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ENGLISH AS A COMMON CORPORATE LANGUAGE IN A MULTINATIONAL COMPANY:
Employees' and Managers' Experiences and Expectations During a Transfer From Local to Distributed Services

A Pro Gradu Thesis in English

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Tutkielman tarkoituksena on kartoittaa kansainvälisen suuryrityksen liiketoiminta-alueen kansainvälisen yksikön työntekijöiden kokemuksia englannin kielen käytöstä ja asenteita sen käyttöön sisäisessä viestinnässä tilanteessa, jossa englannin kieli on yhtiön virallinen kieli siirtymäkautena paikallisista yhtiön sisäisistä palveluista kansainvälisiin, hajautettuihin palveluihin. Tutkimusaineisto koostuu 105 kyselytutkimukseen vastanneen työntekijän aineistosta ja seitsemän haastatteluun osallistuneen vastaajan aineistosta.

Tutkielmassa vastataan kysymyksiin: (1) Minkälaisia kokemuksia työntekijöillä on ollut englannin kielen käytöstä työpaikallaan? (2) Minkälaisia odotuksia työntekijöillä on englannin kielen käytöstä työpaikallaan? (3) Miten yrityksen sisäisiä palveluita ja kielikoulutusta voidaan kehittää palvelemaan yhtenäistä kielipolitiikkaa?

Kyselytutkimuksessa kerättiin määrällistä ja laadullista tietoa, jota vertailtiin ja analysoitiin. Määrällinen tieto analysoitiin pääasiassa vertailevalla metodilla tarkastelemalla koko tietokantaa ja vertailemalla eri ryhmien antamia vastauksia. Kyselytutkimuksen avoimien vastauksien laadullinen tieto analysoitiin ja siitä kerättiin teemoja, joita hyödynnettiin haastattelututkimuksen kysymysten suunnittelussa. Haastattelututkimuksessa kerättiin tarkentavaa laadullista tietoa englannin kielen koulutuskokemuksista ja englannin kielen käytöstä työpaikalla sekä yrityksen palvelu- ja ongelmanratkaisujärjestelmässä.

Tutkimuksessa havaittiin, että hyvä englannin kielen kielitaito on tärkeä osa kansainvälisen yrityksen sisäistä viestintää ja erityisesti sen rooli korostuu, kun siirrytään paikallisista äidinkielellä annetuista palveluista kansainvälisiin englannin kielellä annettuihin palveluihin. Kielitaitoon liittyvissä kokemuksissa ja odotuksissa havaittiin eroja eri ikäryhmien välillä, varsinkin suhtautumisessa englannin kieleen ja sen käyttöön yhtiössä. Havaittiin myös, että monet työntekijät kokivat englannin kielen käytön eriarvoisuutta luovana tekijänä, joka rajoitti työntekijöiden mahdollisuuksia edetä urallaan ja korosti kielitaidon merkitystä verrattuna muihin työssä vaadittaviin osaamisalueisiin. Tutkimuksessa kerättiin myös tietoa yhtiön kielipolitiikkaan ja kielikoulutusohjelmaan liittyvistä kokemuksista ja havaittiin, että kielipolitiikkaa tulisi selkiyttää ja siitä pitää tiedottaa aikaisempaa enemmän. Yhtiön kielikoulutusohjelmia pitää tehostaa ja koulutusohjelmien kohderyhmiä tarkentaa.

Asiasanat: Business Communication, Common corporate language, English as a

common language, internal communication in multinational companies, MNCs,

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1. INTRODUCTION AND RESEARCH QUESTION

"The employees' and managers' experiences and expectations about English language skills in internal company communication during a transfer from local company core functions to internationally distributed services."

In today's rapidly internationalizing business world, companies that once only did business in one country can suddenly find themselves in a new, challenging situation of having substantial international assets in countries far and wide. Due to the rapid pace of today's information society, we can reach people and places in seconds, no matter where they are - in the next room or on the other side of the globe.

This new, smaller world represents many business opportunities, often in places that are geographically far from the company's old operations area. Thus many companies acquire local assets, like local companies or functions with old internal organization, to aid the internationally expanding companies in their international ventures. In the past, many companies have left these acquisitions run on their old internal structures. They were content to operate their new acquisition using the newly acquired company's local support infrastructure and time-proven techniques. This has left the new parts of the corporation semi-independent, especially in business support areas like technical support, payroll and other vital functions.

In an environment with local services, most communication was done in local languages and a common language became an issue only when the local teams interacted with teams from other countries. While language skills were important, most employees did not communicate internationally constantly, instead focusing on local business, conducted in the local language. This was an easy solution, as the local support infrastructure was already present and functioning, with people knowing what to do. Despite this ease of access there were downsides as well, mainly because these local systems were separate, individual systems each requiring their own support staff for maintenance and operation. This caused a flood of

different systems within the company each with their own needs and requirements. Thus support for this wide variety of systems was costly and often overlapping.

In the international economy that has sprung up in recent years, many companies have expanded into the growing international markets. This means that many of the clients, service providers and competitors have turned international as well, and all are facing similar situations. In the so-called "Big Business", international companies with multinational and multicultural workforces have become the norm. In days past, only relatively few companies had international presence. These companies were in a league of their own, often becoming synonymous in the consumers' minds with the cultures they were seen as representing. Coca-Cola, Toyota and Unilever are good examples of these forerunners of international business.

Modern international businesses are not necessarily as massive as the giants that dominated the international markets in the past. Even small- or medium- sized companies can nowadays become international, offering their wares or services on the international market or trying to benefit from the advantages of the modern, globalized information society that allows easier access to off-shore services, production facilities in cheaper countries and to a well-trained foreign workforce.

As the international competition intensifies and the markets demand leaner and meaner companies, new ways of streamlining business operations and cutting costs are required. One of the ways of streamlining an international company is by distributing the company's internal services to low-cost areas. This move from local services to international distributed services increases the need for a common language for use in internal communication. As the English language is the most widely spoken international language, it is often used as the language of choice in internal communications in these far-flung international companies. This shift to English can be problematic in situations with employees without the necessary language skills. There may arise many cases where neither the requester of information nor the person it is requested from has English as his first language. Therefore reaching an understanding may be difficult.

A company that utilises distributed company services, company-wide support and service infrastructures in place of the localised ones, gathers functions in distributed units that offer those services across the whole multinational organisation. This new environment forces the employees to use English in internal communication, not just in doing "business" with international clients but when they want their computer looked at or their payroll issues clarified.

The transition to international business raises many questions: Does this new environment with English as the most important language create new language skill requirements for the employees? How do they see this transformation from local languages to English in internal communication? Does the need for English language skills create new patterns of cultural domination and increase inequality in the workplace? Are there "winners" and "losers" in this new environment? Does this internal communication have an effect on customer relations; does it help or hinder the services the companies offer?

In this study I will examine how the employees and their managers see the increased language skill requirements in their work. I will also study what kind of expectations they have and what kind of experiences they have had with these new situations in regard to their English language skills.

The aim of this study is to provide information regarding language skill requirements in a transfer situation from local services to distributed global services by examining an organisation that has already started the transition. The company's own issues regarding internal communication in English and the English language skills that are required for this are studied. The third aim of the study is to find out if any particular groups of employees or managers have particularly good or bad experiences with the move to distributed global services.

The study will also gather information about the employees' and managers' expectations on this new situation. Do they see the move as a genuine effort to improve understanding within the company or just a blatant attempt to cut costs and please shareholders on the short term? Are language skills the key to easing the transfer and creating a healthy internal communication network that can convey what

it wants efficiently across the organization without compromising internal services, expansion strategy or the bond of trust between the managers and employees?

1.1. Company A: Background

The information in this section has been acquired from Company A's annual reports from the years 1999-2007 and from the company's website.

Company A was created in the late 1990's by a merger of equals between a Finnish IT-company and a Swedish one. The company has been an international one throughout its whole lifespan as a merged company. After the merger Company A has expanded internationally, acquiring and founding assets and functions in many other countries as well.

Before the merger, both the Swedish and the Finnish partners were mainly focused on domestic markets, providing IT-support and services to national institutions, the local banking establishment and companies. Both partner companies were major players on their respective domestic markets but possessed only little in international assets. These limited international efforts were mainly concerned with providing support for other Swedish or Finnish firms at their international sites. This changed dramatically after the merger as the company started forging a new strategy for international business.

This new business strategy involved a leap into the opening European markets that the emergent EU was offering and into the emerging Eastern European markets which offered a steady supply of well-trained cheap professionals.

The official language within the company is English, but due to the company's international nature many local languages are used in communication on local level as well. These languages include but are not limited to Finnish, Swedish, Czech and Latvian.

In addition to a variety of languages used inside the corporation it also has many overlaps in its internal services and functions usually as a result of company

acquisitions and mergers. To reduce this overlap and to cut costs, the company has started an aggressive program to focus and outsource functions and services to locations that handle such services in one place. This program is going to continue and research is needed on experiences and knowledge gained during this program and to ease further changes. In this study I will examine the English language skills aspect of these experiences.

Company A is one of the European market leaders in its field and focuses on providing various IT-solutions and services to various other corporations and organizations. It operates globally, but most of its activities are focused in Europe. The company is also pursuing an active expansion program in other areas of the world, like China and India.

In Company A, some of the company's internal services have been distributed internationally into focused units that provide the services in question for the entire business unit instead of just providing them for the local unit. This is mainly due to effectiveness and costs but also to the fact that a growing number of the business units' workgroups are international in nature with members from various countries connected through long-distance communication.

Company A has pursued an aggressive policy of international service distribution since the beginning of the 21st century and has transferred some of its core functions to low-cost areas. The experiences have been mostly positive but some major problem issues have been highlighted in the process. The study will map out the issues concerning the English language skills and tries to offer help solving them.

The business unit in which the research was conducted is dedicated to providing information processing and network services for customers' communication and information needs. Within the business unit, the study was specifically targeted at a management unit responsible for the unit's international operations.

The company itself has approximately 17000 employees, with some 2200 working in the business unit that was part of the research. The international operations' unit has approximately 1300 employees.

The international operative unit has functions in Finland, Sweden and the Czech Republic. A considerable part of the employees within the unit work with clients whose operations are not within the boundaries of the employees' own country. A growing number of the employees work in international workgroups, with co-workers from other countries.

In the next section, I will discuss theories on sociolinguistics, business communication, intercultural business communication competence (IBCC) and language attitudes as background to the present study. I will discuss English as a world language and explain the key concepts of the study. I will also take a look at previous research that has been conducted in this field.

2. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

This is a sociolinguistic study, but since it is mainly focused on international and intercultural communication within a business organization, it also studies intercultural business communication competence and business communication. The study also touches language attitude studies, but as the main focus is mapping out attitudes toward language skills instead of language itself, it cannot be fully regarded as research on language attitudes. English as an international business language is also looked into.

2.1. Applied Sociolinguistics

Downes (1998: 9) defines sociolinguistics in the following way:

> Sociolinguistics is that branch of linguistics which studies just properties of language and languages that require reference to social, including contextual, factors in their explanation.

Sociolinguistics studies the effects of societies on language and vice versa. These societies can range from large ones like countries or cultures to small ones like individual families and workgroups. All of these societies are interconnected and often overlapping and active participation in them requires exchange of codes, pieces of information deciphered by the common values and factors that connect the participants to each other.

In business organisations this can manifest in many ways, for example, as internal jargons that form within the communities in the company (Smith and Mounter 2005: 98). These jargons ease internal communication by providing a common lexicon for those involved, but also make it more difficult for outsiders to understand what is being communicated. In a big company this can be a problem as this kind of "private vocabulary" can form in smaller societies within the company and make internal communication between different units more difficult. This is especially possible in a multinational, international company with people working in many countries divided by culture and geographic distance (Smith and Mounter 2005: 98).

In an international organisation with operations in a large number of countries, divided by national and cultural borders and large distances, effective internal communication can be difficult to achieve. According to Downes (1998) people are more comfortable communicating with people close to them in distance, culture and appearance. With a large array of different cultures and people in a large international organisation, there is a tangible risk of clique-formation (Elron, Shamir and Ben-Ari 1999: 75). This can hinder the full utilization of the potential well functioning internal communication system.

One of the ways a multinational company can improve its internal communication is by adopting a common corporate language (Marchen-Piekkari et al. 1999); this is aimed at equalizing employees and providing a common medium of communication. A common corporate language promotes one language over the others. This adoption also has an effect on the groups inside the company who are not skilled in the language, reducing their power and usually creating ill feelings toward the common language. Welch et al. (2001) have studied marketing texts used by large, multinational companies and came to the conclusion that imposing a common corporate language may hinder or alter information.

This study has an applied sociolinguistics facet to it, as it aims to provide usable knowledge and solutions for the company the study is conducted in. This information will also be useful to other companies considering or already implementing international distributed services.

2.2. Business Communication

Business Communication is a general field of research that studies all forms of communication used in conducting business (Ahva and Yli-Panula 1995, Hartley 2002). According to Reinsch (1996: 28) business communication can be defined as:

> The study of the use, adaptation and creation of languages, symbols and signs to conduct activities that satisfy human needs and wants by providing goods and services for private profit.

Thus, business communication is not just limited to the study of direct communication, but it also covers non-verbal communication and language attitudes in the business context.

Business communication has been studied from many perspectives and in many situations. Kalla (2006) has studied internal communication as an integrated field. She reports that internal business communication can be viewed as a single, integrated field of study that encompasses managerial communication, enterprise communication and others.

Business communication in intercultural situations has been studied by for example Clausen (2006), who studied business communication between Danish and Japanese companies. Clausen discusses the differences in Japanese and Danish cultures and their effects on communication in business situations. According to Clausen, cultural differences must be taken into account in business situations and cultural differences can be seen for example in dedication to the company and in situations where social contacts outside the working place are concerned.

Tourish and Hargie (2004) and Mendenhall et al. (2007) have collected various cases and articles concerning a variety of business communication issues, for example international human resource management and the impact of information technology in cross-border communication. Both publications highlight the wide variety of issues present in business communication and offer insights into ways of handling international business communication in today's internationalizing world.

In Tourish and Hargie's (2004) book the focus is on organizational communication. The subjects discussed include trust in organizational communication, communication about uncertainty within the organisation, communication in crisis situations, communication in a multicultural organisation and ethics in organisational communication.

Mendenhall et al. (2007) have collected various case studies and readings on international human resource management. The focus of the collection is on HRM

(human resource management) and communication in situations where the communicators represent different cultures within an international, multicultural company. Mendenhall et al. offer various cases for examination, focusing on the effect of cultural differences that might affect the communication process. The running theme in the collection is that cultural differences and differences in knowledge (for example language skills) should be taken into account in international companies. The cases and readings study different situations where differing cultural backgrounds and expectations might affect communication, such as the status of expatriates in foreign work sites and the role of women in international management. Since it has a strong international communication focus, many of the cases in the collection can be considered from the point of view of Intercultural Business Communication Competence, a field of study explained below.

Charles (1998) has reviewed the state of European oral business communication studies. Charles focuses on the study of language and discourse in various business events such as sales and presentations. Charles concluded that the area was a growing field with increasing pedagogical interest and flourishing international co-operation between European and US scientists. There were, however some grey areas, such as the study of interaction between written and spoken business communication and management communication.

Louhiala-Salminen et al. (2005) studied internal email and teleconference communication within two companies formed by mergers of a Finnish and a Swedish company. They found out that Finns and Swedes regarded each other as having a different culture of communication. Finns saw themselves as efficient communicators and regarded Swedes as "wordy", while the Swedes saw Finns as needlessly terse and themselves as diplomatic and consensus seeking. Both nationalities tended to be as talkative, but in meetings their focuses were different: The Finns sought practical results and efficiency whereas the Swedes tended to negotiate and make sure everything was understood properly.

Pirjo Alatalo (2006) studied directive language use in internal communication (147 emails) in an international, intercultural company. The research showed that the email exchange participants changed their roles and moods according to their

position within the exchange structure. Any general structures within the mood structures were difficult to differentiate.

2.3. Intercultural Business Communication Competence (IBCC)

Intercultural Business Communication Competence (IBCC) studies investigate business communication in intercultural setting (Ayoko et al. in Tourish and Hargie 2004, Varner 2000). IBCC studies focus on measuring the effectiveness of communication in intercultural situations, both in internal and external business communication, by studying language and interpersonal skill competencies. IBCC is a rapidly rising field of science, as international business becomes more and more commonplace. IBCC also covers cultural differences that can hinder communication between people from different backgrounds (Ayoko et al. in Tourish and Hargie 2004).

IBCC studies are by their very nature business oriented. Their main function is to map out difficulties in international business communication and find ways of improving communication in situations where cultural differences might play a role.

In her work Lehtonen (2004) studies the importance of communication competence and language attitudes in a multinational company by interviewing 7 people in various positions within the company. Her study shows that while traditional language skills were important for the perception of good communication skills, other skills were also important for a competent communicator. Such skills were problem solving, interactional and strategic competencies.

Clausen (2006) studied intercultural organisational communication from the point of views of Japanese and Danish companies operating in Japanese markets. Clausen studied communication issues between Japanese and Danish companies and issues found within Japanese subsidiaries and branches of Danish companies. The cases highlight the importance of forming a complete array of communication competencies in order to prevent misunderstandings and to create a mutual respect

for each business partner. Cultural differences between the two nationalities and their effects on communication and business are also studied.

The present study brings new, more profound information on IBCC because it focuses on communication between cultures inside a specific business unit in a transitional phase from local services to internationally distributed services. One of the purposes of this research is to study the effects of an organisational change that forces the employees into the use of common language for basic company services. The IBCC aspect of the study focuses on this unit's internal interactions between employees of different cultural backgrounds and tries to find out their perceptions on their own and their co-workers' communication skills and competencies.

2.4. Language Attitudes

Language attitudes are the feelings people have about their own language or the languages of others (Crystal 1992). Language attitude studies explore people's attitudes toward language use. These studies usually concentrate on studying a limited group of people and their attitudes towards a specific language in a specific situation, such as attitudes of particular ethnic groups towards different languages (for example Terborg et al. 2006).

Language attitude studies are important in mapping out people's attitudes toward the languages they use. This is very important in work situations where people are forced to use a variety of languages and may feel differently about them. Some languages may seem forced upon on workers while some people regard their own language as the only "right" one to be used in all situations whether it suits others or not.

Welch et al. (2001) studied how peoples' perceptions of language might alter information flow in intercultural situations. They discovered that adopting a common corporate language might hinder or change information flows, communication and knowledge within companies by forcing a majority of employees to use non-native language in internal communication. The study also shows that a common corporate language is not an intercultural communication panacea in a company with a large number of different cultures.

The attitudes of Finnish employees towards the English language have been studied by Lehtonen (2004). She interviewed 7 employees between 30 and 40 years old in a big international company with its headquarters in Sweden. She reports that even though English was a foreign language to all employees interviewed in her study, they generally had a very positive attitude towards the language, mostly due to their perception of the language's importance in their work. Lehtonen also found that while most employees understand people without excellent language skills, some positions and jobs require a better language skill set than others.

Welch et al. (2005) reviewed the role of languages in international management processes. The roles of languages in local subsidiaries was also looked at and compared between companies with a common corporate language and companies with strong subsidiaries with local languages. Welch et al. came to the conclusion that research of this kind can considerably help companies in, for example, an international post-merger situation

Company A is in a post-merger position and is also in a process of internationalizing its functions and markets. Company A is in a position where all its employees have access to a computer and the intranet. This means that the employees are also in constant communication with each other in English. Therefore studies in companies without these kinds of over-reaching systems have limited relevance to this study.

2.5. English as a World Language

In today's international information society, English is undoubtedly the world language. While there are many languages that are spoken across national and cultural borders (for example Arabic, French, Chinese and Swedish), English is the most widely spread language in the world (Crystal 2003). According to Crystal nearly a quarter of the world's population is proficient in the English language and this proportion is rising due to the domination of Anglo-American culture. English has taken its place among the world languages of the past, becoming the international

language of business, culture, transportation and media. In this study I will consider English a world language.

English language has become synonymous with globalization with over 1.5 billion speakers, the foreign speakers of English outnumber the native speakers clearly, and marking the first time in history a language has done that (Crystal 2003). This trend has also become a badge of dubious distinction, as many view the dominance of English language in the world with disdain as Lehtonen (2004) and Crystal (2003) describe.

With the radical change in economics that has taken place over the last few decades, a large number of small domestic markets have transformed into a few large international ones (Rundh 2001). This market enlargement has been aided by the rise of the new information society that allows for instantaneous transfer of information across vast distances and provides large set of challenges and opportunities to companies that have previously dominated their small domestic markets. And as these companies expand to foreign markets they need a common language to speak with their new employees and clients and as there is usually no other common language, English becomes the medium of communication.

The widespread upsurge in English language proficiency is partly caused by the influx of American goods, services and military personnel into post WW2 Europe. It was with the American Marshall plan that most of Western Europe was rebuilt and even today American military bases remain in Germany and other European nations. American involvement in the international business world has also boosted the importance of English language (Crystal 2004). Even before WW2 English was an important language in trade due to the widespread nature of the powerful British Empire (Crystal 2004). Only after WW2 has it gained such a dominating position, replacing traditional trade languages in areas it has no history of being used as a lingua franca.

Today English has no serious contenders for its status. There are many important and internationally used languages, but most of these are only used in a few countries. For example, Chinese is widely used in business in eastern Asia but even there

English is used more frequently in business communication as more and more international companies have operations there.

In the present study, English as an international language is studied by proxy. Since Company A uses English as its official language of business and it is therefore used as an international language, the study must also acknowledge the importance of the English language as the only viable common business language in pan-European business.

This study makes a contribution to earlier studies on business communication, IBCC and language attitudes by focusing on a more restricted target group in regards to its function within the company. Unlike earlier Finnish studies on Finnish employees in multinational companies this study is more international due to its participants from other countries, namely from Sweden and the Czech Republic. This study also combines both quantitative and qualitative aspects and therefore gives a more comprehensive picture on the subject. The present study is very practical due to extensive cooperation with the company. It is aimed at being a practical aid to the company in question and to others in similar situations.

In the next chapter I will explain the methodology used in gathering information for the study.

3. METHODOLOGY

In this chapter I will describe the data gathering methodology of the study. The survey method and the themed interview method are described separately in sections.

The aim of the study was to gather information on employees' and managers' experiences and expectations on English language skills in a situation where the increase in internationally distributed services has created more demand for language skills in internal communication. The research was aimed at finding out the workers' attitudes toward the English language. Another aim was to assess whether their experiences and expectations could reveal some phenomena that could be addressed in the future. A third aim was to map out future needs for the company's language training by looking at the employees feelings, experiences and perceptions concerning it.

The study was conducted in two parts, an anonymous electronic survey and a thematic interview. This dual method of gathering information was chosen because it was perceived as the best way to gather both qualitative and quantitative data on the English language use in the company. Originally the survey was intended for gathering basic data for use in the formation of the interview, but due to the large amount of information gathered from the survey, it became the main part of the study.

3.1. Survey Methods

The international operations unit in which the study was conducted has 1333 employees in Finland, Sweden and the Czech Republic. As many as 105 of the employees from all three countries participated in the survey. Answers were received from all age groups and from all levels of the organization. Of the participants 79% were male The length of the employment ranged from 0 to 39 years. Company A doesn't collect data on unit-level distribution of gender, age or length of employment. However, the manager-level contact-person from the company estimated that the participants of the survey were a representative sample of the unit's employees. The company has employees in 24 different countries. The

proportion of Czech employees on a company level is markedly lower than among the participants of this survey.

The anonymous survey was conducted electronically through the Internet, which allowed a maximum degree of privacy for the survey participants thus encouraging free expression of opinions and thoughts. The survey contained 56 questions. The service used was Webropol (www.webropol.com), a Finnish Internet survey and data-handling service from which Company A had purchased a license to use its survey collection services. Different kinds of electronic surveys are regularly used in the company. While a considerable amount of data was gathered in the study's open questions, the nature of the survey study, which was conducted in English, might have discouraged some of the more passionate opponents of the English language use from answering it, thus eliminating some valuable input that might have shed light on the perceived negative effects of the English language use in internal communication.

The aim of the survey was to gather quantitative and qualitative data concerning the employees' and managers' background and their uses for English language skills, especially in specific situations and in distributed services. The questions (see appendix 2) were divided into six sections each focusing on a different aspect of language skills and language use in the company: background information, English language skills, distributed services, English in specific situations and OMT. OMT which stands for Operational Management Tool, is a system used in the company for reporting and troubleshooting.

It was decided early in the planning process that the purpose of this study was not to conduct a language skill test and so neither the survey nor the interview contained language skill testing material.

The survey was intended to be as little disruptive as possible within the company, and efforts were made to minimise the impact it had on the workflow of the participants. Therefore it was decided that the survey would be mainly multiple choice in nature, with a few open text questions to provide depth and a chance for the participants to give input on the subject. It was estimated that answering the survey

would take about 15 minutes and wasn't therefore an hindrance during a regular work day as all employees and managers spend a considerable part of their work time on a computer. The company approved and authorized the survey.

Survey data was collected over 21 days, with the survey available on-line. The participants were notified via an internal e-mail in a unit with operation in Finland, Sweden and the Czech Republic, and told to pass the invitation along to reach maximum coverage within the company. As the survey was anonymous, there is no way of mapping out how many received the invitation. This anonymity was instigated to make people comfortable answering questions they might otherwise feel uneasy answering, as many questions asked them to evaluate him or herself or the company. The survey received 105 participants. The survey can be seen as being representative of the unit in which it was conducted in as the unit has approximately 1300 employees.

I will now discuss each section and explain their content and purpose.

3.1.1. Background Questions

The background section maps out the background information of those who took the survey. The questions were quite standard and general, asking about the participants' age, gender, length of occupation in the company, position within the company and the country where the participant worked. The purpose of this section was to gather necessary information for cross-referencing the answers and to ease the mapping-out process of the survey questions.

3.1.2. English Language Skills

The English language skills section of the survey maps out the participants' self-perceived language skills and general attitudes. As the purpose of the study was not to conduct a rough language skill survey, the questions asked the participants' own perceptions of their skills. Questions asked in this section also were aimed at finding out the importance of the English language skills in general business communication,

as perceived by the participants. The section also maps out the amount of use of the English language skills in everyday communication. This section was focused on the language skills and usage in general.

3.1.3. Internal Communication

The internal communication section maps out attitudes and experiences of the participants about the English language and English language skills in internal communication. Most of the questions in this part were either statements on which the participants' level of agreement was studied or open text-based questions that were aimed at providing a deeper understanding about the participants' opinions and experiences about the subjects the statements cover. This section covers internal communication as a broad field and a later section (English in specific situations) maps out English language use in specific situations.

3.1.4. Distributed Services

The distributed services section of the survey mapped out the effect of the transition to distributed internal services from local internal services on the need for and the status of English language skills. The statements and questions mapped out participants' experiences and/or expectations for the English language skills in the new situation. A question also asked about general impressions of the transfer to distributed services, in order to establish a general feeling of attitude towards the system.

3.1.5. English in Specific Situations

The English in specific situations section mapped out the effects of English as an internal communication in specific situations that are common in company communication. The purpose of this section was to find out if any specific situation was particularly problematic in internal communication with English as the common language. The statements each concerned a different communication situation from written communication (email and otherwise) to spoken (face-to-face, by phone and in creative situations).

3.1.6. OMT

The OMT section of the survey mapped out if the participants used OMT (Operational Management Tool), an internal ticket-based communication tool used for both internal communication and reporting and for customer reporting and communication. The survey also asked if they used other languages than English with the system. OMT reporting was supposed to be done using only English in internal communication, as it is the official internal communication language. However, preliminary reports showed that a large part of the communication was done in other languages and it was decided that the survey would be a good opportunity to find out why.

3.1.7. Data Analysis of the Survey Study

Descriptive statistics were used to describe the features of the collected data.

The principal aim of the analysis was to collect information and to compare previous experiences on the use of the English language in internal communication, experiences and perceptions on OMT and language training, perceived language skills and language attitudes between different age groups and nationalities. After its collection, the data was classified and summarized to create a pool of usable data from which interesting and viable results were collected for further analysis. In most cases the quantitative data was collected into tables and expressed as total numbers and percentages. Qualitative data from the survey's open questions served as background for the planning of the interview study. However, some qualitative data was studied together with the sample of participants from which it originated.

3.2. The Interview Study

The interviews were conducted over a period of 3 weeks in August 2007. The participants to the interview were collected as volunteers from the survey participants. In the first call for participants, people were asked to volunteer for the interviews and a reminder was sent after two weeks. A total of 7 volunteers came

forward and the interviews were arranged. The Interview questions can be seen in Appendix A. The invitation email is in the appendix B of the study.

Most of the interviews were conducted in conference rooms and in person. One interview was conducted via a phone. As the interview was a themed one, the interview themes were provided to the participants a few days before the interviews. The participants were also given a few minutes to read through the questions before the interview and to ask any questions they might have about it.

The themed interview method was chosen because of the flexibility it offered. Themed interview is an interview with a selected set of themes that are discussed during the interview. In most themed interviews, each theme is discussed through a set of questions. However, the interview was not limited to these questions if an interesting point or issue arose. In this study most of the interviews had extra discussion, instead of being limited to a pattern of repetitive question-answer. The interviews were kept casual and comprehensiveness was placed over correct language use. This method of themed interview study is described in greater detail in a book by Hirsjärvi and Hurme (2000).

The interviews took from 20 to 40 minutes each and were conducted in English. Five of the participants were Finnish and 2 were Czech. The interviewer recorded the participant's gender before the interviews, as it was not asked on the interview template.

The questions used in the interview study were split into three themes and a section on background information (Appendix A). The themes selected were English language skills in the workplace and in internal communication, improving language skills and OMT. These themes were chosen for their relevance to the study.

Each theme had multiple questions, the number of questions in each themed section ranging from 9 to 18. In total there were 51 questions. Most of the interview questions were formulated from the survey answers that had raised some issues. In addition to the questions that had been formulated from the survey answers, there were also background questions and some questions that were deemed important by

the representatives of Company A. For example, questions pertaining to language issues in the OMT were recommended by the company.

Most of the questions that were derived from the survey study were concerned with specific cases in communication and with the status of the language training in the company. In both instances, the survey results indicated mixed attitudes in the subject and thus warranted further study. Specific cases will be discussed in the sections below.

The background questions mapped out the participants age and nationality, their position in the company and their position in the company when they started working there. Other questions mapped out the participant's skills in the English language and other languages and if they use them in their work.

The first themed part of the interview focused on the experiences and expectations the participant may have about the English language in the workplace and in internal communication. This section inquired about both the participants' experiences with English on their workplace and how they use the language there. Some questions focus on the perceived effects of the English language in internal communication and others on the experiences the participant has with other employees using English.

The purpose of this section was to find out how English is used in the company and if the use is efficient. The last two questions also mapped out the awareness about two company provided language-aid programs and the participants' experiences with them.

The second themed section of the interview was about improving English language skills. This served a double purpose: first it mapped out the participants' experiences and desires in improving their own language skills and secondly it mapped out the participant's perception of language training needs in the company.

As the improvement of the company's language training was one of the key points of the study, it was asked if the participants had used the offered programs and if the training had been, in their opinion, worth their time. The section mapped out any

positive or negative experiences the participants might have had about language training in the company and also mapped out what would be the best ways to improve the training offered.

The fourth part of the interview focused on OMT, the ticket-based troubleshooting and service application used by the company both for internal communication and for communication with some of their clients. This section was aimed at finding out if the participant used the system, if there were any language issues with it and how they regarded the official language policy of the system.

3.2.1. Data Analysis of the Interview Study

The qualitative interview study was chosen to gain further in-depth information on the themes that arose from the data gathered and analysed from the survey study and from the company's preferences. Due to the interview participants' belonging to the same business unit, the collected data is relevant and useful for the company. It is also easier to draw parallels between the participants' experiences and attitudes due to the similar situations they had encountered.

The data was collected in semi-structured, themed interviews, which were recorded and the recordings transcribed into computer text-files. All interviews were conducted in English and reported in their original language. The data was grouped and analysed according to the major interview themes, in an effort to preserve the structure used in the interview. The description of the findings was followed by the analysis of the possible backgrounds of these findings. Special attention was paid to findings that could be useful for improving the company's internal processes, encouraging positive attitudes towards the use of English as a common language and for improving the language skills and their training within the company.

Due to the fact that many interview participants shared similar experiences and views for example on the importance of the English language in their workplace and on perceptions on younger employees' language skills, also some quantitative data is reported.

In the next chapter I will report the results of the survey study.

4. RESULTS OF THE SURVEY STUDY

In this chapter I will report the results I have gathered from the survey research I conducted. In the chapter following this one I will analyze them. I will begin by reporting the survey results, dividing them into the categories I used in the survey.

4.1. Background questions and English Language Skills questions

Tables 1 and 2 show the organisational positions and the age groups of the survey participants. The survey had 105 participants from all levels of the organisation within the business unit (see table 1.) and from all age groups (see table 2.). Most of the participants were male (N= 83, 79%). The average length of employment was 8.6 years (0-39 years). Participants were from the Czech Republic (24 participants), Finland (45 participants) and Sweden (36 participants). All but two participants were not native speakers of the English language and for the majority (N= 81, 77.1%) English had been their first foreign language. A large majority (N=79, 75.9%) also had studied English language for 5 years or longer during their education.

Table 1. Organisational position

Position	N	Percent
Assistant	7	6,7%
Expert	47	44,8%
Team Leader	12	11,4%
Manager	37	35,2%

Table 2. Age groups

Age (years)	N	Percent
18-25	4	3,8%
26-30	16	15,2%
31-40	35	33,3%
41-50	31	29,5%
51-60	14	13,3%
61+	5	4,8%

All but 2 of the 105 participants felt that the English language was important in their work today. However, a majority of them (68.6%) said that the English language skills were not an issue when they had been hired into the company. This was particularly true with the older employees. Virtually all survey participants under the age of 31 thought that their English language skills had been an issue when they were hired into the company. The percentage diminishes noticeably in older participants with only 22.9% of participants between 31 and 40 years of age thinking that their English language skills had been an important issue. This percentage further drops to only 12.9% in the 41-50-age category and to 10% in participants over 51 years old.

Most participants spoke English in their work at least once a week (see table 3.) and most read or wrote English every day (see table 4.).

Table 3. Frequency of speaking English

Frequency	N	Percent
1. Never	4	3,8%
2. Once a month or less	9	8,6%
3. A few times a month	9	8,6%
4. Once a week	9	8,6%
5. Several times a week	35	33,3%
6. Every day	39	37,1%

Table 4. Frequency of writing or reading English at work

Frequency	N	Percent
1. Never	2	1,9%
2. Once a month or less	0	0,0%
3. A few times a month	6	5,7%
4. Once every week	2	1,9%
5. Several times a week	22	21,0%
6. Every day	72	68,6%

As indicated in tables 5 and 6, some variation was visible when different age categories were analyzed. Younger participants used English more often in their work. All those who were 30 years old or younger either wrote or read English at work daily, while 75% of them also spoke English daily (tables 5 and 6.). Four participants didn't speak English at work at all.

Table 5. Frequency of speaking English by age category

Age category	18-25	26-30	31-40	41-50	51-60	61+
Frequency						
1. Never	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	3 (8,6%)	0 (0%)	1 (7,1%)	0 (0%)
2. Once a month or less	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	5 (14,3%)	2 (6,5%)	1 (7,1%)	1 (20%)
3. A few times a month	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (2,9%)	6 (19,4%)	2 (14,3%)	0 (0%)
4. Once a week	0 (0%)	2 (12,5%)	3 (8,6%)	3 (9,7%)	1 (7,1%)	0 (0%)
5. Several times a week	1 (25%)	6 (37,5%)	11 (31,4%)	11 (31,4%)	5 (35,7%)	2 (40%)
6. Every day	3 (75%)	8 (50%)	12 (34,3%)	10 (32,3%)	4 (28,6%)	2 (40%)

Table 6. Frequency of writing or reading English by age category

Age category	18-25	26-30	31-40	41-50	51-60	61+
Frequency						
1. Never	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (2,9%)	0 (0%)	1 (7,1%)	0 (0%)
2. A few times a month	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (2,9%)	2 (6,5%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
3. Once every week	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (2,9%)	1 (3,2%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
4. Several times a week	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	7 (20%)	6 (19,4%)	6 (42,9%)	3 (60%)
5. Every day	4 (100%)	16 (100%)	21 (60%)	22 (71,0%)	7 (50%)	2 (40%)
6. No answer			1 (2,9%)			

As many as 77.6% of the survey participants felt confident in their English language skills. However, 22.4% of the participants did not feel confident. Unlike most other questions designed to gauge language skills and attitudes the answers to this question didn't show any differences between the age groups. The participants' estimate of their own language skills can be seen in table 7.

Table 7. Self-estimated English language skill level

Language skill level	N	Percent
Basic	5	4,8%
Novice	3	2,9%
Intermediate	56	53,3%
Advanced	39	37,1%
Native	1	1,0%

As shown in table 8, a majority (N= 60, 57.1%) of the participants had received training in the English language from the company. As many as 50.5% of the participants had also tried to improve their English language skills outside their work. However, as table 9 indicates, a majority (N=57, 54.3%) felt that the company had not given them enough training in the English language. As many as 80% of those under 31, 34.3% of those in the 31-40 age category and 64% of those who were over 40 years old had attended language training offered by the company. A substantially larger percentage of young participants aged less than 31 years felt that they had received enough language training from the company (50.9%) compared to only 38% among the older participants.

Table 8. Frequency of having received English language training from the company by age category

Age category	18-25	26-30	31-40	41-50	51-60	61+	Total
Frequency							
1. Yes	3 (75,0%)	13 (81,3%)	12 (34,3%)	18 (58,1%)	10 (71,4%)	4 (80,0%)	60 (57,1%)
2. No	1 (25,0%)	3 (18,8%)	23 (65,7%)	13 (41,9%)	4 (28,6%)	1 (20,0%)	45 (42,9%)

Table 9. Frequency of having received sufficient amount of language training from the company, in participants' opinion, by age category.

Age category	18-25	26-30	31-40	41-50	51-60	61+	Total.
Frequency							
1. Yes	4 (100,0%)	10 (62,5%)	14 (40,0%)	11 (35,5%)	6 (42,9%)	2 (40,0%)	47 (44,8%)
2. No	0 (0,0%)	6 (37,5%)	20 (57,1%)	20 (64,5%)	8 (57,1%)	3 (60,0%)	57 (54,3%)
3, No answer	0 (0,0%)	0 (0,0%)	1 (2,9%)	0 (0,0%)	0 (0,0%)	0 (0,0%)	1 (1,0%)

As many as 22 of the 105 participants had lived abroad at some point in their lives, with 9 doing so in an English speaking country.

4.2. English in Internal Communication

A total of 79 participants (75.2%) either somewhat agreed or strongly agreed that all internal communication should be unified under one language. Differences in the opinions of different age groups are reported in table 10. The table shows clearly that participants younger than 41 years old were more eager to impose strict language unification with 87,3% of them either strongly or somewhat supporting such unification compared to only 62% of the older participants.

Table 10. Opinion about internal communication language unification, divided into two age groups.

Answer	<=40 years old N (%)	40> years old N (%)	Total
1. Strongly disagree	1 (1,8%)	4 (8%)	5 (4,8%)
2. Somewhat disagree	4 (7,3%)	10 (20%)	14 (13,3%)
3. Undecided	2 (3,6%)	5 (10%)	7 (6,7%)
4. Somewhat agree	25 (45,5%)	23 (46%)	48 (45,7%)
5. Strongly agree	23 (41,8%)	8 (16%)	31 (29,5%)

Differences in opinion between younger and older employees can also be seen in attitudes towards mandatory language testing as shown in table 11, with 74,5% of the younger participants eager to impose such testing and 62,0 % of the older participants being ready to do so. A majority (68.6%, N=72) of all of the participants at least somewhat agreed that the language skill levels of all employees should be tested.

Table 11. Opinion on mandatory language testing by age category

Answer	<=40 years old	40> years old	Total
1. Strongly disagree	4 (7,3%)	1 (2,0%)	5 (4,8%)
2. Somewhat disagree	1 (1,8%)	13 (26,0%)	14 (13,3%)
3. Undecided	9 (16,4%)	5 (10,0%)	14 (13,3%)
4. Somewhat agree	29 (52,7%)	28 (56,0%)	57 (54,3%)
5. Strongly agree	12 (21,8%)	3 (6,0%)	15 (14,3%)

Almost 41% felt that the transition to the use of the English language in internal communication had made it more difficult to communicate on a general level. In the open question linked to this multiple choice question many participants pointed out that very few of Company A's employees are native speakers of English and this can create situations where some problems can arise. For example people who are afraid of making mistakes are less eager to communicate in meetings and some information may be lost in translations. Many also pointed out that despite the difficulties, as a multicultural and multilingual company, a single language is the only way of communicating effectively within Company A.

As many as 80% of the participants reported that the communication efficiency between countries had increased due to the adoption of a single language, as indicated in table 12. In the linked open question, participants answered that this transition had increased the efficiency, particularly in eliminating unnecessary translation of documents but in some cases the participants reported that they felt the management had underestimated the challenges of such transition.

Table 12. Perception of positive effect in internal communication by unified language use

Answer	N	Percent
1. Strongly disagree	2	1,9%
2. Somewhat disagree	5	4,8%
3. Undecided	14	13,3%
4. Somewhat agree	33	31,4%
5. Strongly agree	51	48,6%

On a personal communication level, 21% of the participants reported that the transition to the English language had made it more difficult for them to influence their work, 25.1% were undecided in the matter and only half of the participants reported that the transition hadn't made it more difficult for them to influence their work.

Table 13 shows that older participants felt more strongly that the transition to English language use in internal communication had made it more difficult for them to communicate. Although 32.7% of the younger participants somewhat agreed with the statement, none agreed strongly. In participants who were older than 40 years old 10% strongly felt that the transition had made communication more difficult and a further 44% agreed somewhat. A similar pattern emerged when the participants were asked if the transition to the use of English in internal communication had made it more difficult for them to influence their work. Only 10.9% of the younger (age 40 years and under) survey participants felt that it had, compared to the 32% of the older participants who felt that the transition had had a negative impact.

Table 13. Perception of increased difficulties in communication after transition to the use of English in internal communication

Answer	<=40 years old	40> years old	Total
1. Strongly disagree	12 (21,8%)	8 (16,0%)	20 (19,0%)
2. Somewhat disagree	17 (30,9%)	9 (18,0%)	26 (24,8%)
3. Undecided	8 (14,5%)	6 (12,0%)	14 (13,3%)
4. Somewhat agree	18 (32,7%)	22 (44,0%)	40 (38,1,3%)
5. Strongly agree	0 (0,0%)	5 (10,0%)	5 (4,8%)

The survey participants' opinions about the company's language skills were strongly divided (see table 14.). Only 36.2% felt that the English language skills in the company were adequate. Younger participants were more satisfied with the level of the English language skill competence of the company than the older participants. While only a fraction (2.9%) of the participants felt that they strongly agreed that the language skills in the company were adequate, a larger percentage of the younger participants felt that they could at least somewhat agree that the language skills were

adequate (41.8% of participants under 41 years of age compared to only 30% among the older participants).

Table 14. Perception of adequate skill level in English within the company

Age category	<=40 years old	40> years old	Total N (%)
Answer			
1. Strongly disagree	4 (7,3%)	9 (18,0%)	13 (12,4%)
2. Somewhat disagree	14 (25,5%)	17 (34,0%)	31 (29,5%)
3. Undecided	14 (25,5%)	9 (18,0%)	23 (21,9%)
4. Somewhat agree	21 (38,2%)	14 (28,0%)	35 (33,3%)
5. Strongly agree	2 (3,6%)	1 (2,0%)	3 (2,9%)

When asked how they would improve internal communication in the company many participants wanted more language training. Other suggestions included increased internationalisation of teams and chances to use English in a variety of situations. Some also suggested hiring professionals with good language skills. The most original suggestion was from one participant who suggested that the company should organise a company wide get-together in a large venue, for example the Globen-hall in Sweden.

4.3. Distribution of Services

As many as 51% of the survey participants' business units had transitioned to distributed services production. Most of the participants' business units had adopted the model in the last 6 years. In this section, the large number of missing answers is probably due to some participants not having experience with working with distributed services production.

As many as 72.4% of the survey participants felt that the move to distributed services production had increased the need for the English language skills (see table 15.) and

62.8% felt that it had also increased the need for internal vocabularies and dictionaries (see table 16.).

Table 15. Increased need for language competence after transition to distributed services production

Answer	N	Percent
1. Strongly disagree	2	1,9%
2. Somewhat disagree	1	1,0%
3. Undecided	18	17,1%
4. Somewhat agree	30	28,6%
5. Strongly agree	46	43,8%
6. No answer	8	7,6%

Table 16. Increased need for language aids after transition to distributed services production

Answer	N	Percent
1. Strongly disagree	2	1,9%
2. Somewhat disagree	7	6,7%
3. Undecided	20	19,0%
4. Somewhat agree	38	36,2%
5. Strongly agree	30	28,6%
6. No answer	8	7,6%

When asked about their experiences with the model, the participants reported that things had been improving steadily, but it was an ongoing process during which some employees had more trouble adjusting than others.

4.4. Communication in specific circumstances

Table 17 compiles answers from various questions on the difficulties in communication in specific circumstances.

Table 17. Perceived difficulties in specific communication circumstances

Communication circumstance		*Meetings*	*Creative situations*	*E-mail*	*Telecon-ferences*	*Access to company service*
Answer by age category						
<=40 years	*1.Strongly disagree*	8 (14,5%)	8 (14,5%)	20 (36,4%)	12 (21,8%)	25 (45,5%)
	2. Somewhat disagree	17 (30,9%)	17 (30,9%)	20 (36,4%)	18 (32,7%)	13 (23,6%)
	3. Undecided	7 (12,7%)	9 (16,4%)	5 (9,1%)	14 (25,5%)	7 (12,7%)
	4. Somewhat agree	22 (40,0%)	20 (36,4%)	9 (16,4%)	18 (32,7%)	10 (18,2%)
	5. Strongly agree	1 (1,8%)	1 (1,8%)	0 (0,0%)	2 (3,6%)	0 (0,0%)
	6. No answer	0 (0,0%)	0 (0,0%)	1 (1,8%)	0 (0,0%)	0 (0,0%)
41>	*1.Strongly disagree*	7 (14,0%)	3 (6.0%)	13 (26,0%)	8 (16,0%)	11 (22,0%)
	2. Somewhat disagree	12 (24,0%)	11 (22%)	14 (28,0%)	11 (22,0%)	10 (20,0%)
	3. Undecided	6 (12,0%)	6 (12,0%)	9 (18,0%)	7 (14,0%)	11 (22,0%)
	4. Somewhat agree	22 (44,0%)	25 (50%)	12 (24,0%)	15 (30,0%)	15 (30,0%)
	5. Strongly agree	3 (6,0%)	5 (10,0%)	2 (4,0%)	9 (18,0%)	2 (1,9%)
	6. No answer	0 (0,0 %)	0 (0,0%)	0 (0,0%)	0 (0.0%)	1 (2,0%)
Total	*1.Strongly disagree*	15 (14,3%)	11 (10,5%)	33 (31,4%)	20 (19,0%)	36 (34,3%)
	2. Somewhat disagree	29 (27,6%)	28 (26,7%)	34 (32,4%)	29 (27,6%)	23 (21,9%)
	3. Undecided	13 (12,4%)	15 (14,3%)	14 (13,3%)	21 (20,0%)	18 (17,1%)
	4. Somewhat agree	44 (41,9%)	45 (42,9%)	34 (32,4%)	24 (22,9%)	25 (23,8%)
	5. Strongly agree	4 (3,8%)	6 (5,7%)	2 (1,9%)	11 (10,5%)	2 (1,9%)
	6. No answer	0 (0,0%)	0 (0,0%)	1 (1,0%)	0 (0,0%)	1 (1,0%)

Nearly half (45.7%) of the survey participants felt that the use of the English language in meetings has made it more difficult for them to follow the discussion (see table 17.). However, 58.1% (N= 61) also felt that the use of English hadn't lowered their participation in meetings or other face-to-face communication situations (information not shown in table 17.). In the open question connected to these multiple choice questions, some participants reported that they sometimes felt shy in international face-to-face meetings and felt that their language skills were not adequate. However, some Czech participants felt that the transition had allowed them to participate in meetings that would otherwise be exclusive to Finnish or Swedish employees.

As many as 48.8% of the participants felt that the use of English had made work in creative situations more difficult (see table 17.). In the open question linked to this question, some participants explained that common problems in creative situations include: the participants having different expressions and nuances, shyness using a foreign language and the fear of losing details in communication.

Some 34.3% of survey participants felt that English use had made e-mail communication more difficult (see table 17.). The participants felt that written English was easier to understand and produce than spoken English. Also, due to its slower and non-instantaneous nature written communication allows people to use aids like dictionaries more easily than in a verbal communication situation, some participants reported.

In the opinion of 56.2% (N= 59) of the participants, the use of English in internal company communication had not made other forms of written communication more difficult, with 13.3% being undecided on the matter (information not shown in table 17.).

According to 25,7% of the participants, the use of the English language had made company services less accessible, with 17.1% being undecided on the matter and 56.2% of the participants not seeing any change or eased access to them (see table 17.). In the open question linked to this question, some participants reported that the

transition had in fact, made the company services more accessible by giving them access to services formerly available only in local languages.

As many as 46.6% of the participants felt that the use of the English language had not made it more difficult to participate in teleconferences and other similar real-time activities without direct face-to-face contact, with 20% being undecided on the matter and 33.4% reporting increased difficulty (see table 17.). Many participants reported that the lack of face-to-face interaction made these situations more difficult than face-to-face communication due to the participants' inability to see the others and read their body language. Some also reported that the language skills needed for large teleconferences were higher than for simple meetings and phone conversations due to the overlap in people's dialog.

As shown in table 17, there were some differences in the way younger and older participants felt about communication in specific situations. In "traditional" face-to-face meetings, the difference in opinion wasn't significant, roughly 45% of the participants in all age groups felt that the transition to the English language in internal communication had made it somewhat more difficult to for them follow the meetings and 22% reported that it had reduced their participation in them. In situations where the contact was real-time but without face-to-face contact, like in teleconferences, a larger portion (48,0% compared to only 36,3% of the younger participants) of the older participants felt that the transition to the use of English had made the communication situations more difficult to participate.

Table 17 also shows differences in experiences in creative situations. As many as 60% of the older participants (over 40 years old) reported that the transition to the English language had caused them difficulties in creative situations. The corresponding figure with younger participants was only 38.2%. As many as 28% of the older (over 40 years old) participants reported that the use of English in internal communication had made communication via e-mail more difficult. This is a high percentage compared to the 16.4% of the younger participants who felt the same way.

In other forms of written communication 40% (N= 20) of the older participants felt that the transition to English had made it more difficult while only 20% (N= 11) of the younger participants reported these problems (information not shown in table 17.). When the survey participants were asked if the transition to the use of English had made it more difficult to use any important company services, 31,9% of the over 40 year old participants replied that it had, while only 18.2% of the younger participants thought so, as shown in table 17.

4.5. OMT

As many as 90.4% of the survey participants used OMT, 64% of whom used it daily.

Of the participants who used OMT, 64.6% used only the English language with it. Other languages were used in situations where the customers required them to be used. However, some participants reported that they used their native language in OMT in other situations as well, mainly due to others also using it or because they felt more comfortable writing in the necessary text-fields with the same language as used by the client.

In the opinion of 58.9% of the participants, pre-created forms and templates wouldn't help them in using OMT. As many as 69.1% thought that neither would OMT-specific language training help them.

5. ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF THE SURVEY

In this chapter I will analyse the results presented in the previous chapter and compile the pertinent data. The data collected in the present study is estimated to be representative of the business unit's employees' opinions.

In the survey study, two distinct phenomena became apparent: "the generation gap" and the perceived unfairness in language matters. Both phenomena will be discussed in a separate section, as will the implications of each phenomenon.

Similar studies of language skills, experiences and attitudes in a multinational company in a transitional phase to distributed international services with participants from several nationalities were unavailable. This makes the results of the study unique.

5.1. "The Generation Gap"

There were some differences in the attitudes of the younger and the older employees towards the English language. This difference was also apparent with the people who had been hired recently into the company compared to the people who had worked there longer. This is at least partly caused by the fact that the majority of the participants hired in the last five years have also belonged to younger age categories.

The survey offers an interesting timeline in the change of values in this workplace. According to the survey, virtually all participants under the age of 31 thought that English language skills had been an issue when they were hired into the company. The percentage diminishes noticeably in older participants with only 22.9% in the age group of 31 to 40 years of age. This percentage further drops to only 12.9% in the 41-50-age category and to 10% in participants older than 51 years.

According to the survey young people encountered English, both spoken and written, more frequently than the older ones. This was especially true with the Finnish participants with whom the difference between old and young participants' encounters with English were especially large.

One aspect of the generation gap was the participants' perception on the amount of language training offered to the employees in the company: while a majority of employees in the youngest and oldest age groups had attended language training, only one third of the middle aged employees (aged 31-40) had done so. A substantially larger percentage of the young participants felt that they had received enough language training from the company (50.9%) compared to only 38% among the older participants. The low participation numbers among the middle-aged employees can be seen as an effect of differences in opinion about the English language. The middle-aged employees do not appear to regard language training as such a crucial part of their work, maybe due to their position as experts and assistants whereas older participants with their managerial positions have a stronger view on the importance of language training. The youngest participants may have a more open view towards international communication and they also may have a greater respect for continued language education. Another possibility is that the company prefers training younger employees, due to the longer potential term of usability.

The most obvious example of the "generation gap" was apparent in the question concerning attitudes towards all internal communication being conducted in one language. With nearly 90% of the younger participants (aged under 41 years) wanting to use only one language in internal communication, the corresponding percentage with older participants was only 62%.

The older participants also felt that the transition to English in internal communication had made it more difficult to communicate. A similar pattern emerged when the participants were asked if the transition to the use of the English language in the internal language had made it more difficult for them to influence their work. Only 10.9% of the younger (age 40 years and under) survey participants shared this view, compared to 32% among the older participants.

Only a small fraction of all participants estimated the company language skills as adequate without fail. This reflects the company's ongoing process of transition from a collection of local companies into a global one. The opinions about the company's language skills were strongly divided between different age groups. Younger

participants were more satisfied with the level of English language competence than the older participants. This may be due to the younger employees having better language skills, using English more often and working in intercultural teams. In managerial positions, the language skill demands can be higher and the tasks more complicated, for example reading intricate agreements and treaties with many details.

There were some differences in the way the younger and the older participants felt about the specific situations where English was used. In "traditional" face-to-face meetings, the difference in opinion wasn't significant. In situations where the contact was real-time but without face-to-face contact, like in teleconferences, a significantly larger proportion of the older participants felt that the transition to the use of English had made the communication situations more difficult to participate.

In creative situations, 60% percent of over 40-years-old-participants reported that the transition to the English language had made it more difficult to participate. The corresponding percentage with the younger participants was only 38.2. This can be due to the older participants' greater insecurity about their own language skills. Older participants also experienced written communication and the use of important company services as more difficult than their younger counterparts did.

This phenomenon of age related differences in language attitudes is an example of a change in language attitudes and in the sociolinguistic environment that affects the modern business world. The English language has increased its importance over the last decades and it has established a dominant position in both the academic world and in the European business scene. With employees who were born shortly after the Second World War, studying English was not necessarily the most natural choice. Language studies weren't as integral to the education as they are in the modern society, at least in Finland. This changed during the '70s with the new study plans and general modernization of curricula.

The dominance of English as the cornerstone language of European business was solidified with the fall of the iron curtain and the rise of the open markets and the internationalization of European business that followed (Crystal 2004). The rapid pace of technological innovation, especially the rapid growth of the Internet, in

which English has become the world language, has had a very large effect on the European business scene, especially in the IT-business. This changing world and the academic adaptation to it has had a notable effect on the attitudes of the younger people. These changes are clearly visible in the results of this study.

Younger people in general have more positive attitudes towards foreign languages. The negative attitudes among the older employees may be hard to repair. Language training, positive feedback and clear guidelines to avoid confusion and negative experiences might remedy the situation. Older people tend to require more time and training to learn new skills. According to this research older employees are also more insecure about their language skills. Therefore, special smaller training groups for older employees should be considered as viable option. The older employees' insecurity in communication with another language can be a threat to a successful internationalization of the company, unless it is acknowledged and taken into account.

Language skills and attitudes towards English as a company language should be a key factor when hiring new workforce. A new employee with a negative attitude towards English might hinder the work of his entire team by refusing to conduct internal communication in accordance with the official policy. The issues of language preference and small group jargons are looked into with more detail in the next chapter.

5.2. Perceived Unfairness in Language Matters

Some participants in the study felt that the current state of language use in the company was unfair towards some groups within the company. Some of the employees who had been in the company for a long time felt that the adoption of English as a corporate language was unfair towards them, other perceived unfairness stemmed from mixed language policy interpretation and from the inherent difficulties in using a foreign language in important situations.

A substantial number of survey participants felt that the transition to the English language in internal corporate communication had limited their capabilities in the

workplace or limited their access to the company services. To many participants, the transition to the use of English was therefore an obstacle.

To some employees, the transition to English was a threat to their careers as people with a better grasp of the language might get picked over people with a better set of skills for positions they applied for. To these employees English language skills were tools they didn't think they'd need in the beginning of their careers. English language skills had now become, in their mind, more important than the actual skills required for many key positions. However, most participants in the survey did concur that language skills, especially English, were necessary in the modern workplace, especially in an international corporation in which internationalization is seen as one of the key routes to success.

The negative effect of the employees' resistance to the official language policy can be quite wide ranging. Project timetables and success can be threatened without effective internal communication, especially in situations where equal access to necessary information is not available to all employees working on a project. Due to language barriers, friction can build up between employees who feel they are not treated equally causing project slow-down and decreased morale which can manifest in further problems. Since a growing number of teams within the company are international and multicultural, a common language is the only way to ensure smooth communication within these teams and improve the effectiveness of international teams.

Some participants felt that the company's official language policy was not followed and local languages, especially Finnish and to a lesser extent Swedish, were used in situations that excluded or hindered them. In their opinion, this was a big problem especially in written communication and in some cases in the OMT system. In the company e-mail, where long chains of communication are forwarded and replied to, the communication sometimes occurs with the local language of the original participants. This in itself isn't a problem, but if a new participant is added later, who doesn't read the language in which the original exchange has taken place, he cannot effectively participate in the communication and has to ask for translations of the key

points of the previous exchange. Some participants reported that this kind of communication occurred from time to time.

Solutions to the perceived inequality in language practises include enforcement of the language rules and a comprehensive company vocabulary. While very few employees want to be seen as informants for the management reporting their co-workers' mistakes, the enforcement of the existing language policy in multicultural communication situations might help people feel that they are among equals. According to the collected material, meetings and teleconferences are good examples of communicative situations where the rules are enforced; the problematic situations quoted by the participants mostly involve situations with written material. Writing every company e-mail in English, especially if it is only for people in the same location, might be useless, but in situations where there is a chance that the text is accessed by an employee in a foreign location, it should be written exclusively in English. Most of the complaints about this kind of problems were related to the OMT-system and most participants who used OMT acknowledged that mixed languages were sometimes a problem. It should also be noted that most reported language issues in OMT were connected to tickets where reports and requests from clients arrived in Finnish or Swedish and the company was contractually required to answer in the same language. On these tickets, some survey participants reported that it was much easier to use Finnish or Swedish in all text-fields of the tickets, even though the language policy stated that the fields intended for internal communication should be filled out in English.

Another factor in the phenomenon is the effects of tradition in the language identities of the language users. For some of the employees who have been in the company for a long time, the rapid pace of change has increased the need for cross-cultural and multilingual communication skills. This phenomenon is interconnected to the "generation gap"-phenomenon described earlier in this chapter. Both phenomena contributed to the decision to specifically study the importance of language training in the interview study, which will be reported in the next chapter.

6. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION OF THE INTERVIEW STUDY

In this chapter I will report and discuss the most important results of the interview study. Each interview theme will be discussed separately.

The purpose of the interview part of the study was to gather further information on issues that came up in the survey. While the survey offered a large amount of quantitative and some useful qualitative data, the aim of the interview was to gather further qualitative data like personal experiences and first hand impressions on more specific issues, thus providing a deeper view into the issues studied.

All interviews were conducted in English and the examples below are reproduced in their original language.

6.1. Background Questions

Two of the participants were women and 5 were men. The participants' ages ranged from their late twenties to their late fifties. Two of them were experts, three were team leaders and two were managers. Two of the participants were from the Czech republic while the rest were from Finland. All had been in the company for over a year, with the longest stint being over twenty years. None of the participants were native speakers of English and for all but one it had been their first foreign language. All Finnish participants spoke at least some Swedish and one other language. Both Czech participants also spoke other foreign languages.

All participants rated their own English language skills above average.

6.2. English Language Skills in the Workplace and in Internal Communication

All participants felt that English was very important for their work in the company and used English daily or at least almost daily. All participants with international co-workers also used English for socialization in the workplace.

Although the majority of people interviewed belonged to the older age group, they all said that younger people had better language skills than some of the older employees and that younger people were much more positive towards the English language and its widespread use in the company. The participants perceived the younger people as having more awareness of intercultural differences in communication and also having better language skills.

The participants also thought that while the attitudes across the age spectrum were changing, younger people were more adaptable. This is due to the younger generation's wider exposure to the English language outside the workplace, socially and during their education.

The participants used spoken English in a variety of situations including meetings, presentations, communicating with clients and in internal communication. Written English was used for reporting, e-mails (both internally and externally) and in producing services for customers and co-workers.

All but one participant felt that problems with spoken communication were greater than in written communication. All agreed that they could manage with their current language skills in their work environment. All but two used English outside their work, when travelling, watching television or when reading books. Two interview participants also had English-speaking friends.

All but one interview participant felt that the English language skills in the company were adequate for internal communication. However one participant was initially shocked with the low skill level in the company. All participants agreed that the situation was getting gradually better as the increased use of English in the company had lowered the employees' threshold of using the language comfortably. New employees usually had better English language skills than long-time veterans but were sometimes more timid in using them.

All participants reported that understanding written communication in a foreign language is easier than in spoken language. The participants had adapted to the situation. For example, one participant had started using more e-mail and instant

messaging in internal communication and sometimes asked co-workers to write them e-mail if communicating via phone was too difficult, as highlighted in the following example:

I = Are there any particular problems with English or with internal communication? How would, how would you solve them?
F1= I don't know if there are any specific problems. If you can't understand what the other guy is saying on the phone, then you, I, ask him to send email, then it's much more easier to try to understand them and what we are trying to say.
I = So writing is easier?
F1 = yeah, It makes clear what the purpose is. What the other one wants me to do or what's the problem. It might be easier when it's written.

The interviews also showed differences in the ways different nationalities in the work community spoke and wrote English. For example, Finnish participants felt that, in their opinion, Swedish co-workers had better pronunciation skills than other nationalities. One particular problem in intercultural communication was the figures of speech that were unique to each country and that did not translate well into English.

For the Finnish participants most of the internal services had originally been offered in Finnish. As the distributed services program had not been completed, most still received some services in Finnish. The transition from services offered in Finnish to services being offered in English hadn't been particularly problematic.

All participants had encountered problems with internal English communication, which they attributed to low language skill levels and negative attitudes towards using English. For the older participants the increased need of the English language skills had been unexpected. Also, four interview participants felt some employees were in a position where their resistance to constant English use was hindering internal communication. According to three of the participants, resistance to the English language use happened from time to time with the tickets in the OMT-system where some employees had difficulties following the official language policies.

Only three participants were aware that an official company vocabulary existed on the intranet. However, due to the age of the program and the lack of knowledge

about it, it wasn't very useful. In the absence of an official terminology, a local jargon had developed in some groups.

The creation of functional and coherent "Company English", a uniform company vocabulary of most relevant terms with an official stamp of approval, was considered to be useful in internal communication. Most pertinent terminology, especially technical terminology and jargon was considered to be useful to have available as a common list.

All but one participant were satisfied with the NetMot electronic dictionary available on the Company A's intranet. One participant considered the program too generic and that sometimes the terms listed as the best alternatives for words were incorrect. In his opinion, most of these cases stemmed from the fact that some Finnish terms, when inputted into NetMot, resulted in multiple choices for the English equivalent term and vice versa and inexperienced users would pick the first, sometimes incorrect alternative.

I: Can you give my an example of your experiences with NetMot?
F2: Sometimes you can see that someone has used Netmot and simply chosen the first option… you know… a word that can mean many things but is not correct for that situation.

In most cases these jargons were not considered a very large obstacle; a quick e-mail or a phone call solves the problem. However, in a multinational environment like the Company A, some people may assume that certain phrases or terms mean different things based on their native vocabulary. These "false friends" can be disastrous when something very precise is described or when the misunderstanding leads to wrong responses to a problem. A comprehensive company vocabulary might be an answer for this problem as it would equalize the speakers and eliminate the need for jargons.

6.3. Improving Language Skills

One of the focus points of the study was the participants' feelings and experiences with the company's language training programs and ways to improve the language skills.

Five participants had tried to improve their language skills outside of work, by reading English literature, watching English language television and participating in language courses. Four of the participants had attended a language course offered by the company but only two of them had actually finished the course. The participants who had dropped out stated priorities as the main reason for quitting the course. According to the participants, language courses offered during work hours are not attractive due to the fact that there is almost always something more important and urgent work to do. This prioritization can be seen in the excerpt below.

I = Have you participated in language training offered by the company? Did you complete the training?
F1 = Yes, actually, almost five years ago, I participated in one training and…but then I was so heavy…my workload was so heavy that. So I couldn't participate in every lesson but I did complete the training and my level was first something and after it was little bit better.

According to the interview participants, information about language training was scarce and available training was not well advertised. This pattern may be suggestive of the priorities in the company in regard to language training; some employees and their managers do not rank improvement of language skills high enough.

All seven participants felt that there should be language training available to employees who needed it. Language training in small groups focusing on specific problems was preferred. It was also noted that basic "class-room style" classes with a broader focus could be useful for employees with more limited language skills.

All participants agreed that at least new employees should be tested for their language proficiency and a competent, standardized level of language skills should be required. All employees should be able to understand both written and spoken English and be able to write and speak the language with at least some proficiency.

I= In your opinion, should all new employees be tested for their language skills. Especially English language skills?
F1= Actually, nowadays, I think they should be tested.
I= Should language skill levels in the company be mapped out among the existing employees? Maybe through a survey that maps out how well people speak?

F1= I know that kind of thing has been done. Well, it depends on what do you do in your position. If you are in one where you don't need that much, so why do it? But it might be useful for some, who you should know what's the level in their situation.
I= What should be the minimum level of English language proficiency for employees or managers?
F1= So you can speak and you can write and you understand. I think this speaking part is very important

When asked about ways to improve the English language skills in the company, increasing the number of meetings with international participants and the formation of international workgroups and teams was suggested.

Training the employees to use English in a workplace environment is one of the key factors in creating a work community that is built around the use of a single language in a multicultural environment. The training should be considered worthwhile by both the employees and the management. The training should be aimed at improving communicative competence and giving the employees the confidence to use the language in all required situations.

6.1.4. OMT

The feelings about OMT were mixed.

I= Do you deal with "problem tickets" in OMT?
F1= Yes I do.
I= Are they problematic?
F1= Most problematic are the language issues, but I don't see any issues with OMT. English is the used language but when the customer wants the answer in Finnish we write it in Finnish. I don't think we need to translate that answer for the customer.
I= Is there anything you would improve the OMT system, language wise?
F1= I have no ideas.

Apart from one participant, all of the interview participants used OMT in their work. All but two participants used other languages than English when using OMT. The participants were generally aware of the official language policy of OMT but had not actually read it. There were some differing ideas about the official language policy among the participants. There was confusion about whether only the tickets meant for internal communication had to be in English or if all tickets should be in English, apart from the text-fields visible to the clients. The mixed language policy interpretation in OMT was considered to be a problem by all participants who used

it. The mixed language use is, however, unavoidable due to the fact that some customers required the reporting to be done in a local language.

The Czech participants felt that the constant use of Finnish in tickets was a problem as they had encountered situations where they had been forced to ask for translation of Finnish-language texts that should had been written in English originally. This problem is highlighted in the following interview sample.

I: Are there any particular problems in OMT, with languages?
M4: Sometimes there are tickets that have a lot of information on them in Finnish and we have to ask someone to translate it and that takes time.

Apart from one participant, all felt that there should not be any exceptions to the language policy in OMT.

The last quote describes vividly the situation in which many people work in a company with a strong history of using certain local languages to which many international employees do not posses proficiency for. This can be seen as a result of the company not having a strong, cohesive language policy with which it could manage the rapid changes it has encountered when transforming from a local company to an international one.

I= Do you have anything you would like add or comment?
F1= English should not be the only internal language. For example when we have a meeting with only Finnish people, why can't we use Finnish? And write our memos in Finnish? But still this way people use English is totally different than it was two years ago. That's all.

The quote highlights the change that has happened in the company over the last few years and the challenges the company faces when planning and implementing a working language policy for a successful international company it wants to be.

7. CONCLUSIONS, FURTHER RESEARCH AND PROJECT USABILITY

In this chapter I will offer the conclusions of the research, suggest ideas for further research and reflect on the usability of this project.

7.1. Conclusions

In the study it was found that there are three critical issues in the internal communication in the company that are connected to language skills. The generation gap, perceived unfairness in language use and the language skill training issues all overlap each other and highlight the underlying situation within the company.

The generation gap may be a significant obstacle in Company A's pursuit of becoming a highly competitive international company with a multicultural and multigenerational workforce. The startling differences between the different age groups' attitudes towards English in internal communication and their apparent difference in language skills is an issue that must be addressed quickly and efficiently.

To improve the situation, the middle-aged employees' lack of commitment towards English language training and the older employees' low confidence in the active use of the English language should be improved. The study suggests that one of the main reasons for this resentment is the fact that the participants in age groups 41 and older have lower language skills. Improving these skills and thus reducing the threshold for communicating with them might allay their fears. The company's top management should also send a clearer message to the employees about their commitment to improving language skills and intercultural communication within the company. The employees with the most negative attitudes towards the language should see that the language is not a threat to them but instead a tool they can use to improve their work and enhance their careers by communicating the managements' dedication to the use of a common language.

One of the ways to help these employees to improve language skills and lower inhibitions in using them would be to offer the employees language training in small-groups with others sharing the same problems. In these groups, teaching could be focused on the problem areas like discussion. Especially those employees who haven't received language training from the company yet and those belonging to the older age groups might benefit from these focused courses. A special program for new employees to teach them the company vocabulary and another for the older generation should be launched.

Creating a standard company language and a comprehensive internal vocabulary should be prioritized and implemented in the upper echelons of the company management. This would help to control and diminish small group jargons and promote equality in workgroups and in decision-making. OMT language policy should be reassessed, the new policy should be effectively publicized and compliance to the policy should be enforced in all meaningful situations.

Multicultural and multilingual teamwork should be encouraged by organizing teams according to their duties and abilities, not by their physical location or native language. Recruiting skilled immigrants should also be encouraged.

In acquisitions and outsourcing situations, the new employees' willingness to communicate in English and their language skills should be tested. Language-training programs should be arranged to help adaptation into the company language and vocabulary. This should be included in the due diligence processes in the future.

Language skill levels should be checked and awareness of the company language improved in the integration phase of new employees and in company reorganisations. Language skills and attitudes should be tested when recruiting new employees. Minimum skill levels for new employees should be determined on company level and it is recommended that such levels be high enough to allow both verbal and written communication.

7.2. Further Research

Further research could be made into deeper mapping out the reasons for the differing language attitudes in specific age groups especially among the middle-aged. Research on better ways to motivate and encourage language training attendance and on improving the results of such training should be initiated.

Another possible venue for further research is the impact of the proposed solutions in the Company A and into the effects of comprehensive language programs in other international companies that have faced similar problems.

7.3. Project Usability

The research project was done in cooperation with an internationalizing IT-company. The findings of this study can be used to improve the company's internal communication and to help the company to achieve its goal of becoming a global company where internal communication is conducted in English. On a more general level, the study could also be useful for other companies faced with similar challenges. The research material collected can be compared with future studies conducted in other units within the company. The study results can be used to improve equality and the quality of work on an international workplace.

Since this study was targeted at a particular business units' international operation unit, and data was collected from all three nationalities within that unit, it gives a comprehensive view of the unit's language skills and attitudes.

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APPENDIX A: QUESTIONS IN THE INTERVIEW STUDY

1. *Background information*
   - How old are you?
   - How long have you been in the company?
   - What is your position within the company?
   - When you started in the company, what was your position?
   - What nationality are you?
   - Is English your first language?
   - What do you think is your skill level in English
   - Which languages do you know? What is your skill level with them?
   - Do you use them in your work?

2. *English language skills in the workplace and in internal communication*
   a. How important do you feel English language skills are in your work?
   b. How often do you use English at work? What do you use it for?
   c. In which situations do you most often use English? Does any particular situation pose a problem for you?
   d. Do you use English outside of work? What do you do with it?
   e. In your opinion, what do people use English language for in the workplace?
   f. In your opinion, what is the level of English language skills in the company?
   g. Do people communicate well in English?
   h. Have you noticed any differences in English language communication between different nationalities within the company? What differences?
   i. Can English be effectively used in internal communication?
   j. Are there any particular problems with English or in internal communication in the company? How would you solve them?
   k. Would the creation of uniform "Company English" help in internal communication?
   l. Do you use English with clients or other contacts outside the company?
   m. Is language a barrier or an asset in these situations?
   n. Has the transition to English made it more difficult to influence your work/ restricted your access to important information/ internal services/ your supervisor /your team?
   o. Do you use any internal services in English? (Tech support etc.)
   p. Has this been always so? Has English use made using them more difficult?
   q. Do you use NetMot in the intra net? How often? Experiences?
   r. Do you use the internal vocabulary in the intranet? How often? Experiences?

3. ***Improving English Language skills***
   a. Have you tried to improve your English language skills outside of work?
   b. Have you participated in language training offered by the company? Did you complete the training?
   c. Was it worth the time invested in it?
   d. What would make participating in language courses more attractive for you?
   e. Do you see any particular problems with the training offered?
   f. How would you improve the language training in the company?
   g. Which would be more useful for you: Language courses aimed at specific problems in English language skills or broader, generic language courses?
   h. Should all new employees be tested for their language skills?
   i. Should language skill levels in the company be mapped out among the existing employees?
   j. What should be the minimum level of English language skills for employees?
   k. Should language skill training be scaled according to existing language skill levels?

4. ***OMT***
   a. Do you use OMT in your work?
   b. What languages do you use in OMT?
   c. Are you aware/have you read the OMT language policy?
   d. Is the current language policy in OMT working?
   e. Should there be exceptions to the language policy in OMT? What exceptions?
   f. In your opinion, do the mixed language used in OMT hinder your work?
   g. Do you deal with "Problem Tickets" in OMT?
   h. What language issues are the most problematic in OMT?
   i. How would you improve OMT?

APPENDIX B: SURVEY AND INTERVIEW INVITATION LETTER

From Local services to Global services, how much English as a working language effects our work in the international environment?

My name is Martti Huusko and I'm doing my pro gradu thesis on English language skills in internal communication for this company and the University of Jyväskylä. My thesis will study the employees' and managers' experiences and expectations about English language skills in internal company communication before and after a transfer from local company core functions to internationally distributed services.

With this research we aim to help the company in its future development as an international, competitive company. The results from this study will help us to improve future planning and decision-making and help the company's internal communication become more effective.

The first part of my research is collecting information through the survey linked below and I respectfully ask you to answer the survey. The answers will be anonymous and any personal information collected will only be used for categorizing purposes and will not be identifiable. All information collected will remain confidential. Answering this survey will not take much of your time and will be very important for future development.

https://www.webropol.com/P.aspx?id=160872&cid=22472703

The survey will close on the 2nd of July.

Please forward this mail to members of your team, as this will help us to get a more thorough coverage.

If you have any questions or comments, I will be happy to answer you. A. S. can also be contacted for questions.

I will be conducting interviews based on the survey results in August. If you would like to be interviewed, please contact me.

Thank you in advance.

Respectfully,
-Martti Huusko