

***Finnish trade union representatives – ‘good enough’ English users***

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<p>Englannin kielen taito on lähes välttämätöntä nykypäivän työelämässä, etenkin isoissa yrityksissä, jotka toimivat maailmanlaajuisesti. Englantia, Euroopan lingua francaa, tarvitsevat myös luottamushenkilöt, jotka näissä monikansallisissa yrityksissä toimivat.</p> <p>Monet luottamushenkilöt ovat mukana eurooppalaisissa yritysneuvostoissa, joiden työskentelykieli on useimmiten englanti. Tämä tutkimus halusi selvittää kuuden haastattelun avulla miten luottamushenkilöt käyttävät englantia tässä työssä. Tulosten perusteella kielenkäytön tilanteet ovat hyvin moninaisia sekä Suomessa että ulkomailla. Suomessa haastatellut käyttävät englantia mm. neuvossaan työturvallisuusmääräyksiä uusille työntekijöille, keskusteluisaan keskijohdon kanssa ja laatiessaan raportteja yritysneuvostotyötä varten. Suomen ulkopuolella he käyttävät englantia pääasiassa eurooppalaisten yritysneuvostojen kokouksissa. Heille kielitaito on tärkeä verkostojen ja luottamuksellisten suhteiden luomisessa yritysneuvostojen jäsenten kesken.</p> <p>Edellisen lisäksi haluttiin tutkia millaisia ennakoivia strategioita yksi luottamushenkilö käytti toimiessaan puheenjohtajana yhdessä yritysneuvoston kokouksessa. Tutkittavan puhe äänitettiin Oslossa ja äänitettyä puhetta kuunneltiin uudelleen tutkittavan kanssa Helsingissä. Tästä menetelmästä käytetään nimitystä ”stimuloitu muistelu” (stimulated recall). Tuloksista selviää, että puheenjohtaja käytti kokouksessa ennakoivia ja selventäviä strategioita, kuten puheen itsekorjauksia, uudelleenmuotoiluja ja toistoa. Nämä ovat tavallisia keinoja puheessa, ja ne edesauttavat ymmärtämistä sekä selkeyttävät sanomaa kuulijoille. Tutkittava oli myös tietoisesti ajatellut kommunikointiaan etukäteen ennen kokousta. Tämä kävi ilmi Helsingissä, kun puhetta kuunneltiin uudelleen.</p> <p>Kaiken kaikkiaan voidaan sanoa, että tutkitut luottamushenkilöt selviytyvät tehtävistään eurooppalaisissa yritysneuvostoissa englanniksi ”riittävän hyvin”. He käyttävät sopivia ja toimivia tapoja kommunikoidessaan vieraalla kielellä monikulttuurisessa ympäristössä.</p> <p>Tämä tapaustutkimus selvensi kuuden suomalaisen luottamushenkilön englannin kielen käyttöä yritysneuvostoissa. Tätä ei ole aiemmin Suomessa tutkittu. Lisätutkimus luottamushenkilöiden englannin kielen käytöstä sekä Suomessa että ulkomailla voisi luoda kuvaa mahdollisista kielen eri ”rekistereistä”, joita luottamushenkilöt monipuolisessa työssään tarvitsevat.</p>					
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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Non-native speakers of English have outnumbered native speakers for some time. There are approximately twice as many people who speak English as a second or foreign language than there are mother-tongue English speakers (Crystal 2003: 60-61). According to Kachru's well-known three-circle model of English there are approximately 350 million of English speakers in the inner circle (mother-tongue speakers), 300 – 500 million speakers on the outer circle (second language speakers) and 500 – 1,000 million on the expanding circle who are foreign language speakers (Crystal 2003: 60-61). Communication within and between the circles is clearly very common, but also the 'expanding circle', non-native speakers use English with other non-natives more and more every day. These speakers are using English as a lingua franca in order to communicate with each other.

Lingua franca means 'vehicular' language spoken by people who do not share a common native language (Mauranen 2003: 513). English is widely used as the lingua franca for instance in global business, media, politics and in the academic world. English is 'the language' of the internet as well. The English of business has been studied by various disciplines. In particular, business meetings have interested psychologists as well as linguists. English as a lingua franca has attracted researchers' attention in recent years in both the business and academic world. This study focuses on a certain area of business lingua franca communication, namely lingua franca communication in trade union work and by trade union representatives.

Many companies in Finland now use English as their company language. This is the case particularly in multinational companies that have subsidiaries around Europe. This means that English is often used in the company's internal meetings as well as meetings with other organisations. Nokia was one of the first to change the company's language to English and many Finnish companies have followed the lead. Trade union representatives (shop stewards) also use English when they are employed by these international companies. The work of trade union representatives involves various types of activities; their duties range from communication with workers and management to solving problems at workplaces as well as at an international level. European level influence on company policies is often done through European Works Councils, EWCs. These works councils are consultation and information bodies established in large multinational companies ([www.etuc.org](http://www.etuc.org)).

The European Works Councils Directive applies to all companies with 1,000 or more workers, and at least 150 employees in two or more EU Member States ([www.etuc.org](http://www.etuc.org)). According to the directive, companies should establish EWCs that consist of workers' representatives from all the EU Member States the company operates in ([www.etuc.org](http://www.etuc.org)). Workers' reps come together to meet with management, receive information and give their views on strategies and decisions affecting the company and its workforce. EWCs can deal with a range of economic, financial and social issues, including research, environment, investment, health and safety ([www.etuc.org](http://www.etuc.org)). The majority of European Works Councils meet once or twice a year. EWCs have either workers' representation only, or both worker and management

representation. According to the coordinating body for the Finnish trade union EWC representatives, the Council of Finnish Industrial Unions, there are approximately 600 EWC representatives in Finland and they represent about 190 Finnish companies. This body provides training and consultation on EWC matters.

There have been two previous studies on EWCs in Europe, namely by Laitinen in 2003 and by Waddington in 2006. They studied the views of the EWC representatives on EWC work and tried to find best EWC practices in Finnish and other European companies. Their perspective differs from that of the present study. This case study focuses on how the trade union representatives use English in their EWC work. More specifically it focuses on how trade union reps communicate in English in their daily work. This seems to be an area untouched by previous research. The research questions are:

1. How do trade union representatives use English in their EWC work and what types of communication are they involved in?
2. What proactive strategies does a trade union representative, who acts as a chair in a EWC meeting, use for making himself understood by other participants?
3. To what extent do trade union representatives think about communication, language and its use in their EWC work?

The first research question was approached by conducting six interviews with trade union representatives. A semi-structured questionnaire was used including questions such as:

- In what kind of situations is English used?
- Is there special vocabulary involved?

- Is all EWC work carried out in English?
- Is interpretation used or not?
- What kind of communication occurs between the meetings?
- Are there any problems with this communication?

The results of the interviews show that trade union representatives use English in many ways and in various settings. The trade union reps use a wide range of vocabulary and deal with many different kinds of issues. Their multifaceted work involves versatile communication in English and a good command of English is essential. A fairly good picture of trade union representatives' English use was established through the interviews.

In addition to this background information this study wanted to investigate the matter further and see what happened in an actual EWC meeting. In particular, the researcher wished to see what the discourse in an authentic EWC meeting was like. For this purpose one EWC meeting was attended by the researcher and the meeting was audio-recorded. This was done in order to answer the second research question. Special attention was paid to the research subject one full-time Finnish trade union representative who acted as a chair in the meeting. The EWC meeting recorded in Norway gave a more comprehensive insight into this full-time workers' representative's use of English in EWC work.

The meeting recorded had twelve participants: from Finland, France, Germany, Norway, Ukraine and Romania. Initially it was hoped that the researcher could record and study interaction in a EWC meeting but fieldwork has its surprises. The meeting turned out to be one where most of the participants needed interpretation and there was not much actual direct

interaction. Therefore the data gathered is a monologue; consisting of communication from the chair in this EWC meeting. Nevertheless, the speech of the chair was worth studying. The data shows how the chair was aiming at comprehensibility in various ways. He intended to make himself understood by using proactive strategies like repetitions and self-rephrasing. These are common ways of ensuring clarity in communication. Both natives and non-natives resort to these strategies when they want to make themselves understood (Mauranen 2007).

After the Oslo meeting a stimulated recall session was organised in Helsinki. Stimulated recall is a method during which the recorded material is listened to again and commented on. This procedure allowed the research subject, the chair, to reflect on what he had said during the meeting. This showed how the informant had been consciously thinking about his own communication and it gave answers to the third research question.

The results of this case study show that not only do the trade union representatives use English in various ways and in diverse situations but also that their communication is successful. This was particularly clear when the Finnish trade unionist acted as a chair in a EWC meeting. Even though one cannot prove that the other participants of the meeting found him clear and comprehensible, his communication in the meeting and his own views on it gave that impression. He used similar proactive strategies that have been found in previous research on ELF communication. All in all, the results of this study show that trade union reps manage with English in their daily work and in various meetings rather well. Being able to communicate in English is vital to their success, not only during the meetings but also when

forming networks and making contacts. The representatives studied succeed in this 'well enough'.

This thesis has the following structure. It will first describe concepts such as Business English, English in the trade union context and English as a lingua franca. Communicative competence in the lingua franca will be examined. After that there will be a discussion of some theoretical and methodological issues and explanation of the role of conversation analysis, discourse analysis and ethnomethodology in this research. Stimulated recall and interviews as research methods will be explained as will their manner of use in this study. The research design of the study will be outlined. Results of this case study, based on three different types of data gathered, will then be discussed in detail. These will be weighed against similar findings in previous research. The thesis will conclude with a summary of the study and its implications.

Before embarking on the details of this study, I would like to thank the Finnish Metalworkers' Union and Union of Salaried Employees TU for helping me in finding the six research subjects and providing background material on EWCs. Without their connections to EWC representatives in Finnish companies this study would have been impossible to make. I would also like to thank all my research subjects who took part in the research for giving their valuable time for an interview. The information gained from the six trade union experts has been very helpful. Finally, I would like to thank research subject A, who was extremely cooperative and willing to assist in this research. He obtained access to the company for me and permission to record during their meeting. This surely was not an easy task as business

discussions are often constrained by confidentiality and sensitivity. Informant A also permitted me to analyse his talk for research purposes. His enthusiastic attitude throughout this project made my research work fun and very interesting to do!

## 2. BACKGROUND

Many companies in Finland now use English as their company language. This is the case particularly in multinational companies which have subsidiaries around Europe. Trade union representatives in these companies also need to use English in companies' internal meetings as well as meetings with other organisations. The trade union representatives also need English in Finland when they talk with immigrant workers. In recent years workplaces here in Finland have become multilingual and multicultural. However, most of the English communication occurs outside Finland. It takes place in various meetings and through different networks. For trade union representatives, as well as other people working in international situations, language is a medium which they use in all communication in multicultural settings. They achieve their representative power through language; for example, when they are involved in common framework processes in Europe and try to convey their national or other standpoints. The European Works Councils (EWCs, see introduction) are a good example of where English is used as the working language by the trade union representatives.

All communication described above, both here in Finland and abroad, can be called business communication, an area widely studied. Bargiel-Chiappini & Harris concur that there is a vast amount of literature on business communication (1997: 11). English used in business has interested many researchers and the notion of communicative competence is often mentioned in these studies. Lingua franca research encompasses both of these fields as English is 'the language' in today's business and

communicative competence is the main mantra when teaching English for business people. All these concepts combined, namely Business English, lingua franca and communicative competence, are important for the present study. Hence, this chapter examines these three fields in turn.

## 2.1 Business English

As already mentioned above, English used for international business has been studied widely. It has been a special interest of applied linguists who have studied English from the learners' point of view. Results of this type of research have been used for developing teaching methods and materials for Business English purposes. There are far too many international studies, surveys and needs analyse on Business English to be listed here. Therefore I will mention some Finnish Business English studies because this survey concentrates only on Finnish informants and their use of English. These will give a general picture of this field and its research.

A study well worth mentioning is called 'the Fly's Perspective: Discourse in the Daily Routine of a Business Manager' and it has been conducted by Louhiala-Salminen (2002). It is a qualitative study and it combines observation and recording with text examples and follow-up interviews. The researcher reports that she used an 'interpretive ethnographic approach'. Among the most interesting findings are that the spoken and written communication were totally intertwined, discourse activities were interrelated and that many means were used (Louhiala-Salminen 2002: 222-223). The institutional, professional and cultural practices have a significant

role in discourse, corporate culture being more significant than national cultures in the daily routine of a business manager. English was used as lingua franca in the company, and it was also present in written 'Finns only' situations (Louhiala-Salminen 2002: 222-223). Code switching between English and Finnish was natural and easy, occasionally resulting in mixed 'Finglish jargon'. Email was the most used medium and the vertical global business unit the main discourse domain (Louhiala-Salminen 2002: 222-223).

Louhiala-Salminen with Charles and Kankaanranta studied mergers between Finnish and Swedish companies (2005). The companies used English as a lingua franca and the researchers were interested in the communicative practices and cultural perceptions of these companies.

They found, among other things, that communication was smooth even though sometimes non-native speaker-like and that effectiveness and efficiency were more important than linguistic correctness (Charles et al 2005: 416-417). They found cultural differences in the meeting talk of Finns and Swedes that were also identifiable in their BELF interaction (Charles et al 2005: 412). Business English Lingua Franca is called BELF (Kankaanranta & Louhiala-Salminen 2007) and it refers to ELF used for business purposes. Charles et al suggest that BELF should be in the forefront in language training (2005: 401-421).

In 2005 Vuorela studied humour in multicultural business negotiations, more specifically in negotiations between sellers and potential customers. She analysed meetings and found that humour seemed to have strategic potential for negotiations; it can be used, for example, to introduce a difficult issue or pursue one's goals (Vuorela 2005: 105).

A comprehensive needs analysis on Business English in Finland was done by Huhta in 1999. She studied 197 employees in Finnish companies and asked them about work-related language needs, she also interviewed managers. She found, for example, that all employees need workplace communication in English as well other foreign languages irrespective of educational background or position (Huhta 1999: 153-162). Her survey showed that employees' strengths are in reading, listening and writing and their problems are deficient oral skills and lack of intercultural awareness (Huhta 1999: 153-162).

These were some examples from the Finnish business world, some of which are also mentioned by Nickerson who offers an overview of current research focusing on ELF in the international business context in her editorial of ESP journal (2005: 367-380). (ESP = English for Specific Purposes, see Engberg 2006). Nickerson writes that two trends in ELF in international business research have become important. The first trend is that there has been a shift from the analysis of language used in isolation towards the analysis of contextualised communicative genres and the second trend is that there has been a shift in focus from language skills to language strategies (Nickerson 2005: 367-380).

ELF in business or BELF subsumes discourse that occurs in corporate meetings of various kinds. The present study is not concerned with meetings as such, but a brief look at them is in order, to provide background for this work.

### 2.1.1 Business Meetings

Meetings are an integral part of work in organisations and play a crucial role in everyday work (Lesznyák 2004: 107). Meetings take up a substantial amount of time at workplaces. Boden writes that 'talk is the work' for managers as they spend more than 70 % of their time in verbal interaction (1994: 79). Meetings are work for all who participate in them and all meetings are composed of talk. In Boden's words 'meetings are where organisations come together' (1994: 81). Bargiela-Chiappini & Harris share the same view as they say that most organisations exist in so far as 'individuals come together to talk them into being during meetings' (1997: 6).

Sociologically-oriented researchers Bargiela-Chiappini & Harris define meetings as task-oriented and decision making encounters between the chair and the group and they differentiate formal meetings from informal meetings (1997: 205-209). In their opinion, meetings are much more task-oriented and topic-centered than most general conversation (Bargiela-Chiappini & Harris 1997: 205-210). In meetings the chair has a different role from the other participants. The chair is usually responsible for topic shifts, particularly in business meetings (Bargiela-Chiappini & Harris 1997: 210). Boden defines meetings as 'a planned gathering' (internal or external to an organisation) in which the participants have some clear role and the event has a purpose that the participants know in advance (1994: 84).

Meetings have been studied, for example, in the framework of institutional discourse. Institutional talk means, for example, doctor-patient communication where the doctor controls the turn-taking (Jokinen et al 1999:

44). There are opposing views on 'institutional talk' and 'talk at work'. Bargiel-Chiappini & Harris claim that organisational discourse does not have the characteristics of 'institutional discourse' which is often taken as a synonym for asymmetric discourse (Bargiel-Chiappini & Harris 1997: 21-22). Some take these two types as synonyms and see no asymmetry; for example Lesznyák who describes 'institutional discourse' or 'talk at work' as being the same (2004: 104-105).

Nevertheless, meetings have been studied by linguists in educational, industrial and political settings (Lesznyák 2004: 107). In medical and business settings the frameworks have been mainly sociologically-oriented (Lesznyák 2004: 107). Boden, a documentary movie maker and sociologist, blends ethnomethodology and conversation analysis for researching the social reality of meetings (1994: 2). She is of the opinion that conversation analysis is a vital analytic tool for those interested in the interface between talk and social structure (Boden 1994: 16). Bargiel-Chiappini & Harris also write that 'the amalgamation of the insights from different disciplines' lead to a more complete understanding of meetings (1997: 31). These methods will be discussed in chapter 3.

Meetings are an important part of workplace interaction. In meetings information is exchanged and many things are negotiated and developed. According to Bargiela-Chiappini and Harris, corporate meetings have discourse patterns of their own (1997). At European level EWC meetings have an important role for the trade union representatives. EWC meetings offer an opportunity for the representatives to influence the actions of the companies. Therefore the communication that occurs in the EWC meetings is

very important for trade union representatives. Trade union representatives use English in Finnish meetings as well as in international contexts. They work in a particular professional field and need special trade union vocabulary which will be discussed next.

### 2.1.2 English in the trade union context

Trade union representatives need specific business language as they work inside different companies. As will be seen in the results section, all interviewees of this study agree that trade union representatives need many different types of English when talking with different people inside the company. They need to know very specific vocabulary connected to, for example, company turnover, its capital, and production processes. In addition to Business English they need vocabulary related to trade union work, for instance, issues like health and safety at work, labour law, and conditions of employment etc. It certainly seems that trade union representatives use English in many ways, for which they require specialised language. This language, however, has not been studied yet and no claims about a special trade union register or even 'trade union jargon' can be made. This study will not make such claims either. Nevertheless, some other trade union related research, particularly on trade union representatives' EWC work, has been conducted in Finland and they will be looked into next.

### 2.1.3 Previous European Works Council (EWC) studies

As mentioned in the introduction, two previous studies on trade union English in Finland and on European Works Councils have been made. One was done by Laitinen, who surveyed Finnish EWC representatives in 2003. The other study was by Waddington 2006 and he surveyed the views of Finnish EWC representatives. A brief outline of both studies will follow.

In his research Laitinen asked, among other things, about the amount of interaction between the EWC members and about the education they had received for EWC work. He received 100 answers to an email questionnaire and conducted 56 interviews (Laitinen 2003: 6). He found out that about half of the EWCs have more than one meeting per year and that the issues dealt with mainly concerned those proposed by the EWC legislation (Laitinen 2003: 35-36). The Finnish companies organise surprisingly little training for EWC representatives, but when they do it is mostly language training. The research found that the main obstacle for Finnish representatives when communicating with other representatives were language problems (64 %). Laitinen concluded his report by recommending more language training for the Finnish EWC representatives (Laitinen 2003: 35-36).

The other study was done by Waddington from the University of Manchester. In 2005 he received a total number of 409 answers to a European-wide questionnaire, 79 of which were from Finnish EWC representatives. He found that the Finnish representatives would like to receive more training not only in languages but also training on the laws,

regulations and best practices in EWCs (Waddington 2005: 18). Another result of interest here was that communication between EWC meetings is done mainly by email and phone (Waddington 2005: 16). In his survey Waddington asked many questions about EWC representative's work and EWC decision making, but those results are not relevant to this study.

To my knowledge there are no studies which concentrate on Finnish trade union representatives' actual use of English language. Consequently the present study set out to find out how trade union representatives use English in their EWC work. The situations in which trade union representatives use English are mostly lingua franca situations, especially in EWC meetings where the trade union representatives from different countries meet and discuss with the company management. This is particularly common if a Finnish company has adopted English as their company language. This study wanted to incorporate trade union English to lingua franca research in order to give a better picture of the situation.

## 2.2. English as a Lingua Franca (ELF)

As stated in the introduction, lingua franca is simply a 'vehicular language spoken by people who do not share a native language' (Mauranen 2003: 513). It is often communication between non-native speakers of English. The Oxford Dictionary of Linguistics defines lingua franca as: 'Any language used for communication between groups who have no other language in common...'. (Matthews 1997). Meierkord presents UNESCO's definition of lingua franca which states that lingua franca is 'a language which is used habitually by

people whose mother tongues are different in order to facilitate communication between them' (2006: 163).

Other closely related terms to lingua franca are intercultural communication, cross-cultural communication, international communication, and mediated communication (using an interpreter). According to Lesznyák the term 'intercultural communication' is used in scientific and popular discourse to describe communication between people from different cultures (Lesznyák 2004: 46-47). The plethora of terms can be confusing, but here we are interested in English used by non-native speakers of English as a common language, i.e. a lingua franca. The research field is called English as a Lingua Franca and the acronym is ELF.

Lingua franca communication interests many different types of researchers; linguists, sociologists, psychologists, to name but a few. As a research field of its own ELF has existed only about six years, but the interest in lingua franca studies is growing (Mauranen & Metsä-Ketelä 2006: 3). English as a lingua franca has been studied, for instance, in the academic world. Some studies have been made in Finland at the University of Tampere using a corpus called ELFA, English as a Lingua Franca in Academic Settings. It consists of recordings in international degree programmes and in other university activities (Mauranen 2006: 129). Another ELF corpus is VOICE, the general Vienna-Oxford International Corpus of English (Seidlhofer 2005: 340). Both corpora are being used for studying ELF. Various linguists have looked at ELF from different perspectives and, for example, phonology has been studied by Jenkins, pragmatics has been studied by Meierkord and lexicogrammatical features by Seidlhofer (Seidlhofer 2005: 340). As

mentioned before, ELF has also been studied in the business context (BELF); there the interest has been mainly on business negotiations and meetings.

ELF researchers have used a variety of methods and the studies have been both quantitative and qualitative. As explained above, many of the studies are based on large corpora of naturally occurring spoken data (Mauranen & Metsä-Ketelä 2006: 3). ELF research has studied, for example, the ways in which native and non-native speakers' use of English vary when compared to each other. The reason behind this lies in the strong tradition of 'standard English' being the norm and the aim of non-native speakers of English. Recently ELF researchers have been more interested in ELF in its own right. There have even been suggestions that ELF could be studied as its own variety of English in Europe, some kind of 'Euro-English'. This has been suggested by Erling and Bartlett (2006: 33-34), but strongly opposed by Sandra Mollin in the same issue of *Nordic Journal of English Studies*. According to Mollin ELF could be a register but not a variety of English (Mollin 2006: 48). 'Euro-English' has also been discussed by Jenkins, Modiano and Seidlhofer in *English Today* (2001). The concept of communicative competence is central to ELF debate and it will be explained below.

### 2.3 Communicative competence and lingua franca

According to one definition, communicative competence is a sociolinguistic notion and it converges with interactional competence (Markee 2000: 64). Markee states that when people talk, they bring in background knowledge about the world in order to communicate successfully (2000: 65 – 67). He

presents a model of comprehension in which he incorporates four areas of knowledge (Markee's table simplified):

- schematic knowledge (background knowledge about the world)
- interactional knowledge (knowledge of how language is used in talk-in-interaction, communicative strategies and knowledge of how verbal and non-verbal communicative factors interact)
- systemic knowledge (syntactic, semantic, phonological, morphological)
- lexical knowledge

(Markee 2000: 66)

The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment (CEFR) has adopted communicative competence as its main perspective on language learning and teaching. CEFR suggests that communicative language competence comprises several components: linguistic, sociolinguistic and pragmatic. The report explains that:

- Linguistic competences include lexical, phonological, syntactic knowledge and skills and other dimensions of language as system.
- Sociolinguistic competences refer to the sociocultural conditions of language use. Social conventions (rules of politeness, norms etc.) affect language communication.
- Pragmatic competences are concerned with the functional use of linguistic resources (production of language functions, speech acts), drawing on scenarios or scripts of interactional exchanges.

(Adopted from CEFR 2001: 13)

Mauranen and Metsä-Ketelä state in the introduction of *Nordic Journal of English Studies* (Volume 5, No. 2, 2006) that the ideology of

communicativeness has been the mainstream of pedagogic thinking for the last 30 years. The concept of 'communicative competence' was first introduced by Dell Hymes in the late 1960s (Lee 2006: 350). Hymes challenged Chomsky's view of competence as being mainly grammatical competence. Hymes was the first to expand communicative competence to include both rules of speaking and knowledge of social and cultural norms (Lee 2006: 350). Hymes was of the opinion that context is the key to appropriate use of language and therefore he argued for an ethnographic approach (Lillis 2006: 666-668).

The Hymesian ethnographic approach advocated understanding and investigation of language use, but in Leung's opinion the operationalisation of communicative competence has had an unwanted effect: the target of instruction has become the native English speaker's norm (Leung 2005: 122). Communicative competence has meant, this far, mainly that a non-native speaker of English is able to produce grammatically possible, feasible and appropriate utterances that are native-like (Leung 2005: 122). Native speaker idealism is no longer relevant and it has received a lot of criticism. Not all native speakers of English use language the same way, for example, a researcher and a policeman use it very differently and do not have the same knowledge of the language. Furthermore, whose English should we talk about? There are so many varieties of English in the world that British and American English are not the only standards. We also need to consider the English in lingua franca situations where non-native speakers from different countries use English for interaction, for example, trade union representatives

in EWC meetings. In these situations native speaker idealism no longer applies and this will be looked at next.

Communicative competence is interaction between individuals who aim at common understanding. In lingua franca situations it is enough if the meaning is clear and the speaker is getting his/her message across to another person. Successful communication can be achieved even though there might be grammatical or other 'errors' and the language cannot therefore be considered accurate. This does not mean that 'anything goes' and certainly communication should aim at accurate utterances, but it should not be taken so 'seriously' because all people make 'mistakes' and 'errors' during interaction whether or not they are native or non-native speakers of the language.

Yo-An Lee studied classroom interaction and communicative competence. She is of the opinion that even though students make mistakes during the lessons, they are experienced language users and exhibit communicative competence when interacting in the classroom. Her data shows that during classroom interaction, utterances of repairs, recasts, go-aheads, continuers and questioning all occur. This means that students are competent in recognising problems and are able to repair them in the course of interaction (Lee 2006: 359-264). In this way all participate in achieving common understanding. She calls this collaborative interaction. Similar collaborative interaction occurs in lingua franca situations where non-native speakers from different countries use English for communication. Phonological and grammatical deviations from Standard English do not

prevent successful communication, conclude Jenkins and Seidlhofer based on their ELF studies (Grzegala 2005: 51).

The European framework (CEFR) talks about plurilingual and pluricultural competences, which 'refers to the ability to use languages for the purposes of communication and to take part in intercultural interaction, where a person, viewed as a social agent has proficiency, of varying degrees, in several languages and experience of several cultures' (CEFR). Plurilingual competence should also be taken into account when we talk about communicative competence in lingua franca. It is not the 'correct' native-like English that the speakers should aim for; in ELF situations the main target is to 'get the message across'. Seidlhofer claims that if learners strive at mastering the fine nuances of language it might even be counterproductive in lingua franca settings (Seidlhofer 2005: 340). Alptekin also writes that the conventional model of communicative competence with its native speaker target norms fails to reflect cross-cultural ELF settings (2002: 60-63). To conclude, communicative competence in ELF is different from the traditional notion of it. ELF speakers strive at communicative effectiveness and clarity in talk. For this they use proactive strategies which will be looked at next.

#### 2.4 Proactive strategies in ELF

In lingua franca situations there are many variables to consider. The speakers come from different countries and cultures and have different mother tongues and in addition the speakers' level of proficiency in English differs (Mauranen 2007: 245). Studying the academic talk (ELFA corpus) Mauranen found that to

prevent misunderstanding in communication the speakers resort to proactive strategies for enhanced clarity (Mauranen 2007: 246-257). Some of these strategies will be briefly presented here.

Repetition or rephrasing is very common in talk. It means the speaker expresses the same idea in different words when speaking.

Repetitions and rephrasing are important for clarity, especially in the foreign language context (Mauranen 2007: 248). When the listener hears the same issues repeated it becomes easier to understand what is being said. Self-rephrasing (or self-repair) is very common in the Finnish ELFA data but not so common in the native speaker MICASE data (Mauranen 2006: 138). (MICASE = Michigan Corpus of Spoken Academic English.)

Self-rephrasing in running text means how speakers rephrase themselves in continuous speech (Mauranen 2007: 250). Based on her data Mauranen concludes that self-rephrasing in running texts operates mainly in two dimensions: structure and meaning (Mauranen 2007: 252). In structural rephrases meaning stays the same, but the form is changed, for example if the choice of verb is altered during the talk. In the rephrase of meaning the content is changed, for example if the speaker says something more generic such as 'in Europe' and then rephrases it in the same utterance to 'in central Europe'. In this example the speaker wants to be more specific about what is being said. Speakers also express their intention to rephrase by using rephrase markers (Mauranen 2007: 248).

Rephrase markers used by the speakers before rephrasing their utterance, such as 'in other words' or 'I mean', are used by both MICASE and ELFA speakers, but are much more frequent in ELFA (Mauranen 2007: 249).

Furthermore the ELFA speakers use a smaller variety of expressions, 'mean' being the most common (Mauranen 2007: 249). As Mauranen notes, it seems that non-native speakers 'need to make good use of the items they have in their repertoire' (2007: 250).

Another important factor for clarity of talk is that the hearers know what the topic is that is being discussed. Therefore topic changes need to be made clear (Mauranen 2007: 253). Mauranen calls this 'negotiating topic' and it means that, for example, different objects (people, places etc.) i.e. nouns in discourse which are later being referred to with subject pronouns, such as he, she, it and they (2007: 253-254). This is also called 'fronting' or 'left dislocation' by linguists (Mauranen 2007: 253). 'They' referent was the most common in ELFA corpus and 'they' refers to groups of people, institutional bodies, physical objects and abstract objects (Mauranen 2007: 254).

Speakers often talk about language itself when they speak. This 'discourse about discourse' is called 'discourse reflexivity' and it can be seen, for example, in the use of words like 'ask', 'answer' and 'question' (Mauranen 2007: 255). This 'metadiscourse' is necessary for organising the ongoing interaction and its explicitness enhances clarity (Mauranen 2007: 255-258). In academic talk (ELFA corpus) the most common is the use of word 'question' (Mauranen 2007: 256). The use of 'ask' was also common, but 'answer' was not (Mauranen 2007: 256).

These proactive strategies used by ELF speakers ensure common understanding even though context and background of interaction makes lingua franca situations versatile and complex. Nevertheless, a significant trend in recent years in applied linguistics has been to examine

language in its real context of use and to bring the participants and their social worlds into focus (McCarthy 2001: 116). This is also one aim of this research; it set out to examine real language use i.e. trade union representatives' language use.

## 2.5 This case study: trade union representatives' English

The aim of this research was more practical than theoretical. Understanding how trade union representatives use English in their daily work was the main objective for this research. The study wanted to bring context into the picture and find out how and where English is being used. Besides this background context this case study wished to examine communication in an actual meeting. The researcher chose to investigate these matters with two different methods: interviews and stimulated recall. These are valid methods for this type of case study as will be seen in the chapters that follow.

### 3. MATERIALS AND METHODS

Case studies in applied linguistics often involve investigation of the language behaviour of a single individual or limited number of individuals over a certain period of time (Nunan 1992: 229). A case study, like this one, aims at presenting a detailed picture of something specific. The aim particular of the study was to show where and how trade union representatives use English. In order to find answers to these questions I wanted to meet trade union representatives and ask them about their work. Additionally, I wished to attend actual EWC meetings where the representatives were communicating. Consequently, interviews and stimulated recall methods were chosen for this study.

Interviews and stimulated recall are well-recognised methods in second language research (SLA). They are good methods of collecting data for this type of study as they are fairly easy to adopt even by an inexperienced researcher. This study benefited from the fact that I was already somewhat familiar with both of them. I had used interviews as a method a few times before and I had participated in stimulated recall as a research subject myself. Both of the methods will be explained later in this chapter.

In addition to interviews and stimulated recall a short introduction of a few other methodologies is in order because they are widely used in lingua franca research. The methods that will be described in this chapter are conversation analysis, discourse analysis and ethnomethodology. These are relevant to this study for two reasons. First, this study will 'borrow' transcription conventions from discourse analysis. Second, this study will refer

to studies that have used some of these three methods and therefore it is important to have some idea of their methodological and analytical conventions. After that reliability and validity of this study will be discussed in section 3.5.

### 3.1 Data collection

This study consists of three types of empirical data:

- Background information from six interviewees
- Authentic discourse data from one EWC meeting
- Stimulated recall data

Interviews, data from the EWC meeting and a stimulated recall session were audio-recorded using an MP-player and a laptop computer with a recording programme called Audacity. The use of two recording devices was to ensure that there would be no fear of losing data on account of technical failure. Field work has its own surprises as stated in the introduction and therefore no extra excitement was needed for the research. There are ways by which interviews or recordings can go wrong, but with some luck and good preparation, data collection should be successful and relevant data can be obtained.

#### 3.1.1 Data from the interviews

For the first set of data, six Finnish trade union representatives were interviewed as specialist informants. These interviews were based on a semi-structured questionnaire (appendix 1) and the questions were designed by the

author. The collection of the empirical data took place between 26 January 2007 and 25 March 2007 as explained in appendix 2. All interviews were conducted in Finnish. All of the interviews followed the questions in the semi-structured questionnaire, but there was room for the informants to expand and deviate from the topic under discussion. There were some minor problems in the collection of data, such as background noise (for example in a restaurant) and inability to find a wall socket for the laptop, but fortunately these had no adverse effect on the data. The recorded data, six interviews, was transcribed and analysed by the author and the data was supplemented by relevant background information.

### 3.1.2 Data from the Oslo meeting

The second set of data for this study was collected from an authentic situation; more specifically during one EWC meeting in which one participant's speech was recorded. The number of meetings that I wished to record and to examine was initially two, but it was reduced to one because one company did not allow me to be present and record in their company meeting. Another setback for me was that originally it was expected that this study could investigate interaction in a EWC meeting, but as already mentioned, most of the participants of the EWC meeting in Norway needed interpretation and so there was no interaction. Therefore the data gathered is only one-way discourse of the chair in the EWC meeting. The meeting recorded took place in Oslo on 22 May 2007. I was present, observed and made notes during the meeting. The recording was supplemented by the trade union representative's interview,

which took place immediately after the meeting. The transcription of the talk in Oslo is in appendix 3.

### 3.1.3 Data from the stimulated recall in Helsinki

The third set of data is a recording of a stimulated recall interview that was organised in Helsinki two weeks after the Oslo meeting. I met the informant on 11 June 2007 and the Oslo recording was listened to again. Gass and Mackey recommend that stimulated recall interviews should be done as soon as possible after the event (2000: 54 – 55). Here, two weeks was the time between the recording and stimulated recall. The accuracy of the recall depends greatly on time that elapses between the event and the interview. Bloom studied classroom events and found that if recalls were done without delay they were more accurate. The accuracy of recall diminishes as more time elapses between the event and the recall; after two weeks the accuracy of recall is approximately 65 % (Bloom cited in Gass & Mackey 2000: 18).

Gass and Mackey say that unstructured recall situations may not generate useful data and a structured situation may be at risk of research interference (2000: 54 – 55). In this study the stimulated recall interview was not structured. I had prepared a few questions, but the aim was to keep the situation as free as possible to get feedback from the research subject. I did not want to guide the speaker or influence his analysis of his own speech too much.

The stimulated recall interview was audio recorded and during the session Finnish was the language used. The translated transcription of the

recall session is in Appendix 5. The stimulated recall session took place in an office and there was some background noise that interfered with the stimulated recall session and informant's listening. Therefore, the first part of the audio recording was listened to by the research subject through the speakers of a laptop computer, but the latter part he listened to through earphones. This might have some influence on the results. The total time spent in the stimulated recall session was 1 hour and 30 minutes.

Gass & Mackey recommend that the stimulus should be as strong as possible, for example video and transcription of the text (2000: 54 – 55). For this research it was not possible to choose video recording over audio recording as that would have not been allowed by the company. Audio recording was also a practical choice. It was an objective of the researcher to stay as 'invisible' as possible and not cause any anxiety among the participants. The meeting was as authentic as it could be as the participants did not pay any attention to a small MP-player on the table by the chair or to the researcher with a laptop computer at the back. If there had been a video recorder in the room it might have had a significant influence on the situation. I believe though that the stimulus – audio recording – in stimulated recall interview was strong enough for the purposes of this study.

Gass and Mackey further recommend that the participants could be trained for the procedure, but simple instructions are often enough (2000: 54 – 55). Training as such was not an option due to time limitations, but the research subject was informed how the procedure would be done. Instructions for the research subject were given beforehand in a similar way to that recommended by Gass and Mackey (2000: 59). The research participant

indicated that he had understood the procedure before the recall of the audio recording. Even though the informant was advised to ask me to stop the tape at any point during the session he did not in fact do so. The informant said that he had not heard himself speak on a tape before and that might have influenced his reactions. Consequently, I stopped the tape at the selected points (see below). This will be discussed further in chapter 4 (results) where the relevance of selected material (total 22.5 minutes) as data will also become clear. The informant provided vital information for this research and he was talkative during the stops the researcher made.

The total amount of recording time in Oslo was two hours 28 minutes. I was present in the meeting for approximately 5 hours but not all talk was recorded because for example management's presentations were not relevant to this study. Before the stimulated recall session I selected parts of the recording and the time was reduced to 22 minutes and 30 seconds. The aim of this selection was to find parts of the recording in which there was something relevant to this study. In addition I took parts from different sections of the recording; the beginning, middle and end in order to enhance randomness.

Chapter 4 (results) will show how the selection of methods serves this study. As this study used both interviews and stimulated recall, both of them need separate explanations as methods and they will be discussed next.

### 3.2 Interviews as a method of data collection

Interviews are a very common research method used in qualitative research. They have been used widely in applied linguistics (Nunan 1992: 149). The idea of an interview is simple and sensible because the researcher can ask the informants directly about their thoughts and motives. Discussions are based on informants own personal perspectives and aims which makes interviews a good method of investigating various issues (Eskola & Suoranta 2005: 85).

Interviews can be formal or informal, structured or unstructured. In a structured interview, such as was used in this study, the researcher has an idea of what she or he wants to know and uses a list of questions that have been prepared beforehand (Nunan 1992: 149). Some of the advantages of interviews are that the subjects are given space in the discussion and they can express their own thoughts, and sometimes they may provide more information than anticipated. Disadvantages of interviews are that the informants may try to please the researcher and give positive views on matters discussed. The interview situation is never neutral, the researcher and the informant have different roles (Tiittula & Ruusuvuori 2005: 9-56). Ethical considerations like the rights and anonymity of the informants have to be observed when conducting interviews (Tiittula & Ruusuvuori 2005: 9-56).

### 3.3 Stimulated recall method

A procedure called stimulated recall was used in this study. Stimulated recall is a reflective or introspective method which enables observation of people's internal processes (Gass & Mackey 2000: 1-3). It is a technique in which the researcher audio- or video-records discourse or speech and afterwards the recording is listened to by the speaker her- or himself. After listening the speaker analyses her or his own speech during an interview conducted by the researcher. In stimulated recall, past events can be made available through recall of recorded data (Nunan 1992: 96). This enables the informant to reflect on his own talk and helps the researcher to interpret the data. This technique of reflection can provide the researcher with information that would be difficult to obtain in any other way and when used with other methods, the results can be both valid and reliable (Nunan 1992: 96). Stimulated recall can be used to supply other empirical evidence. Stimulated recall tries to tap learner's thought processes whereas other methods, for example observation, try to interpret the context in which the event happened.

This method, stimulated recall, has its pluses and minuses just as any other research method has. Stimulated recall has been disfavoured because the notion of consciousness has not been seen as a valid area of research (Gass & Mackey 2000: 24). Memory and memorizing are not simple matters. The disadvantages of stimulated recall are, to name but a few, that participants may give inaccurate information, they might not recall the event properly and their verbal skills vary for reporting (Gass & Mackey 2000: 111-

112). On the plus side stimulated recall is able to give valid information on the thoughts of the informant as it enables the subject to relive the situation with accuracy (Gass & Mackey 2000: 24). Stimulated recall is also a flexible tool for research. It enables the researcher to isolate events, explore participants' strategies, their prior knowledge and their reflections (Gass & Mackey 2000: 111-112).

Stimulated recall has its history in the fields of philosophy and psychology, but it has also been used to study many different issues in second language research (Gass & Mackey 2000: 29-35). Gass and Mackey report that in SLA stimulated recall has been used for example when studying oral proficiency, pedagogical knowledge, communication strategies, writing and discourse (Gass & Mackey 2000: 29-35). Here, the aim was to see whether or not the informant had thought about his communication and clarity of his speech in the meeting.

As mentioned in the beginning of this chapter, interviews and stimulated recall methods are good when looking at a particular case. When evidence that can be generalised is required then larger data and corpora are necessary. The ELF field uses different methods for analysing large and small amounts of discourse and communication. In order to understand the research, a short introduction to these ELF research methods is appropriate and follows.

### 3.4 Lingua franca research methods

Lingua franca communication is being studied in many ways within diverse research frameworks and with varied methodologies such as discourse analysis, conversation analysis and ethnographic methods. Conversation analysis is closely related to several disciplinary perspectives, such as pragmatics, interactional sociolinguistics, discourse analysis, semiotics, rhetoric, ethnomethodology, ethnography of communication, and even social psychology. Many of these perspectives are beyond this study and I will focus on explaining the relatedness and differences of just three methodological approaches as they are probably among the main methods for analysing lingua franca communication. These three methods are conversation analysis, discourse analysis and ethnomethodology. It has to be noted that these traditions also overlap; there are no clear borders between the approaches. Discourse analysis is the overarching method of all of these.

Conversation analysis has probably been the most common method used in ELF studies. Therefore, first a definition of conversation analysis offered by the Encyclopaedia of Language & Linguistics:

‘Conversation analysis (CA) studies the methods participants orient to when they organise social action through talk. It investigates rules and practices from an interactional perspective and studies them by examining recordings of real-life interactions’ (Mazeland 2006: 153).

In other words conversation analysis tries to describe structures of ordinary conversations that occur between friends and acquaintances, either face-to-

face or on the telephone (Markee 2000: 24). Researchers attempt to describe this structure in terms of sequences, turn-taking and repair practices (Markee 2000: 24-26, Jokinen et al 1999: 44). Conversation analysis focuses on talk in conversations as well as other types of talk such as lessons or news broadcasts. It now covers both conversation and institutional talk and therefore the term talk-in-interaction is often used (Markee 2000: 24, Mazeland 2006: 153).

Conversation analysis and discourse analysis are closely related yet different. The main difference between conversation analysis and discourse analysis is that conversation analysis studies the construction of interaction whereas discourse analysis studies construction of meanings in interaction (Jokinen et al 1999: 45). Conversation analysis aims at identifying commonly occurring patterns, and discourse analysis emphasises the social interpretation of the talk (Jokinen et al 1999: 45). As mentioned above, discourse analysis subsumes conversation analysis.

Conversation analysis is also rather close to ethnography research or ethnomethodology. Ethnographers try to gain a holistic picture of the informants. In addition to the very detailed 'thick description' of the data they try to develop a thorough profile of informants' cultures and background (Markee 2000: 26-27, Jokinen et al 1999: 41-43). For trying to understand talk-in-interaction they use additional data which they collect by various techniques such as participants' interviews, observation and by reading documents produced by informants. Background information of the participants can be important to the conversation analyst. Therefore, some conversation analysts incorporate ethnographic information into their analysis

because they think it is necessary for complete understanding (Markee 2000: 26-27, Jokinen et al 1999: 41-43). The main difference between these two approaches is in the collection and analysis of the data. In ethnography the researcher is part of the process whereas conversation analysis can rely solely on the data itself. Ethnographic information can be incorporated into the analysis of the study. This study was interested in the ethnography of the research and therefore background questions were asked and observation during the meeting carried out.

This study has three types of data as described in 3.1. The second set of data consists of authentic data recording in a meeting and pre- and post interviews with the informant. As mentioned before, this study borrows from the discourse analytical approach as it will use their transcription conventions (ELFA, see appendix 4). This loan will perhaps enhance the validity and reliability of the study, issues to be discussed next.

### 3.5 Reliability and validity of the research

Interviews, observation, recording of authentic data and stimulated recall as well as written background information have been incorporated in this study. This triangulation of methods is used to enhance the reliability and validity of the research. Triangulation, which here means using different kind of methods in same study, is common practice particularly in case studies. Triangulation was done in order to reduce bias in the study. The data collection methods used and secondary sources are recognised methods for qualitative research.

The data has been recorded and analysed in an orderly manner. All results in this report are strictly drawn from the usable data at hand.

The validity of this research has been kept to a high standard as the questions of the survey were carefully thought out and they tried to address issues relevant to the objectives of the study. Possibly some more general questions could have been left out from the questionnaire and more specific ones added. This only became apparent in the analysis of the data.

During the recording in Oslo I tried to be 'invisible' as explained in 3.1.3 in order to get authentic material. At the beginning of the meeting there was some 'stiffness' by the chair and he laughed and said 'since I am the research subject'. This is similar to what Bargiela-Chiappini & Harris found when they recorded British and Italian meetings. It is called Labov's observer's paradox (Bargiela-Chiappini & Harris 1997: 49). In this meeting very soon after the chair's comment the chair and other participants paid no attention to the recording and the meeting proceeded as normal. It seems that the objective of researcher's invisibility was met and the data can be considered authentic and reliable.

Furthermore, I was familiar with the method of stimulated recall as I had been a stimulated recall research subject myself as already mentioned in the beginning of chapter 3. This further enhances the reliability of the data. Gass and Mackey also recommend that a researcher should observe stimulated recall before utilising it (2000: 63). Participating in one stimulated recall session did not make me 'professional' as a result of using the method, but it gave some experience and insight into it.

Even though the total sample of the survey is not extensive enough for drawing any generalisations, the data is quite reliable and serves the purposes of this case study. This study needed to obtain general background on how and where the trade union representatives use English in their EWC work. This was easy enough to ask in the interviews. It has to be noted that the results only reflect these informants' views. In addition to interviews, this study wanted to investigate EWC meetings and see what kind of discourse occurs in an authentic EWC meeting. For that reason a recording of a real EWC meeting was necessary. The data of the EWC meeting is from one meeting only and it gives an example of one informant's talk only. These are the obvious limitations of a case study such as this one. However, detailed information was obtained and the data gathered for this case study turned out to be rather relevant and informative as can be seen in the discussion of results in the following chapter.

## 4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In this chapter we will look at the results of this study. Interviews will be discussed first, then data from the Oslo recording and stimulated recall session in Helsinki. After each set of findings a discussion of the results will follow.

### 4.1 Interviews

In this study six Finnish trade union representatives were interviewed as specialist informants, as explained in chapter 3. These interviews were based on a semi-structured questionnaire (Appendix 1). The results of the interviews will be presented in this section after some background information of the interviewees.

#### 4.1.1 The interviewees

Five of the interviewees use English abroad in their EWC work and sometimes here in Finland as well. These five trade union representatives are referred to as interviewees A, B, C, D and E as can be seen in Table 1. The sixth interviewee (referred to as F) does not use English in his EWC work and the results of his interview will be discussed separately in section 4.1.6. Some of the informants are full-time workplace representatives and some part-time. Some of them work as safety representatives and others as workers'

representatives. Most of them have worked in their companies for a long time, on average over 20 years. They have been workplace representatives (reps) between 2 and 15 years (see Table 1). Four of them represent blue-collar workers and two white-collar workers.

	<b>Positon as rep</b>	<b>Full/part-time</b>	<b>Been a rep</b>	<b>Been in co.</b>	<b>Co. employs</b>	<b>Co. operates</b>
A	Workers' safety rep	full-time rep	8 years	30 years	20 000	in 6 countries
B	Workers' representative	full-time rep	5 years	23 years	9 300	in 40 countries
C	EWC representative	part-time rep	5 years	33 years	4 500	in 14 countries
D	Workers' safety rep	part-time rep	13 years	20 years	10 600	in 46 countries
E	White collar workers' rep	part-time rep	2 years	10 years	13 000	in 23 countries
F	Workers' representative	full-time rep	15 years	37 years	25 000	in 50 countries

Table 1: Background information of the 6 interviewees.

All workplace representatives work in large companies (by Finnish standards) which employ between 4,500 and 25,000 employees worldwide. These companies operate in several countries as can be seen in Table 1. Only one of the workers' representatives is now a member on the company's board of directors and two interviewees had previously been on the board of directors for 4 and 6 years.

#### 4.1.2 Maintaining and enhancing English language skills

All informants have updated their language skills. Most of the interviewees had taken part in language training. Two of them had been in the Newcastle EWC-English course which they found very beneficial as other participants from other countries also dealt with EWC matters. In addition to language

courses they maintain their skills, for example, by reading English magazines and watching English movies without subtitles.

According to the interviewees, the employers assist representatives' language training financially. Three of the interviewees had been allowed to use working hours for training though two of them had had to use their own time. They all agreed that the employer should have the main responsibility for language training and that the employers should provide financial support or at least pay for courses and training.

The trade unions and their colleges in Finland do not generally offer any language courses for the representatives. Most of the interviewees are of the opinion that there is no need for the trade unions to organise or provide language training; they should primarily assist in other EWC matters. One informant had a different opinion and he said that trade unions should also have a role in EWC-reps language training. All interviewees agreed that training on cultural differences (which some unions organise) is important for EWC work.

#### 4.1.3 Using English in daily work

In all companies represented in this study, English is used as the language of business and all printed materials are produced in English. Three companies have English as their official language and the interviewees use English in various situations both inside the companies and abroad. In addition to that these companies have changed their official language from Finnish into English and the use of English inside the companies has increased in recent

years due to the increase in immigrant workers in Finland. Here are a few situations in which three interviewees use English in Finland:

- assisting immigrant workers at the workplace
- informing new immigrant employees on health and safety guidelines and regulations
- keeping records and reporting incidents and accidents at work
- participating in the company's board of directors (one rep)
- participating in company-wide project groups
- reading manuals and technical plans
- following the company's intranet information and printed materials
- preparing papers for EWC meetings and related work
- speaking with the middle-management (some reps daily)

As can be seen from the list above the representatives use English in many different situations at work. These situations involve using special vocabulary as briefly explained in section 2.1.2. They need to be familiar with trade union and EWC vocabulary but also know business terminology used by the management. In addition to numerous acronyms, there is plenty of special technical vocabulary in each business sector.

#### 4.1.4 EWC work of the representatives

All EWC work is carried out in English. Only two of the six interviewees use Finnish (through interpretation) in EWC meetings. One of these two nevertheless uses English between the meetings and in informal situations. All the rest of the interviewees use English in all their EWC work, meetings

included. The employers would like to train all EWC participants to use English because interpretation is expensive. However, the representatives anticipated that interpretation will increase as the companies expand their operations and new countries join the EWCs.

There are generally two EWC meetings a year. Between the meetings there is some communication by email and phone. All but one said that there should be more contacts between the representatives between the meetings. They said that the EWC networks do not function as well as they could because workplace representatives are very busy. They also mentioned language problems, especially with EWC members who use interpretation in meetings. These members cannot fully participate in email and phone communication between the meetings. These comments seem to coincide with the findings of Laitinen (2003). He found that the two most important obstacles for the development of EWC networks were language problems and lack of time for EWC work (Laitinen 2003: 25 – 36).

Only two of the workplace representatives receive EWC materials in Finnish if they need them. Others get only materials in English. Some of them translate some of the materials themselves if they have the time. They write summaries of the EWC meetings in Finnish in order to distribute them here in Finland. Getting materials in Finnish may also be counterproductive. One informant said that it does not help much to receive Finnish materials as he needs to use English in all communication. He is currently preparing a paper for the EWC working committee which should refer to the new EWC directive. He said that it is rather challenging as the legal text is 'Greek' to him. Another interviewee said that often the materials for the meetings come too

late; a pile of papers may arrive a day before travelling, and you have not time to read the papers, let alone translate them.

Two of the representatives are members in the working committee of the EWC. This committee coordinates EWC work, plans the EWC meetings and draws up the agendas. They said that it would be impossible to be a working committee member without knowing English. It would be impracticable and impossible to ask for interpretation for a phone call or all the received emails. They also both thought that through the working committee there is a chance to influence things more than through the actual EWC alone.

The representatives resort to different communication strategies in the EWC work in order to communicate successfully. They use, for example, compensation strategies, such as alternative ways of saying things when a word does not come to mind, when they try to convey meanings to the other participants. One interviewee called this creativity. The representatives also said that they sometimes thought beforehand what they wanted to say before the actual communication on the phone or by email. It is not so easy though, for example arguing in English is difficult. One informant said that it was very challenging to give good examples or relevant points to support your argument in another language than your mother tongue.

One problem that the representatives pointed out was that some EWC members were not involved in trade union work in their own countries. In one company, from a factory in Poland, they had sent an EWC representative who knew English, but did not know anything about trade union work. These EWC members have great difficulties when they are asked to explain their respective countries' workers' situations and trade union practices because

they are not familiar with these problems. This aspect also affects the communication in EWC meetings.

#### 4.1.5 Language matters

All informants said that being able to communicate in English is crucial if one wants to participate fully in international EWC work, in particular when forming networks and making contacts. Informants A, C and D use English in their EWC work as well as in their own work in Finland. They communicate in English regularly with management and they belong to different working groups or EWC working committee. They also communicate with other EWC members frequently between the meetings. They have large networks and use a wide range of vocabulary. Their communication can be examined by outlining some situations where knowledge of English was essential.

Informant A gave an example of a situation in which he greatly benefited from his personal contacts and good English skills. His EWC membership allowed him to engage in a long and significant interaction (by email mostly) with the CEO of the company in a crisis situation. He would not have been able to be in contact with the CEO directly if he had not been an EWC member and if he had not know English well enough. It takes time to build trust and confidential relationships between people. In this case that had already happened through EWC work and it was advantageous for both parties.

Interviewee D told about a different type of situation, a situation where better English skills would have been helpful. He thinks that the

management might have used his poor skills of English to their advantage. After one proposal he made in an EWC meeting the management misunderstood him and claimed that he did not trust the management. The representative is not sure whether this was a tactical move from the management or a genuine misunderstanding. He thought it might have been caused by cultural differences, not communication.

Interviewee C thinks that he is able to influence things at the workplace through EWC. His company's EWC operates very well and the company asks workers' representatives to join different working groups and company-wide projects. This would be impossible without good command of English. He thinks that English is essential because interpretation has its problems in EWC work. He thinks that if workers' representatives used interpretation, there would be no reps in any working groups or projects because it would become too expensive for the company. Furthermore the work in the projects would not be so smooth if interpretation was used. Confidential matters would not be discussed because the management would not allow the 'extra ears' to be present. In addition, all 'ex tempore' situations would be missed if interpretation were needed at all times. Even though he thinks good knowledge of English is vital for his work, he was quite critical about the company's policy of using English as their official language. In his opinion they are trying to marginalise people who do not know English, especially those working in Finland.

Some informants use interpretation in EWC meetings and they think that it works well for them. These reps use English during the informal parts of the meetings and in their opinion it is essential to know English for

making contacts and getting to know people. All in all, language matters and English seem to be necessary in the international work of the trade union representatives.

#### 4.1.6 Informant F

As mentioned earlier, interviewee F is the only one who does not use English in any EWC work even though he is an EWC member. His company provides interpretation for him. Informant F is a full-time trade union representative and he has a long work history in the company; he has been a member of the company's EWC board for about 12 years.

According to interviewee F the language shift from Finnish into English in his company had a major effect on his work as the workers' representative on the board of directors of the company. At first, he attended the board meetings with the help of someone interpreting, but the translation by a non-professional fellow participant was not enough for following the subtler and underlying meanings of the discussion. He also had to read many papers in English before the meetings which was a struggle for him as his level of English was low. He soon realised that it was not possible for him to continue on the board of directors as he could not fulfil the requirements of a workers' representative. Finally he had to resign and they now have another person replacing him on the board. He continues as an EWC representative with proper interpretation, but he feels that in the future all trade union representatives who work in international companies should know English 'well enough'.

#### 4.1.7 Discussion: the interviews

The results clearly show that the trade union representatives interviewed use English in their EWC work in different situations in both Finland and abroad. What was not anticipated prior to this study was that the situations where they use English in Finland would be so varied. This data alone is not sufficient for arguments of different registers used by the representatives, but clearly they need different approaches and kinds of language when speaking with management, factory workers or EWCs multicultural members. I would argue that these varied situations are accomplished with creativity and an ability to adapt.

The representatives resort to different compensation strategies when language or memory fails them. Good command of English and resourceful use of communication strategies are essential. Language is a tool for trade union representatives through which they 'get their job done'. Effectiveness and efficiency count in EWC work as they do generally in business. Fine nuances of language are not important as long as the message is clear.

The situations described by A, C and D reveal that language skills matter in their work. When a representative is a confident English user he can influence things in the EWCs, make contacts and build useful networks. They report that sometimes misunderstandings occur but that is not very frequent. It is vital though to know English well enough to be able to argue and present workers' viewpoints at EWC meetings. It is therefore, perhaps, why more

language training was recommended by Laitinen in 2003. When looking at the results, language training with clear EWC objectives could be beneficial for the representatives, because interpretation has its own problems.

Interpretation in EWC work has its pluses and minuses. On the plus side it enables EWC members to participate in EWC meetings without adequate English skills. On the minus side there are the costs of interpretation. Furthermore, interpretation cannot often be used in 'ad hoc' or informal situations. Translation of written materials has the same downsides.

The work done through the EWC meetings is very important for trade union representatives. Some of the representatives said that they were not fully satisfied with the interaction in EWC meetings between the workers and the management. Frequently, there was not enough time for workers' questions or discussion after the presentations by the management. This became clear in the meeting in Oslo as we shall see later. The representatives said that in general there should be more genuine interaction in the meetings and between the meetings.

These were the results of the interviews. It seems that these six representatives are using English in various ways and are confident language users despite some critical remarks. This background information gave a good insight into trade union representatives' work and their language use. Next we shall look more closely at what took place in one EWC meeting.

## 4.2 The meeting in Oslo

The meeting recorded in Oslo was an EWC meeting of a large multinational company; the firm employs 20.000 workers in 6 countries, as explained above (see interviewee A). In total there were 30 participants in the meeting when both employers and all employee representatives were present (employers 8 and employees 22). In the part that was recorded there were 12 worker-representatives: 3 from Finland, 2 from France, 2 from Germany, 1 from Norway, 2 from Ukraine and 2 from Romania. This was the workers' EWC plenary meeting. The informant, referred also to as A, acted as the chair of the employees' meeting. During the day there were sessions where the whole assembly (30 participants) were present but there were also sessions where only workers (22 participants), or part of the workers group (12 participants), were present. There were also pre- and post meetings in the two day EWC ordinary meeting's agenda.

After the recording in Oslo I asked the informant a few questions in order to better understand the situation in the meeting. This was my first EWC meeting and I wanted to find out how the informant felt about the meeting in general. I wanted to know whether this was a typical EWC meeting and what the chair thought about communication during the meeting in general. The answers were not recorded, but written down into a notebook. This is a brief outline of what the informant said:

This was not a typical EWC plenary meeting as we did not have an agenda prepared. (Normally we would have a written agenda to follow.) The issues discussed were things that have been

discussed here before, so I think that nothing was unclear to anyone after interpretation. There was not so much interaction, but this is pretty standard. The participants in general are not that enthusiastic about participating in discussion. The place and the classroom style seating affect the interaction as well as the use of interpreters.

This was the same impression that I got. The seating arrangement was classroom style, interpreters sitting at the back of the room, and this arrangement might have influenced the non-interaction. The discussion was not very lively and most of the participants just listened to what was explained to them. It was more like information giving than negotiation in its traditional sense. It needs to be noted that the matters discussed in the plenary needed plenty of explanation from the chair as it was a new situation for the company and this EWC group.

I observed the meeting for approximately five hours and noticed that the atmosphere was fairly relaxed even though there were major changes on their way in the structure of the company. These structural changes will influence the future EWC practices resulting, for example, in a new EWC agreement which needs to be agreed upon. These issues were discussed in the workers' meeting as will be seen in the analysis below. The managers of the company (CEO's of different business sectors) explained the future market changes as well as presenting a picture of the company's current operational and financial status. The management's slide-show presentations were not recorded as this research focuses on the worker's representative - he is the research subject or the informant. These slideshows took a long time and

there was not much time for genuine discussion after them. This was criticized by A in the stimulated recall and the same criticism came up in the interviews.

### 4.3 The talk in Oslo

Before looking at A's responses to his own talk in stimulated recall, I would like to discuss some excerpts of A's talk. These examples intend to show how the informant aims at clarity in his speech. These extracts have been chosen to show how the speaker seeks to achieve successful communication by resorting to proactive strategies. Proactive strategies are used for creating understanding as explained in 2.4. Repetitions, self-corrections and rephrasing are common ways of ensuring clarity in communication (Mauranen 2006 & 2007). Some examples of these strategies will be looked at next. The examples are from the speech recorded in Oslo that was also the stimulus in the stimulated recall. The extract numbers refer to Appendix 3.

#### 4.3.1 Repetitions by the chair

Repetitions in running text, as explained in 2.4, are used for clarity and they give the hearers more time to process what they hear (Mauranen 2007: 248).

Here is one example from the data:

... so if you have *money* a certain sum of *money* then it's divided  
*to you* and *to you* and *to you* and rest are ah given nothing I  
guess ... (part ten, Appendix 3)

This example of repetition enhances what was said, the repetition makes the message stronger and clearer. The word 'money' gets repeated once and it is expanded to 'certain sum of money'. Also 'to you' is repeated and it seems that the argument becomes more 'visible'. One could imagine how the money is divided physically to different persons. It could be called 'embodiment' such as Goodwin talks about in his research (2000: 1495). The recycling of the same syntactic structure makes this talk or 'action' more 'concrete'.

Another example from the data:

... there has been *some changes* and (xx) plan- we are planning to have *some changes* and some *changes* come from.... and there are *some some cosmetic changes*... (part two, Appendix 3)

This repetition of 'some changes' is here perhaps because the changes were difficult to describe when there were no handouts or overheads to illustrate them from (see section 4.3.4 below). It could be interpreted as a sign of the chair collecting his thoughts and deciding what to say about the changes in general. The repetitions generally give time for the speaker as well as for the hearer (Mauranen 2007: 248).

The third example of repetition from the data:

... *you have to have* decent drawings *you have to have* materials and *you have to have* ah skilled people ... (part eleven)

This example of repetition shows a repetition that has not only the same words but also similar structure. It looks and sounds like a list of things and makes it perhaps easier to be understood by the hearer. Repetition of the

same structure makes the items to stand out and the discourse becomes clearer as well as more effective.

#### 4.3.2 Self-rephrasing in content and form

Self-rephrasing or self-repairs are monologic and work proactively (Mauranen 2006: 138). In self-repairs the speaker tries to find a more suitable word or structure. As explained in 2.4 there are two types of self-rephrasing; content and form (Mauranen 2006: 248-250). Here are a few examples of both types of self-rephrasing in running text from the data.

First content example:

... he's very *rapid guy* very very *smooth talker* and you have to be *quick* if ... (part three, Appendix 3)

This first example is vague. The rephrase of a 'rapid guy' to a 'smooth talker' quite probably refers to the person's way of acting and speaking.

Another content example:

... there is ah at least in finland certain *laws* certain *regulations* certain *collective agreements* of the minimum wages... (part four)

The second example of 'laws', 'regulations' and 'agreements' is clearly elaboration and specification of the content. It seems that the speaker tries to ensure comprehensiveness by giving several formulations of the same phrase.

Another content example:

... they want to have some some *solutions* or some *deeds to be done* in order to to get us back on track... (part five, Appendix 3)

Here the speaker changes his mind about 'solutions'. Maybe he wants to say that action or 'deeds' will lead to solutions and not vice versa. The above examples of rephrasing show clarification in meaning. These rephrases help the hearer to follow what is being said. It gives time not only to the hearers but in this case also interpreters.

Final examples of content - looking for a suitable word:

...said that finland is not going to be the - how would I put it - the *first runner* the *front runner* in that issue... (part nine)

... the *basic* or the *original* idea of the this body is... (part three)

The informant is changing the word he uses and he is trying to find the correct expression. In the first example the informant's expression 'how would I put it' could be interpreted as explicitness in finding a suitable word. This could even be interpreted as rephrase marker.

Some examples of form:

...that we are not *get- making* enough money for them... (part five)

...individual company *should* they *should be taken care in* the *with* the local management ... (part four)

...so if you have ah let's say *concern- issues concerning* directive... (part four)

...it's going to *ease up* ah *increasing* the flexibility and... (part seven)

In these form examples A corrects himself during his speech. Corrections here are for sentence structure and choice of verbs. Rephrasing in form, grammar

repairs, as the above examples could be interpreted, have been found to be rather common in ELF (Mauranen 2006).

#### 4.3.3 Rephrase markers

The rephrase markers used by the informant are different to those found in ELFA corpus (Mauranen 2006). In this data there were no cases of 'I mean' which is the most common in ELFA (Mauranen 2006), but there were several cases of 'I guess' and a few 'I think'. These are not so clear cases of rephrase markers, but the abovementioned 'how would I put it' is more so. It is interesting though that 'I mean' which is so common in talk in general, did not occur here at all. For example, Scheibman found that 'I mean' occurs very frequently in American conversational data (2001: 74) and it has become a set expression or it has been 'lexicalised' in conversation (Hamilton et al 2001: 149).

Lexicalisation here means that the phrase 'I mean' is used like a single word.

The informant rephrased himself several times but did not announce this explicitly by using 'I mean'. His way of talking is very fast and that might have an influence. In addition, it might have something to do with his personal preference of expression. There were no 'I mean's in this piece of data, but they were found in ELFA which consists largely of university student's speech. ELFA speakers are perhaps younger than informant A and this might be one explanation. Other explanations are quite possible but this would need further research.

#### 4.3.4 Negotiating topic

In ELFA corpus 'they' was the most common referent for negotiating topic (see 2.4). In A's talk 'they' referred to the management, the shareholders or the trade unions. Here is an example:

... I know the local unions *they* are not at least *they* are not in finland very keen to give that mandate to us... (part four)

In this data the informant uses 'we' often in his talk, it appears in his talk more than twice as many times as 'they'. 'We' refers most often to the participants in the meeting or the trade union representatives in general, for example:

... but since *we* get the feedback form from from the employers side... (part three)

... what *we* want from the management... (part three)

... *we* can say something concerning the terms of employment in general... (part four)

... do *we* need that international framework agreement... (part six)

Often 'we' appears after 'I guess' in the chair's talk. He starts with 'I' but then talks about us and he expressed this by using 'we'. Planken calls this 'inclusive we' and it is regarded as 'an indicator of involvement and cooperativeness' (Planken 2005: 385).

#### 4.3.5 Discourse reflexivity

The informant used the words ‘question’ and ‘ask’ several times in the data.

This ‘discourse about discourse’ is common in talk as we saw in 2.4. Here are a few examples:

... so we can prepare some *questions* now... (part three)

... that’s a good *question* and if... (part five, Appendix 3)

... the one issue that we could *ask* as well is that... (part six)

... we can perhaps *ask* that... (part thirteen, Appendix 3)

‘Answer’ was not so frequent in the informant’s talk and it was not common in the ELFA corpus (Mauranen 2006) either (see 2.4).

#### 4.3.6 Discourse markers

The data include some discourse markers that appear frequently. For example, the informant uses discourse markers ‘so’, ‘all right’ and ‘okay’ to start a new topic and ‘then’ for closing a topic. Discourse markers do not generally carry content, but are used for signalling boundaries in talk (Carter & McCarthy 1997: 13-14) and therefore they enhance clarity.

#### 4.3.7 Discussion: the talk in Oslo

The examples and data show that the informant used semi-formal language; it was not formal but not colloquial either (see Appendix 3). The informant’s pronunciation was very clear and generally good (informally evaluated by the

author). The chair seems to be aiming at clarity in various ways. His talk is not always grammatically correct but still very fluent and comprehensible. He succeeds in his communication really well as he also had other matters to think about in the meeting. He had to run the whole show and be the chair without an agenda and he did not know this in advance. Since he was able to chair a meeting of this kind that in itself confirms that he is a good English speaker.

As we saw in 2.1.1, in Bargiel-Chiappini & Harris's view meetings are topic-centred and task-oriented. This is clear in this data as well. The chair, who is in control of subject matters, talks about the new agreement and other issues. He focuses on the task at hand which is preparing questions to the plenary meeting. Most of his talk is very focused on the topics discussed, and there does not seem to be much other, for example, 'social' talk.

The informant wanted to make himself understood and for this he used proactive strategies as explained above. These were similar to the proactive strategies that have been found in academic talk (Mauranen 2006). Clearly, academic talk is not similar to the business talk of meetings, but in general, lingua franca communication aims at comprehensibility and these proactive strategies like repetition have been found in other studies as well. For example, Bargiel-Chiappini & Harris who studied meetings write that 'repetition of lexical items' is 'sensemaking' and it contributes to coherence among meeting participants (1997: 59). Meierkord who studied small talk conversations, says that lingua franca communication 'is characterised by cooperation rather than misunderstanding' (2000: 12). It can be supposed that similar proactive strategies that have been found in the Finnish academic ELF

would be found in BELF, but since there are no Finnish BELF corpora yet it will remain an assumption for now. Business English research in Finland does not have a disciplinary status, at least this was the case eight years ago according to Louhiala-Salminen (1999: 27-28). BELF research has possibly been more socially than linguistically oriented and often communication has been interpreted through case studies as we saw in Chapter 2. All case studies will nevertheless increase our knowledge on BELF, and as we have seen here, comparisons of one informant's talk to a large corpus of academic English show some similarities already. Both could perhaps be characterised as 'talk at work' or 'talk in an institutional setting'.

It has to be remembered that the features here illustrate discourse by this particular person and in this particular meeting. According to the informant, the EWC meeting was somewhat unusual because there were new participants and urgent or even 'ad hoc' matters to be discussed. Otherwise he felt that the meeting was normal and particularly in respect of communication. He said that the EWC meetings in general are not very 'talkative'. The seating arrangement in Oslo might have further influenced the fact that the participants were not talkative.

Then again, he was talkative himself as the chair in the meeting and fortunately for the researcher he became the focus of the study. He was fluent as a language user and as a chair. The results might have looked different if the chair had been an insecure language user or there had been difficult questions or confrontations to deal with. But this is the picture that emerged of this snapshot in Oslo. The picture becomes more detailed in Helsinki as we shall see next.

#### 4.4 Stimulated recall in Helsinki

The stimulated recall interview took 1 hour 30 minutes during which we listened to a recording of 22.5 minutes as explained in the previous chapter. This section will examine the stimulated recall session and special attention will be given to informant's comments on his talk. All the recorded talk listened to during the stimulated recall session is described in Appendix 3 and the stimulated recall session is outlined in Appendix 5.

As explained in Chapter 3 the informant did not stop the recording at any point. I stopped the recording at selected points (see 3.1.3) and often the informant started talking immediately – as requested in the beginning – so there was no need for me to ask many questions. I was merely backchannelling throughout the recall session as Gass and Mackey recommend (2000: 60).

The informant was very forthcoming and talkative throughout the stimulated recall session. The informant's remarks show that he had thought about his communication at the meeting consciously. He had taken the new members of the meeting into consideration. His remarks throughout the stimulated recall (see Appendix 5) were perceptive as we shall see in the sections below.

#### 4.4.1 An overview of the stimulated recall session

During the stimulated recall session the informant explained how he experienced the meeting. During the recall he elaborated on matters such as:

- the new participants in the EWC meeting
- the new draft EWC agreement
- the role of the EWC and future meeting places
- past and upcoming changes in the company
- the company's decision making style
- investments and future of the company
- management's role in information and consultation

Being understood was the main concern of the informant. He tried to be clear in the meeting and assumed that the participants were familiar with the issues being discussed. I did not observe any breakdown in understanding in the meeting. The participants of the meeting did not signal in any way that something was unclear to them. As a chair in the meeting the informant explained the issues thoroughly and everything seemed to become clear to all participants. There is no actual proof of this of course.

During the recall session he also talked about the meeting as an interactional situation. He said that he had thought about his talk in the meeting because he said that this was *'a bit difficult as a meeting or particularly as an interactional situation'*. By saying that it was a difficult meeting he may be referring to the fact that it was not a typical EWC meeting for him as he acted as the chair and there were new participants in the EWC.

By difficult communicative situation he possibly refers to the seating arrangement which was classroom style.

On many occasions the informant was worried whether or not he achieved understanding in the meeting. For example, during the discussion about the new draft EWC agreement, he was very concerned whether everyone understood him because he did not have the agreement to show in any form. He did not have it on overheads; neither did he have handouts of the agreement. The lack of overheads or handouts was due to time constraints before the meeting. Undoubtedly it would have been easier for other participants to follow the changes in the agreement, particularly changes in numbers, if there had been a visual aid to support the chair's talk.

Acting as the chair in a meeting requires a different orientation from being a 'normal' participant. At the end of the stimulated recall session the informant commented on his role as the chair by saying:

'I cannot say that I am disappointed; I managed to say something even though it is difficult in English. Being a chair in that type of meeting really kind of empties your head. It would be easier to talk in Finnish. And it is very different to be in the meeting as a participant or as a chair.'

This was also the opinion of one of the other representatives interviewed. Interviewee D who now acts as the vice-chair of their EWC said that being a chair also has its downsides and challenges. The chair cannot participate fully in the meeting as he has to keep up with the timetable and listen to others. If you have a good suggestion or idea about something it is often left unsaid because the chair needs to concentrate on the running of the meeting. Many

researchers differentiate between the chair and other participants in meetings whether they are studying the roles of the participants or their discourse as explained in 2.1.1.

#### 4.4.2 Classification of recall comments by Gass and Mackey

Gass and Mackey recommend that data from stimulated recall should be laid out and coded following a somewhat complicated system (2000: 77 – 99).

This analysis will represent the stimulated recall data in a simpler way. I trust that in this way the results will be clearer. This study describes the informant's responses during the recall session following Gass and Mackey's general classification. Gass and Mackey classify the informant's comments based on content as follows (slightly simplified):

- lexical comments: comments about known or unknown words
- semantic: general comments about meaning and elaboration
- phonological: comments about pronunciation
- morphosyntax: comments on sentence structure, word order or tense
- non-classifiable: informant says nothing bearing any content or comment is unclear

(Gass & Mackey 2000: 70 – 71.)

The informant's translated and summarised comments will now be presented following this classification. The biggest category is lexical comments. There is only one phonological comment and a few comments that could be interpreted as comments on morphosyntax. Most of the informant's comments were general explanation about the situation of the meeting as we saw in 4.4.1.

#### 4.4.3 Lexical comments

Many of the informant's comments were about the words he used in the meeting i.e. lexical comments. In the beginning when the researcher asked the informant if he thought consciously about his talk during the meeting the informant said that *'native speakers sometimes use constructions, expressions or words that are difficult for the non-natives, for example 'red tape'. These are not easy for non-natives particularly if you are not dedicated to bureaucracy. These should be avoided.'* It seems that the informant is very conscious about the words (or idioms like 'red tape') that should and should not be used in international and multicultural meetings.

During the stimulated recall informant A made a lexical comment on the expression 'special negotiation body' which he thought might not be clear to the new members of the EWC (see Appendix 5, part one). He said that he should not have used this expression as *'they may have never heard of it'*. This is impossible to verify, but there were no questions in the meetings from the new members about this issue.

Another lexical comment was to the researcher's question about the word 'rookie' (see Appendix 5, part eight). I asked about this word as I was not sure if I had heard the word right in the recording. The informant was very conscious about his use of the word and he knew the etymology of the word as well. It was a well chosen word for the situation and the informant's explanation of it shows his interest in and knowledge of the English language.

At the end of the stimulated recall the researcher asked the informant how well he thought he had succeeded, in his own opinion and then the informant made two lexical comments (see Appendix 5, end part). He commented on overusing 'I guess'. Indeed, the hedge 'I guess' was favoured by the informant and he used it 21 times in the data. It is rather often, as he himself pointed out, but it is a very common way of 'self-protection' in discourse. Hedges in general are used because the speaker does not wish to put the listeners in a face-threatening situation (Carter & McCarthy 1997: 17).

He also made a remark about the word 'issue' and he claimed that he used it often (see Appendix 5, end part). It occurs in the data 18 times, but for example, in parts one, two and three it does not occur at all. It is a general noun, similar to 'thing' which is one the most frequent words in English (Carter & McCarthy 1997: 16). The word 'thing' is also the most frequent word in the MICASE corpus (native speaker academic talk) and the British National Corpus (Swales 2004: 29-30). 'Issue' is perhaps more common in institutional talk than 'thing' and therefore it was used by the informant.

At the end of the session he said that '*I should think about my repertoire of words and word choices*'. This can be interpreted as lexical comment even though it is not about a particular word. It is a comment on his general lexical awareness.

#### 4.4.4 Comments on morphosyntax

The informant made some comments on morphosyntax. He commented on his talk by saying, for example:

‘Here I could have used shorter sentences and be clearer’

‘I should think what I want to say and have more structured sentences’

‘I try – how would I put it - to speak in a simple way’

These comments show how the informant is able to comment on the structure. The first comment above are remarks to a specific section of his talk, namely to part one (see Appendix 5) and the second and the third are more general comments on structure.

#### 4.4.5 Phonological comments

The informant made only one comment about his own pronunciation. It was a response to the researcher’s first question about whether he thought about his communication consciously in the meeting. The informant commented that he sometimes gets feedback from the interpreters; they may say that he should speak more slowly or pronounce more clearly or stress important matters. This was a comment made before any listening, but it shows the informant’s awareness of his own talk.

#### 4.4.6 Discussion: the stimulated recall

The informant was very observant of his own speech during the stimulated recall session. He made numerous remarks on his own use of English in the meeting. The informant was more perceptive about his own talk in the beginning of the stimulated recall session. Towards the end of the session the

informant's comments became shorter. Perhaps the fact that there was some background noise had an effect on what was being said or the informant was getting tired.

In the previous section (4.3) we saw some proactive strategies which are generally used for clarity in talk. During the simulated recall these were not mentioned by the informant. He is not a linguist and for him it is impossible to notice and comment on linguistic patterns. This would not be expected either from anyone not familiar with linguistics. Even though he did not notice these patterns he indicated similar things by saying that '*I try to speak in a simple way*' and so that '*people understand me*'. He seems to be consciously aiming at clarity in his talk.

He further said that '*I should have used shorter sentences*' and '*more structured sentences*'. In talk, short sentences are not necessarily as productive as in writing. If one says something too 'bluntly' as the informant himself put it, in talk the hearers do not have time to process the information. In spoken discourse the opposite is often true; it is good to elaborate on matters under discussion as the informant was advised by some interpreters. In addition to elaboration, that is repetitions and saying things in other words, the structure of spoken discourse is very different from written. It is understandable though that the informant commented on his 'poor' structure because laymen in general are more familiar with the structure of written discourse than of spoken. If you compare these two types of discourse, spoken discourse may well look messy to the unaccustomed eye. This is because spoken discourse is structured in a quite different way from writing.

At the end of the session the informant said that in general he was satisfied with his own talk. He thinks that the talk is understandable. He was also critical as he said that '*I should be able to speak English better!*' It is understandable that the informant is judgemental of his own talk especially as he was listening to his voice on a recording for the first time. Stimulated recall was a new situation for the informant and listening to one's own talk can be confusing. He said that '*it was very beneficial to listen to one's own voice*' though.

Creating common understanding was the main concern of the informant. This became clear in his general comments. He was worried whether everyone understood what he was saying in the meeting. He was confident though that all participants in the meeting shared the same background knowledge and were familiar with the matters discussed.

After observing in the meeting and looking at the stimulated recall data, I feel that the informant gives much conscious thought to his communication and language. He seems very attentive to his own talk. This could be interpreted as a sign of a good communicator. In my opinion, the informant succeeded as the chair of the meeting very well.

This is also a conclusion for the whole study. Trade union representatives do well in their EWC work and they are 'good enough' users of English. We will now continue with this notion and other concluding remarks.

## 5. CONCLUSION

This case study investigated how trade union representatives use English and what kind of communication occurs in EWC work. In addition, it looked specifically into one representative's talk in one EWC meeting. Furthermore, this study considered whether the representatives had thought consciously about their communication. Interviews and stimulated recall were used for data collection.

The results show that the representatives use English in various situations inside companies, for example with other workers and with the management. In addition they use English in their EWC work, particularly in the EWC meetings. They are 'good enough' English users. Obviously sometimes 'mistakes' and other language related problems occur in their EWC work, but these happen also in Finnish. Most of the time, they are competent in recognising problems and able to repair them during interaction. This was particularly apparent in the chair's talk in the meeting in Oslo. The chair used self-repairs, repetitions and other proactive strategies for clarity. These he used unconsciously, as all speakers do. However, aiming at intelligibility in talk is also conscious, as discussed in the stimulated recall section. The chair had thought about his talk and communication during the EWC meeting and he tried to be as understandable as possible.

Trade unions and trade union representatives are a special area of study. According to my understanding, their English communication as such has not been studied before in Finland. Therefore this was an important area of study. However, it was also limited and in evaluating the results of this

study, it should be remembered that there were only six interviewees and one informant's recording. The results reflect these interviewees' perspectives only and give an example of one informant's talk. Moreover, this descriptive case study looked at the spoken data mainly from one viewpoint. It did not study the spoken discourse pragmatically, phonologically or in terms of lexicogrammatical features. However, the study was able to outline a picture, or present a snapshot, of trade union representatives' communication in EWC work. It showed that these trade union representatives are confident language users who succeed in their EWC work generally very well. The study also revealed that they are creative in their language use.

Where does this creativity come from? Most of the six experts interviewed were not particularly strong at English during their school years, neither were they taught any 'communicative strategies' at school. They started with limited resources but are now competent language users. They have updated and enhanced their language skills in various ways, but training and courses are surely not the only reasons for their success. What could be their secret? Let us imagine what different situations a trade union representative may encounter in his work.

During a work day a trade union representative may be talking about safety issues with the shop floor workers, he might have a meeting with the management about the firm's financial situation and he may even find himself in front of TV cameras explaining the workers' views on the company's proposed layoffs, for example. These situations are varied and demand quite different styles of communication and it certainly seems that the representatives must be very committed, confident and determined and yet

being able to act in this flexible way. They seem like chameleons that move from one situation to another and are able to 'change their colours' and act accordingly. All this – of course – are matters of different research fields, but their varied jobs and creative personalities seem to reflect their use of language, both in Finnish and in English. They are confident language users, quick, resourceful and able to support their arguments despite occasional misunderstandings. This became clear in the interviews, in the chair's talk in Oslo and in the stimulated recall. Having met all the six representatives in person, I concur that these people are very social, talkative and witty personalities.

Motivation and the need for English knowledge are additional explanations of the above. Language training has changed since the representatives' school days and generally it nowadays takes context into account. One good example is the Newcastle EWC language course discussed above which combines EWC subject matter and English language teaching. This kind of language training is clearly beneficial and in Finland there could be similar specific training for the EWC members. For developing this kind of specific language training more information on trade union representatives' language and its use is needed.

As discussed throughout in this study, trade union representatives need English in their work and they need English to work for them. Being a 'good enough' English user for them generally means 'getting the job done'. Intelligibility rather than correctness is their objective and the language does not have to be native-like or 'perfect'. Ahvenainen, a language teacher in an engineering college, is of the opinion that his students will not need to learn to

use English like native speakers, but instead they will need to learn to communicate in English efficiently in an international work community (2007: 17). The same argument applies to trade union work. This does not mean that everything is acceptable in spoken discourse. Communication should aim at efficiency and effective language use as well as correct expression, but all people make 'mistakes' and 'errors' during interaction, natives and non-natives alike.

Who are competent or 'good enough' English users is obviously debatable. Consequently, deciding who is a competent English speaker depends on situation and context. For example, an English language teacher has to pay much more attention to the precision of his/her spoken language than people might need to in other occupations in Finland. In general, more vagueness is allowed in spoken language compared to written language. Spoken discourse is clearly different from written. In spoken discourse and especially in multinational and multicultural lingua franca situations language strategies play an important role. The lingua franca speakers need to be able to adjust their talk, explain difficult concepts using different words or explain matters in a simpler way, repeat what was said and even switch codes if needed (Ahvenainen 2007: 17). Such plurilingual competence is advocated by the CEFR as well.

In the future the varied situations where English is used by trade union representatives will continue to increase. English is needed in trade union work as more and more Finnish companies are changing their language of operation from Finnish to English. Nobody can deny that English has become the lingua franca in business and therefore also in trade union work.

A deeper knowledge of representatives' language use would help us understand in more detail what representatives' work in English entails. It would be interesting and beneficial to follow a trade union officer for a day 'as a fly on the wall' like Louhiala-Salminen (2002) followed a business manager. The method she used in her study had some limitations, but still it would be enlightening to see how a trade union representative's work day progresses. It would possibly reveal the varied situations of language use and provide indications of possible different 'registers' used by the representatives.

These various snapshots or case studies such as this one add to our knowledge of the ELF used in multinational and international encounters in the trade union context, but more studies are needed. This study showed that this is a vast and interesting field for further studies. There are more demands in international trade union work in the future, thus a more detailed picture of the repertoire of the representatives' English use from the shop floor to the worldwide project meetings is needed. Wider and deeper studies would perhaps give more than just snapshots of trade union representatives' English use and thus broaden our understanding of it.

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## APPENDIX 1 – QUESTIONNAIRE USED IN THE INTERVIEWS

### Questions for the trade union representatives

#### Work

1. How long have you been a workplace representative (shop steward) or safety representative? Are you a full-time or part-time representative?
2. What work have you done in the company and for how long?
3. Are you a member of the board of directors of the company?

#### English

1. Is English the official language of your company?
2. With whom and in what kind of situations do you use English?
3. Is there special vocabulary that you use?
4. Have the employer assisted in English learning? Have they organised or paid for English courses for example?
5. How have you updated your language skills?
6. Have you been in the EWC-English course in Newcastle? If you have, was the course beneficial to you?

#### European Works Councils (EWC)

1. How long have you been an EWC representative?
2. Did you get any training for EWC work? If you did, what was the main focus in the training?

#### EWC work and meetings

1. Is all EWC work carried out in English?
2. Is interpretation used? If it is, in which meetings or situations?
3. Do the EWC pre-meetings (only employees present) differ from official EWC meetings (both employers and employees are present)?
4. What kind of communication occurs between the meetings (email, phone etc.) and with whom? How often?
5. Are there any problems with this communication?
6. Does the fact that you use English affect your communication between meetings?
7. Is there any special vocabulary in connection to EWC work?
8. Do you get all material you need in Finnish as well?

#### Other

1. Do you remember a situation in which using English has affected your communication?
2. What kind of support would trade union representatives need when using other than their mother tongue? Who is responsible for that support? The person himself, the employer or the trade union?
3. Anything else you would like to say?

## APPENDIX 2 - PRIMARY DATA COLLECTION

Dates and places of primary data collection

### INTERVIEWS

Interviewee	Date of the interview	Place of the interview
A	8.3.2007	Science Centre Heureka, Vantaa
B	7.3.2007	Hotel Vantaa cafe, Tikkurila, Vantaa
C	14.3.2007	Restaurant Sevilla, Porvoo
D	25.3.2007	Café Kiasma, Helsinki
E	8.3.2007	Science Centre Heureka, Vantaa
F	26.1.2007	SAK office, Helsinki

### RECORDING of TALK

Event	An EWC meeting of a large multinational company
Place	Oslo, Norway
Date	22.5.2007
Time	Between 10 am and 4.30 pm
Recorded person	Male, full-time worker's safety representative, interviewee A

### STIMULATED RECALL SESSION

Event	Stimulated recall session between informant A and the researcher
Place	SAK office, Helsinki
Date	11.6.2007
Recorded person	Male, full-time worker's safety representative, interviewee A

The talk in Oslo - 13 parts listened during the stimulated recall

TITLE: EWC MEETING OF A LARGE MULTINATIONAL COMPANY (=C), THE  
PLENARY OF THE EMPLOYEES'

RECORDING DURATION: 22 MIN 30 SEC

RECORDING DATE: 22 MAY 2007

RECORDING: RL

TRANSCRIBING: RL

NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS: 12

NUMBER OF SPEAKERS: 1 (=A)

A: NON-NATIVE-SPEAKER OF ENGLISH; MOTHER TONGUE FINNISH;  
WORKER'S FULL-TIME SAFETY REPRESENTATIVE AND EWC  
REPRESENTATIVE

GENDER: MALE; AGE: 53

PART ONE – 1 MINUTE 52 SECONDS

<A> All right welcome to this this first C meeting I I dare not to call it C european works council meeting because we don't have any any existing agreement at the moment so to be formal this is not an european works council meeting in that sense but we hope that we can get that agreement signed perhaps tomorrow at least today or tomorrow and like AR said that when when Mr. R decided to t(d)o sell the shares and sell the C right after the disclosure of that that is in in his intention he started to think about this effect on the on the european works council activities and the old working committee FB later on AO we decided to to start the negotiation with the employer and the basic idea was that we want to make very quick negotiations of course if you go by the book by the european directive in in the works council activities you have to establish ah ah special negotiation body and and start the negotiation and and then ah the employer has ah I guess if I recall it right three years maximum ah time limit to to answer our our negotiations so the idea is to to carry on very smoothly and and I sincere hope that we can sign that agreement tomorrow so it eases the future of of works council </A>

## PART TWO – 3 MINUTES 12 SECONDS

<A> and the the new draft agreement is is based on the old old C agreement which is quite new ah two years old and its been updated and upgraded quite recently so that's the basis of of of our new agreement of the draft and ah we have ah at the moment draft number six but un- unfortunately I haven't got it on on the computer so I can't show you anything of that agreement but there has been some changes and (xx) plan- we are planning to have some changes and some changes come from the the employer's side because they have want to have a blue print as well into agreement that like quite normal and there are some some cosmetic changes and ah I guess the biggest is is going to be if agreed is the composition of the of the...the body itself and the the old key is going to be changed a little bit but ah the the proposal key of the limit is is four thousand people if you have a in one country four thousand people or more then you have four representatives that's the and that's also the maximum maximum number of of reps per country and the from from one hundred to one thousand it's ah if I recall it right was one one rep then it's from from two thousand to to four is three and then one from one thousand to two thousand is (xx) two two thousand is maximum ok but its the the more or less the say we have skip the the the bigger parts of it ah it means the six hundred or eight hundred so if if there is a company in one country in in C which has lets say eight ah thousand people working then it's only four reps according to this new proposal and the AO send(t) it to tomorrow morning to SI which is the HR manager of C a nice <NATIONALITY> lady and she is going to put it forward to MR CA K and perhaps we got the answer today or tomorrow what is going to happen with with the agreement and we (xx) discuss FB AO kind of ad hoc committee not an official working committee but an ad hoc committee about that reason because the old old C european works council working committee does not exist any longer because the the we not part of C group any longer so FA or AO would you like any comments concerning the draft number six <P: 07> </A> <FOREIGN>

## PART THREE – 2 MINUTES 29 SECONDS

<A> Okay I guess that is the present situation or orientation of the of the situation how does this new agreement is going to look like but since we get the feedback form from from the employers side then we have to go through it and discuss okay then we have some inclusive preparations for plenary meeting which is normally when the I at least in the in the resent days as many times said in these european works councils activities that we are not satisfied with the the employer reps to to lets say show their slides that they show normally in the in the stock market ah presentations so we can check them in the internet if you like so it's it's more according to the directive it has to be this body is is for consultation and for information and that goes both ways which means we can challenge the management and the cha- perhaps the management challenges us and I guess it's going to be more easier because this is focused for C for for strictly CC business there is no no confusing elements like CK or CM or CS so this is strictly concentrating on on on or focusing on on CC business so it should be easier that way and and I I think one of the challenge or what we want from the management to have an interactive discussions to to get the answers those questions we are raised perhaps in advance or during the meeting or or now so we can prepare some questions now or you can prepare those questions together between your ears or or or or whatever but that's that's I guess it's the the way it's going to it's more useful it's the the basic or the original idea of the this body is but it's I guess normally it goes that MrS is is making a slide show he's very rapid guy very very smooth talker and you have to be quick if you want to get answers otherwise the the you loose the moment but last in the last meeting I think he had an an an a plane to catch and he didn't catch the plane because he he sat on the table and and started to discuss ok lets discuss so lets lets challenge him again </A>

## PART FOUR – 1 MINUTE 54 SECONDS

<A> Ok Yes but that is that is one issue that ah depending on the on the circumstances in one country that how what kind of ah ah immigrant workers and and their terms of of employment is accepted because there is ah at least in finland certain laws certain regulations certain collective agreements of the

minimum wages but then we have ah ah huge amount of people for for instance from lithuania which I according to my understanding these terms are not not fulfilled but that's a big issue I'm sure but we could raise that with with MRS of course <P: 30> and I guess the the very interesting question is the the salary issue that it's said in directive and and in in in agreement that the individual problems should be taken care in the in the in the individual company or country so if you have ah let's say concern- issues concerning directive one one individual company should they should be taken care in the with the local management the european works council if if we have no mandate to negotiate the salaries as such but of course we can we can say something concerning the terms of employment in general level but not not for a individual country or company because I know the local unions they are not at least they are not in finland very keen to give that mandate to us if if we start to negotiate for instance salaries they they are very jealous of the their jurisdiction </A>

#### PART FIVE – 1 MINUTE 8 SECONDS

<A> I guess you have very tough questions and and ah I think that we at the moment we are exposed for for hostile take-over if if somebody wants to buy the shares it's it's quite easy because it's a public stock-market company so in that sense the the situation has changed and the we are now a more aa management run company so so MrS is is ah sole guardian of the of the shareholder value if you like so perhaps that's that's a good question and if the if the shareholders are not satisfied and if they think that they have paid too much for the shares and if the if the projects are not running good enough so perhaps they get nervous and they want to have some some solutions or some deeds to be done in order to to get us back on track if they think that we not on back on track basically (xxxx) expecting that we are not get-making enough money for them so that is a good question to to raise </A>

#### PART SIX – 1 MINUTE 44 SECONDS

<A> I guess that's an proposal as we we discussed that in the old C times ones with the with colleagues from different european countries and and some said it's ok some say it's our our own shop-steward or our own unions to to make

that kind of deals and if you get the more more beneficial framework agreement it would be very very difficult that individual shop-steward to say no if that agreed on a a group level but then there was a guy from belgium and said we cannot agree on ah on a european works council that kind of agreements because all the agreements at ah signed in in belgium has to be confirmed by the by the belgium king so so the issues in different countries are quite different but I guess you're you're right in that sense that that ah if that's possible that could be then asked for MrS that what what he thinks of these kind of agreements and of course when the one issue that we could ask as well is that CC has a ah very ready negotiated agreement in the in the IFA international framework agreement which was said many times by MrL that it's no problem no problem we can sign that but ah the problems raised in in in uk or in asian or in in united states when the local management there's that there's there's no no need for that kind of agreement at at all but perhaps we could raise that question within the CC that do we need that international framework agreement in CC </A>

#### PART SEVEN – 1 MINUTE 36 SECONDS

<A> I don't know in other countries but know in finland that the that the splitting up or the outsourcing what what do you want to call it or cut the processes in in in small pieces is has been ongoing a couple of years and and I was in the same same press conference once with Mister MrJ and he said that that we in H have ah a not fully assembly F but almost an assembly F and then the france in going to be changed in that sense as as as well he he said that quite clearly there were french papers present at at the moment so that is ah business area management's will to to split up the processes and the ah reasoning for that is the it's going to ease up ah increasing the flexibility and and the the other term that has been copied I guess from CB from MRE is that that the use of the flexible cost base which is very near related to the to the social dumping is been used as well in finland at least I don't know what's happening in france but that is the the package and the and the and the personal personal reps many of them at least in finland said that this the process process is going wrong we don't agree many things and it's it's has confused the the production and it's

has makes more difficult to to to control at least the big A building process so far but the management is is disagree they are (xx) different opinions </A>

<FOREIGN>

#### PART EIGHT – 59 SECONDS

<A> so you can you can ask I guess (xx) MrS that that ah if there is this structure it's ah like ah like in the former soviet union an ah Moscow based structure that that all the decisions have been made in the it the in the central office and in the in the business area office and then the ah people and the employees in different countries and different units strongly disagree that this is going not very well then I I guess we are ah facing ah more problems because the we loose the motivation and we cant's get the new newcomers the rookies the the image of the of the brand goes down if it's not there already so so you could face many many problems so the I guess the top management MrS has to be very concerned of that issue because he's the number one guardian of the of the shareholder value </A>

#### PART NINE – 1 MINUTE 57 SECONDS

<LOUD MAINTENANCE WORK IN THE BUILDING INTERFERED WITH LISTENING>

<A> I guess the shape of the ear is is not not designed for this equipment okay ladies and gentlemen shall we carry on we we don't have any any any special agenda for this second session and we haven't got any any reply from the management from our draft agreement no not yet so it remains to be seen then we have we could spend this fifty minutes still discussing the relevant issues and I I guess FA said one issue was which wasn't raised in the in the first session was the investment policy and strategy and there is especially concerning the ee research and development and the especially concerning the EU rules and regulations which means that you can get subsidy for that kind of devel- development so in in order to keep the C competitive it would be an idea and a raise within individual countries in EU countries that is the possible to to apply that kind of subsidy I know in the <NATIONALITY> discussions that the the ministry of of industry has said that finland is not going to be the how would I

put it the first runner the front runner in that issue because it it means if <COUNTRY> starts then the other european countries they follow that was the politicians' reply when we asked why why don't we use that kind of state subsidy which is allowed within EU that could be one issue to to raise to MrS as well how he sees these the issue </A>

## PART TEN – 55 SECONDS

&lt;INFORMANT LISTENED THIS PART THROUGH A HEADSET&gt;

<A> so I guess that is an an good question the investment investment issue is is the other and and ah for instance in in in ah in H there are plans to build a a sky big site office which is said to us that all those investments are are at the moment in the CA's table to let's say think about what kind of order which is the more important and which is not so important so we are in the same boat in that sense we competing ah against each others in in in investment money I guess perhaps AO knows it more because he member of the CA board but so that's the case so if you have money a certain sum of money then it's divided to you and to you and to you and rest are ah given nothing I guess </A>

## PART ELEVEN – 1 MINUTE 20 SECONDS

&lt;INFORMANT LISTENED THIS PART THROUGH A HEADSET&gt;

<A> yeah I guess it's there's always a lack of time when concerning the design and ah I've seen some some plans that ah some visions of how the design is going to be arranged in the future and the and the outsource term has been used in that sense as well which means we discussed earlier in the in the in the break that that when you when you cut the process small pieces then you you loose the control and the and C building is basically quite simple you have to have decent drawings you have to have materials and you have to have ah skilled people then you can complete a A if some of these three is lacking then you are in in trouble so I I guess that's research and development and and especially design issue is is is one of the key issues in the future if we can't design A properly then we can't build it properly then if we have low margins in the in the projects as we have had so the the low margin is sucked out quite easily then we haven't any investment money etc etc so the circle is ready </A>

## PART TWELVE – 1 MINUTE 19 SECONDS

<INFORMANT LISTENED THIS PART THROUGH A HEADSET>

<A> despite of who is going be the future chairman I guess we have to little bit ah rearrange that working method how how we are going to deal issues between the meetings of course there's the phone is invented the email is is very very handy and ah but that also that we we have have to challenge the management to take their part of this information and consultation and we had some bad examples in the last ah last past for instance that take over of SS we didn't know in Finland nothing of it not one word we I myself heard it from our national union not from C or vice board which is I am sitting so this was a <COUNTRY> issue and and ah high level of secrecy nothing was told so I guess in the terms of information and consultation that was a violation of of that that directive we should should have been informed properly and that's the always the top management says that they these are company secrets and we can't tell you anything and the(xx) decision has been made </A>

## PART THIRTEEN – 57 SECONDS

<INFORMANT LISTENED THIS PART THROUGH A HEADSET>

<A> but perhaps perhaps we could challenge a little bit that one issue is in in that area where we meet we have so far met in in <COUNTRY> in <TOWN> for practical reasons because there has been always very much difficulties to get the the top management there at the same time it was in the in the in the old C works council because now we are focused on on <BUSINESS> that should be more easier for instance to have meetings in in in in germany in france in romania perhaps in ukraine in finland of course in norway of course kind of circulate I guess we we might ask MRS how he sees this issue is it possible cause then we have possibilities to meet the local folks and and familiarise ourselves to the to the site the <BUSINESS> site and the same time very cost effective we can perhaps ask that </A>

## APPENDIX 4 – TRANSCRIPTION CONVENTIONS (ELFA guide)

### ELFA Transcription Guide (7/2004)

#### § Utterances

Utterance begins: <S1>

Utterance ends: </S1>

#### § Speakers

Unidentified speaker: <SU>

Uncertain speaker identification: <SU-1>

Several simultaneous speakers (usually laughter or sth): <SS>

§ Uncertain transcription: (text)

§ Unintelligible speech: (xx)

§ Laughter: @@

Spoken laughing: @text@

#### § Pauses

Brief pause while speaking 2-3 sec.: ,

Pause 3-4 sec.: .

Pause 5 sec. or longer, rounded up to the nearest sec.: <P: 05>

§ Overlapping speech (approximate, shown to the nearest word, words not split by overlap tags): [text]

§ Backchannelling: <S1> mhm </S1>

<S2> okay </S2>

#### § Hesitations

/öö/ er

/(ö)m/ erm

/aa/ ah

§ Capital letters: only in acronyms: NATO, EU etc.

§ Numbers as numbers (10,000, 1932, 16), except those smaller than 10 (two or three, the second time, etc.)

§ Names of participants: <NAME>

§ Nonsense words: <SIC> text </SIC>

§ Spelling out a word or acronym etc, as letters: T-U-C, V-W

§ Reading aloud: <READING> text </READING>

§ Switching into a foreign language: <FOREIGN> text </FOREIGN>

(if it's a long stretch, say, of Swedish, no need to transcribe it all)

§ Other events which affect the interpretation or comprehension of what is being said:

<PREPARING OVERHEAD 1:23>

<WRITING ON BLACKBOARD>

<APPLAUSE>

<WHISPERING>

<DISC / TRACK / FILE / CD CHANGE>

§ Coughing, sighing, gasping, etc., if the speaker coughs etc. while speaking and

this affects the situation or flow of speech (but NOT if other participants cough or sneeze, etc):

<COUGH>

<GASP>

Source: <http://www.uta.fi/laitokset/kielet/engf/research/elfa/>

## THE STIMULATED RECALL SESSION

Stimulated recall session is here described in the order of listening and responses. The numbered sections refer to the transcription of original talk (see Appendix 3). There were pauses between the listened parts. The informant's responses are translated and glossed from the original responses in Finnish.

### The beginning

Before the actual listening of the recording the researcher wanted to get the informant into a right 'mood', and therefore the author asked the informant a few questions before listening. This was the first question:

First I would like to ask you a question. The situation in the meeting was different than anticipated as you were the chair of the meeting and there were new participants in the meeting. Did you think consciously that you will operate in such a manner that you will be understood by the other participants?

A's response:

Yes, I did because this was a bit difficult as a meeting or particularly as an interactional situation. When you are - as matter of fact - fist time in interaction with partly strangers you cannot be sure if they will understand you. You may think yourself that you are able to say in English what you want to say but the people from different cultures and through interpreters might not understand you. Therefore I try – how would I put it - to speak in a simple way. One would assume that they understand then. Native speakers sometimes use

constructions, expressions or words that are difficult for the non-natives, for example 'red tape'. These are not easy for non-natives particularly if you are not dedicated to bureaucracy. These should be avoided. I myself try actively develop my English and when one learns a fancy word or expression and use the word, it might go all wrong for this reason. When I speak English I try to check if people understand me, if they say yes, yes, I can suppose that I am being understood or otherwise people are just being socially polite. Sometimes one gets feedback from the interpreters, they may say that speak slower or pronounce clearer or stress important matters (like you are supposed to do in English). One tends to speak English in a Finnish way, but don't the French do the same?

The second question by the researcher:

Where there some new members in the meeting, the Romanians?

A's response:

The Romanians were new in that sense that they are now full members as Romania joined the EU in the beginning of the year. Before the Romanians participated the meeting as observers only. There were also two persons from Ukraine and they brought their own interpreter. The Ukrainians were there first time and they participated only as observers. The management wants that there is representation of all the countries the company operates in.

Before listening the researcher instructed the informant like this:

*We are going to listen to the recording that was done in Oslo in five parts. You can ask me to stop the tape at any point if you wish. Please ask me to stop the tape and tell me if there something that comes to your mind.*

First part – ‘special negotiation body’

Part of A’s original talk (see Appendix 3 for whole transcription):

...the basic idea was that we want to make very quick negotiations of course if you go by the book by the European directive in in the works council activities you have to establish ah ah *special negotiation body* and and start the negotiation...

A’s responses after listening:

I think I should have been more direct in what I was saying. I understand what I am talking about as I have been doing this for a long time, but I am not sure if the new members understand why something is done and for what, and what is this ‘special negotiation body’, they may have newer heard of it. I can blame myself for using difficult terminology that I just advised not to use. One might assume that the members are familiar with the directive but that might not be the case. I have been told, even in Finnish, to talk in a simpler way. Here I could have used shorter sentences and be clearer. If I would be listening to this the first time I might think what does the person mean. In a way thinking (taught) breaks at times and then you start to circulate the issue, I am not sure if it is effective communication. On the other hand the Finns are being told to learn Euro-manners; we should learn to elaborate and use small talk and not be so blunt.

Second part – changes in the agreement

Part of A's original talk (see Appendix 3 for whole transcription):

... we have ah at the moment draft number six but un- unfortunately I haven't got it on on the computer so I can't show you anything of that agreement but there has been some changes...

A's responses after listening:

Again here the communication is the main thing. Because we did not have the draft agreement on paper it was difficult to show or present the changes through talk. But maybe it did not matter that much as the Ukrainians did not have a say in the matter. But the Romanians might have had a different opinion. They might have wanted this, this and that. But the temporary committee had negotiated the agreement and we thought it was good and that is why we didn't want to open it too much here. But for presentation there should have been something from which to show the changes to the old agreement.

A question by researcher:

What did you mean with this 'key'?

A's response to question:

Well, that could have been explained in more detail. The key means that, for example, if you have 1000 employees you get 1 representative to the EWC.

Third part – management’s slide show

Part of A’s original talk (see Appendix 3 for whole transcription):

... we are not satisfied with the the employer reps to to lets say show their slides that they show normally in the in the stock market ...

... we want from the management to have an interactive discussions ...

... so we can prepare some questions now ...

A’s responses after listening:

This was preparation to the session with management. Normally we prepare some questions in advance for the management. As I told on the tape, we unsatisfied with the traditional slideshow presentations of the management in which they tell us the same things that they tell the stock markets. The information is useless and we are dissatisfied. Often they hide behind ‘sensitivity’ issues of stock market companies and therefore do not talk about things in the EWC that are not public knowledge. We think EWC should be used more as a tool by the management.

A question by researcher:

How did you react to the situation in which the management denied your questions during the management presentations and said that all questions should be asked at the end of the slideshow? And then there was not so much time for your questions.

A’s response to question:

It just as you described. Very often they just want to present their things and give us only 20 minutes or so for questions. This reflects the fact that the management does not want genuine interaction. They often show slides about

things that we know already. I myself am not satisfied with this situation even though sometimes we have had situations in which we have had the opportunity to talk with management genuinely, like one time when the CEO said that 'well, there is another flight later' and stayed to discuss with us. Some of us EWC reps are part of company's board of directors and we get more information than others. Of course we could send the unasked questions to the management in writing after the meeting... When we only have two EWC meetings a year and all matters cannot be discussed in these. The times between the meetings should be used better. But, it does not function properly.

Fourth part – no mandate to negotiate

Part of A's original talk (see Appendix 3 for whole transcription):

... the european works council if if we have no mandate to negotiate the salaries as such but of course we can we can say something concerning the terms of employment in general level...

A's responses after listening:

EWCs do not mandate to negotiate, and that is troublesome to Romanians as they work for the company both in Romania and in Norway and the agreements differ. This is a complicated issue.

#### Fifth part – shareholders

Part of A's original talk (see Appendix 3 for whole transcription):

... the situation has changed and the we are now a more ah management run company so ... and if the if the shareholders are not satisfied and if they think that they have paid too much for the shares and if the if the projects are not running good enough ...

A's responses after listening:

This was purely speculation. It is different if you have one big owner than if you have ten small ones.

#### Sixth part – IFA agreement

Part of A's original talk (see Appendix 3 for whole transcription):

... the one issues that we could ask as well is that CC has a ah very ready negotiated agreement in the in the IFA international framework agreement which ...

A's responses after listening:

Yes, we had signed the IFA International Framework Agreement with management already.

### Seventh part – splitting up processes

Part of A's original talk (see Appendix 3 for whole transcription):

... the splitting up or the outsourcing what what do you want to call it or cut the processes in in in small pieces is has been ongoing a couple of years ... it's has confused the the production and it's has makes more difficult to to to control at least the ...

A's responses after listening:

Splitting up here means that business is organised into smaller parts in order to be able to control the separate processes better. It sounds good in theory but it is not good because nobody understands or controls the whole. Especially, if the designers and other workers are from different countries and cultures they may not share same views and the whole production suffers.

### Eight part – Moscow based structure

Part of A's original talk (see Appendix 3 for whole transcription):

... is this structure it's ah like ah like in the former soviet union an ah Moscow based structure that that all the decisions have been made in the it the in the central office ...

A's responses after listening:

This relates to the central office mentality. Decisions are being made in the business area offices while the business units are struggling with very different issues. It should be 'hands on' management, not decisions from the central office.

A question by researcher:

What does a rookie mean? How do you spell it? (The researcher was not sure of what she had heard on the recording.)

A's response to question:

Rookie means a settler, a newcomer. I have heard it in American films. It has been derived from word recruitment.

(Author's note: one etymological dictionary says that rookie is a possible alternation of recruit.)

Ninth part – research and development

Part of A's original talk (see Appendix 3 for whole transcription):

... the investment policy and strategy and there is especially concerning the ee research and development and the especially concerning the EU rules and regulations which means that you can get subsidy for that kind of development so in in order to keep the C competitive it would be an idea ...

A's responses after listening:

The question here is whether or not Europe will maintain its technological advantage against Asia if product development is not prioritised.

Tenth part – investments

Part of A's original talk (see Appendix 3 for whole transcription):

... all those investments are are at the moment in the CA's table to let's say think about what kind of order which is the more important ...

A's responses after listening:

Company investments - the question is how they will be divided. There is a competition between countries. The proposal is on company board's table now.

Eleventh part – margins

Part of A's original talk (see Appendix 3 for whole transcription):

... so I I guess that's research and development and and especially design issue is is is one of the key issues in the future if we can't design A properly then we can't build it properly then if we have low margins in the in the projects ...

A's responses after listening:

Here again speculation about margins and the role of planning.

Twelfth part – information and consultation

Part of A's original talk (see Appendix 3 for whole transcription):

... we had some bad examples in the last ah last past for instance that take over of SS we didn't know in Finland nothing of it not one word we I myself heard it from our national union not from C or vice board ...

A's responses after listening:

When important parts of company are being sold or bought then the management should inform and consult, but in this example it did not work at all.

We in the EWC should have known about it. In our view this was a violation of EWC rules, but there are no sanctions.

Thirteenth part – meeting in different countries

Part of A's original talk (see Appendix 3 for whole transcription):

... that should be more easier for instance to have meetings in in in in germany  
in france in romania perhaps in ukraine in finland of course in norway of course  
kind of circulate I guess we ...

A's responses after listening:

This is future. We wish to have variation in the countries we have meetings. We  
could then get acquainted with different places and factories. This could one  
function of EWC as well.

The end – good enough chair

At the end of the stimulated recall session the researcher asked the following  
question:

Now that you have listened to your own talk do you still feel, like you did in the  
beginning, that you acted in such a way that everyone would understand you?

A's response to question:

It is difficult to evaluate, but surely I do understand my own talk and know what I  
have said. But, I should be able to speak English better! At least I should think  
about my repertoire of words and word choices. I say 'I guess' far too often and  
should not use it even though I would be guessing at times. And then the word  
'issue' I use too often. I should think what I want to say and have more  
structured sentences. Today I listened to my own talk the very first time and I  
believe if I listened to it again I would think that it is understandable. It was very

beneficial to listen to ones own voice. When it is not your own mother tongue it is not certain that everything was said what were intended. When you know the context and think that others know it as well you know what aspects to pay attention to. It may well be that EU and EWC regulations are not clear to all. For example, salaries do not belong to EWC agendas, we have no mandate to talk about them. I cannot say that I am disappointed; I managed to say something even though it is difficult in English. Being a chair in that kind of meeting really kind of empties your head. It would be easier to talk in Finnish. And it is very different to be in the meeting as a participant or as a chair.