



Teacher perceptions of oral language course in foreign languages at upper secondary school

Project LukSuS

New dynamics of language learning:

Spaces and places - Intentions and opportunities

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Background: Project LukSuS

- **Project leader:** PhD, adjunct professor Raili Hildén
- **Project assistant:** BA Outi Hakola
 - University of Helsinki, Department of Teacher Education
- **A research project aiming at gathering feedback from teachers and students at the upper secondary school level concerning new oral language courses in foreign languages**
- **Funded by** the Ministry of Education and Culture in 2010 – 2012
- **Partners:** Ministry of Education and Culture, The Finnish National Board of Education, Palmenia Centre for Continuing Education (University of Helsinki), The Federation of Foreign Language Teachers in Finland SUKOL, Department of Teacher Education (University of Helsinki)



Why?

- Speaking as a vital component of communicative language ability has been included in the modern language curricula since decades. In the current Finnish syllabi the target levels for each of the four language skills, among them speaking, have been specified in terms of a CEFR related scale (National Core Curriculum for Upper Secondary Schools 2003).
- However, the status and teaching methods of oral proficiency in mainstream language teaching and learning has varied largely.
 - **A new, advanced course in oral proficiency** was introduced in the long syllabi of foreign languages in August 2010 as a mandatory part of the language program organized by the municipalities, but optional for the student to select.



Why?

- **Teachers are in front of a partly new challenge:**
 - Oral language courses in foreign languages to be held in every school at the upper secondary level
 - Courses include a mandatory oral test produced by the The Finnish National Board of Education (FNBE).
 - Reliability of assessment?
 - Criteria for assessments according to syllabi!
 - teachers must follow the given criteria when assessing students (Finnish version of the CEFR with 10 levels of proficiency: A1.1 – C2)
 - Teachers no more have the choice to make final tests of their own
 - similar, language-specific tests to all learners despite the amount of students on the courses or the average level of their oral proficiency



Why?

- **Project LukSuS aims to**

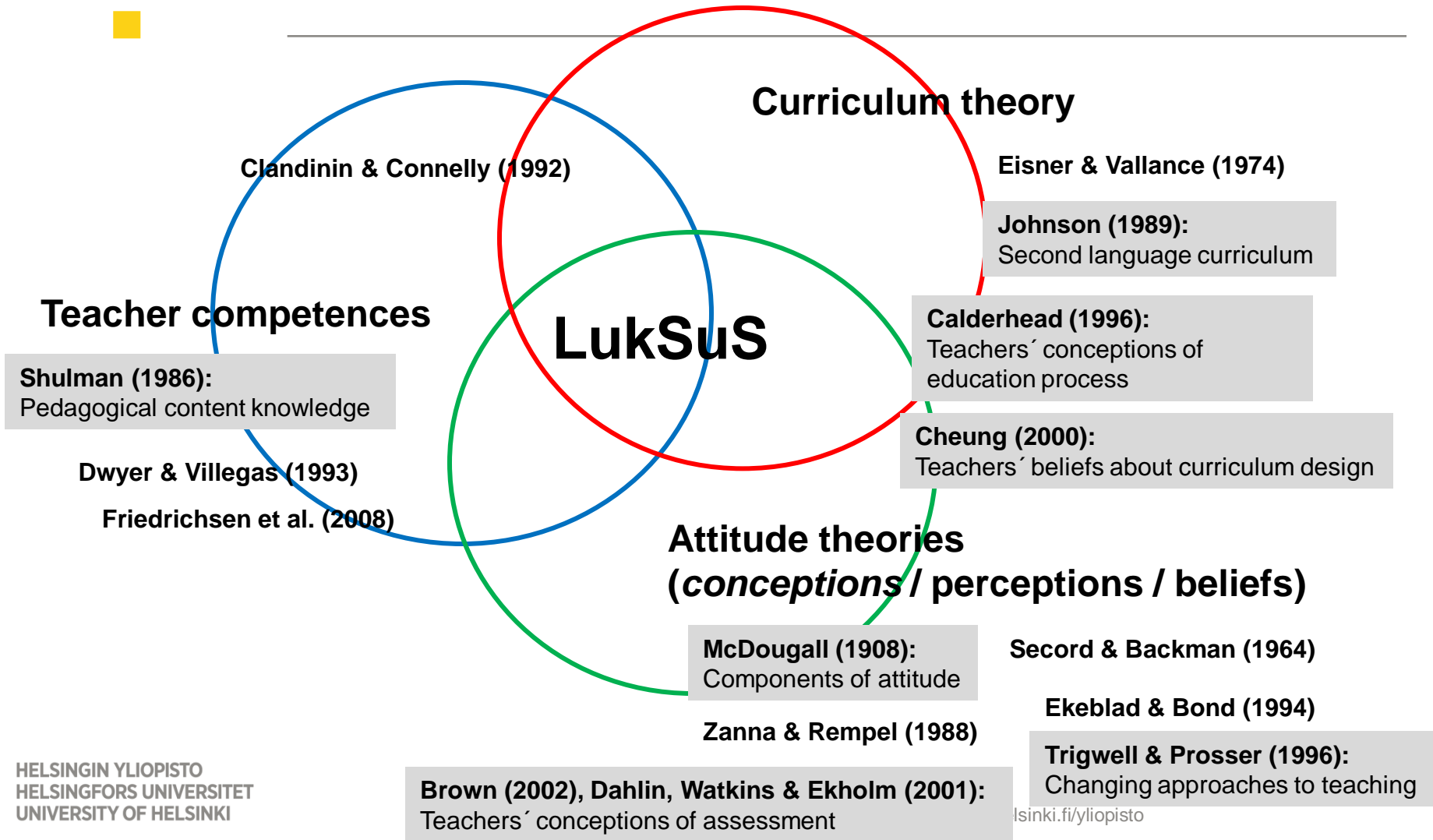
A) gather feedback of the implementation and the impact of the curriculum change by asking foreign language teachers and students about their perceptions and experiences concerning oral language courses

B) collect suitable working methods to diversify teaching and assessment of foreign language skills

C) produce new data to be used both in teacher education and in-service training



Theory basis





How?

- Nationwide survey to teachers: Spring 2011 (n=116, still increasing)
- Nationwide survey to students at the upper secondary schools: Autumn 2011
- Teacher interviews and classroom observations: Spring 2012



Research problems

- **The LukSuS project addresses the following research problems:**
 1. **What practices, experiences and perceptions do language teachers report regarding the course of oral proficiency and the in-service training offered to support its implementation?** (Electronic questionnaire, Spring 2011)
 - 1.1 What practices, experiences and perceptions do language teachers report regarding planning, implementation and assessment of the course of oral proficiency?
 - 1.2 What differences are detected in the practices, experiences and perceptions in relation to certain background variables?
 - 1.3 What experiences and perceptions do teachers report concerning in-service training?



Research problems

2 What practices, experiences and perceptions do upper secondary students report regarding the course of oral proficiency? (Electronic questionnaire, Autumn 2011)

2.1 What practices, experiences and perceptions do upper secondary students report regarding planning, implementation and assessment of the course of oral proficiency?

2.2 /1.2 What differences are detected in the practices, experiences and perceptions in relation to certain background variables?

3 What working methods are applied on the courses of oral proficiency? (Teacher interviews, Spring 2012)



Research problems

4 What are the relationships between the indicators of oral proficiency? (Spring / Autumn 2012)

4.1 What is the relationship between the score of the speaking test taken at the end of the oral course and the overall grade of the course?

4.2 What is the relationship between the score of the speaking test taken at the end of the oral course and the level grading assigned to it?



Methods

- Multimethod approach
- Quantitative survey: questionnaires for teachers and students
 - frequencies, means, modes, medians
 - percentage distributions
 - comparisons between groups (teachers, students)
 - correlations
 - factor analysis, IRT-analysis
- Analysis of the qualitative data: open responses in the questionnaires, classroom observations, theme interviews for teachers
 - content analysis
 - discourse analysis

LukSuS- kyselylomake opettajille

1. Background information

1. Taustatiedot

Koulua koskevat taustatiedot

Henkilökohtaiset taustatiedot

Omaa opetusta koskevat taustatiedot

School related information

Personal information

Information about own teaching

2. Oral language courses

2. Suullisen kielitaidon kurssit

Näkemykset suullisen kielitaidon kurseista

Suullisen kielitaidon kurssien tarjonta koulussa

Suullisen kielitaidon kurssien toteutuminen koulussa

Oma kokemus suullisen kielitaidon kurssien pitämisestä

Opinions and perceptions about oral language courses

Oral language courses in own school

Own experience of oral courses

3. Working methods and assessment practises on the oral language courses

3. Työskentelymuodot ja arviointi suullisen kielitaidon kurseilla

Suullisen kielitaidon kurssit lukuvuonna 2010-2011

Suullisen kielitaidon kurssit ennen lukuvuotta 2010-2011

Oral language courses 2010-2011

Oral language courses before 2010-2011

4. The national bank for the oral test tasks (after August 2010)

4. Suullisten tehtävien koepankki 1.8.2010 jälkeen

5. In-service training of oral language courses

5. Suullisen kielitaidon kurssin täydennyskoulutus

Palmenia Centre for Continuing Education

Helsingin yliopiston Koulutus- ja kehittämiskeskus Palmenian koulutus

Hanken; Swedish School of Economics

Svenska handelshögskolanin ("Hanken") koulutus

Other educational institutions / municipalities?

Muun tahon järjestämä koulutus

Possible suggestions for improvements in in-service training

Suullisen kielitaidon täydennyskoulutuksen kehittäminen



Preliminary results:

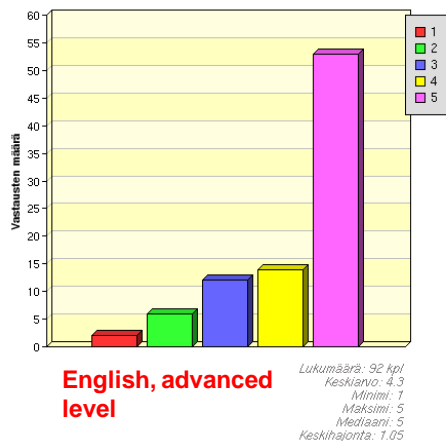
Teachers' perceptions of oral language course in foreign languages at upper secondary school

In your opinion, how *useful* the oral language courses are as a part of language studies on the upper secondary school level?

Answer according to following (Likert-)scale: 1. not at all useful- 5. extremely useful)

23. Miten tarpeellisenä pidät suullisen kielitaidon KURSSEJA eri kielissä?
Vastaa kaikkien kielten osalta asteikolla: 1. ei lainkaan tarpeellinen - 5. erittäin tarpeellinen
A-englanti

Vastausten absoluuttinen jakauma



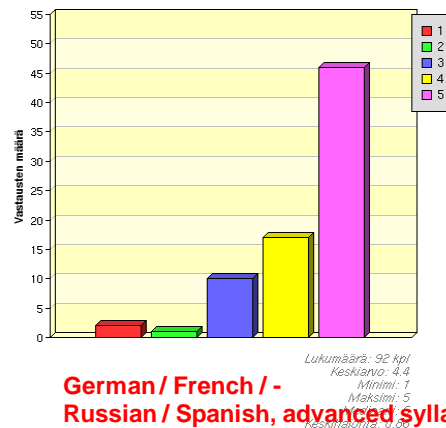
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Äidinkielenomainen ruotsi / suomi

Vastausten absoluuttinen jakauma



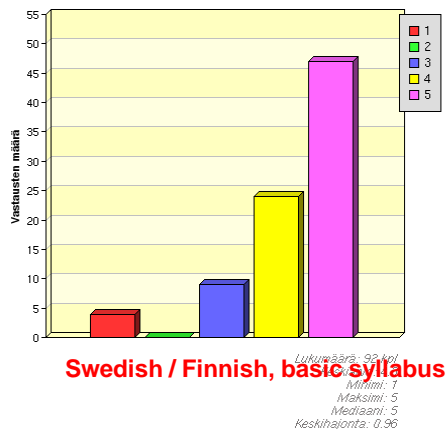
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Vastaa kaikkien kielten osalta asteikolla: 1. ei lainkaan tarpeellinen - 5. erittäin tarpeellinen
A-saksa / -ranska / -venäjä / -espanja

Vastausten absoluuttinen jakauma



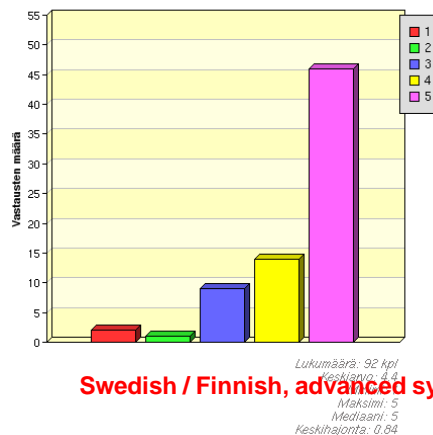
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Vastaa kaikkien kielten osalta asteikolla: 1. ei lainkaan tarpeellinen - 5. erittäin tarpeellinen
B1-ruotsi / -suomi

Vastausten absoluuttinen jakauma



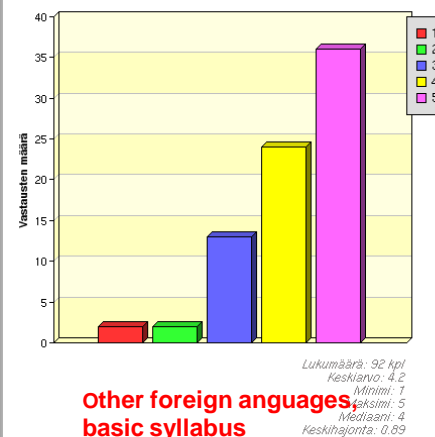
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A-ruotsi / -suomi

Vastausten absoluuttinen jakauma



23. Miten tarpeellisenä pidät suullisen kielitaidon KURSSEJA eri kielissä?
Vastaa kaikkien kielten osalta asteikolla: 1. ei lainkaan tarpeellinen - 5. erittäin tarpeellinen
B2- ja B3-kielit

Vastausten absoluuttinen jakauma





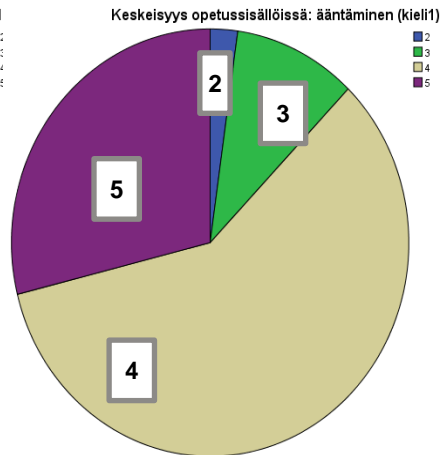
How essential do you consider the following components in teaching oral language proficiency?

(Answer according to following (Likert-)scale: 1. not important- 5. extremely important)

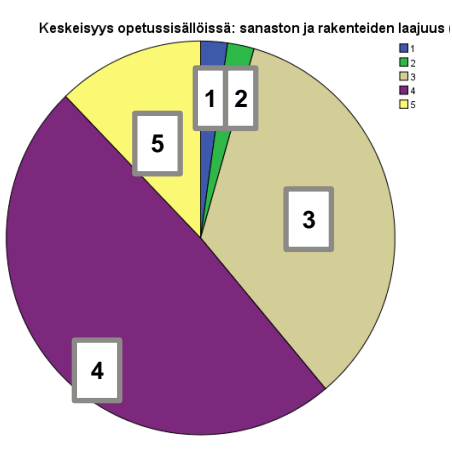
Fluency



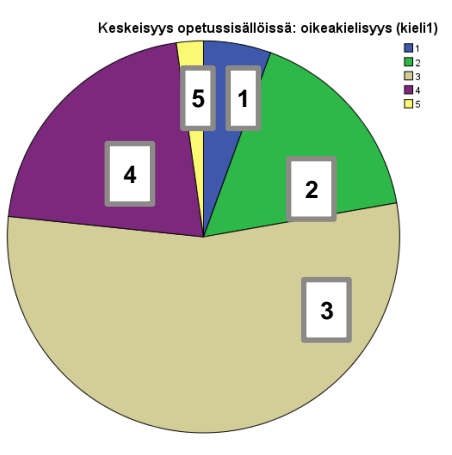
Phonological control



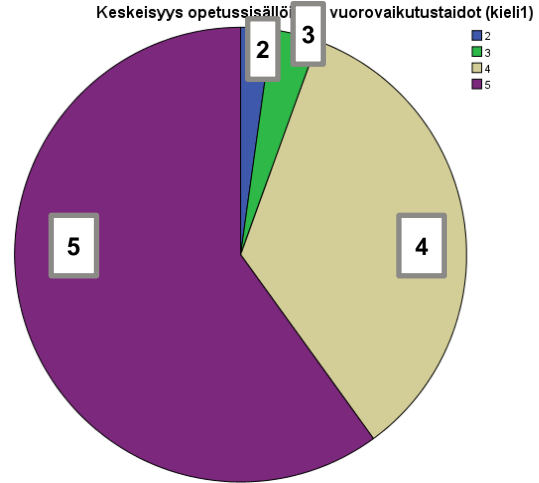
Vocabulary range



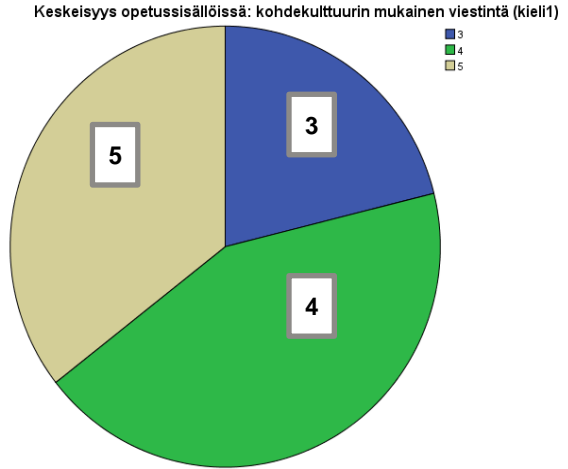
Grammatical accuracy



Interaction strategies



Target culture-like communication



Communication strategies

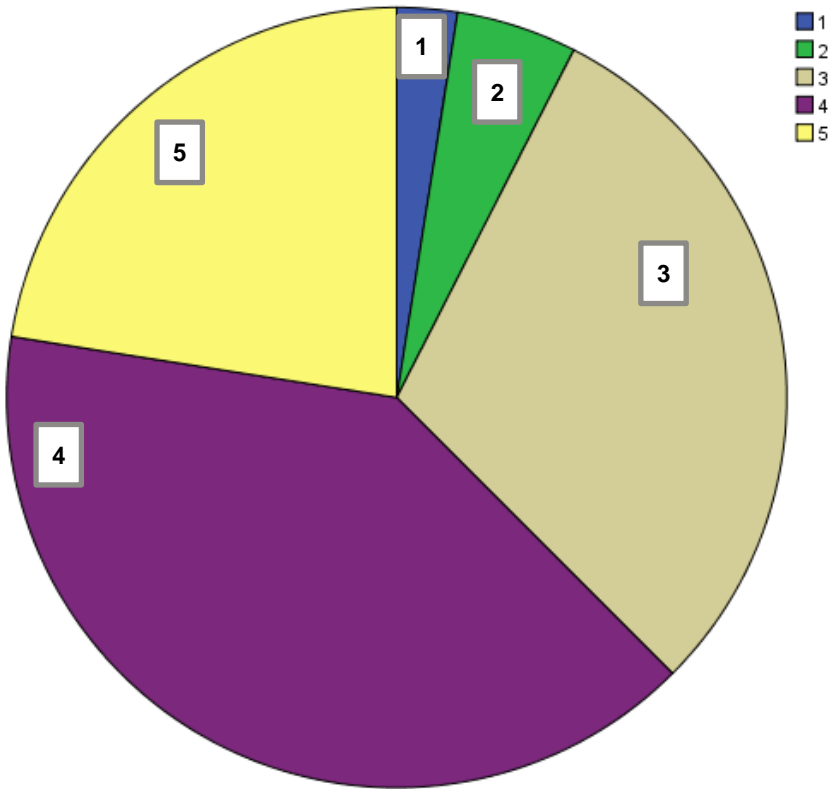




In your opinion, to what extent should following fields be stressed in the assessment of oral language proficiency? (Answer according to following (Likert-)scale: 1. *not at all* – 5. *extremely much*)

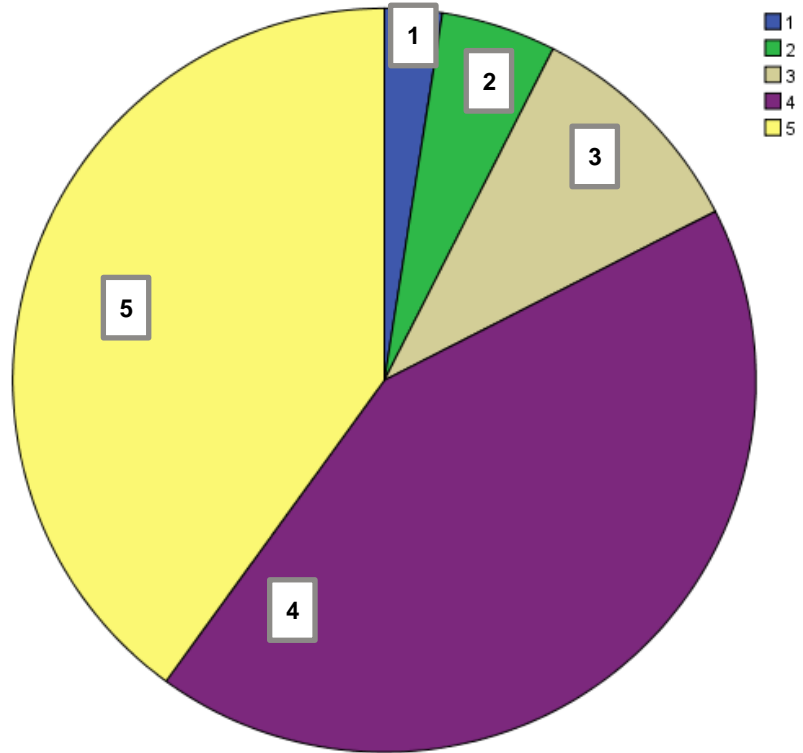
Fluency

Painotus arvioinnissa: sujuvuus (kieli1)



Pronunciation

Painotus arvioinnissa: ääntäminen (kieli1)





In your opinion, should the oral *test* be a mandatory part of the matriculation examination (= A level)?

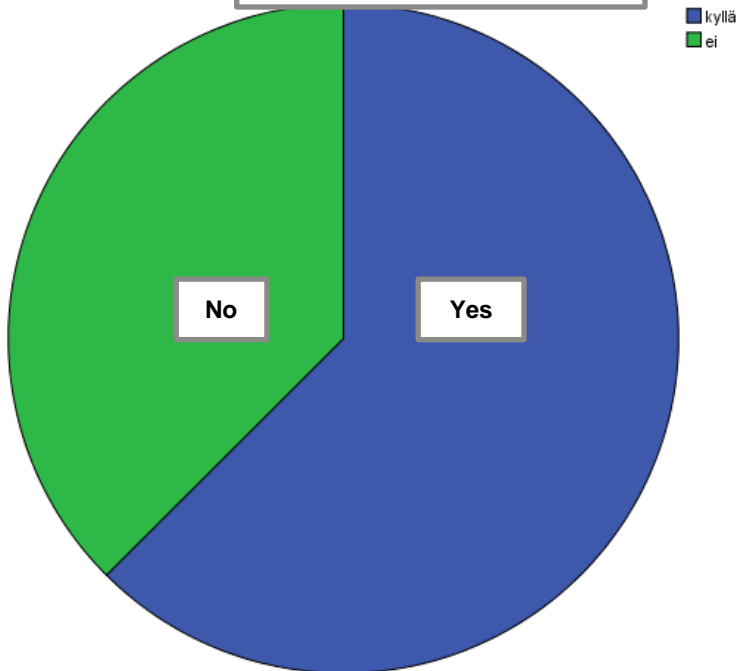
English, advanced syllabus

| | | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|---------|------------------------------|-----------|-------------|---------------|--------------------|
| Valid | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | 55 | 59,8 | 62,5 | 62,5 |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> No | 33 | 35,9 | 37,5 | 100,0 |
| Total | | 88 | 95,7 | 100,0 | |
| Missing | System | 4 | 4,3 | | |
| Total | | 92 | 100,0 | | |

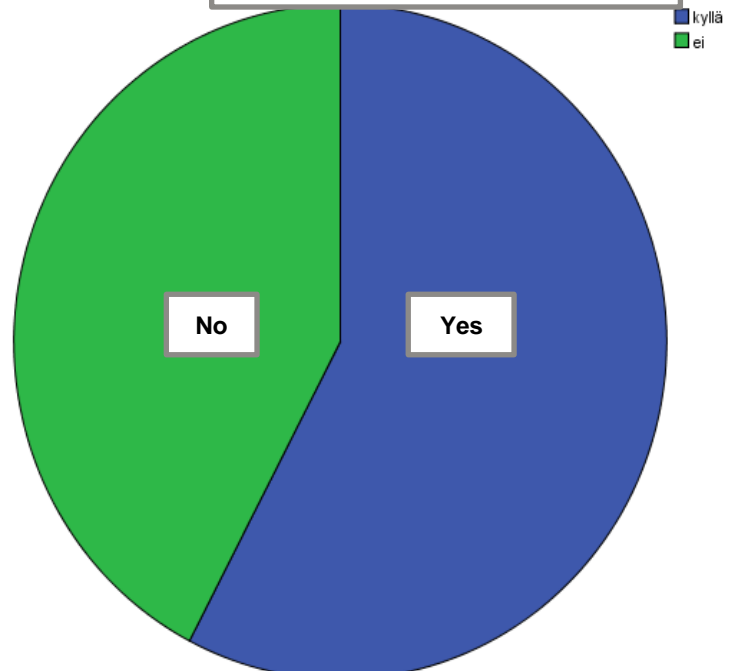
Swedish / Finnish, basic syllabus

| | | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|---------|------------------------------|-----------|-------------|---------------|--------------------|
| Valid | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | 49 | 53,3 | 57,6 | 57,6 |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> No | 36 | 39,1 | 42,4 | 100,0 |
| Total | | 85 | 92,4 | 100,0 | |
| Missing | System | 7 | 7,6 | | |
| Total | | 92 | 100,0 | | |

English, advanced syllabus



Swedish / Finnish, basic syllabus





Should the oral language *courses* be mandatory for all students studying foreign languages?

24. Tulisiko suullisen kielitaidon KURSSIEN olla mielestäsi kaikille ao. kielen lukijoille PAKOLLISIA? Vastaa kaikkien kielten osalta.
A-englanti

Vastausten suhteellinen jakauma

English, advanced level



Lukumäärä: 120 kpl
Keskiarvo: 1.4
Minimi: 1
Maksimi: 2
Mediaani: 1
Keskiahjonta: 0.47

24. Tulisiko suullisen kielitaidon KURSSIEN olla mielestäsi kaikille ao. kielen lukijoille PAKOLLISIA? Vastaa kaikkien kielten osalta.
A-ruotsi / -suomi

Vastausten suhteellinen jakauma

Swedish / Finnish, advanced syllabus



Lukumäärä: 120 kpl
Keskiarvo: 1.3
Minimi: 1
Maksimi: 2
Mediaani: 1
Keskiahjonta: 0.43

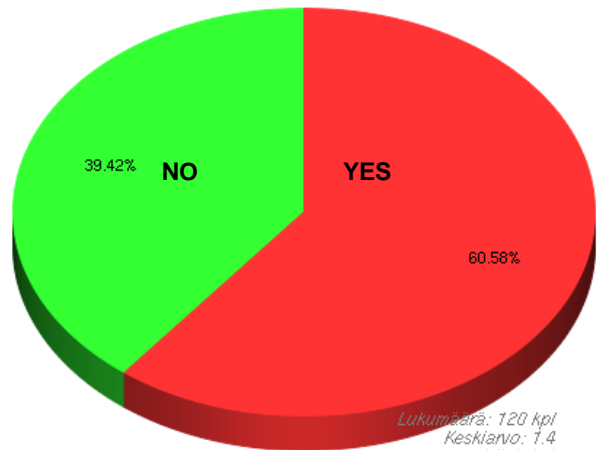


Should the oral language *courses* be mandatory for all students studying foreign languages?

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A-saksa / -ranska / -venäjä / -espanja

Vastausten suhteellinen jakauma

German / French / Russian / Spanish,
advanced syllabus

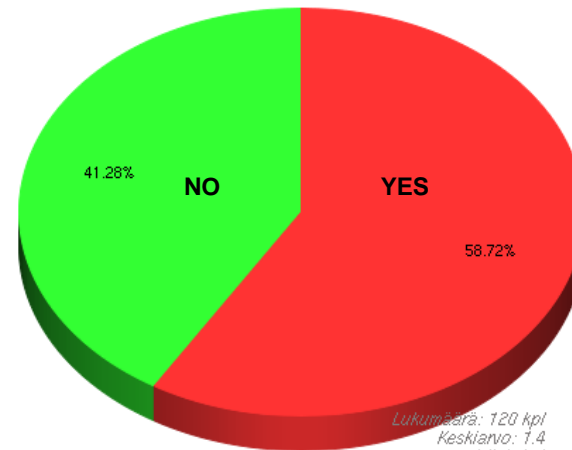


Lukumäärä: 120 kpl
Keskiarvo: 1,4
Minimi: 1
Maksimi: 2
Mediaani: 1
Keskihajonta: 0,45

24. Tulisiko suullisen kielitaidon KURSSIEN olla mielestäsi kaikille ao. kielen lukijoille PAKOLLISIA? Vastaa kaikkien kielten osalta.
B1-ruotsi / -suomi

Vastausten suhteellinen jakauma

Swedish / Finnish, basic syllabus



Lukumäärä: 120 kpl
Keskiarvo: 1,4
Minimi: 1
Maksimi: 2
Mediaani: 1
Keskihajonta: 0,47

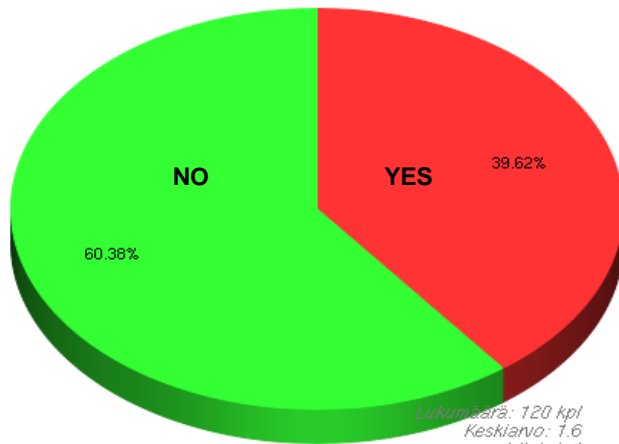


Should the oral language *courses* be mandatory for all students studying foreign languages?

24. Tulisiko suullisen kielitaidon KURSSIEN olla mielestäsi kaikille ao. kielen lukijoille PAKOLLISIA? Vastaa kaikkien kielten osalta.
B2- ja B3- kielet

Vastausten suhteellinen jakauma

Other foreign languages, basic syllabus



*Lukumäärä: 120 kpl
Keskiarvo: 1,6
Minimi: 1
Maksimi: 2
Mediaani: 2
Keskihajonta: 0,46*



Why / why not?

Speaking is the most essential part of communication

The most important thing is to know how to speak!

There's so little time to do oral exercises because of all the vocabulary and grammar exercises on the basic courses

Language is, above all, communication. If you have the courage to open your mouth, you certainly will survive.



Thank you for your interest!

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<http://blogs.helsinki.fi/luksus-projekti/>

(at the moment only in Finnish -> in Swedish and in English : Autumn 2011)

