Risto Puutio

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Situational tasks, discursive strategies
and institutional practices
in process consultation

JYVÄSKYLÄ STUDIES IN EDUCATION, PSYCHOLOGY AND SOCIAL RESEARCH 369

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UNIVERSITY OF JYVÄSKYLÄ

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ABSTRACT

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Finnish Summary
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This study examines conversations drawn from the author's own process oriented consulting practice. It views them as situations that are embedded in various interactional challenges. This dissertation identifies these challenges and asks how responding to them creates particular situational tasks for the consultant.

The methodological repertoire utilizes perspectives developed within systemic thinking tradition and tools from discourse analysis. Both audio- and video recorded material from one single consulting case provide the data corpus for the study. The three original articles of the thesis analyze in detail: (1) how a shared agenda for the consulting relationship is conducted during the contract meeting; (2) how mutual relationships are negotiated during a consulting event with the organization; and (3) how reflection is supported in advice giving episodes during the follow up meeting.

The results reveal that a process oriented consultant becomes a container of various simultaneously emerging tasks with a twofold character. When building a shared agenda, the consultant needs to assist the clients to raise sensitive matters for discussion, while at the same time developing the meaning potentials of the sensitive topics raised. When negotiating mutual relationships the consultant needs to accept and support current asymmetries of the system and simultaneously build new symmetric relationships. When enhancing reflection during advice giving episodes the consultant needs to support the client's agency and simultaneously offer alternative perspectives to the client.

The results draw attention to the carefully balancing character of consulting activity. Rather than following a clearly formulated role, a process oriented consultant's work seems be guided by responding to situational dual tasks. To manage the dilemmatic interaction in situ, a consultant brings forth, 'hidden agendas', targets that are not articulated as open and shared for the work. 'Hidden agendas', I claim, characterize the institutional practices in process consultation.

The study expands the current picture of process consultation practice and provides a more dynamic and context sensitive way to view it. The differentiation of three research perspectives contributes to theoretical discussions whereas the idea of balancing activity in consulting contributes to the development of practices, for example, in the supervising context.

Keywords: agenda construction, institutional interaction, consultant-client relationship, discursive strategies, systemic methodology, process consultation, practice research

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CONTENTS

LIST OF PUBLICATIONS

I Puutio, R., Kykyri, V-L. and Wahlström, J. Sensitivity and the development of meaning potentials - Discursive practices in a process consulting contract meeting. Submitted.

II Puutio, R., Kykyri, V-L. and Wahlström, J. (2008) Constructing Asymmetry and Symmetry in Relationships Within a Consulting System. Systemic Practice and Action Research 21(1), 35-54.

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"The consultant is in a very difficult position. If he behaves according to his ideas and values, he stands a good chance of being a threat to the client. He could be asked to leave. If he decides to behave even temporarily in accordance with the client's values, he may be accepted but he runs a serious risk of failing to change and develop"

Argyris, 1961, 123

1 INTRODUCTION

Having worked for years as a professional consultant in the field of organizational development (OD), I have often found myself asking, "what's going on when I talk with clients". The question reflects the development of my own worldview in which, during the years of studying social constructionist based systemic ideas, the 'linguistic turn' took place. When practicing systemic consultancy, I began to believe that the whole idea of the consulting process is to help the consultees to construct a shared enough and an acceptable view of the realities of an organization, and that the consultant has an active role in this construction work. In my working practice I started to pay attention to discursive practices, the living moments in consulting conversations through which the organization is re-told by the participants. The ultimate question of 'what consultants do' through interaction and 'how they do it', introduced recently also by academic researches (Alvesson and Johansson, 2002; Alvesson and Svenningson, 2004; Kipping and Engwall, 2002), has acted as additional motivation for this study.

I have been guided by the assumption that examining my own practice is beneficial, not only for me, but also for a wider audience interested in consulting practices. Being aware that the lived practice is always unique, my purpose is to open up perspectives that would be of use in exploring consulting interaction in all its uniqueness. Thus, the generalizations made in this dissertation concern more the theoretical than the practical level. The study continues the work started in my pilot study (Puutio, 2000), where I outlined a general conceptual model of consulting work as discursive activity, based on materials taken from my own practice. The model introduces consulting as 'contextual work', where the consultant's key role is to build purposeful contexts for the consulting relationship as well as for meaning construction work within it. The current thesis takes a step further in examining consulting work from a more in-depth reciprocal interaction perspective and in utilizing a new video-recorded data.

Consulting work varies in functional focus (e.g. business strategy vs. human resource development) and structure, ranging from global companies to solo practitioners (Kitay and Wright 2004). Consulting work is practice that is best characterised as a variety of techniques, approaches and theories (Alvesson and Johansson, 2002; Golembiewski, 1993) that are employed with the ultimate goal of improving organizational performance. This study focuses on practice that follows principles of the process consultation approach (Schein, 1969, 1987, 1988) and views organisations as a system that creates and re-news its social realities by language use (Campbell, 2000).

Interestingly enough, consulting practices are only loosely linked to the academic research, implying that consulting is based more on observations and experiences from practice, than on scientific findings (Sorge and Witteloostuijn, 2004). Overall, there exists only a thin body of descriptive research on consulting. This gap between practice and academic knowledge make sense since, as argued by Massey (2003), consultants are only occasionally able to identify the underpinning theoretical approach that they employ in their practice. Recently, research on consulting work has increased, not the least due to the increase in demand for consulting services. During the last 30 years in particular, a brand of 'knowledge industry' (Kipping and Engvall, 2002) or 'management advice industry' (Clark and Fincham, 2002a) emerged in tandem with wider economical and social changes in the western world. However, acknowledged to still be lacking are materials that would allow researchers to examine what actually takes place in conversations between consultants and their clients.

This study contributes to bridging the gap between real-life practice and academic research. A process consulting setting offers a particularly interesting scope for the examination of interaction situations, conversations and language use, since the approach is based on the assumption that conversations can enhance organisational performance. The study is conducted by examining consulting practice at the somewhat early stage of one consulting case by means of micro-level analysis. My aim is to show that examining naturally occurring interaction in its fine detail within multi-party consulting situations can provide new insights into consulting work and thus contribute to theoretical knowledge.

This thesis is organized around three original papers each of which takes a situational perspective to consulting practices of the case. First, an introduction outlining the key perspectives to this thesis is presented. Consulting practice is approached from the role, goal and task perspectives and consulting work is portrayed as an interaction challenge that the consulting parties face in consulting conversations. This is followed by a methodology section that introduces the research design and the discursive and systemic approaches followed in the research. Moreover, the analysis process and the use of analytical concepts and tools are explained to give the reader an opportunity to follow the methodological choices made throughout the process. Then, summaries of the original articles are presented. Each article illuminates how a consultant, in particular, meets the challenges of conversations: what situational tasks and discursive strategies become employed. In the discussion the main findings of the study are summarised and embedded in the context of dual tasks and the use of 'hidden agendas' in consulting practice. The explanations, functions and consequences of hidden agendas are discussed and connected to the institutional interaction perspective. The hidden vs. open perspectives to role, goal and task are offered as a theoretical perspective to understanding of consultancy. The contributions of the study from practical perspective as well as the research process itself are also reflected upon. Theoretical contributions are then listed. Finally, following suggestions for future research directions, some concluding remarks are made.

1.1 Consulting practice as research object

The management consulting literature over the past 40 years can be divided into two main categories: the early literature, referred to as either the OD (Organization Development) approach (Fincham and Clark, 2002) or *functionalist approach* (Werr and Styhre, 2003) and the more recent strand of academic literature, the *critical perspective* (Fincham and Clark, 2002). The functionalist literature, often authored by professional consultants, takes a positive stance to management consulting and is practice oriented. It presents consultants as professional helpers whose knowledge base nor professional practices need not be challenged. The critical, and mainly academic authored perspective however, takes a more challenging stance towards consultancy work and calls its essentials, like status of knowledge and power relations, into question (Alvesson and Johansson, 2002; Fincham and Clark, 2002). The critical interest in management consultancy centres on attempts to explain the success and impact of management consultants (Salaman 2002). The viewpoints offered throughout this thesis make use of both the functionalist and the critical literature.

During the expansion of critical consulting research, a wide range of issues have been taken under scrutiny. These include the history and development of consultancy (e.g. Engwall, Furusten and Wallrestedt, 2002; Ainamo and Tienari, 2002), the consultant-client relationship (e.g. Fincham, 1999a; Pellegrinelli, 2002; Werr and Styhre, 2003), the methods, ideas and knowledge base of consulting work (e.g. Werr, 2002; Werr, Stjernberg and Docherty, 1997), the creation of consulting knowledge (e.g. Sturdy, 2002; Werr, 2002), rhetoric and language use (e.g. Berglund and Werr, 2000; Clark, 1995; Czarniawska-Joerges, 1990; Fincham, 1999b, Jackson, 1996; Kitay and Wright, 2007), professional status of consulting work (e.g. Alvesson and Johansson, 2002) and its relationship to management fashion (e.g. Ramsay, 1996), management guru phenomena (e.g. Clark and Salaman, 1998b), and the management and organization of consultancy firms (e.g. Alvesson, 2004; Robertson and Swan, 2003). The expansion of consulting research becomes understood by the fact that the economic significance of 'knowledge industry' (Engwall and Kipping, 2002) has increased exponentially (Fincham and Clark, 2002; Engwall and Kipping, 2002). To some extent, when viewing clients as victims of the consultants' impression management (e.g.

Clark, 1995; Clark and Salaman, 1998a), the critical research is, among those who would like to adopt a neutral view, said to have taken a negative stance to consulting practice.

This study takes the critical perspective seriously in the sense that, unlike functionalist literature, it challenges the idea of a clearly defined relationship and the idea of one clearly defined task for consulting work, as well as the view of the consultant as having a special power position (Werr and Styhre, 2003). Moreover, this study does neither adopt an idealistic view to consulting nor take the efficiency of OD practice as its target (cf. Worley and Feyerherm, 2003) but rather tends to look at how the practice works. This study relates to the functionalist perspective in that the author works as a practitioner as well as a scholar of consulting practice. Moreover, unlike other critical research, the study approaches consultancy as a profession (cf. Fincham and Clark, 2003) that follows a particular institutional order. Thus, rather than purely adopting either critical or a practice orientation, this thesis places the two in dialog and discusses consultancy from both perspectives.

Consultancy research varies in terms of adopting either the consultant's perspective (Argyris, 1961; Czander, Jacobsberg, Mersky and Nunberg, 2002; Ellis, Kiely and Pettigrew, 2001; Fincham, 2003; Hawk, Schor, Kane and Lindsay, 1995; Kakabadse, Louchart, and Kakabadse, 2006; Massey, 2003; Smith and Zane, 1999; Worley and Feyerhem, 2003) or the client's perspective (Edvardsson, 1989; Martin, Horne and Chan, 2001; Werr and Styhre, 2003; Williams, 2001). Even in studies that focus on both parties of the consultant-client relationship (e.g. Alvesson and Svenningson, 2004; Fullerton and West, 1996; McGivern, 1983; Pellegrinelli 2002) the distinction between them has led to a situation where consultants and clients became viewed as separate agents. Recently, this separateness has been identified and more research has been called for from an interaction perspective that acknowledges the collaborative, reciprocal nature of the consultant-client relationship (Alvesson and Johansson, 2002; Clark and Fincham, 2002b; Edvardsson, 1989; Engwall and Kipping, 2002; deCastro, Alves, and Proenca, 2005; Fincham, 1999a; Kykyri, 2008; Pellegrinelli, 2002; Sturdy, 1997, 2002; Werr and Styhre, 2003; Williams, 2001).

The lack of interaction research is surprising given that there seems to be a consensus on the importance of a 'good interaction' in the consultant-client relationship as a success factor in consulting (e.g. Fullerton and West, 1996; Glasser, 2002; Gummesson, 1991; McGivern, 1983; McKinney Kellogg, 1984).

There is a variety in data collecting strategies that have been used in consulting research. Mostly, survey methods (Church, Burge and Eynde, 1994; Church, Waclawski and Burke, 1996; Worley and Feyerherm, 2003) and interviews (Alvesson and Sveningsson, 2004; Chao, 2005; Gbadamosi, 2005; McGivern, 1983; McKinney Kellogg, 1984; McLachlin, 2000; Kitay and Wright, 2007; Turner, 1982; Worley and Feyerherm, 2003) have been used. Research taking consulting cases (Alvesson and Svenningson, 2004; Argyris, 1961; Baitsch and Heideloff, 1997; Czander et al., 2002; Fincham, 2003; Johansson, 2003; Massey, 2003; Pellegrinelli, 2002; Puutio, 2002) or consulting firms (Alvesson, 2004; Robertson and Swan, 1998) under scrutiny is mostly carried out using interviews. Some researchers have been able to add observing of consultants' real-time practices to their interviews (Adamson, 2000; Handley, Clark, Fincham and Sturdy, 2007; Johansson, 2003; Massey, 2003). Also, some have added the use of other documentary materials like meeting records, data sheets and other case material (Handley et al, 2007; Sturdy, 1997). Still other authors have conducted research based on their field notes from practice (e.g. Czarniawska, 2001; Czarniawska and Mazza, 2003; Marshak and Heracleous, 2005; Smith and Zane, 1999).

Not until recently has the need for studying real practices in consulting been acknowledged and taken as a starting point for empirical work (Adamson, 2000 Alvesson and Sveningsson, 2004; Berglund and Werr, 2000; Bloomfield and Danieli, 1995; Chao, 2005; Fincham, 1999a, Gbadamosi, 2005; Handley et al., 2007; Johansson, 2003; Kipping and Armrüster, 2002; Kykyri, Puutio and Wahlström, 2007a,b, 2009, Puutio and Kykyri, 2007). Using real time materials helps researchers to obtain a more detailed picture of the variety of what takes place in consulting.

Process consultation

The professional literature defines *process consultation*, which is in the scope of this study, as a practice that aims at helping the client system to help itself – through conversations. Edgar Schein, the advocate of the term, describes it as a "helping relationship" where "the client owns the problem and the solution, but the consultant and client jointly own the inquiry process that will reveal what the correct next steps might be" (Schein 1997, 207). The client's active involvement in defining the key issues and formulating the remedy is viewed as crucial since the client has contextual knowledge that would not be available for a consultant and the process itself aims at learning skills needed for organizational change. Unlike the practice of expert consultancy where 'fixing the given problem' creates the context for consulting work, process oriented consultation suits best situations where neither the problem nor the solution is clear.

Drawing from behavioural science and concentrating on improvement of organization's effectiveness through collaborative intervention, process consultation is often described as one application of Organization Development (OD) (e.g. Fincham and Clark, 2002). However, it differs from the mainstream of OD in underlining the importance of the consulting relationship whereas the OD tradition has emphasised the planned nature of a change process (e.g. Beckhard, 1969; Bennis, 1969; French and Bell, 1995) as well as intervention techniques and their consistency with the intervention objectives (e.g. Blake and Mouton, 1983, Cummings and Feyerherm, 1995; Reddy, 1995). Process consulting, instead, is practiced in situations, which have freedom to emerge from the base of local understanding. This type of consulting work requires 'hands on' abilities to deal with individual, group and organizational dynamics while making interventional choices in real time (Marshak and Hearcleous, 2005; Czander et al., 2002).

Both the OD consulting and the process consultation approaches are forms of organizational consulting that aims at enhancing the organisation's effectiveness by focusing on the system (including multiple individuals and groups) level rather than on individual level (Glasser, 2002). These two can be placed under the umbrella of the term 'management consultation', which, according to Clark and Salaman's (1996, 155) definition is "advisory activity which necessitates intervention in an ongoing system where the advisers are external specialists and have no organizational responsibility, and where the aim of the activity is some alignment to the organizational system". Furthermore, the term management consulting is, similarly to the term 'business consulting' (Kakabadse et al., 2006), used to refer to a variety of services of 'management advice industry' like technology application, business strategy planning and implementation, quality management or management guru performing and other forms of management training. Roughly, we can say that mainstream management consultation stands for 'top-down' approach to changing organisations whereas process consultation belongs to 'bottom-up' approach, in which participation of the organisation is seen as essential (Tienari, Ainamo, Kykyri and Puutio, 2008).

The systemic approach offers a useful perspective within which to view process consultation. It is rooted in a belief that "an organization must balance its need for change with its need for stability" (Campbell, Draper and Huffington, 1991, 6). This means that one having a consulting position needs to acknowledge his or her position in the system and be able to reflect upon one's own contribution to the system while at the same time considering how one could intervene from that position (Baitsch and Heideloff, 1997). The ability to take a systems-view to organisations is acknowledged as one key competence of an OD-practitioner (Worley and Feyerherm, 2003). The social-constructionist school of systemic thinking, which this study represents, highlights the importance of meaning construction in consulting (Barge and Little, 2002; Campbell, 2000, Oliver 2005). From the systemic perspective, process consultation could then be viewed as a practice that helps organizational members to reflect on the connections between meaning and action, or in other words, on the discursive processes by which meaning is constructed in context. A consultant should – as a part of the system – enhance its reflexivity, organisational members' joint ability to see how their participation and language use in a situation affects the emerging social realities.

Clearly, there is a lack of research on process consultation, even though exceptions do exist (Fullerton and West, 1996; Kykyri et al., 2007a,b, 2009; Williams and Rattray, 2004). Conducting a literature review, I found no empirical analyses that would, for example, focus on the early stage of process consultation relationship. Academic journals publish literature that illustrates process oriented consulting practices based on authors' own experiences and its documentation (Ellis et al, 2001; Kaplan, 1979; Kurpius, Fuqua and Rozecki, 1993; Schein, 1995, 1997; Schein, Kahane and Scharmer, 2001; Marshak and Heracleous, 2005; Kets de Vries and Balaz, 2005; Shaw, 1997; Smith and Zane, 1999; Tosey and Llewellyn, 2002). This literature offers valuable insider reflection on consulting practice and broadens views regarding the nature of process oriented consulting work. However, its contribution to empirically based knowledge is still poor which means that there is a need for empirical research on the consulting practice (Alvesson and Sveningsson, 2004, 2, see also Alvesson and Johansson, 2002; Worley and Feyerherm, 2003).

One reason for the lack of research can be found in the theoretical conceptualization of process consultation. Process consultation authors have not provided conceptualization and tools that would help to "catch the dynamics going on in process consultation" (Lambrechts , Grieten, Bouwen and Corthouts, 2009, 41). Another reason is practical one. Simply, there is no easy access to authentic consulting conversations – consultants are not willing to share their materials with researchers nor are they willing to invite researchers to observe their practice (Adamson, 2000). On the other hand, consultants themselves seldom document their practice (e.g. by videotaping it) for later research purposes. This study bridges this gap by providing real-life materials for empirical examination.

1.2 Approaching the practice: role, goal and task

There exists a wide strand of literature on consulting *roles* to guide the practitioner to do the right things or to illuminate 'what consultants do'. The functionalist literature (including applied research) in particular offers various consulting role typologies (e.g. Kaarst-Brown, 1999; Kitay and Wrigt, 2004; Massey, 2003; Schein, 1969) which certainly contribute to knowledge among practitioners and consultancy trainers. For example, the dimensional model of expert versus process roles in consulting as presented by Lippitt and Lippitt (1986) offers a frame, or a 'theory' for practice, that can help to make judgments in choosing the appropriate role in terms of the clients needs, situation and the consultant's personal style. The discussions among academic (more or less critical) researchers also deal with roles, however, with different focus and contribution (e.g. Alvesson and Johansson, 2002; Bloomfield and Danieli, 1995; Czarniawska-Joegers, 1990; Fincham, 1999a). For example, the idea of consultants as 'merchants of meaning' presented by Czarniawska-Joegers (1990) illustrates the consultancy role in ways that critical research can benefit from and further develop (e.g. Alvesson and Johansson, 2002). Moreover, there is literature that classifies the typologies on consulting roles (e.g. Glasser, 2002; Kakabadse et al, 2006). Overall, due to the great variation of the practice as well as the intangibility of the service itself (Clark and Salaman, 1998b; Kakabadse et al, 2006), the consulting role has been difficult to define. Perhaps for this reason, consulting roles are often illustrated using metaphorical language (see, Kaarst-Brown, 1999; Massey, 2003).

The problem with the consulting role descriptions is that they tend to overlook the consultant-client interaction and thereby tend to handle the client-consultant relationship as a de-contextual variable. The local and unexpected practice of consultants and their clients makes models on consulting role appear too simple, narrowing the livingness of the reciprocal practice. It is not only the variation within the consulting activity itself but also the variation in research methods that have been used to explore it, that create difficulties with role descriptions. There is also variation in epistemological assumptions among researchers and other authors on consulting which means that the models on consulting roles do not easily communicate with each other (Whittle, 2006).

Due to consulting being practiced in organizational context, and due to its being informed by professional ideals, it is justifiable to view it as a form of institutional interaction. Indeed, Werr and Styhre (2003, 50) confirm this in that we should "view client-consultant relationship as institutionally embedded, emphasizing that it does not exist detached from social norms, shared beliefs and ideologies" . In fact, the functionalist literature also suggests, albeit for practical purposes, that we need to view consulting as culturally determined action (e.g. Chapman, 1998, Schein, 1999, 2002). The research tradition of institutional interaction (Drew and Heritage, 1992; Heritage, 2005) argues that professions contain *goals*, identities and special constraints and inferences about what is allowable or preferred in interaction. It is thus an institution with its norms and beliefs that becomes lived through the ways consulting parties orient towards the goals of a working situation. It can be asked what sort of institutional order process consultation might follow.

Recently, a situational perspective has been introduced to consulting research (Handley et al., 2007). This third perspective offers insight into practical actions that consulting parties take in the moments of interaction. For the purposes of this study, a situational approach is justifiable since we can look at how participants of a consulting conversation respond to each other and jointly orientate to the various *tasks* at hand. Putting the mentioned three perspectives together, this study examines the local, context bound tasks that a consultant, informed by a process consultation role, takes when orienting to the goal of an institutionally embedded situation. Figure 1 illuminates the three perspectives.

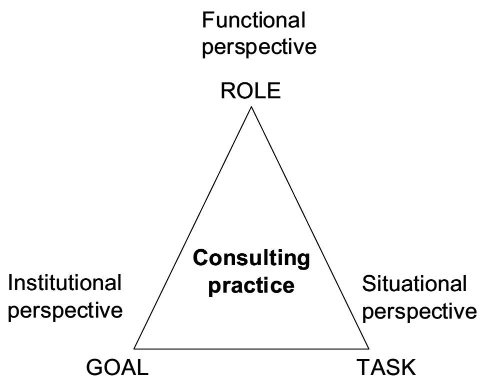

FIGURE 1 Three perspectives and their key points regarding consulting practice

In congruence with figure 1, we can view the three perspectives' various resources that inform a consultant and the client in practice. A consultant has some understanding – perhaps a well explicated one obtained by means of professional training - of the role repertoire that s/he can utilize and that s/he is supposed to display with a client (for example, that of an inquirer). The client also has understanding – often experience based – of what kind of a role s/he expects from a consultant (for example that of showing interest in clients own ideas and perspectives). In parallel with this knowledge, both parties are informed by some understanding on what purposes the consulting activity stands for. This gives orientation to what they are supposed to do together, i.e. what is the goal of the activity (for example, to learn ways to work more effectively). However, it is the particular working situation, with its contents and local processes between people at hand that guides both parties towards the immediate tasks to be done (for example, to help people to listen to each other).

Although not explicated as situational perspective, functionalist process consultation literature acknowledges the situated nature of consulting practice. Process consultation literature especially highlights the idea of unanticipated, emerging and opportunity based interventions, meaning that the situations should guide the consultant's decisions and that a consultant and a client (both those involved with the process and those purchasing the service) need continually negotiate where the focus should be (Campbell et al., 1991; Lippitt and Lippitt, 1986; Schein, 1987, 1988; see also Schön, 1983). This leads to relationships where "consultants can fill a variety of roles depending on the demands of the situation" (Chapman, 1998, 212).

The situational perspective is familiar to other business consultants too, since "everything they (consultants) do for their clients has to be done in a creative and customized way" (Kakabadse et al, 2006, 424). There is a strong expectation for customizing and 'tailor-made' solutions in consultancy (Fullerton and West, 1996), which means that consultants need to apply their methodology to the local context (Werr et al. 1997) and use each situation as a resource for their contribution anyway. This makes it understandable why Werr and Styhre (2003, 50) point out that there are no pre-defined or natural roles in consultancy settings, but rather "their (consultant's and client's) mutual activities are developed in contextually dependent situations against the background of larger discourses that lend legitimacy and reason to some relations, while at the same time making other kinds of relations more difficult". However, only few studies have adopted the situational perspective as a starting point for research (Handley et al, 2007, Fincham, 1999a; Werr and Styhre, 2003).

A situational research perspective becomes justifiable for other reasons, too. Clients turn to consultants and ask for help usually in critical situations of their organization. This means that consulting conversations have a specific nature – not least since they are loaded with various expectations. This makes consulting a practice of building situations that can be considered helpful for the organisation. In fact, the situation with the client is the only means for a consultant to offer relief to the client. What happens in these situations can help the client to find new ways of action for improving the performance of the organization. For a consultant, this means that a change – related to the issues at hand - needs to become produced in the moments of interaction with the client.

1.3 A discursive perspective to consulting practice

The situational perspective leads us to focus on what becomes done by words in a moment. The notion of the centrality of language use in consulting has generated a vast body of research in the field, particularly by the critical authors. Clegg, Kornberger and Rhodes (2004, 36) make a very fundamental point when claiming that "consulting is first and foremost a linguistic activity – a discursive practice through which realities are enacted". The term 'discursive practice' has a two-fold meaning. On the one hand language use in organisations (including consulting situations) constructs the organisation itself, and on the other hand, in consulting, the language use has an immediate effect on the consulting interaction itself. This study adopts the latter perspective by drawing its methodology from the tradition of discursive analysis (DA). DA studies discourse as text and talk in social practice, by which people do things (Potter, 2004). While approaching the social world as action, as endless webs of encounters, conversations, matrixes of relations and negotiations of meanings, discourse analytic methodology is interested in what is done through conversation. Therefore, discursive methodology that approaches consulting as conversation suits well for the purpose of getting to know 'what consultants do'. This holds true particularly with process consultation, where conversations are at the hearth of the action itself and where the consultant's direct responsibility is the conversational process within a consulting project.

The organization discourse approach (Grant, Hardy, Oswick and Putnam, 2004) has recently brought together research from different disciplines, utilizing various theoretical approaches, focusing on issues concerning the use of language and discourse in organisations. The recent interaction oriented research on consulting has strongly adopted the discursive approach (e.g. Alvesson, 1993; Alvesson and Johansson, 2002; Berglund and Werr, 2000; Clark and Salaman, 1998a; Clegg et al, 2004; Engwall and Kipping, 2002; Fincham 1999a; Johansson, 2003; Kykyri, 2008; Marshak and Heracleous, 2005; Meriläinen et al, 2004; Sturdy, 1997, 2002; Werr and Styhre, 2003; Whittle 2006).

The discursive research on consultancy has shown, for example, that consultants are skilful in utilizing various discursive resources in work with their clients. It has been argued that organizational change occurs within and through the use of paradoxical repertoires of talk and hence the consulting practice invites utilising contradictory discourses (Whittle, 2006). 'Mingling' various and opposing discourses are shown to constitute the 'invisible character' of consulting rhetoric (Berglund and Werr, 2000; see also Alvesson and Johansson, 2002). This study joins this strand of discursive research by being curious on the seen but easily unnoticed side of consulting (interaction) practice.

The discursive approach, particularly DA, opens up a strategic perspective to consulting conversation. Consulting can be approached as practice where various participants use language strategically, to achieve something by conversation. Within DA, the strand of rhetorical analysis (Billig, 1987) has focused on discourse as strategic action, claiming that talk consists of an argumentative organization. Discourse analysts, especially those who later developed the discipline of Discursive Psychology (DP) (Edwards and Potter, 1992; Potter, 2003b; Hepburn and Potter, 2003) have paid special attention to psychological concepts and terminology by looking at techniques by which language is used in 'reality producing' and 'fact construction'.

The term 'agenda' helps to approach discursive strategies in consulting conversation. According to the Oxford Dictionary of Current English, the term agenda refers to matters or list of matters to be discussed, for example, in a meeting. Agenda management refers to – and has also been a focus of research - how participants move through meeting from one topic to the next (Boden, 1994). The term agenda is also used to refer to specific goals that someone is having during an encounter. In fact, we can approach consulting as conversation where each participant has their own agendas that guide their orientation during a conversation (Gale, 1991). This is not to say that participants do or even can define their agendas during a conversation. Rather, the interaction agendas are more or less implicit, something that can be re-constructed retrospectively, by analytic methodology (Gale, 1991). An agenda requires discursive strategies, means by which one can strive for one's goal in interaction by language use.

The interaction research on helping institutions employs the term agenda to refer to professionals' claim to introduce topics during a professional encounter (Drew and Heritage, 1992). Institutional situations within medical, teaching, social work contexts or the like are viewed as asymmetric in the sense that the professional can strategically direct the talk within them. The professional can control the topics that are raised and can direct how these topics are handled in the discussion. Along the same lines, Silverman (1987, 184-185) launches the idea of "hidden agenda" to refer to doctors' invisible interactional dominance within medical interaction. Professional settings where various tasks and aims are to be taken into account are said to carry hidden agendas (Vehviläinen, 2003). Such agendas may consist of, for example, professional ideologies, moral stances or the like.

In this study, the term agenda is used in a twofold way. First, it is used to refer to the joint goals of the work at hand. The term *shared agenda* is used to refer to this whereas the term *hidden agenda* is used to refer to interactional goals that are present but not explicit for the conversationalists.

1.4 Challenges of consulting conversations

A consulting conversation, where participants from various positions meet to discuss organizational matters in the presence of an outsider, is a challenging situation in various ways. Participants in the conversation may hold different understandings of the state of affairs, they may have competing interests, and thereby they may view the focal point of change differently. In terms of the social situation, consulting participants have to find ways to discuss often emotion laden topics in a multi-party setting. Next, I will describe the conversational challenges from three different perspectives. The first deals with shared agenda building, the second with relationship negotiating, and the third perspective deals with the general aim of process consultation, namely promoting reflection.

1.4.1 Building a shared agenda

An organizational consulting conversation is a particular working setting, where participants from different organizational roles and positions come together for either solving actual problems or for developing future perspectives for the organization at hand. For this a shared agenda, i.e. a common interest and a joint goal, is required. However, in the consulting context, participants are often bound together by a mix of common and divergent interests and may also have competing definitions of the organizational situation as well as visions for the future. From this basis each participant or representative party (either consultant, members of management or employees) naturally have somewhat different working agendas, different interests for topics to be discussed during the consulting conversation. Moreover, each party may have different expectations as to the preferred and appropriate ways to discuss the topics in that particular situation. To bridge these differences, the consulting conversation, particularly at the early stage of the consulting relationship, needs to provide interaction through which parties can negotiate the goals and issues for their joint work. In fact, the key idea of process consultation is that it is the *process* that brings forth the shared agenda for the joint action throughout the consulting relationship. Agenda negotiation is thus a building block of the working relationship between a consultant and an organization.

The professional demands for the beginning of a consulting work are widely reported in practitioner literature, and the early stage is considered to be the key step in a successful working relation between the consultant and the client (e.g. Block, 1981; French and Bell, 1978; Jamieson, 1995; Neumann, 1997; Schein, 1987, 1999). The challenge of building a shared agenda is acknowledged for example by Schein (2002), who highlights the need for mutual exploring in contract negotiating. He suggests that the concept of contracting be replaced with the concept of "exploring mutual expectations" (p. 25) meaning that each party could 'test' others' expectations and reason as to what could be possible in that working relationship. He argues that "the best model for describing this process is to think of it as a series of mutual tests to see at what level each party can accept the other" (p. 26).

The social situation of negotiating the agenda is challenging, since topics to be taken onto the agenda may be threatening and thus difficult to discuss openly. There is a great potential that in consulting conversations participants have to face criticism and blame (Kykyri, Puutio and Wahlström, 2007a). This is why professional literature views contracting as "a complex human interaction process requiring skill and flexibility" (Jamieson, 1995, 134). The consultant needs to have means for 'face-work' (Goffman, 1963), actions that are made in the flow of the conversation that show acceptance and respect toward others (and one's own) image of self. A consultant thus needs to make situational judgement of what is appropriate, useful and possible to incorporate into the shared agenda.

Building an agenda might be challenging for another reason, too. The client may 'need' a consultant as a resource for the intra-organisational power game or for the political battles within the organisation (Alvesson and Johansson, 2002, Bloomfield and Danieli, 1995). The functionalist process consultation literature echoes the same by noting that "working in the field automatically places the consultant in a relationship to a complex social system with multiple political and psychological dynamics" (Neumann, Kellner and Dawson-Shepherd, 1997, xviii). This can mean that a consultant, aware of it or not, follows only the managerial agenda in his or her work. Sometimes managerial agendas are kept hidden from both employees and consultants themselves (Kaarst-Brown, 1999). When building a shared agenda for the consulting process, the consultant may thus be challenged by already existing hidden interests of organisational parties.

1.4.2 Negotiating mutual relationships within a multi-party context

Consulting conversations often require involvement of various groups and subgroups in the client organisation. Schein (1997) introduces 'basic types of clients' to illustrate the variation in clients in consulting projects. He names these types as contact clients (those who first contact the consultant), intermediate clients (those who get involved in consulting activities), primary clients (those who own the problem), unwitting clients (those who will be affected by the interventions but who are not aware that they will be impacted), indirect clients (those who will be affected but are unknown to the consultant) and ultimate clients (those, whose welfare should be considered by the consultant). According to Schein a consultant needs to distinguish between client types when having conversations with the client organisation. Defining various parties in relation to the consulting process is thus present from the very beginning of establishing a working relationship. When defining the role of each party, the actors simultaneously 'negotiate' and shape their relationships.

Consulting conversations are usually multi-party situations where, according to the typology of Kurpius and Fuqua (1993), three parties are involved: consultant, consultee and client system. In the consultancy process of this study, the triadic relationship was present between the consultant, managers and employees. This kind of a multi-party setting requires definition of relationships between various parties. This is particularly true for settings such as that of the current study, where the client participants in the consulting conversations were somewhat unknown to each other. It is natural to think that when meeting for the first time in a consulting context participants find it important to discuss how they are related to each other. The multi-party setting challenges all concerned since each might have preferences on who should be engaged, how the relationships between each party should be viewed, and what relationships should be addressed in the conversation.

In defining their mutual relationships in a multi-party conversation, interlocutors do not only respond to earlier addresses but also orient to the audience of the ongoing conversation. In a triadic system at least one party is always in the position of audience. Thus, a multi-party system with the presence of various 'audiences' challenges participants in terms of what one can or cannot, want or does not want to say (Kykyri et al, 2007b). This is particularly true when it comes to talking about sensitive topics. When addressing something to somebody, the present third party makes their own interpretations on what is essential message that one tried to convey.

Organisational asymmetry – the fact that organisational members' relationships are already defined as unequal in various ways – makes the consulting conversation particularly challenging. The existing asymmetries may hinder effective communication, mutual sharing and learning from each other – all essential ideals in process consultation. The consulting conversation deals with this challenge since each turn in consulting conversation shapes the present relationships. In a multi-party system this creates complexity: a conversational move aimed to reduce asymmetry in one relationship within the triadic system may lead to increasing asymmetry in another relationship of the triangle.

Acknowledging the multi-party nature of consulting conversations and the tensions embedded, the process consultation literature guides a consultant to take a neutral stance in terms of the goals and the participants' differing interests. The consultant should respect the client's ownership of the problem and its solution (Schein, 1987, 1997), s/he should respect each party's freedom to have a genuine choice regarding their involvement in a consulting process and his or her work should be driven by the client's agenda (Schein, 1995). The neutral position is by no means introduced as an easy position, on the contrary: "one of the most difficult aspects of consultation is how to balance the different agendas of different primary clients within the same company" (Schein, 1987, 192).

Even though there is literature available to managers on how to manage the relationships with consultants, coming from both academic base (cf. Clark, 1995; Martin et al., 2001; Mitchell, 1994; Mohe, 2005) and practical base (cf. Kurb, 1993; Zackrison and Freedman, 2000), it is surprising that the complexity stemming from the multi-party nature of consulting settings is overlooked (Kykyri, 2008).

1.4.3 Enhancing reflection

The process consultant's fundamental role is viewed as that of a process specialist who is dedicated to "helping the system to help itself" (Schein, 1988, 193) and who "attempts to involve the organization in self-diagnosis and enables the organization to give itself sound advice" (Schein, 1988, 192). This requires specific interaction practices that support the client's competency in thinking in new ways. Consulting clients are, however, often loaded with practical problems regarding organisational performance. This creates a challenge to a consulting conversation – how to build interaction that enhances the client's 'self-diagnosis' so that the client can apply it somewhat immediately and at the same time utilise it as a source of learning (Ellis et al, 2001).

Reflection is often viewed as the key element of a process oriented consulting conversation. According to Raelin (2001, 11), reflection is a "practice of periodically stepping back to ponder the meaning to self and to others in one's immediate environment about what has recently transpired". Reflection may occur before, during or after the experience and it can be individual as well as collective practice, structured in various ways and varied in depth (http://crcp.mit. edu/documents/whatis.pdf). Reflection may serve either purposes of understanding theoretical ideas and research findings in practice, building practical knowledge, 'rules of thumb' or seeking dialogical knowledge, which aims at transforming one's practice (Raelin, 2001). The core element of reflection is re-thinking and recognising something that was earlier unrecognisable: "it privileges the process of inquiry leading to an understanding of experiences that may have been overlooked in practice" (Raelin 2001: 11).

While the terms 'reflex', 'reflection' and 'reflexivity' have the same etymological roots, there is a need to clarify the use of each term (cf. Alvesson and Sköldberg, 2000; Cunliffe 2002, 2004). *Reflex* interaction refers to instantaneous, unselfconscious, reacting in-the-moment type of interaction. This occurs when conversationalists respond to each other in the moment. *Reflective* interaction aims to make shared sense of the world by using explicit knowledge and practical theories either retrospectively or through in-the-moment consideration. In a consulting conversation reflection takes place when conversationalists start to re-think the reflex interaction around the topic with the help of conceptual knowledge at hand. *Reflexive* interaction places the conversationalists as "practical authors and critical questioners" (Cunliffe 2002, 52) for each other within the social experience and construction of reality. Reflexivity then refers to relational awareness of one's own agency within a complex system (see e.g. Cunliffe, 2002, Rennie 2004). Ideally, the reflective practice of a consulting conversation leads to increasing reflexivity, managers' increased ability to question their ways of making sense of the world and see their own part in creating organisational realities and relating this to their own behaviour.

However, the primary call for consulting conversations is not always reflection and reflexivity but rather, the need for finding advice to solve some organisational problem. The challenge for a consultant is to make reflective practice (Schön, 1983) present in ways that responds to the call for advice.

1.5 The aims of the study

Using empirical data from one case of process consultation, this study examines how the various challenges of consulting conversations are met by the consulting parties and how responding to these challenges builds particular situated interactional tasks for the consultant. The thesis aims to recognise and describe in detail these tasks as well as the use of various discursive strategies utilised by the consultant when accomplishing *in situ* the tasks in question. In particular, the aim is to show how the consultant, by orienting himself to the interaction with the client and by actively participating in the interaction, shapes agendas that are not articulated as open and shared targets for the work. This thesis aims to show how such 'hidden agendas' are important part of interaction and institutional practice of process consultation. By offering the situational task perspective to consulting conversation, the study seeks to contribute to discussions on consultant-client interaction in general, and to the debates on the role of consultants in particular. Moreover, the aim is to provide a description of process consultation practice that would be useful in finding new perspectives to approach consulting work within both research and practical contexts.

2 THE CASE AND METHODOLOGY

2.1 Two research projects

The three original studies of this dissertation were completed during two separate but connected research projects. The first project, named “Linguistic interaction in organizational consultation” (grant 101360) was carried out during the years 2002-2005 and the second one “Problems, advice and end results in the negotiations between a consultant and a client” (grant 104383) during the years 2005-2006. These research projects were funded by the Finnish Work Environment Fund.

Four Finnish organizations cooperated in carrying out the research. The organizations in question were Odeco, a management consulting firm located in Jyväskylä, the Personnel Department of the City of Kokkola, Click Consulting, a management consulting firm located in Kokkola, and the Department of Psychology at the University of Jyväskylä which offered the methodological guidance for the process. The two researchers, the author and Virpi-Liisa Kykyri[1] who were PhD students at the University of Jyväskylä and employees of Odeco and the City of Kokkola, were responsible for planning and accomplishing the actual research work. Both were half-time researchers for the program while working simultaneously as part-time (external and internal) organizational consultants. The methodological guidance was provided by professor Jarl Wahlström.

The two research projects were aimed at finding novel descriptions and insights about the discursive practices of process consultation work and at producing six empirical articles to be published internationally. Both researchers had a lead author role in production of three separate article

1 Virpi-Liisa Kykyri’s (2008) thesis “Helping Clients to Help Themselves” was produced within the same research projects and shared the same data corpus. Therefore, descriptions of the two research projects, consulting case and participants as well as the idea on analysis process ‘through the insider and outsider views’ are in congruence with the sections of her dissertation.

manuscripts each. Both aimed at completing their PhD thesis based on these two research projects and the produced manuscripts. In addition, two students of psychology were involved and had completed their Master's theses through their involvement with these research projects.

2.2 Participants and data

2.2.1 Action research setting

As a study of living practice, the present study represents ideas pertaining to the action research tradition. According to Reason's and Bradbury's (2001) description, the action research study concerns practical issues, it is curious about knowledge in action, it is conducted by the research subject (the author) and – to some extent - it has an interest in enriching the author's own practice. Because as an author I held a practitioner-researcher position throughout the research process, the research setting represents action research approach in terms of both data production and the retrospective analysis.

In terms of data production, the process consultation case itself can be seen as participatory action research since it highlights the participation of all concerned and aims to empower their practice through dialogue (Kemmis and Wilkinson, 1998). Process consultation, just as the action research ideal, (Kuusela, 2005), aims to "assist locals in extending their own understanding of their situations and helps them to resolve the problems they see as important" (Guba, 1999, xiii). This part of the study was initiated by the client and had followed the client's call for consultation even though data gathering was initiated by the consultant.

During the retrospective analysis of the data, the local practitioners, i.e. the organizational participants of the company at hand were not involved with the research. As the author I was involved in the analysis with the help of a research team. In these terms the study can be viewed as professional practice research (Macpherson, Brooker, Aspland and Cuskelly, 2004). This part of the study was data-driven and followed the research team's emerging agenda during the analysis process.

In this study, the action research agenda becomes perhaps most visible for its focus on social practice, i.e. situations where the action takes places. Several definitions of action research point out the centrality of practitioner's understanding of the situations they are involved in (e.g. Carr and Kemmis, 1986; Kemmis and McTaggart, 1988; Rapoport, 1970; see also McKernan, 1996).

In agreement with Torbert's (2001) notion of 1st-, 2nd- and 3rd-person action research practices this study can be seen as 1st-person approach since as the author I am reflecting on my own professional practice as a process consultant. The 2nd-person perspective is fulfilled in that the inquiry process into the data is done with the help of a research team and aims to make sense of the practice of a broader community, those engaged in process consultation.

The 3rd-person perspective is represented by the pursuit of building theoretical concepts regarding 'talk at work' in consulting.

Typical to an action research setting, the data of this study is derived from a single consulting case. As a consultant of this case, I obtained the permission for data gathering for later research purposes. In the process of research this material proved to represent well the practices of the process consultation approach, which makes it reasonable to take this approach as the central focus of the thesis.

2.2.2 The OD consulting process and the participants

Considering the noticeable difficulties of management consulting researchers in defining what is being studied since consultants' practices are extremely varying (Fincham and Clark, 2002), it is of importance that the consulting approach to this case is well known and carefully defined.

The data for this study is based on a long-term (nine months) process consultation case which was carried out in a company within the pulp industry in Finland. The consultation process aimed at facilitating change in the organisation from a functional organisational model to a more customer oriented process organisation. This meant integration of the two previously separate R&D and Customer service departments. Technically, this change had already been made and people were already informed about their new roles within the organization. The need for consultation emerged as a result of the management's remarkable difficulties in establishing the 'new organization' within the day-to-day practices of the organization.

These difficulties arose due to various reasons. Firstly, the previously separate R&D and customer service departments had been merged to form a united 'customer process' aiming at better focus on customer needs. This resulted in a new organizational hierarchy which was reflected onto the daily practices and experiences of employees. Earlier, both departments had had an equal status and were managed by separate 'functional managers' whereas the erstwhile customer service employees, who worked at the customer interface, now became contractors for the R&D employees. This led to problems of cooperation since the R&D employees felt they were being 'bossed' by the customer service employees. This, in turn, created pressure towards the management to do something about the situation.

The members of the new organization, i.e. the employees and the management of the above mentioned R&D organization and customer service organization, became the participants for this consulting case. Based on previous cooperation with the consultant (i.e. the author of this dissertation) the director of the organization was already familiar with the consultant's professional approach and personal style. This made it easier for the client organization to give the permission to record all the consulting conversations of this consulting case (audio and video recordings) from the early beginning of the consulting process. I organised the recordings with the help of a research assistant. This was done after all the participants had given their written consent for videotaping of the meetings and events for research purposes. Thereafter, the presence of the research assistant with recording equipment was not raised for discussion and, as I interpreted it, it did not hinder our concentration on the consultation process itself.

The consulting case in whole consists of three meetings with the management conducted by the consultant and two two-day organization development (OD) events for the entire merged organization guided by the consultant. As a consultant I was responsible for the whole consulting process and I was present during all the sessions. The consulting process in itself was built so that during the first meeting with the management the first OD-event was agreed upon, whereas during the first OD-event the need for a second meeting with the management emerged. Again, during that meeting, the idea for a new OD-event with a new planning session with the management came up.

Two members of the management (the director responsible for customer process and the manager responsible for R&D operations) were present during the meetings with the management. During the consulting process, meetings with the management became an arena for handling the organizational problems from the managerial perspective. In addition, negotiating about the contract, planning and evaluation of the consulting process were also on the agenda for these meetings with the management which consisted of discussions and inquiries.

The total number of participants during the first OD event was 23, including four members of the management (the director responsible for customer process and the manager responsible for R&D operations, the director responsible for production and the manager responsible for HRM). Basically the same employees were present also during the second OD event, excluding the production director and the HRM manager.

The OD events offered a forum for all concerned (the managers and employees of the merged R&D and customer service departments) to discuss the ongoing change within the organization. Organizational roles and relationships as well as norms of co-operation were discussed and, as a consequence, some practical improvements were agreed upon. During the OD events, I was in charge of the proceedings and I was holding various working roles such as a chair, an interviewer, a facilitator of communication and a guide for working methods. Working sessions during the OD events consisted of discussions and interviews, group work sessions and applications of various special methods.

During the first OD event of this case in particular, the situation of the participating group somewhat resembled that of any group in its early stage of development. When a group begins, one of its primary challenges is how the participants get to know each other and how they learn to work together within the particular group setting. The participants of this consulting case were members of the same organization and therefore some of them were familiar with each other and shared some common background information about each other, and about the earlier group settings held within this organization.

However, not all of them were familiar with one another since they represented two previously separate units that had been merged only recently. Also, in practice, their work sites were divided into five separate places having a remarkable geographical distance from each other. This, in turn, meant that some of the participants met each other for the first time during the first OD event.

The consulting practice of the case followed the principles of the process consultation approach. The assignment in itself was to facilitate meetings which were aimed at helping the organisational participants representing various work sites and professional positions to share their views about the ongoing change. The employees were invited to 'slow down' their daily actions and to spend some time talking about the current situation and the future needs. From the early beginning of the consulting events, I as the consultant, worked to build an agenda which is based on the participants' concerns and contributions. These themes were explored collaboratively, by giving space for participants to contribute. There were no explicit 'steps' for action, but rather, the process itself guided what to do next. During the consulting process, the data gathering and intervention phases were not separate but instead, everything that was done was treated as intervention. As the consultant of the OD events I both defined my role and acted as an organiser of the inquiry process. The interviews I conducted had an explorative purpose with respect to all participants, and were therefore conducted in front of the participating group without the aim of gathering data for a written report. Thus, the explorative and interventive nature of the consulting action was somewhat clear for all. Again, I neither offered solutions, nor took the operative role in managing organizational actions or plans. Instead, as is typical for a process oriented helper, I offered various working methods. In this case I utilised methods and techniques from so called systemic approach to consultation (e.g. Campbell et al., 1991), and applied action methods (e.g. Blatner, 1973) and narrative techniques (White and Epston, 1990).

2.2.3 Data production

The data consists of naturally occurring talk within the complete consulting process. In a way, there is not one single data, but this data has various forms. During the analysis process, all of these versions were available. The very first version of data was 'born' from my immediate experiences as the consultant-researcher during the consulting process. The second version of the data was formed as all the consultation sessions were audio recorded (approximately 30 hours) and all the consultation sessions (except the first contracting meeting) were also video recorded. The third version of the data was formed as this recorded data was transcribed into textual form. And finally, the fourth version of the data was formed as the extracts were selected for the purposes of the six separate studies of the research program.

The transcription of the data was conducted using a modified version of Jefferson practices (see Atkinson and Heritage, 1984). The selected extracts were transcribed with extra care including the intonation, speed of talk and, to some extent, the non-verbal parts of conversation like gestures and facial expressions (transcription symbols are presented in the original articles of this thesis). The extracts were translated into English with the aim of preserving the meanings and the fluency of the Finnish originals, which were used in the primary analysis. To offer the reader the opportunity to view the original Finnish transcriptions, I have added them in appendix 1.

2.2.4 Data selection

During repeated listening and reading phases, the whole process consulting case was used to get the first impression of the data and to find the themes that were later translated into research questions of the original articles of this thesis. Later, the analytic insights and findings were checked against this large data corpus. However, the detailed analysis process was restricted to the smaller number of text extracts which formed the specified data of the separate research articles.

This thesis focuses on the conversations at the somewhat early stage of the consulting process. As multi-party settings each conversation represents typical stages of a consulting process, namely contract negotiation with the management (article1), the first OD event for the organisation (article 2) and the follow up and planning session for the management (article 3). The first and the third article deal with a small group setting (three participants) whereas the second article deals with issues in a large group setting (24 participants including the consultant). The consulting process procedure, the time schedule of the case and the text extracts chosen for three separate studies are illustrated in figure2

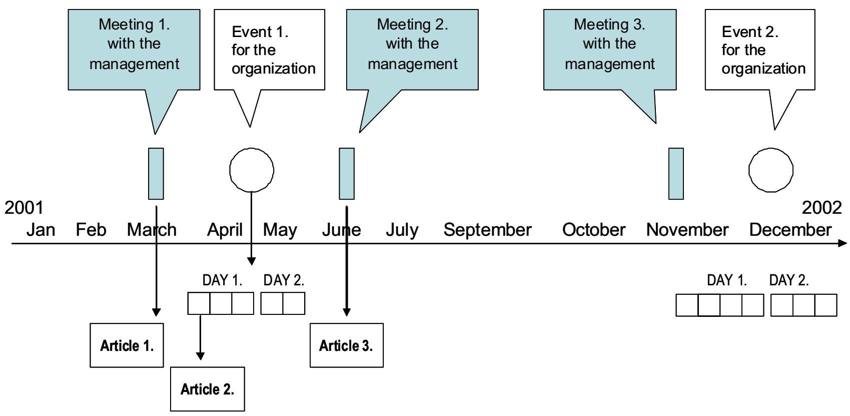

FIGURE 2 The case, time schedule and extract material used in each article

The extracts presented in article 1 come from the first meeting between the consultant and the two representatives of the management of the organisation. Factually, this meeting was the contract conversation with the consultant and included negotiation and planning of the consultation process. The article takes into scrutiny a three minutes and 10 seconds sequence originally located at about 15 minutes into the beginning of the meeting. This conversation is divided into four separate extracts (including one that is divided into three sub-extracts) suiting the purposes of the analysis presented.

The data extracts used in article 2 are drawn from the first consultation session with the employees (altogether 19) and the members of the management (altogether 4). The idea of the event was to collaborate with the customer process organisation in order to overcome the difficulties of the change process at hand. The article includes four extracts from the event. The first three extracts present single addresses of each representative position, namely that of management, consultant and employees. The director's and consultant's addresses represent welcoming words at the very beginning of the event, whereas the address of an employees is drawn 22 minutes later from a group interview conducted by the consultant. In this interview, each participant was basically asked to say something regarding their hopes for the event (e.g. "what do you hope to achieve during this event") and current thoughts or concerns (e.g. "what do you have in mind that you would like to say here"). Each of these three addresses represents more or less monologue structure, whereas the fourth extract represents a conversational structure. It is a 70 seconds episode located at 56 minutes from the beginning of the event where both the two present directors and one employee intervene in the interview.

The extracts used in article 3 are from the second meeting between the consultant and the management. The two client participants were the manager of R&D and the director of the customer process. The idea of this meeting was to reflect and discuss the outcomes of first consulting event for the organisation and to make planning for the next steps both in terms of managerial work and the consulting relationship. The article includes three separate extracts from the conversation during the meeting. The first extract is located at 35 minutes into the beginning (lasting 70 seconds), the second one half an hour later (lasting 40 seconds) and the third one at the end of the meeting (lasting 75 seconds).

In sum, the study focuses on the beginning of a consulting relationship and deals with conversations that occur when negotiating the contract, when starting work with the organisation and when discussing the change process with the management at the first follow-up. Although my initial intention was not to study the beginning of a consulting relationship, the selection of the data in the writing process of each original article led to this preference.

2.3 Methodological repertoire

2.3.1 Systemic frame

Systemic thinking provided one methodological frame for this study. Systemic thinking cannot be explained easily or understood comprehensively since its roots are multidisciplinary drawing from cybernetics (e.g. Wiener, 1948), biology (e.g. Maturana and Varela, 1980) social sciences (e.g. Burell and Morgan 1979; Luhmann, 1995) and anthropology (e.g. Bateson 1972). The systemic approach draws from the Aristotelian notion that "the whole is more than the sum of its part" (quoted in von Bertalanffy, 1972). The General Systems Theory presented by von Bertalanffy in 1950 was an early attempt to build a wider body of knowledge of systems. Since then, systemic ideas have contributed to various applied fields of human sciences like organization theory (e.g. Checkland, 1994; Miller and Rice, 1967), communication theory (e.g. Cronen, Chen and Pearce, 1988), management practice and development (e.g. Barge, 2004; Cecchin and Stratton, 1991; Senge, 1990), organizational consulting (e.g. Campbell et al., 1991; Kurpius, 1985; Oliver, 2005; Shaw, 1997) and family therapy (e.g., Selvini-Palazzoli, Boscolo, Cecchin and Prata, 1980; Hoffman, 1981). Within these multiple fields authors use various concepts to explain systemic principles, leading to plurality of systemic schools, like 'open systems theory', 'organizational cybernetics', 'interactive planning', 'soft systems approach' 'critical systemic thinking' (Flood, 1999). Overall, the systemic perspective views organizations as complex and emergent by nature (Flood, 1999; Stacey 1996).

This study follows ideas and conceptions from the 'systemic-constructionist approach' (e.g. Barge, 2004, 2007; Barge and Little, 2002; Campbell, 2000; Cronen and Lang, 1994; Oliver, 2005; Pearce, Villar and McAdam, 1992) which brings together social constructionist and systemic thinking. It highlights the emergence of language use, proposing that evolving conversations create new possibilities for meaning-making and action. Organisations can be viewed as evolving processes of actions and interpretations that inspire new actions leading to new interpretations (Silverman, 1970). Moreover, the systemic-constructionist approach underlines the context-bound and context shaping nature of all action. Every conversation should therefore be viewed as a unique intersection of various contexts (e.g. time, people, place, the topic). The situational perspective adopted in this thesis is drawn from systemic-constructionist ground by viewing the consultant's situational task in contexts of both professional role and institutional goal.

Another systemic frame for analysis of this thesis is to view the consulting setting as a social system that consists of multiple relationships. These relationships are seen as not stable but as 'living' and being continuously changing. Relationship constructions between various stakeholders in the system are therefore of importance. In this study a consulting system is viewed as a triangular system where the consultant represents one party, while the managers and employees represent the other two main parties (cf. Kurpius and Fuqua, 1993). Being a relational system a change in one relationship of the system enhances change in the other relationships. This is why consulting conversations are viewed as potentially epochal: they can re-construct relationships in the consulting system and, again, change the relationships within bigger organisational system creating new action and performance.

Moreover, it is the systemic awareness that helped me to see that participants in a consulting triangle position each other and become positioned by others in varying ways even during a single consulting conversation. This idea offered insight into the external consulting role: in a system the consultant as a third party can provide new positions for organisational members and thereby offer flexibility for the system to adopt itself to new circumstances. The idea of balancing between various consulting tasks is also drawn from the systemic idea of homeostasis.

2.3.2 Discourse Analysis

Another methodological frame and also more concrete analysis practice comes from Discourse Analysis (DA) (Potter, 1996; 2003a; 2004; Potter and Wetherell, 1987) which, as centring on the analysis of 'naturally occurring talk' (Potter, 2004), focuses on the fine details of interaction and sees discourses as action-oriented, situated, constructed and constructive (Potter 2003a). A consulting conversation is approached as action that is situated in the particular local context and interactional sequences. The interest here is to examine *how* consulting parties, through talk, construct the social worlds that then became real for them. This is done by taking a careful look at the rhetorical character of talk in sequences as well as the discursive strategies that participants employ in conversation.

DA can be viewed as "an umbrella which covers a wide variety of actual research practices with quite different aims and theoretical backgrounds" (Burr, 1995, 163). This study utilises DA as presented by Jonathan Potter and his colleagues, for example by utilising ideas and practices that are originally developed within the tradition of Conversation Analysis (CA) (Goffman, 1979; Peräkylä 1995; Sacks, Schegloff and Jefferson, 1974; Silverman and Peräkylä, 1990). In particular, by focusing on turn-taking and the sequential order of conversations and looking at how utterances are responses to earlier turns and how some turns construct certain preferences during a sequence, the study owes to practices of CA.

DA practitioners favour naturalistic interactional materials in their studies. Naturalistic materials document the interaction as it happens and retain the action-oriented nature of talk. Moreover, they show how participants orient to settings and institutions and call for centring to situated practices of the participants (Potter, 2003a). Thus, to examine consulting practice, the DA idea of using naturalistic materials suits well. Moreover, this perspective and the material of this study makes it possible to study the institutional character of consulting talk. Here, this study owes again to CA tradition (e.g. Drew and Heritage, 1992).

Discourse analytic perspective affords a researcher with many analytical options. Following the conceptualization of Alvesson and Kärreman (2000), a researcher makes choices in the dimension between local-situational and macro-system contexts, as well as in the dimension between transient meaning (e.g. emerging from specific interaction) and durable meaning (e.g. existing beyond specific interaction). While my choices regarding the original analysis of the sub-articles follow a micro-discourse perspective, the summary article also looks at the macro-perspective by connecting language use in local practice to the institutional interaction context.

2.4 Analysis process

2.4.1 Analysis through the' insider' and 'outsider' views

The fact that I had both the researching as well as consulting position has its consequences for both the access to the data and its utilization. Actually, I was involved with three different processes or contexts and – connected to them – I had different access to the experience and data in each as summarised in figure 3.

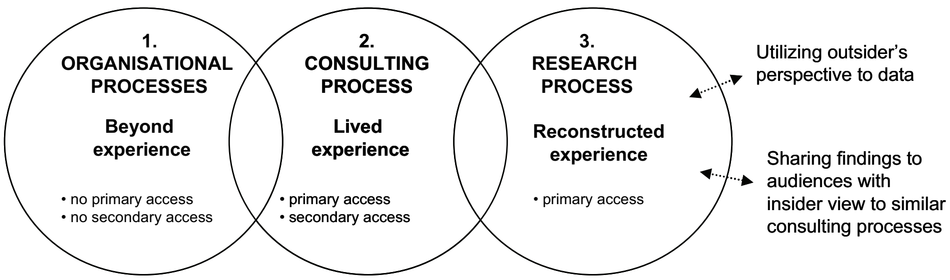

FIGURE 3 Various processes and the researcher's access to them

In relation to organisational processes to which the consulting process was connected I was an outsider without access to the day-to-day practice. I had neither primary access to visiting the organisation nor primary access to hearing what people talked about during their daily work or, what their thoughts on the consultancy process were. I also did not have secondary access that would for example enable me use of organisational documents, mails or other sort of data. Thus, this reality was beyond my experience. Instead, as a consultant in the consultancy process, I was a 'complete member' (Adler and Adler, 1987) of this system and had the insider view to it. As an 'insider action researcher' (Coghlan and Brannick, 2001) I was experientially immersed into the situations being studied and I had lived experience of them. I had primary access to consulting conversations and also secondary access in terms of having the recordings of the conversations. When it comes to the research process, I had as the first author of the studies primary access to it.

Working in a research team actually meant that the analysis was done utilizing 'insider/outsider team research' (Bartunek and Louis, 1996). This has been a remarkable benefit for the production of the research since throughout the analysis process there was a possibility to verify the analysis, results and conclusions in discussions between the 'insider' and the 'outsiders'. I had also audiences, professional consultants and managers, with whom to share the findings of the original studies. This made it possible to verify the findings with others who had lived experiences from similar consulting settings. Both these outsider resources offered opportunities to reflect on and control how I was reading the material.

Practically, and to make use of this benefit, the majority of all analysis work was done within the regular pair work sessions which the two researchers ('insider' and 'outsider') arranged at least 20 days per annum. To utilize my 'insider' perspective to data (Brannick and Coghlan, 2007), it was possible for us as a research pair to test whether the interpretations fit with the lived experience I had from the analyzed situation. This took place by pondering discussions of the type "if this reading of the data is sense making when considering the situation the conversation is drawn from". Discussions, observations and insights produced during these sessions were carefully documented in writing and these notes were actively used during the analysis and writing phases. Whilst writing has mainly been done separately, the two other members of the research team have regularly commented and provided their insights and suggestions for revisions concerning the manuscripts of the original articles.

To manage the potential shortcomings from 'insider' perspective during the overall research process and especially during the analysis sessions, we systematically used third person position to talk about the consultant ("the consultant") instead of using first person position ("I) or second person position ("you", "Risto"), which in itself created some distance and facilitated analysis and conclusions which were not tied to my subjective and personal experiences only. Also, on occasions where I noticed some interference caused by subjective thoughts and feelings, like embarrassment or defence, these issues were openly discussed in the team and they were taken into account as information from the system.

This arrangement was completed during the analysis process by utilizing data sessions and methodology seminars in which discursively oriented experts who were familiar with the methodological perspectives and analysis tools of this research provided their observations, insights and interpretations of the extracts which were selected for the original articles of this thesis. During the two research projects, 12 two-day seminars have been arranged and most of the extracts of this thesis have been worked on during these seminars. All the conversations including analytic observations, insights and concluding remarks made during these group sessions have been carefully documented in writing and these comments can be identified by the speaker.

Moreover, during the research projects, the researches attended several national and international congresses and seminars in which they gave presentations about the aims and preliminary insights and findings of these projects. Audiences of these settings included academics, consulting and organization development practitioners and university students. These settings were used for testing the findings and conclusions of the original articles within the wider communities.

2.4.2 Analytical concepts and tools

Whilst the idea of situationally emerging interactional tasks and hidden agendas was reconstructed during the writing process of this thesis in order to offer a wider perspective to all three articles, the analysis of the original studies benefited from more specified concepts.

In the first article, the focus of analysis was on the indirectness and extra cautiousness in language use by which consulting parties display *sensitivity* (Linell and Bredmar, 1996) of the topics or the meeting situation itself when potentially problematic or threatening issues are raised for discussion. The concept of *sensitivity marker* (or 'delicacy marker') (Adelswärd, 1989; Haakana, 2001; Linell and Bredmar, 1996; Silverman and Peräkylä, 1990; Suoninen, 1999) was used to point out these detailed ways of expressing sensitivity. The analysis of sensitive conversational sequences led to the observation that it is the meaning potential of the expressions that is managed by using delicacy markers. By using delicacy markers, the conversationalists can express that the topic at hand is connected to some particular meanings while by the same token they can suspend a more thorough *topic penetration* (Linell and Bredmar, 1996).

The second article applied the idea of consulting relationship as a *triadic system* (Kurpius and Fuqua, 1993; Sagar and Wiseman, 1982) between the consultant, employees and managers. The analysis was based on the observation that each consulting party seemed to build a different view of the triad depending on what interests (or agenda) they brought into negotiations. While doing so, each party *positioned* (Langenhove and Harre, 1999) themselves and others by their language use. When positioning each other, each party in different ways constructed *asymmetry* and *symmetry* of the relationships between themselves. The concept of asymmetry comes from CA based studies that examine institutional interaction and view asymmetry as an interactional achievement (Maynard, 1991). This article adopted the concepts of asymmetry and symmetry as analytical tools to examine inequalities and equalities of the situated descriptions of the relationships regarding either power, authority, knowledge, competence or other forms of hierarchy (Linell and Luckman, 1991). Moreover, it looked at how asymmetry or symmetry was displayed by communication patterns (Markova and Foppa, 1991).

The third article focused on the *discursive strategies* by which the *content and process of advice* was managed in conversations by the consultant and used for the consulting process purposes. The idea of discursive strategies stems from DA tradition that focuses on the rhetorical or argumentative organization of talk (Potter, 2003a). Distinguishing the process and the content of advice comes from current research on advising (MacGeorge, Feng, Butler and Budarz, 2004). Moreover, the analysis utilised the ideas of Positioning Theory (Harre and Langenhove, 1999) in showing that the consultant carefully positioned himself and the two managers in conversation to promote reflective practice, whereby the two managers could re-think their position, language use and action in the organizational system. While DA gave a general frame to the article to look at both the content of talk (i.e. what is said) and the process of doing it (i.e. how it was done), CA offered tools such as '*marked' and 'unmarked acknowledgement of advice'* (Heritage and Sefi, 1992) to look at how advice was received in each case.

3 SUMMARIES OF THE ORIGINAL ARTICLES

Article 1

Puutio, R., Kykyri, V-L. and Wahlström, J. Sensitivity and the Development of Meaning Potentials – Discursive Practices in a Process Consulting Contract Meeting. Submitted.

The first article examines discursive practices by which client managers and a consultant approach sensitivity, that is, discussions around topics that might evoke guilt, conflict or carry moral implications. Conversations during a contract meeting – which this study focuses on – offer a particularly interesting scope for this, since in it client participants for the first time introduce their concerns to the consultant. From the consultant's perspective, the contract meeting is important since in addition to being a negotiation of a concrete working contract with a potential client, it offers an opportunity to enter into a process of meaning negotiation with that client. With the help of three minutes data extract, the article asks how, during their first meeting, the consulting partners mark their addresses as sensitive and how they collaboratively deal with the sensitivity in terms of developing meaning potentials. In particular, the article explores the consultant's role in this action while also examining possible explanations as to why, in this case, the participants treat certain issues as sensitive.

The analysis shows the richness in the ways by which sensitivity becomes marked in the course of the conversation. Hesitations in articulation, using softening sentences, variation of vocabulary and intonation, speed of talk as well as topic penetration are examples of means that each conversationalist used in their talk. The analysis shows that indirectness of talk has interactional functions in the meeting. In particular, it is used to negotiate the meaning potentials of the topics at hand. The analysis pays attention to the particular interactional task of the consultant to manage the situation in a way that helps clients to raise matters of concern for discussion on the one hand and to actively develop the meaning potentials of the topics on the other hand. The consultant's external position seems to make it possible to enable the consulting meeting to proceed fluently and thereby strategically utilize the meeting situation in order to construct a safe enough and a shared goal for working with the organizational topics at hand.

The article discusses the functionality of indirect language use in consulting conversations, in particular at the early stage of the consulting relationship. It suggests that even though momentarily hesitative or stammering talk may at first sight appear as if there is a lack of professional competence to discuss difficulties, in a local interaction process it can communicate mutual understanding and hence portray the consultant as one who can work sensitively and respectfully. In these terms, the article contributes to the understanding of institutional practices of process consulting. Moreover, by showing the reciprocal nature of sensitivity, the article challenges the idea of a consultant as a supreme rhetorical expert who can have control over the client as claimed by the critical authors. The article points out that expressing and handling sensitivity may be less conscious than what it looks like in retrospect, and that skilful consultants manage to do this with and among their clients even though they are not aware of doing so. As a practical conclusion, the article underlines the importance of the beginning of a consulting process in its fine details. It concludes that consultants need to take the indirectness of the client's discourse into account as meaningful action rather than handling it as harmful social friction. Consultants need to sensitively respond to delicacy delivered, realizing this as a part of collaborative meaning work.

Article 2

Puutio, R., Kykyri, V-L. and Wahlström, J. (2008) Constructing Asymmetry and Symmetry in Relationships Within a Consulting System. Systemic Practice and Action Research 21(1), 35-54.

The second article deals with relationship building at the beginning of a consulting process with an organisation. The materials, conversations between a consultant and organisational members during the first consulting session, are analysed from the perspective of asymmetry and symmetry. Asymmetry refers to one hierarchical characteristic of organizational relationships and to an unequal communication whereas symmetry refers to equality in both how relationships are viewed and how communication works. The former is viewed as important for organisational management while the latter is viewed as essential in providing commitment and mutual learning. The article asks how speakers in three different participant categories of the consulting system (the consultant, management and employees), construct their relationships as asymmetric and symmetric. In addition, the article asks how symmetry and asymmetry of the relationships are negotiated in course of the multi-party consulting conversation.

The analysis of the three single addressees shows that when issues on the formal agenda are being talked about, organizational members discreetly orient to the organizational relationships and make the current asymmetries and symmetries visible from their perspective. This takes place by the ways speakers position each other in talk. Each party of the consulting system views the relationships differently and constructs the asymmetry and symmetry of the mutual relationships differently. Each party also communicates in both asymmetric and symmetric ways. The analysis of a multi-party interaction episode shows the delicacy of negotiating asymmetry and symmetry of relationships in the system. In conversations, consulting parties mutually produce and reproduce the asymmetry-symmetry balance of their relationships from one moment to another. For a consultant, whose only means of contributing is the consulting conversation, this means an opportunity to become actively involved in the relationship construction between the participants. The consultant's status offers a privileged position from which to offer temporary amendments regarding the balance between asymmetric and symmetric relationships in the system. The consultant's role is important in facilitating flexible shifts (i.e. regulation) between symmetric and asymmetric relationships and communication within an organization.

The article suggests that the symmetry-asymmetry dimension is a notable issue in understanding consulting relationships and interaction. By having illuminated the special position of a consultant in allowing asymmetry and enhancing symmetry the article contributes to research that approaches consulting as a form of institutional interaction. For a practising consultant the article offers conceptual tools and questions for reflecting one's own practice. It highlights that being curious about one's own contribution to relationship constructions within the consulting system is one part of the professional reflexivity that every process consultant should engage in.

Article 3

Puutio, R., Kykyri, V-L. and Wahlström, J. (2009) The Process and Content of Advice Giving in Support of Reflective Practice in Management Consulting. Reflective Practice 10 (4), 513-528.

The third article examines advice-giving conversations in consulting practice. Surprisingly, this empirical perspective is novel even though consulting work as advice-giving activity has recently became under scrutiny in research from many other perspectives. By focusing on a single consulting session between two managers and a consultant the article asks how the process and content of advice support reflective managerial practice.

Providing detailed analysis of the discursive practices in three conversational episodes the article illustrates that both content and process of the advice can be used to offer reflective perspectives to management. From the content perspective the analysis illustrates three different sort of advice for reflective practice, i.e. regarding managerial position, language use or managerial action. From the process perspective, the analysis shows some varieties in the discursive strategies available to the consultant, including strategic use of preceding talk, use of a pondering style of talking and employment of psychological terminology, cautious ways of starting with questions when offering advice, as well as downplaying the consultant's expert role. In the flow of the conversations, inviting a reflective perspective to managerial practice seems to be strongly on the agenda of the consultant who explicates a reflective stance as an essential aspect of the managerial position.

The article claims that that the two different agendas of consulting – advising and supporting reflective practice – need not exclude each other as suggested in process consultation literature but rather they can be woven together by appropriate use of language. Supporting reflective practice calls for offering challenging perspectives that suit the managerial concerns, interests and abilities, as well as interaction that delicately considers the management's discourse. In this sense, as the article suggests, giving and receiving advice is a collaborative pursuit where the consultant needs the client's initiatives and responses to formulate and fine-tune the fit between the advice and the client's discourse. This contributes to our understanding of the institution of process consultation.

By increasing empirically based knowledge on the practice of process consulting, the article contributes to debates on theory and practice in consulting. Furthermore, by showing some of the complexities in promoting reflective practice in OD-consulting, the article discusses the learning of reflection. A reflective stance is not easy to attain, even when managers acknowledge its importance and their own need for gaining new perspectives. The article concludes that consulting conversations may offer a specific arena for situated learning of these skills, enabling managers to apply similar discursive strategies in their own managerial practice.

4 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

4.1 Main findings

The aim of this thesis was to examine process consulting practice. It was asked how responding to various interactional challenges builds particular situational tasks for a consultant. The thesis aimed to recognize these tasks and the use of various discursive strategies that became employed in accomplishing the tasks. The study focused on conversations when negotiating the contract, when dealing with the organizational members during a consulting event or when advising the management during a follow up discussion. As a result, the analysis showed that a process oriented consultant became a container of various simultaneously emerging tasks. A variety of discursive strategies were employed. Managing situational tasks required more or less implicit targets and strategies, which hence became 'hidden agendas' of the consulting conversations. The presence of hidden agendas can be portrayed as a salient constitutive element of institutional interaction in consulting practice.

The first article examined a sensitive discussion episode during the contract meeting where two participants (both holding a managerial position), talked about their organization and planned a consulting event for it. The consultant and the client faced the challenge to build a shared agenda for their co-work. The analysis showed how, on the one hand, the consultant supported the participants to raise sensitive topics for discussion and how he actively managed the development of emerging meaning potentials on the other hand. Avoiding and suspending topic engagement that would appear conflicting or face threatening, i.e. guilt or shame evoking appeared to the task for the consultant. It was carried out by the use of discursive strategies which show carefulness and indirectness on the one hand and purposefulness on the other. Utilizing clients' formulations, using first person voice as well as professional vocabulary, proved to belong to the discursive strategies of the consultant. The consultant's external position seemed to make it possible to strategically utilize situations in order to offer a future perspective that each participant could accept as a shared and an open goal for working. The consultant's hidden agenda appeared to make the consulting event look as a remedy for the difficult matters at hand. He portrayed the organizational situation with psychological language thereby making it look manageable. Moreover, the consultant did constructive work to make the social situation of negotiating safe and the future perspective promising enough.

The second article took a step forward in the consulting process and focused on the beginning of the consultation event where both employees and managers met the consultant in order to talk about the current organizational situation. This situation challenged each party to define and negotiate their mutual relationships in a multi-party context. In the conversation, the consultant became actively involved in the reconstruction of the organizational relationships in terms of the asymmetry-symmetry dimension. The article showed how the consultant, on one hand, took the current asymmetries of the organization into consideration and even supported them while on the other hand he built symmetric relationships between all concerned. The consultant's strategy to do this was to take the chair role whereby he could define his own as well as others' positions in a discussion and to offer space for certain perspectives (e.g. for employer's wishes) while temporally ignoring other perspectives (e.g. that of managers). Facilitating flexible shifts between the polarities describes the consultant's hidden agenda in a situation were enough clarity between different organizational roles as well as enough mutuality and sense of sharing resources (e.g. observations, opinions, ideas, learning points) were needed.

The third article took the meeting with the management after the consultation event under scrutiny and focused on advice-giving situations. The article showed how enhancing reflection became the challenge in a conversation. The consultant responded to this challenge by supporting the client's own agency in leadership position on the one hand and by offering alternative perspectives on leadership practices on the other. These tasks were managed, as the article showed, by particular reflective practice whereby the management could re-think its position in regard to the organization. Both the contents of advice and the process of advising seemed to support this constructive work of building such reflective positions to the management. From the content perspective, the advice focused on the managerial position, the language use and the details of actions. Various discursive strategies were employed for this purpose, including for example, strategic use of preceding talk, use of a pondering style of talking and employment of psychological terminology, cautious ways of opening up with questions when offering advice, as well as downplaying the consultant's expert role. In the flow of the conversations, the consultant seemed to orient himself following the more or less hidden agenda of making reflective practice as high priority of leadership.

The findings of the original studies are in the following related to the idea of consultant's interactional tasks during consulting conversations. These tasks seem to have a twofold character which makes it justifiable to view them as *dual tasks*, meaning that the consultant had to work simultaneously in two different directions, as summarized in the figure 4.

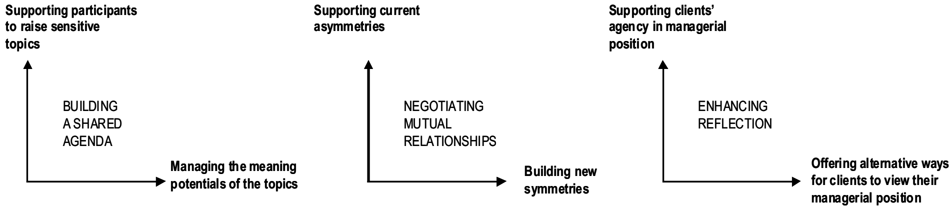

FIGURE 4 Dual tasks as dilemmas in responding to interactional challenges

Meeting the challenges of the interaction situations of consulting conversations thus means that a consultant holds a dilemmatic position from which to focus on varying perspectives. I argue that this balancing activity requires the employment of hidden agendas, which, in turn, illuminates the institutional character of process consulting. Next, the dual task perspective and the functions of hidden agendas are discussed in more detail and related to wider perspectives on consulting role, institutional interaction and the ideal of neutrality in process consultation.

4.2 Balancing activity, dual tasks and the functions of hidden agendas

The finding of dual tasks and the consulting position as balancing between differing and even opposing agendas resonates well with the idea of consulting work as managing the balance between order and chaos. Indeed, Clegg et al (2004, 34-35) suggest that: ″consulting need not be seen as just organizing in the sense of the creation of a new order, but also as disruption of order, an exploration and exploitation of the spaces in between present order and potential, future order″. Several other authors introduce the consulting position from a similar kind of duality perspective. Ellis et al (2001) suggest that a process consultant needs to manage tensions between resolving here-and-now problems and engaging the client's system capacity to learn. Church et al (1994) find that OD consultants often struggle with dual values: wanting on one hand to foster human concerns while responding to client call to focus on outcomes on the other hand. Overall, the functional literature describes the consultant's ambiguous position of simultaneously developing empathy for and maintaining distance from the key players (Glasser, 2002). What this study adds is the systematic illustration of micro-practices by which dual tasks are performed through talk and how balancing between the polarities takes place from early beginning of a process consulting relationship.

The finding of the variation of discursive strategies in responding to interaction challenges of consulting conversation resonates well with the idea of 'paradoxical repertoire' and its use for consulting purposes. Differing and even opposing discourses can constitute resources for doing consultancy (Alvesson and Johansson, 2002; Whittle, 2006). Using language strategically – in order to balance between situational demands - can thus be viewed as a key ability of a process consultant to manage the dual tasks. Ospina, Dodge, Godsoe, Minieri, Reza and Shall (2004) showed empirically, how the dilemma between authority and democracy can be faced and solved in change programs on a situational basis: an authority position can be used strategically for enhancing democratic spaces for organizations. This is in congruence with the findings of the current study. Depending on the situational context, a consultant can, for example, adopt a strong expert position from which s/he can offer perspectives as factual and indisputable or s/he can downplay the expert position and offer his/her view as an optional perspective to be considered along with the client participant's own views. The position of both expert and outsider makes it possible for a consultant to 'test' varying strategies and make situational judgments on what interactional strategies to use. However, as the original analysis argues, we need to realize that producing particular tension or dilemma, or balancing between the bipolar pairs of the duality is not a simple matter of individual choice (see also, Ashcraft and Trethewey, 2004) but rather a question of mutual activity.

As a living system an organization must adapt itself to changes in the environment. The consultant's balancing activity becomes meaningful by the fact that the organization has to balance between various demands anyway. A consultant may be hired in critical moments when there is a need to find a new balance between stability and change. The dual task perspective can help us to see that by taking a balancing position with the opposed needs of a consulting situation, a consultant might (either consciously or not) come to help the organization in its need to balance, for example, various interests. Even though this study does not primarily focus on the political nature of organizational change (Buchanan and Badham, 1999), a consultant's contribution could be seen as political activity, contrasting the views that tend to deny this aspect of OD work (e.g. French and Bell, 1995). Successful balancing, for example, between organizational coherence and diversity is found to be essential success factor for organizations (Butcher and Clarke, 2006). This study illuminates consultants' functional role in these balancing processes.

Organizational ambivalence and tension between various interests during a change process create challenges for consulting conversations. Against this background it is meaningful that the consultant employs interactional tasks and discursive strategies that do not make all agendas openly articulated. Collaboration in multi-party settings without any hidden agendas would make the consulting relationship appear not mutually appreciative, responsive and polite. Both the managerial and the employee position in any change situation is ambivalent and therefore avoiding facing too conflicting or ambiguous conversations can be functional. Similarly, mutual relationships can be organized more flexibly and a reflective perspective can be embedded to the conversation by keeping the conversational moves partly covert.

For a client, observing a consultant in dealing with challenges of a consulting conversation and managing situational tasks, may be a learning experience that can be transported to managerial work. Seemingly, managers face similar challenges in their organizations: they are supposed to raise sensitive matters, to deal with opposing interests and build shared agendas. Moreover, they are supposed to give advice and help people to reflect on their own practices. Consulting conversations can thus enrich the 'linguistic abilities' of managers by offering practices that can be transformed into meta-skills for managerial use (Clark and Salaman 1998b). In functionalist literature terms, a consultant offers a role model to management in dealing with complex issues (Jamieson, 1995, Lippitt and Lippitt, 1986, Schein, 1987).

4.3 On the institution of process consultancy

In viewing consulting practice from role, goal and task perspectives, this study shows that each perspective is different in terms of what is open or hidden in consulting practice. Figure 5 below illustrates the variation in each perspective.

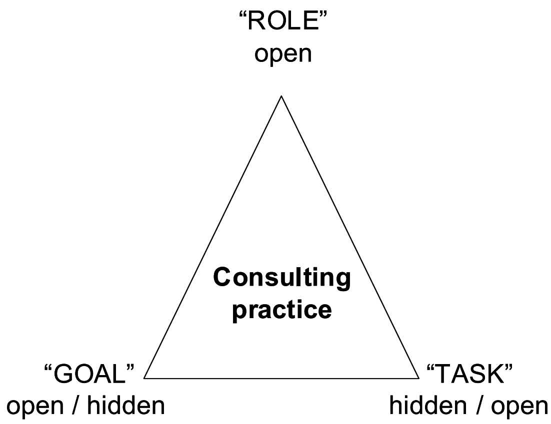

FIGURE 5 'Open' and 'Hidden' in consulting practice

The role perspective stands for an open agenda: a consultant can agree openly with the client that his or her role is, for example, to 'facilitate change' whereas the institutional perspective (goal) might contain both open and hidden elements. The parties might have the somewhat same understanding on the purpose of the consulting, for example to 'transform the organization' but the consultant might also have – as a part of this goal - a parallel hidden goal of making the management more reflexive concerning their own ways of thinking and acting. When it comes to interactional tasks in consulting conversations, a consultant might hold more hidden than open agendas in order to find ways to respond to the clients within interactional practice.

Viewing consulting work as carrying out 'hidden agendas' does certainly not mean that the goals from the consultant's side are purposefully hidden or secret in their own right for the client. Rather, by taking a researcher's retrospective perspective, we are able to see (i.e. reconstruct) that the interaction can contain such qualities and that these qualities are needed, too. Hidden agendas are simply employed to bring forth the shared agenda for the consulting relationship and, thereafter, to 'get things done' in that context. Owing to the research on the institutional interaction within various professions we can see that the presence of invisible interactional dominance, 'hidden agendas' in terms of this study, need not be viewed as a problematic side of interaction, but rather as a salient feature of the institution itself.

Based on the studies from the same research projects as the original articles of this study (Kykyri, Puutio and Wahlström, 2007a, b; Kykyri, Puutio and Wahlström, 2009), Kykyri (2008) has suggested that the particular institutional task of a process consultant is to set conversational norms for the multi-party consulting interaction. Moreover, our research team has illuminated the institutional goal of consulting by showing that re-languaging the organizational realities is present in consulting (Puutio and Kykyri, 2007). What this study adds is the situational character of consulting work and the essential role of covert communication that establishes the practice as process consulting.

The finding of hidden agendas in consulting interaction challenges the idea that a consultant can be a neutral agent in a system that only helps "the client to perceive, understand, and act upon the process events that occur in the client's environment" (Schein, 1987, 34). Consultants might portray themselves, as critical research shows (Bloomfield and Danieli 1995), as neutral conduits of aid. In the process consulting literature, there is a strong professional ideal of putting the client's agenda first and therefore warning words are expressed: "facilitators make a huge mistake by coming in with their own agendas, rather than facilitating the leader's agenda" (Schein et al., 2001, 14).

It is not that the practitioner literature overlooks the consideration of complexities in consulting position. Rather, it acknowledges that consulting work easily evokes ethical dilemmas and that the consultant's responsibility of managing these is of importance (Lippitt and Lippitt, 1986; Lynch, 1997; Ozley and Armenakis, 2000). Moreover, Schein (1988, 1995, 1997) underlines the interventive nature of all consulting activities as 'diagnosing' the organizational problems. However, the professional literature stands for neutrality, even though there are challenging voices, too. Huszczo and Sheahan (1999, 264), for example, point out that the concept of neutrality is an illusion in a reciprocal system and that claiming neutrality leads to uncaring relationship that overlooks the key task of "enhancing organizational effectiveness and improving the quality of the work lives of the people involved". This study accords with the critical notion that the consultant is an active participant and should therefore not be viewed as a neutral agent in terms of setting goals for the consulting work, in terms of defining the relationships and in terms of content, i.e. what perspectives or actions are seen as relevant. To 'be helpful' (Schein 1999) simply means accepting a position that is loaded in favor of agendas that the consultant sees helpful.

To re-think the ideal of neutrality in consulting work, we can turn to debates of other helping institution, namely systemic family therapy. Originally, the systemic approach highlighted the ideal of neutrality (Selvini-Palazzoli et al 1980) meaning that a helper should avoid the acceptance of any position in a system as more correct than another. However, during the development of systemic practices it was soon realized that one cannot hold a neutral position since language use *per se* creates preferences and make some explanations, moral positions or points of departure more relevant than the others (for recent debates, see e.g. Kurri, 2005). The ideal of neutrality has transformed into the ideal of curiosity – the assumption that appreciating multiplicity of 'stories' and possible actions are more helpful for client systems (Cecchin, 1987). A curiosity approach in process consulting work could mean that the consultant, instead of trying to be neutral, makes initiatives for the client system to reflect on the variation in explanations of difficulties, ways of seeing the future as well as possible actions to be taken. This way, the client might also view the consultant as one enriching the ways of seeing realities and finding options for action.

Thus, we should not overlook the power position of a consultant. In accordance with Linell's (1990) notion on various ways to dominate we can think that even though the consultant does not speak the most during the consulting conversation, s/he may use power in other ways. Making initiatives in interaction, setting positions for conversationalists, preferring certain perspectives on the topic, using particular concepts for talking about issues at hand and fostering some meaning potentials over the others are ways to dominate from a consultant's position. The critical consulting literature explicates this power position well (e.g. Clark and Salaman 1998a; Fincham, 2003; Fincham, and Clark, 2002; Werr and Styhre, 2003) and this study illuminates the practices by which such domination takes place in process consulting practice.

4.4 Contribution to author's own practice

This study has focused on consulting work that is drawn from my own consulting practice with a client. Adopting such action researcher's position has offered a specific reflective stance to observe, analyze and conceptualize the action that I was personally involved in. Even though this research did not follow the 'self reflective spiral in action research' (Kemmis and Wilkinson, 1998, 22) including systematic planning of a new action, the practice of doing the research has influenced my own professional orientation and practice as a consultant and a scholar in consultation practice in various ways.

The analytical work with the material of this study has raised my own sensitivity to the details of language use and broadened my conceptual repertoire for reflecting on the ongoing action. When having consulting conversations, I nowadays find myself observing the words and concepts by which I am inquiring into social realities of a client organization or through which I am commenting on client descriptions. Increasingly, I tend to call my own observations into question by inviting the client to reflect on the language being used, by asking "what kind of conversation have we entered in this far". The reflection concerns also the client's language use and the mutual responding to each others' addresses. By doing so, I attempt to enhance the organizational members' reflexivity in the given moment enabling them to become "practical authors and critical questioners to each other within the social experience" (Cunliffe, 2002, 52).

Nowadays, when ever possible, I also tend to video-tape consulting sessions and to utilize this material for reflection with those who take part in the sessions. This practice has deepened my professional belief that new social arrangements can be called into being by reflecting on the coordination of action with clients. Reflecting on 'here-and-now' practice is a powerful method as it helps all participants to step away from their first-person position and move to second- and third person positions. Furthermore, when having client consent, I show examples of my own practice to students when teaching consultation in academic or professional contexts. Doing research has thus become a part of my consulting practice and reflecting on consulting practices has become an essential part of my scholarship in consulting. In fact, the research process has clarified my professional identity as a scholar-practitioner, one who is interested in theory in order to develop practice and vice versa (Wasserman and Kram, 2009). Currently, when doing consulting processes, I try to position myself as a co-operative researcher with the client and build structures that enable co-researching practice within the process. To build active involvement and co-operation I, for example, invite a client representative to build a consulting team with me, thus building an insider-outsider consulting setting for the process. From this stance, I can agree with other authors who encourage process consultants to become aware of their own practice and its impact on the client (e.g. Ellis, Kiely and Pettigrew, 2001; Lambrechts et al., 2009; Schein, 1995).

This study has helped me to identify the tension between the professional ideals and practices. Functionalist literature present ideals for consulting work and these inevitably have a role in terms of building professional identity and orienting to work in practice. For example, literature on process consultation highlights an ideal of open communication, equal relationships and avoidance of advice giving. This study shows that these professional *ideals*, as important as they may be, are somewhat impossible to follow. Rather, it is the *situation*, its challenges and complexities that guides how professional ideals can be practiced in culturally and locally coherent ways. This, I think, is a contribution of this research to my practice, not only as a consultant but a scholar of consulting work, too. Abstract ideals are somewhat meaningless unless they can be made specific to some particular situation. Moreover, we cannot know beforehand what ideals we might make relevant when practicing consultancy. What then becomes important is the reflexivity of the consultant – ability to reflect on one's own participation in the situation and to use this insight to guide further actions. Reflexivity, at least for me, represents a new ideal or a narrative for consulting work. This ideal may find various realization depending on the living moments of practice (cf. Oliver, 2005).

Another learning point deals with the early stage of a consulting relationship. This study shows the consultant's key position in making choices on how topics are approached, and how meanings become negotiated, as well as in defining organizational relationships and managerial position from the very beginning. It accords with the complexity perspective to consulting (Shaw, 1997) by claiming that all participants deal with many simultaneous challenges that contextualize the consulting conversations. As an outcome, this insight has made me become more aware of the importance of the beginning of the consulting relationship. The same observation is made by Glasser (2002, 38-39), who points out that "new consultants should be well acquainted with the power of first impressions and schooled in preventing the minor mishaps that can become major detractors in the early minutes or even seconds of a consulting relationship".

This contributes to practice. What we can do is handle consulting conversations and their outcomes as something that can be negotiated and re-negotiated. A reflexive exercise with a client could be to inquire into the following questions as a part of the contracting process: "what relevant topics have we approached this far and what topics should we engage in or suspend?", "what kind of a relationship are we engaging in this far and what might it make other organizational relationship look like?", or "what impact has our conversation had on how you as managers see your own position in the system – what perspectives should we re-think?". These kinds of questions regarding topics, relationships and managerial position, are something that a consultant could bear in mind at the beginning of a relationship. Raising these kinds of questions might help both parties to find a suitable ways of working together. Moreover, the consultant could expand his or hers views on the emerging tasks and could collaborate with the client in order to be more reflexive with the potential hidden agendas.

4.5 Reflections on the production of the research

4.5.1 Action research

This study represents an action research setting where I was an outsider for the organization being consulted but an insider when it comes to the consultancy process in the organization as well as the institutional practices of process consultancy. Action research is said to provide the simplest basis for insider research (Brannick and Coghlan, 2007), which is normally not only concerned with studying some aspects of organization but also with changing it (Coghlan, 2003). In the case of this study the focus of the change efforts was guided by the process, but when entering the consultancy process, I had no expectation about what the research output would be (cf. Marshak and Heracleous, 2005). From these perspectives, insight and changes of my consulting practices as well as the usefulness of the new knowledge created through the study set the criteria to evaluate the research at hand.

The fact that the client participants were not involved in the production of the original research papers can be viewed as a weakness of the study if we see full participation as an ideal, as for example Whyte (1991) does. However, as noted for example by Huxham and Vangen (2003), the action research approach does not imply inherently that the organizational members should be concerned with the research aspect of the intervention. The primary interest for this study was neither to examine nor change the client organization. Instead, the target was to investigate the consulting practice. Therefore, communities of practice in consulting were occupied to reflect on the findings from the practitioner point of view (including the consulting team to which I belonged and consulting workshop audiences in professional meetings in Finland and in England). In each context, the feedback was that the workshop participants were able to connect to the findings by means of their own working situations. Other audiences for evaluating the findings have been the post-graduate student groups to whom I have been teaching consulting skills during the years of writing this thesis. The discussions with these audiences have strengthen my impression that the findings of the original studies communicate with experiences of those working in the field and offer useful ways to examine the practice. The evaluation of the practicality of the findings is eventually left to the wider community of practitioners and researchers.

My own position as both the consultant and the researcher of the case raises the question of managing this dual role (cf. Ramirez and Bartunek, 1989). To manage such challenges, action research tradition highlights the need for the researcher to reflect on the experience and to distinguish the researcher's own pre-understanding and biases regarding the action (e.g. Argyris, Putnam and Smith, 1985; Gummesson, 2000). In this research process self-reflection became possible in three ways. First, by listening to the tape-recorded material and watching the videotapes again and again I was able to 're-member' myself to the discussions. This recalling work, often shared with the research pair, helped me to verbalize, 're-tell' my own experience. In fact, this helped me see that it was not just me who talked, but rather the institution of process consultation. Second, analyzing materials with an outsider research pair as well as by sharing the material in data sessions with other DA researchers enabled me to get a more complex view of the consulting process than my memories from the situation could have done. Third, through the analysis process and the writing process I was forced to re-think consulting activity and to develop a conceptual understanding of it.

In reflecting on the production of the study, we can ask how the awareness of data gathering during the consulting process shaped the participants' behavior and what effect it might have had on the data corpus itself. Also, one can ask what effect my interest to study consultancy work had on my own practice during the actual consulting process. My experience was that the presence of video and audio taping did not disturb the process neither from my own nor from the participant's perspective. The participants seemed to forget the equipments quickly and none commented on the data-gathering during the process. This is understandable, since it was the client who initiated the consulting process and the process would have been conducted anyway. Further, for the same reasons, it is justifiable to consider the case to be a real life instance for research. Also, the fact that naturalistic materials gathered from this kind of consulting process are very scarce justifies its use as data. In addition, we need to see that this sort of data, naturally occurring talk, gives more detailed knowledge on practices than do inquiries and retrospective interviews (Potter, 2004). The data itself is thus dependent neither on memories and normative assumptions of participants, nor on the researcher's presumptions on what might be relevant in the consulting process.

4.5.2 Single-case study

Rather than aiming to produce generalized knowledge on how consultants tend to work, this study takes a single-case perspective aiming to explicate the "the richness and particularity" (Chen and Pearce, 1995, 141) of consulting practice within a given case. Rather than claiming what is general in consulting, I have tried to show what interaction *is possible* in process consulting.

However, if we consider the case at hand as one sample of practice, generalizations can be made. First, by utilizing my own case-documentation of nearly all consulting processes from more than ten years period as a comparative reference point, it is justifiable to claim that case reflected in the study represents what literature describes as *process consultation*. The outset, a situation where management faces difficulties and social 'friction' in leading a change process while employees report experiences of 'bad feelings' at their work is typical to process consultation. Similar to my earlier cases, the consulting methodology including preliminary tasks, group interviews, action methods, narrative and reflective techniques is also typical to process consultants. Most importantly, compared to my reference cases, there was similar kind of intention of encouraging participation, reflecting on the existing organizational system and re-negotiating the meanings emerging in the conversations. Second, it can be generalized that even though there are many case-specific features on *what was done* during the conversations in this case, there is generalizability on *how it was done.* The discursive strategies identified in this study can fit other instances since they represent institutional practices on how 'talk at work' (Drew and Heritage, 1992) occurs. Third, the findings provide researchers with ideas and tools to investigate interaction in professional settings, and offer *theoretical generalizations* that can be used as viewpoint in further research or as vehicles for the examination of other cases, as pointed out by Yin (1994).

4.5.3 Systemic frame and the use of discursive methodology

The use of the systemic frame and discourse analytic methodology in this study runs in interesting parallel to the actual consulting process of the case. As a consultant I worked to help the client participants find new connections between language use, meaning making and action. I also tried to create a social situation where participants could become positioned in new ways in relation to each other. As a researcher, I took a meta-position and utilised the same theoretical ideas to examine the consultancy practice.

Brown, Pryzwansky and Schulte (1987, 99) state that "whether implicitly or explicitly, current models of organizational consultation are based upon systems theory" (cited in Fugua and Kurpius, 1993, 607). From this perspective one can even claim that in order to understand the consulting practice a researcher should be informed by the pre-assumptions of the actual practice. This is why I see it as an advantage for this study to adopt the systemic frame. In fact, the systemic frame would have been somewhat impossible for me to overlook since it is the way I view the world. Similarly, since consulting in general, and process consultation in particular is discursive practice based on the presumption that a consultant can help the organisation by discussing with its members, discursive methodology is suitable means for analysing it.

The use of analytical tools in this study shows well the nature of discourse analytic research practice. As each original article represents analytical concepts that are drawn from a variety of research literature during the analysis process, the craftsmanship of analysis is very evident. Overall, discourse analytic tradition applied here does not offer ready-made tools for a researcher but rather a methodological frame from which to 'craft' the tools for use.

From the epistemological point of view it is worth noting what Grant, Hardy, Oswick and Putnam (2004, 14) have said on discourse methodology: "There can never be only one discourse that characterizes an organizational setting. Nor is there ever a definitive reading on organizational discourse. Researches are only able to observe some of what is going on as a result of their methodological choices; and they promote particular readings of it depending on academic and professional considerations". The current research is no exception. The methodological repertoire of this study has been influenced by a particular discourse analytic tradition and its applications. Again, my reading of the data was guided by my own understanding of this particular tradition. Certainly, my own reading of the data has been also intertwined – more or less unconsciously – with my professional experience. It is thus understandable to say that "any particular research approach cannot but fail to capture the complexity of language use that occurs over time, in multiple sites and in hidden ways: we make choices and trade-offs, some of which we are not even aware of" (Clark et al, 2004, 14).

Taking the notion of reciprocality of consulting relationships (e.g. Alvesson and Johansson, 2002; Clark and Fincham, 2002b; Fincham, 1999a; Sturdy, 1997, 2002; Werr and Styhre, 2003) the focus on the consultant's perspective can be seen as a limitation of the analysis in this study. Even though the analysis focused on sequences where consultant and clients respond to each others' moves, there remained a risk of overlooking the dialogical nature of all talk as well as the working relationship. More emphasis could have been placed on the fine details of the mutual responding by using video material more extensively (e.g. Wortham, 2001). Here, the in-depth analysis of each original study was conducted using textual material even though the primary analysis was completed using video and audio material.

4.6 Theoretical contribution

This study contributes to debates on consulting work raised by both functionalist and critical literature and partakes in creating interconnections between theory, research and practice in OD-work (e.g. Bunker et al., 2004; Czarniawska, 2001; Fincham and Clark, 2002; Kaplan, 1979; Ridley and Mendoza, 1993; Sebring 1979; Worley and Feyerherm, 2003).

The model of three varying perspectives to consulting practice helps differentiate a more general 'role perspective' from the institutional 'goal perspective' and from that of the situational 'task perspective'. This differentiation of perspectives offers one categorisation in viewing consulting. In a way, each represents different logic to approach consulting. Czarniawska's (2001) has applied Bourdieu's (1990) idea of three different logics in use in management consultation. The 'logic of practice' is situated in time and place and is used for pragmatic purposes in everyday organisational life. The task perspective of this study, focusing on actual situations can be seen as depicting this logic. The 'logic of theory' is abstract, has an objectivistic assumption and is used for discovering the 'truth'. The role and the goal perspectives as abstract illuminations of consulting can be placed under this logic, whereas the role perspective can also be seen as an example of 'logic of representation', since it stands for narrative knowledge and is used to explicate why something is done. This study has argued for the need to use different perspectives or logics to enter into consulting practice. This could contribute to decrease in dichotomous use of either functionalist perspective or critical perspective when approaching consultation. Thus, we can take a pro-consultancy stance (aiming to understand why consultants do what they do) and be critical at the same time (aiming to show the bigger picture and to challenge the practice under scope). Rather than polarizing the consulting phenomena into either/or notions, we need to handle the varying perspectives and logics as complementary (c.f. Lewis, 2000).

The idea of dual tasks as dilemmas in organizational practice (such as consulting) is not new in the field. A wide strand of literature exists pointing out that conflicts, dilemmas and tensions describe the organizational change and that organizational change occurs through the dynamics of paradox and contradiction (for a good review, see Lewis, 2000). Seo, Putnam and Bartunek (2003) have, for example, categorised dimensions and dualities in planned organizational change. According to them, "managing various dualities and tensions inherent in the process is a core element of organizational change and can serve as essential criteria for evaluating approaches to planned organizational change" (p. 101). From this perspective consulting practice should *apriori* be viewed as tensioned and dilemmatic.

Seo et al. (2003) call for, what they refer to as 'connection approach to managing dualities'. Dualities should not be viewed as alternatives, but as connected. They argue: "When dualities are treated as mutually reinforcing, they remain connected, use each other to generate insights, and are open to multiple and evolving interpretations" (p. 101). Applied to this study, we ought to be inquisitive as to the interconnections of various dual tasks identified. It is justifiable to assume that, for example, the way sensitive topics are addressed informs how the dual task of managing the asymmetries can be managed, which reflects back on how the dual task of enhancing reflection becomes manifested and accomplished. Needless to say, the dual tasks listed in this study are not the finite set of all potential tasks to be handled in consulting position. No doubt, our understanding of dilemmas and their interconnections in consultation work will continue to evolve as the consulting work becomes more and more complex in the course of organizational environments and as further research identifies new dilemmas.

This study has addressed the practices of process consultation. This choice is based on the fact that the data is drawn from process oriented practice and on there being a body of professional literature pertaining to this field. While creating some clarity to the focus of the study, process consultation perspective is also limited one. Lambrechts et al. (2009) point out that the practice of the process consultation is difficult to grasp and the ideas of process consultancy are often misunderstood, not the least due to the lack of research. They offer relational constructionism as a proper theoretical approach for grounding the essence of process consultation. Meanwhile, we can ask whether it is the relational practice itself that should be set as a highest context for theorizing consultation rather than various types of it (e.g. either process or expert oriented). From relational perspective, the key point is not the type of consulting practice but rather the interaction that constitutes a consulting relationship. This study hints, that practices carried out in process consultation as well as ways of theorizing it, could be of us a resource for understanding consulting in general.

The idea of asymmetry is one that contributes to consulting research in general. Regardless of consulting approach, consultants and their clients had to deal with asymmetries on various levels. They had to deal with the asymmetries in organizational structures and communication practices, with asymmetries regarding the use of external resources and consultants' positions within client system and with asymmetries that become constructed and re-constructed through consulting interaction itself. Even asymmetry is beyond the main interest of this study, it provides a conception for us to understand the complexities of the client consultant relationship, not least from the triadic, multi-party perspective.

4.7 Future research directions

This study provides insight into the details of conversation through which the realities become constructed in consulting settings. In this sense, the study deals with the critical question of how rhetoric works in consulting activity (Fincham and Clark, 2002). Research with additional process consulting materials would offer us a wider scope to further explore how power is negotiated, how the consultant's knowledge claims are legitimated and what persuasive tactics are used to influence client participants in process consultation settings. Analyses of discursive practices from expert oriented (in contrast to process oriented) consulting would also offer comparative material and thus support the same goal.

One interesting perspective for further studies would be the question, how institutions are referred to in consulting conversations and how meaning potentials emerging from these references are managed between the consultant and the client. This perspective would generate our knowledge on how institutional ideologies or constellation of values become accomplished and utilized at local practice level.

Even though this study has looked at consulting from the interaction perspective, its analysis has focused on the consultant's point of view. We could enrich this perspective by asking what hidden agendas the clients employ in the relationship and how consultants may became 'utilized' for these purposes, as pointed out by for example Kaarst-Brown (1999) and Williams (2001). Additional research could thus approach hidden agendas as mutual practice.

This study has explored the challenges of the consultant-client interaction at its early stage. Analysis with additional materials from the beginning of a consulting relationship would be welcomed in order to get a more comprehensive picture of the critical factors for successful beginnings, in other words, what does a good working relationship require. This would be of importance particularly for the practitioners. Meanwhile, this study has overlooked the question of how consulting tasks or discursive practices may vary, change or evolve during the consulting process. It is justifiable to assume that during an entire consultancy process, a greater variation of discursive practices and dilemmas than that found here, exists. What we do not as yet know are discursive means by which the relationship can be terminated. The theoretical frame developed in this study could be of use in such additional studies. Similarly, Lewis (2000, 769) suggest that "Using paradox framework, in future studies researchers can explore organizing as on ongoing process of equilibrating opposing forces and detail its tensions, cyclical dynamics, and management".

The outcomes of the process consulting case are beyond the scope of this study. We cannot answer whether the consulting situations helped the organizational participants to improve their day-to-day practice. Even though some positive effects were recognised during the course of this case (the participants evaluated that improvements in management as well as co-operation between the employees and the management had taken place during the nine months period of the consulting process), we are left unaware as to the process. This raises a question for further research: how do discursive practices carried out during process consulting interventions change the discourse of the day-to-day work. Further reflection on the effect of how "changes in the use of language bring about changes in practices" (Tsoukas, 2005, 99) will continue to yield fruits in developing knowledge on consulting work and its impact on organisations.

4.8 Concluding remarks

By focusing on the "practitioner-situated problematics and struggles" (Grant and Iedema 2005, 37) in naturally occurring talk this thesis has provided a window to less studied area, discursive practices in process oriented consulting. In brief, it has illuminated how work based on interaction is done. Based on a single case study this thesis has offered perspectives and analytical viewpoints from which consulting practices and interaction can be approached. In its way, the study depicts a metacommunication (Bateson, Haley, Weakland and Jackson, 1956) of communication.

This study has portrayed the momentary and situated nature of consulting work in which the use of knowledge 'from within' (Shotter, 1993, 2006) is essential. It highlighted the idea that conversations themselves are generative and interventive by nature: they shape the relationships and construct the realities that are investigated and being changed. In training new professionals in the field, we need to remember: rather than informing them of ideals about what one should do during a consulting conversation, we should turn to real life practice and be curious about what it can teach us. Wittgenstein noted that practice is a kind of logic that has to speak for itself and therefore cannot be learned by hearing the rules of it. Analysing retrospectively one's own responsiveness and the 'joint action' (Shotter, 1993) between the consulting parties would be, I believe, an essential way on learning (reflecting, critiquing and developing) the practice of consulting.

Kurpius (1985) pointed out over 20 years ago that it is essential that the consultant's definition of consultation is articulated to the consultee. This study raises the question as to what extent this is possible. Process consultancy principles like the role of the consultant as an inquirer certainly can (and usually need to) be explained. However, as this study has shown, process consultation work means dealing with ambiguity and therefore requires responsive practices that cannot be explained beforehand. This, I suspect, might apply in general to professional services that help clients by talking. We cannot tell in detail, what we will do, but we can, together with a client, reflect on what was done and the impact the doing had, thus making the hidden more shared and transparent.

It was the practice that provided the rationale for the study and made me ask “what’s going on when I talk with clients”. As an answer I discovered a new dual task and hidden agenda perspective to consulting. Moreover, I found that it is the institution that talks in consulting conversations. Based on his own experience, Argyris (1961), points out that a consultant holds a difficult position and that one has to find ways to go on in dilemmatic situations. Now, nearly 50 years later, this empirical research confirms just how correct his assumption was. Now we know slightly more about what constitutes this position and how it can be used for consulting purposes. Sometimes, insightful practitioners can distinguish essential matters, only later to be discovered by researchers.

TIIVISTELMÄ

Tämän tutkimuksen aiheena ovat prosessikonsultoinnin keskustelut. Siinä tarkastellaan yksityiskohtaisesti sitä, miten vuorovaikutukseen perustuvaa työtä käytännössä tehdään ja kuinka toimijoiden jaettu ymmärrys rakentuu dynaamisten vuorovaikutuskulkujen kautta. Pyrin tutkimuksellani osoittamaan, että konsultointikeskustelun osapuolet kohtaavat moninaisia keskustelullisia haasteita ja valinnan paikkoja, joihin vastaaminen rakentaa konsultille erityisiä tilanteisesti vaihtuvia vuorovaikutustehtäviä. Keskeinen päätelmäni on se, että kulloisenkin tilanteisen tehtävän täyttäminen edellyttää piiloisten agendojen toteuttamista keskustelussa. Kuvaan ja selitän piiloisten agendojen olemassaoloa konsultointiin liittyvänä institutionaalisena käytänteenä. Taustoitan tutkimustani kuvaamalla konsultointia ja sen tutkimusta ammattiroolin, institutionaalisten päämäärien ja tilanteisen tehtävän näkökulmista. Ammennan tietoperustani yhtälailla konsultoinnin ammattikirjallisuudesta kuin uudemmasta, kriittisestä tutkimusperinteestä.

Tutkimuksen aineisto on peräisin teollisuusyrityksen asiantuntijayhteisölle toteuttamastani konsultointihankkeesta. Tarve ulkopuoliseen apuun kumpusi muutostilanteesta jonka osa työntekijöistä koki oman asemansa kannalta uhkaavana. Ääni- ja videotallensin konsultointikeskustelut, joita sittemmin olen tutkinut yksityiskohtaisesti hyödyntäen yhtäältä systeemisen tradition sekä toisaalta diskurssianalyysin piirissä kehiteltyjä aineiston lukutapoja. Laajasti ottaen tutkimus ankkuroituu sosiaalisen konstruktionismin tiedonkäsitykseen. Kohdistuessaan oman käytäntöni tarkasteluun, tutkimus sijoittuu myös toimintatutkimuksen kehykseen. Hyödynnän aineiston analyysissä sekä sisäistä toimijan näkökulmaa että ulkoista, aineistoa etäämmältä tarkastelevaa näkökulmaa.

Väitöskirja koostuu kolmesta artikkelista, joissa kaikissa osoitetaan konsultoinnissa olevan kyse tasapainoilusta erilaisten vuorovaikutuksellisten positioiden välillä. Ensimmäinen artikkeleista tarkastelee keskustelua toimeksiantotilanteessa. Analyysin keskiössä on se, miten asiakkaan kannalta arkaluonteisia aihepiirejä käsitellään vuorovaikutuksessa. Artikkeli osoittaa konsultin tehtävän syntyvän arkaluonteisiin aiheisiin liittyvien merkityspotentiaalien kanssa toimimisesta. Toisessa artikkelissa analyysin kohteena on työyhteisön konsultointitilanteessa käyty keskustelu, jossa keskustelijoiden väliset suhteet ja niiden määrittelyt tasavertaisuus-eriarvoisuus (symmetria-asymmetria) näkökulmasta muodostuvat konsultointityön keskeiseksi tasapainoilutehtäväksi. Kolmas artikkeli puolestaan tarkastelee työyhteisökonsultaation jälkeistä johdon konsultaatiokeskustelua, jossa neuvon annon hetkinä tasapainoillaan johdon oman toimijuuden edistämisen ja itsereflektoinnin aikaansaamisen välillä. Artikkelien valossa konsultin edustama institutionaalinen rooli ei näyttäydy ylivertaisen tiedon tai etukäteen määritellyn vuorovaikutuskäytänteen areenana. Sen sijaan kyse on elävän vuorovaikutuksen hetki hetkeltä synnyttämien dilemmojen kanssa toimimisesta.

Kuvatessaan konsultin työtä hetkittäisten valintojen tekemisenä ja vuorovaikutusprosessin piiloisena säätelynä tutkimus luo aiempaa vivahteikkaampaa ja kontekstuaalista kuvaa prosessikonsultoinnin käytännöistä.

Esitettyä kuvaustapaa voidaan hyödyntää analyyttisenä työkaluna konsulttien työnohjauksessa ja koulutuksessa. Tutkimuksen teoreettinen kontribuutio on kuvaus rooli-, tavoite- ja tehtävänäkökulmien erilaisuudesta ja piiloisten agendojen funktionaalisuudesta. Piiloiset agendat eivät sulje pois näkyvää roolia eikä avoimeksi tehty työrooli piiloisia tehtäviä. Tämä yleisempi näkökohta avaa uusia kysymyksiä prosessikonsultoinnista instituutiona sekä auttaa kyseenalaistamaan ammattikirjallisuudessa esitettyjä ihanteita. Lisäksi tulokset puhuvat ammatillisen vuorovaikutuksen sävykkään tulkinnan tarpeellisuuden puolesta. Konsultointitutkimuksen kannalta on uutta myös se, että tutkimus asettaa ammattikirjallisuuden edustaman soveltavan ja kriittisen tutkimusnäkökulman keskinäiseen vuoropuheluun.

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APPENDIX 1

The Finnish text extracts of the original articles

M= Manager, T&K henkilöstön esimies (Artikkelissa 1 pseydonyymi ”Mari”, artikkelissa 2 ja 3 ”Aili”)
C = Consultant, Konsultti
D = Director, asiakaspalveluprosessin johtaja (Artikkelissa 1 pseydonyymi ”Daniel”)
D2= Director, tapahtumaan 1 osallistunut toinen johtaja
E = Employer, osallistujaryhmän jäseniä (E4, E11, E13)

Article 1

Näyte 1

1	M	et jotenkin pitäs (.) meidän pitäs järjestää joku sellanen (.)
2		tilaisuus jossa (.) jossa käytäis näitä (.) e-e nimenomaan
3		just [(.)] just näitä asioita läpi
4	C	[°joo°]
5	M	koska mää oon saanu siitä (1) kun ku mää taas koen (.)
6		sillä tavalla omaksi tehtäväkseni (.) e-e hallinnollisena
7		elikkä siis niinkun näitten ihmisten esimiehenä
8		nin (.) nin e-e laatia sen T&K:n osaamiskeskuksen
9		>sen kotipesän eli<
10		se että [(.) että] meille tulee profiili meille tulee ninkun (1) e-e rooli
11	C	[°joo°]
12	M	et meille tulee (.) arvo (.) arvo
13		myöskin ninkun näitten meidän (.) muitten osaamiskeskusten silmissä eli että (.)
14		et meidät tunnistetaan tee et kooksi et noi on niit <u>tee et koo ihmisiä</u> et
15		noi (.) noi on niinkun n-noi on niinkun <u>niitä jotka tietää</u>
16		(1) elikkä (.) mä koen että se on niinkun mul-mulle silleen
17		tärkee tehtävä

Näyte 2
(10 riviä poistettu)

28	C	tota Daniel (1) mitä sä ajattelet siitä
29		ku mulle tulee mieleen toi (.) kun Mari puhu
30		ku mul on vähän niinku semmone (.) kä-käsite päässä heh
31		että niinkon (1) <u>identiteetti</u> että ketä me ollaan
32		identiteettihän jotenkin vastaa [siihen] ketä me oikein ollaan
33	D	[joo]
34	C	mä kuulen jotenki Marin puhuvan vähän siitä että [(1) tavallaa]
35	D	[joo joo]
36	C	hän niinko kantaa (.) kantaa (1) aa-a vastuuta
37		siitä että hänen ihmisensä tuntee olevansa
38		ninko (.) jotakin [siis niinko] ammatillinen [(.) profiili tai (.)]
39	M	[nii justiin]
40	D	[kyllä]
41	C	miksi sitä identiteettiä nyt sanotaankin [(.)]
42	D	[niin]
43	M	[kyllä kyllä]

Näyte 3 a.
(5 riviä poistettu)

48	D	tossa sit matkalla juteltii siitä että (.) ne meijän (.) (naurahtaen)
49		meijän niinku tota (1) tietyt tietyt käytännöt
50		nii ei oo mitenkään tätä asiaa tukenu että et et me ymmärrettäs ne ( )
51		tämä identiteetti syntyy hirveen pienistä asioista [(1)] ninku ju-jus just
52	M	[nn-n]

Näyte 3 b.

53	D	semmosesta asiastaki keskusteltii tos noi että kun (.)
54		kun tehtiin näitä muutoksia (.) nin nin (.) tää asiaa ninkun näk-näki
55		ihmisten nimiä ei ollu lehdessä (.) jot-joka sinänsä on ninku typerää
56		[(1) mut] emmä ymmärrä mistä se mistä se johtu että näin ei ollu (.) ollu tota
57	C	[joo]
58	D	(1) se oli musta vaan typerää

Näyte 3 c.

59	D	ja samantein me keskusteltii siitä että että nyt ku (.)
60		tämmöne muutos (.) muutos ku tehdään ni (.) meiän pitää
61		nyt esmerkiks semmone asia tehdä kun (.) työsopimusten uusimine
62		tavallaan se (.) ku he he ovat tavallaa niinku muuttaneet työpaikkaa et (.)
63		et tämmösistä pienistä asioista (.) e-e tämmöne identiteetti (.) muodostuu
64		ja [(1) >ja katotaan mitä sieltä sitte tulee<]
65	M	[nn-n?]

Näyte 4

66	C	[se on (.)] se on mun mielestä hirveen hyödyllinen tapa ajatella
67		et se just noin (.) et (.) pienistä asioista (1)
68		et vois niinku sanoo että (.) vois aatella et tämmöset ninko
69		(2) tai yks tapa ajatella on tämmösiä (1) tämmöset niinko (3)
70		niinkö arjen kautta siirtyy tämmöset kokemukset
71		että ollaanko me arvokkaita tai [(1)] tai ol ar- ollaanko me arvokkaita
72	M	[aivan]
73	C	ja ollaanko me päteviä ja [ja tuota ylipäätään ketä me ollaan
74	M	[nn-n
75	C	et se liittyy tämmösten arkisten tilanteiden
76		[(1)] se on hyvä tapa [ajatella]
77	D	[joo] [joo joo]
78	C	et sä hahmotat sitä koska tuota (.) se tekee myöskin tän meijän tilanteen (2)
		ninko tärkeäksi [(1)]
79	M	[nn-n]
80	C	mitä siellä tapahtuu (.) on merkityksellistä
81	D	joo (.) joo
82	C	jos siellä kyetään jotenki avaamaan jotakin puolta tai tuomaan joku (.)
83		luomaan semmone (.) yhteinen kertomus siitä et
84		ketä me [ketä me ollaan ni se voi]
85	D	[joo (.) joo joo]
85		[nn-n]

Article 2

Näyte 1 ”teidän suosiollisella avustuksella päästään eteenpäin”

D: toivottavasti että niinku Riston ja teijän (.) teijän niinku suosiolla avustuksella
niin ni tässä keskustelussa päästään niinku (.) päästään niinku hyvään alkuun
ja sanotaan että saadaan niinku mahdollis mahd kerääntyneitä paineita purettua
ja ja tota päästään niinku (.) positiivisella mielellä tästä sitte eteenpäin
suunnitelemaan että miten miten jatkossa (.)jatkossa asioita hoidetaan ja (.)
toss on on nyt Ailin ja Riston kanssa ollu vähä puhetta siitä että että tota (1)
että jos varsinki jos tää tilaisuus osottautuu hyväks jos tää toimii
sillä tavalla niinku (.) niinku me ollaa Ailin kanssa toivottu tän toimivan (.)
niin tota vois hyvin hyvin miettiä tälle jatkoa

Näyte 2 ”mulla ei tosiaankaan oo tavoitteita”

C: joo meijä on hyvä varmaa puhua nyt aluksi tosiaanki ihan siitä että (.)
että mikä tän tilaisuuden jotenki et miten tästä ett
miten tästä te voisitte hyötyä parhaiten
(.) ett sää kysyit tossa ruokapöydässä multa niin että must se oli hyvä kysymys
johonka sä sanoit että että mikäs
(.) sä taisit kysyä jotenki että mikä mun tavote on tai
(1) ja mää vastasin siihe aluks jotain semmosta että tuota
(1) ett että mulla ei tosiaankaa oo tavotetta
(2) ja sit mää tarkensi sitä kun sää kysyit lisää että tuota
(.) että että mihin mää oon tyytyväinen mä sanoin että mää oon
tyytyväinen sillo kun mää nään että käydään rakentavaa keskustelua
(1) että että jotenki mää työskentelen siltä pohjalta ett
mull ei oo tavotteita sisällöllisesti
teillä on teil on omat johtajanne joilla on tavotteita siitä
että mitä minkälaista työtä te teette ja ja teillä on tavotteita

Näyte 3 ”sattuneista syistä niin kaipaisin kovasti resursseja”

E4: tuota nin (.) vähä samat ajatukset kun kollegallani ((E3)) tuolta
nin kokonaisuuden hahmottaminen tietenki päällimmäinen kysymys
sitte mulle on tullu kaks kaks sanaa mieleen jotka just liittyy toi toisiin
tää fokusointi ja resurssointi (1) ett tuota nin (1)
tämän runsaan puolen vuoden toiminnan jälkeen
mä nään edelleenkin sen että ei uskalleta (.) keskittyä asioihin
vaan innostutaan joka puolelle ikään kuin häsäämään
(2) pitäis aina muistaa ja tuota olla rohkea
että panna asioita sivuun kylmästi ja keskittyä niihin olennaisiin
(3) että tää mun vanhan johtajan (.) periaate tulevasta postista
ett hän nostaa aina tulevan postin lähtevän postiin
jos on riittävän tärkee ( ) tulee takas
((naurua))
sama sama rohkeus pitäis meilläkin olla asioitten hoitamisessa
jos me priorisoidaan kyll sieltä ne riittävät merkit nousee pikku hiljaa
(2)
C: ja kun sää sanot että tämmönen (.) fokusointi olis tärkeetä
niin kerropas vähän sun työn kannalta miks se olis tärkeetä (1) että näin tehdään

E4: (1) joo mää tietysti (.) sattuneista syistä niin kaipaisin kovasti resursseja
koska on niinku kitkaa asiakaspinnassa aika runsaasti
((naurua))

Näyte 4 “mut voimavara – oks se parempi”

C onks jotaki (1) Oula ((E11 nimi, muutettu)) mitä haluut vielä sanoo
voidaanko mennä eteenpäin (1)
E11 no e- (.) no jos hän oli sanansaattaja niin mehän ollaan
sit taas käytetty tätä sanaa resurssi (.)
C aha (.)
E11 ni (.) se ei oo minusta yhtään sen kauniimpi
ku tuo sanansaattaja
((ryhmän naurahtelua))
resurssi on myös (.) pikkusen negatiivinen=
T =mut voimavara onks se parempi (.)
E11 no ehkä sekin on parempi (1)
C joo (2)
D2 kehitetään hyvää sa- (.) hyvä niinkun=
E11 =sana (.)
D2 nii=
D =sanotaan että organisaatiokieli mä muistan
sää oot sitä joskus tutkinu eikö vaan [ja tota (.)]
C [(näin on)]
D ja (.) ja (.) se on (.) todella tärkee asia (.) asia tota (.) miettiä sitä
et mi- millä millä tavalla toinen toisiamme kutsutaan
koska (1) ne saattaa saattaa tarkottaa ihan samaa
mut niis voi olla aika lailla [erilainen vivahde]
C [mm (.) mm]
(1) tota onks sulla (.) Oula itselläs ehdotusta
sen resurssi-sanan tilalle (.)
E11 no varmasti tuo voimavarakin sana vois [olla]
D [joku] joku (.)
joku heitteli voimavara-sanaa sillon siellä [(1) () (.) joo]
E11 [se näytti positiivisemmalta]
kun [kuullostaa (.)]
C [mm (.) mm (.) mm] (.) resurssista tulee vähän passiivinen mielikuva että (.)
se on vaan niinku muiden (.)
E11 se vain tekee niin mitä käsketään (.)
C nii et sen takia on on tärkee miettiä et mikä (.)
D joo (.)
C mikä luo teille niinku semmosen (.) auttais teitä (.)=
E13 =nii yks yks ongelmahan on ollu just se että tässä ei oo (.)
yhessä yritettykään tehä asioita (.) vaan vaan
me ollaan itse asiassa nyt jouduttu semmoseen
vähän niinkun resurssi (.) mentaliteettiin (.)
ei oo yhessä (.) yritettykään hoitaa asioita (.)
C m-h (.) okei (.) saat kohta puhua tuosta lisää mut mennään sitä ennen=
E13 =joo=
C =vielä sun vieruskaveriin eli sun [nimes on]

Article 3

Näyte 1 ”te ootte eräänlaisella näköalapaikalla”

1 D (.) hei (.) yks ajatus tuli tossa mieleen (.) just täst nakittamisesta
2 ja resurssista ja muusta ni (.) pitäsköhän meiän istuu alas (.)
3 sen jengin kanssa joka nyt on ollu tätä
4 Tehtaan ((mainitsee tehtaan nimen)) (.) lanseeraushommaa tekemässä (.)
5 M mm (.)
6 D keskustella niinku tää et onko ne kokenu tän (.) nakittamisen ja
7 ((heikohko naurahdus))
8 ja muun (.) et miten ne on kokenu niinku roolinsa
9 (6 riviä tekstiä poistettu, D puhuu henkilöistä ja heidän rooleistaan)
10 D nii onko ne kokenut että niitä on nakitettu ja
11 onko nää kokenu et ne on nakittanu ni (.)
12 se ois ihan ihan mielenkiintonen asia keskustella (.)
13 C joo (.) tota (.)
14 D =et jos miettii kato sitä (.) jos miettii sitä (.) karonkkaa esimerkiks
15 [niin] nehän vois pitää (.) pitää (1) vaikka tämmösen (.) sanotaanko
16 C [mm]
17 (1) teemalla (.) kaks tuntia asiaa kuus tuntii hauskaa (.)
18 M mm (.) ((nouseva äänenpaino))
19 C =joo (.) tota (.) jotenki sama ajatus rupes elää munkin mielessä
20 et siis sillä tavalla että (1) vähän niinku semmosena kysymyksenä
21 että (.) mitä te ootte onnistuneet jotenkin (.) esimiehinä tekemään (.)
22 D mm (.)
23 C joka on (.) niinkö (.) edistäny tätä ihmisten välistä yhteistyötä (.)
24 mitä sellasta te ootte tehneet
25 C koska [te ootte siinä (.)] systeemissä niinku erityisasemassa
26 [mm mm]
27 teillä on [niinku] mun ymmärryksen mukaan laajin (.) näköala ja sit[teillä on]
28 D [mm] [mm]
29 C myös te ootte ollu itse rakentamassa sitä (.) kent- tätä kok ajattelutapaa
30 ja se on teille (.) sisäistynny paljo aikasemmin kun (.) ku välttämättä muille
31 D joo (.)
32 C te ootte eräänlaisella näköalapaikalla (.)

Näyte 2 ”ne on melkeen sivulauseita mut niillä voi olla suurempi vaikutus”

1 C oikeestaan (.) jos mää vähän (.) niinku sanon miten minulle hahmottuu
2 että niinku pelkästään kiinnostuksen ilmaiseminen (.)
3 D mm (.)
4 C miten se projekti etenee (.) mä haluan kuulla ja (.) ja sit
5 palautteen antaminen ja sit kun sä Aili sanoit et raportit oli hyviä=
6 D =joo=
7 M =nn (.)
8 C ni ne on (.) ne on (.) s- ne on melkein sivulauseita=
9 D =mm=
10 C =mut niillä voi olla niinku [suurempi] vaikutus [kun me]
11 D [joo] [nii var-]
12 C tullaan ajatelleeks=
13 D =kyllä (.) miettii miettii (.) sitä ei ees ehkä aina osaa sillai miettiä (.)

14		miettiä sitä et ku (.) pitäis aina (.) muistella ite (.) ite itteesä joskus (.)
15		viistoista vuotta sitte (.)
16	M	aivan=
17	D	=et jos jos o- ois saanu joltaki (.) joltaki tehtaanjohtajalta
18		taikka taikka joltaki=
19	C	=nii=
20	D	=joltaki tota niinku palautetta hyvin tehdystä työstä
21		niin sitähän ois (.) leijunu (.) ilmassa pitkän aikaa et (.)
22		[oikein] (.) [( ) rinta rottingilla joo]
23	M	[nn]
33	C	[joo (1) rintakaa-(.)] nii joo]

Extract 3 " kaikella toiminnalla mitä te teette"

1	D	sen kiteytit kyl siinä mielessä hyvin just et (.)
2		et mitä mä sillä rooli (.) rooli (.) viittauksellani tarkotin
3		on just se että nähtäs asia (.) e- ettei nähtäs asioita niinku
4	C	=mm
5	D	valta- (.) [suhteellisina asioina vaan] vaan vaan
6	C	[mm (.) mm (.)]
7	M	[mm]
8	D	yhteistyö (1) [työhön] liittyvinä asioina
9	C	[joo]
10	C	joo (.)
11	D	et jos (.) jos siitä niinku opitaan pois (.)
12	C	kyllä
13	D	=koska sehän on sellanen funktionaalisen organisaation (1)
14	C	=kyllä
15	D	=toimintatapa ja >tietenki (.) okei se on
16		[varmasti kyllä ihmisiin niin syvään] rakennettu
17	C	[mm (.) mm (.) joo]
18	D	asia että et siitä poisoppiminen (.) voi olla (1) <mahdotonta>
19	C	=mutta tota (.) niin (.) mutta sitte (.) voi kysyä ehkä se (.)
20		voisko se olla hyödyllinen kysymys että (.) että
21		kaikella toiminnalla mitä te teette suhteessa tähän organi[saatioon]
22	D	[mm]
23	C	(1) te joko (1) niinkö (.) tuette jompaa [kumpaa tapaa] hahmottaa
24	D	[mm (.) joo]
25	C	(.) joko (.) joko yhteistyöasetelmaa tai valta-asetelmaa=
26	D	[=mm=]
27	M	[mm]
28	C	=ja sillon mä aattelen että (.) että (.) että (.)
29		voi olla hyödyllistä olla tarkkana sen suhteen että miten
30		minä [(1) miten me ja miten miten te] (1)
31	D	[joo (.) joo (.) joo]
32	C	esimiehinä (1) ikäänku puututte tai
33	M	aivan (.) ((nouseva intonaatio)
34	C	koska se (.) se (.) teiäthän vaan todennäköisesti mielletään
35		niinku [vallankäyttäjinä tässä systeemissä että] (.)
36	D	[joo (.) joo (.) joo]
37	C	niinku miten teiän tavat (1) puuttua (.) teidän tavat antaa (.) antaa (.)
38		tehtäväksiantoja (1) niinku (.) kielisivät semmosesta=
39	D	=mm=
40	C	=niinku yhteistyö-