“It tells me who I am and where I come from.”

How to teach Finnish language and literature concentrating not only on language use but also on what language is?

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International Master’s Degree Program
Master’s Thesis, 2008
ABSTRACT

The topic of the thesis is Finnish language and literature teaching at Waldorf schools for Grades 10 to 12. The topic is: how to teach Finnish language and literature concentrating not only on language use but also on what language is.

In order to organize the topic, three phases have been created with the help of the following supporting questions:

1. What does Steiner’s pedagogical, anthroposophic, linguistic and psychological literature say about what language is?
2. How do I define language and what is its significance for me?
3. What do high school students think language is and what does it mean to them?

To analyse the essays, which students from different schools in Finland wrote, I will use the phenomenographic approach. In total, I have 28 Waldorf school students' answers and 30 regular high school students' answers as my source material.

My aim is not to create a new curriculum, but rather, to clarify the thoughts of students in order to find a way to introduce them to language as a philosophical, and perhaps, a more personal, issue. Thus, my aim is partly to raise my level of knowledge on the subject as the research proceeds, in order to become a better teacher.
FOREWORD

This paper has been made possible by several people. I would like to thank the faculty of Lappeenranta Steiner School for supporting me with my studies. I would like to thank especially Henrika Bergdahl and Tuula Karkia, who were first to hear about my plans. I also want to thank Eija Utti, who patiently arranged my teaching so that I was able to attend contact teaching in Fyresdal, Norway, as well as Auli Taina, who, besides her own studies, has been interested in those of a colleague.

I should not leave without acknowledgment Lotta Hirvas and Esa Mäkinen, who have offered priceless peer support during these two years in both Fyresdal and when traveling there, not to mention my mentor and fellow students in Norway, Sweden, Denmark and Germany.

All this would not have been possible without the enthusiasm of a good friend, Finnish language and literature teacher, Laura Latja-Ropponen, who had her students write material for my paper. Similar thanks go to Finnish language and literature teachers in Vantaa and Turku Steiner Schools. I should not forget all the students in Savitaipale, Turku, Vantaa and Lappeenranta who wrote essays for me.

I have received financial support from my father, Lasse Raunela. He, as well as my mother, Kerttu Raunela, I would like to thank for their encouragement to study.

Invaluable help during these two years has been offered by Kai Sormunen, who has translated this paper into English. I would also like to thank Susan Richard for proofreading this paper, as well as for the terminological guidance she offered. I am responsible for all linguistic errors in the text.

The greatest thanks of all for patience while watching a partner writing a thesis goes to Petri Suikki, who, besides his own work, has contributed to this work by helping me in every possible way.
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Esseiden analysoinnissa on käytetty fenomenografiasta lähestymistapaa. Fenomenografian oletus on, että kaksi opiskelijaa, jotka menestyvät ongelman ratkaisussa samalla tavalla, ovat ymmärtäneet ongelman samoin. Jos opiskelijat ratkaisevat ongelmaa eri tavalla, myös heidän kokemuksensa ongelmasta on erilainen. Tämän argumentin mukaan voidaan siis uskoa, että opiskelijoiden tapa käsittelä ongelmia heijastaa kokemuksen laatuja ja ymmärtäjästeamme, miksi tietty opiskelija ratkaisee ongelman tietyllä tavalla, meidän tulee olla selvillä kokemuksesta, joka hänellä on, koska ihminen ei voi toimia maailmassa toisin kuin miten hän sen kokee. (Marton & Booth, 1997)

Fenomenografian ydin on siis se, miten ihminen kokee jonkin asian. (Marton & Booth, 1997). Tämän vuoksi esseen tehtävänannossa kysymyksenä on ensin: **Mitä kieli on? Jokin syy näkökulmaan, josta opiskelija kirjoittaa, löytynee puolestaan jatkokysymyksestä: Mitä kieli merkitsee sinulle?** Ensimmäinen kysymys on selvästi ongelma, toisen kysymyksen avulla aukeee
toivottavasti opiskelijan henkilökohtainen kokemus kielestä. Tällä tavoin toivon saavani syvemmän kuvan opiskelijan ajatuksista kuin pelkän Mitä kieli on? kysymyksen esittämällä.


Kun tiedän, mitkä kokemukset liittyvät minkäkinlaiseen käsitykseen kielestä, voin alkaa pohtia, miten opettajana minulla on mahdollisuus tarjota kokemuksia, jotka nostavat opiskelijan käsityksen kielestä ylemmäksi alimmalta tasolta. Kokemusten tarjoaminen olisi nähdäkseni myös yksi keino yhteiskuntakeskeisestä opetustavasta kohti yksilökeskeistä.


Esittelen sellaisten henkilöiden ajatuksia, jotka ovat omassa tutkimuksessaan pohtineet ajattelun ja kielen välistä yhteyttä; kielen vaikutusta identiteettiin ja käyttäytymiseen tai ihmisen kasvuun. Aloitan Chomskysta, koska hänen näkemyksensä kielestä eroaa mielestäni eniten Steinerin näkemyksistä rakenteellisella näkökulmallaan kielestä. Jatkan lähempänä Steinerin ajatusmaailmaa olevan Whorfin ja edeltäjänä Boasin ja Sapirin ajatusten esittelyllä, jonka jälkeen kerron Wittgensteinin, Gadamerin ja Heideggerin käsityksiä. Lopuksi esittelen vielä kielitiedettä ja
psykologiaa yhdistävän Vygotskyn ajatuksia. Luvussa 6. vertaan opiskelijoiden käsityksiä kielestä näiden ihmisten näkemyksiin.


Suoria havaintoja siitä, mitä kieli on ja mitä kieli merkitsee opiskelijalle:

"Mitä kieli on?"

- Tasolla 3 oli sekä 10 - 12 luokalla että 1 - 9 luokalla aloittaneita opiskelijoita, mutta ei peruskoulun abiturientteja.
- Kielen itseilmaisullisesta tarkoituksesta puhuttiin ryhmässä 10-13 tasolla 2, ryhmässä 1-13 tasolla 1.
- Alueellisia eroja oli siten, että ryhmässä 1 - 13 itseilmaisusta puhuttiin Vantaalla ja Turussa tasolla 1, ei Lappeenrannassa, jossa itseilmaisusta puhuttiin vasta tasolla 2 samaan aikaan identiteetin kanssa. Vantaalla ja Turussa identiteetit ei liitetty itseilmaisun tasolla 1. Mistä tämä ero johtuu, siihen minulla ei ole vastausta. Syitä voi miettiä opiskelujen kurssien määrästä, muiden oppiajaisten järjestyksestä, yleensäkin kontekstista, joka ei kokonaan ole tiedossani.
- Peruskoulun opiskelijoiden esseissä sekä tasolla 1 että 2 esiintyi termi kansallistunne, jota ei esiinny steinkoululaisen esseissä. Useasti mainittiin myös kieli opiskelun kannalta. Kielen avulla voi opiskella vieraita kieliä. Steinkoululaiset puolestaan molemmassa ryhmässä (1 - 13 ja 10 - 13) kertoivat kielen erottavan ihmiset elämistä, tästä ei peruskoululaisen esseissä mainittu lainkaan. Toisaalta tasolla 3 steinkoululaisilla ollut ajatus siitä, että eri kieliä
osaamalla ihmisen maailmankuva laajenee, esiintyy peruskoululaisten esseessä tasolla 2, jossa myöskin identiteetti on mainittu, mutta ei määritelty tarkemmin, miten kieli vaikuttaa identiteettiin. Esseissä oli vain mainittu se, että ihmisen maailmankuva laajenee kielten myötä.

"Mitä kieli merkitsee sinulle?"

- **Ryhmä 1-13**
  Kokemukset ja vastaukset kysymykseen "Mitä kieli merkitsee sinulle?" liittyivät tunteisiin, konkreettiseen kokemukseen jostain tilanteesta, subjektiiviseen havaintoon omasta kielenenkäytöstä ja mielipiteeseen siitä, että jokin asia on tärkeä ja että kieli liittyy tähän asiaan. Tunne ilmeni vain tasolla 2 ja subjektiivinen havainto omasta kielenenkäytöstä tasolla 1 ja 3, subjektiivinen havainto ei esiintynyt tasolla 2.

- **Ryhmä 10-13**
  Kokemukset ja vastaukset kysymykseen "Mitä kieli merkitsee sinulle?" liittyivät subjektiiviseen havaintoon, konkreettisiin kokemuksiin, mielipiteisiin ja tunteisiin. Vain tasolla 1 vastaus liittyi subjektiiviseen havaintoon. Vain 3. tasolla puhuttiin tunteesta, subjektiivinen havainto ei esiintynyt tasolla 2.

- **Savitaipale**
  Kokemukset ja vastaukset kysymykseen "Mitä kieli merkitsee sinulle?" liittyivät konkreettiseen kokemukseen, subjektiiviseen havaintoon, mielipiteeseen ja tunteeseen. Mielipide esiintyi vasta tasolla 2.

Jos ajatellaan opettajan mahdollisuuksia vaikuttaa opiskelijoiden käsitykseen kielestä ja sitä, että tämän tutkielman mukaan käsityksiä kielestä ja kielen merkitystä opiskelijalle itselleen perustellaan konkreettisella kokemuksella, subjektiivisella havainnolla, mielipiteellä ja tunteella, näistä ainoastaan konkreettinen kokemus on asia, jonka opettaja voi opiskelijalle mahdollisesti tarjota. Opettaja voi pyytää opiskelijaa havainnoimaan omaa kielenenkäytööään eri tilanteissa, mutta tilanteen tulee ensin olla konkreettinen ennen kuin havaintoja voi tehdä, ja silloinkin on paljon opiskelijan oman itsensä varassa, pystyykö hän havaintoja kielenenkäytöstään tekemään. Opettaja voi myös tarjota valmiita mielipiteitä kielestä, mutta mielipiteet ovat tällöin opettajan omia, eivät opiskelijan.

Jotta myös tunne kielestä voisi syntyä, tarvitaan konkreettinen tilanne, jossa jotain voi tuntea. Konkreettinen kokemus on ainoa selvä asia, jolla opettaja voi vaikuttaa havainnon, mielipiteen ja tunteen syntymiseen. Valmiita havaintoja ja tunteita ei voi opiskelijoille tarjota, jos kasvatustavoitteena on saada opiskelijoista itsenäisesti ajattelevia, maailmaa muuttamaan kykeneniä
ihmisää. Pelkkä tilanteen tarjoaminen opetushetkenä ei tietenkään riitä. Pelkkä tilanne ilman havainnointia jättää opiskelijan vaille syventävää tietoa kohteesta, kielestä.


Havainto siitä, että opetuksen tulee olla konkreettista, ei liene uusi steinerkoulujen opettajille. Omalle opetustyölleni asian tutkiminen omassa oppiaineessani teki tämän muuten niin abstraktin lauseen konkreettiseksi. Tämän tutkielman ansiosta huomasin, että opiskelijoiden käsitys kielestä voi yltää kolmannelle tasolle, jos opiskelijat havainnoivat omaa kielenkäyttöään ja itseään kielenkäyttötilan omalla.

Opetuksessa ei oteta huomioon pelkästään sitä, mitä oppisisältöjä opiskelijan tulisi oppia tietyssä ajassa, yleensä yhden kurssin aikana. Opetuksen yhtenä tavoitteena on saada nuori ymmärtämään omat mahdollisuuksensa vaikuttaa omaan elämäänsä. Kielenopetuksen avulla tämä on mahdollista yhtä lailla kuin historian, yhteiskuntaopin, maantiedon tai matematiikan avulla.

Konkreettisuus opetuksessa on nyt todistettu ainakin itselleni. Mikäli haluan saada opiskelijat sekä muistamaan opetettavat asiat että elämään ne tilanteiden kautta, on minun syytä miettiä, miten opetuksesta kielen vaikutuksesta identiteettiin voi tehdä elävää. Suunnitelman tekeminen kaikille lukion kursseille vie kuitenkin aikansa ja tähän työhön on mahtunut vain joitain esille nousseita ideoita.
Muunkin kuin pelkän kielen käytön opettaminen onnistuu oppitunneilla ja siihen kannattaa kiinnittää huomiota. Opetus tulee järjestää mahdollisimman konkreettisella tavalla, jotta opiskelija voi saada kokemuksen aiheesta. Kokemuksen tiedostaminen on myös opittava, ilman havainnointikykyä omien käyttäytymiskaavojen tunnistaminen ja oman ajatusmaailmansa hahmottaminen jäänee vajaaksi ja käsitykset kielestä pelkälle mielipidetasolle tai muistitiedon varaan. Pelkkien tilanteiden tarjoaminen ei siis riitä, on saatava opiskelijat tekemään havainnoita. Tällä tavoin opiskelijan käsitys kielestä voidaan nostaa ensimmäiseltä tasolta toiselle ja kolmannelle.
1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Research background

For the last three years, I have been teaching Finnish language and literature in the Lappeenranta Steiner School. I have had students from grades 6 to 13 (aged 12 – 20), but primarily, my work has been to teach at the high school level (grades 10 to 13) in Finland. Before becoming a teacher, I studied Finnish language and literature, Theology, School Administration, Finnish as a second/foreign language and Educational Science at the University of Joensuu from where I graduated in 2005. Before that, I was a pupil in the Waldorf school (I use this term instead of the Finnish equivalent “Steiner School”, because it is more familiar to the English-speaking world) in Pori on the western coast of Finland for all grades, apart from Grade 9 in England and Grade 11 in Canada as an exchange student. I do not have a comprehensive school background as a pupil, but only as a teacher; first, as a trainee and later, as a short-term substitute teacher. When I finish this assignment, my experience with teaching will still be somewhat limited. This has influenced my choice of subject at least as much as the teacher training period in university. Thus, the situations described are my subjective experiences in actual situations in the classroom. I am not trying to characterize the whole teacher training program, but rather, to introduce issues that have contributed to writing this thesis. In order to make it easier to read these samples, they are indented and written in italics. This is done throughout the paper, not so much in an objective way, but rather, in the context of my own experience.

My experience begins at university:

When studying at university and taking the teacher training program there, I wanted to make myself more familiar with the comprehensive school system. I became acquainted with many of the language teachers and, as far as I could see, they were primarily interested in how to teach as much information as possible in the shortest possible time. The teacher trainees were not encouraged to think of what was good for a certain age group, but rather, to think of how to be effective. In my experience, the students were taught to teach the subject, when I would have preferred studying how to teach the students. The theoretical framework for
learning and teaching, as well as for human life and development for different age levels, did not meet the practice.

My experience, of course, cannot be generalized describing all teacher training programs. Rather, it works as a basis for my view on how I saw the training and how I would have liked to experience it. In the teacher training, the concentration on child psychology was lacking a concept of the full human being:

As a student who went to a Waldorf school, I was unable to see the picture of a human being that is underlying teaching in comprehensive schools. I was not able to find any "human philosophy" or philosophical anthropology behind the teaching method. It was not discussed when making lesson plans, even though it was mentioned that a teacher should be interested in how children and young people learn as well as how their ability to learn develops. I thought there should be a concept of humankind in the background. I did not think it was enough to consider a child purely as a learner but also as a human being, who develops differently at different ages, while teachers support the process. We only came close to this when we addressed which details of the curriculum we should teach at what point However, the reason for this type of thinking seemed to be what type of people society needs rather than what children as individuals need and what type of society they need in order to develop as individuals. The central concept of Steiner education, teaching on the basis of a child’s age level, occurs in all principal works on Steiner pedagogy. For a person who has a Steiner education, it is difficult to understand that things could be different.

In Waldorf education, age-specific teaching means a pedagogical approach that originates from an understanding of children’s developmental stages. This teaching method is adapted to the children’s level of consciousness in order to nourish characteristic features of the development at that particular age (Pemberton, 2007). This means that at each stage, children gain abilities and characteristic features which are strengthened by what is being taught. Waldorf education claims that, when subjects proceed according to developmental stages, children’s interest in learning remains, as well as their energy for solving more difficult tasks (Porin seudun steinerkoulu, 2007).
Each Waldorf school curriculum explains clearly on what basis the view of teaching has been built.

*My conclusion was that the teachers I had met during my school years, and whose teaching had become more or less the model I try to follow in my own teaching, had some knowledge of the growth of a human being and also of how their subjects can answer the needs of pupils in the relevant phase of life.*

After graduating from university, I went to Snellman College in Helsinki to start the Foundation Year which I will discuss further in this chapter. My goal was to learn more about Steiner pedagogy, which I had experienced in practice; now, I wanted to know more about the theory. I only got a short introduction to Waldorf schools, but many recommendations on what to read and where to obtain more information. At this point, I started teaching Finnish language and literature at my present school. My concept of teaching, the human being and Steiner pedagogy are influenced by schooling, literature I have read, curriculum and my pupils. Remembering the experience as a trainee and as a pupil, I wanted to become a Waldorf high school teacher. My field is to teach Finnish language to many classes. In order to become a Waldorf teacher, or at least to be able to say I am a Waldorf teacher, not simply teaching in a Waldorf school, I need to know about the theory of the pedagogy and about what my subject really means for the students.

I do not consider my work as simply teaching Finnish language and literature but also how to think, how to express one’s thoughts, how to develop oneself as a human being, how to achieve self-knowledge. My subject is just a tool or a method pursuing those goals along with natural sciences, gymnastics and the arts. My subject and the way I teach influence how students develop at different ages. Therefore, I consider it important to take a different look at Finnish language and literature compared to teaching a foreign language.

*When studying language at university, the issue was always how to use the language. In writing courses, students learned to write essays, articles, academic texts and finally, a thesis. In structure courses, students learned to divide language into component parts and find the meaning of small morphemes, words and word groups. The goal was to know how to use these elements in writing.*
"Knowing a language" meant understanding how the language was structured and how it could be used. The question was "How to use the language?" A more basic question would have been "What is language?"

For me, language is much more than purely using it in different contexts in appropriate ways. Language is a part of me; something to express what I feel and define who I am. Teaching only language use does not follow the idea of Waldorf education for actively supporting children to grow through learning a subject. Doing purely this rather reflects the idea that society defines how teaching should be carried out. If we take actual contexts of language use and then teach how one should react in these situations, it will primarily serve the needs of society and its control over individuals. If we begin with the idea of what language is and how it defines one’s personal identity, the basis lies in the individual. (What language is will be discussed in Chapter 3.)

Especially in high school, when the development of thinking is emphasized, I consider it vital to have discussions on the essence of language and, as teacher, to create ways of teaching that will support the mental growth of individuals in society. (Further discussion on curriculum and its goals in Chapter 2.)

Carrying out a research on Waldorf pedagogy in the high school grades seems to be important for many reasons. One of the main reasons is that in Finland, there is no Waldorf teacher training program for high school teachers. The only full-time training available is the Foundation Year held at Snellman College in Helsinki and it does not answer all the questions one needs to know when teaching the upper grades. This is the only way to study full-time Steiner pedagogy with professional guidance. It is possible to take the same classes part-time in a two-year program during weekends but not many teachers do that because they have at least five years of full-time study behind them and it feels too big an effort for them. The few summer courses that are offered are good for an introduction, but obviously, do not fulfill the need. Therefore, in Waldorf high schools, there are few teachers who have studied the pedagogy. A Waldorf school needs not only to have the name Waldorf, but also to provide teaching which follows the ideas of Waldorf pedagogy. Doing research in this field is important, because the knowledge of Waldorf high school pedagogy is needed and thus, it can be distributed to others.
Before I continue with the importance and reasons for researching this pedagogy, it is useful to define Steiner pedagogy as a term: Steiner pedagogy cannot be defined *per se*, nor is there a reason why it should be. Rather than thinking of hundred-year-old pedagogical principles, it is more important to concentrate on today’s pupils and their needs at each developmental stage in their lives. A holistic definition leads to freezing the concept. A fully-defined concept has no way to develop; it will remain unchanged. When talking about education, nothing is permanent because pupils proceed to the next level, society changes and our way of thinking develops. When dealing with these changes, pedagogy has to be flexible and renew itself along with the people it concerns: children and youth.

When I discuss the research of Steiner pedagogy, this is almost the same as developing pedagogy to meet today’s standards of the pupils’ need for teaching and for developing themselves as individuals. When we research and develop pedagogy, it will, hopefully, improve the quality of education. To meet the required standards, education must not follow the old routines, even if they once were valid. One must always be prepared to make changes in order to ready pupils for participation in society, not for just passively living in it.

Martin Rawson’s lecture about the development of Waldorf school quality (Espoo, 2007) supports my thoughts about the definition problem of Steiner pedagogy. He stated that, nowadays, it becomes harder to define a Waldorf school. There are newly-founded schools as well as schools wanting to be Waldorf schools. In addition, there are schools that claim to know how Steiner pedagogy works and what Waldorf schools are like. There are also schools that question whether they still are Waldorf schools. With all these considerations, how can pedagogy and Waldorf schools be defined? Could there be a list of qualities required in order for schools to be Waldorf schools?

The necessity of education can be discussed endlessly. For my thesis, it is more useful to concentrate on the way of integrating Finnish language and literature into education and pondering its significance for human growth. I will concentrate on this in the Chapter 1.3.
In addition to the fact that there is no subject teacher training available in Finland, another reason for this research is the curriculum in high schools. Every Finnish high school, including Waldorf high schools, has to follow the same national curriculum. Every student has to study the same basic courses in order to graduate. In addition, many of the schools offer extra courses in various subjects, depending on school specialties. Waldorf schools have so-called Steiner courses, for example, in my subject, Parsifal in Grade 11 and Drama in Grade 12. There are still six Finnish language and literature courses which are offered in all other high schools.

It is also important to think about Waldorf pedagogy today. School is not an island; it is always connected to society and its people. Especially now, it is good to think about pedagogy because the high school system has changed in Finland. Eight years ago, comprehensive schools adopted the course-based high school system, which meant that students could take courses according to their own schedule. Students did not form a class, as in Waldorf schools; they chose courses independently while, in Waldorf schools, the same courses were taught at a certain grade. Waldorf schools are the only schools still following the grade-based high school model, but teaching the same courses as in comprehensive schools. Curriculum for the whole school system has also changed during the past two years. Each school has prepared its own curriculum following the basic outline given by the Finnish National Board of Education (*Lukion opetussuunnitelman perusteet*, 2003). Waldorf schools have done it, too, but the curriculum only prescribes what to teach; every teacher has to think about how to do it with each grade. That is what I am trying to do in my field.

In many ways, it is reasonable to think about Waldorf pedagogy in general, because it is such a large term including all grades and all subjects at all times. During a lecture given for teachers in Pori on March 23, 2007, Tobias Richer, co-author of the international curriculum, stated that he is constantly asking the questions: “What is Steiner pedagogy?” “Is a curriculum an entity? A construction?” He continued that it is the teacher’s task to research these questions and to try and find the answers in one’s own field.

The final reason for researching high school teaching is that this field has not been researched much. It is good to open the field to teachers in our school and, hopefully, this will interest other schools, too.
1.2. Research topic and theme

The topic of the thesis is Finnish language and literature teaching at Waldorf schools for Grades 10 to 12. Based on my experience at university, the topic is: how to teach Finnish language and literature concentrating not only on language use but also on what language is. Teaching purely language use, as mentioned in Section 1.1, is society-centered. The basis for teaching should be individuals and their need for becoming active members of society, not only passive citizens.

In order to organize the topic, three phases have been created with the help of the following supporting questions:

1. What does Steiner’s pedagogical, anthroposophic, linguistic and psychological literature say about what language is? This is discussed in Sections 3.1 - 3.4;
2. How do I define language and what is its significance for me? This will be discussed in Chapters 3.1 - 3.4;
3. What do high school students think language is and what does it mean to them? This is discussed in Chapter 5.

The discussions on literature (supporting question 1), my own views (supporting question 2) and the views of my students (supporting question 3) will create useful ideas on how to develop teaching to be more individually oriented. To find out the views of high school students is important. Although language has been discussed in the classroom, the very question ‘what is language’ has not been presented. Thus, it is impossible to say for sure what the level of knowledge and understanding of language is (other than language use) among the students. Simultaneously, through reading about the topic and arranging my thoughts, my own understanding of Finnish language and of the whole subject ‘Finnish language and literature’ will be improved. My aim is not to create a new curriculum but rather to clarify the thoughts of students in order to find a way to introduce them language as a philosophical, and perhaps a more personal, issue. Thus, my aim is partly to raise my level of knowledge on the subject as the research proceeds in order to become a better teacher.
1.3. Method

I collected students’ views on language by making them write essays on the topic. The assignment was: “Discuss the following topics: What is language? What does language mean to you?” I received answers from Waldorf schools (Grades 12 and 13) in Lappeenranta, Vantaa and Turku as follows: **Lappeenranta**: Grade 12/6 answers; Grade 13/8 answers. **Vantaa**: Grade 13/7 answers. **Turku**: Grade 12/7 answers. In addition to this, 30 candidates for matriculation in Savitaipale High School responded to the topic, so I received non-Steiner students’ views to be compared with other material. As a whole, I have 32 Waldorf school students’ answers and 30 regular high school students’ answers as my source material. I will introduce this more specifically in Section 4.1. In my own school, I instructed students personally without letting them ask what to write. The questions were asked, but they were only told to answer the questions in the assignment. In Savitaipale, Vantaa and Turku, the local Finnish teacher gave the instruction.

To analyze the essays, I will use the phenomenographic approach, which I will discuss more specifically in Section 4.2. In Chapter 5, I will discuss the results for the supporting question on the views of high school students about language. After that, I will present the ideas as well as the plan, realizations and estimation of the ideas I had for teaching. In the final chapter, I will discuss the realization and results of the thesis from the point of view of both teacher and the stage of student development: Did thinking about the significance and the definition of language help to develop teaching in the direction stated in the aims of this thesis?
1.4. Why teach Finnish language and literature?

The Finnish High School Curriculum (Lukion opetussuunnitelman perusteet, 2003) by the Ministry of Education characterises the teaching of Finnish language and literature. The curricula of Waldorf schools have been made on the basis of these principles, taking into account the concept of humankind and age level teaching that underlies Steiner pedagogy. The concept of humankind is an image of a human being based on a holistic view of human development and growth. It is based on the views of Rudolf Steiner, where a human being is seen as a physical and spiritual creature (Pemberton, 2007). A human is not seen only as a thinking creature who can be taught to think with books and by telling it to read, but a human is also seen as a person of emotions and will, whose life involves art and practical work in addition to thinking.

The following indented passages are from the Finnish High School Curriculum (Lukion opetussuunnitelman perusteet) and the discussion is based on my personal thoughts on the topic. After this, I will discuss the views on “The Educational Tasks and Content of the Steiner Waldorf Curriculum” (Rawson & Richter, 2004) concerning the significance of the subject language and literature and why it is taught.

Language and literature teaching is led by a view of the mother tongue as a system of concepts. With the help of these, a human being analyses the world and builds social reality. Through their mother tongue, human beings adopt a common culture and create an identity of their own. This makes it possible to form social interaction as well as to continue and develop culture. (p.32)

Finnish language and literature is seen in the Ministry of Education as a subject that develops an individual. The construction of identity, as well as perception and structuring the world, indicates a view that is described in Chapter 3.2: language is not an island disconnected from humans. It connects humans to the world even to the extent that they form their image of themselves with its help. With the help of language, people can tell themselves who they are.

Finnish language and literature is a vital subject that combines skills, knowledge, culture and arts. It offers material for general linguistic and cultural knowledge. Its contents are research of linguistics as well as literary and communication studies. Linguistic, literary and communication skills, as well as reading, writing and speech communication, are learned in different communicative interactions. (p. 32)
Concepts of thinking, feeling and willing that belong to age level teaching are taken into account when planning classes for students of different ages (more about this in the following chapter) and are shown in the characterisation of the subject Finnish language and literature. My opinion is that knowledge helps students to develop their thinking, skills develop their will, and art develops their emotive side. This does not mean that art would not develop thinking. The primary emphasis on developing thinking at the high school level lies with informative material. According to instructions from the Ministry of Education, these different aspects are being trained in different interactions. The practice itself will be defined more specifically in the curriculum section and course descriptions; further information in the *International Steiner Waldorf Curriculum* (Rawson & Richter, 2004).

Language and literature teaching encourages appreciating one's own language and culture. The subject guides the student to understand multiculturalism and multilingualism as well as lingual and cultural tolerance. (p. 32)

Along with strengthening the position and appreciation of one's own language through the subject language and literature, it is important to connect the young to the surrounding world so they can find their own place in it. Through interaction with others, one will be able to find one's own identity: to be something that no one else could be. This is referred to in the following passage:

The goal of high school literature teaching is to learn to understand fiction, to analyse and interpret texts from different points of view. Fiction offers material for mental growth, forming cultural identity and creating diverse ways of expression. (p. 32)

Self-generation is part of creating diverse ways to express oneself. When teaching Finnish language and literature, it is important to train these skills because in different interactions and their later analysis, one's behaviour can be seen in relation to earlier interactions. In speech, the consciousness of one's self-view helps one to notice how one has improved as a communicator and which facilities one has to deal with in these situations. In order to shape the world to the direction where it would be easier to live, one needs courage to take action. Willpower can be found in small exercises and the marks of mental development (as mentioned in the curriculum) might not be found when the course ends, but perhaps years later.
Written expression, fiction and other literature help organise thoughts to logical entities. In other words, creating diverse ways of expression helps to make the world clearer to understand. Understanding the world is vital in order to be able to live in it and shape it.

The goal for teaching Finnish language and literature is to give communicative and interactive skills that make further studies and contributions to working life as well as active citizenship possible. Social interaction and learning are based on diverse communication skills, solid literacy and writing, as well as the ability to use language in a proper way, depending on the situation. Finnish language and literature lead to an active search of knowledge and its critical analysis and interpretation. (p.32)

All these skills are needed in society. It requires active citizenship to be able to shape the surrounding world so that one fits in. Further studies, work, social interaction and active citizenship are taken for granted in the curriculum (Lukion opetussuunnitelman perusteet, 2003). It is useful to be active, study and work; without doubt, these, as well as language, define us as humans and express who we are. This is made possible through the study of Finnish language and literature.

Education and my particular subject can be seen as devices when pursuing the obvious goal.

Teaching aims at integration within the subject, as knowledge and skills function together. The link between them is language, as well as the view of a human as a goal-directed, expressive, analysing and productive communicator. (p. 32)

Integration within the subject is probably a precondition for good teaching. It is futile to consider teaching and learning as separate entities, when the link between them is language. Another type of integration to consider is the cross-curricular association between different subjects. When a language can unite whole nations, there is no reason to disregard what happens in other subjects. This is a central point in Steiner pedagogy; a different entity that connects each subject together is taught in each grade. For Grade 10, for example, the theme is answering the question *What?* and each subject will answer this question from its own perspective. (This will be shown later in this paper.) Grade 11 will answer the question *Why is it like this?* Before high school, the entities include stories at each grade. Grade 5 focuses on historical events in India, and in Grade 6, the rise and decay of the Roman Empire is a central theme. Grade 7 concentrates on the period of exploration. Ideally, different subjects are taught taking advantage of these stories so they can be discussed from different points of view.
The aims of teaching have been listed in the Finnish High School Curriculum (*Lukion opetussuunnitelmank perusteet*, 2003):

The aims for Finnish language and literature are that students

• study language, literature and communication more deeply and can properly use the concepts related to them;

• develop communicative and interactive skills being able to interact in a more appropriate and goal-directed way;

• learn to use written and spoken language more appropriately;

• learn to understand and analyse the relation between text and context;

• train the skills in order to be able to analyse, interpret, estimate, benefit and produce different texts being more conscious of goals and contexts;

• learn to estimate ways of expression in a text, such as rhetorical devices and argument, as well as adapt the knowledge to interpret and produce texts;

• strengthen their knowledge of literature in order to develop thinking, expand general education, imagination and ability to empathise and create a world view;

• know the norms of written language and understand the significance of standard language;

• can select and critically estimate different sources, reliability of information, usefulness and purpose, as well as information and communication technologies in their studies;

• enjoy culture and can appreciate its various forms. (p. 32)

Developing one's own thinking and self-knowledge are the most central aims from a high school teacher's point of view. If one does not spend much time thinking about things that matter, one's contribution to society remains insignificant. When a person is able and willing to participate, the possibilities for a good and balanced life are greater. At least I, as a 28-year-old teacher in a Waldorf school, feel that the more I contribute to the world I live in, the happier and safer I feel. The educational aims are not the easiest to carry out, but being aware of them helps to place my subject among other subjects and the rest of education.

*The International Steiner Waldorf Curriculum* (Rawson & Richter, 2004) has primarily been written for British Waldorf schools. Thus, language and literature means English. The aims are,
however, the same in Finnish curricula. The basis is the concept of humankind and the subjects are built upon this premise.

The general view of Finnish language and literature for all grades is discussed in Chapter 2. Language is considered to be the most important means of communication between humans, which makes it the primary device for teaching. Language also influences the mental and psychological development of a child, which makes it a central means of operation in a school (Rawson & Richter, 2004).

Thus, language is not only taught for itself, but also because it helps young people to develop themselves and to be understood as well as they understand the surrounding world. Language is as essential for humans as the body parts. Simultaneously, with motor coordination training, one trains language and its use.

Language teaching contains both written and oral expression. The purpose of classes is to develop both of these aspects. They have different characteristics, meaning that spoken language refers to issues whereas written language concentrates on structuring and defining the world. Spoken language is related to oral tradition, where thinking and collective experience were expressed in interactions and rituals. Written tradition, or culture, is individualistic, where the writer brings personal experiences for others to enjoy. One mission for language teaching is to establish a strong oral tradition on which written tradition can be based (Rawson & Richter, 2004).

My view is that oral tradition belongs to the emotional side of a human being, unlike written culture. When a human spontaneously expresses joy, sorrow or fear, the consciousness of this emotion is different from simply writing about these emotions. During writing, a human takes a look at these emotions and analyses them separately from the original feeling. The focus of high school teaching lies with thinking. Despite this, oral expression is not excluded from the curriculum as described in the following chapter.

Because the Waldorf school curriculum is based on the concept of humankind, teaching is structured to support the various developmental stages of children and the young. Language is seen to influence human growth. In the individualisation process, language helps a human to find an identity for expressing oneself and one's thoughts in order to find one's own voice. This makes it possible to enter the world (Rawson & Richter, 2004).
If we achieve our goal, a Grade 12 student can analyse phenomena in relation to context. Subjective views and radical opinions based on emotions are replaced with the ability to perceive entities that are not judged from one single point of view as merely interesting or boring.

The views of language and literature teaching in *The Finnish High School Curriculum* (2003) and *The International Steiner Waldorf Curriculum* (Rawson & Richter, 2004) differ from each other on their basis. The former concentrates on teaching language use and the development of identity through learning; the latter starts from individual development and growth, as well as how language influences a human and its role in shaping personality. The former seems more society-centred than the latter, but they are not mutually exclusive. In order to be able to contribute to society, one must know how society works. In other words, in my subject, this means teaching how language is used in different contexts; it is more important to know how a human reacts in different situations. When I control myself, I will be able to see my possibilities in society. How Finnish language and literature material is taught has to be important for the teacher in order to remember that one is teaching humans, not just the subject matter. Both the social and individual points of view should be present in teaching; otherwise, pedagogy would not be a changing process, but stagnant, without ways for survival.
2. AGE-SPECIFIC TEACHING, TEACHING FINNISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE IN HIGH SCHOOL AND CURRICULUM FOR GRADES 10 TO 12

2.1. Age-specific teaching

The difference between Waldorf schools and comprehensive schools is that, in the Waldorf curriculum, the pedagogical mission is emphasised and subjects are adapted to fit the developmental stages of children. The comprehensive school system does not attend to this as consciously as is done in Waldorf schools. (Rawson & Richter, 2004). Of course, both teachers and curriculum planners ponder what can be taught to children of different ages. My view is that the basis is what children can learn at a specific age instead of what they need in order to grow as human beings. When taking my teacher training in Finland, I was not able to see what type of view on humankind existed in the program, or indeed, if there was any particular view at all behind the pedagogy.

Waldorf curriculum is descriptive: it states each developmental stage of a child or a teenager. The aim is to describe a changing process, a young person moving from a certain level to another. The features of different subjects are adapted to developmental stages (Rawson & Richter, 2004). This means age-specific teaching: teaching that is suitable at each age level, grade and year.

In this thesis, I will try to clarify how I could teach beyond just language use. Since it is not clear for me what students think of language and what it means to them, it is natural to find this out before I start rearranging my teaching schedule and contents. Then I will be able to plan how I am going to modify my teaching.

The basis of Steiner pedagogy is the schedule of developmental stages of human growth that combines physical, psychological and mental development. The curriculum should support this development by bringing the right type of challenge and support at the right moment. There is plenty of variation between individuals, but some aspects are common. One of these aspects is language. The schedule of development and what students are like varies from time to time. That is why the teacher can create the most appropriate way of teaching only by examining the students in the beginning.
The purpose of schooling is to strengthen the ego of the young, the core of which is thinking, feeling and willing (Rawson & Richter, 2004). When examining the concentration of high school classes, these three elements can be clearly seen, as will be expanded on later in the chapter. Thinking is typical for Grade 10 whereas feeling is for Grade 11. Grade 12 is for finding a personal path through their own willing. These are available for teachers and they must meet requirements that students set with these guidelines. The features of this age level in high school I will discuss in the next section.

Teaching is balancing between what supports children's general development and what a specific individual needs at a given moment (Rawson & Richter, 2004). Succeeding in this follows the idea of age-specific teaching. In other words, when we take into account the developmental level of a student and the current situation of an individual, teaching will follow the idea of age-specific teaching. Planning and observation will help, but the teacher also needs an intuitive view that can be developed. I consider writing a thesis, such as this, as part of the necessary growing process of a teacher.

Because Steiner pedagogy cannot be, from my point of view, holistically defined so that one could say exclusively what it is, I would like to emphasise the significance of the term 'age-specific teaching'. The term is more flexible and gives the teacher more leeway to function than does Steiner pedagogy. Every now and then, it is said that in a Waldorf school, there should be Steiner pedagogy. This seems as obvious as the fact that, in a comprehensive school, the teaching should be according to their pedagogy. However, the basis of Steiner pedagogy is the concept of humankind and we know that change is a constant process that one can see and experience everywhere. When one defines Steiner pedagogy, it is said that it should follow the natural developmental stage of a person at that very moment. This is age-specific teaching. We cannot, however, say that the stages are similar for year after year. The young of today are different due to our modern world. One cannot forget that, in Finland, the school children start school at the age of seven, unlike most other countries. The Parsifal block lesson, for example, that is traditionally taught in Grade 11, should actually be taught to Grade 10 students, according to their age level, if we follow the curriculum for the Toronto Waldorf school. On the other hand, it is useful to consider whether Finns are at the same developmental level as children of Waldorf schools in Central Europe, for example.
One must constantly examine the curriculum, teaching and students. The teacher cannot take a ready-made package of pedagogical theory of one's choice but must observe the preparedness and development of the students. Sometimes, the teacher, who has students who have gone to comprehensive school but want to come to a Waldorf high school, has to begin with novels that are suitable for children of Grade 6. The challenge for Steiner pedagogy is those very students who come to Waldorf schools from other schools. Two and one-half years ago, there was an entire class of high school students for whom the Waldorf school was a completely new thing. They had no experience of main lesson books, close team spirit in the class or what teaching is like in Waldorf schools as a whole. Age-specific teaching seems to be created for students like that. The first term in this type of class is dedicated to getting to know each other and to developing a strong identity and spirit for the class. The curriculum will be taught as scheduled, but the new social environment is taken into account simultaneously. (Unlike other countries, in Finland, high school starts at Grade 10, after the Grade 9 the students choose whether they will continue to high school or choose a vocational school.)

Teaching according to developmental stages is based on the developmental level that can vary considerably from year to year. Every Grade 10 class is different from the one last year, and so on. This is why I want to develop my teaching according to the students and the situation in which I teach. Unfortunately, the term Steiner pedagogy brings to my mind a dogmatic idea of Rudolf Steiner as an omnipotent guru. Age-specific teaching gives me freedom to teach and develop my teaching, as circumstances dictate. Steiner pedagogy should not be seen as purely following the curriculum year by year, but it should also take into account the particular circumstances of the students. It is clear that different areas of society influence growth; home, friends and the times in which we live all influence what type of young people we are raising. If we exclude society from raising and teaching young people, we destroy age-specific teaching. When we take into account both human growth and needs at different ages, as well as society’s influence, Steiner pedagogy is going to work best. With these thoughts, I agree with Rawson and Richter (2004) about the role of the teacher for the upper grades.

Upper grade students need ideas that will help them to work towards their own ideals for the future. The teacher should respond to this need by examining his/her subject and by encouraging the
students to actively explore and understand the world (Rawson & Richter, 2004). I hope that their participation in this thesis, as writers of the data material, and seeing how it will be completed, will support their growth. I hope that the writing process itself is a pedagogical act. Creating the thesis will provide me with professional self-development through understanding my subject, my students and myself. After all, my subject is to study language and how to teach it; it is something we share and influences how we are.

2.2. Teaching Finnish language and literature in high school

In high school grades, the students are in a phase when thinking can be touched and used in teaching. Teaching should be analytic and more cognitive than in lower classes. Teacher’s task is yet not only to present the subject the way the students would understand it the easiest way but be aware of that one must support the student during the growing process and at the same time know what the young person needs now as well as knowing what is good for the specific age group (Rawson & Richter, 2004)

Grade 10, 11 and 12 students have their own way of receiving information and of looking at the world. In some ways, the students are in a new situation; they have entered high school and see the end of their school years coming, even though they still have three or four years left. In high school, they learn the same subjects they have learned in lower school, but now, the issues are dealt with more carefully, and students are expected to think more analytically in order to find their place in the world.

In Grade 10, students should start thinking that there are reasons for each phenomenon. Through the thinking process, the reason can be discovered (Rawson & Richter, 2004). The magic word at that age would then be thinking (Petresh, 2003). It is important to consider how things differ from each other, not only which different things have changed during the centuries (Gerwin 1997; Childs 2005). In Finnish language and literature, through giving students the complete picture of what language is, teaching is meant to give students the tools to see the world. Every single part of it is important. There is a place for every word and syllable and every word and syllable is part of something larger. There is fiction, lyrics, drama and non-fiction, which, when combined, create something greater than just the separate units: the field of literature. In this way, the students can
perceive the world as a unit (but the teacher should remember not to start from the separate units, but rather, from the whole entity).

In Grade 10, teaching could be described as providing the tools for students to build the structure of a house in which they are going to live. The structure needs to be in good order before going further. It means, for example, that by the end of the school year, grammar should be mastered and could be used as a tool to learn a foreign language, too, not only to analyse the mother tongue. The question for Grade 10 is *What?* This theme is taught from as wide a perspective as possible by introducing factual information about the world.

In Grade 11, the main component of this age is feeling (Skinnari, 1998). It can be seen in students’ eagerness to hear reason for every little thing; why the school has these same old habits, why the classes cannot be organized differently. The question for this age group is “Why are things this way?” (Gerwin, 1997: 13). It can also be seen in how they consider themselves as the most important people around. Students feel the subjects, and from my short experience as a teacher, this grade is a special one when it comes to story-telling. No other grade in high school is so eager to hear stories of how different people have achieved their goals. In some way, these students try to discover their way, but they do not know how to proceed. In their life, there are periods when the goal is very clear, but the next day, it feels stupid and childish.

Literature, history, foreign language, eurythmy and the arts try to respond to this feeling by providing problems to be solved. There is no black and white drawing any longer, because life is not as simple as it used to be. By giving the problem and leading students to solve it in view of their ideal, we help them choose their own path in life. Therefore, different periods are addressed in the history of literature. It is important, through teaching, to make students think of the qualities of those periods, but also to let them see that, in between the periods, there is always change where people are neither in the past nor in the next phase, but somewhere in between, pondering how to make the world a different and better place for everyone. In that same phase where they find themselves, the focus in language teaching is now expressing these thoughts. Writing essays in which students can discuss freely, experimenting with pursuing their own thoughts of where to go and what to do, will help them to understand their feelings. In our faculty’s house analogy, this kind of teaching helps students build their own personal house. The building forms the inner walls, the colours and every room has a task of its own. In the house, students feel comfortable and it is their own work, rather than something given to them without their own effort. It is the house where one
can live and start to look outside, observing others; it is easier to contemplate others after knowing one’s own place and goal.

Grade 12 is full of energy. After the Grade 11 time of searching, it is now time to act. This class is the time to use the will. In language, it is reasonable to take the history of Finnish language and think about who developed the written language and what it means to us now. This development from spoken language into a written and official one has also changed and developed our country and the people here. One man’s goal and ideas of the Finnish language became an idea for other people, too, and many centuries later, people started to be proud of their own language, started to use it in literary works, and could study it. This passion of a human being changed the whole country and nation and its identity.

Besides the history of language, it is time to practise writing arguments and learn how to express opinions and defend them. It is time to know the power of language. At the same time, it is important not to forget others. There is always the world with other people; I am not the only one. Students learn that co-operation is needed because otherwise, one is left alone. One needs to understand why people have different opinions. Co-operation is practised, for example, in the play that the students prepare during the year. In the house analogy, students step out into the yard, perceiving the house as part of a neighbourhood and town. They start to think that they are a part of the community and, by using their will, they can make the yard fit in with the neighbourhood and also take responsibility in the community or town life. In other words, this means that the question for Grade 12 students is to think: “Who am I?” Students will have a feeling that there is the world and they can act in it; they understand the world and themselves in it (Petrash, 2003: 83). The questions might be What can I do? and How can I change the world?

When teaching in a high school, it is often forgotten - as I see it - that knowing is not the same as remembering. For the teacher, knowing is not only recalling subject material and explaining what it is about; for students, knowing is not only memorizing and remembering what has been said. Instead of this, for both groups, knowing is something deeper that comes closer to understanding. “What is knowing, really?” is the same type of question as “Who am I?” This can be discussed and pondered over and over again and still, it is almost impossible to find the answer. One stays in the hermeneutic circle, getting closer to the middle by thinking, but never reaching the ultimate point.

The question of what ‘knowing’ is, in my field of work, can be considered by giving an example
from a lecture given by Aksel Hugo on October 3, 2006 in Fyresdal. The title of the lecture was *Steiner and knowledge - the extended concept of action*. Hugo presented the ideas of knowing by Immanuel Kant. He asked a question: “How is knowledge possible?” The phrase presupposes, (it can be read from the text) that there is something called knowledge and it is already there and what we want to know is how it can be there, how it is possible. Rudolf Steiner developed this question further and asked: “What is knowing?” It is important to go that far because, if one leaves thinking about knowledge as an existing thing in a human being, one will, at one point, reach a line that cannot be crossed. The question “What is knowing?” would remain in the idealistic world. By stating a question this way, one rejects the idea that one can actually go further, one does not have to stop there. I think it is always possible to continue the chain of questions; there is no question that would tell us all we need to know. If we ask ‘how is language used’, the answer would explain language use in different situations. When we ask 'what is language', we find out something the former answer does not give. The question 'how is language used' is included in the latter question because answering it will tell something about what language is.

Welburn (2004) discusses Steiner’s theory of knowing in his book *Rudolf Steiner’s Philosophy and the Crisis of Contemporary Thought*. He says that, for Steiner, knowing is something that cannot be given a metaphysical foundation. Steiner gives many perspectives to observe knowing from different angles. One point of view is that knowing is not something that is disconnected from the world. As Welburn (2004) explains,

> [w]hat we know of the world depends on the fact that we are part of the world and have been shaped by it, so that from the beginning our nature and organization become not a limit, but the actual key to the nature of the universe to which we belong and which brought us into being. (p. 49)

Thinking about alternative questions, as stated earlier, will help to form a thought that we do not have to stick to language use in language teaching. It is possible to set further questions and truly consider what language is and how it influences what I am. The question Kant stated did not allow further questions. Steiner does not stop thinking because of a wrongly stated question, but forms a new one that expands the topic. From the point of view of teaching, it is useful to consider not only the essence of language, but also what knowledge is in my own subject.

What is ‘knowing’ in my field of work? Knowing can be considered from both the students’ and teacher’s angles, but before one can actually teach, one should be aware of at least what knowing is
not. When studying language, the subject was always how to use it. In writing courses, students learned to write essays, articles, academic texts and finally, theses. In structure courses, students learned to divide language into component parts and find the meaning of those small morphemes, words and word groups. The goal was to know how to use these elements in writing. ‘Knowing’ was understanding how the language is structured and how it can be used. As I see it, this is the Kantian perspective to the object. Kant's question would have been: “What makes language possible?” But this question was not presented in my studies either; instead, the question was: “How language should be used?” The more important question would have been, as Steiner may have pointed out, and still is “What is language?” After this, with the help of the previous questions, one could have tried to find answers to the question of how to use language.

From the point of view given previously by Welburn (2004), it is important to take a look at language as a living object that has shaped human beings as well as they themselves have shaped language. Language is in the middle of an ever-changing situation, as we humans are, too. Language is not only a tool for helping people to communicate with each other, but also something that tells us about what we are. Understanding this is important when entering the classroom. I can teach how to use the language, but behind the knowledge of the structure, it would be useful to know what it really is that I am teaching the students and how. What is the subject, really? What is language? What do I actually teach when I teach language?

The courses that are included in the subject Finnish language and literature are discussed later in this chapter. It is reasonable to always be aware that language is always more than just a subject and that students should get a sense of its importance, too. Language is their own thing that they can change and develop at the same time as developing themselves.

How does the question “What is language?” relate to Grade 10 thinking, Grade 11 feeling, and Grade 12 willing? I will return to this question in Chapter 6 when discussing planning the teaching.
2.3. Curriculum for grades 10 to 12

Grades 10 to 12 in the Lappeenranta Steiner School have eight Finnish language and literature courses. One course contains 38 lessons of 45 minutes each. It is almost the same number of lessons as a four-week main lesson block. An ordinary main lesson block means 10 lessons per week, which means two lessons each school day. All of the courses are obligatory for the students, but six of them are the same as in comprehensive schools. In Grade 10, there are three courses taught, in Grade 11, there are two courses, one of which is included in the group of six comprehensive school courses, and in Grade 12, there are three courses, two of which are the same as the comprehensive school courses. The order of the courses differs from the comprehensive school system. In comprehensive schools, the courses follow each other in a numerical order. Even from one Waldorf school to another, the order of the courses varies. Each school has arranged the order of delivery themselves. I have not been able to contribute to our high school curriculum planning, but I have come to a school where the first class of students took their matriculation examination in my first year. Comparison of the different curricula and, especially the order of courses, is my task. I believe that our curriculum well meets the above-stated pedagogical views.

The descriptions of the same six courses have been taken from The Finnish High School Curriculum (Lukion opetussuunnitelman perusteet, 2003) and they can also be found in our own curriculum. The Waldorf curriculum of individual schools is based on Ministry of Education standards and the pedagogical views of Waldorf education as mentioned earlier in this chapter. The contents are basically the same. The teacher then adapts these non-Steiner courses according to Steiner pedagogy and developmental stages. Other descriptions of courses are from our own curriculum as well as the characterisation of Finnish language and literature teaching in high school (and in Grade 9). The exception is the Parsifal course in Grade 11 that has been taken from the International curriculum (Rawson & Richter, 2004) because, in our curriculum, it is only mentioned as a course offering, there is no course profile as yet. The course descriptions for high school are attached at the end of this thesis.
3. WHAT IS LANGUAGE?

Philosophical thinking about the influence of language on thinking and what language is has not been ignored in linguistics, contrary to my experience during my studies. My experience was that there was no, or little, discussion on the topic. Sources, however, indicate that the topic has been discussed through time.

In this chapter, I will discuss how language is defined in different sources and how I perceive it. First, I will concentrate on anthroposophical and Steiner pedagogical literature in section 3.1, after which I will take linguistic, philosophical and psychological views on the concept. I will also contribute to the discussion by expressing my own views on the subject and on what language is.

In Sections 3.2 - 3.4, I will concentrate mostly on reflections by linguists, philosophers and psychologists of the 20th Century, taking into account the earlier researches as they are mentioned in the sources. I will introduce the thoughts of those who have discussed the relationship between thinking and language; the influence of language on identity and behaviour, as well as human growth. I will begin with Noam Chomsky in the Chapter 3.2. because his structural view on language differs most from those of Rudolf Steiner. I will continue with Benjamin Whorf and his predecessors Franz Boas and Edward Sapir who are closer to Steinerian thinking, and then, Ludwig Wittgenstein, Hans-Georg Gadamer and Martin Heidegger in Chapter 3.3. In Chapter 3.4. I will introduce thoughts by Lev Vygotsky that combine linguistics and psychology.

It is important to report comprehensively on research by these scientists because, in this thesis, I will not only want to find out the views of high school students, but also expand my own understanding on the topic. To select the central points from these thinkers is difficult, but the comparison to Steiner can be done only through a comprehensive examination. The reader should notice that the purpose is not only to write a thesis on the thoughts of high school students, but also expand my own level of knowledge.

Authors whose views I will introduce in Chapter 3.2.1. and works I have used:
Whorf - *Language, Thought and Reality - Selected Writings of Benjamin Lee Whorf* (1956)
Whorf - *Nykysuomen rakenne ja kehitys 1* (Hakulinen & Leino, 1983)

Authors whose views I will introduce in Sections 3.2 - 3.4. and works I have used:
Wittgenstein - *Kieli ja mieli* (Hintikka, 1982)

An important book to show that Steiner is not always alone with his thoughts is David Abram’s “*The Spell of the Sensuous*” which I recommend my reader to read. It will give some more views on language what I have not added to this work.

### 3.1. Language in anthroposophic literature and Steiner pedagogy

In this Section (3.1), I will use *The Genius of Language - Observations for Teachers* (1995) by Rudolf Steiner as my primary source and I will discuss the topic in the order of the book. Other sources are *Opettamisen taito - Steinerkoulun opetusmenetelmiä* and the lecture series *Kansansielujen tehtävä* (*Mission of Folk-Souls*). The Section also introduces views on language by various writers in the article collection *Language - Symptom And Servant of Culture* (2005), edited by Forward, W. et al.

Considering the readers of my paper, I will presume that they are familiar with the writings of Rudolf Steiner in general and have read at least some literature discussing anthroposophy. The indented text *in italics* will be my own experiences and thoughts on the topic, as in Chapter 1. The **bold** text organises text into different sections by source, topic and writer. The tables in Sections 3.1. - 3.4. introduce what field of language the concepts are related to among each thinker. These are definitions of our own study group and they do not mean that there are no other fields in language. In these fields the researchers operate and tell much more and relating to correspondence in sound and meaning to words, for example, that I will tell more later. The table appears first time
During my studies in Norway was a contact teaching period where students formed groups for discussions of various topics of interest. A group of students began to think about the essence of language and there were a few lessons of discussion. I was in a group that started with the question “What is language?” Right from the beginning, we had to limit the discussion on human language to it being some type of sign system among animals. There were both Nordic and German students in our group. We compared how we express amazement and joy with gestures and sounds, for example. When expressing emotions, we tend to use purely vowels. Amazement we express with ‘Oh’ and understanding and agreeing with “Uh-huh”. Consonants were not used in these oral expressions, only in writing. As an experience, this was enlightening; before words, we can express emotion with sounds. This is natural when we are babies and cannot yet speak. We are understood by the sounds we make. We also know than even when we lack a common language, we can communicate with gestures. When we find a common language, gestures are no longer needed to that extent. The question “What comes before gestures?” remained unanswered. Is there something before them? And is that something a thought that we are going to express, for example?

At that time, we did not find any answers to those questions. We did not base our thoughts on anything other than our own experiences of language and perceptions when comparing the use of emotions and gestures in different languages. When reading literature on the topic, we can find support for our thoughts on linguistic writings by Rudolf Steiner, for example.

Here is an excerpt from the introduction to the lecture series The Genius of Language - Observations for Teachers by Rudolf Steiner (1995): During the first few years, children make themselves familiar with the surrounding sound world by cry and babble. When children learn to talk, they ”choose” the surrounding sound world and start naming things. Through language, children join the language community; language gets its social aspect. With the help of language, a person can perceive the surrounding world and communicate with other people (Pusch, 1994).
A child can be considered to have two phases when acquiring a language. During the first year, physical movement changes into motion of the speech organs. During the second year, the child begins to connect speaking with thinking more clearly (Pusch, 1994). In other words, the movement of hands and legs diminishes when the child learns to talk, and the same movement changes into movement in the larynx, making speech possible. Before speech, the child expresses things with movement, which is gradually replaced by words.

The same pattern can be seen in the history of language. Before speech, gestures were the primary method of communication; consonants appeared with experiences of natural events, whereas vowels were suitable for expressing emotions. After this came words and their abstract meanings (Pusch, 1994).

Historical perspective on language (Lecture one): We can say that the development of language expresses the psyche, even though the reaction to language varies from time to time. If we consider the relationship between languages and thinking, as well as the fact that people form their thoughts into speech, we should take into account that the structural system of language does not allow arbitrary combinations of words. There are rules controlling the ways of expression and these rules also control thinking. Thus, we express ourselves within the limitations of language because we are not able to express ourselves absolutely freely (Steiner, 1995).

I remember thinking about the differences between languages when I was in Grade 9 at Wynstones School in England. For the first time, I was living in a country where I was not able to run errands in my own language and where the language of instruction was English. I remember listening to my schoolmates and thinking how fluently they spoke their mother tongue. I understood that language was the thing that made us different. I was one of the students and enjoyed being in the class, but I was not able to find answers to the questions “How is my classmates’ way of thinking different from mine? How does language influence the way they see and perceive the world?”
With the help of the stereotypical structure of language introduced by Rudolf Steiner, we can understand that languages do affect thinking. How this is done is hard to explain and Whorf, whose research I will discuss in the next chapter, explains it more clearly than Steiner. Word combinations, grouped for understanding, belong to the structural standards of language. We need rules to be understood. The rules, as such, do not prevent us from forming different sentences and words. When we belong to a language community and want to be understood, it is not helpful if we use arbitrary combinations in speech. The rules of language (stereotypical sentence structures) influence thinking, but there are also other things that affect differences in thinking in different languages.

When examining the original form of language, expressions of the soul world of a language community, one should ignore the foreign influence on a language. If we think that language belongs to speech and want to enter the core of it, we should think about how language has been formed by the inner urge to express ourselves and not the outer urge for naming things. Being outside a language community of one's own is enough to reform a language or stop its development. The core of language, as Steiner says (1995), states that the power we have in thoughts is present in our words as well. Nowadays, we do not recognise the power of words, because the core of language is far from the language we speak. Before language became abstract, the meaning of words was associated with the meaning of sounds; human senses became real through sounds and the voice.

Sometimes, I have the feeling that I would not like to say unpleasant things to my friends in my mother tongue. I feel like hurting other people with the help of language, even though my intention is not to hurt or to be rude. Giving feedback or criticizing in tricky situations feels much easier in a foreign language, because the words do not have the same emotional weight as in Finnish. This is why it often takes a long time to find the right way to say certain things in Finnish, although it would be so much easier in English. My students have noticed this, too. A Grade 10 student wanted to give feedback on a classmate's speech in English. Sometimes, swearing is done in English instead of Finnish. Words are just words in a foreign language, there is no emotion in them and yet, we can speak about similar things as in Finnish.

One can feel the change within one's own language, as well. As a person who moved from Western Finland to the Eastern part, I only use the dialectal word
'mä' by accident (instead of the standard language word 'minä' or 'I' in English), because in the East, we say 'mie'. After spending a few years surrounded by another dialect makes 'mä' sound impolite to others. This thought never came to my mind when living in Western Finland, where it is a common word. Emotions in language seem more present in my current residential area than in the West, where words seem harder and shorter. I have not examined this feature further, but the length and number of vowels seems more important in the East. Emotions are present and everybody can see them in language. One does not want to be impolite. In Finnish dialects, it is easy to recognise where people are from by the personal pronouns they use. I am not surprised by why a student wants to give feedback in English; in a foreign language, it is more impersonal, and the other person receives the same feedback without taking it too personally.

Nowadays, one is very conscious of language control and development. One cannot say that language expresses sensory perceptions as purely as before language development became more abstract. The conscious development of language is useful and essential, but, as usual, the basis for it is society, not the importance of human expression. An example of language control is The Research Institute for the Languages of Finland. Its purpose is to research Finnish, Swedish, Saami languages, other Finno-Ugric languages, Romani and FinSL (Finnish Sign Language) from various perspectives: vocabulary, nomenclature, language use in different contexts, different texts, the past and present of the language, its variation and stability. Furthermore, the Institute controls and develops Finnish, Swedish, Saami, Romani and Finnish Sign Language. (The Research Institute for the Languages of Finland, 2008). The basis is the social need to standardise rules of written language and agree on conventions.
The Evolution of Language from an Organic Point of View (Lecture two): It is not language control when a person expresses inner emotions and sensory perceptions. When something happens outside our body, we express it with consonants. They express how we feel inside about the incidents happening outside our body (Steiner, 1995). When we drop something heavy on our toes, we tend to cry 'auts' in Finnish, with the emphasis on the phoneme 'ts'. When the pain continues, and we can continue, we utter the phoneme 'au'.

In our language group, we compared the phoneme for amazement in Finnish, Norwegian, and German. We noticed that, in all these languages, the expression is the phoneme 'o'. We also took a word 'puu' (tree) and thought what type of tree comes first to our mind. A German tree was completely different from ours, even though we concentrated on the word sounds. If 'tree' is a different word in German and Finnish, our concept of tree is also different when concentrating on what the phonemes of the word describe. When I mentioned the word 'puu' ('tree') the group thought of a tree standing tall and narrow. For me, the word 'Baum' means a wide-topped leafy tree with a heavy trunk, whereas the word 'tree' brings to my mind an image of a lighter leafy tree than the word 'Baum' does.

Consonants express what happens, whereas vowels tell more our relationship to the surrounding world. When we feel pain, emotion is our attitude to what has happened. In order to understand a human being better, Steiner (1995) says we can think of how the voice is connected to what we want to say about what is inside us. Examining language, we can discover what a human being is and how language influences the way we think and perceive the world.

Earlier, the connection between the voice and phenomena was clear, but unconscious. In abstract thinking, it is impossible to find the connection; we no longer know the qualities of phonemes. This is important in order to be able to communicate with the world inside us (Steiner, 1995).

The Transforming Powers of Language in Relation to Spiritual Life (Lecture Three): We can think that there was a common parent language from which other languages derived. Roughly speaking, languages developed when people travelled from one place to another. Languages became different
and, later, different languages made new connections and influenced each other. In some other place, a language group was left isolated and language developed within the group (Steiner, 1995).

The period when sounds corresponded to meaning, and the connection between consonants and vowels was different, was the time when lingual structures were primitive. The migration of people influenced the development of languages differently, and the direction in which they developed was dependent on what type of region people settled. It was determined by whether people lived on mountains or plains and by what type of culture developed. Furthermore, the larynx and other speech-producing organs adapted to the environment and seemed to produce words and sounds according to the geographical region (Steiner, 1995).

It seems natural that the region and source of livelihood define what type of vocabulary the community creates. It limits and develops different types of vocabulary, whether people be farmers or traders. What type of word describes 'tree' is also dependent on what types of trees grow in the area. The word 'puu' would not have the phoneme 'u' if the image of tree had not been a tall forest of spruces. In a leafy, forest zone, there probably would not, as I feel it, be the phoneme 'u' in the word meaning 'tree'.

There are three steps in language development according to Steiner (1995):

- Humans' relation to the environment was created through consonants. The environment impacted on what types of consonants there were and how many of them were taken into language. Consonants and environment had to communicate and adapt themselves to each other. Stabilisation was the first developmental step. People had to be one with the world, because the source of livelihood was Nature. Modern work where seasons affected the quality of work did not exist. The connection happened through language.
- After adaptation, people created an inner relation to the world. People began to develop folk souls¹, a typical way for folk to experience the world internally. Because of the folk soul and the characteristic features and emotion, it is hard to translate from one language to another. We can try to translate an idea, but the emotion cannot be translated. In the third step, language

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¹ In brief, folk soul means that, because different regions on the surface of the earth have been formed differently, similarly, people in different areas are likewise different. Characteristics of a folk are not entirely dependent on the quality of people, but also on what the spirit of that area is like. Naturally, also, what people do influences the folk soul.
is already far from human experience. It has become abstract.

When the shaping and development of language becomes free from experiencing the environment, and people lose their connection to nature, the development of language becomes an independent process. Also, human soul life separates from experiencing nature. These steps came true in Middle and Northern Europe (Steiner, 1995). Language became abstract, at the latest, when Christianity spread through Europe and brought new terminology and vocabulary to people who were unaware of this religion. Whatever is brought to language outside the folk soul, people cannot create a similar relationship to it as to things they experience directly by themselves. It is easier to tell difficult things in another language, for example.

Nowadays, people are unable to find the connection between words and objects, as was the situation during the first step. We cannot find the connection even when we end up in a new situation and cannot repeat and find words that would correspond to our experience. Only exclamations are traces of what has been more widely used in our language corresponding to our experience. Exclamations express directly and without thinking how an incident or emotion feels (Steiner, 1995). 'Auts!' ('Ouch' in English) expresses that something has dropped on our feet and 'Huh!' ('Phew' in English) tells the task has been hard. We know that the connection between words and world exists, but because of the step towards abstract language, we are not able to find it.

Abstract use of language presupposes also a different type of inner activation of thought. When we hear a word in a foreign language, or think that we hear a word in our own language but are not certain of it, we must think of a word as an idea and see this idea in our mind. People use their ability for abstract thinking, and this thinking has been developed especially among those who have taken more foreign influence into their own language (Steiner, 1995).

History of Language in its Relation to the Folk Souls (Lecture Four): In ancient times, people's emotions could have been derived from the voice, as mentioned earlier. Consonants, together with vowels, expressed the environment and the connection people had to it, so that they had a connection to environment and emotions. When people stopped experiencing the connection
between sounds and the object, something else happened, too. People began to produce speech without paying attention to sounds and the process became less conscious. Thus, speech was pushed to the unconscious level, simultaneously with another consciousness trying to reach the thought, the idea of message. In other words, by letting phonemic associations be forgotten, people raised their consciousness to the level of inner images and perception where there no longer was any connection to sounds and meaning. Nowadays, people have to find the meaning of words in a different way. Earlier, the connection was found in sounds, whereas now it can be found in words. People remember meanings of new words but no longer feel them inside. They do not have a similar inner connection to the world as sounds used to have. (Steiner, 1995)

However, some aspects of the connection between words and sounds remained. For each situation, there is not a single word that could describe it. In that case, we can use two words with alliteration. This means that some aspect in that phoneme describes better what happened than the word itself (Steiner, 1995). In Finnish, there are examples, such as 'puti puhdas' and 'ypö yksin' (in English: ”dead as a doornail” or ”busy as a bee”). In order to understand language and its development, we should observe what type of connection language has to the folk soul and to how people experience different words (Steiner, 1995). Steiner (1995) gives more examples like these, clarifying the etymologies of different words. More important than giving separate examples is to emphasise the thought that folk have a shared consciousness of the meanings of words and the qualities of sounds, such as how a sound is used to express fright or amazement.

Language and the Sense for Reality or its Lack (Lecture Five): According to Steiner (1995), people's connection to words is not the same as it used to be. When words earlier created a feeling in humans, they nowadays tend to leave humans cold; they purely indicate the idea of an object. In Finnish, we can take the word 'kylmä' ('cold') as an example. When we say that a person is cold, we mean that the person is emotionless or indifferent towards something or someone. The word is used metaphorically. In olden days, the word was connected to concrete coldness, feeling cold. Nowadays, the meaning of the word is abstract, denoting directly emotional coldness.

Metaphorical expressions are remains of the period when language was experienced differently (Steiner, 1995). An example of metaphorical use in Finnish is the phrase 'käden ojentaminen' or 'käden antaminen' (‘giving a hand' meaning 'help') When we give someone a hand, we help someone to lift a heavy object or open the door for a person whose hands are full. The meaning is not literally 'giving a hand' but 'helping'.

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In the beginning of language development, the forms of language take people far from abstract language use. The metaphorical use of language indicates that people were living closely connected to different aspects of life. When this connection broke, the sense of reality among people disappeared and was replaced by abstraction. An example of language becoming abstract is dropping grammatical cases. Of the original eight cases in German, there are four left, and in English, only two. With cases, experiencing the world was more diverse; it was possible to experience what is no longer possible, with only a few cases remaining. (Steiner, 1995).

In Finnish, there are still 15 cases left, provided we include the accusative. At this stage, I will not start discussing how this influences thinking and how the thinking of speakers of Germanic languages differs from that of Finno-Ugric speakers. However, on the basis of thoughts by Steiner (1995), it feels clear that the number of cases influences the experience of the environment and of abstract thinking.

The Inner Path of the Genius of Language (Lecture Six): Vowels can express our inner emotions and our will to do something. Consonants represent gestures and forms perceived around us. According to this definition, language is an audible storage of gestures not carried out by the limbs, but by organs of speech. This means that all consonants can be transformed into gestures (Steiner, 1995).

When there is a clear connection between sounds and meaning, the human way of thinking in the past was different than the current method. People did not consider themselves as subjects, but rather, as objects of the world. In language development, this means that at first, language consisted primarily of consonants that can be perceived among the languages of primitive peoples. The next step is the forming of vowels and experiencing the environment. However, the development does not stop here, but continues from inner to outer, which means from development of vowels to that of consonants and thus, the development continues. People create words for new things and use metaphors when they see the world from outside. When the metaphorical meaning is forgotten, people are again inside themselves and abstract concepts have taken their place (Steiner, 1995).

It is quite easy to reach the powers of forming vowels and consonants through verbs, for example, where the primary significance lies on vowels. In a verb, the vowels relate to people's inner connection to action more than do consonants. Inner connection can be seen in grammatical tenses,
for example, where the passage of time is indicated by changing vowels (Steiner, 1995).

Different languages have different relationships to thinking and will. Nowadays, the difference is clearer than earlier, when thinking and will were connected to each other. According to Steiner (1995) the will seems to be more powerful in the languages that have free word order. Thinking is connected to normative language, where one has to consider the order of the words in order to be understood. It is important to perceive the changes in people when they speak and conjugate verbs, as well as decline nouns in cases. When the form of a word or sentence structure moves away from normativity, language becomes livelier, as does the person who uses the language.

In *The Art of Teaching* (Steiner, 1996), it is said that speech is always related to emotion. As mentioned, the expression of amazement using the phoneme 'o' also means the same in situations where we are unable to have any type of feeling. However, emotion can be extremely unconscious as in the word 'pallo' ('ball' in English). We can unconsciously feel amazement when seeing a rolling object that can be seen in the phoneme 'o'. Similar analogies can be found in language with the phonemes 'u', 'a', 'e' and 'i'. Fear, admiration, resistance, and the feeling of consensus can be heard in vowels. Original relationships between phonemes and meanings in a language can be examined using original words that are not borrowed from other languages but have been in our language as long as we can remember. If we think about phonemes and meanings in borrowed words in modern language, we are not able to reach any emotion, and because of abstraction, it cannot be found in the word, either.

According to Steiner (1996), feeling is a spiritual event that is based on experiencing sympathy. Sympathy from the inside always meets antipathy from the outside. According to Steiner (1996), all vowels express the movements of the inner human soul and they come up sympathetically towards different things. When people are afraid, they feel sympathetic towards the object of their fear; otherwise, there would not be any sense of fear. Consonants are needed for humans to have another type of relationship to the world than emotional. Consonants distance people from the world, thus they relate to antipathy. When consonants are attached to vowels, sympathy is attached to antipathy. The metaphorical aspect is that vowels are musical elements and consonants, picturesque elements. In speech, these elements unite. Taking into account these aspects when examining words, we can free ourselves from abstraction. In Steiner's time, this type of linguistics supporting pedagogy in science did not exist. (In the following chapter, I will discuss different linguistic theories in the middle of the 20th Century and later on.)
In education, being aware of this type of feeling that belongs to language is important because we educate a living person, not a mechanical device. Teaching purely abstract information does not support the idea of holistic education, which means teaching for humans’ sake, not purely because of society’s need for it. As consonants are attached to vowels, also should abstraction be attached to emotion and work together. The educator should also be linguistically aware of how to support the emotional life of the young, not purely the capability for abstract thinking (Steiner, 1996).

Learning grammar is essentially related to human growth. According to Steiner (1996), when people learn grammar, they bring speech from the level of unconsciousness to that of consciousness. If we do not think about how we pronounce words nor of the analogy between phonemes and meaning, in grammar, we can become conscious of our language. Furthermore, in learning nouns, we learn to separate ourselves from the word and with adjectives, we join ourselves to the world. This is because nouns describe objects that are spatially bound. By learning nouns, humans learn to be one in the group but separate from the others. Adjectives describe a chair or a table in order to create a relationship to the object. The observation comes from people themselves and they give those characteristics to the object. By listening and learning verbs, a person becomes connected to another person and, in a way, does what that person does. With verbs, people enter the world as active actors.

We can also attach to this the syntactic idea of what sentences without a subject bring to the idea of entering the world. Steiner (1996) thinks that, through these sentences, people are not separated from the world. In the phrase ‘Sataa’ (‘It's raining’), a human participates in the world. There is no noun as subject in the Finnish language that would separate a human from this action.

When it is raining, Steiner (1996) explains, people get wet outside just like trees and buildings. Humans purely give the phenomenon a name: It is raining. There is no reason to express, through the subject, what is raining; the action itself is meaningful. In other words, already in speech and language study, we can take into account the interaction between human and environment.

The rules of written language limit much of what is living in articulated speech. A part of what was lively in language as analogy of phonemes and meaning disappears amidst spelling rules. Rules are not useless and they should be learned in order
to communicate successfully. Thus, our task in the world is not to develop our individuality (and allow all forms of written language), but to hone our social skills and concentrate on our emotions towards other people. A part of our individuality wears off in interaction with others. Spelling rules are a good example of this. According to Steiner (1996), we should remember this so that spelling rules are not just rules for rules’ sake, but rather, rules for making successful communication possible.

The rule for language teaching is to keep teaching as lively as possible. This means discussing grammar and not writing down examples, but only the rules. Writing examples supports forgetting, whereas discussion and the remember ing of rules brings them to life and encourages students to come up with examples of their own. Also, in lessons, the examples should come from the students; ready examples kill activity in the class (Steiner, 1996).

Several articles in the collection *Language: Symptom and Servant of Culture* (The Golden Blade, 2005) deal with the meaning of language. From the perspective of further information, it is useful to emphasise only those ideas that have not already been mentioned in the previous two sources by Rudolf Steiner. Most of the writers have used thoughts by Steiner but also cited other writers.

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| The article *Crisis of cognition as a language crisis on the 100th anniversary of Hugo von Hofmannsthal’s Chandos Letter* (Sam, 2004) tells, in brief, the connection that language, thinking and speech have to each other and how they influence each other. Sam (2004) bases his thoughts on the writings of Hugo von Hofmannsthal and Rudolf Steiner, who believe that words have come between humans and the world. The rules and norms of language prevent people from seeing the world as it is. They even say that there are no thoughts in the world, even though people speak with words.

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| The article ‘O, for a Muse of Fire’ *The Imaginative Language of W.B. Yeats* (Byrne, 2004) argues that even though language is said to be a mediator of knowledge, it actually builds a barrier between knowing and direct experience. With the help of language, people can create images of the object that is being thought. According to Byrne (2004), a thought has an object in this world and a thought that is being created with the help of language is not created by people themselves, but by the object, because, without seeing or hearing the object, people would not think about it, or at least,
would not express it linguistically. In other words, Byrne (2004) presents the same idea as Steiner (1995, 1996) when he talks about the analogy between phonemes and meaning.

The article *Emily Dickinson and the Living Word* (Schmandt, 2004) discusses what words are. According to the article, examining word roots is practising metaphorical thinking, because each word derives from gestures and images people have made and seen. The origin of words derives from a similar experience to that of a poet. Poems create a surrounding reality and images with the help of words. Etymology brings forward these images and we become aware of the analogy between phonemes and meaning (Steiner, 1995, 1996). The article argues that this is more than just a still life of the situation. It is an image of the quality of the change (Schmandt, 2004). It seems natural to believe this, because we do not perceive the world photographically scene by scene through our senses, but rather as a continuing feeling, such as through touch or smell.

The essence of language in teaching is presented in the article *An Improvisation on the Theme of Educational Intuition* (Rawson, 2004). Learning language teaches a person to grow and be united with the environment and to create a connection to other people. Learning a foreign language, we should find at least one person to communicate with, because language is being learned for interaction. By training, we also learn to understand people around us as an artisan learns to make more beautiful and skilful artefacts. Thus, language is connected to the ability to understand the world and also to the ability to understand how language influences our way of thinking about the world.

Not only did Steiner think about what language is, but he also spoke of a subject that might have interested Immanuel Kant as well: how is language possible? A view by Steiner (1979) is presented in his lecture series *Kansansieltujen tehtävä ja germaanispohjoismainen mytologia* (The Mission of Folk-Souls in Connection with Germanic Scandinavian Mythology, original work: *Die Mission einzelner Volksseelen im Zusammenhang mit der germanisch-nordischer Mythologie*). In the presentation “Etheric Aura and Language of Folks” discusses what we all can observe. Different parts of the world are different and, due to these differences, people have different qualities as well. According to Steiner, this is a materialistic view on how climate, vegetation and waterways influence the differentiation of peoples.

According to Steiner (1979), the reason for the difference is an etheric aura, a spiritual formation that rises in a certain part of our earth. The auras of different areas change due to migrations, so it is
not entirely dependent on topography, but people can influence it. Folk spirits have been formed by the influence of the etheric aura and it can be seen in folk temperaments and their characteristic features. It is likely that both the etheric aura and folk influence the qualities of each other and both are in constant change due to changing topography and migration.

In order for language to exist, it must have been possible for a brain structure to be formed to make speech possible. Because Steiner (1979) believes that, in addition to the visible world, there is a spiritual one, it is natural for him to present the thought that the spiritual world has made it possible to form the brain so that a person can say 'I'. The spiritual world also works in a human on a physical level, having a connection to the elements and a human, making it possible for a human to speak.

Other types of spirits that influence the ability to speak also influence how each era has a manner of thinking. A human does not develop from one event to another and learning about what has been done, but also through the spirits. Together, all spiritual creatures influence people, and this is why thought and language interact with each other. Language is the product of the folk spirit, and language appears in the folk soul; it "melted" each thought and formed it so that language became possible for the first time when Sanskrit was developed (Steiner, 1979). After this, there was the analogy of phonemes and meaning that is slowly disappearing because of increasing abstraction.

Above, I have presented the view of language in anthroposophy and Steiner pedagogy with comments and views of my own (or rather, my experiences).

I do not know yet how differences in thinking appear and how language could influence human behaviour in different circumstances. Before developing ideas of teaching, it is useful to examine what linguistics and philosophy has to say about what language is.
3.2. Linguistic views on language

In his collection of essays *Language and Mind* (2006), Professor Noam Chomsky (Linguistics at Massachusetts Institute of Technology) offers a completely different picture on language than that of Steiner. In the first essay, "Linguistic contributions to the study of mind: past", Chomsky presents a historical review of past phases of linguistic research. As a result, he comes to the idea that, in order to understand language use or learning, one should take into account the phases of language development of children and examine their so-called linguistic competence. One should also consider how language has been seen to influence people in history and what qualities language has been thought to have. It is notable that language constantly creates something new. Even though words have been used for ages, new language structures take place all the time, the process being innovative and, in a way, free of control. Speech is not considered right or wrong as written language is, but it functions as a means of self-expression, as a tool for bringing out thoughts.

According to Chomsky (2006), the most likely way to find out what language is, is to describe language and the mental processes related to language use as accurately as possible. This way, we can discover the principles according to which language is formed and functions in our brain. He criticizes the thoughts of the 19th Century around each language having a certain relationship between sound and meaning. This would mean that language has surface and deep structures. It is important to describe the structure of language because it is an essential part of language use and how people express themselves. Structuralism, influential in the first part of the 20th century, supports the thought by Chomsky (2006) about the importance of structure when defining language. The problem has been, however, how to link language to thinking. There has not been a way to examine the cooperation between language and brain and how language may influence the behaviour of a child. This is the very same thing that Steiner (1995) discusses when describing how children’s limbic movements change into movements of speech organs.

In his essay “Linguistic contributions to the study of mind: present” (2006), Chomsky discusses later linguistic research and introduces the thought that language is so difficult to examine because of it being too obvious. People have difficulties seeing phenomena that belong to their everyday life. We can observe our language use, but are perhaps not able to see deeply enough; we need a more powerful lens to see the essence of language behind an everyday phenomenon. Chomsky (2006) is very close to Wittgenstein (1953) with his ideas. Wittgenstein (1953) argues that the
simplest phenomena are hidden from us because they are so obvious that we are not able to perceive them. According to these philosophers, in order to be able to find out something about language, we should be conscious of the subject and sensitive to hearing and seeing changes in language without forgetting the person using the language.

Wittgenstein, however, discusses the equivalence of words and meaning and that language cannot be researched through the plain structure (Määttänen, 1997). For Wittgenstein (1982), the idea is not equivalence between sounds and meaning but between words and meaning. The meaning of words is agreements; they do not express their object in the sense which Steiner (1995) argues. According to Wittgenstein, the world is constructed of qualities, particulars and the association between them. The association can be seen in the context in which words are used. Wittgenstein argues that it is absurd to create sentences that do not correspond to the logical structure of the world (Määttänen, 1997). According to this, the way we experience the world can be seen in language. Connecting words to sentences among people tells about the entity they see in front of their eyes and, in order to be understood, there is no reason to leave logic and invent arbitrary words that do not mean anything and are difficult to interpret.

The meaning of words is agreed upon when using language. According to Wittgenstein, the meaning of words is in their use. It is not a sequence of sounds as Steiner (1995) argues, but a simple decided form of a word in a certain context (Määttänen, 1997). Chomsky's (2006) view on language concentrates more on how language use is possible. For Wittgenstein, the emphasis is on language and what it is (Määttänen, 1997). At the end of the essay, Chomsky (2006) argues that the speaker and listener's knowledge of language and language use makes it possible to discuss different aspects of the world.

In the third essay, “Linguistic contributions to the study of mind: future”, Chomsky (2006) finally states the question “What is language?” According to him, it is a mistake to consider language to be informative, always conscious and relying on facts. With language, we can present facts or mislead the listener, clarify thoughts, show a level of knowledge or just play with it. But if we want to understand language, we should ask what it is and what it is used for. Chomsky (2006) states, however, that it is useless to start researching language historically, that is, to examine how
language has developed to what it is now, because language is fully connected to the mental ability to process language. To reveal this mental ability, or linguistic competence, we should examine the structure of language, because this knowledge of language contributes, in the background, to all intellectual activity.

Without mentioning the reference, Chomsky (2006) describes thoughts by Wilhelm von Humboldt. Although von Humboldt sees different languages as showing the world differently, the thought behind this is the universal system on which language is built. Due to this universal structure, people cannot actually learn a language, but it develops in favourable circumstances because of this arrangement. We cannot teach children a first language, but offer them circumstances so that it can be developed, because children have linguistic competence before they start using it. Chomsky (2006) states the thought as follows:

Insofar as we have tentative first approximation to a generative grammar for some language, we can for the first time formulate in a useful way the problem of origin of knowledge. In other words, we can ask the question, what initial structure must be attributed to the mind that enables it to construct such a grammar from the data of sense? (p. 69)

Language knowledge is, for Chomsky (2006), knowledge of grammar and people have it ready in some form. With the help of this knowledge, children learn their first language. However, it is not clear how language knowledge and brain structure make language possible.

In the essay “Form and meaning in natural languages”, Chomsky (2006) writes that people learn to understand a new expression even though they have not heard it earlier in their own language and they are able to create new expressions when they are aware of the language system. Thus, the regular use of language is creative. We cannot, however, understand what makes creative language use possible for expressing our thoughts and emotions. Teachers should be aware of this, because many modern issues tend to weaken students' ability to think and to work creatively thanks to its formality. Chomsky (2006) expresses his opinion on modern educational trends, where computers and networks are an essential part of teaching: In education, there is constant pressure to increase the use of technology in schools and to base lesson plans on this. Educational goals are far from those of technology use; they are completely different. Technology should be an instrument, not a goal, even though it might possibly help deliver the subject matter, evaluate students and render the teaching more efficient. The little we know about human intelligence should be taken into account.
in order to offer students as few prepared patterns as possible. Presenting similar cases as technology impedes creative skills that are needed in language use.

*Chomsky's (2006) thoughts make this thesis writer sigh with relief and think that, even if one examines the structure of language and thinks it unnecessary to take a historical view of it, one does not have to consider people as users of structure, but rather as creative individuals who need art. My view is that imagination belongs to creativity, to the ability to empathize and to think beyond the present. My subject, Finnish language and literature, tries to develop this aspect. In order for students to be individuals able to make a difference, creativity and imagination are important skills. People are supposed to see the end result in order to be able to change things. The excessive formality of technology may suffocate creativity and thus, the young who were meant to make changes are not able to take up the challenge. Making a difference becomes secondary to survival.*

Chomsky (2006) also introduces his view on the correspondence in sound and meaning. Unlike Steiner (1995), Chomsky considers this relation to be (generative) grammar, not people's experience on the inner world and connecting the world:

> The system of rules that specifies the sound - meaning relation for a given language can be called the "grammar" - or, to use a more technical term, the “generative grammar” of this language. To say that a grammar “generates” a certain set of structures is simply to say that it specifies this set in a precise way. In this sense, we may say that the grammar of language generates an infinite set of “structural descriptions,” each structural description being an abstract object of some sort that determines a particular sound, a particular meaning, and whatever formal properties and configurations serve to mediate the relation between sound and meaning. (p. 91)

We cannot ignore that, even if the structure determines how to present the issue, people can read certain things between the lines (Chomsky, 2006). What is expressed with language from a structural point of view can be completely different from what someone means to express. In these cases, we cannot discuss the correspondence in sound and meaning in Steiner’s sense (1995).

In his essay *Linguistics and philosophy*, Chomsky (2006) argues that linguistic competence is knowledge of language on a grammatical level; how words are formed and in which order they are allowed to be set together. My view is that the knowledge of language might include the idea of
'what language is'. Another question is how conscious people are of this feature or whether they can describe it. Steiner (1995) mentions that Goethe was very sensitive to the correspondence in sound and meaning as described in the previous chapter, for example. Nowadays, this type of consciousness would be highly unusual, but in (folk) poetry, there might be traces of the knowledge of language left. In Finnish, the first novel writer and poet, Aleksis Kivi (1834-1872), can be presumed to have possessed traces of such knowledge.

The connection of language to the visible world has been researched by Benjamin Whorf (1956). In his collection of selected writings *Language, Thought and Reality - Selected Writings of Benjamin Lee Whorf*, he writes about views that come close to views by Steiner (1995, 1996). In the last essay of the collection, “*Language, Mind and Reality*”, he states that every language combines certain views on the world and resists others. In his writings, Whorf (1956) tries to find those components of a language that make people see the world differently, even if the circumstances are the same. According to him, language guides people's thinking and behaviour and that, behind this, is the world of higher dimensions that we are not able to see and that is waiting to be explored by all fields of science in order to unite thinking and behaviour. This, along with the idea that we can see the world of higher dimensions in language and not only the “skin” of the physical world, is new in linguistics. Otherwise, we can describe language with earthly terms that have been used for a long time.

Whorf (1956) argues that language is a physical phenomenon. It consists of acoustics, physical movements of the speech organs in the larynx, and the movements necessary for sound forming. Sounds join into morphemes and words, and eventually, into word order and stories. The inner connection between nature and language has been recognized, excluding modern times. The past civilizations knew it for longer than the Western civilizations have existed. Language has also had a different function than it has now. Whorf (1956) gives an example of a person who has not been able to adopt a scientific view of the universe. In the case of that person, language is more a means of communication than something that would work as a creating force for a world view. The person would not possess scientific knowledge of the globe being round or even of blood circulation; the world would appear only through personal experience. The heart would not be seen as a blood pump, but a place
where love, friendship and thoughts are held and felt. People were more aware of their experiences as Heidegger (2001) would perhaps have expressed the issue.

Language has a connection to thinking, even though, according to Whorf (1956), people do not recognize it. The connection can be observed by comparing two languages. Each language is an independent system different from the other; it influences the way we speak, how we see nature and relationships between phenomena, and how we create causal relations and build our consciousness of the world. The human mind, choosing words for different purposes, is connected to the world of higher dimensions, where the essence of language lies. The higher mind, that is language, sticks to its essence without being able to influence how it is perceived in human consciousness.

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<td>?</td>
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When we start examining language, we find out, as Steiner (1995, 1996) stated, that diversity of language is what makes it possible to think complex thoughts. Steiner's (1995) example was the number of grammatical cases and their influence on more complicated expression. Whorf (1956) gives an example from the language of Algonkia that has four forms of the third person singular. Vowels and consonants have characters of their own and, according to this, they are joined together, forming words. Whorf (1956) does not discuss the correspondence in sound and meaning, but explains that sounds belong to different classes, such as dark-warm-soft or bright-cold-sharp. Also, in Finnish, the terms hard and soft consonants are used to make a distinction between sounds where sound stops (b, d, k, p, t) and those where it continues (f, h, l, m, n, r, s, v). In linguistics, sounds are divided more specifically according to the place of articulation; more generally, they can, however, be divided into hard and soft sounds.

When Whorf (1956) examined language, science was not able to prove the connection to higher dimensions of the world because it relied on limited logic. People were not able to see that the
visible part of language is only the surface for greater phenomena and that the visible part was only one of the many aspects of the phenomenon.

Whorf (1956) was interested in the same question as I about how different languages lead us to think. In his writing, *A Linguistic Consideration of Thinking in Primitive Communities*, Whorf (1956) begins by considering the language of primitive peoples and whether they have similar or different ways of seeing the world to what we have. He uses the Jungian method of thinking as a tool. Jung believes that thinking consists of four missions: sensation, feeling, thinking and intuition. According to Whorf (1956), thinking belongs to linguistics, but feeling, on the border, because we can express feelings and language itself contains feeling. Sensation and intuition do not belong to language at all. (It needs further consideration whether silent thinking belongs to language.)

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<td>One could be the distinction between masculine and feminine words. For some reason, there are different words for women and men. The motor process of making this difference in English is adding <em>s</em> to the beginning of the pronoun <em>he</em>. There is no reason why this connection cannot be made without this process (Whorf, 1956). In Finnish, there is only one pronoun for <em>s/he</em> (<em>hän</em>) that can refer to both men and women. However, in names, the gender distinction is present.</td>
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<td>Exclamations</td>
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<td>Words</td>
<td>Whorf (1956) especially examined the Hopi language that does not have any gender. He argues that, in the languages of primitive peoples with more complex syntactic structures, thinking is also more diverse. The human mind works on a higher level than in languages that can be called civilized because they have a written form of the language. A more detailed analysis of the Hopi language will follow later.</td>
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Human evolution is, according to Whorf (1956), the development of human language, because language brings habits and influences behaviour. Science has not reached, and will never reach, the genesis of human language (Whorf, 1956). What we can research is the result of this evolution.

Whorf (1956) argues that describing language and defining words with grammatical categories, such as nouns, verbs, passive tense, should be avoided. In *Grammatical Categories*, he introduces
different types of terminology. With this terminology, we can discuss grammatical aspects concerning words in different lexical categories. Plurality can be seen in both nouns and verbs; this we can call 'overt category'. It contains prefixes, suffixes and inflection. Another point is when we want to change word order into the passive voice. This we can call 'covert category', and it contains word order and pronoun references, for example. Terminology that defines phenomena too specifically restricts holistic observations of this particular phenomenon.

In *The Relation of Habitual Thought and Behavior to Language*, Whorf (1956) states that naming a phenomenon influences the way we behave under the circumstances. If we use different terms when speaking of fire, we tend to behave according to the term: 'sea of flames' makes us behave differently than 'an apartment fire'. In addition to vocabulary, tone, verb forms and sentence structure influence interpretation. Whorf (1956) gives an example in his text for how time, space, material and contents are understood in Hopi and Western languages and how they influence thinking. As an example, we can mention some differences in thinking in these languages.

For example, in Western languages, numbers are expressions that can refer to both concrete (10 people) and abstract (10 days) phenomena. In the Hopi language, people do not use numbers in an abstract sense. A similar situation should be paraphrased by using the expression: “the 10th day is later than the 9th day”. (Whorf, 1956)

When speaking of an amount of something in Western languages, we can use expressions such as ten pencils, for countable things, but with non-countable things, we need measurement, such as a cup of tea. In Hopi, the word 'water', for example, means always a certain amount of water. If they need to describe an unlimited amount, they use a different word than a noun. (Whorf 1956)

When referring to time in Western languages, we can say summer, winter, morning, or evening, to name just a few. Words, as nouns, can function as subject or object in sentences. In Hopi, the expression would be the adverbial form: in summer, in morning, and so on. Words are not used as nouns, and they do not have morphemes expressing the adverb, as in the English expression, 'in the morning'. (Whorf, 1956)

According to Whorf (1956), Hopi speakers seem to emphasize preparation before action. In language, this can be seen as insistent repetition as he states:
Hopi “preparing” activities again show a result of their linguistic thought background in an emphasis on persistence and constant insistent repetition. A sense of the cumulative value of innumerable small momenta is dulled by an objectified, spatialized view of time like ours, enhanced by a way of thinking close to the subjective awareness of duration, of the ceaseless “latering” of events. To us, for whom time is a motion or a space, unvarying repetition seems to scatter its force along a row of units of that space, and be wasted. To the Hopi, for whom time is not a motion but a “getting later” of everything that has ever been done, unvarying repetition is not wasted but accumulated. It is storing up an invisible change that holds over into later events. (p. 153)

The differences between gestures can also be seen in Western and Hopi languages. In Western languages, gestures are used more when talking about abstract things. Gestures are not needed when talking about a doorknob, but it is useful when talking about thoughts, time or something else we cannot touch. Gestures seem to express more clearly what is said in words. In Hopi, there are very few gestures and one reason for this might be the example of expressing amount, where the mass is limited. They do not have to explain with their hands what is already clear. (Whorf, 1956)

Which came first, language forms or cultural norms? Whorf (1956) says that both influence each other, similarly as Steiner (1995) states when he writes that folk influence language as well as folk soul. Language represents the collective mind but changes slowly because of human inventions and development. It seems that, when it comes to the motive of thinking and shaping, the manner of speaking is more important than vocabulary, even though structural features are visible in expressions. Influence is mutual, the way to speak consists of structures, but they become evident in fixed expressions. (Whorf 1956)

In *Linguistics as an Exact Science*, language is a phenomenon of which speakers are unaware when using it, unless they pay attention speech in specific contexts. According to Whorf (1956), science has developed in countries where the consciousness of grammar is strong. We should understand that knowing grammar has not developed science, but only given colour to the comparison between language and scientific development. This allows language to divide natural phenomena differently and into different categories, each in their own way. This division brings each language different vocabulary for speakers to use when telling about observations. It has to be that, using different languages, the world is perceived differently. (Whorf, 1956) More specific research is needed in
order to understand how Finnish makes my students and I think “in a Finnish way”. Whorf (1956) concentrated on the Hopi language and compared it with Western languages. An example of this type of research that is based on theories by Whorf can be found in an article in *Nykysuomen rakenne ja kehitys* 1 (Hakulinen & Leino, 1983).

In the article *Ajaako suomen kieli ajettelemaan suomalaisesti? [Does Finnish language lead a person to think in a Finnish way]*, Leino (1983) states that, if we take a narrow interpretation of Whorf’s theory, it would mean that language determines human thinking. However, there is reason to presume that language purely leads and influences thinking. Similarly, the writer states that human perception is determined by physical qualities as well. When thinking about time, year and day are determined mostly by culture and business. The categories of year and day exist so that language purely gives them names. Similarly, different phenomena are seen differently in different cultures and this is why, in language, there are only those words that have reference in that particular culture (Leino, 1983).

Leino (1983) mentions grammatical cases in Finnish, and says that they are a characteristic feature that makes Finno-Ugric different from Indo-European languages. The use of grammatical cases in Finno-Ugric languages emphasizes the consequences of an event, whereas Indo-European languages emphasize the event itself. Leino (1983) argues that this does not necessarily mean that there is a connection between thinking and the way we shape the world. It is just that people express the same thing differently in different languages. In either case, I think the dissimilarity of languages and the diversity of expression show that the world is shaped differently.

Boas and Sapir have influenced some essential parts of Whorf's research. In *Language diversity and thought. A reformulation of the linguistic relativity hypothesis* (Lucy, 1999), it is said that Boas created three arguments to take into account when thinking about language as a shaper of thoughts. First, language leads experience, especially in vocabulary. Secondly, due to the former argument, different languages create different experiences in people. Thirdly, we can claim that language is unconscious in its use because it is almost entirely automatic. According to Boas, language leads thinking, but is not determined by it, and language also influences culture through human experience (Lucy, 1999).

Whorf's teacher, Sapir, thinks that language and thinking are connected in that thinking is expressed with the help of language. However, he seemed to ignore the human ability to think without words.
and to experience without language. According to him, culture influences language, not *vice versa* and the influence can be seen in vocabulary, not in morphology or phonetics (Lucy, 1999).

Whorf stated that people think language is firstly, a means of communication and its form is secondary. He also thought that people consider language as reflecting a ready-formed reality and a set of beliefs, not influencing how the world is shaped or how thoughts are formed (Lucy, 1999). After reading essays by high school students, I can understand Whorf's thinking. In Chapter 5, I will present students’ thoughts on language. My presumption is that, in their essays, there are no thoughts of language as shaper of thoughts, but rather, views on language as the means of communication and as a useful tool for survival. People do not consider these aspects because they are unconscious and automatic; people use language because they can and that is it. We need consciousness so that language can be seen as the motive for world shaping (Lucy, 1999).

In his study, Whorf explains how vocabulary influences the behaviour of an individual and how grammatical structures influence cultural habits and behaviour (Lucy, 1999). I would need a more specific view on Whorf's works in order to be able to go into more detail on how these are reasoned. However, it is important to know how the linguistic world thinks. When Chomsky begins with structure, Whorf goes straight to entity and the context of the language. Chomsky thinks that all people have a common knowledge of language, but Whorf is closer to Steiner when he thinks that language influences what we and our culture are like. Whorf and Chomsky do not use the term 'folk soul', even though Whorf mentions a higher dimension existing in language or language being equivalent to it, but still being a mystery for traditional science.

Philosophy has taken a step in a direction other than linguistics. The method of observation is not structured, based on vocabulary, morphology and phonetics, but takes into account more general features, such as context and human experience. We can define the borderline between philosophy and linguistics, even though the topics are linked. In the next chapter, I will start with Wittgenstein because of his interest in linguistic issues. After that, I will continue with Gadamer, Heidegger, and Vygotsky.
3.3. Philosophical views on language

In Kieli ja mieli - Katsauksia kielifilosofiaan ja merkityksen teoriaan
[Language and mind – review of language philosophy and theory of meaning] (1982), Hintikka summarizes Wittgenstein's view on how linguistic signs represent reality. The topic is related to naming and Wittgenstein's idea is that things can be named but they cannot be expressed, that is, how things are instead of what things are. This suggests that Wittgenstein considers language as a system of agreements. Language users have formed a conventional way to speak about an issue by referring to it with a specific term. Words and objects are related because we can point to objects and give them names.

Hintikka (1982) states that Wittgenstein thought that it would be impossible to go outside the borders of language. This suggests that the borders of language are the borders of our world. This would mean that languages have a vocabulary for all possible phenomena and when humans meet a new phenomenon, it is possible to use that vocabulary, if we are aware of all the words in our language. In Wittgenstein's case, it is not about correspondence in sound and meaning, but that language is a universal means of communication. The connection that language has to reality is not mentioned further. We learn words by experiencing phenomena, not by checking the dictionary. This would indicate that misinterpretations are caused by people experiencing similar situations differently, so that they have not reached a mutual understanding of phenomena.

I will return to the linguistic thoughts of Wittgenstein because his theory on language games has influenced Gadamer's (1900 - 2002) thinking. In his essay collection Philosophical Hermeneutics, Gadamer (2004) discusses the problem between language and understanding. I will introduce his views on language essay by essay, as I do with Steiner, Chomsky and Whorf. In autumn, 2007, I wrote an article that was based on the first essay by Hans Georg Gadamer. This introduction is based on that article.

Words, context and understanding in Hans-Georg Gadamer’s essay The Universality of the Hermeneutical Problem (1966) What is language? How does it influence people? How is language taught with only a hint of knowledge about what it can be? Can a teacher teach other aspects than
how to use language in different situations, depending on the circumstances, such as the way of
distribution, audience and text format? Can one take into account through all high school courses
that language influences identity, even though it is not certain how this occurs? The subject is
mentioned in the title of the sixth course of Finnish language and literature: *Language, literature
and identity*.

However, when teachers ask themselves what language is and how it influences a person, the title of
the course is not enough to give an answer to the specific question: how does language influence the
way people think and what type of person one is? Do different languages tend to direct people to
see the world differently? The answer seems clear. People here in the North do have vocabulary that
people do not need in the Southern hemisphere, but how is the situation when we take a deeper look
at the question?

The accepted view is that language theory can be divided into three categories: morphology,
semantics and pragmatics. Each aspect has supporters and researchers concentrating on their
specific field of study. Each theory explains from its point of view what language is. However, the
big picture remains unclear; one has to create it by oneself with the knowledge available. The task
seems impossible, especially when it comes to a paper of only a few pages. One cannot write a
complete analysis on any subject, even when it comes to a dissertation. Combining different views
from researchers and philosophers, one can clarify for oneself what language is its influence.
However, something remains beyond reach.

Because morphology (including grammar and phonetics), semantics, and pragmatics (social
situations and presuppositions) are familiar, at least partly, for all of us, I will begin to discuss the
essence of language by introducing Hans-Georg Gadamer’s (1900-2002) thoughts on the topic. In
the essay *The Universality of the Hermeneutical Problem*, he does not concentrate on dividing
language into different categories and discussing how they are connected hierarchically to each
other. He rather tries, as much as possible, to create a coherent view of language, taking into
account how language functions in different situations through its different aspects. However, in
these situations, the context must not be separated from the language, if one wishes to form a
coherent picture of the phenomenon. An important part of the essence of language is how it
influences understanding, and that is where Gadamer focuses his primary interest.
According to Gadamer, the discussion must involve the philosophical aspect of the topic, because language is the primary method for people to function in the world, as well as to define it. The term hermeneutics is linked to language, which one can notice, if one takes a look at definitions by Heidegger and Schleiermacher. The latter says that hermeneutics is the art of avoiding misconception (Gadamer 2004, p. 3–7). Hermeneutics defines language as connecting words and utterances to the outer world. They cannot be the target of reference, but rather a device one uses when talking about something else. These targets are discussed by using accepted words that are common to all people. In order to avoid misconceptions, the language user should eliminate ambiguous elements when interpreting a message, if it is to be understood correctly. These elements can usually be correctly interpreted when one considers them in the context they are given.

One can say that there are different parts of language, such as words and clauses. When discussing a topic, one often needs more than one word. Sometimes, one cannot find the right word, so one must use other expressions that indicate how the speaker is accustomed to using language (Gadamer, 2004, p. 15). In order to be able to use language so that one will be understood, one needs to know the basic rules of reference. Of course, in some cases, one's purpose might be intentionally try to confuse with vague expressions. Thus, in order to interpret the message correctly, the receiver must be familiar with the same references of expression as the one sending the message.

Sometimes, interpreting a message needs more effort from the receiver. References might be unclear, or two people might use different terms when discussing the same phenomenon. Then they must operate on understanding and misunderstanding, trying to find correct interpretations. When the sender is not there to help with the interpretation process by rephrasing the message, the receiver may end up in a hermeneutic circle\(^2\) (Gadamer, 2004, p. 4) without reaching the right interpretation and understanding.

A hermeneutic circle supports the thought that language is constructed socially. One uses language in order to send a certain message to other people. A mutual understanding of this topic is not the goal, but rather clarifies the social situation so that communication can continue in interaction. When two people speak different languages, the receiver has a more central role in interpretation. When ending up in a hermeneutic circle, the significance of the context increases. It is easier to

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\(^2\) Heidegger’s term
understand when communication takes place in the middle of the action, instead of in an environment where no reference to the topic is discussed.

The new matriculation examination in Finnish language and literature may include a question where a student is expected to define the context of a fictional text, news item, or factual text, such as a short story, poem, news item, column or article. Being able to define the context presumes a degree of understanding. A student must be able to tell what the text is about, the context, time and setting. In other words, the student should recognize the message, even if he or she does not agree with the writer. If we consider the purpose of language use is to understand and avoid misinterpretations, one must not underestimate the significance of learning to define context. When teachers know that students have problems at home (the context), they understand why homework is done less carefully than it should be (the message). Through understanding, the situation can be solved: the teacher may allow students to do their homework during the break instead of forcing them to do it after school as punishment.

How do words, clauses, understanding the message or the hermeneutic circle help people to understand themselves or others to understand the sender of the message? How can I define myself with the aid of these terms?

Prejudices are related to the meanings of words and the phenomena to which they refer. Different words meaning the same thing may have different connotations. By using a certain word, a person makes a decision that reveals his/her attitude towards the topic. It is very different to speak about a house instead of a shack for example.

According to Gadamer (2004), prejudices arise from, among other things, our history. Certain events create a certain tone in the way we speak about them. This can be seen in the words we choose to use when describing certain phenomena. However, it does not necessarily mean that prejudices are unjustified or false in the way that they twist historical events. They do prevent us being open to new things and demonstrate our perspective and how we take an attitude towards phenomena (Gadamer, 2004, p. 9). In order to be able to see ourselves and other people through prejudices, we must continue on the hermeneutic circle and try to think how the experience is initiated. Our use of language reveals attitude, but not necessarily why we take the specific attitude on that issue. Perhaps thinking about the context, historical period, age, or place will help us to observe what kind of people we really are. Then the hermeneutic circle will help us to have a better
understanding of ourselves and other people. Words will work in a way that reveals our real personality.

In a classroom, it might be difficult for a student to define context. Lack of practice can be seen in the way the students defend their views and opinions. They simply cannot see all the elements in a text that may help them to state an argument. We observe people around us by interpreting gestures, facial expressions, tone of voice and language, and, in a similar way, we can find hints in a text that reveal what type of world and people are portrayed. Thus, similar things happen on a level different from that in the real world.

In a text, one can read certain things and fill in the gaps with logical thinking. Language is the most important focal point when it comes to the examination in a subject that is the mother tongue. When a student states that the protagonist is shy and bases the argument on the observation that the protagonist does not make any initiatives but is reluctant to share his/her views with other people, the interpretation involves defining the context. By taking into account the situation, time, age of the characters and place, the student has a strong argument. When other students end up with a more or less similar interpretation, the one who pays attention to the references of meaning becomes certain that the interpretation is most likely correct. Of course, in the classroom, the whole process is accomplished by a group of people of the same age and roughly similar background and experience of the surrounding world that might give a slightly different interpretation than a more heterogeneous group of people would reach.

| ? | How have the meanings of words originated? Why does the whole class interpret the references of words similarly when they have the same context? |
| Gestures | Gadamer (2004) argues that meanings are not coincidental, because words remain and they are used for describing similar phenomena. One must take into account that references do change occasionally, but it will always take place with a contextual change. When an expression is not needed in an original, concrete sense, it may be used differently in a context where it will be used metaphorically. Gadamer 2004) explains that understanding is language-bound and that we live within a language. It is true that each one of us has our own vocabulary and registry of words and sometimes, one hesitates, it takes time to find the right words. This happens also when learning to speak a foreign |
| Exclamations | |
| Words | |
| Sentences | |
| Stories | |
language. Mastery of language is not always evident, even when speaking one’s mother tongue. Finding the right word means also better understanding by the receiver if the context is common for both of them. This is obvious in one’s own and in a foreign language.

If the context is understood differently, or if the meaning of words has been given different connotations by the sender and receiver, then it might be difficult to really say what this sender thinks about the topic or what kind of a person s/he is. As Gadamer (2004, p.17) says at the end of his essay, “language occurs -- in vocabulary and grammar as always, and never without the inner infinity of the dialogue that is in progress between every speaker and his partner”. When defining a person by the way s/he speaks and uses words and gives meanings to words, we cannot come to a final conclusion about her/him. This is because we can never know for sure how other people understand the same words. In the classroom, the context between students might be similar, but not everyone knows all the connotations of different words. For some students, the choice of words does not matter when talking about school or parents; they do not hear the tones. Some students might be very careful to use only neutral expressions. If the reason for using a particular word is not knowing the tone, then one cannot come to any conclusion about the speaker as a person. One can only stay in the hermeneutic circle and maybe get more confused from this idea. Knowing or not knowing the tone belongs now to the context. The receiver needs to know the person’s ability to sense the tone in order to understand her/his way of saying things.

The questions How does language influence the way people think? and What type of person is one? remain unanswered at this point. Maybe Gadamer’s next essay will shed light on the topic. If this does not give the final answer as to how language influences the way people think, it still provides ideas on how important it is to know the context in order to understand the message and the person sending the message.

In his second essay, On the Scope and Function of Hermeneutical Reflection (1967), Gadamer (2004) begins by reviewing the beginning and history of rhetoric that has survived only in fragments. Aristotle introduced Plato’s idea that the purpose of rhetoric was to create competent speakers so they would use correct arguments in the proper context. According to Gadamer (2004), this means that speakers should be aware of the truth, what is talked about and the listener’s competence to receive the message, that is, context. The question is about preparing speech according to a certain context: time and place. Later generations also considered that written language should be impressive. This has led to people paying more attention to writing style
(Gadamer, 2004). In my own subject, stylistics is a topic in Grade 12, fourth course, when we concentrate on language use as an instrument of exercising power.

Before the development of science in ancient Greece, rhetoric replaced what could be proven scientifically. Impressive speech made the subject true. Understanding the matter is another part that Gadamer (2004) believes to be a phenomenon apparent through language. Through language, people become conscious of the world, they have the opportunity to express in words what they have realized. Through language, we can also understand how things stand. Rhetoric and hermeneutics support each other. One could not exist without the other, expressive speech without understanding of the topic. Gadamer (2004) argues

> [T]hat the thing which hermeneutics teaches us is to see through the dogmatism of asserting an opposition and separation between the ongoing, natural “tradition” and the deflective appropriation of it. (p. 28)

In language, we can meet the world, our self that we are otherwise unable to reach, because we are the world we live in. However, language is not a mirror in which we see ourselves and the surrounding world, but something living that is in us and that we have. Language is not an anonymous subject that we use for telling who we are and where we come from, but a game of interpretation. It is always a question of interpretation when we understand the hidden message behind the words. Reality is not *behind* the language, in secondary meanings and assumptions of the words or human interpretations, but *in* language. That is why it is important to notice different ways of interpretation. Even in science, it is useful to work out assumptions around the topic and to remember that they are not reality, but subjective views. (Gadamer, 2004).

*How can people understand themselves? People are conscious of themselves. I am very conscious of myself when writing about Gadamer’s thoughts in a position that, at first, felt good, but now, my left leg is going numb. I am conscious because I think about my thinking and how do I combine the thoughts of two or three philosophers on the basis of my own questions. Language influences how I think; it influences me so much that I would rather write this in Finnish and let someone else translate it into English because the quality of my thinking is not as good in a foreign language as it is in my mother tongue. However, sometimes I am very conscious of not understanding myself all the time. I do not understand why I feel something or do things that are useless for the progress of this paper or I feel an urgent need to make a call I have*
been putting off for days. Why am I what I am and what, in language, influences how I think of myself? How can I understand myself? The next essay by Gadamer explains something about this topic.

In *On the Problem of Self-Understanding* (1962), Gadamer (2004) begins by stating that, according to the goal of hermeneutics, understanding includes consideration. Understanding is not revealing information or repeating the topic, but rather, realizing that one is repeating the topic. Understanding is not purely awareness of understanding, but something that connects the object and the human. This is not about understanding oneself, but the process of understanding always involves the moment that Gadamer (2004) describes as 'loss of self'.

Gadamer (2004) tells how self-understanding is not information about ourselves that can be reached but

For self-understanding only realizes itself in the understanding of a subject matter and does not have the character of a free self-realization. The self that we are does not possess itself; one could say that it “happens”. (p. 55)

If the thing is, as I see it, that, for Gadamer, understanding the self is not information about why people do things in a certain way or why they feel and think in a certain way, I need to reconsider my question of 'how can I understand myself? It is not about how I act, but how I realize myself and see myself in different situations. Understanding can be an event where the object and I are connected in some way.

What could this event of understanding be? Some time ago, a friend of mine and I were taking a nap. We had been sleeping for a while, until I woke up. I did not want to get up because I did not want to wake my friend up. Instead, I watched him sleep, and I came up with the feeling that I knew my friend better than one could expect, based on the time I had known him. I felt that I knew him, and the feeling came with the idea that I saw myself in him. I did not think about him or myself, I just looked, and the feeling changed into understanding what my friend was like. It arose without effort, and it was not an understanding of what friendship means to me. The understanding was more about what my friend is and what I am. I saw myself in him and, simultaneously with understanding him, I understood myself. The moment took its time, I was not able to control how long it lasted, but I realized that it was a moment
that I did not cause consciously. I realized the situation, but I did not think about it or analyze it. I experienced it, and when the moment was over, the feeling left. What remained was the current understanding of what my friend is and what I am. By interpreting Gadamer (2004), if understanding is an event, what remained was the thought of what I had understood. It is rather difficult to describe a moment when emotion has been uppermost and words are just instruments for describing it. I began to wonder if one becomes aware of things without words, as in the moment I described, but is still able to think with the help of language. Do we need language for both processes? If so, I must also ask: How does language influence my self-realization? Gadamer (2004) continues with the topic:

“Loss of self” arises with conversation with others. Language is social activity, but it is unclear how words are understood. The meaning of words can be understood but can we really understand words themselves? They appear in certain contexts as letters expressing certain sounds and in combination, form written words. When can we say that children understand what words mean when learning to speak? Do children understand the meaning of words at the moment they repeat what they hear or does it happen after several repetitions? According to Gadamer (2004), no one decides the meanings of words, and learning to speak does not mean learning definitions and the correct use of words in context. Words are learned through situations in agreement with other people. Each person speaks her/his own language, and when two people converse, they try to agree on language use and the meanings of words in that particular context (Gadamer, 2004). This view differs from that of Wittgenstein (1982), who argues that words exist; people need only to become aware of them.

Understanding text is also a dialogue, and when we understand text, we probably understand ourselves in dialogue. Understanding cannot, however, be seen and heard until readers stop repeating like a child and begin to recount events in their own words. When speaking in one’s own words, interpretation is always involved and, consequently, interpretation is always part of understanding. Thus, self-understanding is connected to language, and understanding comes through dialogue. (Gadamer, 2004). However, Gadamer (2004) writes at the end of the essay that
the real event is beyond reach, even if we want to get a grip of it and develop a method to reach the event. Through each dialogue, we have a chance to understand ourselves more.

In the situation I described, the dialogue was wordless, even if we can say that it was some type of dialogue. How I understand myself is, according to Gadamer (2004), connected to language that is expressed in the dialogue between another person. Understanding is the moment that takes place, but is also beyond reach. If I understood Gadamer (2004) correctly, I understand myself when I am in dialogue with other people or with texts, being able to tell and interpret discussion in my own words. The moment of understanding cannot be reached. This is perhaps true when language is connected to the process of understanding. The situation was different when I was in the middle of the situation, purely observing. I understood myself when “reading” the person who was asleep. Language was not involved when I became aware of the situation. First came feeling about how I understand my friend and myself, because I saw myself in him. After this, came the same thing in linguistic form. Is understanding outside language in a situation so that it is possible to express verbally only later? The next essays by Gadamer will possibly tell more about the topic.

In the essay Man and Language (1966), Gadamer (2004) begins with the relationship between humans and language. In addition to language, humans and animals differ from each other by human awareness of the future. Humans are able to think about what might happen in the future. Animal languages differ from those of humans, for example, by the same expressions that can mean various things.

Language lives in us to the extent that we are as comfortable with it as we are when being home in the world. When we talk about language, we speak a certain language; it is an essential part of us. This is why it is not simply a tool we use when we want to understand the world; that is not the tool of understanding (as I expressed when describing my experiment). Learning to speak does not mean learning to use a tool to be able to tell something about the world we know; it is learning to control the world and to face the world in our lives. Humans have always focused on one direction at a time when interpreting the world. The diversity of the interpretations and the ability to interpret mean human growth in the world and inside oneself. (Gadamer, 2004).
When speaking, humans are not aware of language, except when we must consider the correctness of things in a certain context. Language can be considered to have different qualities and Gadamer (2004) introduces three of them:

- In language use, the awareness of language is not conscious. We do not pay attention to structure, word order or grammar. The primary attention is on the topic. Thus, when teaching grammar, I teach awareness of how language works. Abstraction is brought into the living language.

- Sociality is also an essential part of language. Language is used in interaction. This means that if a person speaks a language no one knows, s/he actually does not speak at all, but only makes noises. Gadamer (2004) expresses it as follows: “[S]peaking does not belong in the sphere of the ‘I’, but in the sphere of the ‘We’”. Language connects people, and in conversations, there is always consideration of what type of conversation is taking place.

- Continuity also belongs to language. We can discuss, discuss and discuss things. Nothing and no one else influences when discussion ends but the speaker himself. A person must consciously stop speaking, even though there are an unlimited number of thoughts to be expressed. If there seems to be nothing to be said about the topic, it has nothing to do with the topic or with language, but with the speaker himself and the context. The same thing takes place when we try to translate a text into our own language. How correctly can we translate the connotations of words? Explanations are endless, but they are not translated, because we have to stop somewhere. Cultural background cannot be made explicit for people who do not know the language of the original text.

In The Nature of Things and the Language of Things (1960), Gadamer (2004) writes about what details influence how things are spoken of. According to a phenomenological view, the objects affect expression and we should pay attention to this. Nowadays, only poets have some type of relationship to the correspondence in sound and meaning, as Steiner (1995) expresses. Paying attention is possible if we forget the structural quality or use, and concentrate on what the object is and what it has to tell us. (Gadamer, 2004)

How about the qualities of language? What type of qualities does language have that would tell people about language itself? The three points in the former essay characterize language, but
somehow, they belong more to how people experience language and language use. Language is something, but what is it? How can we pay attention to language and concentrate on what the phenomenon called language has to say about itself? Gadamer (2004) will return in his text to poets who have formed a sense of the rhythm of language. Poetry can express the harmonic relationship between humans and the world, and it is expressed among poets as a sense of rhythm. The structure of a poem becomes language that expresses the connection between the soul and the world. The experience of language can be experiencing rhythm. Thus, language reveals itself through rhythm, and humans feel this rhythm in themselves. (Gadamer, 2004) Through poetry, language can reveal various things. I will return to this topic later, when I introduce Heidegger's (2001) thoughts in *Poetry, Language, Thought.*

In *Aesthetics and Hermeneutics* (1964), Gadamer (2004) returns to the topic of the connection of language to understanding. Understanding speech does not mean that we have understood the words and their meanings. People understand issues better when they understand the words, but understanding is always dependent on the will to understand, as well. When people understand what the other person is saying, they also understand something about themselves. Gadamer (2004) provides an example of art. People can look at artwork and they can be moved through self-understanding. People have an experience of art and, when observing a piece of art, they feel something because they are concentrated on observing. The piece of art speaks to people in its own language, and people understand something about themselves through this object. The object has a meaning that is revealed, but only when we let us observe without assumptions of what we know about that piece of art. (Gadamer, 2004)

Language can thus be seen to have a connection to understanding, but it can only be found when we let ourselves hear what an object or a person has to say in its/his own language and ways of expression. If this is true, the definition of language should be expanded so that language will not only be speech and correspondence in sound and meaning. When objects have something to say to us, and we experience something, the experience can be seen as the language of the object. The language of poetry appears as a sense of rhythm, and when we translate this into our own language, we can speak of alliteration and rhyme, syllable as well as verse, stanza and word lengths, and so on. Metaphorically, we can say that the language of poetry is rhythm, and the above-mentioned components are grammar.
In *The Philosophical Foundations of the Twentieth Century* (1962), Gadamer (2004) refers to Wittgenstein's thoughts on language use as always having a cause. There is no reason for inventing words that others do not understand, because language is a tool of communication. According to Heidegger, the essential part of language is the possibility for interpretation. In *The Phenomenological Movement* (1963), Gadamer (2004) continues that, according to Wittgenstein, language should ignore the meaningless words. If the purpose of language is communication, there should be agreement on what words mean.

Wittgenstein and Gadamer - Towards a Post-Analytic Philosophy of Language (Lawn, 2006) examines the differences and similarities of Wittgenstein and Gadamer. In the first chapter, *The Nature of Language: Two Philosophical Traditions*, Lawn (2006) introduces the background for their theories. Behind their thinking, there are two different theories on language. The first one argues that language has a referent. Language exists because, with it, we can name things and speak about them. As Lawn (2006) argues, according to this theory, communication is the most important task of language that we receive from the object, even though words do not mean as much as the idea itself.

According to another theory, language is an instrument for self-expression that becomes real during interaction with others. Language is part of humanity, and, without the possibility of speaking about the world with language, it would not exist, as Lawn (2006) clarifies Taylor's thinking (1985). Wittgenstein and Gadamer agree on the view that an expression receives its meaning in context. The same sentence can be expressed with a different tone in a different context, and only the context reveals how the sentence should be interpreted. Language itself does not have the quality of being the means of expression, but it is the need of the community, and it finds its expression in language.

When language is seen, according to the first view, as an instrument for expressing thoughts, another view concentrates on the possibility of finding and expressing oneself. We can express ourselves and try to understand with the help of art, for instance, which also involves language use. At this point, when writing, my question is whether people can understand who they are with the
help of language. Is it possible to fully understand something in the first place? Perhaps not, but as Lawn (2006) states, the need for this is significant. In the group of philosophers I have selected, Wittgenstein supports the first view, especially when it comes to his early works, but he never reaches the second view, which is closer to Gadamer's views. (Lawn, 2006)

The second chapter, *Gadamer and Wittgenstein: Contrast and Commonalities* (Lawn, 2006), discusses the distinctions and common views these two philosophers have on language. Both agree that the meanings of words and expressions appear in context. The context always involves interpretation, but the goal is reaching agreement. Language cannot cope without context. For Gadamer, the play in dialogue is central in thinking, speaking, and reading, when we try to understand. Interpretation cannot be separated from dialogue, because we understand language from our own perspective, and, if the text was written several hundred years ago, we can only try to interpret it. Our own context always influences how we understand the message. Wittgenstein's views on the topic are almost similar, even though, in dialogue, he emphasizes describing the object instead of interpretation (Lawn, 2006). Wittgenstein seems to have an idea that we do not need interpretation if we share a common view of what words mean. Lawn (2006) states that Wittgenstein sees rules in language, whereas Gadamer sees a hermeneutic circle.

The third chapter, *Gadamer's Philosophical Hermeneutics and the Ontology of Language*, discusses that, for Gadamer, language is a tool for sharing thoughts. Language changes constantly, and past meanings change into new ones in different contexts and with different people. Language is a dialogue to which we give ourselves, being inside it (Lawn, 2006).

The fourth chapter, *Wittgenstein and the Logics of Language* (Lawn, 2006), concentrates on Wittgenstein. According to him, everything we can say about the world is everything we can say about it. Linguistic regularity and learning the rules in community indicate, according to Lawn (2006), that Wittgenstein thinks a person can use language as well as anyone else. Correct language use would not mean knowledge of language, but rather, the ability to follow generally accepted agreements. These are inherited ways to use language. Learning language is thus seen to be adopting certain rules that, on the other hand, require training. (Lawn, 2006)

If readers still remember the concept of generative grammar by Chomsky, they notice that Wittgenstein thinks in a similar manner. Chomsky (2006), however, assumes people having a constructed knowledge of language, whereas Wittgenstein argues that information is learned in
situations. They both agree on the significance of language structure, even though Chomsky (2006) does not consider it as important as Wittgenstein.

The technical knowledge of language seems to be important for Wittgenstein. This idea comes from Aristotle. The question is not about correct language, but rather having a sense of situation. We cannot speak similarly to all people; we need different tones and emphasis. This is the technical knowledge of language that is learned when learned language AND a sense for situation are combined, which cannot be taught. (Lawn, 2006)

Both Gadamer and Wittgenstein believe that language cannot be separated from structure, because language is based on agreements, but is also in a state of constant change. New agreements appear in new contexts. In hermeneutics, rules and individuals are not separate parts, but fused together. Wittgenstein considers the components to be more apart than together (Lawn, 2006). When it comes to my question, it is interesting that, according to Wittgenstein, it is futile asking why we behave like we do. The same would be to ask why we are humans, which, in my opinion, is also an important question. The topic does not interest Wittgenstein, because he believes that we cannot discover anything about understanding (Lawn, 2006). The question “How does language affect the way we think?” is, furthermore, without a clear philosophical answer.

In the fifth chapter, ‘What has history to do with me? Language and/as Historicality’, Lawn (2006) says that Wittgenstein considers language as setting limits for the world and people. This would refer to what had been mentioned above about us not being able to describe something that does not exist or, at least, is beyond our reach. While Wittgenstein concentrates on one language at a time, Gadamer expands the point of view by taking into account all languages, and not only the mother tongue of a speaker (Lawn, 2006). This is a wider point of view, so it is no wonder there are differences.

I agree with Gadamer that language is not only a means of communication in situations, such as changing thoughts, small talk when waiting for the bus, and so on. Language has its social nature, but the fundamental purpose is to create a meaningful discussion, a dialogue with other people. As a language user, a human does not need plain communication, but self-understanding that dialogue brings (Lawn, 2006) that was discussed in Gadamer’s writings. Language makes communication possible; communication, dialogue; and dialogue, self-understanding.
In the beginning of the sixth chapter, *A Competition of Interpretations: Wittgenstein and Gadamer Read Augustine* (Lawn, 2006) Gadamer states that all experience is, in a way, linguistic. This can be understood when we consider thinking, and how someone can have a constant silent monologue. A human is inside language, and when something happens, the experience is expressed verbally, not perhaps in full description, but in a type of reflection of what happened and what is in our mind (Lawn, 2006). Language lives in us and we in language. Through language, the events of the world are literally speaking to us.

There are many languages in the world, and, according to Gadamer, they all articulate language to speech differently. This also means many interpretations, because speech is always an interpretation of the object, and, therefore, the object cannot be fully described. People settle down in this world with language, not limited by formulas and rules, but changes with language in time and place. The purpose of hermeneutics for Gadamer is not understanding the world, but rather, those situations when understanding originates. (Lawn, 2006)

At this stage, it seems that the pursuit of the answer to my question about the essence of language has only brought more questions. On the other hand, the same question has been discussed from different points of view: communication, experience and the structure of language. The whole paper has been an interpretation of the thoughts by Chomsky, Whorf, Wittgenstein and Gadamer. When I use my own words, I express how I have understood things. In addition, when it comes to Wittgenstein and Gadamer, I have told how Määttänen and Lawn interpret them. The whole text is interpretation and, at this stage, I have not even introduced Heidegger’s thoughts on what language is...

In the fourth chapter, *Language*, in *Poetry, Language, Thought*, Heidegger (2001) explains how language should be seen according to his views. Language makes humans human, this is obvious for Heidegger (2001), and language is a part of the human essence. He defines language by saying that language is language, nothing else, but also continues, in the next paragraph, to state that language speaks to humans in a similar way as humans speak to language. Therefore, we should define what speaking is. Heidegger (2001) has three points of view:
• Speaking is expression, where people tell something about their inner life;
• Speaking is human activity;
• Human expression is always expressing the real and the unreal as well as re-expressing.

What about speaking, the way language speaks? We could search for an answer from what has been discussed and, for Heidegger (2001), this means poetry. He gives an example and then, explains how it has been constructed rhythmically, with the number of syllables, verses and tone. Not even a word is superfluous; each word is in its own place and has a sensible meaning. Poetry gives the reader a picture of winter scenery, a sunny day or something else. This is, however, only a picture we receive through the meanings of words, but what language says to us is something completely different. Language speaks to a human between the lines, and by listening to this language, we find out the true essence of the poem. (Heidegger, 2001)

This is the interpretation of a poem, even though Heidegger (2001) does not use this expression. People receive expression from a poem, and that experience is the speaking of language. Where does speech originate, then? From silence? Heidegger writes:

The peal of stillness is not anything human. But on the contrary, the human is indeed in its nature given to speech - it is linguistic. The word “linguistic” as it is here used means: having taken place out of the speaking of language. What has thus taken place, human being, has been brought into its own by language, so that it remains given over or appropriated to the nature of language, the peal of stillness. Such an appropriating takes place in that the very nature, the presencing, of language needs and uses the speaking of mortals in order to sound as the peal of stillness for the hearing of mortals. Only as men belong within the peal of stillness are mortals able to speak in their own way in sounds. (p.205)

Human speaking is always dependent on the speaking of language. According to Heidegger (2001), humans could not speak if language itself belonged to humans. This would mean that language must be, to some extent, an independent object, similarly as a human. Like Steiner and Whorf, Heidegger also considers language a higher, independent object that has another type of connection to people than purely instrumental. With our ability to speak, we show that we are humans; with its ability to speak, language shows that it is language, even though the speaking of language appears only in human experience. If humans had no experience, would there be the speaking of language at all? A similar question can be posed about a newly-written novel: Is there a novel, if no one knows that it exists? However, humans answer language by listening to it, and Heidegger (2001) says that language hears the “commands” of silence, after which it continues speaking to us.
How can we then learn and teach how to listen to language? Can we learn to become more sensitive to speech and, thus, find out more about what language is?

3.4. Psychological views on language (by Vygotsky)

Even though psychology, unlike linguistics, is not my strength, (my major was Finnish language), there is no reason to ignore the impact that psychology can bring to the subject. The connection between psychology and linguistics has been acknowledged for a long time. I will concentrate on Vygotsky’s views (1988). He combines these fields of study and opens these topics more concretely when discussing linguistics theoretically and philosophy, abstractly.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>?</th>
<th>Gestures</th>
<th>Vygotsky (1988) argues that the development of thinking and language do not go hand in hand. These lines of development are asynchronous, even though they support each other. Before language, people have gestures, which is the level prior to speaking. In part, this means that language should be understood both as mimics and sounds. Gestures are language when they are used for communication and are interpretable. Interpretation also belongs to language. It is not only based on audiovisual elements, but demands intellectual activity from both the sender and the receiver of the message. Sounds that express only emotions and instincts are something other than intentional communication, according to Vygotsky (1988). He considers language to have a communicative nature and that language exists for social needs. If sounds do not fill these requirements, it is not language, but serves other functions, such as expression of emotions. This could be, as Steiner (1995, 1996) argues, the situation in which people express the world and their attitude towards an object, with the use of vowels.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gestures</td>
<td>Exclamations</td>
<td>Vygotsky (1988) quotes Bühler (1930) when he writes that, before language, there was thinking, and when we think about human history and evolution, this thinking has consisted of observations about work methods. Prior to language and speech, actions become conscious and meaningful. According to Vygotsky (1988), among children, laughter, sounds, gestures and movements are the preliminary stage of social communication, prior to language. This thought is similar to that of</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gestures</td>
<td>Exclamations</td>
<td>Stories</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Exclamations | Words | Sentences | Stories | Words | Sentences | Stories |

| Exclamations | Words | Sentences | Stories | Words | Sentences | Stories |

| Exclamations | Words | Sentences | Stories | Words | Sentences | Stories |

| Exclamations | Words | Sentences | Stories | Words | Sentences | Stories |
Rudolf Steiner (1995). On the other hand, Steiner (1995) argues that gestures are the preliminary form of articulated speech, and that gestures and limbic movements have similar movements as in sounds. They later shape in speech organs and come out in the form of speech. For Vygotsky (1988), these movements are the preliminary form of language but, as in Steiner’s writing, they are connected to the social aspect.

Vygotsky (1988) summarizes his thoughts by saying that thinking and speech have different roots and that children can be thought to have a pre-intellectual phase before speech and a pre-lingual phase before language. These phases take different routes but are joined when thinking changes into speech and speech becomes rational. It is interesting that Vygotsky (1988) considers language to be possession rather than a symbolic system or the symbol of an object. Children think that a word and an object is one entity before they realize that language has a symbolic meaning and that words can be interpreted differently in different contexts. I think this comes close to Steiner’s (1995) views on the correspondence in sound and meaning, where sounds and words are equal. Although, when children learn to name objects, they ask their parents how they should call these objects. Words that are learned are not initiated among children, except when they start using words they invent for themselves. The thought of correspondence in sound and meaning exists, even though children do not recognize it. Vygotsky (1988) argues that thinking develops through language development and social experiences. Only in teenage years, the development of language and thought reaches the point where concept formation becomes possible. Correct concepts are impossible to form without words, and conceptual thinking requires verbal thinking. How does a young person act in this situation? Vygotsky (1988) writes:

Unlikely the development of instinct, thinking and behaviour of adolescents are prompted not from within but from without, by the social milieu. The tasks with which society confronts an adolescent as he enters the cultural, professional, and civic world of adults undoubtedly become an important factor in the emergence of conceptual thinking. If the milieu presents no such tasks to the adolescent, makes no new demands on him, and does not stimulate his intellect by providing a sequence of new goals, thinking fails to reach the highest stages, or reaches them with great delay. (p.108)

Concept formation in linguistic and thinking development proceeds such that first, children learn to name objects. After this, they start connecting objects and begin to notice that objects belong to
different groups, according to their qualities. Then, they are able to classify things according to some part of an object, not the whole object itself. This view by Vygotsky (1988) differs from the general linguistic view by Chomsky (2006) that everyone has a knowledge of language from birth. This is not correct, because children have different phases of concept formation, and their thinking develops in relation to concept formation. Even though children and adults have, from early on, a common vocabulary, this does not mean that concepts exist and that children learn the concept simultaneously with the word. Children learn thinking phase by phase, as Vygotsky (1988) presents.

Vygotsky (1988), who discussed the etymology of words, wonders how, in several languages, the meaning of words changes, as well as in children’s thinking. First, they can name the object; then, they can refer to the object that is connected to other objects; finally, they are also able to use words metaphorically. Vygotsky (1988) considers it difficult to distinguish between the development of words and thinking, even though they do not share the same origin. It is hard to say whether a word belongs to speech or to thinking. A word without meaning is just a sound. Meaning gives a word its character, and concept is a sign of thinking. The meaning of a word is a conscious phenomenon only if thinking becomes concrete in speech and a phenomenon of speech if speech is connected to thinking. It is a sign of verbal thinking, or a phenomenon of momentous thinking. This means that words and thinking belong together.

Verbal thinking, which is thinking with words, can also include abstract concepts. When the meaning of a word changes, Vygotsky (1988) argues that the content of the word does not change. In fact, how reality is constructed, and how it is reflected in words, change. If we consider linguistic development among children and the learning of vocabulary, we can say that children learn word by word, from a single expression to several expressions. Little by little, they learn to join words together and to form sentences and stories. The direction is from one to many. Meaning is a completely different case. When children learn one word, it can mean a whole sentence to them. When saying ‘milk’ a child does not only mean a milk carton, but asks a parent to provide some milk to drink. Only later will children learn that each word has a different meaning. Thus, the structure of speech cannot be equivalent to thinking; it does not reflect thinking because thinking changes drastically before it takes the form of speech. It does not necessarily find words to express itself (Vygotsky, 1988).
On the basis of thoughts by Vygotsky, we can understand that words and speech are only the audible part of human thinking. Behind all this, there are structures more complicated than suitable expressions in context, or the change of meaning when speech develops, as we grow older. Humans can think without language, but then, thinking is not conceptual. Humans can understand a situation and act in a proper way, but they cannot necessarily express their thoughts verbally, if they do not have concepts to which the words can be linked. In school, I have often heard Grade 11 students speaking about emotions, uncertainty towards the future, whether homework is reasonable, and so on. When I ask why they think as they do, I seldom receive a clear answer. When I ask why a certain topic interests them, almost always I receive an answer about it just being interesting, without any further grounds. To find the right words for emotions is difficult and, according to my experience, it is even harder when it comes to younger students. In Grade 11, the question 'why?' is a good way to draw attention. It gives distance to their emotions which might be heavy, and makes it possible to take a step towards individual thinking about their own issues which, later in Grade 12, appear as an urge to affect issues of their own as well as school conventions, as much as possible.

At the beginning of Chapter 3, I spoke about student group discussions as follows:

During my studies, there was a contact teaching period where the students formed groups for discussions of various topics of interest. One group of students began to think about the essence of language. There were a few periods of discussion. I was in a group that started with the question "What is language"?

The question "What comes before gestures?" remained unanswered. Is there something before them? And is that something a thought that we are going to express, for example? At that time, we did not find an answer to that last question. We did not base our thoughts on anything other than our own experiences of language and our perceptions when comparing the use of emotions and gestures in different languages.
Vygotsky (1988) helps us with his views on the topic: What comes before gestures?

The connection between thought and word, however, is neither preformed nor constant. It emerges in the course of development, and itself evolves. To the biblical “In the beginning was the Word, “Goethe makes Faust reply, “In the beginning was the deed.” The intent here is to detract from the value of the word, but we can accept this version if we emphasize it differently: In the beginning was the deed. The word was not the beginning - action was there first; it is the end of development, crowning the deed. (p.255)
4. ESSAY ASSIGNMENT AND THE ANALYSIS METHOD

4.1. Essay assignment and the introduction of student groups

I collected student views on language by making them write essays on the topic. The assignment was: "Discuss the following topics: What does language mean to you? What is language?" I received answers from Waldorf schools (Grades 12 and 13) in Lappeenranta, Vantaa and Turku as follows: Lappeenranta: Grade 12/6 answers; Grade 13/8 answers; Vantaa: Grade 13/7 answers; Turku: Grade 12/7 answers. In addition to this, 30 candidates for the matriculation in Savitaipale High School wrote the topic, so I received non-Steiner students’ views to be compared with other material. As a whole, I have 28 Waldorf school students' answers and 30 regular high school students' answers as my source material.

I have attached the instructions for essay writing as received by the students. They have been translated into English for this paper, as well as quotations from the students' essays.

In my own school, I instructed students personally without letting them ask what to write. These questions were asked, but I only told them to answer the questions in the assignment. In Savitaipale, Vantaa and Turku, the local Finnish teacher gave the instructions.

To analyse the essays, I will use the phenomenographic approach, which I will discuss more specifically in Section 4.2. In Chapter 5, I will discuss the results for the supporting question about high school students’ views about language. After that, I will present the ideas as well as the plan, realizations and estimation of the ideas I had for teaching. In the final chapter, I will discuss the realization and results of the thesis from the point of view of both teacher and the stage of student development: Did thinking about the significance and the definition of language help to develop teaching in the direction stated in the aims of this thesis?
4.2. Phenomenography in the analysis of the essays

After discussions with anthroposophical, linguistic, philosophical and psychological viewpoints, it is time to take a look at what high school students think about language. It would have been most interesting to let the above-mentioned researchers write the same essay as the students. Understandably, this is not possible, so the phenomenographic approach introduced here is used in the analysis of the student essays and not in the writings by people introduced in Chapter 3. The information in Chapter 3 has been background information as well as the basis for my thoughts about the number of ways language can be seen to be connected to humans. The observation method in the previous chapter was used to see what writers think about language and its relation to thinking and the way the world is seen.

We can observe different aspects and levels of language in the student essays. I will provide results of the analysis in the next chapter. In this Section, I will concentrate on explaining the phenomenographic model used in examining the views in essays written by a group of students. The basis for this introduction comes from Learning and Awareness (Marton & Booth, 1997).

The basic idea in phenomenography is that two students who succeed in solving a problem in the same way have also understood the problem in a similar way. If students solve a problem differently, their experience of the problem is also different. According to this argument, we can presume that the way the student deals with the problem reflects the quality of the experience and, in order to understand why a certain student solves a problem in a particular way, we have to be aware of the experience, because humans can only operate according to their experience. (Marton & Booth, 1997)

According to Marton (1994)

Phenomenography is the empirical study of the differing ways in which people experience, perceive, apprehend, understand, conceptualise various phenomena in and aspects of the world around us. The words experience, perceive ... etc., are used interchangeably. The point is not to deny that there are differences in what these terms refer to, but to suggest that the limited number of ways in which a certain phenomenon appears to us can be found, for instance, regardless whether they are embedded in immediate experience of the phenomenon or in reflected thought about the same phenomenon. The different ways in which a phenomenon can be experienced, perceived, apprehended, understood, conceptualised etc., according to
our way of describing them, are thus independent of the differences between experience, perception, apprehension, understanding, conceptualisation etc.

The core of phenomenography is how humans experience a certain thing. (Marton & Booth, 1997). Therefore, the second question in the assignment is “What is language?” A type of reason from a particular point of view can be found in the first question “What does language mean to you?” The second question is obviously a problem, whereas the first question clarifies the personal experience the student has of language. In this way, I hope to receive a more elaborate picture of students’ thoughts than purely presenting the question “What is language?”

My aim is to describe language as students see it, and this is one of the approaches phenomenography uses for research material. It is also possible to categorize the answers according to how elaborate the answers are. In this way, we can find hierarchical levels on the basis of how wide the understanding of language is (Marton & Booth, 1997). These levels will be discussed later, because I will describe the students’ impressions of language with help of these levels. The difference between the levels is pedagogically interesting, because teachers can see which level students have reached with the help of their teaching. An example could be a situation where the whole class states that language is a device for communication. The teacher who is accustomed to self-reflection could wonder if teaching has focused too much on language use, whereas literature, poetry and drama have not been emphasized enough. This might not be the case, and we cannot assume that teaching language use would automatically lead to one-sided views on language, because hopefully, students form their views of language not exclusively in Finnish language classes. This situation would be worth researching and, after analyzing the essays, it will be the next task. However, in this paper, it will be a purely theoretical consideration.

The examination of experience is related to views by Barton & Booth (1997) who argue that experiencing a phenomenon is experiencing a phenomenon as something. The object, language, has a structure as well as a context, and people experience that object as something. The reason for experiencing different phenomena differently is that people notice different aspects of the context at different times or other aspects together. The different aspects of the context can also be seen consecutively. Therefore, all phenomena described and that students describe about language are personal views and interpretations about the world they themselves experience. The written description of an object cannot be considered experiencing the object, because the experience exists before the writing. (Marton & Booth, 1997).
According to this view, we should take into account that an experience is always personal for a student, even though the purpose of phenomenography is to examine human experience and discover the differences between different groups. Researchers cannot have a similar experience because they cannot leave the world of their own experiences aside. The researchers can only receive a description of an experience and the subject, and can only guess what the original experience was like.

So, phenomenography does not concentrate on how people learn, but, in my view, on clarifying which things (experiences, for example) influence understanding the subject that is taught, and what has been understood about the subject. If I wanted to examine only what students know about language, instead of how they experience it, I could simply have prepared an exam, in which I would ask: What is language? Then students would write everything they remember about the units they have been taught. I am not interested in this, even though it is clear that students should remember, after the classes, what they have been taught. If I were interested in this, I would not be able to develop my teaching in the way I now wish to do. I would only be able to develop how to create new methods to make students remember what I want them to remember. However, my aim is to get the students thinking about the subject by themselves, and forming impressions of their own, instead of repeating mine. Therefore, the question What does language mean to you? is important because then, I hope to be able to find out the students' personal views and experiences of language.

Thus, phenomenography concentrates on analyzing the experiences of those other than researchers themselves, how people experience the object, see it, what they know about it, and what skills they have related to it. The purpose is to find variations in the experiences and answers that will help to see the object from several different perspectives. (Marton & Booth, 1997).

According to Marton & Booth (1997), those who experience consider the object in which the researcher is interested as trivial. They recognize the existence of the object, but do not pay attention to how they experience it. Especially when it comes to language, it is clear that by asking What does language mean to you? we will be able to make students think about their own relationship to language and in this way, raise their level of consciousness of language.
When students describe language – what it is – they reveal that part of language which they feel is important in their context. We should remember that the concept of language which students have is not scientific. They have not examined the subject scientifically as have the researchers in the previous chapter. Students describe language on the basis of how they see it and express what is important for them. When we analyze and examine the essays, the purpose is not to evaluate the content of the essays in terms of whether they are right or wrong, but rather to present what high school students think about language. To be honest, I myself am not able to assess the essays, because it is still unclear for me what language actually is. How experience influences the object of impression is essential, according to Marton & Booth (1997).

An experience means a student's inner relation to the object. It is not a psychological or physical phenomenon, but merely a relationship to the object. We should take into account that we can never give a total description of an experience. Researchers have been interested in the different experiences of students seen as a diverse and one-sided discussion of the topic. The more diverse the experience, the more conscious the person is about the object, language (Marton & Booth, 1997). It can be that, although one might think that there is plenty of space in an essay for discussion, for some students, the given number of pages (4-5) is not enough, and the description is incomplete because of this. I hope this is not the case, and that the high school students have been able to say all they have wanted to about the topic. The assignment is similar to that of the Finnish matriculation examination. When students are told that the essay will be graded according to the standards of the matriculation examination, in my experience, their motivation is high, and they take the writing more seriously and with more consideration.

In the group, there is variation concerning how the object is seen and experienced. In phenomenography, the group can be considered to represent a larger group of people (Marton & Booth, 1997). I wanted to receive essays from other Waldorf schools, as well as from comprehensive schools. I will not claim that the results reflect the attitudes in all Waldorf and comprehensive schools in Finland, because there are essays from only four schools. The results may give some idea of what students think. I will not do any of this because the topic of the paper is How could we teach Finnish language and literature so that, in addition to language use, we could teach what language is? A little wider view than just the one from my own students is needed in order to be able to compare whether my students think in the same way as students in other schools. This is important, because I am the only Finnish language and literature teacher in the Lappeenranta Steiner School and my knowledge of teaching in other schools is limited. Writing this paper, I will
I agree with the phenomenographic view of research being a learning process for a researcher, and with the help of this process, the students learn about the topic of research (language). When collecting information, that is, analyzing the essays, the researcher tries to come up with students' experiences and learns more about the topic at the same time (Marton & Booth, 1997). Interview questions and, in this paper, giving an essay assignment, are formed according to the topic (Marton & Booth, 1997). My topic in this paper is:

**How to teach Finnish language and literature concentrating not only on language use, but also on what language is.** Teaching pure language use, as mentioned in Section 1.1, is society-centred. The basis for teaching should be individuals and their need for becoming active members of society, not only passive citizens.

In order to organize the topic, three phases have been identified, with the help of the following supporting questions:

- **What does Steiner’s pedagogical, anthroposophical, linguistic and psychological literature say about what language is?** This is discussed in Sections 3.1 - 3.4.
- **How do I define language and what is its significance to me?** This is discussed in Sections 3.1 - 3.4.
- **What do high school students think of what language is and what it means to them?** This is discussed in Chapter 5.

The discussions on literature (supporting question 1), my own views (supporting question 2) and the views of my students (supporting question 3) will create useful ideas of how to develop teaching to be more individually oriented. Finding out the views of high school students is important. Although language has been discussed in the classroom, the very question “What is language?” has not been presented. Thus, it is impossible to identify the level of knowledge and understanding of language (besides language use) among students. Simultaneously, through reading about the topic and arranging my thoughts, my own understanding of Finnish language and of the whole subject...
'Finnish language and literature' will be improved. My aim is not to create a new curriculum, but rather, to clarify the thoughts of students in order to find a way to introduce language to them as a philosophical and, perhaps, a more personal issue. Thus, my aim is partly to raise my level of knowledge of the subject as research proceeds, in order to become a better teacher.

With data analysis, we try to examine certain features in the essays. These are divided into several levels according to their variation (Marton & Booth, 1997). Marton (1994) continues:

The different ways of experiencing a certain phenomenon, characterised by corresponding categories of description, represent different capabilities for dealing with (or understanding) that phenomenon. As some ways of experiencing the phenomenon are more efficient than others in relation to some given criterion, we can establish a hierarchy of categories of description.

This means that the answers to the question "What is language?" are categorized according to how students see language. In one essay, language can be regarded purely as a means of communication and justify this view with experiences on discussions with Finns and foreign people. This view on language belongs to the level 1. The next level could be language as creator of human identity with weaker arguments than in the third level, where people discuss clearly and from several points of view how language influence identity and possibly thinking as well. The division could be done after the preliminary reading of the essays but before the actual analysis. We can present this in the table as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NUMBER OF LEVEL</th>
<th>DESCRIPTION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>In addition to communication, language is regarded as a factor that influence identity and this is discussed comprehensively.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>In addition to communication, language is regarded as a factor that influence identity but identity is not discussed further.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Language is seen as a means of communication and the emphasis of the essay is on communication.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Because it is impossible to pay attention to everything at the same time when reading essays, we have to concentrate on one aspect at a time and read texts several times (Marton & Booth, 1997). Therefore my method is to read essays one by one and first make clear the levels of the essays according to what types of answers there is about the question "What is language?"
Simultaneously, I will write down which school students belong to and whether a writer is male or female (At this stage I am not interested in this but if the differences are significant I will discuss the topic). After this I will read the essays carefully paying attention to how they answer the question *What does language mean to you?* In other words I will clarify what type of experiences belongs to each level or what experiences are being used as arguments on each level on views of language. In the end of analysis chapter the table will be as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NUMBER OF LEVEL</th>
<th>DESCRIPTION</th>
<th>EXPERIENCES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>What is language?</em></td>
<td><em>What does language mean to you?</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 3               | In addition to communication, language is regarded as a factor that influence identity and this is discussed comprehensively. | • Experience 1  
• Experience 2  
• Experience 3  
• Experience 4 etc. |
| 2               | In addition to communication, language is regarded as a factor that influence identity but identity is not discussed further. | • Experience 1  
• Experience 2  
• Experience 3  
• Experience 4 etc. |
| 1               | Language is seen as a means of communication and the emphasis of the essay is on communication. | • Experience 1  
• Experience 2  
• Experience 3  
• Experience 4 etc. |

When I know which experiences belong to which views on language, I might be able to start thinking which possibilities I have as a teacher to offer experiences that will develop students' view on language to the higher levels. Offering experiences might also be a way to move from society-centered teaching to individual one.

In addition to studying researchers' views on language, I will use phenomenographic approach to language to find out how students see it. One aim for phenomenography is to define diverse ways to experience, interpret and understand the object (language) (Orgill, 2002). Usually the method of material gathering in phenomenography is an interview but the views of 60 students for this paper are easier to handle in written form not even to mention what a task it would be to interview each
student. It would also limit my sampling to the students in our school. Orgill (2002) quotes the phenomenographic view by Svensson (1997) as follows:

> Although phenomenography makes no assumption about the nature of reality, it does make assumptions about the nature of conceptions. The primary assumption is that conceptions are the product of an interaction between humans and their experiences with their external world. Specifically, conceptions results from a human beings thinking about his or her external world. An assumption that is extremely important to phenomenographical research is that a persons conceptions are accessible in different forms of actions, but particularly through language.

When reading the essays I try to find as carefully as possible the similarities and differences in both questions of the assignment and then examine which experiences belong to which impression of language. Even though I will classify the students' views and relate them with experiences, I will not classify the students. This is important in phenomenography and Marton (1981) also mentions this:

> The aim [--] is not, however, to classify people, nor is it to compare groups, to explain, to predict, nor to make fair or unfair judgements of people. It is to find and systematize forms of thought in terms of which people interpret aspects of reality aspects which are socially significant and which are at least supposed to be shared by the members of a particular kind of society; namely, our own industrialized Western society.

In the next chapter I will examine what do the students in Turku, Vantaa, Lappeenranta and Savitaipale think about language: what it is and what does it mean to them.
5. WHAT STUDENTS THINK ABOUT LANGUAGE

Before discussing the students’ views in Sections 5.2 and 5.3, I am going to collect all the data into a table. In this way, the reader can see how these views are divided into the different levels referred by Marton & Booth (1997). After the summary, I will address what topics were discussed in Steiner school students’ (Grade 12 and candidates for matriculation examination) essays as well as those presented in comprehensive school candidates’ essays.

5.1. Students' thoughts on language and the experiences related to these – Tables presenting the distribution of essays into different levels

We can find three different levels in the essays, as it could be seen when reading these for the first time. The table below is a reminder of how language was described at different levels.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LEVEL</th>
<th>DESCRIPTION What is language?</th>
<th>EXPERIENCES What does language mean to you?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 3     | In addition to communication, language is regarded as a factor that influences identity and this is discussed comprehensively. | •Experience 1  
•Experience 2  
•Experience 3  
•Experience 4 |
| 2     | In addition to communication, language is regarded as a factor that influences identity but identity is not discussed further. | •Experience 1  
•Experience 2  
•Experience 3  
•Experience 4 |
| 1     | Language is seen as a means of communication and the emphasis of the essay is on communication. | •Experience 1  
•Experience 2  
•Experience 3  
•Experience 4 etc. |
The following table shows how the essays were distributed into different levels, in other words, on the basis of views on what language is. A more specific division can be found in Sections 5.2 to 5.4. In order for the reader to understand the abbreviations, I have listed them below:

ST1, ST2, etc. = Candidates for matriculation examination in Savitaipale (females)
SP1, SP2, etc. = Candidates for matriculation examination in Savitaipale (males)
LT1, LT2, etc. = Students of Lappeenranta Steiner School, Grades 12 and 13 (females)
LP1, LP2, etc. = Students of Lappeenranta Steiner School, Grades 12 and 13 (males)
VT1, VT2, etc. = Students of Vantaa Steiner school, Grade 13 (females)
VP1, VP2, etc. = Students of Vantaa Steiner school, Grade 13 (males)
TT1, TT2, etc. = Students of Turku Steiner school, Grade 12 (females)
TP1, TP2, etc. = Students of Turku Steiner school, Grade 12 (males)
T1, T2 and T3 = Students of Turku Steiner school, Grade 12 (gender unknown)

In the table, we can also see which students have taken all grades in a Steiner school as well as those who have only taken the last four years (high school). At the bottom of the table, we can see whether the students are male or female. Essays from the Lappeenranta Steiner School are from Grades 12 and 13. These are considered to be one group, because they have taken the same number of Finnish language and literature courses. The students in Grade 13 wrote the essays in the autumn of 2007, and the Grade 12 students wrote them after the final course in spring, 2008. Students from the Turku Steiner School wrote the essays in Grade 12 and those of the Vantaa Steiner School, in Grade 13. The candidates for the matriculation examination wrote the essays in autumn, 2007, as well as the students of the Vantaa and Turku Steiner Schools. I do not know how many courses they have taken.

In Section 5.2, students of a Steiner school are considered as a group

- Students who have taken grades 1 to 9 in a Steiner school (in the table “Grades 1 to 13”)

In Sections 5.2 and 5.3, students of a Steiner school are considered as a group

- Students who have taken Grades 10 to 12 in a Steiner school (in the table “Grades 10 to 13”)

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I will not emphasize the location because I am interested in the group of Steiner school students as a whole instead of Steiner school students from Lappeenranta, Vantaa or Turku. The division can be seen in the analysis, but I am not greatly concerned with it; I am interested in the pedagogical point of view and not how the location influences views on language. In another context, I would be interested in studying how the geographical location affects views on language and how Finnish people abroad, for example, see their language and what it means to them. However, that is not the task in this paper, but a focus on pedagogy. Gender is not considered in the analysis unless there are significant differences between male and female that are necessary to discuss.

Nor have I indicated in the table how many essays mention language as a means of self-expression, for example, or how many of them argue that language separates humans from animals. The essays share certain features at levels 1, 2 and 3: communication (level 1), identity (level 2) and comprehensive discussion of identity (level 3). The purpose is to indicate which topics are discussed at different levels, not how many of them are found in individual essays. The time for comparing views will be in Chapter 6. But even then, my point of view is to discover the similarities and differences in different types of schools, and whether students have taken all grades in a Steiner school or only the high school grades.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Savitaipale</th>
<th>Lappeenranta</th>
<th>Lappeenranta</th>
<th>Vantaa</th>
<th>Turku</th>
<th>Turku</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Students in a comprehensive school all grades</td>
<td>Students in a Steiner school Grades 1 to 13</td>
<td>Students in a Steiner school Grades 10 to 13</td>
<td>Students in a Steiner school Grades 1 to 13</td>
<td>Students in a Steiner school Grades 1 to 13</td>
<td>Students in a Steiner school Grades 10 to 13</td>
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</table>

Table: The essays were distributed into different levels on the basis of views on what language is.
5.2. Students who have gone to Steiner school from grades 1 to 9

In this, and in the following sections dealing with the essays, I will show how language was understood at levels 1, 2 and 3. The table below shows the numeric distribution of essays at each level. These can also be counted in the data from the previous table. After this, I will organize the views and experiences of what language means to the students at each level. In this way, we can combine the views and experiences and begin considering what types of experiences we should offer to students to raise their views on language to higher levels.

In this section, 5.2, I will address views of students who have studied in a Steiner school from Grades 1 to 9. The essays are from Lappeenranta, Vantaa and Turku, 16 essays altogether. These are in bold face in the table.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Savitaipale Students in a comprehensive school all grades</th>
<th>Lappeenranta Students in a Steiner school grades 1 to 13</th>
<th>Lappeenranta Students in a Steiner school grades 10 to 13</th>
<th>Vantaa Students in a Steiner school grades 1 to 13</th>
<th>Turku Students in a Steiner school grades 1 to 13</th>
<th>Turku Students in a Steiner school grades 10 to 13</th>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
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<td>2</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
5.2.1. What is language?

At Level 1, Language is seen as a means of communication and the emphasis of the essay is on communication.

Students who have gone to a Steiner school in Lappeenranta since Grade 1 (2 students, essays LP1 and LP2) answered that language is both speaking and writing. It also makes the distinction between humans and animals. Language is seen as a necessary device to be able to understand others because there are many languages, and without language, people cannot communicate. Language is also always interpretation and, despite a common language, we can interpret and understand things differently. Language is seen to have the power to unite people when the same language connects them to the same group. On the other hand, language also has a fatal power and it can be used as a means of influence. It is a device for communication and studying that develops and changes through time.

It does not even come to mind how important language is for humans. Many things would be difficult or even impossible without language. It would be hard to communicate with other people and studying would also be difficult. (LP1)

Also, history books indicate that language can be a fatal device. Eloquent speakers, such as Adolf Hitler, can create plenty of destruction. [--] Language also has a positive influence on life because it has the power to unite people. (LP2)

Students who have gone to a Steiner school in Vantaa since Grade 1 (3 students, essays VT2, VT3 and VP1) answered that language is a means of communication that unites people and makes a distinction between humans and animals. It also becomes concrete in speech and writing in different contexts. Also, gestures are a part of language. Thoughts are said to be seen in speech, whereas emotions are actions. Language is a part of life and welfare that enables thinking, self-expression and forming a community.

We speak differently to different people. With speech, we can express respect for another person, whereas, among friends, we speak at the same level. Through speech, we make ourselves and our opinions heard. (VT2)
If there is no one to talk to, I will talk to myself. We also call it thinking aloud, but for me, it is more speaking for myself. In any case, without language, it would be impossible for me to think, so I can only wonder how the deaf-mute survives everyday thinking. (VT3)

Students who have gone to a Steiner school in Turku since Grade 1 (2 students, T1 and TT2) answered that language is a means of communication as well as speech and writing that clarifies thoughts. Language was connected to self-expression that is important. Words were considered having power to influence other people. The point of view expanded into language acquisition among children and the forming of the voice in the vocal cords. Diversity of language was noted, as well as the point that, if people had only one language, it would unite people. Thus, the uniting power of language was also seen.

I am not sure when people learn to speak, but I am certain that human actions and the way of thinking before acquiring language skills would be inefficient from the point of view of social activity and cooperation. It is also difficult to know which came first - speech or thinking. On the other hand, these two things support and develop each other even now. Be that as it may, it is certain that humans have become the ruling species on the earth because of language. (T1)

In addition to speech, writing is an excellent invention. It is wonderful how one can scribble a word and another person is able to read it. Sometimes, it is easier to clarify thoughts by writing them down. It is also easier to tell difficult things to other people in writing. (TT2)

At Level 2, In addition to communication, language is regarded as a factor that influences identity but identity is not discussed further.

Students who have gone to a Steiner school in Lappeenranta since Grade 1 (2 students, essays LP3 and LP4) said that, in addition to communication, language influences a person’s identity: each nation has a language of its own that causes nations to be different. The student (LP3) asks what would happen if the mother tongue were different than it is? Language is also connected to the economy. It fosters a sense of togetherness and is a part of the culture, but still a tool to be used in different situations.
Language in Finland is an everyday phenomenon. We can use it when running errands in governmental offices, we use it in school and we are served in shops, thanks to it. However, language is an important part of the Finnish identity. The fact that we do not pay much attention to it is because of the status it has in our country: we have literature, TV programs and theatre in Finnish. It is the official language of the state and teaching is in Finnish in our schools. In Russia, the speakers of minority languages pay much more attention to their language. The reason is simple: the poor status of their language. In multicultural and multilingual nations, such as Russia, it is not easy to give minority languages a similar status as in Finland. In Russia, the reason seems to be the goal to homogenize the people. If everybody speaks Russian, there is no need for civil servants who can speak several languages. Russia has severe problems with multiculturalism because the identity of people begins from language and many of the speakers of a minority language would rather be part of a nation-state than part of multicultural empire. [---] Language is important for all people. It is not only a means of communication but reflects the uniqueness of each nation. Language tells something about environment, nature, animals and people, of course, of each nation. (LP3)

Students who have gone to a Steiner school in Vantaa since Grade 1 (2 students, essays VT1 and VT4) described language as being both spoken and written. It is related to the development of thoughts and the human mind. It is also communication reaching only a small part of thoughts. It is also the basis of thinking. Gestures were thought to be important when expressing emotion as well as noticing the context when trying to understand the message. Language creates a sense of togetherness and is connected to the human personality. Through language, humans are conscious of themselves and able to express themselves.

Language is primarily a means of communication. With it, we express our simplest needs and thoughts. Language is also the basis of thinking. People become conscious of themselves with the help of language and they are able to express themselves in their mother tongue. [---] A thought of non-lingual thinking seems, without doubt, almost impossible. I think thoughts cannot be structured without using language. But the plain language is hardly the only necessary element for thinking. (VT1)
A student who has gone to a Steiner school in Turku since Grade 1 (1 person, essay TP1) stated that language is a cultural creation and it is needed for the definition of concepts. Language is a part of culture and, thus, also a part of human identity. Language makes a person human. Language is strongly seen connected to our own culture and identity. Bilingual people, for example, feel that they have a different lingual identity than those who live in a monolingual cultural environment. Language is a stronger identity than borders. An example of this is conflicts where lingual or cultural minorities within a multicultural region want to become independent of the nation as well as regions who want to join a state that shares their language and culture. (TP1)

At Level 3, In addition to communication, language is regarded as a factor that influences identity and this is discussed comprehensively.

Students who have gone to a Steiner school in Vantaa since Grade 1 (2 students, essays VT5 and VT6) identified language as being a means of communication as well as a part of culture and identity. Speech is used for expressing emotion whereas language use reflects what is deep inside a person. The differences in language use are due to culture. Bilingualism influences how broad-minded a person is. Language consists of speech, gestures and thinking. Because of language, people are able to control animals. With the help of language, we bring our thoughts into words and it makes us belong to a certain group. Essay VT5 also discusses how a deaf person's thinking differs from that of a hearing person. The essay also ponders what words are.

I think it is unfair and impossible to even say that one could master a language fully without knowing the culture and history of a nation. Language expresses the characteristic features of each nation and has definitely been shaped by location, environment and the challenges of time. If we do not become familiar with customs, people, habits and spirit, how can we even presume to understand language? (VT6)

How about someone who is not able to use vocal or verbal language, for example? How does his or her thinking differ from that of mine? Are words eventually more important than body language? Does a dumb or deaf person know my way of communication? He or she will not be able to hear how I emphasize words or hatred in my voice, but does he or she see something else, something more important? I believe that a deaf or dumb person reads another’s mind on the basis of his or her
gestures or voice. It feels that the one who is not able to hear words gets much closer
to a person than the one who can hear words, but not to the most important part, the
person's inmost being. For this kind of person, the world might be much broader and
meaningful than to me. (VT5)

Students who have gone to a Steiner school in Turku since Grade 1 (2
students, essays T3 and TT1) described language as being speech and writing,
communication and a sign of humanity. Language makes us different from
animals and it is a part of thinking. It influences identity and it has power in
society. Through language, we understand the world and other people. It also
helps us to understand the environment. Without language, a human would
not be human. With help of language, we learn, and foreign languages broaden our world view.
Language changes along with people, and it is a symbolic system that is connected to morals.

One part of humanity that language influences is thinking. Thinking, as such, does not
require language because we can think before we can speak. But when thoughts begin
forming sentences, we can introduce more complicated structured thinking models.
With language, we can handle much more abstract issues, such as mathematics or
poetry. Luckily, thinking is not limited to pure action that takes place in our mind.
When we describe other people's thinking, we tend to produce it in coherent
sentences, but in reality, hardly anybody considers the description of a friend's face in
clear sentences or, instead of drawing, writes a description of the route one uses when
going home. People use their own mother tongue for thinking, which sets thoughts
within quite a limited framework. Each language does not have expressions for each
single phenomenon and also, grammar sets certain limits for thinking. (T3)

It [language] classifies phenomena to different groups and categories, and all we
know about language and each other can be defined under some label. If we run into
an unknown phenomenon, we begin to define it with words and try to label it so that it
fits into our categories. The concepts themselves are words that are connected by
different images. These images consist of different parts that are described with
words. My image of a tree, for example, is a life form that consists of a brown stem
and a ball-shaped foliage that belongs to the vegetable kingdom. [--] It is language
that a human uses for dividing the world into sections. [--] without language, a human
would not be able to differentiate between right and wrong, because these are purely
concepts that vary from one culture to another. Thus, if a human did not have a tool,
language, to interpret himself or herself, his or her actions, as well as the surrounding
world, I do not believe that a human would be able to construct an identity at all, and
without one, there is no such thing as a human. (TT1)
5.2.2. What does language mean to you?

The question “What does language mean to you?” was answered indirectly. In some essays, there was no introductory sentence “Language means to me...”, but the views were supported by examples. The examples described situations which the student or the student’s friend had experienced. I interpret these situations as experiences and meaningful incidents for students, because I do not see that they would have reason to write insignificant experiences in this kind of essay. Not all answers to the question "What is language?" were given reasons, only in instances of greatest importance to the students. These grounds (some of them are experiences, others opinions) are answers to the question and will be introduced in this section.

At Level 1, Language is seen as a means of communication and the emphasis of the essay is on communication.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lappeenranta Students in a Steiner school Grades 1 to 13</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Students who have gone to a Steiner school in Lappeenranta since Grade 1 (2 persons, essays LP1 and LP2) answered that, for them, language is a device for studying and something that connects people. Studying was brought into the discussion because students experience language learning difficult and unpleasant (perhaps due to learning being difficult). As an example of language connecting people, the writer (LP2) presents an experience of a trip abroad, were he had noticed this.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The English do not have to learn languages because their mother tongue is English. This seems unfair. I have often been irritated about why I was not born English or American. You see, learning languages is not my favourite activity. (LP1)

In modern society, the meaning of language is significant when studying. A student has to study at least two other languages in addition to the mother tongue. For me, this has been a nuisance, because learning Swedish is no fun at all. [---] Language has a positive influence on life because it connects people. When abroad, for example, if you do not know the local language, you can communicate with those who share language, even though you would not talk with them otherwise. (LP2)
Students who have gone to a Steiner school in Vantaa since Grade 1 (3 persons, essays VT2, VT3 and VP1) said that language is the possibility to communicate, to express oneself, and something that unites a nation. As an example of communication, experience through music and self-expression was connected to the urge to speak. Language was seen as fascinating and it meant belonging to a community, in this case, to the Finnish people.

Without language, my world would be very gloomy, even pointless. All would happen instinctively, music would not have lyrics, and that would be depressing. Lyrics, after all, form an essential part of music. (VP1)

When speaking about foreign languages, such as English, I get shivers in my spine. I do not like languages at all, especially foreign languages, because I am not good at them. Writing texts and announcements in foreign languages is an enormous effort for me, an excessive amount of thinking and concentration, not to mention listening. Even listening to my own mother tongue can be hard if the speaker is someone other than myself. I just happen to have a way too excessive urge to talk about anything to anybody all the time. Primarily, language is, for me, the most important device for living and feeling well. If there is no one to talk to around me, I will talk to myself. (VT3)

I am fascinated by how languages have originated and changed through times. Languages change and are influenced by other languages and cultures all the time. I like my mother tongue, Finnish. It connects the Finns and makes us a united folk. (VT2)

Students who have gone to a Steiner school in Turku since Grade 1 (2 persons, essays T1 and TT2) answered that language means understanding other people, the power of words, even when one does not know the language and various languages, as well as their power to unite. With respect to understanding as an experience was brought the view that a common language in the world would promote respect, because people would understand what other people say to them. About the power of words, a student wrote about a trip to Italy visiting the father of a friend. As an example of the richness of various languages, there was a festival where one could hear different language forms and the uniting power of language was demonstrated by an example where a student had heard Finnish in a situation where it was not expected to be heard.
It might be possible for human activity to be better than now. But because of different languages and backgrounds, there are always disagreements and conflicts. What if we actually spoke the same language, understood each other wherever on earth we were? Then, cooperation and respect for others would be easier, almost effortless. Would that not be the first step towards a perfect world?

My personal opinion about cherishing one’s own language is that it slows down the development of a universal language and thus, of the world becoming a better place.

(T1)

Words have enormous influence. Even though it is said that words do not mean anything but actions, everybody must have noticed how one can influence, hurt, anger, and delight others. Even though we don’t understand a foreign language, we can assume, from the way a person speaks, whether he or she is angry, sad, cheerful, or disappointed. Sometimes, there might be misunderstandings because of the way people from different cultures speak. I remember when I was visiting the father of an Italian friend of mine; the father spoke loudly to my friend in Italian. I thought that he was angry about something, but later, I was told he was pleased his bella bambino was visiting him.

(TT2)

At Level 2, In addition to communication, language is regarded as a factor that influences identity, but identity is not discussed further.

**Lappeenranta Students in a Steiner school Grades 1 to 13**

Students who have gone to a Steiner school in Lappeenranta since Grade 1 (2 students, essays LP3 and LP4) said that language means identity, folk and culture. This was reasoned by opinions and feeling that a language of one’s own is valuable and worth maintaining.

The significance of language is different for different people, but we cannot deny that we would not be Finnish without our language. What if Finns spoke French! Each language has been formed by a long run of historical events, and revolutions have influenced language as well as the speakers. Language means identity, folk and culture, thus being an important part of our lives. (LP3)
When thinking further, it is nice that, of all languages in the world, I am using Finnish. I am not especially patriotic or fanatic about being a Finn, but there is something in the Finnish language that I like. It might not be the easiest compared to other languages, so it is great to be able to speak it. Also, otherwise, Finnish is a distinctive language with peculiar words. After all, it would be boring to be James from Manchester, because most people would know my language and there would not be such words as 'äyskäri' [translation: bailer] in the language.

I, by all means, do not want to belittle other languages, such as English. It just is nice to belong to the speakers of a language that is less common, even though it would be easier to be able to speak English as the cowboys in Texas do. Luckily, we can learn other languages and still use our mother tongue along with them. The more fluent one is speaking English and other languages, the better. Anyway, each and every person should be proud of their mother tongue. (LP4)

Students who have gone to a Steiner school in Vantaa since Grade 1 (2 persons, essays VT1 and VT4) stated that spoken and written language means a lot. The reason was an experience in theatre, for example. Connections with other people were important and the reasons for this were that, with language, one could express one's own thoughts, receive other people's thoughts, as well as information. Gestures were important because, with them, one can sometimes express the same issues better than with words. A sense of togetherness came up in experiences where students had felt belonging to a group.

Lack of spoken language would mean the end of discussions, significant tones of voice, long phone calls and the worst – the end of gossip. I would also have to say goodbye to my hobby: theatre. The significance of spoken language cannot be praised enough. Already, as a child, it was extremely difficult for me to control my speaking, and it is still hard, in certain situations. Children live in the world of spoken language. Few children can or want to read instead of playing or other physical activity. Everything was pure joy without books, writing and texts. Now, I could not even imagine my life, or even a day, without written language. When you have reached something, it is difficult to give it away. How would the days pass by without a whodunit or a crossword puzzle with my parents? I would miss many things in a world with only spoken language. (VT1)

For me, language means connections to other people and to the world. With language, I can share my thoughts, but also receive other people's thoughts and information. [--]

The purpose of language is to create connections to other people and to bring out my own views. When meeting a dear person, a warm hug can mean a lot. Then, words are not needed and the feeling that someone cares is evident. Sometimes, gestures express more than words. Words can lie, gestures hardly ever. [--]
With language, we can contact other people, but, for me, it also means the sense of togetherness. In a small group, this is created by common issues that are talked about and shared with a friend. (VT4)

**Turku**  
Students in a Steiner school  
Grades 1 to 13

A student who has gone to a Steiner school in Turku since Grade 1 (1 person, essay TP1) did not reveal what language means to him and he did not give any indication of his thoughts on the influence of language on culture, concept definition or identity either. He thinks that language makes a human but this belongs more to the category of what language is than what it means to the writer.

At Level 3, *In addition to communication, language is regarded as a factor that influences identity, and this is discussed comprehensively.*

**Vantaa**  
Students in a Steiner school  
Grades 1 to 13

Students who have gone to a Steiner school in Vantaa since Grade 1 (2 persons, essays VT5 and VT6) stated that language means ability to put thoughts into words when this is needed, but this is not always needed. Belonging to a group was reasoned by an opinion about bilingualism. The influence language has on culture was considered significant and was supported by an experience involving bilingualism.

For me, language means the skill to put my thoughts into words and thus, make myself understood, as well as understand other people. It would be very hard to imagine the world in my mind without a spoken language. When writing down thoughts, they change a little. For me, language is the same as everyday life. During discussions with my friends or family, or during language without words with my cat, then, words are not needed. A hug from a good friend may mean more than a thousand words.

Language also means belonging to a certain group. It is a very important part of my identity and makes me the person that I am. I am monolingual, but as bilingual, for example, I would be much more broad-minded. (VT5)

I am bilingual, and I can easily see the differences of lingual expression when comparing two languages. The Finnish language, for example, seems to lack formal address and polite request, whereas the Russian language uses them all the time. Actually, they do exist, but they are not part of our culture. [--] Differences in language use are due to cultural differences. (VT6)
Students who have gone to a Steiner school in Turku since Grade 1 (2 students, essays T3 and TT1) said that language means identity. The grounds for this view were, for example, the experience of being able to understand people and the environment again, after returning from a trip. The connection language has with thinking was considered important and was supported by the experience of how humans think. The possibility to communicate was considered vital as well as the significance of language in learning.

Is it not rewarding to return from a long trip abroad and notice that you’re able to understand people and signs? You feel like coming home. (T3)

Language is a part of human thinking as much as images. When I start going through my thoughts, I notice the infinite chain of words that goes through my brain. When I focus on thinking about a problem, for example, I do it with words, using linguistic means. Images of things are, of course, a part of thoughts as well. But, words are closely connected to them, too, and give them meaning and value. Sometimes, I think more through images. It is like watching a film in my head. But, often, even then, somewhere in the background, there is “a voice” commenting on the events or an image tangles into a web of words. [--]  

For me, language means the possibility to communicate every day with my friends and other people around me. It is also an entry point for learning foreign languages, because teaching is seldom done through images. I believe that learning foreign languages broaden our minds. (TT1)

5.2.3. Conclusion

In the table "What is language?", the students' views on language are described and divided into different levels. Similarly, in the table "What does language mean to you?" are presented student experiences and clarifications of the topic.

"What is language?"

It is remarkable that, at Level 1, views on language are very similar. Language is seen as a means of communication, it is both written and spoken, it has an important role in self-expression, and it unites people. At Level 2, language is considered to be a part of thinking, as well as identity. In order to understand another, one should take into consideration the context. At Level 3, the relationship of language to identity and thinking is discussed more thoroughly than at Level 2.
Without language, it is said, there are no morals, either. Language use tells about the innermost being of a human and, even though the students were not able to express what Whorf (1956) discussed in his research, they are certain that, if their mother tongue were different, their way of thinking would also be different, because, with language, people construct the world. Language is much more than merely a means of communication. On the other hand, we are able to read in the essays the following question: Without spoken or written language, can understanding be broader and deeper among the dumb than among students who are able to speak and write?

"What does language mean to you?"

At Level 1, are the experiences of language connected to language those of an instrument for studying, a uniting factor, a means of communication or self-expression, a way of understanding, or the power of words and diversity of languages? Experiences are very concrete in the way that a writer relates an event when he or she was abroad and heard his or her mother tongue and what he or she felt in this situation. Four out of nine experiences were unusual events in their life: a trip or a visit to a festival where attention was paid to the way people were speaking the language. Two cases dealt with subjective observations (observing one's own language use, not that of others) about students’ ability to learn or the need for using language. Three experiences were mostly opinions, where they spoke of music being an important way to communicate, a common language promoting mutual respect, and language being fascinating and it having power to unite people.

At Level 2, there was an experience about a feeling in one essay about the significance of identity, folk and culture. The experience was close to an opinion when the students wrote that language was important for drawing attention to their own thoughts and for receiving thoughts and information from other people. Also, gestures were considered important because words are not always as good for expressing thoughts. The concrete experiences were the examples of theatre as a hobby when reasoning the difference between written and spoken language as well as the experience of belonging to a group.

At Level 3, the experience of skills to put thoughts into words appeared as a subjective observation about language, and thoughts changing when writing them down. Observations were also used when a writer had paid attention to his or her way of thinking. The experience is close to an opinion when bilingualism was an example of belonging to a group. The writer is not bilingual, but she has
views about it. It is also the question of an opinion when a student states that the possibility for communication and learning with the help of language is important. Concrete experiences were in evidence when a writer told how language influences culture. The writer herself was bilingual and has experienced this influence. The connection between language and identity was noticed when returning home and being surrounded by a familiar language after a long journey.

Experiences and answers to the question "What does language mean to you?" were connected to emotions, concrete experiences to a situation, subjective observations to one’s own language use and an opinion about something being important and language being connected to it. Emotion appeared only at Level 2 and subjective observations about language use at Levels 1 and 3 were not expressed at Level 2.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Savitaipale</th>
<th>Lappeenranta</th>
<th>Lappeenranta</th>
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<td>Students in Steiner school, Grades 10 to 13</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td>7</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Influences identity; brings a sense of togetherness; connected to economy and culture; a means of communication.</td>
<td>Spoken and written; related to the development of thought and mind; communication; basis for thinking; gestures important for sharing emotions; understanding context important for understanding the message; creator of togetherness; connection to human personality.</td>
<td>Created by culture; is needed when defining concepts; part of culture and human identity; makes a person human.</td>
<td>Speaking, writing; separates from animals; means of communication and studying; necessity for understanding, uniting and “fatal” power.</td>
<td>Speaking, writing; separates from animals; means of communication; unites people; also gestures; a part of life and welfare, that makes thinking possible, as well as creating a community and self-expression.</td>
<td>Speaking, writing, means of communication; unites people; self-expression; words have power; diversity of languages.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level</td>
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<td>Lappeenranta</td>
<td>Lappeenranta</td>
<td>Vantaa</td>
<td>Turku</td>
<td>Turku</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>Students in Steiner school, Grades 1 to 13</td>
<td>Students in Steiner school, Grades 10 to 13</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
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<td>Speaking, writing, means of communication; unites people; self-expression; words have power; diversity of languages.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4</td>
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</table>

Table: “What is language?”
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Savitaipale</th>
<th>Lappeenranta</th>
<th>Vantaa</th>
<th>Turku</th>
<th>Turku</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Students in a comprehensive school, all grades</td>
<td>Students in Steiner school, Grades 1 to 13</td>
<td>Students in Steiner school, Grades 1 to 13</td>
<td>Students in Steiner school, Grades 1 to 13</td>
<td>Students in Steiner school, Grades 10 to 13</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| 2 | 11 | 7 | • Ability to put thoughts into words was reasoned by a subjective observation about how language and thoughts change when they are written down.  
   • Belonging to a group was reasoned by an opinion about bilingualism.  
   • Influence of language on culture was considered significant and it was related to a concrete experience of bilingualism. | 3 | • Significance of identity was reasoned by a concrete experience about coming home from a long trip abroad.  
   • The connection language has to identity was considered important and this was reasoned by a subjective observation about how a human thinks.  
   • Possibility to communicate was considered important, as well as the role of language in learning. | 4 | No experiences or opinions | 1 |

| 2 | 11 | 7 | • Meaning of identity, folk and culture are reasoned by an opinion and a feeling that one’s own language is valuable and worth preserving. | 3 | • Significance of spoken and written language was reasoned by a concrete experience of amateur theatre.  
   • Connection to other people was considered significant and was reasoned by an opinion about language as a device for expressing thoughts, receiving other people’s thoughts and information.  
   • The importance of gestures was reasoned by an example of them being sometimes more useful than words for saying certain things.  
   • Importance of togetherness was introduced by a concrete experience about belonging to a group. | 4 | • About possibilities of communication was subjective observation through music.  
   • Self-expression through a subjective observation about language being attached to a need for speaking.  
   • Something that unites people was an opinion of language being fascinating and having the power to connect people. | 1 |

| 1 | 8 | 4 | • Device for studying subjective observation on difficulties in language learning.  
   • As a thing that connects people, a writer presents a concrete experience of a trip abroad. | 4 | • Understanding as an experience was discussed in an opinion that common language would increase mutual respect.  
   • Power of words was discussed in a concrete experience of a trip to Italy.  
   • Diversity of language was discussed through a festival experience.  
   •Uniting power of language was discussed in an experience about hearing one’s mother tongue when traveling abroad. | 1 |

Table:”What does language mean to you?”
5.3. Students who started Steiner school in grades 10 to 12

Section 5.3. deals with students who have been in a Steiner school for Grades 10 to 12 only. Essays are from Lappeenranta, Vantaa and Turku, 12 altogether (these are in bold in the table).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Savitaipale</th>
<th>Lappeenranta</th>
<th>Lappeenranta</th>
<th>Vantaa</th>
<th>Turku</th>
<th>Turku</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Students in a comprehensive school, all grades</td>
<td>Students in Steiner school, Grades 1 to 13</td>
<td>Students in Steiner school, Grades 10 to 13</td>
<td>Students in Steiner school, Grades 1 to 13</td>
<td>Students in Steiner school, Grades 1 to 13</td>
<td>Students in Steiner school, Grades 10 to 13</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
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<td>1</td>
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<tr>
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<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5.3.1. What is language?

At **Level 1**, *Language is seen as a means of communication and the emphasis of the essay is on communication.*

**Lappeenranta**

Students in Steiner school, Grades 10 to 13

Students who started Steiner school in Grade 10 in Lappeenranta (5 persons, essays LT1, LT3, LT7, LT9 and LP5) described language as speech and writing, and that it works as a device for communication (LP5). There are several languages and they were partly seen as a "technical" system because of grammar. Language also distinguishes between humans and animals as well as helping people to understand each other. The usefulness of language was seen through English which is considered to be practical, easy and thus, more international than Finnish. On the other hand, the purpose of language is also self-expression, and it unites the people of a nation. In the following example, the instrumental value of language can clearly be seen when describing what one can do with language:
However, it would be only partly true to say that the role of language [self-expression] would stay here. Among countless ways to use language, I can always choose the right one, depending on whether I want to persuade, flatter, argue or lie to another person. In language use, there are countless different shades of grey and not just black and white. So it takes a lot to be able to know what a lie is and what truth is, not even to mention sarcastic or ironic twists in the language of a skillful user. Even though the ability to speak and write is a great gift and a source of power for me, it does not replace speaking. I cannot persuade crowds with my speech, nor argue in a panel discussion or stand in front of a crowd of people answering tricky questions. I have often wondered if the reasons for this could be the increased individuality and the change of the world so that social interaction in market squares and with friends has been replaced by sitting in front of the monitor. The good old verbal communication with gestures and facial expressions fights with keyboards and smileys. The tendency is alarming, when one sometimes chooses to chat with friends instead of stepping out and meeting them face to face in the old-fashioned way.

[---] However, it will be interesting to see how we communicate 50 years from now, for example. Does the intense global community take away our national identity causing us to lose one of the essential Finnish features that we share? (LP5)

---

A student who started Steiner school in Grade 10 in Turku (1 person, essay T2) answered that language is a means of communication that consists of sounds, gestures, and a certain type of structure that can be compared with other languages. The writer also poses a question about how a human would be able to speak if there were no language at all. Mostly, the text compares Finnish with English.

There are ca. 5000 languages in the world, even more, because we do not know what type of languages can be found in African savannas and jungles. Finnish is one of these 5000 languages, as well as English. If The Unknown Soldier [a novel by Väinö Linna from the 1950s] or Seven Brothers [the first novel in Finnish by Aleksis Kivi from the 1870s] were translated into English, for example, it would be boring, because, in Finnish, there are different words for certain things. A bear ['karhu'] can also be called 'otso' or 'mesikämmen'. [---] (T2)
At Level 2, In addition to communication, language is regarded as a factor that influences identity, but identity is not discussed further.

**Lappeenranta**

Students in Steiner school, Grades 10 to 13

Students who started Steiner school in Grade 10 in Lappeenranta (3 persons, essays LT4, LT5 and LT8) answered that language makes a distinction between humans and animals; it is communication (LT5) with gestures and expressions. Language transfers cultural heritage (LT4) and it is part of our identity. It also unites people and is a device for self-expression as well as for expressing our thoughts aloud. Language was seen to be helpful for understanding the world, even though understanding is primarily seen as naming things and forming concepts.

Human communication is mostly based on spoken language and the written form of it. Facial expressions and gestures also have their function when trying to understand other people face to face, but, without a spoken language, transferring our cultural heritage to the next generation would be in danger. (LT4)

If we think about one of the most used languages, English, and an African tribal language using "click"-sounds, for example, there are not many similarities other than communication. They try to pass on information and express their needs and hopes. (LT5)

**Turku**

Students in Steiner school, Grades 10 to 13

A student who started in Steiner school in Grade 10 in Turku (1 person, essay TT3) described language as a device for telling other people things. Language makes a difference between people, helps them to express themselves and influences identity and personality.

Language is a very important device for working with other people. It is also a part of human identity. If my mother tongue were Swedish, for example, who would know what kind of person I am? (TT3)
At Level 3, In addition to communication, language is regarded as a factor that influences identity, and this is discussed comprehensively.

Students who started in Steiner school in Grade 10 in Lappeenranta (2 persons, essays LT2 and LT6) described language to be communication and that it influences identity in a way that, when speaking another language, behaviour changes, for example (LT2). With language, we can express experiences, shape the world and name things. It makes a distinction between humans and animals, connects us to other people, influences attitudes, communication, thinking and actions. Culture, that language also belongs to, is the way we speak, think and communicate. People were considered to evaluate things differently because of different languages.

Finnish is not the only language for me that I connect to feelings and family, but also Spanish. I can put my feelings into words in Spanish and sometimes, I feel like my whole nature changes when speaking it – then, I am more cheerful, brave and frank. I believe that languages have characteristics of their own that are attached to the speaker. Language can become a part of human identity and, in the best cases, change it. (LT2)

5.3.2. What does language mean to you?

At Level 1, Language is seen as a means of communication and the emphasis of the essay is on communication.

Students who started in Steiner school in Grade 10 in Lappeenranta (5 persons, essays LT1, LT3, LT7, LT9 and LP5) answered that language is the possibility to read. This was reasoned by the quiet nature of the writer (LT1). Language means unity between people that was justified by an experience of a discussion with foreign relatives (LT3). Written language was also considered important because of a personal habit of writing (LT9). Speech was considered significant through a personal experience of verbal skills that appeared worse than one would hope them to be (LP5).
Finnish as a mother tongue does not mean much to me because it is my mother tongue and that means that I speak and write Finnish, nothing more. It would not make a difference whether I were Polish or English. [-]  
I have never been very excited about grammar (hardly anyone else either), especially in Finnish, because it makes writing too complicated and boring. [-] Finnish means most to me when I read. Speaking is useful, of course, but I am a girl of few words, and I am not a good listener either, because I am as good a listener as an orange. Anyway, sometimes it is good to be quiet.  
However, I do not hate Finnish even though one might think so from my writing. That would be insane. I need my language for living. Only the fact that our mother tongue has been made exhausting and technical is what bothers me. (LT1)

I find it very useful and essential that each country would preserve its own language, even though it would be useful to have one language that everyone could speak. However, the world is full of people who are not able to communicate with foreign people. Therefore, there are interpreters who might be invaluable because of a lack of common language. [-]  
When my French relatives come to visit us here in Finland, I am relieved when I find people who speak Finnish. We would not be able to communicate at all if there were no one who spoke English fluently. This way, we notice how important one language can be. It makes possible for us to get to know each other. (LT3)

For me, language means a lot because I write poetry as well as other texts. Without language, this would hardly be possible. (LT9)

However, it would be only partly true to say that the role of language [self-expression] would stay here. Among countless ways to use language, I can always choose the right one, depending on whether I want to persuade, flatter, argue or lie to the other person. In language use, there are countless different shades of grey and not just black and white. So, it takes a lot to be able to know what a lie is and what truth is, not to mention sarcastic or ironic twists in the language of a skillful user. Even though the ability to speak and write is a great gift and a source of power for me, it does not replace speaking. I cannot persuade crowds with my speech, nor argue in a panel discussion or stand in front of a crowd of people answering tricky questions. (LP5)

A student who started in Steiner school in Grade 10 in Turku (1 person, essay T2) described language as a device for communication. The argument for this was the view that purely with the help of gestures, one would not be able to deliver information as efficiently as needed (T2).
could, of course, use gestures, but would people be able to understand me? Perhaps in time, they would learn to understand what each gesture meant. But gestures would not be enough when one grows older and the time comes to start school. One cannot explain with gestures what a polynomial is, for instance. We could use sign language, of course. Then we would not need a spoken language at all. (T2)

At Level 2, In addition to communication, language is regarded as a factor that influences identity, but identity is not discussed further.

Students who started in Steiner school in Grade 10 in Lappeenranta (3 persons, essays LT4, LT5 and LT8) described language as the possibility for communication and global citizenship (LT4, LT8) as well as for self-expression. The arguments for these were opinions about the beauty of sign language and its mysticism (LT5).

For me, language means the possibility to communicate, to be similar and, on the other hand, an English-speaking world citizen but, in the end, the existence of language is related to everything around us so that we can only guess the true nature of its meaning to us. (LT4)

Language means to me a way that people use for expressing themselves; different people in different ways. In one culture, people speak differently from another one. [---]

What would it be like if we were not able to express ourselves by speaking? I think that sign language is very interesting because of this. A human can express him/herself by using only his or her body. It must be the most unique of all languages. It is not attached to a particular people or culture, but yet, it has an identity and communication. Italian and French are very beautiful languages, but in sign language, there is something cryptic and a mystic beauty. (LT5)

What language means to me is that it is a large part of and a necessary device for communication between humans. (LT8)
A student who started Steiner school in Grade 10 in Turku (1 person, essay TT3) described language as communication. Support for this was an experience of a phone call in another language and, simultaneously, talking to a sister in Finnish. Communication is possible in different languages and changing languages can be quick depending on the context. (TT3)

Even though one would think that changing languages in a second would be difficult, it actually is not, if one knows both languages well. If I speak English with my friend on the phone, and my little sister asks something in Finnish at the same time, I will answer my friend quickly and, the next moment, I will have an intense discussion with my sister in Finnish. [--]

For me, language means my own identity, as well as the ability to communicate with people. Language is an important device for working with other people. It also forms a part of human identity. (TT3)

At Level 3, In addition to communication, language is regarded as a factor that influences identity, and this is discussed comprehensively.

Students who started in Steiner school in Grade 10 in Lappeenranta (2 persons, essays LT2 and LT6) answered that language means identity. Arguments for this were experiences of different languages in different situations. Finnish means family and home country, whereas English means business and trends. Spanish is a more complicated part of the writer's identity, because some of the people that are important for her are Spanish. Thus, it has become a language where the writer can express her feelings, along with Finnish. The writer has an experience of language influencing identity: Spanish makes her more cheerful, brave and frank. (LT2)

Language also means communication, and the writer presents an opinion that she does not want to discuss with a person in a foreign language because she cannot be certain how the other person evaluates things in another language. The writer is afraid that she will not be understood, and it is a frustration that she wants to avoid. (LT6)

I speak four languages, some of them better, others worse. Finnish is my mother tongue, and one of the elements that my identity is based on. It is the language that I have been raised with. In Finnish, it is easiest for me to express my opinions and
discuss, because I do not have to be worried whether I pronounce words correctly or about the grammar. Yet, I feel that some things, such as expressing feelings, are easier in other languages.

When studying a foreign language, I have noticed the importance of the right motivation and interest – when you are interested in something, you spend much more time studying. I have never been interested in obligatory Swedish, so I have never learned it, not properly, at least. I can speak English well; that is important abroad, and in creating a successful career. I have noticed that I relate different languages to different situations: Finnish means family and home country, and English means work and trends. Spanish is more complicated for my identity. I have learned and have wanted to learn Spanish because of people who are important for me. The need for discussing was the motivation to learn – what would I not do on behalf of people who are important for me. At first, when I was not able to speak Spanish, I was very frustrated, because I was not able to understand what people said around me, and I was not able to participate in discussions either. Now, after 18 months, the relief is mutual – we have a common language.

Finnish is not the only language that I relate to emotions and family, but also Spanish. In Spanish, I am able to put my feelings into words and sometimes, I even feel that my whole personality changes when speaking Spanish – then, I am more cheerful, brave and frank. (LT2)

They say that the world is disconnected and that people are not able to understand each other because they speak different languages. At first, I found it amusing until, after a while, I realized that, at times, I was thinking in the same way. I cannot help thinking that I do not want to communicate with foreign people because they have a completely different base than we do. How do they evaluate things? At least, the language of us Finns is, for example, so different from other languages in the world that we are aliens compared to other people. For some of us are the foreigners, aliens and vice versa. Especially if you cannot speak a language properly enough in order to communicate, at some point, you tend to become frustrated when not being able to put thoughts into words, even if you want to. I am one of those, but I know that thinking like this tends to separate us from other nations. A language and culture of your own are considered the one and only, and thus, people are not able to appreciate those of foreign people. (LT6)
5.3.3. Conclusion

In the table “What is language?” are presented the different levels of the concepts of language of the students. In the table “What does language mean to you?” are presented the different levels of students' experiences and clarifications about what language means to them.

“What is language?”

At **Level 1**, the answers shared the view of language as a device for communication. Language was examined from different points of view, such as its structure and usefulness. Identity was mentioned at **Level 2**. Language was seen as a way of self-expression that was a common view for writers. At **Level 3**, the view that writers shared was the influence on human personality, either on behaviour or evaluating things.

“What does language mean to you?”

At **Level 1**, the meaning of language was the importance of reading, and it appeared in a subjective observation about the quiet personality of a writer. A subjective observation was also an experience of speech skills that were not as good as they could be. A concrete experience was brought into discussion as an example of a phone call, when a writer stated that language had significance for the unity of humans. Similar concreteness was an experience of the significance of written language using the writer's own writing as an example. The meaning of communication was also reasoned by an opinion that gestures are not enough for expressing things as well as needed.

At **Level 2**, the grounds for the significance of communication were opinions about the beauty and mysticism of sign language, for example. It was also discussed through a concrete experience with a phone call as an example.

At **Level 3**, the arguments for the significance of language to identity was a concrete experience: the status of the Spanish language in a writer's identity appeared in the ability to discuss feelings in Spanish as well as in Finnish. Language also made the writer more cheerful, brave and frank. It also means communication and another writer presents an opinion of not being interested in talking to foreign people because one cannot be sure how the other person evaluates things with his or her
language. The writer is afraid (emotion) of not being understood and that would bring a sense of frustration that the writer wants to avoid.

Experiences and answers to the question “What does language mean to you?” were related to subjective observations, concrete experiences, opinions and emotions. Only at Level 1, the experience was related to subjective observations. In all levels, experiences were related to opinions and only at Level 3 the writers discussed emotions.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Savitaipale Students in a comprehensive school, all grades</th>
<th>Lappeenranta Students in Steiner school, Grades 1 to 13</th>
<th>Lappeenranta Students in Steiner school, Grades 10 to 13</th>
<th>Vantaa Students in Steiner school, Grades 1 to 13</th>
<th>Turku Students in Steiner school, Grades 1 to 13</th>
<th>Turku Students in Steiner school, Grades 10 to 13</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Communication; influences identity; expresses experiences; with it, can shape the world and name things; separates humans from animals; connects to other people; influences our attitudes; communication, thinking, actions and evaluating things.</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Communication; connected to facial expressions and gestures; transfers cultural heritage; part of identity; connects people; device for self-expression and thinking; separates humans from animals; helps in understanding the world.</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Device for telling things; separates humans from each other; helps to express oneself; influences identity and human personality.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Speaking, writing; separates humans from animals; means of communication; helps to understand other people; is useful (English); self-expression; unites a nation.</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Means of communication; connected to thinking; has a certain structure and vocabulary, sounds and gestures.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table: "What is language?"
Table: “What does language mean to you?”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Savitaipale</th>
<th>Lappeenranta</th>
<th>Lappeenranta</th>
<th>Vantaa</th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Students in a comprehensive school, all grades</td>
<td>Students in Steiner school, Grades 1 to 13</td>
<td>Students in Steiner school, Grades 10 to 13</td>
<td>Students in Steiner school, Grades 1 to 13</td>
<td>Students in Steiner school, Grades 10 to 13</td>
<td>Students in Steiner school, Grades 10 to 13</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. Language means identity. This was reasoned by a concrete experience of using different languages in different situations, with people who are close, for example. Spanish makes the writer more cheerful, brave and frank.
2. Language means communication, and the argument for this was an opinion about the reluctance of speaking to foreign people because of the uncertainty about how they interpret things. The writer is afraid of not being understood, and that would be an unwanted sense of frustration.
3. The significance of self-expression was reasoned by an opinion about the beauty and mysticism of sign language, for example.
4. The importance of communication was reasoned by a concrete experience of a phone call with a foreign friend and, simultaneously, speaking to a sister in Finnish.
5. The importance of communication was reasoned by subjective observation on the quiet personality of the writer.
6. Unity between people was reasoned by a concrete experience of discussions with foreign relatives.
7. Written language was considered important due to a personal interest in writing. It was a concrete experience.
8. Speech skills were considered significant through subjective observation on the inadequate eloquence of the writer.
9. The importance of communication was reasoned by a concrete experience of a phone call with a foreign friend and, simultaneously, speaking to a sister in Finnish.
10. Language is important as means of communication. The arguments were opinions of gestures being inadequate for expressing things well enough.

Level

- Savitaipale
  - Students in a comprehensive school, all grades
- Lappeenranta
  - Students in Steiner school, Grades 1 to 13
  - Students in Steiner school, Grades 10 to 13
- Vantaa
  - Students in Steiner school, Grades 1 to 13
- Turku
  - Students in Steiner school, Grades 1 to 13
  - Students in Steiner school, Grades 10 to 13
Section 5.4. presents the views of students who have gone to comprehensive schools. The essays are from Savitaipale, 30 essays altogether (these are in bold in the table).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Savitaipale</th>
<th>Lappeenranta</th>
<th>Lappeenranta</th>
<th>Vantaa</th>
<th>Turku</th>
<th>Turku</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Students in a comprehensive school, all grades</td>
<td>Students in Steiner school, Grades 1 to 13</td>
<td>Students in Steiner school, Grades 10 to 13</td>
<td>Students in Steiner school, Grades 1 to 13</td>
<td>Students in Steiner school, Grades 10 to 13</td>
<td>Students in Steiner school, Grades 10 to 13</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5.4.1. What is language?

At Level 1, *Language is seen as a means of communication and the emphasis of the essay is on communication.*

Students who have gone to a comprehensive school in Savitaipale (12 persons, essays SP1, SP2, SP8, SP11, ST2, ST3, ST5, ST6, ST8, ST9, ST13 and ST18) described language as communication. It connects and separates people from animals as well as from each other. Language is a way to express feelings and thoughts, so it is a means of self-expression that also brings a sense of safety when people understand each other, because they share the same language.

Language consists of gestures, sounds, words, sentences and stories and can be expressed in both speech and writing. Words can have several meanings and they change as time passes; language itself changes and develops. With the help of language, we analyze the world and thus, it is a part of human personality and culture. It influences thinking; we can play with it as well as learn foreign languages. It tells about a person's origin, it is a sign of nationality and can even reveal the location a person comes from. Language is everything that is related to national characteristics, and one of its purposes is to raise national pride, for example.
The purpose of language is basically to help people to communicate with each other. Each country has a language of its own, bringing togetherness among the citizens. It is a part of national culture. It brings a sense of national independence and, in a way, separates it from other nations. (SP2)

Language can be divided into two categories: spoken and written language. Good writing and rhetoric skills can be seen as a sign of education and intelligence. (SP11)

Our mother tongue reminds us about who we are and where we come from. We also analyze the world with it and, thanks to our language, we are able to learn other languages as well. (ST2)

Language changes many ways in different dialects and among people of different ages. Older people use mostly older versions of written and spoken language, whereas, the young use, in both written and spoken language, words and phrases that older people cannot understand. Few people understand, for example, the slang of the young in Helsinki or what “LOL”, “EVVK” or “XD” stand for. (ST3)

It is because of language that poems are so fascinating and also because you have to go into them more deeply if you want to understand what a poet really wants to say. In poetry, the typical playing with words is interesting and beautiful. (ST6)

Language gives us the freedom to express emotions and experiences; with it, we can say many things to other people. Language is a part of us and it will not disappear, even if we are quiet. Funnily enough, language is important even when we think. (ST9)

Language is sounds: sounds that form words, and words that form sentences. Sounds have many stories to tell. Language is the narrator of great stories of life and we interpret and analyze the world with its help. Language is also gestures that supplement and change the meanings of words. Gestures alone are silent words. (ST13)

At Level 2, In addition to communication, language is regarded as a factor that influences identity, but identity is not discussed further.

Students who have gone to a comprehensive school in Savitaipale (12 persons, essays SP3, SP4, SP5, SP6, SP7, SP9, SP10, ST1, ST4, ST7, ST10, ST11, ST12, ST14, ST15, ST16, ST17 and ST19) described language as
communication and something that unites people, as well as separating them from each other. Language is a part of identity and it develops and changes constantly. Language is speech, writing, facial expressions, gestures, and signs. It has a certain structure and it can influence people through literature, for example. On the other hand, good linguistic expression also helps us to get along with other people. It connects people to community and it is used for expressing emotions, not least because emotion is present in words. Language also speaks about land and culture. It is a part of the human being and it is used for self-expression, to bring thoughts into words and to give shape to the world. It tells people who they are and where they are from. The human world view is constructed on language being the basis for thinking, along with morals. With language, one can study and understand the phenomena of the world and, learning languages, the world view expands. With language, we establish contacts with other people, and classify both concrete and abstract things. Language influences national identity and, if we spoke another language in Finland, we would be different. On the other hand, some things are easier to say in another language because of the emotions that certain words contain. The essay ST11 asks what Finnish identity would be like if we spoke some other language. It states that a mother tongue is more for emotions than are other languages. With language, we can preserve knowledge that has been gathered through centuries and, with this, we can educate ourselves. Different languages can have many differences between the meanings of words, and cultural differences can be clearly seen in languages. Therefore, we can learn about other cultures and human attitudes through language. In brief, humanity could not exist without language.

The meaning of language is great for humans. With language, we communicate and construct our identity. Language is a priceless part of human life, on weekdays and on the weekend. You cannot escape language but, on the other hand, you do not have to. In brief, language is a means of communication that you cannot survive without. (SP5)

The Finnish language is an important part of me. It is my mother tongue, and, with it, I can express my thoughts clearly. Even if I knew hundreds of languages, Finnish would be the only one that is a part of me. I was born in Finland and surrounded by Finnish culture, so I have developed a strong Finnish identity, in which Finnish language plays a very important role. It tells me who I am and where I come from. Finnish is the thing that keeps me in my own culture and in my home country. Wherever I am, there is one place where my home is, and not least because of language. (SP6)

The most important is that messages are delivered and we understand each other. I think that is the most important task and meaning for language. (SP9)
Language is a device I use to organize my world and to express myself. Language gives my thoughts a clear form and shape. [--] Language is an even stronger part of our identity than citizenship of a country. (SP10)

[Speaking a foreign language] expands our world view and helps us to survive in the internationalizing world. We understand other cultures better and learn to appreciate our own country and language. (ST4)

The mother tongue has, through time, been important for speakers. It creates national pride and unites people with each other. Finland would be very different if we spoke Swedish or Russian, for example. (ST7)

[--] I still think that some things are easier to express in a foreign language. Would it not be easier to say to someone “I love you” instead of “minä rakastan sinua”? (ST10)

Because everyone has a unique way to communicate, language is also an essential part of human identity and self image. We also draw several conclusions on the basis of language use; it tells us about the profession and status of the speaker, as well as about political and religious views and background... (ST11)

A common language is necessary when we think of how society works. It is hard to imagine humankind without languages. Language plays a significant role when thinking about national identity – it unites people. (ST12)

With language, I can speak about love, hate and my other feelings. However, they would mean something slightly different, if I spoke a language other than Finnish. (ST15)

Language is a necessary device for communication. People need language for sharing information, skills and emotions. Language does not necessarily have to be spoken or written. Signs, looks, gestures, body positions and moves, music and art can sometimes express more than words.  

[--] As a measure of humanity, language could go hand in hand with morals. Both of them are necessary for a fluent life with other people. (ST17)
5.4.2. What does language mean to you?

At Level 1, Language is seen as a means of communication and the emphasis of the essay is on communication.

Students who have gone to a comprehensive school in Savitaipale (12 persons, essays SP1, SP2, SP8, SP11, ST2, ST3, ST5, ST6, ST8, ST9, ST13 and ST18) stated that language is important because it separates us from other people (SP2, SP11) and emphasizes the region from where the speaker comes. It tells who we are (ST2). Arguments for this were an opinion of the beauty of language (SP2) and that it cannot be taken away (SP11) as well as a concrete experience of speaking different dialects (ST2). Language is also important because of communication (ST3, ST5, ST8, ST9 and ST13). Arguments were an opinion that we would understand other people properly (ST3) and a subjective observation about the eagerness to read as a child (ST5). Also, an opinion about the significance of language in lyrics and, thus, music contributing to communication as well as an experience of writing poetry (ST9). The role of language in communication is discussed in an experience of being able to speak without hesitation. Some people may also be nervous when speaking in a foreign language (ST8). Internationality, language as a part of personality and self-expression were considered important and an argument for this was an opinion of how a mother tongue influences these (ST13). Togetherness that belongs to language was understood through an opinion concerning learning English (ST6) and the sense of safety after returning to a mother tongue after travelling abroad.

I find my mother tongue, Finnish, very important for me. Finnish sounds beautiful and it is unique, compared to other languages in the world. (SP2)

In addition to a means of communication, for me, language has been a thing that separates me from foreigners. With it, I can express being Finnish and, by using it, I indicate that I am proud of my Finnish origin. Language is also one of the things that no one can take away from me. (SP11)

As a child, I also became interested indifferent dialects that I noticed my relatives were speaking. I adopted them rather easily; for example, when I was visiting my cousins in Tampere, I began to speak the local dialect and, with my sisters, I speak the dialect of Savo because they have adopted that while living in the Mikkeli and Jyväskylä areas. Sometimes, I might speak all three dialects simultaneously. Dialects are fun, fascinating and important, because they emphasize the place the person comes from. It would be sad if they disappeared. [--]
For me, perhaps, emphasizing the Finnish language means that I am proud of being Finnish. I do not see it very necessary that Finland should become a modern international nation, where the language of instruction would be English. Globalization would lead to that eventually, would it not? The whole world would resemble the USA, and all traces of indigenous cultures could only be found in museums.

Because of this, language is important. We should fight to preserve our mother tongue and not go with the flow. Our mother tongue reminds us of who we are and where we come from. With it, we give shape to the world and, thanks to it, we can learn other languages, as well. (ST2)

Many people in different cultures have an opinion of the significance of language, but for me, it is both spoken and written - an important device for communicating with other people and for making them understand what I want to tell them. (ST3)

For me, language has always meant a great deal. When thinking now, I could not survive without spoken or written language. Language is also a means of communication and a sign of nationality. Through language, I have also been able to read books and go to school. Already, as a child, I was eager to read, and that has contributed significantly to learning my mother tongue and, through it, the increased meaning of it to me. Books have given different words and phrases to my language use but also, grammatical tips for learning language. (ST5)

When writing lyrics, language is essential to the process. When listening to music, I first pay attention to the lyrics, no matter what language they are. Music would be only music, if it did not have linguistic significance. Through language, music comes alive. If using language skillfully, one can write fine lyrics. (ST9)

Even though I write plenty of texts in English and watch English TV series, Finnish is very important for me. I tend to freeze in a situation when speaking to a person whose mother tongue is English. Furthermore, even if I know the person, I’m nervous speaking. In English, I am nervous, but, in Finnish, I am not. (ST8)

For me, languages mean internationality. Knowing several languages, one can survive in the global world. However, most important is to know your mother tongue. Even if I moved abroad, I would not forget Finnish and its richness.

I would not be able to forget my mother tongue, because it is a part of my personality. My dialect tells other people where I come from, and the words I use can easily reveal how old I am, what I am interested in, as well as my friends. When I grow older, it grows with me, and when experiencing something larger than life, it follows right behind me.

My mother tongue plays a large role in my life. If I did not have it, my life would be quiet and empty, actually meaningless. I would be all alone. With language, I communicate with the surrounding world, and I can express myself and discuss with my friends. (ST13)
When studying English, for example, one realizes how important one’s own mother tongue is and how it influences everyday life. It brings a sense of togetherness and, with it, we can learn new languages. (ST6)

For me, personally, language and, especially a mother tongue, plays an important role, helping with my childhood memories, as well as with future challenges. Even if I traveled abroad, hearing different languages, not necessarily understanding what is being said, I can always return and speak a language that I know for sure. A mother tongue brings a sense of safety wherever I might be. (ST18)

*At Level 2, In addition to communication, language is regarded as a factor that influences identity, but identity is not discussed further.*

**Savitaipale Students in a comprehensive school, all grades**

Students who have gone to a comprehensive school in Savitaipale (12 persons, essays SP3, SP4, SP5, SP6, SP7, SP9, SP10, ST1, ST4, ST7, ST10, ST11, ST12, ST14, ST15, ST16, ST17 and ST19) said that the meaningful thing in language is that it helps us to get along with other people (SP3); it is a part of human identity (SP6) and it helps when learning other languages (SP7). With our own language, we can express emotions better (SP9), and languages expand the world view (ST4). Arguments for these were opinions that this is how things are. It is also significant that language connects the user to the community (SP4) and is a part of humans themselves (ST17).

This view comes from a concrete experience of living in a different place and working for a foreign family during the summer. Language is also important when expressing feelings (SP10) and it brings a sense that you are not alone (ST10). The possibility to communicate is important, as well as self-expression (ST12). Tones of words in different languages were considered significant (ST15). These were reasoned by subjective observation about one’s own language use when writing, talking to oneself, compared to the possibility for self-expression through visual arts as well as through reading both in English and Finnish. The feeling about belonging to something that language brings was considered important as well (ST11) and the argument for this was the feeling itself.

For me, the significance of language is not that great. A person who is linguistically talented usually gets along better with other people, but there are exceptions, of course. However, we can say that good language skills cannot harm you. It is more a sign of being well-educated and, when traveling abroad, it plays an even larger role than usual. I do not maintain that everyone should be a famous writer or that someone should speak perfect English. What I mean is that one should know the basic skills in
order to survive in life. (SP3)

I have spoken several languages and dialects in my life and, therefore, I understand the meaning of them. For eleven years, I lived in Suonenjoki, where people spoke the local Savo dialect. There, it was natural, but, when we moved to Lemi, things changed. I was soon considered “an outsider” because of my dialect. As time passed, I learned the local dialect, and then, I was accepted as a member of the community. (SP4)

The Finnish language is an important part of me. It is my mother tongue and, with it, I can express my thoughts clearly. Even if I knew hundreds of languages, Finnish would be the only one that is a part of me. [---]

An outsider might say that Finnish is just a language among other languages. I say it is not, because it is important for me. Languages are important for national identities, so each language is important for its speakers. Each language is valuable. (SP6)

The meaning of a mother tongue is emphasized, especially when learning foreign languages. It is difficult to learn new, completely different, languages, if we do not know our own language well. As a Finn, learning is even more difficult, because the Finnish language is so different from Indo-European languages, for example. (SP7)

As a language, Finnish is very important for me. People in other countries surely think the same way, from their perspective. When speaking a mother tongue, you can make use of language nuances that you will not be able to reach when using other languages. I think this is due to the fact that we can express our own language better than other languages because it is a part of ourselves, and this is why we can express our feelings through language. (SP9)

Personally, it is poetry and writing that come first to my mind. Poetry and, thus, the Finnish language is, for me, an important device for expressing emotions. I put a piece of myself into every piece of writing, and these together form a symbolic diary of my life. I go through my emotions and, through art, I am in contact with myself. I have therapy sessions with myself, with the help of language. (SP10)

Even though speaking a mother tongue and knowing it properly are vital, I am also in favour of foreign languages. They expand our world view and help us to survive in the global world. We understand other cultures better and learn to appreciate our own country and language – as it happened to me. (ST4)

I am used to speaking for myself all my life, and, as I learned English, I began to use it. Speaking, to me, is also a way to benefit from language. When speaking aloud, thoughts are easier to analyze and speaking relieves loneliness. (ST10)

For me, language is belonging to something, and coming from a certain place. (ST11)
Language appears to be surprisingly important, when thinking about my own life. You do not come to think of it, even though it is one of the central elements of our lives. The meaning of language, for me, increases because I am not talented in visual arts, for instance, and thus, I express myself though it. I speak a lot, and, for me, it is important to be able to communicate with each other. Colorful and diverse expressions tell about one’s personality. (ST12)

I notice the significance of language also when reading books in foreign languages, such as English and Swedish. I am not eager to read in other languages, when it is not for studying. However, there was a situation when I could not wait for a book to be translated into Finnish. The latest Harry Potter came out in July. Since it was the last one, I had to read it immediately.

Reading in English was not difficult; it was boring. Even though I could understand the plot rather easily, and I could check words in the dictionary, the meaning of them left me empty. They did not have the same feeling as the Finnish equivalents would have had. (ST15)

What does language mean to me? It is a part of my everyday life, and, without it, life would certainly be more difficult. [--]

There have been a few occasions in my life when the meaning of language has turned out to be central. The first time was few years ago, when I was working in a Belgian family. Their mother tongue was French, but the parents spoke fluent English, as well. I was in the upper level of comprehensive school and, although I spoke English rather well for my age, it was hard to spend much time with the family, because I was able to understand only a fraction of what they said. I felt very lonely and homesick, even though my home was only a few kilometers away from the summer cottage where we were. (ST17)

5.4.3. Conclusion

In the table “What is language?” are presented the different levels of the students’ concepts of language. In the table “What does language mean to you?” are presented the different levels of students’ experiences and clarifications about what language means to them.

“What is language?”

At level 1, language is said to be communication and that it unites and separates people from animals and from each other. Language is a way of expressing feelings and thoughts, self-expression; it brings a sense of safety and is constructed of gestures, sounds, words, sentences and stories. It can be expressed in writing and speech; words can have several meanings. Language changes all the time and, therefore, develops. It also helps to analyze the world, and is a part of
human personality and culture. It influences thinking, can be played with, or we can learn new languages with it. Language tells where a person is from; it is everything that is related to national characteristics; its purpose has been to raise national pride, for instance.

**At level 2**, language is communication; it connects and separates people. It is part of identity, and it develops and changes. It is expressed in writing, speech, facial expressions, gestures, signs and has a certain structure. It can influence people; with its help, people can express feelings, tell about culture and country. Therefore, it is part of a human self, brings thoughts into words, shapes the world, tells people who they are and where they are from; the world view is based on it. Language is the basis of thinking, along with morals; with it, we can study and understand phenomena, expand the world view through learning different languages, create contacts with other people, and create concepts. It influences the sense of nationality. A mother tongue is considered for feelings and, with language, we can preserve information and culture. Differences in meaning can be huge, cultural differences can be seen in languages; through language, we can learn about culture and human attitudes. Humanity would not exist without language.

"What does language mean to you?"

**At level 1**, the significance of language, as discussed through an opinion, a concrete experience and a subjective observation. The significance of language is that it separates us from other people, emphasizes place of residence, and tells us who we are. The beauty of language was mentioned and that it cannot be taken away from people. The communicative nature of language was considered important as well as internationality. Language as a part of personality and self-expression were considered important, as well.

**At level 2**, the meaning of language was discussed through an opinion, a concrete experience, a subjective observation and an emotion. The opinion was that the importance of language belonging to human identity. A concrete experience was belonging to a community, whereas, a subjective observation was used for reasoning the influence of language to self-expression and to revealing emotions. An emotion was used for reasoning a belonging to something and coming from a certain place.
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<th>Level</th>
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<th>Students in a comprehensive school, all grades</th>
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<td>Lappeenranta</td>
<td>Students in Steiner school, Grades 1 to 13</td>
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<td>Lappeenranta</td>
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<td>Students in Steiner school, Grades 10 to 13</td>
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Table: “What is language?”
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<th>Level</th>
<th>Savitaipale</th>
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Table: “What does language mean to you?”
6. SUMMARY OF THE ESSAYS, THE CONTENTS OF THE ESSAYS COMPARED TO THE VIEWS OF ANTHROPOSOPHY, LINGUISTICS, PHILOSOPHY AND PSYCHOLOGY, AND IDEAS FOR DEVELOPING TEACHING

6.1. Summary of the Essays

After reading and analysing the essays – and even now – I have thought how precise a line can be drawn between the different levels. The essays at Level 1 seem to be clear, but making a distinction between Levels 2 and 3 was not as simple as one might have imagined. In this section, we can see that what language means to students, for example, varies drastically from level to level, and, in the lower levels, might also include experiences that do not exist at the highest level. When selecting essays from different categories, they must be limited to what students think language to be and not forgotten that this has been the leading thought when creating these categories.

The tables illustrate the paper and create pauses when reading this analysis. The tables are formed during the reading process, and there must be dozens of other ways to present the data in brief. The main emphasis has to be in the text, and in the examples taken from the essays.

When reading the essays, it was not clear how to find, in the text, what language means to a student. In most texts, this was mentioned clearly, and the topics were arranged according to the questions in the assignment. In other texts, there were no key phrases indicating what the student’s very reason was that made language important for the writer. The whole essay may be general knowledge about language and what the writer considers to be significant for people, or the essay might describe a certain situation, in which language had played an important role. In these situations, I have interpreted the situation to be important because it influenced what the student said about what language is. Presenting purely general information is complicated because of the lack of the student’s own views. In these cases, the writers hide behind the text and the reader is only able to see what students think language to be when writing about communication and identity, for example. In these cases, I have ignored the meaning of language, and there are no examples of this in the section entitled What does language mean to you?

Usually, the essays revealed one thing about what makes language significant and then, there was an example, or the writer simply stated an opinion about the topic. In other cases, there might be
two or three important situations. I have tried to take all examples and situations into account, but if there were several similar situations in different essays, I have not quoted all of them in this paper.

The meaning of language appears in the essays through different experiences, observations, emotions, and opinions. Experiences are very concrete situations when traveling abroad, or when using language with foreign people. In these cases, the writer has, through this experience, understood language to have influence on different things, self-expression, different tones, etc. This has been considered significant because it has been mentioned in the essay. Observations about language are subjective observations about the writer's own language use. It is easier to relate difficult things in a foreign language, and thinking is easiest in our own language. Emotions are present in language when the mother tongue gives a sense of safety, so that the writer feels a sense of belonging to a group. The mother tongue was considered as the language of emotions much more powerfully than other languages. Opinions about the significance of language could be named as views on the topic. They told about, for example, how skills in a mother tongue help in learning other languages, as well. There were neither clear examples of these nor observations about the personal use of language. The table, later on, will clarify how experiences, observations, opinions, and emotions are divided in the essays of each group of students.

I did not separate the differences between males and females because I did not find it useful. Taking too many categories would have detracted from the main point: what people think about language and what it means to high school students of both Steiner and comprehensive schools and also from the topic “How to teach Finnish language and literature concentrating not only on language use, but also on what language is.”

Even though I say that I am not interested in differences related to location, the structure of the table shows that there are some differences. I am not going to discuss the reason for this thoroughly. Students who have gone to Lappeenranta Steiner School, all grades did not reach Level 3, whereas two of the students who have taken only high school grades in a Steiner school attained this level. In Turku, the situation was the opposite. With a sample this narrow, we should not draw conclusions without further studies, such as interviews. It might be that a written assignment leaves out some aspects that the students might have mentioned in an interview, and that it might support the written texts.
Direct observations about what language is and what it means to a student:

“What is language?”

- At Level 3, there were students who have gone to Steiner school for all grades, as well as those who came to a Steiner high school (Group 10 - 13), but not students from comprehensive schools.
- The purpose of linguistic self-expression was discussed at Level 1 among comprehensive school students in Steiner high schools (Group 10 to 13), and at Level 1 among students who have attended all grades in a Steiner school (Group 1 to 13).
- Regional differences were as follows: Group 1 to 13 discussed self-expression at Level 1 in Vantaa and Turku, but not in Lappeenranta, where that topic was at Level 2, together with identity. In Vantaa and Turku, identity was not attached to self-expression at Level 1. Why this is, I do not have any answers. Reasons might be the number of courses, the order of other subjects, or a context, on the whole, that I do not know in detail. This difference would need more research.
- In the essays of the upper level of comprehensive school, there was the term national pride that did not appear in the essays of Steiner school students. Language was often mentioned from the point of view of studying. With the help of language, one can learn other languages. Steiner school students in both groups (Group 1 to 13 and Group 10 to 13) stated that language makes a distinction between humans and animals. This was not mentioned at all in the essays of comprehensive school students. On the other hand, Steiner school students who were at Level 3 mentioned that knowing different languages expands the world view, whereas the same things were mentioned among comprehensive school students at Level 2. At the same level, identity was also mentioned, but its influence, in this case, was not discussed. The essays simply mentioned that the world view was expanded.

“What does language mean to you?”

- Group 1 to 13

Experiences and answers to the question “What does language mean to you?” were related to emotions, a concrete experience of a situation, a subjective observation about one’s own language use as well as an opinion about something important and that language is a part of this. An emotion occurred only at Level 2 and a subjective observation of personal language use at Levels 1 and 3, but not at Level 2.
• **Group 10 to 13**
Experiences and answers to the question “What does language mean to you?” were related to a subjective observation, concrete experiences, opinions and emotions. A subjective observation occurred only at Level 2.

• **Savitaipale**
Experiences and answers to the question “What does language mean to you?” were related to a concrete experience, a subjective observation, an opinion and an emotion. An opinion occurred only at Level 2.

What was common to Steiner school students was that a subjective observation as an argument for the significance of language was mentioned at Levels 1 and 3, but not at Level 2. However, among comprehensive school students, emotions were already mentioned at Level 1, compared to the essays of Steiner school students, which mentioned this at Level 2. Both a concrete experience and an opinion occurred among all groups and all levels. I think this is a topic on which I should concentrate more carefully.

The students must have plenty of observations about personal language use; after all, they have spoken and written all their lives. But still, the significance of language is discussed through a concrete experience. Experiences are often simultaneously subjective observations about personal language use. An example of this might be Spanish as a language of emotion, making its speaker more cheerful and brave. The discussion with a close friend is very concrete, and the observation of how this changes is subjective.

The arguments of the Steiner school group 1 to 13 at Level 1 were concrete experiences about language as a phenomenon that unites people, the power of words and diversity of languages. At Level 2, these were the significance of spoken and written language, as well as unity. The influence of language on culture and the significance of identity were discussed at Level 3.

The group 10 to 13 reasoned, with a concrete experience, the unity that language brings, as well as the significance of written language. Level 2 emphasised the importance of communication and Level 3, how language influences identity.

The candidates for matriculation examination of the comprehensive school used, at Level 1, concrete experiences about the importance of language in communication, as well as language
separating us from other nations. At Level 2, concrete experiences were used for arguing that language connects its user to community and is a part of the human itself.

If we think of how teachers can influence the views of students about language and that, according to this paper, views on language and its significance for students are reasoned by concrete experiences, subjective observations, opinions and emotions, the only thing that a teacher can possibly offer to students is concrete experiences. A teacher can ask students to observe their personal language use in different contexts, but the situation must be concrete in order to be able to make these observations and, even then, it is up to the students to be able to do this. A teacher can also offer prepared opinions about language, but, in these cases, they are those of the teacher, not those of the students. In order to create an emotion, we need a concrete situation. It is the only clear thing that a teacher can offer in the process of creating opinions and emotions. Prepared observations and emotions cannot be offered to students, if we are trying to help them become independently thinking adults able to make a difference. Offering the right opportunity is naturally not enough. The plain situation, without observation, leaves a student without a deeper understanding of the object, language. Therefore, the teacher can, at least in theory, think of concrete situations and create lesson plans paying attention to these.

The concrete situations in the essays explain what language means to the students. Simultaneously, with this, they also reveal what language is. Through concrete experiences in different contexts, the students have been able to give the following arguments:

- language unites people
- words are powerful
- there are several languages
- language is both written and spoken
- togetherness is a part of language
- language influences culture
- language influences identity
- written language is important
- communication is important
- language separates us from other nations
- language connects its user to community
- language is part of being human itself
If we think of teaching as being more than concentrating in a single classroom – and why should we not do that? – the teacher should have the possibility of presenting situations where the experiences mentioned in the list above can be initiated. All of these cannot take place in a classroom, but that is not necessary, because learning is not bound to a certain place. How teaching should then be arranged will be discussed in the next section.

At the end of this section, there is a table displaying how the above-mentioned phenomena were divided among the groups of students. The reader has probably noticed how the views of Steiner school students differ from those of students in comprehensive schools as well as what arguments the groups of students use to support their views on what language is. To return to my research topic “How to teach Finnish language and literature concentrating not only on language use”, the difference between the groups may remain without further discussion in this paper. However, when reading the essays, we should pay attention to the views on language compared to how anthroposophy, linguistics, philosophy and psychology consider language.
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<td>Students in comprehensive school, all grades</td>
<td>Students in Steiner school, Grades 1 to 13</td>
<td>Students in Steiner school, Grades 10 to 13</td>
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Table: *What does language mean to you?* Grounds for answers among different student groups
6.2. Contents of the essays compared to the views of anthroposophy, linguistics, philosophy and psychology

In this section, I will discuss issues that can be most clearly observed in the essays and the theoretical chapter of this paper. I will not compare each view in the essays to those of the theories, but, rather, discuss topics that might support each other or that raise questions suitable for further studies.

6.2.1. Contents of the essays in relation to the anthroposophical view of language

Students explain how we can influence people through language, how powerful words can be and that they are full of emotion. All words do not feel the same, and, in a foreign language, it might be easier to discuss difficult things than in a mother tongue that is usually considered the language of emotions. The core of language, as Steiner writes (1995), states that the power we receive in our thoughts is also present in our words. Nowadays, we are not able to feel this power because the core of language is far from the language we speak. Before language became abstract, the meaning of words was related to the meaning of sounds, and human senses turned into words through sounds. Some of the power must exist because students discuss emotional reactions and how saying certain things in a mother tongue can be embarrassing. Students do not discuss the correspondence between sound and meaning, but, when speaking in lessons, they continue with the topic, saying that swearing in a foreign language is not as satisfying as it sometimes is in Finnish.

In the past, the connection between voice and event was clear, although unconscious; sound and meaning had a connection. In abstract thinking, it is impossible to find the connection. We do not recognize the qualities of sounds, as earlier. However, this is important in order to be able to communicate with the world within (Steiner, 1995). In the case where students would be able to recognize the correspondence between sound and meaning, self-understanding, as well as understanding the world, could increase. This is quite a great wish, especially when the teachers themselves live in the same world with students and are thus also uncertain about how sounds and meanings correspond with each other in language – or if they do recognize it, they do not feel it in the same way as have past generations.

In order to understand language and its development, we should examine its connection to the human soul and how humans experience different words (Steiner, 1995). I am not aware of how this
could be studied, but I think that students are, at some level, conscious of experiencing words. After all, they have spoken of the power of words and how one can cherish or hurt with them.

In some cases, students have expressed their own relation to grammar and language skills, from a technical point of view. Grammar was considered an agonizing collection of rules, unnecessary, when it comes to communication. However, learning grammar is essentially connected to human growth. According to Steiner (1995), in learning grammar, humans bring unconscious speech to a conscious level. In grammar, we can be conscious of our language. Even though, as a teacher, it is disappointing to read about grammar being unpleasant, there is no reason to be worried, but, rather, one should think of how the consciousness of language would truly increase through grammar. How can we set teaching at a level where students would experience language in a way where language would express something about itself for real?

According to Steiner (1996), it is important to keep grammar teaching as lively as possible. This means discussing grammar, and not writing down examples, but only rules. Writing examples fosters forgetting, whereas discussion and remembering of rules brings them to life and encourages students to come up with examples of their own. Also, in lessons, the examples should come from the students, ready-made examples kill activity in the class. This could bring grammar to a concrete level of emotions providing students with experiences and observations of a language system. If the experience of grammar is boring and agonizing, teaching fails in its purpose of keeping it lively.

Students state that language connects and separates people. It is communication and helps in a globalizing world to get along with different people. The article An Improvisation on the Theme of Educational Intuition (Rawson, 2004) discusses the essence of language integrated in teaching. Language learning teaches a human to grow together with the surrounding world and to create connections to other people. When learning foreign languages, one needs to have at least one other person to communicate with, because language is learned for communicating with others. By practising, humans also learn to understand the people around them, similarly to a craftsman learning to make more beautiful objects through practice. Thus, language is connected to the ability to understand the world and also, I believe, to the ability to understand how language influences the way people see the surrounding world. On the basis of what students have expressed, we can assume that, for them, language teaching follows the principles presented by Rawson (2004). All views on language are formed not only in the classroom, but, as described earlier, also in concrete
situations, when travelling and with friends. Students admit that foreign languages influence how the worldview expands and develops.

6.2.2. Contents of the essays in relation to the linguistic view of language

In his essay, *Linguistic contributions to the study of mind: future*, Chomsky (2006) asks the question *what is language?* According to him, it is wrong to consider language to be informative, always based on facts and conscious. We can state facts with language or we can mislead; clear thoughts show the level of knowledge or just play with it. If we want to understand language, we should ask what it is and what it is used for.

For students, it is clear that language is used in different contexts, and that we can do different things with it. It would be wonderful if students, in addition to the things mentioned in the following example, recognised the significance of language to human appearance as well as why humans are like they are and why they behave they behave.

From numerous language uses, we can always choose the right one, when I want to persuade, flatter, argue or lie, for example. In language use, there are several shades of grey, in addition to black and white, and it requires skill to tell what is true and what is a lie, or to notice the use of irony and sarcasm by a talented language user. Although reading and writing skills are a talent and a great gift for me, they do not replace speaking. I cannot persuade crowds of people or say challenging arguments in panel discussions, not even to mention answering tricky questions in front of the media.

(LP5)

The question “*What is language?*” cannot be answered only by examining language use in different contexts; we must take into account how humans experience language and what type of observations they make about these experiences. How should this be carried out? Chomsky (2006) puts forth his opinion on modern educational trends, where computers and networks are an essential part of teaching: In education there is a constant pressure on increasing the use of technology in schools and basing lesson plans on this. Educational goals are far from those of technology use; they are completely different. Technology should be an instrument, not a goal, even though it possibly helps teaching the subject, evaluating students and making teaching more efficient. The little we know about human intelligence should be taken into account, so that we offer students as few prepared patterns as possible. Presenting similar cases as technology prevents creative skills
that are needed in language use.

A rather un-Chomskyan view of language is presented in an essay where language is said to be a quality that transfers to the speaker:

I believe that languages have their basic characteristics that are able to cling to the speaker of language. Languages are able to become a part of human identity and even change it. (LT2)

This view is close to that held by Whorf (1956). In his writings, Whorf (1956) tries to find those parts of language that make people see the world differently, even if the situation is the same. According to him, language guides people’s thinking and behaviour and that behind this is the world of higher dimensions that we are not able to see and that is waiting to be explored by all fields of science in order to unite these components. This, along with seeing the world of higher dimensions in language and not only the “skin” of the physical world, is new in linguistics. Otherwise, we can describe language with earthly terms that have been used for a long time.

Whorf stated that people consider language to be a means of communication and its form being secondary. He also thought that people believe that language reflects a ready-formed reality and set of beliefs. It also does not influence how the world is shaped and how thoughts are formed (Lucy, 1999). After reading the essays of the high school students, I can understand Whorf’s thinking. In Chapter 5, I presented the students’ view of language. I presumed that, in the essays, there was no consideration of language as an editor of thoughts but, rather, views of language as a means of communication. This was not the case. Students spoke of language influencing identity and some students were able to describe how this is done. I am very happy about this because Lucy (1999) mentions that people usually regard language as neither an editor of thoughts nor as something that would influence behaviour, because language is unconscious and automatic. People use language because they can, and that is it. We need consciousness to find out how language influences the way we see the world. Some students obviously were conscious of language influencing identity and they were able to express how language influences themselves.
6.2.3. Contents of the essays in relation to the philosophical view of language

Students mention language as being a part of them. It is an inseparable part that we cannot let loose, even in sleep. Hearing a mother tongue after a long trip brings a good feeling, similarly to when we see another person who speaks the same language, when traveling abroad. Language is like a portable home country. Gadamer (2004) writes that language lives in us so that we feel at home with it, similarly as we feel at home in the world. When we speak of language, we are using language. It is an inseparable part of us. This is why it is not only a tool that we use when we want to understand; it is not a tool of understanding. Learning to speak does not mean learning how to use a tool in order to express something about the world we know. It means that we learn to control the world and how we face it during our life. Humans have always tended to interpret the world in a certain way. The diversity of interpretations and the ability to interpret mean that humans grow in relation to the world as well as to themselves.

Students express, with the help of concrete situations, their thoughts of how a mother tongue feels important. If we could offer these experiences as much as possible, teaching would be livelier than it is now. Concrete experiences can be offered through poetry, for example.

In his text, Gadamer (2004) will return to poets who have formed a sense of the rhythm of language. Poetry can express the harmonic relationship between humans and the world, and it is expressed among poets as a sense of a rhythm. The structure of a poem becomes language that expresses the connection between the soul and the world. The experience of language can be experiencing the rhythm. Thus, language reveals itself through rhythm, and humans feel this rhythm in themselves. (Gadamer, 2004) Through poetry, language can reveal various things.

A piece of work speaks to a human with its own language, and people understand something about themselves through a piece of work. It has meaning that we can see when watching it, but only if we allow ourselves to observe without assuming that we know all about the piece of work. (Gadamer, 2004). After offering the possibility for a concrete situation and experience, it is time to stop and think and observe the situation. Without observing, a subjective observation of language and language use is not possible. The observation supports the situation and, thus, teaching.

We can consider language to have a connection to understanding, but this cannot be found until we give ourselves an opportunity for hearing what the object and what another person have to say in
their own language and the way of expression. If this is true, the definition for language should be changed to reflect more than speech and correspondence in sound and meaning. When the object has something to say and a person experiences something, this can be regarded as the language of the object. When a person speaks of this experience, he or she translates the message into his or her own language.

According to another way of thinking, language is a means of self-expression that appears in connection to other people. Students mention this several times. Language is a part of humanity, and without the possibility of speaking about the world with language, the world would not exist, as Lawn (2006) rephrases thoughts by Taylor (1985).

I agree with Gadamer when he states that it is not possible for language to be just a means of communication, when its purpose would only be changing thoughts, making things work or making time go by while waiting for a bus. Language has a social nature of its own, but its fundamental purpose is to create a deliberate conversation, a dialogue with other people. As a language user, a human does not only need communication, but self-understanding (Lawn, 2006) that dialogue can bring us, also expressed by Gadamer (2004). Language makes it possible to communicate; communication creates a dialogue and dialogue, self-understanding. If I were able to strengthen the self-understanding of my students, they would more clearly understand the unique influence that language has on people.

6.2.4. Contents of the essays in relation to the psychological view on language

Students write that language influences human thinking. People, for example, name things, in order to be able to discuss certain issues. There are different phases in language development and, although it is not mentioned in the examples, in the essays, there are passages where the writer speaks of learning to speak, and how the interest in reading has influenced the development of language.

Vygotsky (1988) argues that thinking develops through language development and social experiences. Only in teenagers, the development of language and thought reaches the point when concept formation becomes possible. Correct concepts are impossible to form without words, and
conceptual thinking requires verbal thinking. How does a young person act in this situation?

Vygotsky (1988) writes:

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Unlike the development of instinct, the thinking and behavior of adolescents are prompted, not from within, but from without, by the social milieu. The tasks with which society confronts an adolescent as he enters the cultural, professional, and civic world of adults undoubtedly become an important factor in the emergence of conceptual thinking. If the milieu presents no such tasks to the adolescent, makes no new demands on him, and does not stimulate his intellect by providing a sequence of new goals, his thinking fails to reach the highest stages, or reaches them with great delay. (p.108)
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In teaching, we should take into account the age level of the student, as well as how the student is able to receive what is taught and becomes excited as well as feeling that it is challenging enough. In the next section, I will discuss how students’ experiences could benefit teaching by providing ideas for making it livelier. Could the teacher offer students opportunities for experiences that would raise the students’ level of understanding from Level 1 to Level 3?

### 6.3. Ideas for the development of teaching

The curriculum for Grades 10 to 12 includes several courses in Finnish language and literature. The purpose of schooling is to strengthen the ego of the young, the core of which is thinking, feeling, and willing. (Rawson & Richter, 2004). When concentrating the quality of high school classes, these three elements can be clearly seen, as will be addressed later in the chapter. Thinking is typical for Grade 10 as is feeling for Grade 11. Grade 12 is for finding a personal path through willing. These are available for teachers and they have to meet requirements that students set with their help. In this section, I will present some ideas for developing teaching. These are short inspirations that came to mind when reading the students’ essays. I know myself well enough to be certain that there will be more ideas during the following semesters.

I will introduce the current ideas grade by grade. The thought is that, in Grades 10 to 12, students would raise their level from Level 1 to Level 3 when preparing for the matriculation examination. In case other teachers come up with ideas while reading this, I would be more than happy to receive feedback on this particular topic.
6.3.1. Grade 10

In Grade 10, students should begin thinking that there are reasons for each phenomenon. Through the thinking process, the reason can be discovered. (Rawson & Richter, 2004) The magic word at that age would then be thinking (Petrash, 2003). It is important to think about how things differ from each other, not only what has changed during the centuries (Gerwin 1997; Childs 2005). In Finnish language and literature, teaching is meant to give students the tools to see the world through providing a whole picture of what language is. Every single part of it is important. There is a place for every word and syllable and every word and syllable is part of something larger. There is fiction, lyrics, drama and non-fiction that, when combined, create something greater than just the sum of all separate units: the field of literature. That way, students can perceive the world as a unit (but the teacher should remember not to start from the separate units, but from the whole entity). The question in Grade 10 is *what?* The contents of the courses are taught from as wide a perspective as possible by presenting factual information about what there is in the world.

It would seem natural to think that the view of language, as with all other subjects, would take its shape in the long run, and that learning is a lifelong process, even when it comes to language. So it would be natural to think that all knowledge cannot be adapted at once. A good idea would be to set a goal to help Grade 10 students think of language at Level 1. This is in harmony with the curriculum; all three course descriptions of Grade 10 emphasise communication, the distinctions between written and spoken language, as well as the structure and use of texts.

At Level 1, students had concrete experiences of

- language connected to togetherness
- language uniting people
- communicating being important
- language separating us from other peoples
- language binding the user to community
- written language being significant
- words being powerful

The student who considered that language unites people (LP2) presents an experience of a trip where he paid attention to this. Language means unity between people, which was reasoned by an
experience of discussion with foreign relatives (LT3). The origin of these experiences is not in
school, but it can offer opportunities for similar experiences. The first trip abroad will be a cultural
excursion in Grade 12 but, nevertheless, an exchange with another foreign school might be possible
in Grade 10. Lappeenranta Steiner School has begun an exchange with the St. Petersburg Steiner
School, and Grades 4 and 5 are visiting our school to carry out the project Kalevala. It would be
wonderful to carry out similar exchanges with the upper grades and, not least, because of the
students being able to have experiences of uniting the aspect of language. Finnish would unite
students within the class and English would connect the students to Russian students.
Simultaneously, they would learn that communication is important, and that it is not as easy to run
things in another language as in a mother tongue.

Language was seen as fascinating, and it means belonging to a community, in this case to the
population of Finland. Students spoke of language as understanding other people, emphasising
where the other person comes and expressing who we are (ST2). The argument for this was a
concrete experience of speaking different dialects (ST2).

Students are used to hearing different dialects in the classroom. It does not take long for a student to
change his or her dialect to a local one, if s/he does not like standing out in the class. Becoming
familiar with dialects should be lively and students’ experience should come in the actual context of
different dialects in Finland. One alternative is that the students’ union should take an active role in
this. The active members of the students’ unions of Steiner schools in Finland meet several times a
year to discuss topics that are of importance. Meetings are usually arranged in Helsinki, and a
couple of times in Lappeenranta. It would be wonderful to have students from all over Finland
discuss with each other, instead of only the board members of the student’s unions. This way,
Finnish students would be able to meet each other to discuss issues of interest, such as what it is
like to go to school in Western or Northern Finland. The language which students use would be
concrete, and they would also hear different dialects other than just that of their own hometown.

Experiences of the power of words were a trip to Italy to see a friend’s father, diversity of language
at a rock festival where you can hear different dialects, and the uniting power of language when
hearing a mother tongue in an unexpected place. (TT2). It would be good to introduce something
surprising for students. The power of words was discussed this year through the poetry of Emily
Dickinson, when Grade 10 was reading the same poems in both Finnish and English. The tone and
atmosphere were different in different languages. Noticing this when reading poetry, for example,
would bring the right type of concreteness, which sets a good base for observations. At the same time, we should also encourage free writing, because written language was considered important because of a personal habit of writing (LT9).

6.3.2. Grade 11

In Grade 11, the main focus at this age is feeling (Skinnari 1998). It can be seen in the pupils’ eagerness to know the reason for every little thing; why the school has the same old habits, why the classes cannot be organized differently. The question for this age group is “Why are things this way?” (Gerwin 1997: 13).

Literature, history, foreign language, eurythmy and the arts try to respond to this feeling by providing problems to be solved. There is no longer black and white in drawing because life is not as simple as it used to be. By providing a problem and leading the students to solve it considering the ideal, we help them choose their own path in life. Therefore, different periods in the history of literature are presented at this age. It is important to teach and encourage students to think of the qualities of those periods, but also to let them see that, in between periods, there is always a transition, where people are neither in the past nor in the next phase, but somewhere in between, pondering how to make the world a different and better place for ourselves. Students are now in a similar transition phase, and the focus in language teaching is now expressing these thoughts. Writing essays in which the students can discuss freely, trying to pursue their own thoughts of where to go and what to do, will help them to understand their feelings.

I think that Grade 11 students could reach Level 2 when they become conscious of language influencing identity. Concrete experiences at Level 2 would be that

- language is related to togetherness
- language is both written and spoken
- language is part of being human itself

Since students who are at Level 2 are not yet able to understand how language influences identity, there were no concrete experiences in this area. The importance of togetherness came up in the experience of belonging to a group. Therefore, it would be useful for Grade 11 to concentrate on togetherness that would continue through Grade 12, as well. Belonging to a group can be exercised...
by rehearsing a play, a long-time successful tradition. After all, students stated that written and spoken language mean a great deal to them, and this was reasoned by an experience of theatre, for instance. In addition to an increased sense of togetherness, the project would experience the difference between written and spoken language clearly. They would notice whether they are “in need of speaking” as a student writes in the essay, or they are more inclined to writing. The play is usually performed in Grade 12, but sometimes, Grade 11 has prepared a play in a foreign language, as well. Last year, the play was in English, and, the following year, it will be in Swedish. The goals for Finnish Language and Literature in Grade 11 include students finding their own voice in both writing and language use. Preparing a play would, at least, partly support these goals.

It is also significant that language binds the user to a community (SP4) and to a part of humans themselves (ST17). This is revealed through concrete experiences of living in a foreign region and working for a foreign family. Language, as part of the self, is closest to the experience that language influences identity. One writer worked in a foreign family. We cannot construct an equivalent situation in school, but involvement with foreign families, as well as with the Finnish-Russian or Finnish-Swedish society, would not seem impossible to arrange. During Grade 11, there is also a social work practice, when students spend a week in homes for the aged, in kindergarten, school or in an afternoon club. If this could be done in a foreign language, the above-mentioned experience might develop among students.

6.3.3. Grade 12

Grade 12 is full of energy. After the Grade 11 time of searching, it is now time to act. This class is the time to use the will. In language, it is reasonable to study the history of the Finnish language and to think about who developed the written language and what it means to us now. This development from spoken language into a written and official one has also changed and developed our country and the people here.

Besides the history of language, it is time to practise writing arguments and to learn how to express opinions and defend them. It is time to know the power of language. At the same time, it is important not to forget the others. There is always the world with other people; I am not the only one. Students learn that co-operation is needed; otherwise, one is left alone. The question could be what can I do? or how can I change the world?
In Level 3 essays, a concrete experience appeared in these examples:

- there are a number of languages,
- language influences culture,
- language influences identity.

An example of how language influences culture was an experience of bilingualism. The significance of identity appeared when returning from a long journey, when being again able to understand people and the surrounding world. Already, speaking a foreign language gave the idea of language influencing human identity and behaviour (LT2).

Learning language in Grade 12 aims at students being able to examine the social effect of literature; learning to examine and evaluate texts and values, also from an ethical point of view; learning how Finnish has developed through times and understanding how European language and the cultural context have influenced and still influence Finnish culture; learning to appreciate multicultural and multilingual modern Finland and understanding the significance of the mother tongue for each of us. *(Lukion opetussuunnitelman perusteet, 2003)*

Visiting writers would support the experience of language influencing identity and the whole nation through literature. Introducing literature and listening to writers that can tell about the reception of their works and their own experiences as writers can confirm the views of how literature can also modify society. Instead of visiting writers, the class could visit a book fair, because there, we could listen to several writers of different fields, both fiction and non-fiction. It is not easy to have experiences of bilingualism if you are not bilingual yourself, but hearing from someone about what it is like to be bilingual can offer an experience that helps to understand how language influences identity.

In this grade, it would be useful to pay attention to the cultural trip that takes place in the spring. It should be planned so that it would not only be a trip from a cultural point of view, but would also create a sense of coming home, when one is again able to understand signs and language that is being spoken, as a student writes in the essay. It should be more about surviving in a foreign culture and about action, more than simply traditional sightseeing. Based on a student example, I could say that the trip is important because of returning, and not so much because of the trip itself. This is also important, but the sense of returning home and hearing a mother tongue after a short break is so powerful that the trip is worth arranging. During the trip, the students should be able to actually use
a foreign language and, possibly, use a language that they have never used before. The experience of succeeding is monumental, when being able to order food in a restaurant in Italian or Greek, or even just to say ‘thank you’. Offering opportunities, as well as encouraging students, is a challenging task for a teacher. The students might be afraid for the first time, and they might need a push.
7. WHY TEACH FINNISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE IN A CONCRETE WAY?

When I started my studies at Snellman College, and even earlier, my question was about the central contents of Steiner pedagogy in my own subject. While writing this paper, I have learned to understand, as I wrote earlier, that Steiner pedagogy cannot be defined, if we want to keep it alive and fresh to meet new students in a new stage and in a new time period.

The student essays showed that we can consider language from several perspectives, and that these can be very different. Students, who were able to describe concrete situations that influenced their lives, gave views that were lively and well-argued. In the previous section, I tried to find out how teaching could be made more concrete. The plan did not proceed very far because there are nine courses in Finnish language and literature in our high school, and rendering them more concrete appears to be a task large enough for another thesis.

An observation that teaching should be concrete might not be new for Steiner school teachers. This abstract sentence became very concrete for my teaching while studying the topic from the point of view of my own subject. Because of this paper, I saw and read that students' views on language could reach Level 3, if they observe their own language use and themselves in the right context. With the help of language, some students are, to some extent, able to recognize in themselves habits of behavior and thinking that are instigated by language.

Finnish language and literature is seen in the Ministry of Education as a subject that develops an individual. The construction of identity, as well as perception and structuring the world, indicates a view that is described in Section 3.2: language is not an island disconnected from humans. It connects humans to the world, even to the extent that they form an image of themselves with its help. With the help of language, people can tell themselves who they are.

Gadamer expresses the same in his thoughts about language. He says that language is not only a means of communication in situations, such as changing thoughts, small talk while waiting for the bus, and so on. Language has its social nature, but the fundamental purpose is to create a meaningful discussion, a dialogue with other people. As a language user, a human does not need plain communication, but self-understanding that dialogue brings (Lawn, 2006) as discussed in Gadamer's writings. Language makes communication possible; communication, dialogue; and dialogue, self-understanding.
In teaching, we do not only concentrate on what learning a student should acquire in a certain period, usually this is a course. One of the goals in teaching is to help the young to understand their own possibilities; to influence their own lives. In language teaching, this is possible, as well as with the help of history, social studies, geography or mathematics.

Along with strengthening the position and appreciation of one's own language through the subject of language and literature, it is important to connect the young to the surrounding world, so they can find their own place in it. Through interaction with others, one will be able to find one's own identity: to be something that no one else could be.

If we achieve our goal, a Grade 12 student can analyse phenomena in relation to context. Subjective views and radical opinions based on emotions are replaced with the ability to perceive entities that are not judged from one single point of view as merely interesting or boring.

We teach other things than simply language use in the class, and we should pay attention to this. Teaching should be presented as concrete as possible so the students receive an experience of the topic. Becoming aware of the experience is also something that has to be learned; without the ability to concentrate, the students are not able to recognize their patterns or the way they think, and their view on language remains at the level of opinion and what they can remember. Thus, offering plain situations is not enough but we should encourage students to make observations as well.

The importance of concreteness in teaching has been confirmed, at least in my experience. In order to help students remember what they have been taught and experienced through situations, I would ponder how to enliven teaching the influence of language on identity.

What other concrete ideas can we come up with? The essays provided ideas, but the rest I will collect in my own notebook; other ideas are welcome, as well. Steiner high school, in course form, is a challenging task, but, when thinking further, the regulations and curriculum society dictates are not in conflict with the educational goals of a Steiner school. The contents have to be taught, but how this is done is up to the teacher. I want to develop my teaching to be more concrete instead of relating what I think about the topic. In addition to the examples I have presented, there are a number of things that teachers can do in high school. These ideas concern also the teaching of foreign languages, and not just Finnish language and literature.
At the moment, our school participates in a national development project for second language. Its purpose is to develop Swedish teaching in schools. As part of the project, the students went to see a Swedish play, which was a success, because, in spite of prejudices, they were able to follow the story and understand what was said on stage. Organizing similar events should become a tradition, instead of being something that happens once in a lifetime.

The coordination between different subjects is vital, and high school teachers have already started planning introductions of course descriptions. In general, teachers have been positive about the course they have held. Next year, we want to clarify our plans in order to properly coordinate subject lessons that could actually support the main lesson. Thus, cooperation would become more routine, instead of being random. A foreign play should also be established as part of the curriculum. Currently, it depends on budget. The five-year or seven-year plan of high school would also encourage teachers to go further, and, at its best, to develop analyses in different subjects.

The upper-grade students need ideas that can help them attain their own ideals. The teacher has to meet these challenges by researching his own subject constantly and, thus, encouraging students to actively examine and understand the world (Rawson & Richter, 2004). I hope that the participation of students in this paper as the writers of the essays has also supported their personal growth. I also hope that writing this paper is a pedagogical act itself. I hope that writing this paper has helped me to develop, as well, and, through this, I will learn to better understand both students and myself. After all, my topic is language and teaching; something that is common for us all, and that contributes to what we are and what I am like – also, as a teacher.

I hope that this paper meets the qualitative and stylistic standards of proper educational science research. I have done my best, and sat hundreds of hours at my desk, reading and writing. I could have written more ideas; usually, the best ideas came to me after sleeping well, or while in front of the class. As a teacher – after a short period of teaching – I have noticed that well-planned is not always half-done. Leaving lessons unplanned makes teaching livelier, the same thing as concrete experiences can also bring to lessons. The plan in this paper is not complete, but, ideas waiting for further development. However, I believe that I have answered the research question “How to teach Finnish language and literature concentrating not only on language use”. The possibility for personal experiences, as well as observations about myself as a language user in concrete situations, could raise my
understanding of language from Level 1 to Level 3 when Grade 12 ends. Do I succeed in this and can I integrate my ideas into teaching is another question. However, it is clear that, when it happens, I have to prepare another report on the process, because it will not be finished for this paper. Besides, the project would last at least three years, because I want to examine how Grade 10 students understand language and what language means to these students each year. Will the level of understanding rise to the upper levels, as I hope, when making my teaching plans?
REFERENCES

Source material:


Pieksämäki: Suomalaisen kirjallisuuden seura.


Research material:

Essays from Savitaipale high school

ST1 Kieli keskellä suuta (Careful with language)
ST2 Suomen kieli - katoava perinne? (Finnish language – a disappearing tradition?)
ST3 Kieli kulkee mukana läpi elämän (Language follows us through our whole life)
ST4 Äidinkieli elämässäni (The mother tongue in my life)
ST5 Minä ja kieli (Me and language)
ST6 Suomi syvällä sydämessä (Finnish in my heart)
ST7 Äiti, anna ja nam (Mom, give and yummy)
ST8 Tärkeämpää kuin matematiikka (More important than mathematics)
ST9 Miun kieli (My language)
ST10 Kielen koukeroita (Ins and outs of language)
ST11 Kielistä parhain (The best of languages)
ST12 Kieli elämän peruspilarina (Language as a basic element of life)
ST13 Kieliverkosto (Language network)
ST14 Kielestä (Of language)
ST15 Tunnen vain suomeksi (I only feel in Finnish)
ST16 Ei (No)
ST17 Kieli - ihmisen vahvin lihas (Language, the most powerful muscle of people)
ST18 Kieli auttaa ja suojelee (Language helps and protects)
ST19 Ihana, kamala kieli (Charming, horrible language)
SP1 Kielen merkitys minulle (What language means to me)
SP2 Kielen merkitys minulle (What language means to me)
SP3 Kielen merkitys minulle ja muille (What language means to me and other people)
SP4 Kieli ja minä (Language and me)
SP5 Suomi - jotain erityistä vai kieli muiden joukossa (Finnish – something special or just a language among others)
SP6 Kielet, kansallisen identiteetin rakentajat (Languages, the builders of national identity)
SP7 Kielettä vaikutaminen (Influencing through language)
SP8 Uhanalainen B-luokan kulttuurielämä (Threatened B-class cultural experience)
SP9 Kieltä tarpeeseen (The needed language)
SP10 Kieli identiteetini osana (Language as a part of my identity)
SP11 Mitä kieli on? (What is language?)
Essays from the high school of Lappeenranta Steiner School
LT1 Kirjakieli (Standard language.)
LT2 Kielien identiteetti (Identity of language)
LT3 Avain kahleisiin (A key to chains)
LT4 Kielien yhdistää ja erottaa (Language connects and separates)
LT5 Kielit (Language)
LT6 Mitä kielit on? (What is language?)
LT7 Mitä kielit on? (What is language?)
LT8 Mitä kielit on? (What is language?)
LT9 Mitä kielit merkitsee minulle (What does language mean to me)
LP1 Kielit (Language)
LP2 Kielien merkitys elämässä (The meaning of language in life)
LP3 Kielit ja identiteetti (Language and identity)
LP4 Kielien törnää kaikkialla (We run into language everywhere)
LP5 Kuoleekoo kieleemme (Is our language dying?)

Essays from Vantaa High School
VT1 Kielit seurassa kehdosta hautaan (With language from cradle to grave)
VT2 Muutakin kuin puhetta (More than just speaking)
VT3 Arvokas perintö (A precious heritage)
VT4 Kielit luo yhteyden (Language makes a connection.)
VT5 Kirjaamia toistensa perään (Letter after letter)
VT6 Epävarmuus ja tärkeys (Uncertainty and importance)
VP1 Pohjimmiltaan kielit on kommunikaation väline (Fundamentally, language is a device for communication)

Essays from the Steiner School of Turku
TT1 Kielien merkitys (The meaning of language)
TT2 Sano oma sana (Say a word of your own)
TT3 Kielten moninaisuus (The diversity of language)
TP1 Maailman kielit (World language)
T1 Mitä kielit merkit? (What does language mean?)
T2 Kielit, elämän rikkaus (Language, the richness of life)
T3 Miekkaa mahtavampi (Mightier than the sword)
Appendices

Appendix 1: Curriculum for Grades 10 to 12

On the high school curriculum, in general:

In each grade (Grades 9-12), students write essays, practise grammar, stylistics, different text types, language use in practice, oral expression, presentations and literature. Discussion is one of the most common ways of learning. Its goals are detailed observations, concentrated listening and understanding the message. These are followed by deductions, estimations, evaluations and personal creative work that develop logical thinking. Together with artistic contributions, this will produce the basis for the teaching method in Finnish language courses. Learning proceeds from the factual knowledge of literary history to a vivid oral expression and physical performance. The emphasis lies on language use: it should express clearly what intentions the language user has, but also be correctly structured and eloquent, while waiting for more developed ways of expression.

(Lappeenranta Steiner School curriculum 2007/2008)

Grade 10:

Course 1. LANGUAGE, TEXTS AND INTERACTION

Students' views on language, texts and interpretations deepen and their skills of reading texts develop. They can structure a communicational environment and identify skills of their own as speakers, listeners, writers, readers and users of media so that their view of themselves as communicators grows more specific.

Aims

During the course students
• deepen their views on text
• learn to examine different types of texts, being more aware of the details that influence the interpretation
• understand the text as a meaningful entity and examine its features from the point of view of goal, context and media
• learn to examine their own language use, reading habits and communication more consciously
• become more used to reworking texts of their own
• deepen their knowledge of group communication: they develop and learn to evaluate their own participation from different aspects, such as interaction, atmosphere and teamwork or discussion

Central contents
• basic elements that guide interpretation and production texts, such as goal, receiver, genre and text type
• significance of context and media on the text
• deepening knowledge of texts, such as spoken and written texts, media texts, electronic and graphic texts, factual and fictive texts, official and private texts
• observation and practice of language and contents of different texts: intelligibility, clarity and coherence
• summarization and commentary of texts
• evaluation of their own communication skills, attitudes and motivation from the point of view of a high school student
• interaction in a group
Course 2. TEXT STRUCTURES AND MEANINGS

Students learn to analyse the language, structures and meanings of a text as well as learn to see a text in relation to the context and to other texts. Students deepen their knowledge of textual genre and develop themselves as producers of different texts.

Aims

During the course, students
• learn to evaluate the contents, aspects, style and form as well as analyse text as an entity of temporal, causal, contrastive and other semantic relations. They also learn concepts that are useful for the analysis of text and can adapt these when producing texts
• learn to rework their own texts on the basis of their own and others’ evaluations
• learn to plan and create spoken and written texts as well as send the message to listeners or readers as planned
• learn information retrieval strategies, use printed and electronic sources and can find useful and reliable information on which to base their writings and speeches

Central contents
• textual means, such as sentence types and structures, word choices, metaphors, references, relations, focusing, limiting topic and choosing point of view
• structuring an informative act of speech, focusing, illustrative performance and evaluation
• writing as a process, appropriate search of material, critical selection and referring to it and using it in a text of their own as well as reworking a text emphasising on structure and coherence

Course 3. LITERARY METHODS AND INTERPRETATION

Students’ views on fiction, the artistic function of language and its cultural significance increases

Aims

The aim of the course is that students
• learn to understand imagery and ambiguousness of language
• deepen knowledge of literary genres and their characteristic features
• develop as an analyst of different fictive texts using different interpretation methods as well as literary terminology
• learn to defend their interpretations of texts both orally and in writing
• become trained to use above-mentioned linguistic methods appropriately when producing texts of their own

Central contents
• analysis and interpretation of literature using interpretatively appropriate terminology and approach
• prose as a genre: narrative means, such as narrator, point of view, topic, character, time, milieu, theme and motif
• poetry as a genre: concepts such as voice, verse, stanza, rhythm, metre, repetition, metaphor
• drama as a genre
• analysing short stories, poems and drama
• using literary means in texts of their own

(Finnish High School Curriculum, 2003)
poetry, paying special attention to metaphor, tone and metre. Exercises include metric and free verse poems as well as short prose texts.

(Lappeenranta Steiner School Curriculum, 2007/2008)

Grade 11:

**Course 5. TEXT, STYLE AND CONTEXT**

The student learns to analyze texts and their style in order to be able to take into account the significance of context when interpreting or producing text.

**Aims**
The aim of the course is that students
- learn to read fiction as well as non-fiction texts in their cultural contexts and in relation to other texts.
- learn to analyze different stylistic elements and how they influence the text as a whole.
- will be able to use an independent writing process that includes choosing a topic and point of view, selecting material, reworking text. This leads to the capability to produce personal and analytic writing.
- will develop a personal way to express themselves and their literary style.

**Central contents**
- fiction and other texts covering different styles and cultural periods paying special attention to cultural context.
- analyzing texts through how they represent a world view, values and ideologies in the context of contemporary and modern worlds.
- aspects of style and how they influence the text (word choices, tone, metaphor, rhythm and sentence structure.
- an essay on a topic related to the course material.
- developing one’s own style

(Finnish High School Curriculum, 2003)

“**Steiner**” course. **PARSIFAL**

There is no course description in our curriculum. That is why we follow the contents of the international curriculum (Rawson & Richter, 2004). In brief, the description is as follows: The medieval epic by Wolfram von Essenbach deals with the development of consciousness. Suitable topics for teaching are: facing medieval court life, social restrictions and opportunities limited by outer principles. The subplot of Gawain is suitable for examining inner growth and relation to the surrounding world. “This epic of court life offers material for essays, linguistic and structural exercises, history learning and questions dealing with literary form.”
Grade 12:

Course 4. TEXTS AND INFLUENCE

Students learn to examine texts and language from the point of view of influence. They make themselves familiar with argumentation and deepen their skills with it. They learn to analyse and produce argumentative texts.

Aims

The aim of the course is that students
• deepen their skills in media reading, becoming able to analyse and interpret different media texts, their background and aims, as well as being able to critically evaluate information in media and its influence on individuals and society
• learn as both a writer and speaker to defend their views and estimate efforts to influence and the reliability of a text
• learn to examine and evaluate texts and their values also from an ethical point of view

Central contents
• direct and indirect influence: persuasion, manipulation, commercial, propaganda, irony, satire and parody
• text types that are meant to influence, graphic and electronic: opinion, feature, causerie, review, editorial, comment, advertisement
• ways of argumentation and rhetoric
• speeches that take stance, discussions and debates
• literature and other texts that consciously try to influence
• ideology of texts, source criticism and media criticism
• responsibility of a communicator; choices of media and ethics in the Internet

(Finnish High School Curriculum, 2003)

Course 6. LANGUAGE, LITERATURE AND IDENTITY

The student will learn the significance of Finnish language and literature to an individual as well as to society.

Aims

The aim of the course is that students
• learn how Finnish has developed through time and understand how European language and cultural context has influenced and still influences Finnish culture.
• will learn to appreciate multicultural and multilingual modern Finland and understand the significance the mother tongue has for each of us.
• know the central literary works and themes of Finnish literature. Students should be able to value their significance from the point of view of their own culture as a basis on which their cultural and individual identity has been built.

Central contents
• text in oral and written tradition: from folklore to literature, from literary culture to modern communication
• Finnish language in international context
• the significance of Finnish language and literature when building national identity
• Finnish literature in temporal and cultural context, central literary works and themes
• producing written texts as well as oral presentations on the themes dealt with during the course

(Finnish High School Curriculum, 2003)
“Steiner” course. DRAMA

• Preparing, rehearsing and performing a full-length play
• Working individually and as a team
• Self-study as part of the course
• May include theatre visits and lectures by professionals
• Aim is that students:
  • understand and carry out the essential requirement of a stage performance: trusting other people and being trustworthy and taking one’s own and others’ work seriously
  • develop an act of speech of their own, voice, mimics, move and interaction with other actors and audience
  • develop the ability to speak opinions and attitudes
  • learn to analyse the character, intentions and attitudes as well as relations to other characters on the basis of the text
  • perceive the commitment, responsibility and motivation a large production requires
  • learn to take responsibility not only for playing a role but also other aspects, such as direction, dramatisation, costumes, staging, make-up, music, sound and light
  • learn to make artistically independent decisions
  • have opportunities to perform and work in a group

(Lappeenranta Steiner School Curriculum, 2007/2008)
Appendix 2: Assignment for candidates

I am a Finnish language and literature teacher at Lappeenranta Waldorf School, and I am currently taking the Masters programme in Waldorf pedagogy in Oslo, Norway. I am writing a thesis on students' views of what language is and what it means for matriculation examination candidates. In the matriculation examination, there will be an essay, according to which I have set the guidelines for the following written assignment. I ask you to allow that I copy your essays and send them to me before your teacher marks them.

Since I will receive essays from both Waldorf schools and comprehensive schools, please answer the following questions by marking an 'x' in the correct place.

I have taken classes 1 to 9 in a Waldorf school and continued in a Waldorf high school. ___

I have taken classes 1 to 9 in a comprehensive school and continued in a Waldorf high school. ___

I have taken classes 1 to 9 in a comprehensive school and continued in a comprehensive high school. ___

I have taken classes 1 to 9 in a Waldorf school and continued in a comprehensive high school. ___

My thesis will be completed in May 2008, when you will be able to ask more about the contents, if you are interested in the subject. I will not mention the names of any contributors to the thesis.

Good luck for this academic year!

Eeva Raunela
eeva.raunela@lprsteinerkoulu.fi

FINNISH LANGUAGE II
Essay

Instruction: Write a coherent and linguistically flawless text of ca. 4 - 5 pages. The completed text should be written with a pen. The essay will be graded on a 60-point scale. Give your essay a title.

Please hand in the essay AND this assignment sheet.

WRITTEN ASSIGNMENT

Discuss the following topics in your essay: What does language mean to you? What is language?