Author(s): Härmälä, Marita

Title: Linguistic, sociolinguistic, and pragmatic competence as criteria in assessing vocational language skills: the case of Finland

Year: 2010

Version:

Please cite the original version:

Härmälä, M. (2010). Linguistic, sociolinguistic, and pragmatic competence as criteria in assessing vocational language skills: the case of Finland. Melbourne Papers in Language Testing, 15(2)

Linguistic, sociolinguistic, and pragmatic competence as criteria in assessing vocational language skills: the case of Finland

Abstract

The content of the assessment criteria used in assessing vocationally oriented language competence in the Finnish Competency-Based Qualifications was examined. The data consisted of the National Core Curricula, eight education providers' assessment criteria used in rating performances in the Qualification of Business and Administration, and thematic interviews conducted with 12 language teachers and four workplace experts. The data were analysed qualitatively. The results showed that on the lower levels of language competence, sociolinguistic and pragmatic competences were considered important in compensating for lacking linguistic competence. The findings will be useful in further defining the content of professional language competence for teaching purposes, and, in particular, in designing workplace oriented assessment criteria.

I   Introduction

In recent decades, there has been a growing interest in developing appropriate criteria for work-related performance assessment. Traditionally, the same theories of language knowledge and use and psychometrics have served as a starting point for both general and specific purpose language testing (Douglas, 2001), and factors other than those relating to language ability have been seen as errors of measurement (Bachman, 1990). Recently, however, the difference, even considered a fundamental incompatibility, between these two language assessment settings has been acknowledged (Brindley, 2000; Elder & Brown, 1997; Jacoby & McNamara, 1999), and a need has been expressed for developing a set of more indigenous assessment criteria in which context-relevant, occupation-specific communication

skills would be defined in terms of observable behaviours (Fulcher, Davidson & Kemp, 2011; Jacoby & McNamara, 1999). According to another view, the linguistically oriented and indigenous criteria could be seen as complementing each other (Douglas, 2001).

The target of work-related performance assessment has not been clearly defined, either. There is no one, commonly accepted definition as to what Language for Specific Purposes (LSP) entails (see e.g., Dudley-Evans & St John, 1998, on the scope of English for Specific Purposes). Drawing a line between testing LSP and general language testing is controversial as well (Robinson, 2001; see also Davies, 1990). It would be more appropriate to conceive of a continuum ranging from a very specialized to very common use of language (Douglas, 2000; Dudley-Evans & St John, 1998). Many LSP tests, such as the Occupational English Test (OET) and English for Aviation, are targeted at the upper levels of language proficiency, which in turn highlights the role of expertise and special knowledge needed in these tests. Consequently, LSP is not commonly associated with lower levels of language competence (Dudley-Evans & St John, 1998).

There are relatively few studies on lower levels of work-related language competence and its assessment (e.g. Holmes, 2005). In this paper, the term vocationally oriented language competence is used for the context-relevant, occupation-specific communication skills that L2 users with non-academic, lower levels of language competence use in work situations. The purpose is to analyze the content of vocationally oriented language competence as it appears, firstly, in skills requirements in the national policy documents, and secondly, in the local education providers' assessment criteria and, thirdly, in the perceptions of teachers and workplace experts in Finland. [1] This is done by analyzing the different sets of assessment criteria used to assess language competence in the Finnish Qualification of Business and Administration (QBA). In the QBA,

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[1] Since 2008 the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages has been used as a common framework for language skills requirements; up until then there was considerable local variation in the requirements.

vocationally oriented language competence is assessed as integrated in vocational competency, and demonstrated while performing work tasks which strive towards authenticity. Competence is used here to refer to language competence as defined by Bachman (1990); Canale and Swain (1980) and Hymes (1972), whereas competency refers to vocational "can-do" statements.

In the analysis of the QBA assessment criteria, communicative language competence is considered to consist of linguistic, sociolinguistic and pragmatic components. Each component, in turn, comprises knowledge, skills, and know-how (CEFR, Council of Europe, 2001). This approach is different e.g. from that of Bachman and Palmer (2010) and Bachman (1990) who define language ability as consisting of two components: language competence and strategic competence. Language competence, also referred to as language knowledge, consists of organizational and pragmatic knowledge. Sociolinguistic knowledge, in turn, is considered a subcategory of pragmatic knowledge. In the CEFR, linguistic competences refer to the dimensions of language as a system and include lexical, phonological, and syntactical knowledge and skills. Sociolinguistic competences are concerned with the sociocultural conditions of language use. It is sociolinguistic competence, in particular, that is of special interest in this paper; for example, how sociolinguistic factors, such as sensitivity to register, cultural references, and appropriate use of genres are represented in the linguistic assessment criteria of the QBA. Pragmatic competences refer to the functional use of linguistic resources drawing on scripts of interactional exchanges. For example mastery of discourse, cohesion and coherence, and text types are features of pragmatic competence.

The QBA serves here as an example of a Finnish Competency-Based Qualification for many reasons. In the QBA, language skills are receiving increasing attention as a result of the ongoing internationalization of trade, and the growing number of people visiting Finland. The QBA is also an example of a qualification in which skills in the second official language of the country (Swedish) as well as in one foreign language (English) are required. The scope

of the QBA is also quite broad; a QBA examinee can work for example as a shop assistant, bookkeeper, secretary, or civil servant.

In the study, written documents were used as primary data, complemented by informants' perceptions about the object being studied. The National Core Curriculum is the policy-level document that every education provider has to follow when writing their own assessment criteria. In practice, however, there is little coordination, guidance or training, which, in turn, means that every education provider has their own practices. This raises some questions: How are the national guidelines concretized in local curricula of the QBA? How do QBA language teachers and workplace experts perceive the content of vocationally oriented language competence?

The study explored vocationally oriented language competence as defined for the QBA, local education providers' assessment criteria, and the perceptions of individual language teachers and workplace experts of vocationally oriented language competence. The focus was on oral skills, as Finns are considered to need most practice in these (Sjöberg, 2002). The different aspects of language competence were analysed by using mainly qualitative methods, such as discourse analysis and categorization. The interviews were analyzed with the Atlas.ti software program. The research questions were:

1. What kind of vocationally oriented language competence is required of a Business and Administration examinee in the National Core Curricula?
2. What kind of vocationally oriented language competence do local education providers require in their assessment criteria?
3. How do individual language teachers and workplace experts perceive vocationally oriented language competence?

The rest of this paper is structured as follows: First, the most relevant research conducted in relation to workplace oriented assessment criteria will be reviewed. Next, the method and the data will be described and the results reported. The article concludes by

discussing the study's central findings and outlining topics for future research.

II   Literature review

There are many challenges in testing specific purpose language skills. First, there is the question of whether professional, subject-specific skills and language communication skills should be assessed separately or as integrated into the subject knowledge. This question has been addressed in different ways depending on the context. In McNamara's (1996) terms, the approach adopted has been towards either the "weak" or the "strong" end of the continuum of performance testing. In both approaches, serious problems have been identified. If professional skills and language communication skills are assessed separately, the validity of the whole test seems to be threatened (Jacoby & McNamara, 1999). The content of the test does not necessarily catch the essence of the communication skills needed in the workplace, for example by oversimplifying some features of the tasks. At the other end of the continuum, the integration of professional skills and language communication skills may lead to a situation where the performance, which is used as a basis for drawing conclusions about the participant's professional language communication skills, is so narrow that making generalizations over the testing situation is highly questionable (Härmälä, 2008). In the latter case, the test is primarily used for making judgments about the participant's ability to perform tasks in which language skills are only one of the elements needed for task fulfilment. In other words, language communication skills are a vehicle for attaining the ultimate goal, not the object of assessment *per se*.

Another controversial issue in the discussions about the nature of workplace communication skills is whether the same standards are or should be applied to native and non-native speakers (McNamara, 1997). A listening task from the OET including taking notes while listening to a simulated patient consultation illustrates this problem. In real life, note-taking practices vary considerably from one practitioner to another, and accordingly it is questionable whether

under test conditions, non-native speakers should be required to supply larger amounts of observable data for assessment purposes than they would normally do in a real-life setting. Workplace communication also includes tacit knowledge which is not always possible to express explicitly. A similar observation was made by Douglas and Myers (2000) in their study about the assessment of veterinary students' communication skills. The focus of the study was on the assessment of students' interviewing skills in a simulated client – vet interaction. In addition to the "official" criteria, different sets of criteria used by students, veterinary professors and applied linguists were identified. Although there was a considerable degree of overlap in the three sets of criteria, each group emphasized somewhat different characteristics. For the vets, the professional relationship with the client was the most important, whereas the applied linguists focused on the language construct to be measured and the language framework. The students emphasized their own knowledge base and the authenticity of the test. Douglas and Myers (2000) concluded that since any single set of criteria for specific purpose assessment is hardly usable, a better solution would be to adapt and blend criteria from various perspectives and for different test purposes (see also Brindley, 1991, 1994; Douglas, 2000; Jacoby & McNamara, 1999).

As a whole, the assessment of language competence in professional settings encompasses a considerably wider range of factors to be taken into account than the traditional assessment of general language competence. In some settings, pragmatic and discourse competence, for example, may play a bigger role in task fulfilment than factors such as fluency, accuracy, intelligibility and comprehension generally associated with general language competence (Elder & Brown, 1997; Mislevy, Steinberg & Almond, 2002). These general criteria do, however, influence assessment when naturally connected with task fulfilment (Long & Norris, 2000; Norris, Brown, Hudson & Bonk, 2002). Furthermore, it is recognized that language competence does not, in professional settings, follow the same kinds of hierarchical ability levels that have been identified in the development of general language competence (see discussion

e.g. in Douglas, 2001). Especially at the lower and intermediate levels of language competence, subskills do not develop at the same pace (Huhta, 1993). A professional setting imposes situation-specific requirements on an individual's communication skills independently of whether the individual's language competence as a whole is at a certain level or not. This applies, in particular, to adults who need FL skills in performing their everyday work tasks. For example, for a nursing aide or a salesperson, which are typical blue-collar jobs in the Finnish education system, the language skills requirements are defined with reference to the CEFR levels A2-B1. At level A2, in particular, the CEFR scales make few references to professional settings. [2]

In LSP testing, writing the assessment criteria is problematic (Norris, Brown, Hudson & Yoshika, 1998), for example because of rapidly changing situations and the mismatch between proficiency level descriptors and actual performance. Instead of using existing general proficiency rating scales, a more "indigenous" approach is proposed by Jacoby & McNamara (1999) and Fulcher et al. (2011). In her study, Jacoby (1998) documented the socialisation of university physics research group members into field-specific discourse practices by using ethnographic and discourse analytic methods. She found a wide range of details that the physicists oriented to while discussing their own performances, and concluded that activities of this type could be more widely used in establishing professionally relevant criteria in other settings. A more recent attempt to identify work-related criteria in observable terms is the Performance Decision Tree proposed by Fulcher et al. (2011). The PDT combines the data-based approach and the empirically derived, binary-choice scales of Upshur and Turner (1999). The model is illustrated by describing

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[2] Some examples: **A2** *Can give a simple description or presentation of people, living or working conditions, daily routines, likes/dislikes, etc. as a short series of simple phrases and sentences linked into a list. Can describe his/her family, living conditions, educational background, present or most recent job. (Council of Europe, 2001, p. 46)*

interactional competence in a service encounter which consists of three elements: discourse competence, competence in discourse management, and pragmatic competence. Discourse in a service encounter has a certain fixed structure, script, which needs to be realized in the actual performance. Features such as transition boundary markers, explicit expressions of purpose, identification of participant roles, and management of closing are important in order to make discourse management smooth. In addition to these, pragmatic competence is needed because of interactive rapport building, affective factors, and non-verbal communication inherent in every service encounter.[3]

For the purposes of this study, the elements of pragmatic competence are of interest. First, because of their relevance in situations where poor language skills may lead to communication breakdown, and secondly, because one aim of this study was to explore what other criteria than explicitly linguistic ones could be included in the criteria used to assess workplace oriented language competence of a QBA examinee. And finally, there has not been much research on testing pragmatic competence (Rose & Kasper, 2001). In previous studies, the focus has been on speech acts (Hudson, Detmer & Brown, 1992), on implicature (Bouton, 1999), and on developing test instruments to assess pragmatic competence (Roever, 2001; Yamashita, 1996). According to these studies, some components of pragmatic competence such as speech acts, routine formulas, implicature, and address forms are fairly easy to assess, teach, and learn. For example, knowledge of routines is almost completely accounted for by exposure. A central problem is, however, that judgements of what is appropriate differ widely because they are to a great extent influenced by social and personal background variables (McNamara & Roever, 2006). Testing pragmatic competence in authentic situations thus requires further research.

III   Method

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[3] In this, the authors draw on the work done in cognitive psychology by researchers such as Schank and Abelson (1977).

Data and participants

Three types of data were used to answer the research questions identified in the introduction. The first of these was the National Core Curricula, which served as the national policy level document to define the language skills requirements in the Qualification of Business and Administration (QBA) chosen as the object of study. In 2006, when the original data were collected (Härmälä, 2006), the National Core Curricula used a five-point scale consisting of the following levels:

Excellent   = 5

Good   = 4 and 3

Satisfactory   = 2 and 1

The general language skills requirements for excellent skills in the QBA (2004) state that "the examinee knows the basic vocabulary related to the company's different business lines in the second national language (Swedish), and in one foreign language (normally English) in such a way that s/he can for example present his/her company and work, serve customers, and do sales work as well as deal with business documents." (original statements in Finnish). For satisfactory skills, no language skills are specified. These general requirements are common to everyone taking the qualification. For different lines of speciality the requirements are, however, more detailed.

On the basis of the language skills requirements for excellent skills described above, every education provider has to write their own criteria for the other three levels (Good 4, Good 3, and Satisfactory 2). These local assessment scales were then used to describe the micro level language skills requirements.

The local assessment criteria were collected in 2003. At the time, there were a total of 47 Vocational Adult Education Centers in Finland

organizing Competency-Based Qualifications. In 15 of them, QBA training and/or competency tests were organized. In the first phase of the study, the language teachers in these Vocational Adult Education Centers were contacted via e-mail and asked if they were willing to participate in the study. Eleven Centers expressed their interest to participate, and consequently agreed on sending the researcher their assessment criteria and some examples of competence test tasks in Swedish and English. In total, eight sets of criteria were thus received and analyzed for possible differences between the education providers in order to see if the criteria for a minimum performance varied.

In addition to collecting the national and local requirements, thematic interviews were conducted with language teachers and workplace experts between autumn 2005 and 2007. A total of 12 language teachers from 11 Adult Education Centers agreed to participate in the interviews. Four of them were teachers of Swedish and six of English. Four teachers taught both languages. The teachers were aged 30 to 60; six of them were between 40 and 50. They had on average 17 years of experience as language teachers, mainly in adult education.

The four workplace experts were chosen to be interviewed on the basis of the researcher's personal contacts and their accessibility. Two of them had a long experience as teachers in upper secondary vocational education and also in National Education and Training Committees that supervise the organizing of the Competency-Based Qualifications (CBQ). Two had worked as entrepreneurs. All the workplace experts had extensive knowledge of the CBQ system as a whole and the QBA in particular.

The thematic interviews conducted with the informants were tape-recorded and lasted for about 30 minutes per interviewee. The themes of the interviews were vocational competency, language competence, and the design and administration of the competency tests.

Data analysis

The data were analyzed qualitatively as the aim was to describe the various dimensions of vocationally oriented language competence as expressed in the requirements and in the perceptions of the informants. Some frequencies were, however, calculated concerning the competence categories (linguistic, sociolinguistic, and pragmatic) in order to show their relative proportion in the various sets of criteria.

The criteria in the National Core Curricula and the eight sets of assessment criteria obtained from the education providers were analyzed by content analysis and careful line-by-line reading. The local education providers' criteria produced four types of scales. One education provider used a pass/fail scale; two education providers had a three-point scale, and five used a five–point scale. Two education providers used criteria directly copied from the general requirements. The difference in the number of levels per education provider is worth noting because it is in direct relation to the number of descriptors analyzed.

For the purposes of this study, all eight sets of descriptors on each level were first put together, and then analyzed separately as whole phrases. This resulted in total of 116 phrases (Appendix 1). At the levels Good and Satisfactory, the two separate sublevels were analyzed as one entity for practical reasons, and because the descriptors were very much alike at both levels. Here are some examples of the descriptors for *satisfactory*, *good*, and *excellent* levels:

Satisfactory (levels 1/2)

Ymmärtää muiden puheesta ja käyttää itse yleisimmin käytettyjä ja rutiininomaisia ilmauksia. (Translation: Understands other person's speech and uses some of the most frequent routine expressions.)

Kohtelias käytös ja joidenkin tuttujen fraasien käyttö saattaa korvata heikohkon kielitaidon. (Translation: Polite behavior and the use of some familiar phraseology may compensate for poor language skills.)

Puhe voi olla hitaahkoa, mutta epäluontevia katkoja ei enää esiinny kovin paljon. (Translation: Speech may be quite slow but unnatural pauses are not very common.)

Kielen rakenne on hyvin puutteellista ja sanaston käyttö yksipuolista. (Translation: Structure of language is very inadequate and the use of vocabulary lacks versatility.)

Good (levels 3/4)

Puhuu ymmärrettävästi ja melko sujuvasti. (Translation: Speaks comprehensibly and fairly fluently.)

Osallistuu keskusteluun sujuvasti, laajentaa aihetta valitsemaansa suuntaan ja ottaa huomioon toiset keskustelijat. (Translation: Takes part in the discussion fluently, expands the topic to a desired direction, and takes other participants into account)

Kielenkäyttö on selkeää, hyvää ja kohteliasta sekä asiakaspalvelutilanteeseen sopivaa. (Translation: Use of language is clear, good, and polite as well as suited to the customer service situation.)

Opiskelija suoriutuu tilanteesta hieman kangerrellen, mutta väärinkäsityksiä ei synny ja tilanteesta jää myönteinen vaikutelma vierailijalle. (Translation: The student manages the situation with some hesitation but no misunderstandings occur and the visitor gets a positive impression of the situation.)

Excellent (level 5)

Tulee hyvin toimeen arkisissa kielenkäyttötilanteissa ja selviytyy melko hyvin odottamattomissakin viestintätilanteissa; puheenvuorot sujuvia, yhtenäisiä ja luontevan pituisia. Erottaa puheessa muodollisen ja epämuodollisen kielimuodon. (Translation: Manages well in everyday language use situations and fairly well even in unexpected communication situations; turns are fluent, coherent, and of natural length. In speech, distinguishes between formal and informal language.)

Kielenkäyttö luontevaa, sujuvaa, kohteliasta sekä kaupan asiakaspalvelu-tilanteeseen sopivaa. (Translation: Use of language is natural, fluent, polite and suitable for a business customer service situation.)

Hallitsee kielen erittäin hyvin ja osaa tuottaa lähes virheetöntä tekstiä. (Translation: Masters the language extremely well and can produce practically faultless text.)

Next, the descriptors were categorized into groups of linguistic, sociolinguistic and pragmatic competence. These groups consisted of the following factors (adapted from the CEFR and Fulcher et al., 2011) and are shown in Table 1 (next page):

Table 1. Linguistic, sociolinguistic, and pragmatic competence as units of analysis of the assessment criteria

Linguistic competence	Sociolinguistic competence	Pragmatic competence
• range: general and vocabulary • control:	• registers: rules governing relations between social groups, generations,	1. discourse competence: cohesion and coherence;

grammatical accuracy; vocabulary control; phonological control • intelligibility	classes • rules of politeness; phraseology • appropriateness	flexibility with regard to situation; turntaking; thematic development 2. functional competence: language use for different purposes 3. interactional schemata: scripts, designs for interaction; spoken fluency (ability to keep going); propositional precision (make one's meaning clear); rapport building (comfort); non-verbal communication

The following example from the Good level (level 3) illustrates how the descriptors were classified into the three groups:

Table 2. Classification of descriptors in groups of linguistic, sociolinguistic and pragmatic competence (example)

Linguistic competence	Sociolinguistic competence	Pragmatic competence
Some interference from other	The use of language is clear and good, and	The student manages well in familiar

languages may occur.	the examinee knows the polite phraseology in English	business customer service situations.
Basic structures are fairly well mastered and vocabulary suitable for the situation.		…vocabulary suitable for the situation.

It turned out that the classification of the descriptors was not a straightforward task mainly due to the vagueness and interdependence of some descriptors. In the above example, for instance, the descriptor "vocabulary suitable for the situation" is therefore placed both under pragmatic and linguistic competence as it can be understood as referring to vocabulary range and control as well as to appropriate vocabulary in different situations.

The interviews were transcribed as literally as possible and lengthy pauses and extra-linguistic features, such as laughter, were also marked. In this way it was possible also to register how things were said. The interviews were analyzed by the Atlas.ti software. The content of the interviews was classified into categories, which had already been formed on the basis of interview themes.[4] This way, it was possible to create an overall picture of the perceptions the interviewees had as a group as well as individuals. The categories used included topics such as language competence, language assessment, assessment criteria, and vocational competence. Finally, each category was summarized thematically. The primary aim was not to look for frequencies but to describe the whole variation of the data. Some frequency information is, however, presented to give a general idea of the relative importance of a phenomenon in the given context.

IV   Results

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[4] These themes were originally identified as those causing most debate among the language teachers who participated in a pre-study done in connection with the main study.

The results of the study will be presented by answering the three research questions, one by one. The first question was:

1. *What kind of vocationally oriented language competence is required of a Business and Administration examinee in the National Core Curricula?*

The analysis indicated that the content of the language skills requirements in the National Core Curricula was very general and vague. At Excellent level (level 5), the examinee was expected to have functional knowledge of how to present his/her work tasks and the company as well as to serve customers, sell goods, and deal with business letters. In order to do this, some basic vocabulary essential to different business lines is needed. Language competence was stated as a short can-do statement, which makes different interpretations possible. The components of linguistic, sociolinguistic and pragmatic competence must therefore be read between the lines. For example, to whom is the company presentation to be addressed? Is it written or oral, and is it a monologue or an interactive situation?

Based on the above description of the language competence required, it was therefore very interesting to see what kinds of interpretations the local education providers had made when writing their own assessment criteria.

The second research question was:

2. *What kind of vocationally oriented language competence do local education providers require in their official assessment criteria?*

The analysis of the education providers' assessment criteria indicated that the required language competence was described in terms of linguistic, sociolinguistic, and pragmatic competence, and by indicating different levels of proficiency. The three competence categories are described below across levels. Major differences between the levels are highlighted.

a) Linguistic competence across levels

In the data, there were a total of 18 phrases referring to linguistic competence. Linguistic competence includes the range and control of the linguistic resources an examinee possesses. Thus, control refers above all to grammatical accuracy, vocabulary control, and phonological control. Also general intelligibility is considered here as belonging to this category as far as no reference to a specific context or situation is made in the descriptor.

At Excellent level, seven out of eight phrases referred to grammatical accuracy and vocabulary control, and one to intelligibility. On the whole, a very high level of accuracy was required according to the criteria: "accurate, as accurate as possible, only few inaccuracies". In only one phrase "sufficient" accuracy is required in order to get the message through.

At Good level, the requirements become less demanding. Only basic vocabulary and structures were required. In more demanding structures, difficulties were evident. At this level, interference from the mother tongue or some other languages was possible, and pronunciation might clearly deviate from that of the target language. Again, only one descriptor made allusion to linguistic intelligibility.

At Satisfactory level, linguistic competence is even less central. Only in three phrases were there references to linguistic features. At this level, the mastery of language structures was very inadequate and use of vocabulary lacked versatility. Getting used to the examinee's pronunciation required a lot of effort, and consequently made getting through the message difficult.

To sum up, references made to linguistic competence become less frequent in going from Excellent to Satisfactory level, and constitute, for example, at Good level less than half of those made at Excellent level. This, in turn, suggests that features other than merely linguistic ones are more crucial at Good and Satisfactory levels. Only at

Excellent level are linguistic control and range emphasized, but even there only moderately, compared to other factors.

b) Sociolinguistic competence across levels

 In the data, sociolinguistic competence (16 phrases) overlaps to some extent with pragmatic competence. Both refer to knowing how to produce and interpret language in different contexts.

At both Excellent and Good levels, there were few references to the sociolinguistic appropriateness of expression. At Excellent level, references were slightly more frequent (4 at Excellent and 1 at Good), and polite expressions were characterized as having already become natural. Distinguishing between the formal and informal register was mentioned in one descriptor, although some nuances were still expected to cause problems in intelligibility. At Good level, the use and mastery of polite phraseology was not self-evident. Some expressions were already quite natural but, occasionally, polite phrases were only moderately used because of problems in producing them.

At Satisfactory level, references to sociolinguistic competence were few (2 out of 30). At this level, the examinee understood polite formulations in another person's speech, and was able to produce the most common and routine expressions even though not always to use the most appropriate expressions in his/her own speech.

On the whole, understanding and using sociolinguistically appropriate expressions with some ease and naturalness is important at Excellent level, even though some hesitation may still occur. At the lowest level of language proficiency, the ability to understand polite phrases is better than the ability to produce them.

c) Pragmatic competence across levels

Pragmatic competence includes knowledge of the principles according to which messages are organised, used, and sequenced

(e.g. CEFR). As mentioned above, there was some overlap with sociolinguistic competence.

In the data, references made to pragmatic competence were very frequent at each level (82 in total). At Excellent level they constituted 56 %, at Good level 73 %, and at Satisfactory level as much as 83 % of all descriptors. In other words, according to the data, the importance of knowing how to use language for different purposes, and according to what kind of schemata each interaction needs to be sequenced and conducted seems to become the more important the fewer language skills people have.

In what way, then, were the above-mentioned principles put into words in the education providers' assessment criteria? And what kind of differences were there between levels? At Excellent level, the examinee's flexibility with regard to the situation was represented by his/her ability to manage well or even very well in various, everyday workplace situations and with workmates. Even in less-routine situations s/he reacted spontaneously without needing to search for expressions. At Good level, managing was restricted to predictable, everyday working situations. However, special weight was accorded to turntaking and participating in interaction which were referred to in four descriptors. Knowing how to support one's opinions, solve problems with the help of language, and take other participants into account were mentioned as examples.

The different language functions include introducing oneself, presenting one's work tasks and the company, taking (phone) messages, buying tickets and booking accommodation, selling, and dealing with business letters. At Excellent level, knowing the scripts included the ability to ask and respond to questions. Spoken fluency and the ability to keep the interaction going were in the data connected with propositional precision. The message needs to be expressed fluently enough in order to get it accurately through. Accuracy needs, therefore, to be seen here as referring to the correctness of the information content, not as linguistic accuracy. In other words, inadequate language skills should not lead to

misunderstandings. In total, four descriptors at Good level made reference to the importance of avoiding misunderstandings. One clear difference between Excellent and Good level was that, at Good level, some hesitation and difficulties of expression were allowed as far as they did not affect the overall quality of the encounter. At Excellent level, however, hesitation and pauses were rare.

Rapport building, affective factors, and non-verbal communication (see Fulcher 2010) were mentioned in two of the descriptors at Excellent and in three at Good level. At Excellent level, it is thus important that the client leaves the shop satisfied and gets a positive impression of the service encounter. At Good level, a satisfied client with a positive overall impression of the encounter was described as the aim of the whole encounter.

As the references made to pragmatic competence at Satisfactory level were far more frequent than at the other two levels, they are presented here separately. In total more than four descriptors out of five described how the examinee was expected to structure and use the linguistic resources s/he possesses in work-related situations. As for flexibility with regard to the situation, the scope of work-related situations where the examinee's language skills are sufficient was restricted to the most common and simple encounters at this level. The client got, however, a positive impression of the situation because polite behaviour and well-rehearsed phrases might compensate for inadequate language skills. Among different functions, introducing oneself, talking about one's work tasks, and taking messages were mentioned. Only minimal understanding of business letters was required, i.e. the examinee was expected to understand the function of the letter through identifying some of its contents.

At Satisfactory level, the interaction between a shop assistant and client was affected by comprehension difficulties and by the need for repetition and slowing speech down. The examinee's own production was minimal, and if it was required at all, it was limited to topics prepared in advance. In two descriptors, however, despite the fact

that communication is on a very simple level, it was stated that no misunderstandings arose because the examinee was, in the end, understood. In this respect, in particular, the content of the descriptors was thus fairly contradictory. If the examinee is not, at Satisfactory level, expected, or even able, to produce anything without assistance, how can one at the same time require that there be no misunderstandings? This example clearly illustrates how inconsistent the assessment criteria of the different education providers tended to be (see Härmälä, 2008). It also explains why, in this paper, references to actual proficiency levels, e.g. the CEFR levels, required in the QBA are kept minimal.

Figure 1 (next page), summarizes the distribution of descriptors referring to linguistic, sociolinguistic, and pragmatic competence at each level analyzed. In the figure, the frequency of the descriptors in the entire data is given in percentages in order to allow some tentative comparisons.
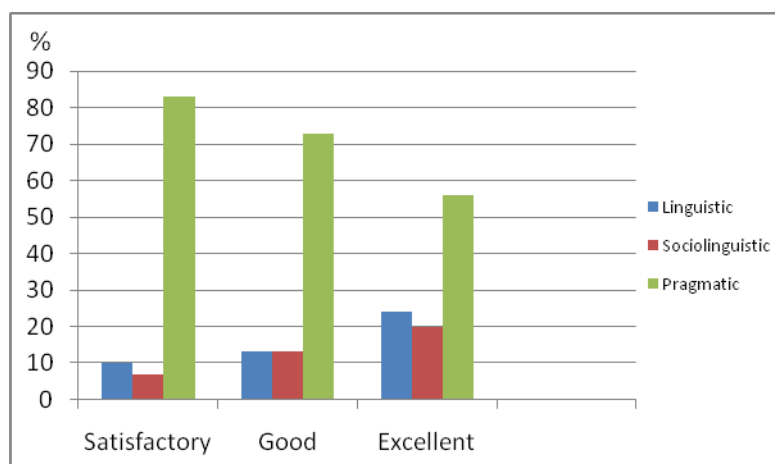

Figure 1. Percentage of descriptors referring to linguistic, sociolinguistic, and pragmatics competence across levels.

The third research question was:

3. *How do individual language teachers and workplace experts perceive vocationally oriented language competence?*

Answers to this research question are based on the analysis of 16 transcribed interviews. On the whole, the interviewees were remarkably unanimous about many issues. They had, however, somewhat differing opinions about the scope of language skills needed in working life, and about what counts as an adequate performance.

The interviewees' perceptions are described here only in terms of those having a direct connection with linguistic, sociolinguistic, or pragmatic competence. No frequencies were calculated because the original interview was a thematic one, and consequently, all the participants did not talk about precisely the same issues. Furthermore, language skills were included only as a general topic, not as one explicitly consisting of the three subcategories mentioned above. Issues relevant to the current study are, however, reported here because through them it was possible to get additional support for the claims made about the assessment criteria. Also, the assessment criteria could be considered as the "official" criteria of each education provider, while the interviews produced a sort of "non-official" criteria. To some extent, however, the two sets of criteria matched each other.

The interviewees' perceptions will be reported here in three sections: references made to linguistic, sociolinguistic, and pragmatic competence. Some references were also made to different proficiency levels, that is to say, to good and minimum pass level, and these perceptions will be reported in the corresponding context.

a) References made to linguistic competence

For all 16 interviewees, linguistic competence was important. According to them, it is the foundation for everything else. The following quote illustrates this:

"Mun mielestä kielitaito on siis kielitietoa plus tällaista sosiaalista tietoa. Kielitiedolla tarkoitan ihan tällaisia rakenneasioita, sanastollisia asioita, ihan tietoa siitä kielestä mun mielestä siihen liittyy myös tällainen sosiaalinen puoli, että miten kommunikoi. Eleet, ilmeet, musta nekin on kielitaitoa. Kyllähän itse asiassa on aika suuri merkitys ihan näillä tämmöisillä ei-kielellisillä tekijöillä, äänenpainolla, eleillä, ilmeillä on suuri vaikutus siihen, että missä muodossa se viesti ymmärretään. Mutta toki kielen rakenteet on semmoset, mihin kaikki rakentuu ilman niitä taas ei oo kieltä." Anna

Translation: In my opinion language competence is language knowledge plus this kind of social knowledge. With language knowledge I mean just these kinds of structural matters, vocabulary stuff, knowledge of the language in fact. In my opinion this sort of social side is linked with it, the way you communicate. Gestures, facial expressions, I think they are language competence too. In fact these kinds of non-linguistic matters like stress, gestures, facial expressions have a big effect on the way the message is understood. But language structures are those which everything is built on, without them there is no language."Anna

Linguistic competence is thus equal to structures and vocabulary. Especially as it comes to good and excellent language skills, structures are of greatest importance. Mastering the structures is, however, not as important in spoken as in written language.

A surprising finding was that six language teachers (out of 12) and one workplace expert (out of 4) referred to pronunciation, in particular to the pronunciation of English. They considered pronunciation important but admitted at the same time that English pronunciation today varies considerably, depending, for example, on the user's linguistic background.

b) References made to sociolinguistic competence

Especially for the language teachers the knowledge of polite phraseology was important, in particular in case a person's language skills were not so good. Maija says:

"Ruotsi. No kyllä se jotain pitää sanoa, eikä pelkkää ja, ja men nej. Et esimerkiksi […] et jo sitte se että kun tulee vaikka siihen huoneeseen, niin sanoo jonkun tervehdyksen ja sanoo jotain, mitäpä kuuluu tai vastaa jos toinen kysyy ja tämmösiä yleisilmauksia, et jos se sitten jää muuten se ammattisanasto tai muu siitä lähes nollaan, niin ehkä sillä, tai sillä sitten sais vois sen ykkösen.

(Translation: "Swedish. Well, you must say something, not just Yes, yes and No, no. For example […] even when you enter the room, you say some kind of a greeting and say something like how are you or something or answer if someone asks a question, this kinds of general phraseology so that if you don't know any work-related vocabulary or everything else is nearly zero, well maybe with that [greeting] then you could get let's say level 1.")

According to Maija, it was the greetings, apologies etc. that could compensate for inadequate language skills, especially in borderline cases. This meant that even using some isolated words could, according to some interviewees, be considered as language competence; and if your language skills were to be considered good, you also needed to master idiomatic expressions.

c) References made to pragmatic competence

The role of language use in interaction became very clear in the interviews. Especially the importance of spoken fluency and propositional precision was emphasized. Nearly all (14 out of 16) interviewees referred to the accuracy of the message. By accuracy they meant the correctness of the information transferred. Also, in order to get the message through, even non-verbal communication strategies, such as gestures, facial expressions, grasping the other person's sleeve, were allowed. The ultimate aim is that the situation has to be somehow handled. In other words, task fulfillment means handling the situation in such a way that the main purpose is achieved. At the same time, the examinee has also to understand the limits of his/her language skills so that s/he does not "bite off more than s/he can chew". In workplace communication, no cul-de-sac is

possible; otherwise there is the danger of losing face (see also Yule, 1996). The following example illustrates this:

> *"Sekin että sä lupaat lähettää jotain materiaalia ja sä et osaa ottaa henkilön nimeä oikein, niin, niin ne on semmoisia, ne on pieniä asioita mutta siinä työtilanteessa niillä onkin ihan ratkaiseva merkitys. Mutta jos ajatellaan taas kokonaiskielitaidon kannalta, sanotaan ettei osaa aakkosia, sehän ei ole iso asia, työtilanteen kannalta se voi joskus olla ihan ratkaiseva. Samoin kuin lukusanat."* Mervi

> (Translation: "Even that that you promise to send some material and you can't write down the person's name correctly, well, well these are small things but in that work situation they really do have a decisive meaning. But if you think about it from the point of view of language competence as a whole, let's say that you don't know the alphabet, that's not a big issue, but from the point of view of the work task it may sometimes be crucial. The same goes for numbers." Mervi)

To *summarize* the findings of the study: What are the most important characteristics attributed to examinees' language skills at the level of Excellent, Good, and Satisfactory? At Excellent level, flexibility in various workplace related situations, and the ease of communication manifested by spoken fluency is emphasized. Communication also has to be appropriate with regard to the situation and persons involved. In addition to these, linguistic competence is required. Grammatical accuracy and vocabulary range are the most typical features of linguistic competence. At Good level, flexibility and fluency continue to be important, but also different features connected with interactive encounters are highlighted. In communicating with clients, establishing a positive ambiance and actively participating in communication is needed in order for the encounter to succeed. When language skills are poor, as they are at Satisfactory level, communication proceeds mainly on the basis of knowing the scripts and how to use the language for different functions. Non-verbal communication and polite behaviour may compensate for poor language skills. Some fluency is, however, required in order to convey the message correctly. The figure below illustrates the differences between the levels.

Satisfactory	Good	Excellent
scripts, schemata	flexibility, fluency	flexibility, fluency
polite behaviour and non-verbal communication	rapport building turntaking	appropriateness linguistic range, control
spoken fluency, propositional precision		

Figure 2. Features describing vocationally-oriented language competence of a BA examinee at Excellent, Good, and Satisfactory levels.

As Figure 2 clearly demonstrates, non-verbal communication and knowing the script is, in some situations, considered to be enough for the examinee to adequately deal with the situation.

V   Conclusion and Discussion

The system of Competency-Based Qualifications has been in use in Finland since 1994, and its importance is constantly growing due to an increase in work-related immigration. Until recently, local education providers have been given some freedom in organizing the competency tests within the framework set by the National Board of Education. This has resulted in varying testing practices and lack of consistency in the whole testing process. For example, no common practices exist for testing vocationally oriented language competence (Härmälä, 2008). Since 2008, however, some attempts to standardize the practices have been made, and in the near future the language skills requirements in the Competency-Based Qualifications will be expressed by applying the CEFR levels.

The present study set out to analyse the content of work-related language competence as expressed in the National Core Curricula, in different education providers' assessment criteria for the Qualification of Business and Administration, and in informants' perceptions. No performance data were available to investigate how the criteria analysed were working in real life. The purpose of the study was to contribute to the discussion about the criteria by which specific purpose language skills are currently assessed. This study differs from earlier Finnish studies in that language skills requirements were examined at the lower levels of language proficiency, that is to say at the CEFR levels A1, A2, and B1. Studies on blue-collar workers' language skills are extremely few in Finland, but urgently needed. In other countries, e.g. in New Zealand, there are some recent studies of blue-collar jobs (Daly, Holmes, Newton & Stubbe, 2003; Holmes, 2000, 2005) which have found that pragmatic and sociolinguistic skills, such as managing small talk, are extremely important in order for people to fit smoothly into work teams. Consequently, it can be argued that, at least as regards the official assessment criteria, features relating to pragmatic and sociolinguistic competence might also be considered important by Finnish education providers.

The study showed that when work-related language skills were assessed, linguistic competence alone was not enough to describe the interactional nature of workplace communication. In fact, as this study made clear, sociolinguistic and, in particular, pragmatic competence might be even more important in situations where language skills are not at a very high level. This, in turn, can be seen as further evidence for the assumption that work-related language skills do not develop linearly, but are highly dependent on the context and on the demands it sets on an individual language user (see e.g. Douglas, 2001). Further studies are, therefore, needed to help design valid measures to assess pragmatic competence in actual performances. An example from the present study illustrates the dilemma. If the criteria for satisfactory skills state that "the customer gets a positive impression of the situation despite the examinee's

deficient language skills", how is this positive impression to be measured?

There are limitations to this study: no other raters apart from the researcher were used in data analysis, and the sample was relatively small. The descriptors studied need to be taken only as examples of the criteria used in the Qualification of Business and Administration. In other qualifications the criteria may be of a very different nature. As a method, content analysis was considered to best fit the scope of the study which was to describe in detail the various dimensions of work-related language skills as expressed in the assessment criteria and the perceptions of the informants. The study has, thus, provided further support to the need for deriving assessment criteria from the same real-life context as the assessment tasks in order to create criteria that state in more observable terms the essence of workplace language competence.

More studies are thus needed to describe what work-related language competence entails at lower levels of language proficiency. This study has, however, demonstrated that according to the raters, linguistic competence alone is not a sufficient basis for assessing work-related language competence.

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Appendix 1 Phrases from the 8 education providers' assessment criteria, grouped in the analysis into linguistic, sociolinguistic, and pragmatic competence

KIITETTÄVÄ 5 (EXCELLENT 5)

Osaa yrityksen eri toimintamuotoihin liittyvän perussanaston toisella kotimaisella ja yhdellä vieraalla kielellä, jotta osaa esimerkiksi esitellä

yritystään ja työtään, palvella ja myydä sekä käsitellä asiakirjoja. (Knows the basic vocabulary related to the company's different business lines in the second national language and in one foreign language in such a way that can e.g. present his/her company and work, serve customers and do sales work as well as deal with business documents.)

Pystyy toimimaan myös ruotsin ja englannin kielillä. (Is able to function also in Swedish and in English.)

Tulee hyvin toimeen arkisissa kielenkäyttötilanteissa ja selviytyy melko hyvin odottamattomissakin viestintätilanteissa. (Manages well in everyday language use situations and fairly well also in unexpected communication situations.)

*Puheenvuorot sujuvia, yhtenäisiä ja luontevan pituisia. (*Turns are fluent, coherent, and of natural length.)

Erottaa puheessa muodollisen ja epämuodollisen kielimuodon. (Distinguishes between formal and informal form of speech.)

Osaa esittäytyä, tehdä ostoksia, hankkia matkalippuja ja majoitusta. (Can introduce him-/herself, make purchases, reserve tickets and accommodation.)

Osaa esittää yksinkertaisia kysymyksiä. (Can pose simple questions.)

Puhuu kieltä ymmärrettävästi. (Speaks the language in a comprehensible way.)

Puhe voi olla hitaahkoa, mutta epäluontevia katkoja ei enää kovin paljon. (Speech may be a little slow but unnatural pauses no longer occur frequently.)

Tulee ymmärretyksi vaikka ilmaus ei aina olekaan aivan kohdekielen mukainen. (Will be understood even though expressions do not always completely correspond to those of the target language.)

Pystyy kiertämään useat kohtaamansa viestintävaikeudet. (Is able to get around many of the communication difficulties encountered.)

Näyttöön osallistuja ymmärtää ja tuottaa kieltä riittävän sujuvasti jotta viesti välittyy oikein. (The competency test participant understands

and produces language fluently enough to get his/her message accurately through.)

Kokonaisuutta ajatellen toiselle osapuolella jää tilanteesta positiivinen kuva. (As regards the situation as a whole, the other participant gets a positive picture of the situation.)

Rakenteiden ja sanaston hallinta on riittävää, jotta kielellinen informaatio välittyy oikein. (Mastery of structures and vocabulary is sufficient for linguistic information to be accurately transferred.)

 Annetut tehtävät suoritettu virheettömästi (n. 90 % maks. pisteistä) yllämainittujen kriteereiden mukaisesti. (The given tasks are performed accurately (about 90 % of the maximum points) in accordance with the criteria above.)

Teksti on kieliopillisesti mahdollisimman virheetöntä. (Text is grammatically as accurate as possible.)

Keskustelu kuulostaa luontevalta ja tilanteeseen sopivalta. (Conversation sounds natural and appropriate for the situation.)

Keskustelu selkeää ja yksityiskohtaista sekä lähes virheetöntä. (Conversation is clear, detailed, and nearly faultless.)

Osaa soveltaa kielitaitoaan joustavasti erilaisiin ammatillisiin tilanteisiin. (Can apply his/her language skills flexibly to various work-related situations.)

Pystyy reagoimaan yllättäviin tilanteisiin spontaanisti ilman, että tarvitsee juurikaan hakea ilmauksia. (Is capable of reacting spontaneously to unexpected situations without really needing to search for expressions.)

Kielenkäyttö luontevaa, sujuvaa, kohteliasta sekä kaupan asiakaspalvelu-tilanteeseen sopivaa. (Use of language is natural, fluent, polite, and suitable for a customer service situation in a shop.)

Kielen rakenteiden hallinnassa on vain pieniä epätarkkuuksia, mutta sanasto on monipuolista ja tilanteeseen sopivaa. (There are some minor inaccuracies in the mastery of language structures, but the vocabulary is versatile and well suited for the situation.)

Asiakaspalvelutilanteen kokonaisuutta ajatellen on tärkeää, että asiakas poistuu tyytyväisenä liikkeestä ja että hänelle jää myönteinen kuva ostotilanteesta. (With regard to the customer service situation as a whole, it is important that the customer leaves the shop satisfied and that he/she gets a positive picture of the purchasing situation.)

Väärinkäsityksiä ei synny ja opiskelija hallitsee numerot sekä suoriutuu luontevasti tavanomaisten puhelinviestien vastaanottamisesta. (No misunderstandings occur, and the student both masters the numbers and manages to receive commonplace telephone messages without any effort.)

Kielenkäyttö luontevaa, sujuvaa sekä asiakaspalvelutilanteeseen sopivaa. (Language use is natural, fluent and suitable for a customer service situation.)

Erityisesti korostuu englannin kielen kohteliaan fraseologian käyttö. (The use of polite English phraseology is particularly emphasized.)

Opiskelija suoriutuu erinomaisesti tavanomaisesta liike-elämän asiakaspalvelutilanteesta, sekä suoriutuu luontevasti tavanomaisten puhelinviestien vastaanottamisesta. (The student manages excellently in a familiar customer service situation in business and succeeds effortlessly in receiving commonplace telephone messages.)

Tutkinnon suorittaja ymmärtää, mistä asiakirjasta on kysymys, hän ymmärtää sivuotsikoiden sisällön, osaa kirjoittaa alku- ja loppufraasit ja käyttää asiakirjastandardia. (The examinee understands the purpose of the business letter, understands the content of margin headings, can write salutations and closing phrases, and make use of business letter standards.)

Lisäksi huomioidaan kielen rakenne ja sanavalinnat (kriteerit yhteiset K5-T1). (In addition to this, language structure and vocabulary choices are taken into account (common criteria for levels 5 and 1.)

Hallitsee liike-elämän sanaston hyvin ja osaa vaivatta toimia työyhteisönsä eri tilanteissa. (Masters business vocabulary well and can function without difficulty in various work community situations.)

Hallitsee kielen erittäin hyvin ja osaa tuottaa lähes virheetöntä tekstiä. (Masters the language extremely well and can produce practically faultless text.)

HYVÄ ¾ (GOOD ¾)

Työ sujuu myös ruotsin ja englannin kielillä. (Is able to do the work also in Swedish and in English.)

Henkilökohtaisesta(myynti) työstä suoriutuminen on ongelmatonta myös ruotsiksi ja englanniksi. (Has no problems in carrying out personal (selling) tasks also in English and Swedish.)

Tulee toimeen arkisissa kielenkäyttötilanteissa ja saattaa selviytyä melko hyvin odottamattomissakin viestintätilanteissa. (Gets along in everyday language use situations and may also manage fairly well in unexpected communication situations.)

Puheenvuorot melko sujuvia ja yhtenäisiä. (Turns are fairly fluent and coherent.)

Selviää ennustettavista rutiinitilanteista hyvin. (Manages well in predictable routine situations.)

Kielitaidon rajallisuuden vuoksi jää silloin tällöin sanattomaksi tai joutuu vaihtamaan puheenaihetta. (Because of inadequate language skills is occasionally lost for words or has to change the topic.)

Viestintä on vielä hidasta ja katkonaista, jotkin fraasit tosin ovat jo melko luontevia. (Communication is still slow and disconnected, even though some phrases are already fairly natural.)

Äidinkielen vaikutus kuuluu vielä puheessa selvästi. (The influence of the mother tongue is still clearly distinguishable in speech.)

Selviytyy hyvin arkielämän puhetilanteissa ja kohtalaisesti myös rutiininomaisissa työtilanteissa. (Manages well in everyday speaking situations and also moderately well in routine work situations.)

Joutuu vain harvoin jättämään jonkin asian sanomatta tai käyttämään paljon aikaa asiansa ilmaisemiseen. (Is only seldom obliged to leave something unsaid or to use a lot of time to express him/herself.)

Puhuu ymmärrettävästi ja melko sujuvasti. (Speaks comprehensibly and fairly fluently.)

Selviytyy ennustettavista rutiinitilanteista melko hyvin. (Manages quite well in predictable routine situations.)

Viestintä on vielä hidasta ja katkonaista. (Communication is still slow and disconnected.)

Ääntäminen saattaa olla selvästi ei-kohdekielenomaista. (Pronunciation may clearly deviate from that of the target language.)

Osallistuu keskusteluun sujuvasti, laajentaa aihetta valitsemaansa suuntaan ja ottaa huomioon toiset keskustelijat. (Takes fluently part in the discussion, expands the topic to a desired direction, and takes other participants into account.)

Perustelee ja ratkoo ongelmia kielen avulla. (Motivates and solves problems by means of language.)

Vaativimmissa rakenteissa, oudoissa sanoissa sekä yllättävissä ammatillisissa ilmauksissa on selkeitä hankaluuksia. (Clear problems in the more demanding structures, unfamiliar words, and unexpected work-related expressions.)

Osallistuu keskusteluun aktiivisesti mutta kielellisesti puheen taso on vaihtelevaa. (Participates actively in the discussion but but the competence level is variable.)

Perustelee mielipiteensä ja kyselee toisilta sekä osoittaa suullisin ilmauksin aktiivista kuuntelua. (Motivates his/her opinion, asks others questions as well as demonstrates active listening via oral expressions.)

Osaa käyttää jonkin verran ammattisanastoa. (Can use field-specific vocabulary to a degree.)

Kielenkäyttö on selkeää, hyvää ja kohteliasta sekä asiakaspalvelutilanteeseen sopivaa. (Use of language is clear, good, and polite as well as suited to the customer service situation.)

Kielen perusrakenteet on suhteellisen hyvin hallussa ja sanasto tilanteeseen sopivaa. (Linguistic structures are relatively well mastered and vocabulary appropriate to the situation.)

Muiden kielten vaikutusta saattaa esiintyä jonkun verran. (Influence (interference?) from other languages may occur to some extent.)

Tavoitteena tyytyväinen asiakas, jolle jää myönteinen mielikuva ostotapahtumasta. (The aim is a satisfied customer who gets a positive impression of the purchasing event.)

Opiskelija selviytyy tavanomaisista puhelinviesteistä ja osaa riittävällä kielitaidolla palvella soittajaa. (The student manages routine phone messages and has sufficient language skills to serve the caller.)

Hän osaa numerot, vaikka pientä epävarmuutta viestin vastaanottamisessa saattaa esiintyä. (Knows the numbers even though some hesitation may occur in receiving the message.)

Kielenkäyttö on selkeää, hyvää ja tutkinnon suorittaja osaa englannin kielen kohteliaan fraseologian käytön. (Use of language is clear and good, and the examinee knows how to use polite phraseology in English.)

Kielen perusrakenteet on suhteellisen hyvin hallussa ja sanasto tilanteeseen sopivaa. (Basic linguistic structures are relatively well mastered and the vocabulary suitable for the situation.)

Muiden kielten vaikutusta saattaa esiintyä jonkun verran. (Some interference from other languages may occur to a degree.)

Opiskelija suoriutuu hyvin tavanomaisesta liike-elämän asiakaspalvelutilanteesta. (The student gets on well in a routine customer service situation.)

Kielenkäyttö on melko pelkistettyä/ yksinkertaista, mutta riittävän sujuvaa / selkeää palvelutilanteesta selviytymiseen. (Use of language is fairly simple but fluent / clear enough for coping with a service situation.)

Kielen tuottaminen saattaa aiheuttaa vaikeuksia, mutta opiskelija osaa palvella asiakasta ostotilanteessa, vaikkakin hieman kangerrellen. (Production of language may cause problems, but the student is able

to serve a customer in a purchasing situation even though with some faltering.)

Väärinkäsityksiä ei synny ja asiakkaalle jää myönteinen kuva tapahtumasta. (No misunderstandings occur and the customer gets a positive impression of the event.)

Hän ymmärtää hidasta ja selkeää puhetta sekä osaa riittävällä kielitaidolla vastaanottaa nimiä ja numeroita ilman väärinkäsityksiä. (Understands slow and clear speech and has sufficient language skills to get names and numbers without misunderstandings.)

Kielenkäyttö on melko pelkistettyä, mutta riittävän sujuvaa palvelutilanteesta selviämiseen. (Use of language is fairly simplified but fluent enough to get on with a service encounter.)

Kielen tuottaminen saattaa aiheuttaa vaikeuksia ja siksi englannin kielen kohteliaisuudet jäävät vähemmälle. (Production of language may cause difficulties and therefore English compliments may remain rare.)

Opiskelija suoriutuu tilanteesta hieman kangerrellen, mutta väärinkäsityksiä ei synny ja tilanteesta jää myönteinen vaikutelma vierailijalle. (The student manages the situation with some hesitation but no misunderstandings occur, and the visitor gets a positive impression of the situation.)

Hallitsee perussanaston siten, että osaa toimia hyvin oman työyhteisönsä tavallisimmissa tilanteissa. (Masters basic vocabulary to such a degree that can function well in the most familiar work community situations.)

Osaa kielen perussanastoa jonkin verran ja selviää oman työyhteisönsä tavallisimmissa tilanteissa. (Knows some basic vocabulary and manages in the most common situations in his/her work community.)

Osaa työskennellä äidinkielellä, toisella kotimaisella ja yhdellä vieraalla kielellä. (Can work in the mother tongue, in the second national language and in one foreign language.)

Selviytyy asiakaspalvelutilanteista myös toisella kotimaisella ja yhdellä vieraalla kielellä. (Manages in customer service situations also in the second national and one foreign language.)

TYYDYTTÄVÄ ½ (SATISFACTORY ½)

Selviytyy tutuista tilanteista myös ruotsin ja englannin kielillä. (Manages in familiar situations also in Swedish and in English.)

Osaa selviytyä tutuista tilanteista myös ruotsin ja englannin kielillä. (Can manage in familiar situations also in Swedish and in English.)

Selviää tavallisimmissa käytännön puhetilanteissa. (Manages in the most common, everyday speaking situations.)

Puhuu ymmärrettävästi, mutta kuulijalta voidaan vaatia vielä jonkin verran totuttelua. (Speaks in a comprehensible manner but the listener may be required to get used to his/her way of speaking.)

Puhe voi olla hitaahkoa, mutta epäluontevia katkoja ei enää esiinny kovin paljon. (Speech may be somewhat slow but unnatural pauses are no longer very frequent.)

Viestiessään tulee ymmärretyksi, vaikka ilmaus ei aina olekaan aivan kohde-kielen mukainen. (Communicates comprehensibly although expresses him-/herself in way that does not always completely correspond to the target language.)

Pystyy kiertämään useat kohtaamansa viestintävaikeudet. (Can get around many of the communication problems encountered.)

Viestintä voi olla vielä hyvinkin hidasta ja katkonaista. (Communication may still be very slow and disconnected.)

Kielitaidon vähäisyys rajaa paljon sitä, mitä asioita puhuja pystyy käsittelemään. (Lack of language skills limits to a great extent the topics that the speaker is able to discuss.)

Ääntäminen vaatii kuulijalta paljon totuttelua ja vaikeuttaa viestin perillemenoa. (Pronunciation requires much getting used to and makes getting through the message difficult.)

Osaa kertoa itsestään ja kuvailla elinolojaan ja liiketalouden alan työtehtäviä. (Can talk about him-/herself, describe his/her way of life and duties in the field of business.)

Pystyy kertomaan muutamalla sanalla itsestään ja työstään. (Is able to talk with a few words about him-/herself and his/her work.)

Osallistuu keskusteluun mutta ei tee vastakysymyksiä tai muuten laajenna keskustelua. (Participates in the discussion but asks no questions in return or otherwise expands the discussion.)

Pitäytyy kirjallisen osion sanastossa tai ennakolta valmistelemissaan teemoissa. (Sticks to the vocabulary of the written test task or to the topics prepared in advance.)

Ymmärtää muiden puheesta ja käyttää itse yleisimmin käytettyjä ja rutiininomaisia ilmauksia. (Understands the most frequently used and routine expressions in others people's talk and produces them him-/herself.)

Annetut tehtävät suoritettu tyydyttävästi eli 50 % maksimaalisesta onnistumisesta / maksimipisteistä. (Given tasks are performed in a satisfactory manner, that is, 50 % of the maximum scores.)

Osallistuu keskusteluun harvakseltaan ja käyttää irrallisia yleiskielen ilmauksia, joissa ei esiinny ammattisanastoa. (Participates in the discussion now and then and uses unconnected general language expressions without any field-specific vocabulary.)

Ymmärtää yksinkertaisia keskusteluja, jos vastapuoli puhuu hitaasti ja on valmis auttamaan. (Understands simple discussions if the partner speaks slowly and is ready to help.)

Tutkinnon suorittajan kielitaito riittää yksinkertaisissa tutuissa viestintätilanteissa. (Examinee's language skills are sufficient for simple, familiar communication situations.)

Kielen rakenne on hyvin puutteellista ja sanaston käyttö yksipuolista. (Structure of language is very inadequate and the use of vocabulary lacks versatility.)

Kohtelias käytös ja joidenkin tuttujen fraasien käyttö saattaa korvata heikohkon kielitaidon. (Polite behavior and the use of some familiar phrases may compensate for poor language skills.)

Tutkinnon suorittaja tulee ymmärretyksi ja asiakkaan viesti menee perille. (The examinee is understood and the customer's message gets through to him/her.)

Asiakkaalle jää myönteinen vaikutelma tilanteesta opiskelijan puutteellisesta kielitaidosta huolimatta. (The customer gets a positive impression of the situation despite the student's deficient language skills.)

Kielen tuottaminen aiheuttaa vaikeuksia siitä huolimatta, että viestit toistetaan ja puhe on hidasta. (Language production causes problems even when messages are repeated and spoken slowly.)

Numeroiden ja viestin vastaanottaminen takeltelee ja vuorovaikutus kärsii. (Reception of numbers and the message is faltering and interaction suffers.)

Viestin vastaanottaminen onnistuu auttavasti. (Reception of a message succeeds tolerably.)

Tutkinnon suorittajan kielitaito riittää yksinkertaisissa tutuissa viestintätilanteissa. (The examinee's language skills are sufficient in simple familiar communication situations.)

Kielen rakenne hyvin puutteellista, sanaston käyttö yksipuolista. (Structure of language is very inadequate, vocabulary use lacks any versatility.)

Kohtelias käytös, joidenkin tuttujen fraasien käyttö saattaa korvata heikohkon kielitaidon. (Polite behavior, use of some polite phrases may compensate for poor language skills.)

Opiskelija selviytyy tavanomaisesta liike-elämän asiakaspalvelutilanteesta. (The student manages in familiar business-related customer service situations.)

Väärinkäsityksiä ei synny, vaikka kommunikaatio on melko yksinkertaisella tasolla. (No misunderstandings occur even though communication is on a fairly basic level.)

Osaa kielen perussanastoa jonkin verran ja selviää oman työyhteisönsä tavallisimmissa tilanteissa. (Masters some basic vocabulary of the language and manages in the most common work community situations.)

Selviytyy juuri ja juuri minimitasolla eli tunnistaa ja ymmärtää esim. vieraskielisestä kirjeestä mistä on kysymys. (Just about manages on the minimum level and understands, e.g., what a letter in a foreign language is about.)

Ei välttämättä tarvitse osata tuottaa mitään itse, riittää kun osaa toimia mallin mukaan. (Does not necessarily need to produce anything him-/herself, it is enough if s/he can function in accordance with a model.)

Selviytyy yksinkertaisista asiakaspalvelutilanteista myös toisella kotimaisella ja yhdellä vieraalla kielellä. (Manages in simple customer service situations also in the second national language and one foreign language.)