UNIVERSITY OF JYVÄSKYLÄ

REPAIR WORK INTERACTION IN BUSINESS E-MAIL MESSAGES – WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO INTERPERSONAL METADISCOURSE

A Licenciate Thesis

by

Pirjo Alatalo

Department of English Philology
Spring 2002

HUMANISTINEN TIEDEKUNTA
ENGLANNIN KIELEN LAITOS

Pirjo Alatalo
REPAIR WORK INTERACTION IN BUSINESS E-MAIL MESSAGES – WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO INTERPERSONAL METADISCOURSE

Lisensiaatintutkimus
Englantilainen filologia
Huhtikuu 2002
289 sivua + 2 liitettä

Abstract

Tutkimus käsittelee ongelmatilanteita selvitteleviä englanninkielisiä liike-elämän sähköpostiviestejä. Tutkimusaineisto käsittää kokonaisuudessaan 279 viestiä, joista 40 selvittelee ongelmatilanteita. Viestit ovat amerikkalaisten, brittiläisten ja suomalaisten liike-elämän ammattilaisten kirjoittamia. Aineisto edustaa tosielämän tarpeisiin kirjoitettuja viestejä, joissa viestijät käyvät eriaikaista ja –paikkaista dialogia ongelmien selvittämiseksi. Kvalitatiivinen tutkimukseni on tapaustutkimus: aineisto perustuu yhdeltä yritykseltä saatuihin viesteihin.

Olen omaksunut pragmaattisessa tutkimuksessani funktionaalisen, vuorovaikutuksellisen ja sosiaalisen näkökulman kielenkäyttöön. Haen vastausta ensisijaisesti seuraavaan kysymykseen: Mitä strategisia funktioita interpersoonaisella metadiskurssilla on aineistoni ongelmia selvittävissä sähköpostiviesteissä? Interpersoonainen metadiskurssi ymmäretään siksi kielen funktioksi, joka ilmentää tekstin tuottajan asenteita sekä sisältöjä että osallistujia kohtaan, ja näin ollen se korostaa kielenkäytön vuorovaikutuksellista ja sosiaalista näkökulmaa. Ensisijaiseen ja toissijaisiin tutkimuskysymyksiin vastauksia hakiessani työssäni tulee esille sosiaalisen konstruktionismin näkökulma, jonka mukaan diskurssi ja sosiaalinen toiminta ylläpitävät ja muokkaavat toisiaan jatkuvasti. Kuvaan, tulkitsen ja selitän viestijöiden tilanteenmukaista diskurssia viestintätilanteen (tausta)tekijöitä huomioon ottaen. Tukeudun funktionaalisen kielitieteen, diskurssianalyysin, keskusteluanalyysin, etnografian ja organisaatioviestinnän teorioiden ja lähestymistapojen synteesiin kielellisten ilmausten analyysissä.

Tutkimuksen yhtenä pyrkimyksenä oli selvittää, onko mahdollista luoda ongelmia selvittävien viestien rakenteen makrotason kuvaus taustoittamaan mikrotason kielenkäytön analyysiä; ensisijaisesti interpersoonaisen metadiskurssin funktioiden analyysiä, mutta myös ongelmatilanteita selvittävien viestintästrategioiden käytön analyysiä. Sekä makro- että mikrotason analyyseissä viestintätilanteiden (tausta)tekijät olivat keskeisellä sijalla kuvaillessani tilanteenmukaista kielenkäyttöä ja tulkitessani ja selittäessäni kielenkäytön syitä. Makrotason kuvaus perustuu viestien jaotteluun neljään ryhmään viestien pääasiallisen käyttötarkoituksen (engl. *primary communication purpose*) mukaan. Toissijaisissa tutkimuskysymyksissäni hain vastausta siihen, löytyykö aineistoni viestien 1) makrorakenteen ja interpersoonaisen metadiskurssin strategisen käytön välillä yhteyttä ja viestien 2) makrorakenteen ja ongelmatilanteita selvittävien viestintästrategioiden käytön välistä yhteyttä. Lähemmin analysoimani ongelmatilanteita selvittävät viestintästrategiat olivat anteeksipyynnöt, ongelmien syiden ja vastuun myöntämisen/kieltämisen kielelliset ilmaukset sekä pyynnöt ja niiden muodot.

Kielenkäytön analyysissä lähtökohtana oli kielenkäytön tilanteenmukaisuus ja interpersoonaisen metadiskurssin tilanteenmukainen monimerkityksisyys. Analyysin tuloksena saatiin aikaisemmista tutkimuksista poikkeava interpersoonaisen metadiskurssin funktiolähtöinen luokitus neljään pääluokkaan. Kirjoittajan asenteita ja tunnepitoisia arvostuksia ilmaiseva pääluokka voitiin jakaa kolmeen alaluokkaan, joissa voidaan katsoa havainnollistuvan interpersoonaisen metadiskurssin tilanteenmukainen monimerkityksisyys mm. erilaisten anteeksipyyntöjen ja pahoitteluiden ilmauksissa. Anteeksipyyntöjen ja pahoitteluiden, vastuun ja ongelmien syiden kielellisten ilmausten ja viestien makrotason rakenteiden välillä voitiin havaita strategista yhteyttä. Toinen pääluokka koostuu sellaisista kielellisistä ilmauksista, joilla pyritään saamaan aikaan henkilökohtainen ja läheinen suhde viestijöiden välille, mm. erilaisilla puhekielimäisyyksillä ja keskustelumuotoisilla ilmaisuilla. Kielelliset ilmaisut, jotka toimivat kirjoittajan varmuusasteen vahventimina ja viestijän sitoutumisasteen pehmentiminä muodostavat tutkimusaineistooni pohjautuvat kaksi muuta pääluokkaa. Kolmen viimeksi mainitun pääluokan ja viestien makrotason rakenteen välillä ei voitu havaita strategista yhteyttä.

Viestien pääasialliseen käyttötarkoitukseen perustuva viestien makrotason kuvaus soveltui erityisesti ei-rutiininomaisia ongelmatilanteita selvittävien viestien kuvaamiseen, sillä 16 yhteensä 22:sta viestistä näytti noudattavan samantapaista rakennetta. Muissa tapauksissa analysoitavia viestejä oli vähemmän, eikä samanlaista vastaavuutta löytynyt. Jatkotutkimuksissa isommalla aineistolla tehty analyysi voisi tuoda lisävalaistusta asiaan. Tutkimukseni perusteella voi mielestäni suosittaa, että liikeviestinnän opetuksessa ja oppimateriaalin tuottamisessa interpersoonaisen metadiskurssin monimerkityksisyyteen ja sen strategiseen käyttöön sekä anteeksipyyntöjen ja vastuun myöntämisen/kieltäminen tilanteenmukaisuuteen ongelmatilanteiden diskurssissa tulisi kiinnittää lähempää huomiota. Samoin opetuksessa tulisi korostaa entistä enemmän viestintätilanteiden eri (tausta)tekijöiden merkitystä tosielämän liikeviestinnässä.

Avainsanat: electronic mail interaction. interpersonal metadiscourse. professional business discourse. repair work.

LIST OF FIGURES

LIST OF TABLES

CONTENTS

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Remarks on computer-mediated communication (CMC)

With the development of the information age innovations, governments and enterprises are building electronic rather than concrete highways to move materials. The materials moved are increasingly data and information, and the new wide-area computer networks will give equal access to various electronic sources of information to a steadily increasing number of people worldwide. The socio-economic impact of this development is undeniable and hard to underestimate. The then Senator Albert Gore put it in the 'National High-Performance Computer Technology Act of 1989' as follows: "The nation which most completely assimilates high-performance computing into its economy will very likely to emerge as the dominant intellectual economic, and technological force in the next century" (Howard 1992:10).

Computer-mediated communication (CMC) systems are the communication media of the present decade and the decades to follow, also for businesses. Aided by the enhanced communication technologies, such as electronic mail systems, more and more companies are networking their employees in order to facilitate access to databases and to gain added-value in the speed and efficiency of their communications. Further, switching to electronic mail accelerates corporate decision-making processes by allowing senders to circumvent traditional communication hierarchies. Electronic mail messages are not screened systematically, since each employee is assigned an individual e-mail address accessible by personal password (Nantz & Drexel 1995:45).

It is argued that CMC encourages communication not only across geographical but also across social, professional, hierarchical, and institutional boundaries. The lack of screening allows employees to communicate directly with someone several levels higher on the organization chart. Using e-mail, employees have direct access to everyone's mailbox, including the senior management level staff. This direct access option circumvents reporting lines. Consequently, it is suggested that e-mail systems allow a virtual organizational hierarchy, i.e. traditional organizational hierarchies are dissolved and they cease to exist electronically. As a result, more egalitarian social organizations emerge (Nantz & Drexel 1995:45). In electronic mail systems, however, the addressee has the option of not reading or responding to unwanted or unimportant messages, since the sender and the subject of the electronic mail message are displayed on the list of the received messages menu.

It can be suggested that CMC as a new form of social interaction encourages wider corporate participation, increases candour and transparency, and emphasizes the merit of what one says and does over the status one holds. Thus experts and possessors of knowledge and information allegedly gain added value in corporations. The lack of intermediary screens is argued by some corporate executives to make electronic mail systems too democratic means of interaction because they flatten hierarchies. This argument can partly be justified by suggesting that people in organizations are vested with different amounts of power and status and that those who are better off want to restore a degree of isolation by limited, i.e. screened, access to them (Zachary 1994:1). It is evident that global connectivity engenders power, the power to screen and choose what is said, and to authorize who is allowed to speak.

The question remains if it is the advent of the electronic mail system in itself that encourages the organizational developments discussed above, or if there are other simultaneous factors intertwined with the technological development of communication methods. Leaner organizations can be argued to result from the general democratization development of corporate environments, which in turn influences the way in which members of organizations interact with each other, including the language they use in their interaction.

1.1.1 Previous research on electronic mail language, style and rhetoric

The impact of CMC on language use and the language itself, together with CMC as a force in language change, has been under increasing discussion since the early 1980s. The focus of this discussion seems to have been mainly on the potential effects of the new technology on the written and spoken registers or genres (see e.g. Collot and Belmore 1996:13). However, it has to be acknowledged that the field of electronic language is varied, as is the field of oral and written language. Electronic language ranges from the real-time, spontaneous Internet Relay Chat (IRC) to elaborate articles published in scientific magazines, found also on the Internet. Such articles are merely electronic versions of printed articles, frequently edited and modified in order to utilize the enhanced features of the Internet, e.g. to access various links covering related topics (e.g. Tanskanen 2000:77-78).

The drastic increase in the number of electronic mail users in business in the 1990's is said to have revolutionized the language of written business communication. According to some researchers, electronic mail language is a hybrid of written and spoken language, some use the notion of net-language or network text, some talk about a new linguistic entity with its own vocabulary, sentence structure and use (e.g. Rubin 1995).

The grammar of the screen as compared to the grammar of the page is suggested to be one of the differences between electronic mail and paper mail, including telefaxes. Differences between screen-text and printed text include size, aspect ratio, and the way one moves through the text, i.e. scrolling for screen-text and page turning for printed text. These differences make screen-text more difficult to read than printed text (Selfe 1989:10). Further, it is suggested that screen-readers have less sense of the structure of the full text (Haas & Hayes 1986). In addition, readers of e-mail messages may have difficulty in sorting out the salient from the less salient elements of messages (Hawisher & Moran 1993). Electronic mail communication is typed, written communication. However, since e-mail messages are composed on-line and the exchange is rapid, they are not typically subjected to the careful scrutiny writers usually give to the language inscribed on paper. According to some users of electronic mail in business contexts, the language of e-mail messages is 'fuzzier' than the language of traditional business letters (Louhiala-Salminen 1995, 1999). On the other hand, there is research to show that there are no notable differences in the language used in commercial e-mail messages when compared to mailed business correspondence (Gains 1999).

Hawisher and Moran (1993) place e-mail language somewhere on the continuum between spoken and written language. A study of Finnish business e-mail messages supports this view; about 50 per cent of the messages analysed contained variants of spoken language, either lexical or syntactic (Alatalo 1996). The results showed that the language of Finnish e-mail messages is a hybrid of spoken and written language, and e.g. sentence boundaries seemed to be 'fuzzier' in e-mail messages than in conventional business letters. The elements of spoken language in e-mail messages can be suggested to result from the fact that, to some extent, e-mail has replaced the use of telephone in enterprises and the fact that electronic mail systems are realized as on-line communication systems where the presence of the addressee and the instant reply option create an impression of simultaneous face-to-face communication (e.g. Johansson 1988). Further, the conversationalization of electronic mail communication can be explained by the tendencies rooted in broader currents of contemporary cultural change, the apparent democratization and consumerization of institutional discourse. These can be regarded as being utilized for strategic and instrumental ends in the technologization of discourse, making the cultural values attaching to informal, conversationalized institutional discourse profoundly ambivalent (Fairclough 1996:74).

In their article 'Transaction and Interaction in Writing: The Case of Electronic Mail', Kalaja and Leppänen (1991) state that in their analysis the placement of e-mail messages along the one-dimensional continuum, i.e. written - spoken, of text features turned out to be problematic. In their corpus, some of the e-mail messages represented the 'written' end of the continuum, while others represented the 'spoken' end of the continuum. In order to be able to explain the linguistic variation within this text type, Kalaja and Leppänen looked at the texts with reference to the communicative event. Consequently, their focus of analysis shifted from the analysis of text features to an analysis relating texts to features of the communicative event itself (Kalaja & Leppänen 1991:267).

Another paper by Kalaja and Leppänen (1994) discusses the similarities and differences between face-to-face discussions and computer conferencing, a multiparticipant discourse in the net. One similarity is evolvement of the discussion in time, one message following another, like turns in a conversation. One of the differences when compared to classroom discussions is in that the responses to messages were not immediate. Thus, the group's interaction was characterized by mediacy in terms of time and space. Further, as the discussions were not in real-time, they were characterized by one-sidedness. As the communication happened in the written mode, the group could not make full use of all the interactional resources that communicators in spoken discussions have, and consequently they had to rely on emoticons and other typographical means (Kalaja & Leppänen 1994:83). These characteristics are also typical of one-to-one electronic mail interaction in the net in business contexts. Today, enhanced technology enables one-to-many / many-to-many interaction in electronic mail systems, still with the same constraints.

The use of electronic mail in business interaction has not been studied widely. For example, Louhiala-Salminen (1995) maintains in her study on the use and language of telefax that fax as a new medium of communication has had an impact on both the language and form of fax messages. The language has changed; it has become less formal, speech-like, straight-to-the-point. Louhiala-Salminen (1995:99-100) states, "The study clearly showed that the users who have experience with communicating in English for more than five years have noticed changes in the language. The most distinctive change was the trend towards more informal, and speech-like language, away from rigid norms related to layout and phraseology. ..., the informants seemed to conceptualize the language they were using as separate from British or American cultural values and norms; they were using something which was called, for example, 'present-day international business English', and the cultural values related to that language were a combination of the cultures of the country of the recipient, the norms of the business sector, and the corporate culture. An important aspect affecting the linguistic outcome of the messages was the distinction between in-house and outgoing messages." In addition, Louhiala-Salminen's (1995:99-100) study indicates that the interviewees of the study had recognized similar influences by the new technology on electronic mail language. In her more recent study of electronic mail language, Louhiala-Salminen (1999) refers to her earlier findings as still valid.

According to Nantz and Drexel (1995), the tone and structure of electronic mail messages in business contexts seem to be relaxed because e-mail is perceived by many users as a less permanent and less formal method of communicating than the traditional mailed business correspondence. On many occasions, the notion of e-chat is used to describe the nature of e-mail messages. This phrase refers to the fact that message recipients tend to be tolerant to idiosyncracies. Some common e-mail structures may include conversational syntax, sentence fragments, abbreviated words, acronyms, symbols used to create emoticons, smilies, and parts of messages taken out of context as message sections are retained or deleted when responses are written. Nantz and Drexel regard these devices as unacceptable in other types of business communication and, therefore, they should not be acceptable in e-mail correspondence either. They see the use of, for example, emoticons and excessive abbreviations as deformalizing messages and causing communication barriers, particularly for international communication. The use of these devices can be an indication of writers' wish to appear as individuals in a technology that supports a certain amount of anonymity and sameness (Nantz & Drexel 1995: 46-47).

Independent of the warnings by some writers of e-mail etiquette books, sentence fragments, abbreviated words, and 'fuzzy' syntax, typical of oral discourse, are used in e-mail messages in the present data. The following message by a British management-level informant exemplifies such usage:

> *Mike saying wouldn't have placed (order number) with us if $xxxx p/t so I agreed $xxxx p/t on that order. (order number) and (order number) remain unchanged. He has new lower prices from (Supplier name) so $xxxx p/t not*

> *good enough for reservation (order number) - he won't give me any guidelines. Wants either order prices/monthly prices or a price to end of year - if latter it would have to be a low number.*
> *Confirmed his next reservation will be for 200 tanks so xxx tonnes.*
> *I need to respond tomorrow - I'm at (Customer company name) in the morning.*

What Nantz and Drexel (1995:47) refer to as "taking parts of messages out of context as message sections are retained or deleted when responses are written" can be regarded in e-mail interaction as an important device of intertextuality, co-text. Intertextuality provides the reader of the message with valuable reference points in the process of interpreting the meaning of the present message in the sequence of several messages, often exchanged when dealing with a specific matter in business. Delany (1995:219) refers to this type of communication in net, i.e. including extracts from earlier net discourse into messages, as 'an inherently dialogic medium', as opposed to the monologism of broadcast media.

In a case study investigating electronic mail messages in Finnish in a business enterprise (Alatalo 1996), there were no emoticons used in the corpus of 319 electronic mail messages, and abbreviated forms were very rare. In the present data, emoticons are used only in messages when discussing the weather or when sending birthday congratulations, with no occurrences of emoticons in messages discussing business topics. This may partly result from the fact that groups exhibit consistent patterns of behaviour that can be described and measured. When describing group behaviour, a distinction is made between shared knowledge of rules for behaviour, which are patterns of behaviour specified by authority, and shared norms, and developed by the members of a speech community through interaction. Groups may modify functional rules for their own purposes, and such changes constitute norms of interaction, which are more difficult than rules to identify, describe and analyse (Korenman & Wyatt 1996:226). The low occurrence rate of abbreviated forms and emoticons in the present business interaction may imply that the persons using e-mail as a means of interaction see themselves as individuals known to each other, primarily representing the enterprise and thus applying the rules and norms of traditional business communication etiquette. As a result, business professionals seem to restrict the use of e.g. emoticons to messages written for purely social purposes in the present data.

Almost contrary to Nantz and Drexel's recommendations, Angel and Heslop (1994), in their normative guidebook on the use of electronic mail in business communication, urge e-mail writers to forget about the rules and norms of the traditional business communication. They encourage writers to use more informal style in order not to lose the dynamism of the new communication media. For example, Angel and Heslop advice the writers to use more informal salutations and complementary closes than in traditional business letters as part of their 'new e-mail etiquette' (1994:3). Some companies, e.g. the Outokumpu Group, have launched similar etiquettes focusing on the impact of the new communication media on the language used in messages and recommend the use of more informal style in business electronic mail messages than in traditional mailed business interaction (Tihinen 1995:6).

Some researchers' recommendations seem to ignore the importance of the context in which interactants operate in when writing electronic mail messages. However, e.g. Kalaja and Leppänen (1991) analyse texts with reference to communicative events in order to explain the linguistic variation within e-mail message texts. Some writers advise to bear in mind the influence of e.g. cultural differences, the relationship between the companies involved in business transactions, the relationship between individuals communicating with each other, the topic communicated on the language and style of electronic mail messages. Louhiala-Salminen (1995), however, refers to her interviews with the interlocutors and maintains that the language they use in electronic mail communication is "separate from British or American cultural values and norms", which is an interesting postulation worth discussing in the present work.

Delany (1995) cites Marshall McLuhan's suggestion that no communication channel is neutral: all media modify the status of the messages they transmit, and so new cultural formations are emerged. Delany maintains that computer-mediated communication provides additional communicative power at the cost of a more rigorous and impersonal communicative environment. Instead of face-to-face, transparent communication between integral subjects, personalities become largely notional, since communicators encounter each other only in the virtual space created by computer networks, cyperspace. According to Delany, in cyperspace traditional ideas of presence and the self are both attenuated and made provisional since the persona presented to others cannot easily be authenticated (Delany 1995:213).

The idea of the existence of the virtual space as the only reality for interactants using electronic mail is hardly viable in business contexts, since there are other means of interaction available for and used by business people to do business together, including face-to-face contacts. In his discussion concerning computer-mediated communication, Delany (1995) refers to CMC taking place in multiparticipant computer conferencing environments with discussion groups, such as Usenet, which is a medium for technical discussions between Unix network administrators, thus encouraging interaction between computers on a peer-to-peer basis. In business environments, however, with interaction often taking place from one-to-one, Delany's ideas can be questioned, since the relationships between interactants are often old-established, involving interaction via other media, by phone, faxes and also face-to-face meetings, all providing a higher degree of authentication and personification than in discussion groups like Usenet, which is a medium devised for many-to-many interaction.

In face-to-face encounters, discourse is largely determined by implicit mutual understanding of the situation. Delany (1995) argues that the lack of positional clues to net users creates a freer, more egalitarian discursive space. This argument supports the ideas put forward by Nantz and Drexel (1995) who refer to e-mail blurring organizational hierarchies. According to Delany, a networked organization might become more creative by encouraging free circulation of ideas, instead of the hierarchical model where workers are only allowed to interact with their immediate supervisor. In this new communication model, if ideas are dissociated from the status of their originator, ideas should live or die on their merits rather than on the power of the one proposing them. The idea of 'Non-Standard English' might thus be rendered moot, at least in the sense of non-standard as usage typical of subordinate rather than élite groups. Against this, it could be argued that net discourse will tend to re-stratify itself through intrinsic qualities such as correctness or coherence, even in the absence of attached markers such as the accent or rank of the utterer. People with an imperfect grasp of English, provided that they are functionally able to make themselves understood, will stand on an equal footing with native speakers in the group (Delany 1995:218-219).

Shapiro and Anderson (1985:10) argue that electronic mail is "a fundamentally new medium with significantly new characteristics that cannot be treated with the old rules alone". Thus, it would be required that the rhetoric of e-mail be considered more closely. Hawisher and Moran (1993) suggest that a full rhetoric of e-mail would consider the different rhetorical contexts for e-mail, including genres, audiences, voices, uses, and the extent to which any and all of these are influenced by the properties of the medium. However, Howard (1997:2-6) maintains that the argument that network text represents a radical departure from other media forms and therefore deserves its own rhetoric goes too far. Howard argues that "..., the analytical boundaries or frames theorists put around a medium have no ontological basis; they float free and play so that there is overlap between media forms. It is therefore difficult to conceive of a radically new and distinct form that does not in some way participate in the old"

(1997:6). Instead of the notion CMC, Howard uses the term 'network text' to refer to the writing taking place on wide-area networking systems (WANS). In Howard's opinion e.g. the notion CMC implies that the discourse that takes place on WANS does not really represent a new medium but is actually little more than written or spoken discourse repackaged in a computer-based delivery system. Consequently, Howard uses the word 'text' to describe writing on WANS and criticizes the use of the word 'writing' which implies printed texts appearing on computers, and avoids using the dominant 'conversation' metaphor that imposes standards from oral media on this new medium (1997:3). Howard's arguments are supported to some extent by Gains' (1999) findings, according to which no notable differences between e-mail messages and mailed business correspondence could be found, and consequently no distinct e-mail genre or sub-genres, as suggested by Louhiala-Salminen (1995, 1999).

1.2 Professional business interaction via electronic mail

In the past two decades, researchers have recognized the status of business discourse as an identifiable field of study, thus admitting that discourse in its broadest sense is essential for carrying out business transactions. With the emergence of research in the discipline, the focus of analysis has been towards 'discourse' rather than 'language' in business, evidencing the widening of the scope of applied linguistics and the increased usage of interdisciplinary approaches in business discourse analyses. Globalization of the business world has contributed to the emerging interest in intercultural business discourse as a field of study. For instance, organizational communication, negotiation studies, conversational analysis, discourse analysis, ethnography, applied linguistics and pragmatics have provided theoretical perspectives and methodological approaches to the analysis of discourse in business environment work settings.

The concept of English as an international language (EIL) was introduced by Smith (1976) and the premise was that English is the property of its users, native and non-native, and the core argument in teaching EIL was that non-native speakers do not have to use English in the same way native speakers do. According to EIL, to ensure successful and efficient intercultural interaction, native speakers have to master e.g. other cultures' structures of information and arguments. Further, non-native users of English must be prepared to interact with one another as well as with native speakers of English. In addition, EIL recognizes that different language groups have different ways of speaking, and this creates different discourse patterns in interaction (Smith 1987:xii).

The applied linguistic approach, English for Specific Purposes (ESP), suggests that in order to understand the nature of language and to better prepare ourselves to teach it, we need to examine language in relation to the context of its use. Criticism against ESP suggests that there is disagreement as to the choice between subject-specificity and a more unified approach to ESP in studies relying on ESP. Further, critics suggest that often ESP draws too much from the perspective of one particular discipline or area of interest, e.g. medicine, physical science, engineering sciences. However, as Dudley-Evans and St John (1998:17-18) point out, there are analyses also across various disciplines and areas of specialization, utilizing e.g. cross-cultural communication studies, sociology, rhetorical studies, and research in human resource management.

English for Professional Communication (EPC) represents a broader perspective than ESP, since it involves more than just the applied linguistic disciplines, including communication theory, intercultural studies, organization culture, and the speech sciences. EPC involves both the transactional and interactional dimensions of language use, i.e. the means to manage the processes are both verbal and non-verbal, linguistic and non-linguistic, and involve the use of various forms of technologies. The concept of EPC suggests that it forms a unique and coherent domain of human interaction and language use, encompassing new theoretical parameters and requiring specific approaches and perspectives to analysis and understanding. One focus of analysis in EPC is the communicative and interactional demands of work setting and professional practice, seen from the point of view of language needs, communication skills, thinking skills, discourse structure or interactional process (Richards 1993:i-ii).

The data in the present work represents task-oriented and transaction-related real-life interaction between business professionals and experts. The interaction is intended to have a desired influence on the addressees, and audience. Audience in the present work refers to the attending but not interacting addressees, more specifically to the recipients of cc:ed messages which are sent for the information of the audience (cf. Levinson 1994:72). When interacting, the participants aim at effectiveness, efficiency and quality, outcomes by which the appropriateness of each option chosen is measured. Quality in interaction is interlinked with persuasive effects, and rhetorical choices are seen as functions of persuasive goal and expected or probable audience response (Shelby 1988, 1998). The use of the term 'interaction' in the present study to refer to electronic mail texts, or written discourse, relies on the postulation that as an act of communication, texts have interactive dimensions, since texts are situated within contexts of social and political environments that participants perceive and apply. The composition of texts, or discourse is guided by participants' own purposes and their notions of the intended readers' potential to understand, based on the assumed shared knowledge (Witte 1992). The notion of e-mail 'discourse' is used interchangeably with the notions of e-mail 'interaction', or e-mail 'texts' in the present work.

Electronic mail messages can be categorized under interactive writing, since they represent intentional, purposeful writing intended to have a desired, or expected influence on the recipient/s. Reciprocity is an important notion of business communication labelling it as interactive writing (more about Bereiter 1980, Östman 1987 in Yli-Jokipii 1994), as well as interpersonal writing, an indication of which on a concrete level in the present data is the high number of messages urging a reply, response from the addressee/s and the fact that many of the messages under scrutiny are reply messages to received e-mail messages. The interpersonal character of e-mail messages is evident, i.e. the focus is on dyads and not on groups, even though the multi-addressee option of electronic mail systems enables group interaction as well, and thus the audience role is made possible in interaction. Previous messages are frequently attached to reply messages in order to facilitate reference to previous interaction about the same topic, thus resulting in a string or chain of messages in the sequence of message exchange displaying intertextuality on a concrete level. This option of borrowing content directly or editing it freely makes intertextuality a prominent and frequently-used strategic element in e-mail message interaction. It is maintained that part of the environment for any text is a set of previous texts, texts that are taken for granted as shared among those taking part (Halliday & Hasan 1989:47). Intertextuality can be seen as the property texts have of being full of snatches of other texts, which may be explicitly demarcated or merged in, and which the text may assimilate, contradict, ironically echo, and so forth (Fairclough 1993:80). In terms of production, an intertextual perspective stresses historicity of texts: how they always constitute additions to existing chains of speech communication (Bakhtin 1986:94) consisting of prior texts to which they respond. In terms of distribution, an intertextual perspective is helpful in exploring relatively stable networks which texts move along, undergoing predictable transformations as they shift from one text type to another (Fairclough 1993:80–81). Documents in corporate settings are often interrelated, and an examination of any document in light of similar, related documents from the same setting, created previously, contemporaneously, or perhaps afterwards, can be referred to as intertextuality (Fimbel 1994:103).

Even though the present data includes sequences of message exchange comprising initiating messages, reply messages, and follow-up messages, the use of the notion of 'message exchange' instead of 'interaction' (cf. Louhiala-Salminen 1999) would overemphasize the physical aspect of interaction and the technology used in interaction. In line with Louhiala-Salminen's approach, the concept 'communication' was discarded due to its mechanical and automatic stance, focusing on the sender and the recipient roles as well as the encoding and decoding stages of messages. Further, 'communication' does not emphasize the importance of the dynamic aspect in the present context, interacting via electronic mail in a professional setting in an intercultural business environment. (see Yli-Jokipii 1994 and Louhiala-Salminen 1995, 1999 for more discussion about the concepts) Thus, the term 'interaction' is used in the present work.

Interaction can be understood as the sustained production of chains of mutually dependent acts, constructed by two or more agents each monitoring and building on the actions of the other (Levinson 1994:44). In the division of language functions, transactional serves in the expression of content, whereas interactional function is involved in expressing social relations and personal attitudes, corresponding to Halliday's division of ideational and interpersonal functions respectively (Brown and Yule 1993:1). Interactive writing can be defined "as writing activity which has a strong sense of audience, a specific purpose, and which harnesses the piece of writing to achieve this purpose. Interactive writing may, further, resemble 'written conversation', and may be concerned with conditions applying to spoken interaction" (Yli-Jokipii 1994:49). Yli-Jokipii uses the term 'audience' interchangeably with 'addressees', differently from the approach used in the present work, since 'addressees' in the present treatment are the primary readers of e-mail messages.

In his study of commercial and scientific e-mail messages, Gains (1999:92) suggests that the medium of e-mail is a communicative offshoot of conversation and e-mail language has conversational features in it. There are other studies (e.g. Alatalo 1996, Louhiala-Salminen 1995, 1999) to support Gains' suggestion, and some researches focusing on the immediacy aspect of e-mail interaction state that e-mail interaction is conversation in the written mode via telephone lines (e.g. Rubin 1992:100, Oksa 1990:68). This idea refers to the possibility of achieving an interaction situation resembling face-to-face interaction with all participants simultaneously physically present to interact in the written mode on-line, the pace of interaction making the turnaround times of messages decisively shorter than in traditional mailed written correspondence. The instantaneous on-line response option offered by the interaction system and the context-oriented approach in the analysis convey the dynamic nature of the professional interaction under scrutiny. The alleged conversationalization of e-mail language will be one aspect of analysis in the present work in order to test the tenability of the conversational assumption.

The term 'professional' in the notion of 'professional interaction' is used in the present work to convey that the informants involved in the intercultural e-mail interaction are either business professionals or technical experts concerning the issues they write about. The technical experts use the English language in the same broad corporate context as the business professionals, but the specific contexts of their language use is more technical in nature. The terms 'business communication' or 'technical English/communication' were discarded, in order to include both categories of professionals in the present study.

Macro-level analyses of repair work messages will be included in the present study to go beyond the language itself, and the following three-level schemata will be referred to in the analysis of the messages written by business professionals (Roberts et al. 1992:7):

Schema	knowledge and assumptions brought to the interaction;
Frame:	strategies for and interpretation of what is going on in the interaction;
Language:	uses and forms.

The professional interactants must firstly have task skills, i.e. they have to know the subject matter they write about. Due to the knowledge of the subject matter and the contextual expertise, a certain amount of power is bestowed on the expert. Secondly, professionals must have strategic skills, i.e. they have to know how to organize or structure their messages for each context, and thirdly they have to have language skills or language proficiency, i.e. they have to know the lexicon and the structures of the language as well as the use of various linguistic elements appropriate for each context, including interpersonal metadiscourse. Deeper insights into the factors referred to above will be provided when discussing the theories and approaches, and when building the methods of analysis for the present work.

1.3 Aims, rationale and outline of the study

The present qualitative case study analyses a new kind of social and cultural dialogue carried out in English between employees of a Finnish multinational business enterprise and their non-Finnish colleagues with the help of electronic mail, a computer-based message delivery system. The present work includes discussions on the relationships between writing and technological and organizational change within workplaces. Background for the analysis is offered by the examination of various components of contexts of writing from the interactants' point of view, including the possible interlinking of writing and organizational and technological change, in order to perceive how electronic mail discourse is situated within social relationships in corporate interaction. The present study is a case study, containing more than one unit of analysis and utilizing a descriptive and interpretative research approach. The present case study represents an empirical inquiry into contemporary phenomena within their real-life contexts, especially when boundaries between phenomena and contexts are not clearly evident (e.g. Yin 1994:1, 13, 41).

The present data represents written work-place interaction in English, i.e. English language use in an institutional setting, more specifically in an intercultural profit-making business environment, in which interactants make choices between different interactional operations, strategic and linguistic, in each context of interaction. The written discourse under scrutiny is carried out via an electronic mail system, a new technology medium through which textual discourse-in-interaction takes place between people pursuing a wide range of practical goals and functions and through which more and more of the daily tasks and transactions of business professionals and organizational representatives are carried out in today's business world. The discourse in English represents interaction within a group of companies, with informants from the main company in Finland and the Metal Marketing Companies (MMC) in the United States, the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, and France.

On a more concrete level, the present study examines how the informants use electronic mail discourse for their repair work interaction in various discourse events, i.e. how they deal with problematic situations. Repair work interaction represents part of the informants' daily tasks assigned to them according to their organizational positions. The present study includes a discussion of various discourse event components and an analysis of strategic structures of the messages under scrutiny. The main focus, however, is on the functions of interpersonal metadiscourse in 40 repair work messages. The concept of metadiscourse is used in this study differently from earlier studies. This means that in metadiscourse are included also linguistic elements that can be regarded as part of the main discourse or propositional content, i.e. they are not strictly speaking "**meta**discourse" (if metadiscourse is defined as linguistic material that does not add anything to the prepositional content, as for example Crismore & al. 1993 say), but which express the same type of interpersonal meanings as metadiscourse does in the present data. As a result of the approach adopted into interpersonal metadiscourse in the present study, for instance the adjective *unfair* in the utterance *It seems very **unfair** that we have to pay the charges ...* (message 40) is assigned under the functional category of expressing writer's attitudes towards the propositional content. Further, the colloquial noun *geeks* in inverted commas in the utterance *I realize that this problem does not concern you but we have been speaking with our corporate computer **"geeks"** and they have finally decided on how to issue the credit.* (message 14) is interpreted in its context of use as a linguistic element functioning as emphasising a conversational, and consequently personalized nature of the utterance in intra-corporate repair work interaction.

The study adopts a perspective view of pragmatics, according to which pragmatics does not constitute an additional component of a theory of language, but "offers a different *perspective*" (emphasis by Verschueren 1999:2). Thus, the linguistic phenomena to be analysed and studied from the point of view of their usage can be situated at any level of structure or may pertain to any type of form-meaning relationship. The functional approach in the present analysis of interpersonal metadiscourse allows for the interpretation of the use of language elements by reference to their functions in the total linguistic system, since each linguistic element is interpreted as functional with respect to the whole. Consequently, the categorization of the interpersonal metadiscourse elements under scrutiny, i.e. the pragmatic functional elements, is made according to their functions in their contexts of use and not according to their linguistic structure, nor their word class. The categorizations and analyses acknowledge the polypragmatic nature of interpersonal metadiscourse, which is a prerequisite in a context-derived approach to analyse language use.

Chapter 2 approaches metadiscourse, apologizing, repair work and requests from various perspectives, which are regarded as relevant for the present study. The work concentrates on the messages including repair work strategies, i.e. messages written to deal with problematic situations. The repair work approach applied in the present work relies on Meier's (1995) postulations on repair work. Further, the analysis includes a tentative analysis of utterances expressing requests, since various lexico-grammatical utterances functioning as expressing requests are frequent in the present data, also in repair work messages. Yli-Jokipii's (1994) findings on requestive utterances from her cross-cultural study of business writing will be utilized for comparison. Allegedly, repair work strategies and requesting strategies can be included under persuasive interaction strategies. Consequently, repair work messages seem to offer a more intriguing data for an in-depth analysis of their strategic structures and the use and functions of interpersonal metadiscoursal elements than messages with other primary communicative purposes, e.g. providing information. Various discourse events involving the use of repair work strategies are challenging situations of interaction and require professional expertise and rhetorical skills from interactants, including persuasion skills, in addition to the knowledge of the subject matter.

The methodological part, i.e. Chapter 3, initiates by presenting Biber's model of multi-dimensional-multi-feature (MD-MF) analysis of components of speech situations (Biber 1988, 1991, 1992). Biber's model is modified for the description of the discourse events represented in the present data. Further, Chapter 3 includes a classification of a total of 279 e-mail messages in the present corpus basing on their primary communicative purpose (e.g. Swales 1990:58) in their context of use, i.e. speech or discourse event, in which they are exchanged between the writer and the addressee/s. A total of 40 messages including repair work strategies will be in the focal point of the various analyses in the present work. A descriptive and functional framework for the structural and linguistic analysis of the 40 repair work messages is offered in Chapter 3, with references primarily to Herring's (1996) schemata for the macrosegment structure of electronic mail messages, by analysing the sets of the recurrent textual-pragmatic functions, or communication strategies as elicited in the 40 repair work messages.

Chapter 4 discusses repair work and requesting interaction from various angles, and the analysis of request forms and functions aims at detecting functions possibly specific for repair work messages. Further, Chapter 4 presents the analyses of the macrosegment structures of the 40 repair work messages. The present treatment adopts a different approach from the one used e.g. by Louhiala-Salminen (1999:19) who uses 'genre' as a working tool to categorize discourse activities. That the present work has a different starting point from those resorting to 'genre' does not equal saying that analyses based on 'genre' categorizations are not capable of approaching and revealing important aspects of discourse activities. 'Genre' will be referred to, but not relied on, in the present work when discussing reasons for discarding it as a tool for analysis. References to Paltridge's (1995, 1996) notion of 'sufficient similarity' concerning the generic and prototypical structures of texts will be made.

As stated above, the primary aim of the present work is to analyse, i.e. to detect, identify for functional categorization, describe and interpret, the use and functions of the interpersonal metadiscoursal elements in the 40 messages including repair work strategies written in various discourse events. Interpersonal metadiscourse is a micro-level feature of text rhetoric. In order to provide the necessary contextual background information for this analysis, analyses and discussions of some macro-level features of the electronic mail messages will be included, i.e. discourse event components and macrosegment structures of the repair work messages. Chapter 5 concentrates on the analysis and discussion of the functions of interpersonal metadiscourse.

The analysis of the use of interpersonal metadiscourse in repair work messages acknowledges the postulations, supported by the systemic-functional approach, that writers most likely use metadiscourse in interaction with a persuasive aim (Williams 1989, Crismore et al. 1993:43), and that interpersonal business messages have persuasive functions (e.g. Yli-Jokipii 1994). The use of modifying devices is suggested to enable language users to express interpersonal meanings, or interpersonal functions, in interaction (Nikula 1996:19). Since metadiscourse has particular prominence in spoken discourse, it was natural that this feature was first analysed by linguists in the spoken discourse (Telenius 1994:23). Further, metadiscourse is regarded to be a vital linguistic device for situations involving face threatening acts, FTAs, such as requesting, refusing, disagreeing (Brown & Levinson 1987).

Interpersonal metadiscourse devices may be used e.g. to soften or emphasize the pragmatic force or intent, conveyed by different surface forms, in order to ensure successful interaction from all participants' point of view. These are goals that allegedly constitute an integral part of interaction aiming at doing repair work. Electronic mail messages represent interactive writing, involving a high degree of interactivity with conversational features present in the messages. Thus, the data of e-mail messages exchanged in real-life intercultural business situations between business professionals to carry out their daily business transactions offers an interesting target for a study of interpersonal metadiscourse. The carrying out of the daily business transactions requires sending out and receiving messages that are written to serve various communicative purposes in different discourse events, including situations with FTAs present. Further, the allegedly high degree of interactivity and the presence of conversational features in e-mail messages add to the interest to study interpersonal metadiscourse in commercial electronic mail messages, as metadiscourse is suggested to be a feature of especially oral discourse. The number of reports and studies written on business e-mail interaction is low and the findings do not seem to tally with each other (see e.g. Louhiala-Salminen 1995, 1999 and Gains 1999). This knowledge reinforces the decision to analyse interpersonal metadiscourse in electronic mail messages written in English in an institutional, international business environment.

Despite the fact that the business professionals interacting via electronic mail in the present data represent different ethnic backgrounds, the main focus is not on intercultural differences or similarities in their structural or interpersonal metadiscoursal choices. It is assumed that the interaction culture within a discipline or within a group of people, who represent institutionally fairly homogeneous users of language, independent of their ethnic background, rather than the ethnic culture influences the language use of e.g. business professionals writing in English in their recurrent interaction at their workplaces via e-mail. Louhiala-Salminen's (1995) postulation that e-mail language use is separate from British or American cultural values and norms supports the assumption made above. Further, it is maintained that rhetorical strategies are shared rather than ethnically determined and the notion of 'shared community' is created through rhetoric (Roberts and Sarangi 1993:105).

Discarding the intercultural focus in the present work is justified by the fact that the interaction analysed represents interaction within a company, since the interactants represent the same group of companies operating in different countries. Thus, the aim in the present qualitative case study in not to use 'culture' as an unproblematic explanation or metaphor for variation in interaction in which interactants have different ethnic origins. However, some references to cross- or intercultural researches will be made, e.g. Yli-Jokipii's (1994) cross-cultural study of requests by British, American and Finnish writers, and Crismore et al.'s (1993) study of cross-cultural variation in the use of metadiscourse in persuasive writing between American and Finnish writers, in order to make comparisons of the use of linguistic elements in the present case study with other research, including some interlanguage research (e.g. Nikula 1996). In sum, the present work does not assume a cross-cultural or interlanguage approach. It could be asked if the different discourse events and communicative purposes of the messages rather than the differing ethnic backgrounds give rise to the possible differences in the strategic structure of the messages and in the use and functions of interpersonal metadiscourse in the present data. Further, as suggested earlier, the shared knowledge of e.g. the prevailing business interaction conventions and the e-mail interaction conventions, deriving from contextual presuppositions based on e.g. experience and knowledge of contextual requirements, may explain the use of the various structural strategies and linguistic features under scrutiny in various interactional settings.

Chapter 6 discusses findings of the present work and answers the research questions formulated in Chapter 3.5. Further, some aspects of the limitations of the current work will be covered. The work concludes by suggesting topics for further research.

1.4 Data and informants of the study

The present corpus consists of 279 English language electronic mail messages exchanged in authentic intercultural business encounters between native writers of English and Finnish informants writing in English, including Dutch and French audience informants. The messages represent internal electronic mail interaction in a Finnish multinational industrial enterprise, and the messages were collected between 1996 and 2000. The data is not from one specific period only, because the number of messages sent or received by each informant may vary significantly on a daily or weekly basis. Therefore, the request for messages from the informants needed to be repeated to accumulate the corpus for the analysis.

The corpus is limited in the sense that it represents electronic mail interaction inside one group of companies, since it is difficult to receive authentic messages for analysis from business enterprises. The Finnish informants were self-selected by their willingness to submit their electronic mail messages for the analysis on the present writer's request, authorized by the management team of the company. This self-selection influenced the selection of the other informants, since there is a limited number of employees in the main company in Finland who interact in English via electronic mail. Further, the main company has only two overseas offices with native speakers of English as their employees, a fact also limiting the number of native writers of English in the present corpus.

The present study is a case study relying on written data submitted by informants working for the same multinational group of companies, except for one American customer. The fact that the messages represent intra-company interaction will be taken into account when analysing the messages, and especially when discussing the results and the generalizability of findings. The primary informants are either native writers of English, i.e. employees of two overseas Metal Marketing Companies (MMC's) of the main company, represented by six members of the British company staff and five members of the US company staff and one America customer, or Finnish informants writing in English, i.e. ten Finns working for the main company in Finland. The majority of messages analysed are exchanged between native writers of English and Finnish informants. However, one Finnish informant's e-mail messages in English to French and Dutch MMC staff is included, since his main interaction in English, according to the e-mail interview carried out for the present work, takes place with French and Dutch MMC staff. The messages by the French informant, Fr1, are not included in the study, since the aim is to analyse language use by native writers of English and Finnish informants writing in English. The messages cc:ed to French and Dutch informants are included, even though the primary informant is French. This is due to the assumption that the addressees' or the audience's ethnicity does not influence the way of writing. As an argument for the above inclusion, it is suggested that the informants see each other as individual staff members of one group of companies using English as the language of interaction and not as individuals representing different ethnic cultures. A senior management level employee put this idea in the following way in a telephone interview: "You have to remember that all these messages represent interaction between our own folks, a fact which will allegedly display itself in the informants' language use, no frills are used and only the essential is there."

As stated earlier, the present work does not assume an intercultural or crosscultural approach, despite the various ethnic cultural backgrounds of the informants. For instance Bilbow (1997:45) points out, referring to his studies on intercultural business meetings, that it is important to remember that there is an evident weakness in assuming, on the basis of apparent intercultural variation in the realization of certain linguistic utterances, that such variation originates from interactants' ethnicity, since the verbal performances of groups in business environments may be equally much influenced by other sociocultural factors, including corporate culture, as by ethnicity.

The Finnish informants are identified by F with a number in the analysis, the British informants by B, and the American informants by A with a number. The British and the American informants are staff of the MMC's, with the exception of AC1 who is an American customer. The informants identified as D1 and D2, as well as Fr1 and Fr2, are two Dutch and two French audience informants and messages by them are not included in the analysis. The informants identified as F10, F11, F12, and F13 are Finnish audience informants whose messages are not included in the present analysis. All informants represent white-collar staff. The informants referred to in the work are listed in Table 1, including descriptions of their organizational statuses as defined in the group's internal hierarchy.

Table 1. Informants of the study

A1	an American middle management level male employee
A2	an American operative level female employee
A3	an American operative level female employee
A4	an American operative level female employee
A5	an American middle management level male employee
AC1	an American male customer (no information of his organizational position)
B1	a British middle management level male employee
B2	a British senior management level male employee
B3	a British operative level female employee
B4	a British operative level female employee
B5	a British operative level female employee
B6	a British middle management level male employee
D1	a Dutch middle management level male employee (audience)
D2	a Dutch middle operative level male employee (audience)
F1	a Finnish operative level female employee
F2	a Finnish middle management level male employee
F3	a Finnish middle management level male employee
F4	a Finnish operative level female employee
F5	a Finnish operative level female employee, technical expert
F6	a Finnish operative level male employee, technical expert
F7	a Finnish operative level male employee
F8	a Finnish operative level female employee
F9	a Finnish senior management level male employee
F10	a Finnish middle management level male employee (audience)
F11	a Finnish middle management level male employee (audience)
F12	a Finnish middle management level male employee (audience)
F13	a Finnish middle management level male employee (audience)
F14	a Finnish middle management level female employee
F15	a Finnish middle management level female employee
Fr1	a French management level male employee (audience)
Fr2	a French management level male employee (audience)

An e-mail questionnaire in Finnish was circulated among the Finnish informants to receive support for the analyses and interpretations of some messages. Further, phone interviews were carried out in order to discuss the organizational status of the informants with some management level employees to facilitate the analysis of the messages. The group-internal survey report on the efficiency of internal and external communications in the mill in Finland and between the mills and the Metal Marketing Companies was used to define the informants' organizational levels (OCDP Report 1999).

The informants write e-mail messages in English on a regular basis to carry out their daily business-related duties. There are only few messages written purely for social purposes and these messages are excluded from the present work, although some comments are made concerning them when discussing the use of paralinguistic devices and typography as interpersonal metadiscourse, e.g. smilies, and punctuation, in e-mail messages in the present data.

Each informant has a variety of tasks and duties to take care of as part of the daily work. Deriving from their positions and roles in the organizational hierarchy of the group of companies, the range of the work-related communicative purposes found in the e-mail messages produced by the informants seems to be limited to some extent with each informant. This was confirmed by the informants in the questionnaire concerning the situations and topics they communicate about with the MMC staff in Britain, France, Holland and the USA. For instance, typical communicative purposes of the native English-speaking MMC staff's messages include the following: requesting for information and advice, and for action, forwarding complaints to the main company staff on behalf of the customers, i.e. doing repair work. On the other hand, the Finnish staff's messages mainly seem to serve the following communicative purposes: informing the recipient about something, by the recipient's request or on their own initiative, giving advice, suggestions, recommendations and directives, and responding to complaints or messages reporting other problems, i.e. doing repair work. However, the division is not as categorical as suggested above, i.e. on some occasions the MMC staff may inform the Finnish staff about something, and correspondingly the Finnish staff may request something. The communication purposes as elicited in the present data will be discussed further in Chapter 3.3.

2 THEORIES AND APPROACHES

The present part of the study introduces the theoretical background into the linguistic and strategic focuses of the work. Since the analysis of functions of interpersonal metadiscourse is the main focus of the present work, the theoretical part is initiated by giving insights into various approaches to metadiscourse, including interpersonal metadiscourse, and earlier research on it. Further rationale for the approach and focus assumed in the present work will be submitted. A total of 40 electronic mail messages including repair work strategies are under the main linguistic and strategic scrutiny in the present study. Consequently, a discussion on the various approaches to apologizing and repair work strategies is included.

Requestive utterances are frequent in repair work discourse. Therefore, theories of requesting introduced by several research and relevant implications from that research for the present work are included in the present chapter, in order to provide background for a discussion on forms and functions of requests in repair work messages in Chapter 4.4.

2.1 Notes on research into metadiscourse

Harris coined the term 'metadiscourse' and used the term to refer to passages of a text that contain information that is only of secondary importance (1970:464-466). Vande Kopple (1985) gives a predominantly functional classification based on Halliday's (1985) macrofunctions of language. Vande Kopple (1980) understands metadiscourse as writing that signals the presence of the author and that calls attention to the speech act itself. Vande Kopple's (1985, 1988) classification system for metadiscourse divides metadiscourse into two main categories or functions, i.e. textual and interpersonal, and distinguishes seven subcategories. According to Vande Kopple, many discourses have at least two levels, and "On one level we supply information about the subject of our text. On this level we expand propositional content. On the other level, the level of discourse, we do not add propositional material but help our readers organize, classify, interpret, evaluate, and react to such material. Metadiscourse, therefore, is discourse about discourse or communication about communication." (1985:83). For Williams (1985:226) metadiscourse is "writing about writing, whatever does not refer to the subject matter being addressed". Williams' definition of metadiscourse includes all connecting devices, all comment about the author's attitude, all comment about the author's confidence in his following assertion, and references to the audience.

Crismore (1989:4-47) demonstrates in an interesting way how authors from different cultures, writing in different time periods, disciplines, and genres, use metadiscourse. Crismore (1990) moves beyond the sentence level to a discourse level and beyond grammatical and speech act approaches to a rhetorical approach. She shares the view, suggested also by other researchers, that the notion of metadiscourse is theoretically problematic because "almost all properties of spoken and written discourse may implicitly or explicitly signal various dimensions of the communicative situation, ... In addition, what is metadiscourse in one situation may be discourse in another." (1989:49). As suggested by Crismore et al. (1993), metadiscourse can be realized by using a wide variety of linguistic devices, ranging from affixes, such as Finnish suffixes *-s*, *-pa* used often in informal speech to soften commands or directives, to whole sentences, such as *To summarize the report...* in English. The multitude of these collective devices, however, poses a problem of classifying them according to linguistic criteria. For Enkvist (1975) 'metatext' is a wide umbrella concept under which new linguistic elements can be placed almost indefinitely according to the situational needs. The relativeness of the concept is central in Enkvist's approach, since some utterances or textual sequences can be interpreted as metatext only in relation to another utterance or text sequence.

Thus, the analyst has to first consider how to describe the discourse in which the metatextual devices are elicited. According to Swales (1990:188), it is easy to accept the concept of metadiscourse, but it is more difficult to establish its limits. One aspect of metadiscourse elements, i.e. the multifunctionality of some of them, poses problems for classifying metadiscoursal elements. Also Nash (1992:100) recognizes the difficulty of defining the word metadiscourse and sees " ... the boundaries of definition no more firmly drawn than those of, say, 'rhetoric' or 'style'. One reader may perceive a clear stylistic intention in something which another reader dismisses as a commonplace, 'automatized' use of language" (quotes by Nash). Nash created a two-category classification system of metadiscourse, which owes much to Halliday's concept of macrotextual function. Nash divides metadiscourse into 1) tactical metadiscourse, including preview, tactical enumeration, topic shift, review, and conclusion, and 2) lexical metadiscourse, including limiters, hedges, emphatics, evaluatives, formulators, appeals, directives, and asides (1992:114 - 115). The present work partly discusses what Nash refers to as tactical metadiscourse. In the present work, however, some elements under Nash's tactical metadiscourse are dealt with when analysing the generic message structure in order to provide contextual elements for the analysis of interpersonal metadiscourse. The approach in the present work acknowledges Enkvist's relativeness idea, according to which utterances have to be interpreted in relation to other utterances or sequences of text.

Crismore (1989:49) reviews, explains, and integrates definitions and classifications of metadiscourse from different disciplinary perspectives in her attempt to bring some coherence to the theory of metadiscourse, suggesting a term 'rhetorical theory of metadiscourse'. Crismore summarizes the different perspectives of metadiscourse by postulating e.g. that in any discourse, the metadiscoursal level consists of propositional attitudes, textual meanings, and interpersonal meanings. In addition, metadiscourse is part of or embedded in a rhetorical, situational context that determines appropriateness of type, form, amount, style, aim, and function. Metadiscourse is pragmatic and rhetorical in that it is concerned with acts and effects on the addressees. Further, Crismore maintains that metadiscourse has many functions, i.e. semantic, social, psychological, communicative control, and rhetorical, since metadiscourse can frame the topical/propositional material, enables addressees to relate the content matter to a wider framework of knowledge, creates discourse cohesion and coherence, operationalizes rhetorical strategies, organizes and evaluates discourses, introduces level shifts within discourses, prepares addressees for the next rhetorical, communicative moves in discourses, indicates writer's states of consciousness, and helps monitor contact with addressees (1989:89-92). Further, differences in text type are suggested to influence the type of metadiscourse used in various situations (e.g. Crismore and Farnsworth 1990). Crismore's rhetorical theory offers relevant insights for the present work, including the suggestion that differences in text type may influence the type of metadiscourse. In the present work, instead of relying on the notion of 'text type' or 'genre', the primary communicative purpose of messages is used as a decisive feature when categorizing messages for the ensuing analyses.

Crismore, Markkanen and Steffensen (1993) suggest a modified classification, preserving the two main categories of textual and interpersonal metadiscourse and creating new subcategories by collapsing, separating and reorganizing Vande Kopple's (1985, 1988) classification system. In their revised classification, textual metadiscourse is divided into textual markers, including logical connectives, sequencers, reminders, and topicalizers, and into interpretative markers including code glosses, illocution markers, and announcements. The interpersonal metadiscourse category, used for emotional and ethical appeals, is divided into hedges, certainty markers, attributors, attitude markers, and commentary (Crismore et al. 1993:47).

The use of metadiscourse to signal text organization, evaluate the text contents and convey attitudes to readers is found to be important in different academic disciplines, although displaying disciplinary variability, and the findings support the postulation that metadiscourse is a universal feature of professional rhetorical writing in English (Hyland 1998b:447). Also Hyland (1998a, 1998b) distinguishes textual and interpersonal metadiscourse in his two modified classifications of Crismore et al.'s scheme, one for the academic disciplines purposes and one for the corporate discourse purposes focusing on chief executive officers' (CEO) letters, both representing purely written genres. Hyland maintains that his revised versions aim at minimizing overlapping functions and thus eliminating categories identified by only formal, rather than functional characteristics.

Hyland (1998a:228) classifies logical connectives, sequencers, frame markers, endophoric markers, and code glosses under textual metadiscourse in his corporate discourse data, and logical connectives, frame markers, endophoric markers, evidentials, and code closses under textual metadiscourse in his academic writing analysis (1998b:442-443). In academic texts, evidentials function to refer to sources of information from other texts, guiding the readers' interpretation and establishing intertextuality, and allowing the writers to display knowledge of other texts in the discipline (1998b:443). In corporate discourse, sequencers function to denote sequences of text material, including enumerative expressions, such as *first*, *secondly*, as well as numbers and letters used for listing (1998a:228-229).

In Hyland's (1998a:228) corporate discourse data, the category of interpersonal metadiscourse includes the following subcategories: hedges, emphatics, attributors, attitude markers, and relational markers. The following subcategories are represented in his academic writing analysis: hedges, emphatics, attitude markers, relational markers, and person markers. In academic texts, person markers, i.e. first person pronouns and possessive adjectives, make explicit references to the authors and reflect the importance of the degree of writer presence in contributing to the variability in tenor of texts (Hyland 1998b:442, 444). In corporate discourse, attributors function to indicate the source of quoted information, e.g. *according to / X says*, and contribute to CEO's credibility appeals, since attributors allow drawing on external sources to emphasize the authority of their assertions or their role in leading a company (Hyland 1998a:228, 235).

In her analysis of metadiscourse in commercial electronic mail messages, Louhiala-Salminen (1999:125) refers to Hyland's subcategories for her modified classification and relies on the following: the textual category includes logical connectives, frame markers, organizers, and explanatory markers; the interpersonal category includes hedges, emphatics, attitude markers, and relational markers. Louhiala-Salminen's taxonomy is based on business messages, including e-mail messages, and it is presented in Table 2, in order to allow for comparison with the categorization in the present work in Table 3 in Chapter 2.1.4. The categorization by Louhiala-Salminen (1999) is presented in Table 2 on the following page.

Table 2. Categories of metadiscourse by Louhiala-Salminen.

Category	Function	Examples of textual realizations
	Textual metadiscourse	
(1) logical connectives	express relations between ideas	*but, and, however*
(2) frame markers	focus attention, introduce a topic, refer to previous discourse	*please note, as for ..., thanks for your fax*
(3) organizers	organize parts of message toward higher readability	*first, noted above, enclosed are...*; use of numbers, arrows
(4) explanatory markers	explain	*for example, i.e.*; use of brackets
	Interpersonal Metadicourse	
(1) hedges	express lack of complete commitment to the proposition	*may/might, can/could, possibly, I think*
(2) emphatics	express full commitment to the proposition	*indeed, I am sure;* use of exclamation marks
(3) attitude markers	express writer's attitude	*hopefully, I would like to; :-)*
(4) relational markers	build writer-reader relationship	use of names; *I will keep in touch; If you need help or info, please do not hesitate to get back.*

In the present corpus, occurrences of what Hyland refers to as 'relational markers' in his corpus of written discourse, a category also included in Louhiala-Salminen's taxonomy, would offer an abundant source of analysis. These occurrences are discussed in the ensuing analyses, but they are not dealt with as a separate functional category in the present work, since the use of the person pronouns *I, you, we*, and the first names to build writer-reader relationships are regarded as exemplifying the conversational nature of the present e-mail discourse. However, it is admitted that their more in-depth analysis as tools of building writer-reader relationship could offer new insights also into research on 'voice'.

2.1.1 Interpersonal metadiscourse

Vande Kopple (1985:87) defines interpersonal metadiscourse as utterances expressing the author's role in the situation in which the text functions, and the author's hopes for the kinds of responses readers might make. Crismore et al. (1993:47) refer to the dimension of emotional and ethical appeals in interpersonal metadiscourse in their categorization of metadiscourse; these dimensions will be referred to in the analyses in the present work. Hyland (1998a, 1998b) postulates that interpersonal metadiscourse alerts readers to the writer's attitudes towards both the propositional information and the readers themselves, thus contributing to the development of a writer-reader relationship. According to Hyland, interpersonal metadiscourse is essentially interactional, evaluative and expresses the level of personality, or tenor, of the discourse, influencing such matters as the writer's intimacy or remoteness, the expression of attitude, commitment to propositional content, and degree of reader involvement. According to Hyland (1998b), e.g. hedges, a category of interpersonal metadiscourse, function in academic writing to distinguish facts from opinions and they reflect the need of authors to evaluate their claims in ways that are likely to be persuasive to their colleagues, since hedging allows writers to present their assertions with appropriate caution and deference to the views of their discourse community. Further, Hyland (1998a:241) argues that the ways in which authors control the expression of textual and interpersonal relationships in a discourse may be as vital to the rhetorical success of a discourse as its propositional content. Allegedly, Hyland's postulations hold true in the present repair work interaction in some discourse events.

2.1.2 Metadiscourse as a strategic tool

Writing is regarded as a social activity influenced by culture. It has also been suggested that authors use culture-specific strategies, rhetoric, e.g. in order to facilitate the perception and understanding process of hearers and readers, to specify the inferences that they wish their hearers and readers to make from the discourse, or to express their attitudes toward the content of the discourse. In persuasive discourse, for instance, authors may decide to use some context-specific strategies when they want to convince their addressees or audience of their claims and argumentation, or when they want to increase the credibility of their message, or when they want to create a dialogue with the other interactants. These discourse strategies can be realized through different linguistic units and devices, ranging from single words to sequences of sentences, i.e. discourse-based strategies that do not add to the propositional content but are devices to conduct 'discourse about discourse'.

In their cross-cultural study investigating cultural and gender variations in the use of metadiscourse in the United States and Finland by university students in their written persuasive texts, Crismore, Markkanen and Steffensen (1993:40) use the notion of metadiscourse to refer to the linguistic material in discourse, including both spoken and written, that does not add anything to the propositional content but that is intended to help the hearer or reader organize, interpret, and evaluate the information given. Crismore et al.'s study provides partial evidence for the universality of metadiscourse and the writers suggest the need for more cross-cultural studies of metadiscourse use.

Metadiscourse is suggested to be essentially discourse about the discourse itself. The notion of 'metadiscourse' is also referred to by terms such as 'metatext', or 'text about text', 'metatalk', 'metacommunicative markers'. Crismore et al. (1993:40) rely in their treatment of metadiscouse on the functional approach by Halliday (1973) who seeks to consider and identify the role of various linguistic items in any discourse in terms of their function in building meaning. Metadiscourse is defined as fulfilling the textual and interpersonal functions of the language (Halliday 1985). The third function of language is the ideational function, 'the learning and thinking function', i.e. the meaning or the content function, divided into experiential and logical (Halliday & Hasan 1989:44-45).

The textual function is "... a resource for ensuring that what is said is relevant and relates to its context", and that "... there is coherence between one part of the text and every other part ...", whereas the interpersonal function is " ... the doing function in the process of social interaction between the participants ..." in the communication situation (Halliday & Hasan 1989:44-45). Further, "Every sentence in a text is multifunctional; but not in such a way that you can point to one particular constituent or segment and say this segment has just this function. The meanings are woven together in a very dense fabric in such a way that, to understand them, we do not look separately at its different parts; rather, we look at the whole thing simultaneously from a number of different angles, each perspective contributing towards the total interpretation. This is the essential nature of a functional approach." (Halliday & Hasan 1989:23)

Thus, the textual function of metatext allows the author's presence in the text by organizing what has been said, and the interpersonal function by expressing personal feelings and attitudes by interacting with the reader. Crismore et al. (1993:39-40) suggest that by projecting themselves into texts, writers are able to guide and direct readers to facilitate their understanding of the content and the writer's attitudes toward the content and the reader. By doing this, " ... writers convey their personality, credibility, considerateness of the reader, and relationship to the subject matter and to readers by using certain devices in their texts ...". Crismore et al. include words, phrases, main clauses, and even punctuation and typographical marks in these collective devices and use the term 'metadiscourse' for them. The present work includes punctuation and typography into interpersonal metadiscourse in some discourse events.

Basing on his studies on corporate (1998a) and scientific (1998b) discourse, Hyland argues that there is an evident relationship between metadiscourse and its rhetorical context and that this relationship constitutes an essential aspect of successful academic writing. In addition, in the academic world, metadiscourse is critical to the general purpose of language use, it is a special form of discourse with the expressive and referential functions to enable readers to contextualize a text and authors to gain acceptance for their work. Thus, according to Hyland, in academic writing metadiscourse is a central pragmatic tool for authors to portray a disciplinary awareness of how best to represent themselves and their research (1998b:453). Further, in corporate environments interactants must be concerned with the influence of metadiscourse in persuasion. Metadiscourse is argued to be a ubiquitous feature of the way in which CEO’s portray their awareness of how best to represent themselves and their companies. Hyland points out that metadiscourse is an important tool in creating rational, credible, and affective appeals in CEO's letters, and calls for future research to investigate other type of corporate communication in various contexts and genres to discover how best to make the features of metadiscourse more salient (1998a:241). The present work attempts to respond to this urge by Hyland for research on contextually-oriented real-life corporate data analysing the use and functions of interpersonal metadiscourse.

2.1.3 Beyond surface form categories towards contextual multifunctionality

Researchers in different disciplines have pointed out the importance of appropriate use of metadiscourse as a device of guiding and directing addressee/s through discourse by facilitating the perception and inferencing process by the addressee/s, i.e. by helping them understand the discourse and the writer's attitudes and perspectives. There are, however, various interpretations to the notion of 'appropriate'. The notion of contextual 'appropriateness' will be included in the discussion on repair work and requesting strategies. The present work analyses corporate electronic mail messages written in English by American and British as well as Finnish informants to find out in which functions and for which strategic purposes interpersonal metadiscourse is used in the highly goal-oriented and interactive electronic mail discourse events in a corporate environment.

Halliday (1994) elaborates on the notion of 'functional approach' by suggesting that it is "... essentially 'natural' in the sense that everything in it can be explained, ultimately, by reference to how language is used ...", and "Following from this, the fundamental components of meaning in language are functional components." Further, according to Halliday, "... each element (Halliday's quotes and emphases) in a language is explained by reference to its function in the total linguistic system. In other words, each part is interpreted as functional with respect to the whole." (1994:xiii-xiv). In the scope of the present work, the analysis of metadiscourse is limited to interpersonal metadiscourse. Rather than discussing the interpersonal metadiscoursal elements primarily as linguistic structures elicited in the data, the present writer seeks to adopt a broader view in the process of analysing the messages by discussing the multi-functionality or the polypragmatic nature of metadiscourse in various contexts of use, in order to gain more in-depth insights into the functions of interpersonal metadiscoursal elements. Further, the analysis will be elaborated above sentence level by discussing the contextual components of various discourse events and, further, by analysing the generic message organization and structure, in order to facilitate the interpretation of the functions and uses of interpersonal metadiscourse in the messages.

In her study of economic texts, Mauranen (1993) suggests that despite a relative uniformity of academic papers imposed by requirements of the genre, there is intercultural variation in the rhetorical preferences of writers. Crismore et al. (1993) found intercultural differences in the use of textual and interpersonal metadiscourse among American and Finnish university students, although their study provided some evidence for the universality of metadiscourse. Basing on her intercultural study of one micro-level feature of text rhetoric, the use of causal metatext, Moreno (1997) argues, however, that it is the writing conventions of the research article genre, and not the peculiarities of Spanish and English writing cultures, that govern the rhetorical strategies preferred by writers to make the cause-effect intersentential relations explicit and the frequency with which these are made explicit.

Traditionally business writing in English, either by natives or non-natives, has been conventionalized and under the influence of Anglo-American writing culture. The present study includes discussion of the conventions of written business English and their possible impact on the language use of the informants in their electronic mail messages. In addition, possible influences of Finnish informants' mother tongue will be referred to, as well as to the alleged influences of the new technology used to send and receive the messages. Valero-Garcés (1996:279) suggests that users of a second language acquire certain rhetorical habits from their own culture as well as others from the second language and both resources may have a specific impact on the efficiency and credibility of their language use, including metadiscourse. In the present material, it is possible that the conventions of the traditional business writing together with the e-mail etiquette by the parent company and the established e-mail use influence the English language use of the Finnish informants equally much as the mother tongue or their native communication culture. This suggestion is supported by Louhiala-Salminen's (1995) findings in her study of business language, according to which the interlocutors' ethnic cultures and their norms and values do not influence e-mail language use. As stated earlier, the present work assumes a discourse-event and context-derived approach in analysing the functions of interpersonal metadiscourse, acknowledging the polypragmatic nature of interpersonal metadiscourse; possible influences of the ethnic culture will be included in the discussions as a variable of discourse event components.

2.1.4 Interpersonal metadiscourse in the present work

It can be suggested that the relation between text and context, on the one hand, and the relation between the author and the reader, on the other hand, created partly through metadiscourse, is a dynamic, two-way interchange between the author's intentions and desires, and the possibilities and constraints presented by the discourse situation in which the text is written and read. Further, it can be suggested (Luukka & Markkanen 1997:168) that all language use is interpersonal in that messages conveyed are aimed at readers or hearers, and the message meaning is always a result of negotiation between the interactants. Accordingly, the author or the speaker chooses various communicative strategies in accordance with the readers or hearers, and an individual metadiscoursal element may be multifunctional in specific discourse situations. Consequently, the functional and pragmatic approaches in the analysis of interpersonal metadiscourse in electronic mail repair work messages can be regarded as adequate. The contextual element is emphasized by e.g. Luukka (1992:42, 156) who introduces a third category of 'contextual metadiscourse' into her analysis of oral and written academic metadiscourse. Contextual metadiscourse is understood as being interconnected with interpersonal metadiscourse in that in various contexts of language use speakers may explicate themselves as actors, and explicit references to hearers are made by e.g. asking questions or expressing requests.

Interpersonal metadiscourse is the linguistic and strategic feature under the main focus in the analyses of the 40 repair work messages in the present work. The repair work messages represent interpersonal business interaction between named writers and readers, and audience, who interact with each other concerning highly goal-oriented, task-related business issues. Repair work strategies involve persuasive strategies; writers request for information, advice, views, or for action, they suggest courses of action, they refuse requests, etc. Frequently, these strategies are used in repair work processes to achieve or maintain negotiation processes, i.e. participation in dialogue, requiring both writers' and readers' verbal participation. In these negotiation processes, writers' and readers' roles alternate. Research suggests (e.g. Williams 1989) that interactants use metadiscourse in persuasive interaction more than in other types of interaction. Further, it is suggested that metadiscourse is a significant strategy of interaction used in oral discourse (e.g. Telenius 1994). However, several researches on written discourse show that metadiscourse, including interpersonal metadiscourse, is a prominent feature of also written interaction. As electronic mail interaction supposedly has features of both the written and oral discourse, and as repair work strategies involve strategies of persuasion, the analysis of the functions of interpersonal metadiscourse in the 40 repair work messages is regarded as an important subject of analysis.

The systemic-functional approach is applied in the present work, and the contextual features of each discourse event are looked closely into for the analyses. The multi-functionality of interpersonal metadiscouse together with the argument that metadiscourse is decisive for the adequate interpretation of the meaning of discourse content are acknowledged in the present work (see e.g. Luukka 1992). In the present qualitative study, the focus is on interpersonal metadiscouse and its polypragmatic functions in electronic mail messages doing repair work. The aim is not to quantify the various occurrences of interpersonal metadiscourse, since several occurrences are multifunctional. Thus, assigning them under clear-cut categories for quantification would be problematic. Further, due to the low number of messages analysed, it would not be possible to make generalizable conclusions basing on quantification. Textual metadiscourse is excluded from the present work in order to focus on the context-derived analyses of the functions and strategic uses of interpersonal metadiscourse.

Despite the multicultural background of the informants, the present work is primarily neither cross-cultural analysis, because only English language is involved, nor interlanguage analysis, because the main focus is not on the comparison of the various ethnic groups of writers and the possible variation in their use of interpersonal metadiscourse. Rather, the present work describes and analyses the occurrences, or non-occurrences, of interpersonal metadiscoursal elements and their functions and strategic uses in electronic mail messages doing repair work with various primary communicative purposes. The assumption of the present writer concerning the cultural effects on the language use is that in the present data, a joint cultural influence of the 'international business communication culture', the 'electronic mail communication in English culture', the 'corporate-specific electronic mail communication culture', and the 'idiosyncratic electronic mail communication culture' may have an effect on the language use of the informants more explicitly than the ethnic culture of the informants. It can be further assumed that there is a multitude of variables influencing the various 'sub-cultures' referred to above (quotes by the present writer).

The decision to analyse interpersonal metadiscourse only was made on the assumption, expressed in earlier research of business e-mail interaction (e.g. Louhiala-Salminen 1995, 1999, Gains 1999), that e-mail interaction is conversational in nature and involves persuasive aspects, and that interpersonal metadiscourse is a device primarily used in spoken, persuasive discourse. It would have been interesting to include textual metadiscourse in the analysis, but in the scope of the present work an in-depth analysis of both would not have been possible. However, it would be tempting to analyse textual metadiscourse in electronic mail messages, since there are claims presented by some writers about electronic mail interaction suggesting that e-mail discourse is 'chatty', 'without any stylistic refinements' and 'loose in structure', 'not properly organized', 'fuzzy', and consequently not very efficient or effective, i.e. not fully successful (e.g. Angell & Heslop, 1994:2-3; Ruokakangas & Matthan, 1999:11). These writers refer to the instantaneity and spontaneity of e-mail interaction. Despite the fact that a detailed analysis of the textual metadiscoursal devices in the present data corpus is not made, the present writer does not acknowledge the above claims. On the contrary, basing on tentative reviews of the messages in the present corpus concerning textual metadiscourse, the messages seem to include several types of textual metadiscourse which is suggested to be one way of creating coherence in texts and thus contributing to structurally organized texts (cf. Tanskanen 2000). Further, the messages at least to some extent, e.g. routinized short requests, seem to rely on a situationally utilizable organization of messages. Halliday (1994:391) postulates about consciously and carefully planned texts on the one hand, and about spontaneous and unselfconscious texts on the other hand, as follows: "A text of either kind may succeed or fail, in relation to its various functions; most discourse falls somewhere in between the rhetorical ideal and the total flop. But it is a mistake to think that success depends on conscious planning, or that spontaneous discourse is formless and unstructured.". According to the tentative observations by the present writer, Halliday's postulation seems to be applicable in the present data.

The preceding discussion indicates that there is variation in the precision with which the term metadiscourse has been defined. Further, as suggested above, writers analysing metadiscourse in their data in different discourse events have proposed several categorizations. As mentioned above (p. 20), in this study the concept is used in a wider sense than usually, i.e. certain choices made in the main discourse are discussed under the heading of metadiscourse. Consequently, for instance some adjectives have been included in the analysis in the present study with the function of conveying the writer's attitudes, contrary to e.g. Crismore & al. (1993:48), who consider adjectives primarily prepositional in their data. The functional categories of interpersonal metadiscourse constitute the primary level of analysis in the present work, and the various structural or syntactic devices to realize the functions serve a subordinate role in the present categorization. Thus, the Hallidayan functional approach is relied on, with the main focus on the analysis of the polypragmatic functions and strategic uses of interpersonal metadiscourse in different contexts in the 40 repair work messages.

Various linguistic interpersonal metadiscoursal elements are analysed according to their functions as interpreted in each context of use, and the various functional categories in the present work are understood as umbrella concepts under which the various interpersonal metadiscoursal devices are placed. The polypragmatic nature of interpersonal metadiscourse is acknowledged, together with the fact that metadiscourse and propositional discourse cannot always be distinguished and there are frequent overlaps, e.g. in persuasive discourse in which the affective and logical level may both be present simultaneously. The present approach differs from e.g. Hyland's (1998a, 1998b) and Louhiala-Salminen's (1999) approach in that the present work analyses the use of interpersonal metadiscourse only, and it does not include a quantitative analysis of the frequencies of the linguistic realizations of interpersonal metadiscourse. Instead, the focus is on a functional analysis and the functional interpretations derive from the discourse event components discussed further in Chapter 3.2. Table 3 presents the various functions detected in the 40 repair work messages, with some examples of the linguistic representations of each function. As described in Table 3, category 1, i.e. the functional category of expressing attitudes and affective values, is divided into three sub-categories to allow a more in-depth, contextual interpretation of the functions and strategic uses of the interpersonal metadiscoursal elements. The polypragmatic nature of interpersonal metadiscourse is evidenced by the recurrent appearance of some linguistic realizations in the functional categories. The terms used in earlier research on metadiscourse, e.g. hedges and attitude markers, are not used in the categorization of interpersonal metadiscoursal elements in the present study. Instead, the categorization in Table 3 resorts to functional categories that describe the specific functions of interpersonal metadiscoursal elements in their contexts of use in the present repair work interaction.

Table 3. Functional categories of interpersonal metadiscourse in repair work interaction.

Functional category	**Examples of linguistic realizations**
1 Express attitudes and affective values	
1.1 Establish convergence	Noun *apology*; Adjective *sorry* in *I/we am/are sorry*; Verb *regret*
1.2 Express emotions and feelings	Utterances, such as *Sorry for my frustration.*, *What irritates me the most*, *I sometimes feel*
1.3 Express attitudes	Modals of obligation *have to*, *must*, *need*, *should*, and *shall* Adverb *unfortunately*, *I'm not confident*, *finally*, *hardly* Adjectives *unfair*, *the best*, *the only*, *fine*
2 Bring about personalized stance	Use of first names to address and involve reader/s Message-, sentence-initial, or sentence-final *sorry* Message-final *Thanks* Message-initial *Yes* Higher verbs *I think*, *I mean*; Pragmatic particles, such as *OK*, *you know*, *well anyway* Contracted verb forms, such as *let's* Adjectives, such as *a couple of* Idiomatic expressions, such as *(lucky for me)*, *to make a long story short*, Colloquial words, such as *guys*, *"geeks"* Small talk about weather
3 Convey certainty and force	Adverbs, such as *certainly*, *really*, *usually*, *just*, *only*, *so*, *very* Higher verbs, such as *I/we think*, *I/we know*, *I believe* Full forms vs. contraction
4 Withhold writer's full commitment	Modal verbs, such as *would*, *can/could*, *may*, *should* Verbs *seem*, *suggest*, and *think* Adverbs, such as *perhaps*, *probably*, *not completely*

Some functions, which are detected, by e.g. Hyland (1998a) and Louhiala-Salminen (1999) in their analyses, are found also in the present data. However, category 2, i.e. that of introducing personalized stance into e-mail discourse by using conversational style, is not included in Hyland's or Louhiala-Salminen's categories. In the present data, this category was regarded as necessary, due to the frequency of various conversational utterances. The linguistic realizations under the category of relational markers, used by both Hyland and Louhiala-Salminen, are partly discussed under category 2 in the present work. However, it has to be pointed out that some of the utterances categorized under the personalized function are multifunctional in nature and are assigned to some other categories as well.

Hyland's (1998a) data represents primarily written discourse, or written 'genres' of CEO letters and directors' reports, which explains the lack of this category in his taxonomy. Louhiala-Salminen's (1999) data includes electronic mail messages written in a business environment, but the conversational function has not been assigned a separate category. Louhiala-Salminen and Hyland discuss the notions of 'genre' and 'sub-genres' in their researches. In business e-mail research there are differing postulations concerning the notion of 'e-mail genre' (e.g. Louhiala-Salminen 1999 and Gaines 1999), and basing on the present data it would have been difficult to offer new insights into the discussion. As pointed out earlier, the present analysis of interpersonal metadiscourse is contextually bound to the analyses of the various discourse events and the primary communicative purposes of the messages written in various discourse events. Consequently, an elaborate discussion on the notion of 'genre' is not regarded as essential for the purposes of the present work. However, in the concluding chapter, some implications of 'genre' for the present work will be discussed.

2.2 Apologizing and doing repair work

The present work analyses the functions and strategic uses of interpersonal metadiscourse in the 40 electronic mail messages including repair work strategies. For the analysis, the messages have been divided into two categories, i.e. repair work messages including an utterance of apology or regret and messages not uttering apology or regret. In order to provide background information for the analysis, this chapter presents previous approaches to apologizing and introduces Meier's (1995) approach of repair work strategies, including discussions on the implications of the approaches for the present study.

2.2.1 Approaches to apologizing

Research relying on the speech act approach (e.g. Olshtain 1989) regards an apology as a speech act intended to provide support for the hearer who was actually or potentially malaffected by a violation. When deciding to offer a verbal apology, the apologizer is ready to commit a move that frames himself or herself as one-down, i.e. the speaker is ready to humiliate himself or herself, and to admit to fault and responsibility for the violation. Olshtain's (1989) research is a part of one of the most often quoted researches in apology, the CCSARP (Cross-Cultural Study of Speech Act Realization Patterns) project reported by Blum-Kulka et al. (1989). The project compared the realization modes of two specific speech acts, i.e. requests and apologies, in seven languages and language varieties in the same social situations. Native and non-native speakers' realization patterns were analysed for differences and similarities in the two speech acts for social and contextual factors, such as distance, power, and severity or ranking of violation or offence. The data were analysed mainly from a global perspective of strategy occurrence, with less attention paid to strategy order or the significance of content (Suszczynska 1999:1054).

According to Olshtain (1989), to materialize a speech act of an apology, the apologizer is to include in her/his utterance at least two strategies. The two general strategies to be used across all situations requiring the act of apology are: (1) the Illocutionary Force Indicating Device (IFID) containing the explicit, performative apology verb used in the routinized, standard forms; and (2) the expression of the writer's responsibility, which conveys the writer's readiness to admit to fault. The other three strategies reflecting the content of the situation are: (3) the explanation; (4) the offer of repair; and (5) the promise of forbearance (Olshtain 1989:155-158). The research showed that there was similarity in the use of the apology strategies, the IFID, including an expression of regret and a request for forgiveness, and an expression of responsibility, since they materialized to varying degrees in all situations and in all languages under analysis. The other three strategies were found to be situation-specific (Olshtain 1989:164-165, 171-172). Olshtain and Blum-Kulka (1989) make a distinction between negatively and positively oriented apology strategies, which are used to characterize the different cultures analysed in their study.

Olshtain (1989) suggests, in line with Brown and Levinson's (1987) postulation, that apologizing is intrinsically a negative politeness strategy, showing the apologizer's reluctance to impinge on the apologizee's negative face. On the one hand, apologies are face-saving for the apologizee since the hearer wants that his actions be unimpeded by others. On the other hand, apologies are face-threatening for the apologizer and they imply damage to the speaker's positive face. Within B/L taxonomy, the distinction between direct and indirect is analogous to the positive-negative politeness; indirectness is associated with negative politeness, which is deemed to be more face redressive, i.e. more polite, than positive politeness (Brown and Levinson 1979:106). Trosborg (1995:373), who also relies on the speech act theory in her research on requests, complaints and apologies, refers to Searle (1969) and Katz (1977) and suggests that apologies have the effect of paying off a debt, thus compensating the victim for the harm done by the offence. Leech (1995:124 - 125) uses the metaphor of debtors and creditors in explaining the speech act of apologizing. In Olshtain and Cohen's (1983:20) terminology, an apology is expected when social norms have been violated, whether the offence is real or potential.

The speech act approach as suggested by Olshtain (1989) is not applicable in the present analysis of repair work interaction, since the situations requiring apologies as defined by Olshtain are not realized in the present real-life data in the way they are described in his speech act approach utilizing data mainly collected via discourse completion questionnaires carried out under similar, strictly controlled conditions, with few notable differences in the conditions governing the production of the material. The starting point for the present analysis of the messages including repair work strategies is the division of the messages into categories according to their primary communicative purposes in different discourse events and the inclusion of an analysis of discourse event variables for the interpretation of the functional properties of the communicative strategies used in the messages. Utterances of apology and responsibility are regarded as optional communication strategies for repair work interaction in the present data, i.e. they are situation-specific in Olshtain's terms. In the present data, there are messages with no utterances of apology or/and responsibility categorized as repair work messages. These messages receive their repair work interpretation from the discourse events in which they are written. In order to be able to include such messages into the repair work message categories, the present analysis of real-life data requires approaches and interpretations that rely on the relativity with respect to the context of utterances (Werkhofer 1992:162, Enkvist 1975).

Among others, Levinson (1994:280 - 281) refers to the failure of attempts to match up the actual usage of utterances with the speech act theory and especially with the felicity conditions proposed by Searle (1969), i.e. with the sets of necessary and sufficient conditions constitutive of specific speech acts. According to the postulation by Searle, for an apology to be felicitous, two basic conditions must be met. First, the apologizer acknowledges responsibility for some act, and secondly the apologizer conveys regret for the offence, which came about as a result of the commission of the act. Levinson maintains that e.g. questions in actual usage are too variable and situation-dependent in nature to be captured by any set of e.g. felicity conditions and, relying on Owen's (1980) findings, Levinson (1994:280-281) suggests that the same can be shown for such apparently ritualized speech acts as apologies. Brown and Yule (1993:233) point out that "Speech Act theory does not offer the discourse analyst a way of determining how a particular set of linguistic elements, uttered in a particular conversational context, comes to receive a particular interpreted meaning." Recent pragmatic research on apologies, based on elicited or real-life data, regards apologizing as culture-sensitive interaction, consisting of semantic formulae or strategies that co-occur regularly in apologetic responses, being relevant for a felicitous, or contextually appropriate, performance of apologizing (see Maier 1993, Meier 1995, Tyler 1997, and Suszczynska 1999). Thus, rather than testing the tenability of approaches such as that suggested by Olshtain (1989), the ensuing analyses of the generic macrosegment structures of repair work messages aim at finding out if such regularly recurring and co-occurring formulae or strategies are resorted to in the e-mail messages including repair work strategies. Analysing the use of various communication strategies and their functions and order of appearance in the messages will enable to reach this aim. A discussion on discourse event variables is included to facilitate the analyses.

According to the so-called commercial model (Leech 1995), there is a contractual relation between interactants to ensure successful performance. According to Leech, the expressive, convivial illocution called apology expresses regret for some offence committed by the writer against the reader without any implication that the writer has benefited from the offence. Leech (1995:124-125) refers to the mercantile metaphor by suggesting that "It might be argued that the mercantile world, ..., is a special case of a social world in which the standing of one person k relative to another person l can be measured in terms of what k owes to l or l owes to k." Further, Leech suggests that "..., an apology implies a transaction, in that it is a bid to change the balance-sheet of the relation between s and h. If the apology is successful, it will result in h's pardoning or excusing the offence. Significantly, if we commit an offence against someone, we talk of owing that person an apology, thereby treating the apology as in some sense an expiation of the offence. The metaphor whereby deeds make us 'debtors' or 'creditors' of one another applies not only to good deeds (favours), but also to bad deeds (offences), so that apologizing, like thanking, can be regarded as an acknowledgement of an imbalance in the relation between s and h, and to some extent, as an attempt to restore the equilibrium." (all highlightnings and quotes by Leech).

Holmes (1990) agrees with Leech in that the core function of apologizing is to restore equilibrium between the apologizer and the apologizee. However, Holmes maintains that face-saving, face-threat and support may have different meanings for culturally different groups of people. She argues that restoring equilibrium can only be done in a manner appropriate to the culture of the group of people, for whom politeness may not be the major concern in their communication (Holmes 1990:161). In the present data, the analysis of the repair work messages not uttering apology may benefit from the postulations put forward by Leech and Holmes regarding the notions of acknowledgement of imbalance, restoring harmony or equilibrium, face and appropriateness. Restoring harmony, however, in the goal-oriented and transaction-oriented business contexts can be extended to include a more tangible goal, i.e. 'putting things back to normal', on the practical level rather than primarily restoring mental harmony. This argument is justified, since there are no messages with the main communicative purpose of apologizing, and the messages including explicit utterances of apology or regret have a primary communicative purpose other than that of apologizing.

The need to apologize places the apologizer in a position of decision making. The decision-making process involves the consideration of e.g. the following: Should apologizing be done implicitly or downgrade the importance of the whole event, not apologize at all, or at least try to evade it? If the speaker decides to aplogize explicitly, what specific realizations of apologizing would, most effectively, bring about the restoration of harmony between the interactants. Is this restoration of harmony to be achieved at all cost to the speaker, or is the speaker determined to limit the degree of cost to himself or herself? (Vollmer and Olshtain 1989:197) The present work seeks to reply these questions by discussing various aspects of the repair work approach adopted for the present work in Chapters 2.2.2, 4.1, and 4.2. Parameters, such as severity of situation, authority or ascribed power of either of the apologizer or apoligizee, social distance, or degree of familiarity between interactants will be discussed in order to shed light on the above questions.

2.2.2 Repair work approach

In her article "Passages of Politeness", Meier (1995) introduces a model of repair work, which is located within a framework of social interaction, providing a basis on which to functionally identify different ways of doing repair work. According to Meier (1995:388), repair work functions to remedy any damage incurred to an actor's image upon the establishment of a responsibility link between an actor and behaviour which fell below the standard expected relative to a specific reference group. The responsibility link allows for the inclusion of situations in which the actor takes responsibility for another's action, called the third-party responsibility in the present work.

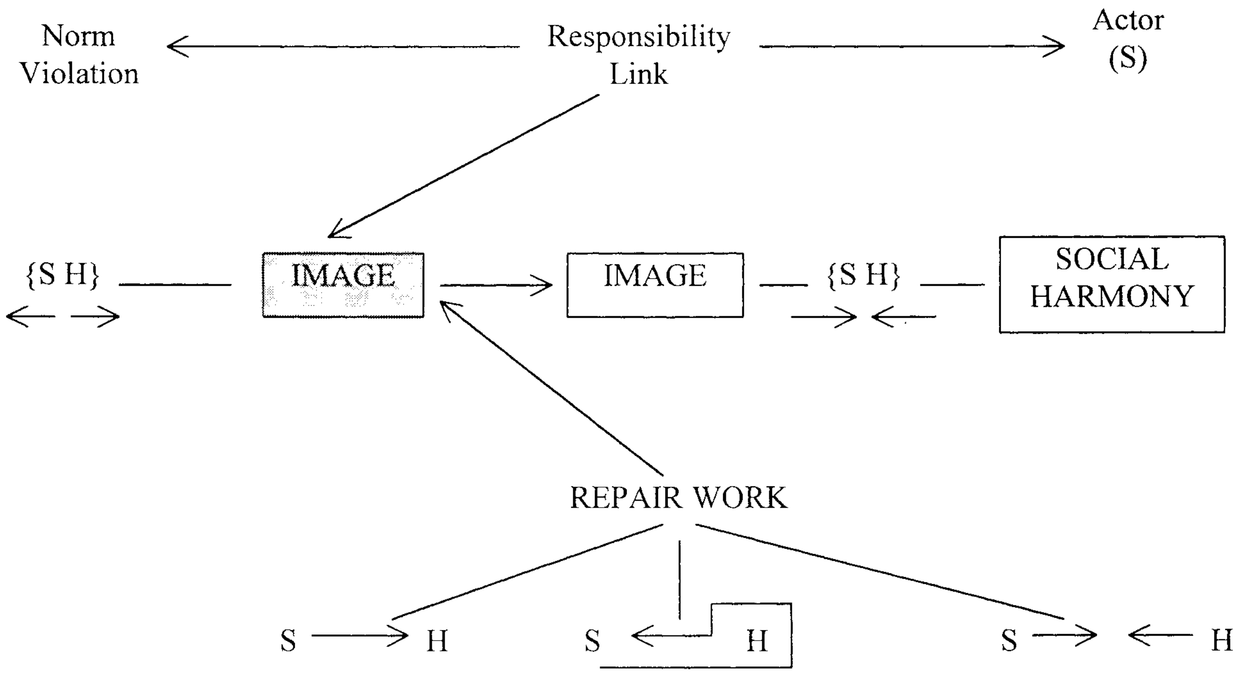
Meier postulates that the damaged image results in a divergence of the speaker's and the hearer's worlds, and consequently repair work strategies are called for to enable image repair and a subsequent convergence of the speaker's and the hearer's worlds, which serves reaching the underlying goal of social harmony. Meier relies on Aston (1988:8, 250) in maintaining that repair work can be seen as an instance of interactional speech, aiming at establishing and maintaining social relationships, effected through negotiation of shared attitudes (Meier 1995:388).

Interestingly, Meier's (1995) approach provides an image-saving device for the speaker, not the hearer, and makes the speaker the central figure of interaction, leaving concern for the hearer's face aside in the attempt to save the speaker's face. The concern for the writer's face or image, or for the corporate image on a larger scale, is allegedly an important factor in the choice of the repair work strategies in messages doing repair work in the present data, thus giving support to Meier's speaker-image-saving postulation. The framework introduced by Meier (1995:389) provides tools for the present analysis since, according to the repair work approach, the speaker is a 'good guy' (Meier's quote), despite having violated a social norm, and can be relied on in future interaction to act predictably in accordance with the social norms of a particular reference group, i.e. to act appropriately.

Leech (1995) supports the 'good guy' idea in his commercial model by stating that the writers do not commit the offences the writers express regret for in order to benefit from them. Both Meier's and Leech's postulations acknowledge the fact that in the process of carrying out business transactions things may and do go wrong unintentionally. Acting appropriately, according to Meier (1995:389), can be regarded as a "type of reaffirmation of shared values, an uncertainty reduction (see Berger and Bradac, 1982), which helps to assure S's membership in the group wherein she or he can derive the same benefits from co-memberships' predictable behaviour as they can from S's. ... By acting appropriately and contributing to a group's underlying social harmony, the actor is accorded social value and consequently a certain amount of power."

Figure 1 provides a sketch of Meier's repair work model, according to which, a violation of a norm by the speaker incur damage to the speaker's image or face. A violation is any behaviour, which fell below the standard expected by the hearer or the hearer's party. The damaged image, depicted by the shaded box in Figure 1, also effects a divergence of the speaker's and the hearer's worlds. Therefore, repair work strategies are called for to facilitate image repair and a subsequent convergence of the speaker's and the hearer's worlds, which serves an underlying goal of social harmony. The potential ways to effect repair work are categorized according to their focus of function in bringing about convergence between the speaker and the hearer. The categorization comprises three types, and the three major categories, branching off of repair work, are depicted in Figure 1 (Meier 1995:388-389).

Figure 1. Meier's model of repair work (adapted from Snyder et al. 1983)



The S--->H type involves 'S seeing things H's way', expressing appreciation for H's feelings, including such strategies as expressing empathy with H; expressing negative feelings; explicit statement of a bad performance; redress. The second type involves 'getting H to see things S's way', including e.g. excuses, justifications, appeal to H's understanding. The S---><---H type is 'S and H meeting halfway', in which case the focus is on absolution, an attempt to wipe the slate clean, including routine formulae, and expressing a hope for a continuation of or a return to status quo (Meier 1995:389-399). The various linguistic realizations of the repair work strategies will be utilized, among other textual-pragmatic strategies or communication strategies, when analysing the macrosegment structures of the messages and when suggesting prototypical schemata for message structures in Chapter 4.

The framework suggested by Meier (1995) differs from e.g. the B/L approach in not assuming any preordained politeness status for the speech act itself or for particular strategy types. Instead, it aims at identifying what is perceived to be appropriate in a particular situation. In fact, Meier equates politeness with appropriateness, since this definition provides a basis for interpretations that look at the contextual and situational factors underlying particular linguistic behaviour. Therefore, Meier's appropriateness approach allows for the consideration of the context-specific and situation-specific elements and how their perception is informed by the subsequent value and belief system of the specific speech community. Meier (1995:390) concludes that "A 'functional-appropriacy approach' (Meier's quote) such as this should also reduce the ethnocentricity in such studies, not only by allowing for differing perceptions of social factors across speech communities, but more importantly by facilitating their identification as they contribute to underlying social goals, and inform Repair Work behaviour." The 'functional appropriateness' referred to by Meier (1995), or the 'utilizable strategy' used by Sifianou (1992) vs. 'politeness' in requests and in repair work messages, will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 4. In the present work it is postulated that the notions of 'appropriateness vs. politeness', or 'power' and 'roles' should be looked at differently in requesting strategies and in repair work strategies, remembering however, that requesting strategies belong to repair work strategies. For instance, Meier's (1995:389) argument that by acting appropriately and contributing to a group's underlying social harmony, the speaker is accorded social value and consequently a certain amount of power will be under further discussion. Thus, it will be pointed out in the discussion in Chapter 4 that there is extensive overlap in how e.g. 'power', 'status' and 'roles' are at work in the two communication strategies.

2.3 Requests

As pointed out earlier, the 40 repair work messages under analysis include messages with the primary communicative purpose of requesting for action or information. Further, there are requesting utterances included in repair work messages with other primary communicative purposes. The present work discusses requesting messages and requesting utterances, in order to find out if requesting strategies have a specific function in repair work interaction. Especially Yli-Jokipii's (1994) and Bargiela-Chiappini and Harris' (1996) work will be referred to, since they focus on business requests.

The analysis of 'requests in the present repair work messages approaches the concept of 'request' from two angles, which are intertwined. Firstly, the repair work messages with the primary communicative purpose of requesting are termed as 'requests' for brevity, and they will be analysed for their macrosegment structure in Chapter 4.2.3.2. The analysis depicts and discusses the placement and order of requesting utterances in relation to other communicative strategies in the macrosegment structure. Secondly, each individual linguistic expression interpreted as functioning as an utterance expecting a response in the form of a verbal of physical act by the reader or the reader's party, as elicited in the repair work messages with various primary communicative purposes, is termed as a 'request'. Thus, the concept of 'request' will be used also for the linguistic utterances interpreted as functioning as a request. Requesting utterances will be analysed for their linguistic structure and their function/s in repair work messages in Chapter 4.4. An explicit distinction between 'requests' to denote the primary communicative purpose of repair work messages and 'requests' to denote individual requesting utterances will be made in each occurrence.

Requesting utterances occur frequently in the present repair work interaction. The current work aims at investigating if they have some specific functions in repair work interaction. Discourse can be seen as a device through which individuals and organizations seek to control and manipulate others, and further to create and maintain social relations based on e.g. power. In discourse aiming at directing others, the speaker or the writer requests or commands the hearer or the reader to act. The interpretation of an utterance as requesting or commanding relies not only on the lexico-grammatical expressions but is aided by prosodic devices in oral discourse or typographical elements in written discourse, as well as by the roles of interactants, and the subsequent power relations between interactants. In Searle's (1979) classification of illocutionary acts, requesting is categorized under directives, which are intended to produce some effect through action by the hearer, comprising a category of illocutions in which negative politeness is important.

In her cross-cultural study on politeness in requests in English and in Greek, Sifianou (1992) assigns requests under the class of directives; they are requests for an action of some kind from the other person. In her discussion of indirect requests and their relationship to politeness, Sifianou suggests a distinction between structural indirectness and pragmatic indirectness, in Brown and Levinson's (1987) terms on-record negative politeness or conventional indirectness, and off-record or non-conventional indirectness respectively. Sifianou (1992) refers to Labov and Fanshel (1977:63) who in turn consider directives to be part of the class of requests. Labov and Fanshel, however, differentiate between aggravated and mitigated types of requests, i.e. they suggest a dichotomy of requesting utterances. Aggravated requests, which explicitly establish status differences, include orders, commands, and demands, and are regarded to minimize the addressee's freedom of choice. Mitigated request types are petitions, pleas, and suggestions, and they allegedly allow the addressee a choice, at least symbolically, between complying with a request for action or not. Sifianou does not employ this dichotomy directly, even though she describes linguistic elements used to either soften or intensify requests.

For the present analysis the dichotomy suggested by Labov and Fanshel (1977) is not fully applicable, especially as to the level of freedom of choice concerning the compliance with a request. Compliance is not a major or the most relevant criterion to be used in the taxonomy of requests in the present type of business setting. The present data represents intra-concern communication mainly, i.e. messages are exchanged between informants who represent the same group of companies, except for one message written by an American customer. Consequently, at least partial compliance by the addressee can be expected to be one of the prerequisites for writing repair work messages in various discourse events when seeking solutions to problems, sometimes requiring negotiation. The inclusion of suggestions into the category of mitigated requests, as proposed by Labov and Fanshel (1977), is regarded as relevant for the purposes of the present analysis of requests in repair work messages, since some explicit suggestions are interpreted as including an implicit urge for action, i.e. they function as welcoming the reader into a negotiation process concerning the matter interacted.

From the brief summary of various approaches of categorizing requests and directives above, one can derive that it is difficult to suggest a universal or 'proper' categorization of requestive utterances. The present work introduces a division of messages, not only of linguistic utterances, into requests and directives basing primarily on contextual variables. This division relies on the postulation that in the present data messages are sufficiently contextualized, e.g. as to their primary communicative purpose and the discourse events in which they are written, or are sufficiently marked lexico-grammatically or prosodically, i.e. typographically in the present written discourse, to allow them to be interpreted as requests. The same applies to linguistic utterances in assigning them into requests. 'Directives' in the present data are understood to constitute a message category of their own in terms of their primary communicative purpose, and they are out of the scope of the present work. For instance, Gains (1999) rejects the speech-act-theory-derived categorization and discusses requestive and directive messages as conveying separate communicative purposes in his data of commercial and academic electronic mail messages. Directive messages in Gain's categorization convey reprimands and scolding from the main office staff to their subordinate members of the staff. Due to the divergent views of categorizing requests as discussed above, the present writer attempts a context-derived approach argumented in more detail below.

2.3.1 Implications of previous research on requests

In her in-depth discussion of business requests and the nature of requests, Yli-Jokipii (1994:59-94) concedes that "..., the concept of a request is difficult to define. It is also difficult to describe." According to Yli-Jokipii, the difficulties arise from the mutually interdependent features that requestive messages share, i.e. variation in the degree of requestivity, potential incongruence between form and function, sensitivity to language-external conditions, and sensitivity to the linguistic conventions of different societies and user groups (1994:61). Yli-Jokipii refers to the continuum idea, according to which one end of the requestivity continuum is represented by the utterances with minimally requestive force, and the other end of the continuum by the utterances with a maximally requestive force, leaving the addressee little choice as to whether to understand the utterance as a request or not (1994:61). Three traditional descriptive levels, syntactic, semantic and pragmatic are observed on a large scale in Yli-Jokipii's research, with the remark that the link between the semantic and pragmatic categories is not clear-cut. Yli-Jokipii refers to the syntactic level as the lexico-grammatical level in order to illustrate that either syntactic or lexical criteria may also apply at this level. In Yli-Jokipii's treatment, the semantic level operates in giving meaning, or 'semantic force' (quotes by Yli-Jokipii), to utterances or individual items. The pragmatic level in turn includes the context which determines the utterance as being interpreted as a request, i.e. having the 'pragmatic force' of a request (1994:70). (see Leech 1995:16-18; Nyyssönen 1992:316-318 cited by Yli-Jokipii 1994:146)

In syntactic terms, imperative, interrogative and declarative sentences can be used to produce the pragmatic force of a request in specific contexts, the imperative sentence conveying the communicative purpose in the most explicit and direct way, representing bald on-record strategy in Brown and Levinson's (1987) terms. Yli-Jokipii (1994:147) includes modal-initial interrogative sentences as a fourth separate category in her treatment of requests. This category is assigned to the interrogative sentence category in the present treatment. The communicative purpose of requesting in business settings is suggested to represent the prime example of acts threatening the requestee's negative face while usually benefiting the requester, who must consider the requestee's face and respect the requestee's privacy and freedom of action. In the present treatment and discussion of the presence or absence of interpersonal metadiscourse in repair work e-mail messages including requests, Yli-Jokipii's 3-level approach to identify requests is used as a point of reference. Explicit imperative and interrogative verb forms, including the modal verbs, are the lexico-grammatical properties that may identify linguistic utterances as requests. The semantic level operates in giving meaning, or semantic force to utterances or individual items, and according to Yli-Jokipii the second group of identifying factors are the semantic properties of the utterance, primarily the meanings of verbs with the subject. These produce mainly declarative forms and it may be possible to identify the utterances as requests without any intertextual information, whereas on the pragmatic level the context determines the utterance as being interpreted as a request, i.e. having the pragmatic force of a request. Thus, it is the function of the utterance in the discourse only that identifies the utterance as a request (Yli-Jokipii 1994:60-94). In line with Yli-Jokipii's postulations discussed above, the utterances including the verb *suggest* are contextually categorized under requests in the present work. According to this logic, the utterances with *I suggest*, written by interactants with either hierarchical or expert power, are interpreted as requesting or urging or welcoming the reader to join the negotiation process, in order to achieve a mutually acceptable solution in the discourse events in which the suggestions are put forward.

Levinson (1994:274-275) suggests that "... interrogatives can be used with the illocutionary force of 'real' questions, 'exam' questions, rhetorical questions, requests, offers, suggestions, threats and for many other functions, without over-riding some 'literal force' (which concept has been abandoned)." (quotes and brackets by Levinson) Further, Levinson (1994:275) maintains that the nature of the use to which interrogatives are put can vary with the contexts in which they are used. One way of expressing the consideration for the addressee's face is realized by the use of indirect utterances, e.g. interrogative and declarative sentences, i.e. questions and statements respectively. In line with the approaches recognizing the contextual factors as aiding the interpretation of the functions of various linguistic expressions, some interrogative sentences not explicitly including a request in the repair work messages are interpreted context-specifically as requestive utterances, since they function as requesting for a response from the reader to negotiate the problematic matter, or as requesting for action from the reader to put the matter right. It can be suggested that, in order to avoid imposition or to do face-work, the inherent threat of direct linguistic request forms is mitigated by e.g. interrogative sentences or statements of suggestion, which contextually have the force of a request, an impositive in the present data. On the other hand, it may be the conversational nature of e-mail interaction that explains the use of e.g. interrogative sentences in their requestive function. The concepts of 'face', 'appropriateness' and 'politeness' will be discussed further in Chapter 4.3 when introducing some remarks on messages including requests.

The present discussion of requests recognizes Yli-Jokipii's (1994:60) definition of a business request as a message expecting a response in the form of a verbal, physical or cognitive act. Relying on the continuum idea, Yli-Jokipii categorizes requests basing on the notions of imposition and FTAs (face threatening acts). Yli-Jokipii places the most and the least impositive and face-threatening requests on a continuum with a varying degrees of imposition and face threat, referring to the ranking of imposition or 'gravity' of an FTA concerning requests introduced by Brown and Levinson (1987:11). Thus, Yli-Jokipii's definition of request can be regarded to include the speech acts of 'order' and 'directive' under the notion of business requesting on the one hand, and the speech act of 'invitation' on the other hand. The speech act of 'invitation' is placed on the weak illocutionary end of the continuum, and 'order' and 'directive' on the strong illocutionary end of the continuum (all quotes by Yli-Jokipii). In her conceptualization, request or requestive message is not attached to any particular level of observation or description, and therefore the term in Yli-Jokipii's treatment may refer to either the lexico-grammatical, semantic, or pragmatic, contextual properties of requests.

2.3.2 Communicative purposes of requesting and directing

The present treatment of e-mail messages doing repair work and the classification of the various messages according to their communicative purposes differs from e.g. Yli-Jokipii's

(1994) treatment to the extent that requesting messages are categorized separately from directing messages.

Directing messages

The definition for the noun *directive* is as follows: an authoritative instruction or direction: *the directives of the bishop*; *a new directive by the President on foreign aid.* Relevant definitions for the verb *direct* for the present work are the following: to guide by advice, helpful information, instruction, etc.: *He directed the company through a difficult time.*; to give authoritative instructions to; command; order or ordain (something): *I directed him to leave the room.* (Webster 1987:407) By definition, the presence of authority is predominant in the two examples, i.e. the bishop and the president respectively named as the sources of the directives.

The messages assigned under directing messages have the primary communicative goal of introducing long-term orders and instructions, or reminding of them. They represent the more forceful or aggravated end of the request continuum in that they expect compliance by the readers or the reader's party. In the present data, directing messages also include messages giving advice for future procedures as well as recommendations, which can be regarded as more mitigated ways of conveying directing messages. This categorization utilizes a contextual approach of the process of both interpreting and producing messages. The writers of the directing messages are not necessarily the originators of the messages; the originator may be e.g. the executive team or a team of experts having the power to make a decision on the content of the message to be implemented, and the author of the directing message is forwarding the information to the relevant addressee/s or audience. Thus, writing a directing message is legitimized by the institutional position or role the writer is holding in each discourse event. The effect of directing messages on the addressee's or somebody else's performance is temporally more extended when compared to messages including routinized requests, which are typically expressed to manage an individual phase of a business transaction. In addition, directing messages understood as above typically involve reaching a cognitive state in the addressee's mind favourable to the addresser, the addressee and eventually the whole organization, since directing messages in the present data predominantly concern the implementation of a new procedure or practice to facilitate the conduct of a specific work-related task, in order to improve work efficiency from the author's, the addressee's, the customer's and the whole organization's point of view. The favourable cognitive state includes being informed of, perceiving, comprehending, accepting and implementing the procedure or practice as introduced by the author of the message, initiated either by the writer of the message or a group of people with authority to make long-range decisions in the concern, such as a management team or a group of experts.

In addition, directive messages typically do not expect response from the reader, or the addressee concerning the main issue. Instead, directive messages in the present data expect primarily a response in the form of a congnitive act by the reader or the reader's party, i.e. perception and understanding of as well as compliance with the message content to be able to act accordingly. Thus, the presence of the communicative purpose of informing is notable in directive messages. The lack of the supposedly central aspect of welcoming negotiation on the issues interacted was a decisive determinant to exclude directive messages from the present analysis of repair work messages, which frequently aim at creating a dialogue between the parties to solve problematic issues. For the reasons discussed above, the category of directing messages is excluded from the ensuing analyses, whereas repair work messages with the primary communicative purpose of requesting together with the individual requesting utterances as elicited in repair work messages with various primary communicative purposes are included in the analyses.

Requesting messages

Generally, the verb *request* includes the communicative purpose of expressing a need or wish for something, or for someone to do something. The noun *request* is defined as the act of asking for something to be given, or done, especially as a favour or courtesy; solicitation or petition, as in *I have a request to make.* Correspondingly, the definition for the verb *request* is as follows: to ask for, especially politely or formally; to ask or beg (someone) to do something: *He requested me to go.* (Webster 1987:1219)

In the present work, under requesting messages are placed messages with the primary communicative purpose of requesting, in which the addressee or somebody else is requested to carry out an immediate physical act, e.g. to re/issue a credit note, to write an invoice, or an immediate verbal act, e.g. to reply to a question or to give additional information or to provide views concerning something inquired. Individual requestive utterances included in repair work messages with other primary communicative purposes are referred to as 'requests'. In the present data, requesting messages or messages with requestive utterances are typically written in recurrent routinized type of repair work discourse events.

Trosborg (1995:187) suggests a general concept of request as an illocutionary act whereby a requester conveys to a requestee that she or he wants the requestee to perform an act for the benefit of the requester. Bargiela-Chiappini and Harris (1996) adopt a pragmatic view of request, which is employed in spoken language research to define business request, and redefine it by considering an option of refusal as a constitutive element of a valid request. Their way of defining business request can be regarded as offering a relevant point of reference for the present study conducted in a business environment: "[a business request is] ... a legitimate attempt by the writer to get the reader to perform an action required by the business circumstances through evoking the reader's need for compliance on the grounds of corporate and personal motivators such as necessity, duty and goodwill." (Bargiela-Chiappini & Harris 1996:640) The approach to compliance motivated by corporate-derived necessity, duty and goodwill provides a relevant point of view for the present analysis.

In business interaction, the legitimization of the act of requesting conventionally happens through the participants', i.e. the requester's and the requestee's, institutional positions and roles. It can be suggested that compliance by the requestee, or the requestee's party, in a business setting is frequently a prerequisite for the relevance of writing the message. This suggestion seems to apply especially to the requesting and directing messages in the present data, since the context in which the informants are writing is not a typical business setting where messages are exchanged between the buyer and the seller as e.g. in Yli-Jokipii's (1994) research, the buyer and/or the seller having almost a free choice of compliance with the requested action. In the present data, informants convey their hierarchically defined, position- and/or role-derived communicative purposes in intra-concern situations where the legitimacy and compliance are preconditioned by a variety of contextual variables, since the requester and the requestee work for the same primary goal, i.e. to satisfy the needs of the non-Finnish customers and the Finnish supplier. For instance, the status or the role of the writer is a sufficient precondition to obtain compliance with most requests in the present data. However, there are discourse events in which compliance by the reader is not achieved. Non-compliance takes place e.g. when an overseas office member of staff forwards a complaint from a customer in his customer-representative role to a Finnish office staff member, who rejects the complaint including a request as unjustified. Thus, it can be suggested that the intermediary role between the customer and the mill in Finland held by the MMC staff members in forwarding complaints is a necessary but not a sufficient condition to obtain compliance by the reader in the communication situations represented in the present data.

The above classification between requesting and directing messages, relying heavily on contextual considerations, is regarded as justified in the present data. The classification acknowledges the continuum idea of varying degrees of imposition and face threat included in requests. In the present data, routinized and conventionalized requests as elicited in requesting messages and requesting utterances allegedly involve less imposition and face threat for both the addressee and the writer. Directing messages written in more unique and less recurrent situations, however, may involve a higher degree of imposition and face threat for the informants, as compliance with the message content is expected and it can be considered to be more costly to the addressee/s or to generate a heavier load on the addressee/s when compared to routinized requests, which presuppose the carrying out of a recurrent, established procedure or task. The inclusion of elaborate pre- and post-sequences in directing messages e.g. to motivate the reader to accept the new procedure may indicate the aim to mitigate the alleged imposition. Further, directive messages include the communicative purpose of providing information, not that of requesting information. This implies that directing messages in the present data do not aim at creating dialogue or negotiation between the interactants. Requesting information by various linguistic utterances is an important repair work strategy. Thus, the division into requesting and directing messages seems to be relevant mainly because of contextual considerations.

3 BUILDING THE METHODS OF ANALYSIS

The research aims of the present study require discussion and elaboration on the methodological approaches in order to create basis for the ensuing descriptive and interpretative analyses of repair work messages. The methodological approaches used to provide background and to create a concrete framework for the present analysis, i.e. the approaches into discourse events, communicative purposes and macrosegment message structures, are closely intertwined. However, they are discussed in separate chapters to provide readers access to deeper insights into each. The discussion on methodological approaches initiates by discussing the rationale for the general methodological approaches resorted to in the present work.

3.1 Methodological approaches

The present work studies language use in real-life institutional setting, i.e. the corpus consists of authentic business messages exchanged via electronic mail between people working for a multinational business organisation to carry out their daily business routines and transactions in international environment. More specifically, the work focuses on e-mail messages that include repair work strategies and consequently aim at finding solutions to problematic situations. Thus, the present work represents the linguistic tradition of pragmatics focusing on the language use in relation to its users and the functions of language. The present analysis of the use and functions of interpersonal metadiscourse in various contexts relies on 'the modified qualitative approach', according to which tentative assumptions and decisions are made before the analysis of the data (Fraser 1990). Due to the fact that there is not much research on the language of electronic mail messages in business contexts, the decision was made to study the strategic uses and functions of interpersonal metadiscourse in real-life repair work messages, i.e. a type of messages representing interactive, persuasive language use. Basing on previous research, some tentative assumptions are made, e.g. as to the conversational nature of e-mail interaction, and the recurrent structure of e-mail messages. The main aim of the present work is to find answers, even if tentative, to the research questions, primary and secondary, formulated in Chapter 3.5.

The approach adopted in the present work for the analysis of interpersonal metadiscourse resorts to the systemic-functional approach introduced by Halliday (e.g. 1973, 1985, 1989, 1994), according to which language comprises three functions: textual, ideational and interpersonal metafunctions (Halliday 1985:xiii). The work relies on pragmatics and discourse analysis, i.e. it aims to do pragmatics of discourse in the sense e.g. Verschueren (1999), or Yule (1996) suggest. Yule postulates that "..., within the study of discourse, the pragmatic perspective is more specialized. It tends to focus specifically on aspects of what is unsaid or unwritten (yet communicated) within the discourse being analysed. In order to do pragmatics of discourse, we have to go beyond the primarily social concerns of interaction and conversation analysis, look behind the forms and structures present in the text, and pay much more attention to psychological concepts such as background knowledge, beliefs, and expectations. In the pragmatics of discourse, we inevitably explore what the speaker or writer has in mind." (Yule 1996:84). The pragmatic perspective as applied in the present work was referred to when discussing metadiscourse in Chapter 2.1, and will be discussed further when discussing the methods of analysis in Chapter 3.2 and 3.3, and repair work and requesting strategies in Chapter 4.

The present study relies on the qualitative research tradition with an orientation on discourse analysis, and to some extent to conversation analysis, in order to describe and interpret the contextual use and functions of interpersonal metadiscoursal elements, rather than on the quantitative research approach, which aims at generalizing research results and findings basing on statistically quantified data. Since the work adopts a context-derived descriptive and interpretative approach to allow the inclusion of the linguistic, conversational and social context, qualitative research methods are called for. Some simplified techniques of quantification are utilized, i.e. frequencies will be given for phenomena when regarded relevant to visualize e.g. the frequency or regularity of use of some elements of analysis in certain messages with specific communicative purposes in different contexts. In addition, quantitative data will be utilized when making comparisons between some findings of the present study and other studies. Since this is a case study, the aim is not to suggest generalizable facts but to make inferences and interpretations concerning contextual language usage basing on how language is used primarily in the 40 repair work messages by native writers and Finnish writers of English. However, the work is neither intercultural, cross-cultural nor interlanguage study of language use for reasons discussed in Chapter 1.3.

3.2 Discourse events

In the present data, business professionals interact in various international business contexts, writing messages to convey several communicative purposes in order to perform their position-derived tasks. The present study can be regarded to fall into the category of ethnography of speaking, an originally anthropological approach, concerned with the intercultural study of language usage, in that it deals with authentic, real-life discourse that make up human interaction and the social situations in which the discourse takes place. Consequently, the focus of attention in the present work is not solely on the sentence or utterance level but it has been shifted to the whole interaction situation, the discourse or speech situation or event (e.g. Leech 1995:13 and Spolsky 1998:14). Any group to share both linguistic resources and rules for interaction and interpretation is defined as a speech community, and ethnographers of speaking concentrate on such groups. However, interactants who apparently share the same language may also have different norms as to greetings, acceptable topics, what is said next in a conversation, i.e. how a conversation is structured, how speaking turns are distributed and so on. A discussion of discourse event components followed by a discussion of various primary communicative purposes provide a basis for an analysis of the strategic macrosegment structure of messages and, ultimately, for the analysis of the uses and functions of interpersonal metadiscourse in the 40 repair work messages.

In order to interpret the meanings and functions of the various linguistic resources in their contexts of use, a general framework of meaning imposed by the speech activity or speech event types, terms used by e.g. Levinson (1994) and Yule (1996) to correspond to 'speech situation' or discourse event', is offered as the starting point for the present analysis of the messages with the various communication strategies chosen by the interactants. The aim is to gain a deeper understanding of the linguistic realizations chosen by the participants in various discourse events, or speech situations in order to convey specific communication purposes. Speech situation is defined (Yule 1996) as an activity in which participants interact via language in some conventional way to arrive at some outcome. Further, it is suggested that a speech situation may include an obvious central speech act, but it will also include other utterances leading up to and subsequently reacting to that central action. Accordingly, e.g. requesting may be carried out by a requesting speech event without a central speech act of requesting. Yule (1996:57) maintains that the analysis of speech events is clearly a way of studying how more gets communicated than is said.

Verschueren (1999:154) fits various uses of language, both monologic discourse and dialogic discourse, under the activity or event types, and according to him they do not designate structures but complex contextual-structural categories, i.e. activities or events. Drew and Heritage (1992:25) include the following criteria in the notion of activity type: orientations to institutional tasks and functions, restrictions on the kinds of contributions to the discourse that are, or can be made, as distinctive features of interactional inferences. Sarangi (1998:383) points out, however, that e.g. in professional-client encounters, interactants do not necessarily display explicit orientation to the institutional agenda, thus making it difficult for researchers to locate setting-specific or style-specific features. Thus, multi-faceted pragmatic approaches to the functions that utterances perform are called for, since the contextual sources that give rise to functions or purposes of linguistic elements are complex and intriguing.

In his pragmatic analysis of real-life language use, Verschueren (1999:155) utilizes the activity or event type approach and suggests that when relying on the traditional speech act approach, however accurate it may be at a certain level of structure and content, the interpretation would be missing the point if one is after what is really happening in each communication or speech event, i.e. a culturally recognized social activity in which language plays a specific, and often rather specialized role. According to Verschueren (1999:155-156), nothing in linguistic interaction is stable and various strategies, many of which are highly conventionalized, are at play in the dynamic generation of meaning. He maintains that everything conventional is liable to further strategic use or exploitation and, therefore, there are hardly any fixed form-function relationships in language when regarded from a pragmatic perspective. Further, he points out that "*In general, **strategies** of language use are ways of exploiting the interplay between explicitness and implicitness in the generation of meaning,* at the level of sentential and suprasentential utterances as well as the level of utterance clusters, and whether it is done consciously or not." As examples of instances of the strategic avoidance of explicitness, Verschueren lists conversational implicature, some instances of irony, metaphor, politeness, and humour (Verschueren 1999:156, original emphases).

The multidimensional-multi-feature schema (MD-MF) used in the present work to characterize various components of speech situations was applied by Collot and Belmore (1996:16), adapted from Biber (1988), in their study of situationally-determined language variation in Electronic Language used on Bulletin Board Systems (BBSs). The term 'speech situation' is used here instead of the term 'context' to refer to Biber's model on components of speech situations. The notion of 'context', as a collection of situational factors external to language pertaining to the setting, the relationship between the interactants, and to the task at hand, can be regarded as interchangeable with the concept of 'speech situation'. Biber (1988) calls the features of speech situations 'components of speech situation' and his postulation is that differences in situational variables correlate with both the presence and absence of particular configurations of linguistic features. Biber, similarly to Collot and Belmore, uses computer-based corpora to determine sets of linguistic features whose presence or absence correlates with textual dimensions, which is a functional categorization cutting across traditional genre classifications (Collot and Belmore 1996:17).

The present analysis does not comprise a large-scale corpus-based analysis of e-mail language and no quantitative analysis is relied on in order to find correlation between the linguistic features and textual dimensions in Biber's terms. The present qualitative analysis resorts to a descriptive and interpretative approach instead. Biber's MD-MF schema is used as a general framework in describing the various components of speech situations in the present work. Biber's schema needed to be modified for the present purposes, since some situational constraints typical for BBS interaction set it apart from the interaction in the present study, e.g. in BBS interaction the participants do not know each other, the participants' organizational status does not influence interaction, the participants' have access to all messages, the topics discussed are freely chosen and are not task-related or transaction-oriented as in the present data, i.e. the communicative purposes in the present data are more varied. The components of discourse events in the present work are depicted in Table 4. The table is modified via Collot and Belmore (1996) from Biber (1988), and the additions and modifications are indicated by the statements (added) and (modified).

Table 4. Components of discourse events in professional interaction via e-mail.

Business relationship (added)
Intra-corporate.

Participants
Roles
Addressor, Addressee, Audience (cc:ed messages - added).
From experts to non-experts. (added)
Personal characteristics
Information available is scarce.
Ethnic group characteristics
American, British, Finnish (primary informants); Dutch, French (audience).

Relations Among Participants
Hierarchical relations (added)
From white-collar operational level to white-collar senior management level.
Social relations, social distance (modified)
Equality and non-transparency of hierarchies is part of corporate policy.
Task-derived relations (added)
From 'knowers' or disseminators of information to 'inquirers' or information seekers.
Frequency of communication (added)
From several contacts per day to a few times per year.
Level of acquaintance
From high-level of acquaintance to low-level of acquaintance.
Personal relations
Generally familiar, and informal; with low-level acquaintances fairly formal.
Degree of shared knowledge
Variable but often high. Corporate aim is to disseminate information.
Degree of shared values, beliefs and assumptions (modified)
On corporate level, high, to ensure efficiency, effectiveness, and quality.
Degree of shared interactional corporate conventions
From highish to high.

Setting
Spatial context
Informants' PCs in the corporate premises.
Temporal context
Independent of temporal limitations.
Time difference between Europe and the USA increases e-mail use.
Extent to which space and time are shared by participants
Occasional face-to-face meetings and phone calls, depending on the topic.

Topic
Topics are task-derived and communication-purpose-specific and vary accordingly.

Purpose
Primary communicative purposes vary. (See chapter 3.3.)

Social Evaluation
Attitude towards communicative event
Generally positive.
Attitude towards content
Varies according to topic.

Relations of participants to the text

Type 1
Planned text, prepared beforehand (typed memos, extracts of manuals sent attached).
Type 2
Instantaneous text, composed on-line.

Channel Keyboarding, using an electronic mail system. (modified)

The discourse under scrutiny is predominantly institutional allegedly complying with the practices, rules and norms imposed by the communication traditions in the discipline and embedded in various contexts of communication. Workplaces are held together by interaction practices, shared habitual practices or interaction orders, or institutional orders (Sarangi and Roberts 1999), a term that coincides with Foucault's (1981) concept of the order of discourse. Interaction between humans, however, is dynamic social activity or social struggle (Sarangi and Roberts 1999) since interactants' talk, texts, and behaviour change over a period of time. This change may be imposed by regulation or without regulation, since human interaction is contextually influenced by idiosyncrasies on the one hand. On the other hand, in the present study when electronic mail messages are the target for analysis, the introduction and the use of the modern communication system itself, combining the written and conversational features of interaction, as one of the situational or contextual factors is suggested to have blurred the compliance with the conventional practices, traditions and norms in written business interaction by allowing a direct access to addressees, or audience. Consequently, the ramifications and implications of the used communication channel, electronic mail, on the chosen linguistic resources together with other situational variables will be discussed as part of the meaning generation in each speech or discourse situation in the ensuing analyses. Thus, it can be suggested that the perspective adopted in the present analysis is what Sarangi and Roberts (1999) call for, referring to Geertz (1973), i.e. a thick description, a holistic analysis covering the linguistic analysis together with the situational determinants aiming at understanding them in all their interpretative complexity.

It can be assumed that interactions within institutions are conditioned by a high degree of shared knowledge, beliefs and values. Combined with the beliefs and values is the knowledge of what are and what are not allowable communicative contributions in each communicative setting associated with the rights and duties with the particular institutional roles each communicator is holding. Resulting from this, it can be further assumed that interactants take advantage of e.g. the interpersonal metadiscoursal devices which the interaction context makes available, in order to achieve their communicative goals in the best possible way in each situation by continuously assessing and re-assessing their own and their interactants' goals and intentions as the discourse develops.

The factors considered here are e.g. culture understood in a broad sense including both ethnic culture and business/corporate culture; communicative purposes and the nature of topics of interaction; shared knowledge, conventions, values, beliefs and assumptions between the interactants; the relationship between the participants including social distance, the level of familiarity, frequency of communication, and the participants' hierarchical and professional role, i.e. superior - subordinate or expert role, and the subsequent power relations. Further, discussion about the alleged influence of the new communication medium, the electronic mail system, on the use of language will be included. Presuppositions expressed in earlier research concerning the communication medium (e.g. Louhiala-Salminen, 1997, 1999 and Gains, 1999) suggest that the nature of the topic influences the choice of the communication medium. It has been suggested that when the matter is urgent and does not require negotiation, the writers resort to electronic mail. These reasons were mentioned also as motivators for electronic mail use by the informants in the e-mail questionnaire carried out for the present work.

In the electronic mail messages under scrutiny multiple social identities of informants are found, depending on the communication situation. Additionally, the two groups of communicators, native and non-native, do not form homogeneous groups fully sharing given sets of values, perceptions, or behaviours deriving exclusively from e.g. their ethnicity, institutional role and status. Consequently, it can be assumed that there is a negotiation process going on between the interactants in their conveying different communicative purposes, a process that involves the assessment and reassessment of the different contextual factors influencing their interaction and their interaction influencing the context and the way they interact with each other. Thus, the aim of the present study is to analyse strategic and linguistic variation in writers' language use, the use of interpersonal metadiscourse primarily, relying on the social practices and activities in which the writers are involved.

3.3 Communicative purposes

The communicative purpose view adopted in the present study to categorize the messages for the analysis of interpersonal metadiscoursal devices relies on the approach presented by Swales (1990:8-10) when defining genre. According to Swales, the three elements, i.e.

discourse community, genre and task, interlock and it is communicative purposes that drive the language activities of the discourse communities, i.e. sociocultural networks. Swales asserts that it is the communicative purpose that is the prototypical criterion for genre identity, and it is communicative purpose that operates as the primary determinant of task. In Swales' approach the communicative purpose of a text is accomplished through rhetorical moves, which give each genre its typical cognitive structure. Just as each genre has a communicative purpose that it tends to serve, each move also serves a typical communicative intention, which is always subservient to the overall communicative purpose of the genre. Bhatia (1993:33), according to whom the communicative purpose is the most privileged criterion for the identification of genres, however, reminds us of the fact that the notion of cognitive move-structure outlined by Swales may not always be applicable to all genres.

In her cross-cultural analysis of academic rhetoric, Mauranen (1993:8) suggests that genre is a social activity of a typical and recognizable kind in a community and is realized in language. It is by reference to social rather than linguistic parameters that genres are distinguished. In her rhetorical study of academic discourse, Mauranen's main focus is on specific textual variables as choices in persuasive communication, and thus rhetoric in Mauranen's terms means persuasive discourse. Mauranen asserts that a writer uses rhetorical choices in order to increase the credibility of certain propositions in the reader's mind. She postulates rhetoric as an aspect of genre, according to which genre constrains rhetorical choices and thus precedes rhetoric. The present study focuses on the use of interpersonal metadiscourse and its functions in repair work messages written in different discourse event to convey various communicative purposes. The approach adopted here can be claimed to be rhetorical in the sense that the present analysis discusses and elaborates on the functions and effects of the interpersonal metadiscoursal elements elicited in the repair work messages under analysis in conveying various communicative purposes.

An interdisciplinary study of newspaper editorials (Heikkinen 1999:46, 223) cites Eggins and Martin (1997) and refers to their functional register and genre approach in which they theorize how discourses and texts are similar, how they differ and why. Eggins and Martin include in their analysis both oral and written modes of everyday language usage. Secondly, their definition for genre is functional, i.e. text types provide a means to use language to accomplish culture-specific tasks. The Eggins and Martin approach makes it possible for the analyst to predict and infer: Basing on a description of a context it should be possible to predict the meanings of the text and the linguistic elements that convey the meanings. Further, basing on a text it should be possible to infer the context in which the text has been produced. The linguistic elements chosen convey the contextual dimension as well as the situation in which the text has been produced and the general communicative purposes of the text in the specific culture. In his analysis of the strategies that the writers use to influence the audience, Heikkinen (1999:222 - 223) rejects the regulative approach which e.g. Searle (1977:33 - 34) and Mauranen (1993:8) refer to and utilizes the approach of systemic-functional potentials, i.e. what is possible for the writer in each situation. Consequently, if needed, the writer can change, renew rules and thus discourse practices, an option that also Mauranen refers to (1993:8). Heikkinen urges analysts to step out of the text and the contextual and text type features present in the text and to focus on text-external reality instead. Interestingly, Heikkinen (1999:223) introduces the notion of 'deliberation' as one of the criteria to categorize editorials as a generalizable text type, in the same way a scientific article can be categorized as a genre.

The present analysis relies on Biber's components of speech situations, which are modified for the present work. Further, in the present analysis of interpersonal metadiscourse in commercial e-mail messages, the contextual approach will be utilized together with the systemic-functional potentials approach when discussing the alleged changes in business communication practices as displayed in professional e-mail interaction, as compared to traditional mailed business communication. As to the notion of 'deliberation' introduced by Heikkinen, it can be suggested that a number of electronic mail messages are undeliberated, i.e. composed on-line, due to the urgency and instantaneity of many electronic mail messages in the data. Thus, Heikkinen's criterion of 'deliberation', which is supposedly more relevant and applicable for traditional mailed business correspondence and thus for the analysis of genre, is not necessarily applicable for the discussion of the alleged 'e-mail genre', a term discussed in some research (e.g. Gains 1999, Louhiala-Salminen 1999). Consequently, the focus of analysis in the present work is not on the notion of 'genre'. However, references to the concept of 'genre' and its relevance for the analysis of the linguistic elements under scrutiny will be made in the concluding chapter in the present work.

The present data includes messages with the following primary communicative purposes: Providing information, Requesting for information, Requesting for action, Directing, Doing repair work, Complaining, and Providing support or encouragement. Requesting for action messages fall into two categories in terms of the imposition on the reader. The first category includes messages with the communicative purpose of requesting for the issue or reissue of some documents, and the second category includes messages with the communicative purpose of requesting the recipient to read some documents for information or to check the databases for the necessary information. Structurally the second category can be assigned under requests for action. However, in the more in-depth analyses of request forms and functions they are referred to as functioning as providing readers with further information. Thus, the first category involves a higher level of imposition on the recipient as to the amount of effort needed to comply with the request.

Messages providing directives include messages informing about the implementation of a new procedure or a change in an existing procedure. As stated earlier, messages providing directives are differentiated from messages requesting for something in terms of their broader temporal scope and the cognitive processes the recipients have to go through to perceive and internalize the new procedure. Directing messages are out of the scope of the present work.

The whole message corpus of 279 messages is depicted in Table 5, presenting the primary communicative purposes of the messages. The 40 messages including repair work strategies are included in the message categories in Table 5. At this stage, it is important to point out that the messages in the category of messages doing repair work, i.e. the category of 29 messages, all have the primary communicative purpose of doing repair work conveyed by different communication strategies, and 22 of them do not utter apology or regret.

There are five messages with the primary communicative purpose of requesting for action or information, and six messages with the primary communicative purpose of providing information, all including repair work strategies and an utterance of apology or regret. The messages in the analysis part of the present work are referred to as messages 'initiating' the discourse and messages 'replying', or 'responding' to an earlier message or messages or earlier contacts via some other means of communication.

Table 5 presents the frequencies and percentages of the primary communicative purposes as elicited in the messages in the present data in a descending order in terms of the frequencies.

Table 5. Taxonomy of communicative purposes in professional e-mail messages.

Primary Communicative Purpose	Frequency	%
Providing Information	113	40.5 %
Requesting for Information	91	32.6 %
Requesting for Action	35	12.5 %
Doing Repair Work	29	10.4 %
Providing Directives	7	2.5 %
Providing Positive Feedback, Encouragement	4	1.5 %
Total	279	100 %

Table 5 displays that the interactants in the present data most often use e-mail to either provide information or to request for information. The e-mail messages providing information are typically responses to requests for information via e-mail. Less frequently the requests for information are forwarded via other media, e.g. phone call or a face-to-face meeting, which were referred to in some e-mail messages providing information, as well as in the e-mail interviews. The share of the messages with the primary communicative purpose of requesting, either for information or for action, is about 45 % of the total number of messages in the corpus. With the addition of the messages providing directives, which typically include a request for an implementation of a new procedure or a change in an existing procedure, the share is about 48 %. Requestive utterances as elicited in the present corpus will be discussed in Chapter 4.3, with commentary on variation and changing discursive practices in electronic mail interaction. The analysis in Chapter 4.4 focuses on the forms and functions of the requestive utterances in the 40 repair work messages to find out if requests have a particular function in repair work interaction.

The repair work messages are either initial or reply messages reporting mishaps or aiming at solving problematic situations. The number of messages with the primary communicative purpose of doing repair work totals 29 in the present corpus. The analyses in Chapter 4.2 include the generic structural analyses of the repair work messages, including messages with an explicit expression of apology and messages excluding an expression of apology.

In his qualitative case study focusing on the relationships between writing and technological and organizational change within workplaces, and more specifically a study on how directors and associate directors use e-mail for a variety of communicative purposes, Ziv (1996:259) lists the communicative purposes including Delivering documents, Forwarding information, Providing opinions, Reporting information, Requesting information and action, Offering feedback, Suggesting meetings, and Establishing links. The communicative purposes of Forwarding information, Reporting information, Requesting information, Solving computer problems, and Suggesting meeting or phone call were found to be the most often conveyed communicative purposes via e-mail when compared to other media, i.e. printed documents, team meetings and direct meetings. Thus, Ziv's findings concerning the frequency of use of e-mail for various communicative purposes support the findings on the frequencies in the present work. Also Herring's (1996:86) findings from her study on interaction on two Internet mailing lists are in line with the findings of the present study and Ziv's findings, and Herring reports the communicative purposes of providing information (31 %) as the second most frequent communicative purpose after expressing views (52 %) in her corpus.

3.4 Macrosegment structure of electronic mail messages

The present work focuses on one micro-level feature of text rhetoric, the use and functions of interpersonal metadiscourse in orienting addressees in their interpretation and inference process of electronic mail discourse. However, in the present analysis of e-mail messages, discussion of the discourse structure and organization of the messages will be included, i.e. the macro-level feature of text rhetoric. The inclusion of such discussion makes it possible to utilize both a bottom-up approach, i.e. work out the meanings of utterances and structures of sentences to build up a composite meaning of the utterances including interpersonal metadiscoursal elements, and a top-down approach, i.e. to predict, on the basis of the context and the composite meaning of the utterances already processed, what the next utterance is most likely to mean (see e.g. Fairclough 1993:80-82).

In the present work, the macrosegment structure analysis of repair work messages relies on Herring's (1996) findings on the generic structure of electronic mail messages. References to the structural representations of written requests suggested by Bargiela-Chiappini and Harris (1996) will be made when discussing the structural properties of requesting messages briefly in Chapter 3.4.1 in the present work. A more detailed treatment of requesting messages and requesting utterances will be included in Chapter 4.3 and 4.4.

The five-macrosegment electronic mail message schema proposed by Herring (1996; adapted from Longacre 1992) will be relied on in the structural analysis of the messages including repair work in the present work. The most immediate result of chunking the electronic messages into macrosegments in the study of electronic messages by Herring (1996) was the discovery of a limited set of recurrent textual-pragmatic functions, or communication strategies. The order of the macrosegment schema, suggested by Herring, corresponds roughly to the linear order in which they appear in Herring's corpus. However, no single message contains all of the functions listed.

The results of Herring's (1996:86) findings concerning the order of the detected macrosegments in electronic mail messages are presented in Table 6.

Table 6. Functions of macrosegments in e-mail messages in Herring's study.

Epistolary Convention	Salutation
Introduction	Preamble (prologue, introduction, background) Metacomment Prospective introduction (e.g. messages to follow) Link to previous message
Body	Express views Request information Provide information Express feelings Suggest solution Offer
Close	Apology Appeals to others Chastisement
Epistolary Conventions	Complimentary close Signature Postscript

3.4.1 Macrosegment structure of repair work messages

In the present data, directing messages contain longer and structurally more complex discourse when compared to messages categorized as requesting messages, since the former include motivation by the writers in the form of pre- and/or post-sequences (Bargiela-

Chiappini & Harris 1996:647) as default elements of messages. The pre- and/or post-sequences function as convincing the addressee/s of the applicability of the new practices or procedures, in order to persuade them to accept and implement the new practices or procedures introduced in the messages.

In requesting messages, the pre- and post-sequences have similar persuasive functions. The pre- and/or post-sequences can be regarded as instances of the Swalesian (1990) cognitive move-structure. Even though pre- and/or post sequences are not explicitly present in all messages, implicit intertextuality can be suggested to serve the purpose of pre- and/or post-sequencing in some messages.

Results of the analysis of the 40 messages doing repair work are various five-stage electronic message schemata modified from Herring's schema. Herring places the various textual-pragmatic functions, or communication strategies, under five separate stages in the message structure. Instead of the notion *Introduction*, and the notion of *Close*, both used by Herring, the present analysis relies on the terms suggested by Bargiela-Chiappini and Harris (1996:647), i.e. *Pre-sequence* and *Post-sequence* correspondingly. The notion of *Core message* is used instead of *Body*, a notion used by Herring, in order to pinpoint the placement of the core or primary communicative purpose of the message. In the present repair work messages the primary communicative purpose, at least the first instance of it in messages repeating the primary communicative purpose, is usually conveyed in the *Core message* stage.

Table 7 on the following page exemplifies a five-stage macrosegment structure of a message category of the six electronic mail messages doing repair work with the primary communicative purpose of providing information and with an utterance of apology or regret for comparison with Herring's structure. The information in the brackets, e.g. (S-->H type) in the pre-sequence chunk after the repair work strategy of explicating responsibility, bad performance, refers to Meier's (1995) repair work strategy types introduced in Chapter 2.2.2.

Table 7. Macrosegments in messages doing repair work, primarily providing information.

Epistolary Conventions	First name(,) Hi(,) Hello(,) First name(,) Good morning(,) First name/s(,)
Pre-sequence	Express apology, empathy with the reader (S-->H type) First name(,) Explicate responsibility, bad performance (S-->H type) Express justification, reason (H-->S)
Core Message	Refer to previous communication (with customer or reader) Provide information Express apology, empathy with the reader (S-->H type) Express justification, reason (H-->S type) Explicate responsibility, bad performance (S-->H type) Create common ground with reader Inform of action taken
Post-sequence	Express apology, empathy with the reader (S-->H type) Explicate responsibility, bad performance (S-->H type) Provide information
Epistolary Conventions	Complimentary close(,) First name

As in Herring's (1996) schema, the order of the textual-pragmatic functions, i.e. communication strategies, is not universal in all six messages; however, Table 7 represents the most typical order and frequencies of occurrences of the listed textual-pragmatic functions in the present data. The message structures of messages including repair work strategies with contextual influences will be analysed in more detail in Chapter 4.2.

3.5 Research questions

The primary aim of the present qualitative case study is to analyse the functions and strategic uses of interpersonal metadiscourse in the 40 electronic mail messages including repair work strategies. The messages represent intra-company interaction and the repair work messages deal with problematic situations in an international business environment. The writers are American, British and Finnish informants, all writing in English. Despite the multicultural background of the informants, the present study is neither intercultural, cross-cultural nor interlanguage study of language use.

Chapter 2 related the interpersonal level of language to the social aspect of discourse in that it helps in creating and maintaining a relationship between the writer and the reader. Interpersonal metadiscourse includes those utterances expressing the writer's role, attitudes and evaluation about the discourse in the situation in which the discourse functions, signalling the writer's disposition and thought patterns. The function of guiding the reader is intertwined with the attitudinal level, allowing the writer to provide comments of affective type on the discourse and conveying the writer's expectations of the reader's reactions to the discourse. The interactive and persuasive nature of repair work interaction offers an intriguing target for analysing interpersonal metadiscourse in real-life business interaction. Consequently, the primary research question of the present work can be formulated as follows:

> What functions does interpersonal metadiscourse have in the 40 repair work messages under analysis?

The present work seeks to address some subquestions or secondary research questions, in order to be able to offer a tool-kit for the analysis of the functions and strategic uses of interpersonal metadiscourse. A subquestion closely related to the primary research question is the following:

> What are the possible influences of discourse event components on the use and functions of interpersonal metadiscourse in the repair work interaction under analysis?

The discourse event components mainly dealt with in the analysis of interpersonal metadiscourse are the primary communicative purpose of messages, the position and role and the subsequent power or authority of the interactants, and the severity level of the topic. The topic of discourse is interlinked with the primary and other communicative purposes of the messages and the communication strategies used to convey the communicative purposes in repair work interaction. Other discourse-event-specific components are raised for discussions when regarded relevant for the interpretation of interpersonal metadiscoursal elements. The present work relies on the primary communicative purpose in categorizing messages for the ensuing analysis instead of e.g. 'genre' or 'text type'. Crismore and Farnsworth (1990) rely on 'text type' and suggest that differences in text type may influence the type of metadiscourse used in various situations. The present work aims at discussing this suggestion by relating it with the primary communicative purpose approach adopted here and with the previous research on 'genre'. This discussion, however, has a minor focus in the present work.

In order to reply the primary research question and the concomitant subquestions, a way of describing repair work interaction and different discourse event components as elicited in the present data needed to be studied. The following secondary research questions to be replied are connected with learning and educational dimensions in the present work. Yielding new insights into these issues would help diminish the disparity between real-life business interaction and teaching.

> To what extent is Meier's (1995) repair work strategy approach applicable for the purposes of the analysis of the present repair work interaction?

The discussion on the tenability of Meier's approach will be related to the suggestions and recommendations offered by business interaction course books, which allegedly fail to cover contextual components when guiding learners into the secrets of business interaction. It is argued that e.g. the use of the communication strategies of apologizing and acknowledging responsibility need to be re-evaluated or discussed more in-depth in business interaction course books.

Further, the following subquestions are equally relevant for learning and educational purposes in that business course books suggest and offer outlines for various types of business messages.

> Is it possible to compile and suggest a prototypical macrosegment structure for the 40 repair work messages under scrutiny?
>
> Is there interplay between the possible prototypical macrosegment message structure and
> a) the strategic use of various repair work strategies suggested by Meier (1995),e.g. utterances of apology, responsibility and justification, in relation to other communication strategies included in the 40 repair work messages;
> b) the strategic use of interpersonal metadiscourse in the repair work interaction under analysis?

The present work seeks to find out if the macrosegment structure suggested by Herring (1996) can be applied in the present electronic mail data, representing repair work interaction. In order to reply the subquestions above, the messages were first categorized in accordance with their primary communicative purpose and then chunked into macrosegments with subsequent textual-pragmatic functions, or communication strategies. When seeking answers to these questions, references will be made to the notion of 'sufficient similarity' put forward by

Paltridge (1995, 1996) in his discussion on generic and prototypical structures of texts in an attempt to assign texts under various pragmatic categories.

The present work includes discussions on requests in electronic mail interaction and an analysis of the forms and functions of requesting utterances in repair work interaction. The discussion of requests was found relevant and justified in the present work, again mainly for learning and educational purposes. Requesting in various business situations is an integral part of business professionals' interaction, and the present work discusses the use of requests, especially in repair work interaction, to reply the below question.

> Do various request forms have context-specific functions in the present repair work interaction?

4 MACRO- AND MICRO-LEVEL STRUCTURE OF REPAIR WORK MESSAGES

Chapter 4 is devoted to the analyses of repair work messages as well as requesting messages and requesting utterances, in order to provide background information for the analysis of the functions of interpersonal metadiscourse in Chapter 5. The analysis is initiated by the discussions on the absence and presence of utterances of apology, responsibility, and justification, together with the notions of 'politeness vs. appropriateness' and 'power' and 'roles' in repair work interaction. The chapter includes a discussion on repair work interaction, focusing on the macrosegment structure of messages. Firstly, the macrosegment structure analysis aims at finding out if the types introduced by Herring (1996) are elicited in the present data. The second aim is to suggest prototypical schemata or formulae for the supposedly regularly co-occurring sets of strategies for the communicative purpose-specific and the context-specific messages including repair work strategies. References to Herring's (1996) e-mail schema will be made in describing messages on a global level.

Chapter 4 includes a discussion on requests, since requesting strategies are a significant component of repair work strategies. The discussion on requests comprises the notions of 'directness' and 'appropriateness', as well as 'power' and 'roles', which all relate to the discussion on variation and changing discursive conventions in e-mail requests. The chapter is closed by an analysis of the forms and functions of requesting utterances. Factors specific to discourse events, including primary communicative purposes, are included in the discussion as they are argumented to give justification for the discussion on e.g. 'power and status' and 'power and roles' separately in requests and repair work interaction. E.g. the 'appropriateness' discussion in repair work interaction is closely connected with the presence or absence of utterances of apology or regret and responsibility, whereas in requests 'directness' and 'appropriateness' are relevant for the discussion of direct imperative forms in requesting utterances. In the concluding chapter these notions will be discussed further for similarities and differences.

4.1 Remarks on repair work interaction

4.1.1 Politeness vs. appropriateness

Interpretations of the notions of 'politeness' and 'face' abound in research, and there are elaborations on the avoidance-based negative politeness and solidarity-based positive politeness approaches introduced by Brown and Levinson (1987:68, 76). It is suggested e.g. that different kinds and degrees of politeness are called for in different situations, and illocutionary functions are classified according to how they relate to the social goal of establishing and maintaining comity (Leech 1995:104-106). In Leech's 'tact maxim', the goal of apologizing, pardoning coincides with the social goal of maintaining or restoring harmony, equilibrium between the communicators. Therefore, the realization of an apology is beneficial for the hearer and is to some extent at cost to the speaker. Apologizing is understood as intrinsically courteous, and politeness, the linguistic behaviour to achieve this goal, is expressed in a positive form, i.e. observing the Politeness Principle (PP), when seeking opportunities for comity (Leech 1995). It is also argued that apologies can address both positive and negative face needs (Holmes 1990). This interpretation is made possible by Meier's (1995) repair work approach in that it concerns also the speaker's face.

Meier refers to B/L's dichotomy between negative and positive face as "a rather dubious dichotomy". She argues that e.g. apologies could be viewed as requests for exoneration, and that an absolute measure of indirectness or directness should not be at issue, but rather the social interpretation of specific linguistic behaviour within a particular speech community (Meier 1995:384-385). 'Indirect' and 'direct', 'more polite' or 'less polite' should be used with caution especially cross-culturally, and 'appropriateness' in lieu of 'politeness' should be preferred, an approach assuming a standard external to, but interacting with, the linguistic behaviour itself. Thus, politeness can only be judged relative to a particular context and a particular hearer's expectations and subsequent interpretation; it is part of utterance meaning rather than of sentence meaning. Further, politeness is universal only in that every society has a set of norms for appropriate behaviour, although these norms will vary, and politeness becomes the unmarked state, undeserving of special attention, being the expected, appropriate, preferred way of conduct (ibid. 1995:387 - 388).

Wierzbicka's (1985) suggestions are based on her extensive pragmatic research on cultural variables and their linguistic realizations. She maintains that linguistic differences originate from aspects of culture much deeper than mere norms of politeness (1985:144-145). This approach can be seen as a reaction against a 'misguided universalism' (Wierzbicka 1991:67-69), associated with the line of research focusing mainly on the linguistic conventions of mainstream British and American English and assuming that every language makes available to the user the same basic set of speech acts (Wierzbicka 1991:152). Wierzbicka maintains that 'conversational maxims' (Searle 1969, Grice 1968) are ethno- and linguocentric and far from 'universal'. Thus, e.g. the rule that 'ordinary conversational requirements of politeness make it awkward to issue flat imperative sentences' is rather English-specific (all quotes by Wierzbicka 1991:60). Wierzbicka refers mainly to ethnic culture when discussing politeness. In the present analysis, the ethnic culture together with the conventional business culture and the corporate culture with references to their rules, norms, values and attitudes will be discussed when analysing language use in the messages carrying out repair work, either uttering or not uttering apology or regret.

Other research points out that politeness strategies manifest a culturally filtered interpretation of interaction (Blum-Kulka 1992:270-271). It is also argued that the social understanding of politeness phenomena is greatly affected by specific cultural notions like sincerity or truthfulness (Suszczynska 1999:1055). These notions of sincerity and truthfulness will be referred to in the analysis of the strategies used in some repair work messages by Finnish informants not uttering apology or regret; traditionally the notions of sincerity, truthfulness, and directness are used to characterize Finnish communicators. In the present work, the notion of 'appropriateness' is regarded as preferable to 'politeness' in references to the selected repair work strategies, including apologies. 'Politeness' aspect is not, however, totally discarded when analysing the use and functions of interpersonal metadiscourse.

The core communicative purpose of the repair work messages uttering apology or regret (18 messages) is either that of requesting for action, requesting for information, providing information, or doing repair work. The core communicative purpose of messages not uttering apology or regret (22 messages) is that of doing repair work. Herring's (1996) approach is found suitable for the analysis, and the present work includes the analysis of the generic message structure and the order of communication strategies used, including Meier's (1995) repair work strategies of apologizing, uttering responsibility and justification, in order to provide communicative-purpose-specific information for the analysis of interpersonal metadiscourse. This information makes it possible to suggest prototypical electronic mail message schemata for messages including repair work strategies. The message structure analysis utilizes various discourse event components, mainly the primary communicative purpose, the severity level of topic, and the power and roles of interactants. Each event requires the writer to make appropriate strategic choices in order to achieve the required goals, e.g. when uttering an apology or when not uttering an apology, simultaneously aiming at compliance with the norms and conventions of context-specific business interaction. The identification of the different perceptions of appropriateness and the cultural assumptions, including business and corporate culture, underlying them becomes a valuable goal of the studies (Meier 1995:390). The functional-appropriacy approach provides image-saving strategies for the speaker and not only for the hearer, as it does not assume any preordained politeness status for the strategies chosen to do repair work, which is another adequate perspective for the present work. In addition, Meier's approach allows for the inclusion of the third-party responsibility, as well as the inclusion of messages not uttering apology or regret. Allegedly, all these considerations are determinants of the contextually appropriate strategic choices in a business environment.

In the present e-mail data, repair work is carried out by conveying various primary communicative purposes, such as providing information, requesting for action or information, and doing repair work, including various communication strategies, such as giving opinions or views, expressing suggestions. Apologizing is one of the repair work strategies and, in the present data, there are no messages with the primarily purpose of apologizing. This indicates that if the main communicative purpose is to apologize for a mishap or a misconduct of a business transaction, the severity of the violation or offence is high and apologies are uttered face-to-face by management level staff by visiting the Metal Marketing Company and/or the customer, or via telephone. There are indications in some messages in the present corpus that it is appropriate corporate policy to manage non-routine problematic situation by oral communication. However, it is evident that in such situations also other communication strategies are necessary to solve the problematic situation. Chapter 4.1.2 discusses some context-specific reasons for the inclusion or exclusion of apologetic utterances, and the discussion is closely related to the notion of 'appropriateness', but also to those of 'power' and 'role' of interactants.

4.1.2 Uttering or not uttering apology, responsibility and justification

It is suggested that an individual constantly acts to provide information that she or he is of sound character and reasonable competency. When, for whatever reason, the scene around him ceases to provide this information about him, he is likely to feel compelled to act to control the undesired impression of himself (Goffman 1971:163). In a corporate crisis situation, one way to control that undesired impression of oneself is to apologize, and one way companies and their managers attempt to save face or corporate image, and defend themselves from public outrage is the social account, consisting of causal accounts and penitential accounts (Tyler 1997:2-3). Causal account is an explanation comprising a reason to mitigate the apologizer's responsibility for some action, and is more commonly referred to as an excuse (Bies 1987:298; in Tyler 1997), which in fact is a denial of responsibility, an attribution of responsibility to other people or some impersonal force. A penitential account is an apology, an acknowledgement of guilt and an expression of remorse (Tyler 1997:5). Justifications make up a third category of accounts (Tadeschi and Reiss 1981, fn. 4 in Tyler 1997). In the business arena, legal constraints may prevent corporations, i.e. individuals in corporations as actors, from acknowledging responsibility for violations, and this rhetorical problem may have serious ethical implications that are important to consider (Hobbs 1995:343). Candour and transparency in corporate interaction are sometimes impossible, and strategic ambiguity is resorted to when company staff experience a need to restore the company's image but are limited in what they are allowed to communicate because they do not want to incur legal liability (Tyler 1997:13).

In the present work, resorting to Meier's (1995) repair work approach and her notions, utterances of apology are expressions using the words *sorry, apology, regret*, or *unfortunately*. Utterances of responsibility are either explicit, acknowledging the writer's, writer's party or third-party responsibility, or implicit utterances receiving the interpretations through the context. The notions of 'justification' and 'account' are used interchangeably to refer to the factual reasons for problems or mishaps uttered by writers.

One of the hypotheses underlying the present analysis of the messages doing repair work, including explicit apologies, is that politeness and/or the concern for the recipient's face are not the main concerns when choosing repair work strategies. The concern for the writer's own face, or the corporate image, may cause the writer to exclude an explicit utterance of apology and an expression of the writer's own or third-party responsibility. Some speech-act approaches (e.g. Olshtain 1989, Trosborg 1995) presuppose both an utterance of apology and responsibility in order to express an apology. In the corporate arena, however, in order to preserve self-esteem and the image of a competent employee, and to comply with the corporate image and legislative requirements, the writer may decide to give a tentative account of the situation only, excluding an overt apology and an explicit expression of responsibility. Thus, the business discourse community and its conventions, etiquettes, and norms, including legislation, are important factors to consider when choosing the most appropriate strategies of repair work interaction. Further, it can be argued that an explicit expression of an apology in a business situation in which the apologizee is not expecting it or does not find it appropriate can be interpreted as patronizing or as irony, thus receiving a negative interpretation by the apologizee. Examples of this will follow in the context-derived analyses.

The repair work approach (Meier 1995) in the present analysis allows for the inclusion of messages in which the writer chooses to utter only an account for what has happened, excluding utterances of apology or responsibility. It is postulated that in the business arena, in interaction between peers and colleagues, including superiors and subordinates, a 'public', explicit expression of an apology is not always required in repair work interaction, and an explicit apology is not always appropriate or permitted in terms of corporate image or legislation. The exclusion strategy is required for an efficient and appropriate processing of the business transaction in question on a longer perspective, in order to avoid incurring legal liability. The omission of explicit expressions of apology and/or admissions to responsibility can be interpreted as resulting from the fact that the writer, vested with an organizational position and/or an expert role, needs to do more investigations into the matter before giving a definite reply. This may indicate the writer's effort to maintain her/his reputation or self-esteem as a competent employee or a member of a team. Thus, it is argued that excluding utterances of apology, responsibility or justification does not result in strategic ambiguity as Tyler (1997:13) suggests. The concept 'public' is regarded as relevant here, since electronic mail systems deliver messages in the written mode and allow for the multiple-recipient option and the forward option to 'publicize' messages originally sent to one recipient only, thus making the content of the message 'public'.

Repair work strategies function to remedy any damage incurred to an actor's image upon the establishment of a responsibility link between an actor and behaviour which fell below the standard expected relative to a particular reference group. The responsibility link in the repair work approach adopted for the present work (from Meier 1995:388) allows for, i.e. regards as appropriate, the inclusion of interaction in which the actor utters third-party responsibility, i.e. deals with discourse events in which the mishap or problem was not caused by the writer personally. The present analysis deals with messages explicating an apology as well as messages in which the writer, in some discourse events according to her/his organizational position and/or in her/his expert role, solely gives an account for specific procedures and tasks mismanaged by others. In doing that, the writer assumes responsibility for communicating the reasons and justification for what has happened on behalf of a third party. Thus, the very act of responding to messages reproaching or complaining about something will be seen as the writer's, i.e. in this case the replier's, admission of responsibility to manage the case in an appropriate, situation-specific way at each moment. Further, it is suggested that, in the business context under scrutiny, the limits of interactants' responsibilities are inherently defined by their organizational positions or their position-specific tasks. Consequently, explicit utterances of responsibility in all discourse events in which repair work is carried out are not necessarily expected and the exclusion is regarded as appropriate by the recipient since the responsibility relations are shared knowledge between the interactants. Thus, relying on discourse-event-specific considerations, it is argued that equating politeness with the requirement of uttering and apology or responsibility off-hand is not tenable in the present business interaction environment.

The power and roles held by the informants, and referred to above, are discussed in the following chapter, and the discussion focuses on the perspectives specific to repair work strategies, including expressions of apology, responsibility, and justification.

4.1.3 Power and roles

Most linguistic choices allegedly have to do with properties of social settings or institutions, and sometimes the very act of linguistic choice-making is institutionally sanctioned. In some cases we can speak of 'ratified utterers' and 'ratified interpreters' (Verschueren 1991:91). Within these settings and institutions, many linguistic choices depend on relationships of dependence and authority, or power and solidarity, not only between the utterer and the interpreter but also between the utterer and/or the interpreter and any third party which is either explicated in the topic of the discourse or is otherwise involved or implicated, e.g. intertextually. Further, social settings and institutions impose many types of principles and rules on the way in which certain types of linguistic acts can be performed, or who has the right to perform them. In addition, they may even determine the 'performability' of certain acts under certain specified circumstances (quotes by Verschueren). Verschueren concludes that institutionally defined power on the part of the utterer, for instance, enables someone to order, command, permit, while institutional power on the part of the addressee may make an utterer ask and beg. Verschueren adds that acknowledged superior knowledge, also a form of authority, enables an utterer to advise and counsel, whereas reversal of the knowledge-based authority relationship makes an utterer ask questions (Verschueren 1999:90-92).

The notion of 'power' as an instance of legitimate power in repair work interaction will be discussed by referring to the postulations by Verschueren (1999), Fimbel (1994) and Katz (1998) in their analysis of the notions of 'power', 'authority', and 'influence'. Fimbel lists (citing French and Raven 1959; Bachrach and Lawler 1980) the classic framework of the five types and bases of individual power: 1) reward power, based on the ability to control valued organizational rewards and resources, e.g. pay and information; 2) coercive power, based on control over various punishments, e.g. suspensions and formal reprimands; 3) legitimate power, based on the belief that an individual has the recognized authority to control others by virtue of her/his organizational position, e.g. high-ranking corporate officials; 4) referent power, based on subordinates liking the power-holder, e.g. friendship between superiors and subordinates; and 5) expert power, based on the accepted belief that the individual has a valued skill or ability, e.g. expert technical skill. A sixth type and base of individual power is information power, based on the opportunity employees have to gain information about the workings of their organization or the relations between the organization and its environment because of their experience as insiders. The source of individual power of the first three bases is the authority of the position the individual is holding, whereas the source of referent power and expert power is personal influence over others. The sixth type of power, information power, depends on both position and personal characteristics (Fimbel 1994:9).

Legitimate power, which is essentially the same as authority vested in persons by virtue of their position in the hierarchy of an organization, is allegedly at work in the choice of repair work strategies in some situations. The degree and extent of legitimate power may vary from organization to organization, and in organizations that favour more individualistic effort, the layers of power are usually less defined. According to some Finnish informants and their superiors interviewed for the present work, the legitimate layers of power are not emphasized in the daily operations in the organization under scrutiny and, independent of their organizational position or their geographical location, interactants see each other as colleagues, peers interacting their work-related matters. The analysis of the messages will shed light on this postulation. However, research suggests that legitimate power is a very important source of day-to-day influence and routine running of matters in organizations, since authority is more acceptable and easier to use than most forms of power, and it can also be used without incurring the costs associated with other forms of power (Schackleton 1998:81). Further, the notion of 'performability' of certain acts under specific circumstances and the notion of 'ratified utterers' are regarded as relevant for the ensuing analysis.

Expert power, in turn, may be effective for matters over and above the normal daily running of organizations and for matters that require some sort of commitment to the organization. According to this suggestion, it is possible that expert power, the power vested in someone because of their acknowledged expertise in a particular area, e.g. the technical experts in the present data, may display itself in the organization of the messages, in the content of the messages, and in the strategy choice, especially in the repair work messages excluding explicit apologies and admission to responsibility. The decision to give an account of or a justification for what has happened, but not utter an apology or acknowledge responsibility, can be interpreted as manifesting the writer's expert power to choose the situation-specific strategy when submitting her/his response. Few people resent being influenced by those they regard as experts and for this reason expert power is often regarded as the least obnoxious or objectionable of the power bases, and it is the most socially acceptable source of power, and most sought after (Schackleton 1998:83).

The third type and source of power resorted to in repair work interaction is information power, relating to the extent to which an individual possesses and provides, or disseminates, the information needed to do the job. The negligence to disseminate the needed information is one of the reasons for complaints by the customers or the staff of the MMC's. This problem is referred to in a survey report (OCDP Final Report 1999:1) on information flows in the organization under scrutiny, suggesting that in a vertical organization withholding information may be due to the fact that some individuals want to increase their market value. The survey report concedes, basing on the interviews among the staff, that if asked for, information is available for dissemination and publicizing. Further, the survey shows that most information is shared through personal contacts, and computer-mediated communication, including databases and e-mail, is well used in the organization.

Referring to the ideas put forward in research cited above, it can be expected that when choosing to omit an utterance of apology and/or an explicit admission to responsibility in repair work, the writer uses her/his authority or power derived from either her/his organizational position, expert role or the information possessed when interacting in a situation which, according to the traditional research on apologies or business interaction course books, would require an explicit expression of apology together with an admission to responsibility for the mishap or violation, in order to maintain or restore harmony between the interactants. It is postulated that, in the present business context, the account of, or the justification for what has happened serves to give rationale for the occurrence. Simultaneously, the justification functions as maintaining harmony between the writer and the recipient/s of the message until the writer, or the writer's party, has made further investigations and tests to give a more in-depth account of the situation, in order to put the matter right. The choice of this repair strategy in these contexts may also be due to the fact that the writer is not a 'ratified utterer' in Verschueren's (1999) terms and is constrained by the corporate rules and norms imposed and applied for the management of such problematic situations, in order to avoid incurring legal liabilities on a longer perspective. Further, it is argued that, in the present business context, shared knowledge of context-specific determinants between interactants allows for the omission of utterances of apology and/or responsibility, which is interpreted as appropriate behaviour.

The discussion above, providing background for the ensuing analysis of repair work interaction, suggests that repair work interaction is discourse-event-specific in that the writer in her/his organizational position or role has to consider the severity level of the topic, the problematic situation or mishap, when making repair work strategy choices in each discourse event. The exclusion of utterances of apology or responsibility is regarded as an 'appropriate' strategy choice in some discourse events, and the power, roles and information held by writers empower them as 'ratified utterers' to choose 'performable' strategies in each discourse event.

4.2 Macrosegment structure of repair work messages

When teaching business interaction in English at a business polytechnic, discourse events requiring repair work are one of the most challenging instances of business interaction from both the instructor's and the learners' point of view. Many business professionals suggest that replying to customers' complaints in maintaining and restoring mutual understanding between business partners is among the most difficult situations of interaction to cope with. Another challenge in the learning process is the fact that business communication course books published in Finland and elsewhere tend to suggest structural outlines to be applied when organizing business messages in order to deal with such discourse events. However, business course books frequently fail to deal with context-specific components of interaction, or have only a few references to them. The normative suggestions put forward by some books may be as follows: "Of course there has to be an apology - ... One apology is enough. ... Never end on an apology." (Moon 1999:59) There are a number of messages in the present corpus to contradict such normative suggestions. Thus, to be able to acquire contextual evidence for the use of different communication strategies and their functions in various discourse events in real-life business interaction, the present work focuses on the intriguing interaction in situations in the business arena, those containing repair work.

Some business communication course books suggest a strategic organization for messages requiring e.g. persuasion and convincing of the readers (e.g. Airas-Junkkari 1992, Guffey 1997, Moon 1999). The writers refer to the indirect organization, or the inductive plan, as opposed to the direct organization, or the deductive plan, and to the circular organization of messages. The direct plan in which the main issue initiates the message and is followed by the necessary details is used for routine situations. The suggested indirect organization is to place the justification utterances before launching the main content. In the circular organization, the main issue is repeated for emphasis, in order to ensure successful interaction from the writer's point of view.

Analyses of the generic macrosegment structures of the repair work messages with various primary communicative purposes will be included in the chapters to follow. The analyses are influenced by Herring's (1996) study on the macrosegment structure of two Internet mailing list messages. Herring (1996:84) refers to her three-sequence message organization used in interactionally-oriented text types as the 'interactive message schema'. Herring's approach and its adaptation for the present work were discussed in more detail in Chapter 3.4. Herring's message corpus consists of 136 messages, basing on which the pragmatic-textual functions and frequencies of various macrosegments have been listed. The number of repair work messages in the present data totals 40; the whole corpus comprises 279 messages. Consequently, due to the low number of repair work messages analysed for the macrosegment structure of messages in each category, it is impossible to 'universalize' on the findings. Instead, to provide insights into the reasons for the discourse-event-specific and context-specific uses and functions of the repair work strategies as well as other linguistic strategies, detailed analyses of message structures are included, firstly, in order to provide a framework for an analysis of the interpersonal metadiscourse to follow in Chapter 5 and, secondly, to empower the suggestions made in the concluding chapters of the present work.

The analyses focus on the order, placement, and combinations of the repair work strategies suggested by Meier (1995) in relation to other communication strategies, e.g. providing information, requesting for action or information, expressing views, giving suggestions, in various macrosegment chunks. The repair work strategies included are 1) the utterances of apology or regret (A); 2) the utterances of justification (J) for the errors, mishaps or problematic situations requiring repair work; and 3) the utterances of responsibility (R), i.e. explicating or implicating a bad performance that fell below the expected standard in the context.

Herring (1996) refers to the various communication strategies in her macrosegment chunks as 'textual pragmatic functions'. In the present analysis the notion of 'communication strategy' is used interchangeably with Herring's notion of 'textual pragmatic function', and the notion of 'function' refers to the suggested functions each strategy serves in various discourse events. Thus, e.g. an explicit suggestion by *I suggest* may in some discourse events function as requesting for information or opinion, or a direct imperative form may function as providing further information to the reader, i.e. *For further details, please refer to Document XXX.* The tables presenting the macrosegment structures of the various types of repair work messages depict the functions of the communication strategies in each discourse event. The polypragmatic nature of some utterances and the problemacy of categorization of the various strategies will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 4.2.4.2.

When analysing the 40 messages as to their macrosegment structure and the subsequent communication strategies, the following criteria have been used. The linguistic elements used to realize each communication strategy in various discourse events may be single linguistic utterances, such as *Sorry.* or *Thanks.*, in other events one syntactic sentence or sentence fragment, or alternatively several sentences or sentence fragments, forming e.g. a typographically indicated paragraph separated by empty lines from the other text chunks. The polypragmatic functions of the communication strategies will be under more detailed discussion when analysing the repair work messages excluding an apology or regret utterance.

The 40 messages including repair work strategies have been placed into two main categories basing on the use or non-use of an utterance of apology or regret in the messages. There are 18 messages including repair work strategies with an apology or regret utterance with three different primary communicative purposes, i.e. requesting for action, providing information, and doing repair work. The remaining 22 messages contain repair work strategies, excluding utterances of apology or regret, and have the primary communicative purpose of doing repair work. Table 8 presents the categorization.

Table 8. Primary communicative purposes of messages including repair work strategies.

	Number of messages
Messages uttering apology or regret	18
Primary Communicative Purpose	
Requesting for action or information	5
Providing information	6
Doing repair work	7
Messages not uttering apology or regret	22
Primary Communicative Purpose	
Doing repair work	22
Total	40

4.2.1 Responsibility, severity, positions, roles and primary communicative purpose

Repair work is understood to comprise the measures taken to remedy any damage deteriorating an actor's image upon the establishment of a responsibility link between an actor and behaviour which fell below the standard expected, relative to a specific reference group. According to the present data, repair work strategies, either with or without an apology or regret, and other communication strategies are used to exchange information and views during the repair work processes to achieve mutual understanding.

The admittance to responsibility is one of the topic-specific and communication-purpose-specific discourse event components discussed, in order to find out its possible influence on the presence or absence of an utterance of apology or regret in the present data. The 3rd-party responsibility (3rdPR) in the present work includes situations in which a member of the Metal Marketing Company (MMC) staff writes a repair work message concerning a mishap or extra work caused by e.g. a customer or a bank. On the other hand, from the Finnish supplier's point of view, 3rdPR is admitted to when a staff member of the mill in Finland writes about a mishap, e.g. a lost consignment, caused by a shipping company. The discourse events in which Finnish staff members reply on behalf of other Finnish staff members, or in which MMC staff members reply on behalf of other MMC staff members, are not regarded as 3rdPR cases; they will be referred to as the writer's party responsibility (WPR), separate from the writer's responsibility (WR). In the present data, there is one reader's (RR) or reader's party responsibility (RPR) situation. The admittance to responsibility involves explicating or implicating the responsibility for a bad performance, or behaviour.

Another topic-related discourse event component discussed is the severity level of the discourse event or situation requiring repair work, allegedly influencing the presence or absence of an utterance of apology or regret in the repair work messages. Factors that are considered to have impact on the severity level are the face concerns of the writer or the reader, or the corporate image concerns, as well as the financial implications involved in the business transactions for all parties concerned. The severity level of the situation in the present repair work messages varies on a continuum between low and high. The severity level of the discourse event in terms of face and financial concerns are decisive in dividing the repair work messages into routine and non-routine ones, mainly basing on the discourse event and the topic of interaction, the routine messages representing the low severity end of the continuum and the non-routine messages the higher end.

Further, discussion on the interactants' organizational positions and roles with references to the inherent power relations as components of discourse events will be included in the present analysis. The participants involved in the interaction represent either operative level or management level white-collar staff. Additionally, the participants' expert role and its possible impact on the communication strategy choice in each discourse situation will be under scrutiny. The task- and/or position-derived topics each participant discusses, and consequently the primary communicative purpose of each message, are significant for the severity level of each discourse event as well as for the readiness to admit responsibility. The analysis seeks to find an answer to the question of whether the interactants' organizational positions and their roles in each discourse event are closely interlinked with the severity level and the admittance to responsibility.

4.2.2 Messages uttering apology or regret

The 18 repair work messages uttering an apology or regret have three different primary communicative purposes as presented in Table 9.

Table 9. Primary communicative purposes of messages uttering apology or regret.

Primary Communicative Purpose	Number of messages
Requesting for action or information	5
Providing information	6
Doing repair work	7
Total	18

A total of 13 messages of the 18 repair work messages uttering an apology or regret, i.e. five messages requesting for action or information, six messages providing information and two messages doing repair work, deal with documentation, either the issue or reissue of documents or markings on documents. Thus the 13 messages represent routine business interaction in discourse events with a low severity level in terms of related financial implications for the parties involved or face or image concerns. The five remaining messages are written in more non-routine discourse events involving higher severity level, due to financial considerations and corporate image or personal face threat.

Tables 10, 11 and 12 present the macrosegment structure of the repair work messages containing an apology or regret utterance. Each table presents messages with different primary communicative purposes. The three tables list the set of macrosegment chunks with subsequent communication strategies, including those to express the primary communicative purposes. The running numbers in the vertical columns indicate the order of the functions as elicited in each message. Thus, number 1 indicates the strategy that appeared first in the message, number 2 indicates the strategy that followed the first strategy, etc.

The outline of the order of appearance of the macrosegments and the resulting sequence of communication strategies in the tables roughly correspond to the linear order of the macrosegments and the occurrences of the communication strategies in the 18 repair work messages with various primary communicative purposes. However, as can be seen from the tables, no single message contains all of the functions presented, and further, some of the textual-pragmatic functions may recur in the three consecutive macrosegments, i.e. the pre-sequence, the core and the post-sequence of the messages.

4.2.2.1 Messages primarily requesting for action or information

Table 10 presents the macrosegment structure of the five repair work messages uttering an apology or regret with the primary communicative purpose of requesting for action or information. All messages represent routine discourse events with a low severity level, all explicating writer's responsibility. Four messages represent operative level peer-to-peer communication with equal power relations, and one message is written vertically upwards, all discussing the writer's task-related documentation. Three messages are initial messages, one a reply message and one a follow-up message. Appendix 1 lists the 40 repair work messages in full for closer scrutiny for the readers. Tables 10, 11, and 12 present the primary addressees of the messages, not the audience, i.e. not the informants to whom the messages are cc:ed. In the analysis part, the importance of the audience is discussed when found relevant.

Message (4) is an example of a repair work message primarily requesting for action. The message is written in a routine situation with low severity level by an American operative-level interactant to a Finnish operative-level interactant about documentation. The writer conveys the reason for the error and acknowledges personal responsibility message-initially. These statements are followed by the indirect request for action by the reader. The writer expresses regret message-finally and repeats the justification for the error.

Message (4)

Ok, despite the fact that I actually have a post-it-note stuck to my computer that says "Bonehead Remember Surcharges!" I still forgot to add a surcharge to a (Customer company name) stock order I just did.
Can you please make an additional surcharge invoice for cert. xxxxx.
Thanks and sorry I forgot.
....A2 (first name)

Table 10. Macrosegments in messages primarily requesting for action or information.

MCP - RAI - Main Communicative Purpose - Requesting for Action or Information					
IM = Initial Message, RM = Reply Message FU = Follow-up Message					
WR = Writer's Responsibility					
With an Apology	WR	WR	WR	WR	WR
Informants	A2>F1	A2>F1	F1>A2	A2>F1	A1>F1
Message	M1/IM	M2/FU	M3/RM	M4/IM	M5/IM
Epistolary Conventions					
Hi(,) First name	1	1			1
Helllo(,) First name			1		
Pre-sequence					
Provide Prospective Introduction					2
Conversational turns (Ok, Well,)		2		1	
Provide Background Information				2	
Refer to Previous Communication/Enclosed Message		3			3
Explicate Responsibility, Bad Performance (S->H type)			2	3	
Express Justification, Reason (H->S type)			3	4	
Express Apology, Empathy with H (S->H type)			4		
Core Message					
Provide Background Information	6	4	5		
Request for Action or Information - Indirect	2,7,10,11		7	5	6
Express Apology, Empathy with H (S->H type)	5	5			
Explicate Responsibility, Bad Performance (S->H type)	4	6			4
Express Justification, Reason (H->S type)	3, 8	7	6		5
Request for Action - Direct	9		8		
Post-sequence					
Express Apology, Empathy with H (S->H type)		8, 13		7	7
Explicate Resonsibility, Bad Performance (S->H type)		9		8	
Express Justification, Reason (H->S type)		10		9	
Request for Action - Direct		11			
Thanks.	12	12	9	6	8
Epistolary Conventions					
Complimentary Close			10		9
First name	12	14	11	10	10

When considering the order, placement and combinations of the appearances of the primary communicative purpose of requesting for action (REQA) or for information (REQI) and the three repair work strategies under analysis, i.e. the utterances of apology or regret (A), responsibility (R) and justification (J), in the generic macrosegment schema of the messages, the following outline can be presented:

	Pre-sequence	Core Message	Post-sequence
Message 1		REQA - J - R - A - REQA -J - REQA	
Message 2		A - R - J	A - R - J - REQA - A
Message 3	R - J - A	REQA - J - REQA	
Message 4	R - J	REQA	A - R - J
Message 5		R - J - REQI	A

Firstly, the **primary communicative purpose** of requesting for action or for information directly or indirectly is placed in the core message in four messages out of the total of five in this category. The initial placing, or foregrounding of requests enables the reader to interpret the core communicative purpose of the message before reading the whole message. Frequently, the subject line facilitates the reader's work by targeting the request to a specific customer. In the follow-up message (2), the request is placed in the post-sequence of the message. The message-final placing of the core communicative purpose, that of requesting for action, can be interpreted as a strategy to explain the situation in-depth and to give justification for the error made by the writer before explicating the request. This strategy can be referred to as the indirect organization suggested by some business communication course books. Thus, in the routine requesting messages including repair work strategies and uttering of apology or regret, the primary communicative purpose, or the core content, is typically expressed in the core message and it is framed by other communication strategies in the pre- and post-sequences, which aid in linking the messages to a larger interactive context.

The pre-sequences in the present messages e.g. provide links to previous communication (two messages), provide a prospective introduction, contain conversational turns (two messages) or utterances of responsibility (two messages), justifications (two messages), and an utterance of apology for negligence. The post-sequences contain utterances of responsibility (two messages), justification (two messages) and apology or regret (three messages). Further, the post-sequence in five requesting messages contain the politeness utterance *Thanks.*, typical for messages uttering a request in the present data, to emphasize the force of the direct or indirect requesting utterances included in the messages.

As stated above, the **utterances of apology or regret** (A) are distributed across the pre-sequence, the core message and the post-sequence macrosegments in this category of messages. However, the post-sequence (four instances) of the requestive repair work messages together with the core message (two instances) are the typical macrosegments to house the utterances of apology or regret. Only in message (3) the genuine utterance of apology for forgetting something is in the pre-sequence preceded by the utterances of responsibility and justification. The final placement of the utterances of apology in routine, low severity discourse events in peer-to-peer interaction can be interpreted to evidence that it is appropriate, when requesting for action or information in writer responsible, low severity repair work situations, to close the message with a conventionalized, routinized utterance of apology or regret. The present frequency of the appearances of the apologetic utterances in the various macrosegments is in line with Herring's (1996:86) frequencies in her e-mail language study showing the lowest frequency in the introduction sequence, here the pre-sequence, and the highest frequency in the close sequence, here the post-sequence.

The suggestion put forward in the business communication course books referred to earlier, concerning the placement of the **utterances of justification** (J) prior to the main message in the discourse events requiring persuasion and convincing, is supported by the strategy structure in four messages out of the five outlined above. The messages requesting for action or information can be regarded as involving aspects of persuasion, since the writer is trying to make the reader act in the suggested way, either to produce documentation or to take measures to provide information. Out of the five messages only one, i.e. message (1), displays the strategy of placing the justification utterance after the primary communicative purpose. Thus, the informant resorts to the direct organization of messages rather than the indirect one in the routine discourse event.

However, **responsibility** (R) is uttered prior to justification (J), except for message (1), showing the writer's readiness to utter personal responsibility before giving the justification for the negligence in routine situations. The order of the apologetic utterances (A) in relation to the R and J utterances seems to be random in the present five messages. Firstly, the order of the repair work strategies may be explained by the routine nature and the instantaneity of the discourse events, which are not regarded as requiring the use of premeditated or deliberate communication strategies. In the writer's responsibility (WR) messages, the responsibility is acknowledged readily without any prior elaborate justifications by uttering e.g. *I totally / still forgot*, *I made the mistake*, *I didn't need the credit,* and *I deleted the message*. In all the five messages, the writer uses the first person pronoun *I* to acknowledge responsibility and the utterances cited above give the justification in a compact way. In the present routinized discourse events, a concise way of communicating is appropriately economical from both the writer's and the reader's point of view. However, the low number of messages has to be considered as a limitation in the present context for any postulations on generalizable tendencies in strategy use.

4.2.2.2 Messages primarily providing information

Table 11 lists the macrosegment structure with the subsequent communication strategies as appearing in the six messages with the primary communicative purpose of providing information and including repair work strategies with an explicit utterance of apology or regret. Three messages are reply messages and another three are follow-up messages written in routine discourse events representing low severity level. Four messages are either writer's responsibility (WR) or writer's party responsibility (WPR) messages, and two messages represent either implicated, based on shared knowledge between informants, or explicated 3rd-party responsibility (3rdPR), i.e. the customer company is regarded responsible for the situation. Two WR or WPR messages and one 3rdPR message are exchanged between operative level peers, and two WR or WPR messages and one 3rdPR message represent upward vertical interaction.

Table 11. Macrosegments in messages primarily providing information.

MCP - Main Communicative Purpose - PI - Providing Information						
RM = Reply Message FM = Follow-up Message						
3rdPR = 3rd Party Responsibility, Customer's WR/WPR = Writer's/Writer's Party Responsibility						
With an Apology/Regret/Unfortunately	3rdPR	3rdPR	WPR	WR	WR	WR/WPR
Informants	F1>A1	B3>F4	A4>F1	B3>F4	F5>B6	F8>B1,F5
Message	M6/RM	M7/FM	M8/FM	M9/RM	M10/RM	M11/FM
Epistolary Conventions						
First name		1				
Hi, Hello, First name						1
Good Morning, First name/s			1			
Pre-Sequence						
Express Apology, Empathy with H (S->H type)	1	2	2	1		2
First name	2					
Explicate Responsibility, Bad Performance (S->H type)			3			3
Express Justification, Reason (H->S type)			4			4
Core Message						
Refer to Previous Communication (with customer, or H)		3				
Provide Information	5	6	5	2	1	5
Express Apology, Empathy with H (S->H type)					2	
Express Justification, Reason (H->S type)	3	4			4	
Explicate Responsibility, Bad Performance (S->H type)	4	5			3	
Create Common Ground with Reader		7				
Inform of Action Taken		8	6			6
Post-sequence						
Express Apology, Empathy with H (S->H type)		9	7			
Explicate Responsibility, Bad Performance (S(S->H type)			8			
Provide Information					5	
Epistolary Conventions						
Complimentary Close	6	10	9	3	6	7
First name	7	11	10	4	7	8

The reply message (6) serves as an example of a message primarily providing information. The message is written by a Finnish operative level interactant to an American management level interactant. The writer refuses the reader's request by giving justification for the refusal, simultaneously implying third-party responsibility, i.e. the customer required fast delivery.

Message (6) *Sorry, A1 (First name)*
As fast shipment in question we do not have time to add anything to marking.
Kind regards,
F1 (First name)

The following outline presents the placement and order of the appearances of the primary communicative purpose of providing information (PI) in relation to the three repair work strategies, i.e. the A, J and R utterances in the messages under analysis:

	Pre-sequence	Core Message	Post-sequence
Message 6	A	J - R - PI	
Message 7	A	J - R - PI	A
Message 8	A - R - J	PI	A - R
Message 9	A	PI - R - J	
Message 10		PI - A - R - J	REQA(=PI)
Message 11	A - R - J	PI	

The core message macrosegment in all six messages includes the **primary communicative purpose** of providing information. Message (10) includes a request for action by requesting the reader to refer to a source of information. The marking REQA(=PI) in the above outline indicates that the request functions as providing additional information to the reader. This requestive utterance *For further details, please refer to document xx* is the only requestive utterance in the six messages. It primarily provides further information, and the utterance functions to reinforce the credibility of the information provided in the core message, which is refusing the customer's request for changes in packing. In addition, three messages inform of action taken in the core message chunk.

Either the pre- and post-sequence of the messages or both include other communication strategies, the pre-sequence containing implicated or explicated links to previous communication. Further, linking to previous communication is taken care of by the tangible intertextuality option offered by the e-mail systems, i.e. the enclosed e-mail messaged exchanged earlier.

All the messages in this chapter are either reply or follow-up messages, and all of the five **apologetic utterances** (A) in the pre-sequences are used in a routine way typical of discourse events in which earlier communication is either explicated or implicated. Thus the initial placement of the A utterances functions to convey an instant negative message to the reader concerning the matter interacted. Five messages have an utterance of apology or regret in the pre-sequence.

In messages (9) and (10) the **responsibility** (R) and **justification** (J) strategies respectively appear in the core message after the utterance of the main communicative purpose. In message (6) and (7) the J and R utterances are prior to the utterance of the main communicative purpose in the core message, whereas in messages (8) and (11) the pre-sequence R and J utterances precede the main communicative purpose which is expressed in the core message. Messages (6) and (7) use the indirect organization strategy with justification preceding the main message, since the strategy allows the writer to shift the responsibility to the customer and to give the justification for the refusal of the customer's request before explicating the refusal. Messages (8) and (11) contain the pre-sequence R and J utterances, representing discourse events involving partly writer's responsibility (WR); the pre-sequence utterances of the writer's party responsibility (WPR) and the justifications function as mitigating the writer's face threat. Messages (6) and (7) are third-party responsibility (3rdPR) messages with an implicated and explicated customer responsibility respectively. Messages (8) and (11) explicate WPR but imply genuine apology by the writer for what has happened. In the post-sequence of message (8) the utterance *accept my apology* reinforces the idea of the writer's genuine commitment to the apology in peer-to-peer communication to avoid imposition on the peer's face. Also message (7) includes a routinized conventional post-sequence A utterance *Sorry for the trouble.*

To sum up, it can be suggested that in the routinized reply or follow-up e-mail messages primarily providing information, independent of the interactants' positions or roles, the main communicative purpose is placed in the core message. The placement of the utterance of apology in the pre-sequence functions as an immediate and concise reference to earlier communication conveying a message negative in some aspect in relation to the earlier contact, which seems to be the primary usage in the present messages. Secondly, the A utterances in the various macrosegments can be regarded as routinized usage, appropriate for the discourse event, or thirdly as genuine expressions of the writer's apology for a non-expected turn in the processing of the matter in situations representing both horizontal and vertical interaction. In the placement of the utterances of responsibility, there is more variation between the pre-sequence, the core message and the post-sequence chunks.

4.2.2.3 Messages primarily doing repair work

The messages with the primary communicative purpose of doing repair work and uttering apology, written by Finnish informants, typically respond or reply to messages by the MMC staff. The MMC staff may communicate problems experienced by customers, or complaints from customers concerning the quality of the material delivered, the safety of packing methods, the delivery date of the material, the price of the material, or the payment time of the material delivered. Thus, the MMC staff report the mishaps to the staff in Finland on behalf of the customers. Further, some messages primarily doing repair work and uttering apology or regret respond to messages which report problems in disseminating information to the MMC staff. Dissemination of information, according to the group's internal survey report, seems to be a problem within the group. Consequently, the nature of the issues interacted is more severe than in the two earlier categories analysed, since customers' problems in the discourse events in this category are more explicitly present.

The customers' problems or complaints reported will allegedly have negative implications on future business between the customers and the supplier, the mill in Finland, in the form of damaged corporate image, which may result in customers seeking new sources of supply in the future. This idea was explicated in two messages by the MMC staff members discussing quality problems experienced and reported by customers. On the one hand, the lost business would have negative financial ramifications too, which is the second severity level component in the present analysis. On the other hand, e.g. lost consignments resulting in extended delivery times will have financial ramifications from the customers' point of view. Thus, in the discourse events in the present category, the severity level of the situations varies between high and highish on a continuum between low and high. Therefore, repair work is necessary to remedy any damage incurred or possibly to incur to the corporate image, in order to regain or to maintain convergence, mutual understanding, or social harmony between the parties involved.

The non-routine situations seem to require negotiation between the parties to arrive at a concluding decision on the problematic situations interacted. This negotiation aspect of interaction results in the use of a wide variety of communication strategies.

Message (16) exemplifies repair work interaction involving high severity level, since safety aspects are concerned due to the recurring problem. The writer acknowledges the writer's party responsibility message-initially.

Message (16) is by a Finnish technical expert and it is addressed to a British management-level interactant and cc:ed to a Finnish management-level interactant and a Finnish operative-level interactant mentioned in the message.

Message (16)

Was this the first time when the customer experienced loose or broken banding? Perhaps they have seen some cases, but have not reported them. Do you know if there has been any safety hazards because of the problem?
The quality department will audit the next shipment. It will take place in July, week 27 according to F8 (First name)
For your info ... We have audited one Canadian customer because of similar problems for the last two years, a couple of times a month. I have not seen any fast improvement. Auditing and inspecting seems to be the only way to educate people here in the mill. I thought that our fine automatic packaging line would solve this type of problems, but automation is not a solution.
Sorry for my frustration.
Rgds, F5 (First name)

The macrosegment structure of the messages primarily doing repair work explicating an apology or regret utterance is presented in Table 12 with the subsequent communication strategies. The messages with the primary communicative purpose of doing repair work are either reply (five messages) or follow-up (two messages) messages. Two messages are third-party responsibility (3rdPR) messages, one message represents reader's party responsibility (RPR), and the remaining four messages are writer's party responsibility (WPR) messages. Five messages are written in non-routine discourse events representing high or highish severity level, whereas two messages represent the lower end of the severity level continuum.

Main Communicative Purpose - DRW = Doing Repair Work							
RM = Reply Message, IM = Initial Message, FM = Follow-up Message							
WP/WPR = Writer's/Writer's party responsibility; 3rdP = 3rd-party responsibility; RPR = Reader's party responsibility							
With an Apology/Regret	3rdP	3rdP	WR/WPR	RPR	WPR	WPR	WPR
Informants	F1>A1,F3	F1>A1,A3	AC1>A2	B3>F4	F5>B1	F5>A1	F6>A5
Message	M12/RM	M13/FU	M14/RM	M15/FU	M16/RM	M17/RM	M18/RM
Epistolary Conventions							
First name			1	1			
Hello(,), Good morning First name/s	1						
Generic greeting (Hello to you, everyone; Good morning!)		1					1
Pre-sequence							
Small Talk				2			
Refer to Previous/Enclosed Message or Communication							3
Provide Prospective Introduction			2				2
Explicate Responsibility, Bad Performance (S->H type)							4
Express Justification, reason (H->S type)			3				
Core Message							
Provide Information		2		3	5	2,4,8	6
Express Views					2,6		
Express Apology, Empathy with H (S->H type)	2					7	
Explicate Responsibility, Bad Performance (S->H type)	3	3		5	1	1,5	
Promise Future Action		4	4		4	3	5
Express Justification, Reason (H->S type)		5		4	7	6	
Request for Action or Information - Indirect				6	3		
Promise Further Information	4						
Post-sequence							
Provide Information						9	
Express Apology, Empathy with H (S->H type)		6	5,7	7	8		7
Explicate Responsibility, Bad Performance (S->H type)			6				8
Express Justification, Reason (H->S type)							9
Express Views							10
Promise Future Action	5	7					
Epistolary Conventions							
Complimentary close	6	8	8	8	9	10	11
First name	7	9	9	9	10	11	
First name and Family name							12

Table 12. Macrosegments in messages primarily doing repair work.

As stated earlier, the messages with the primary communicative purpose of doing repair work involve a more varied range of necessary communication strategies to ensure successful solutions to the problematic situations than repair work messages with other primary communicative purposes, due to the alleged negotiation aspect of the discourse events. The negotiation process aims at ensuring a satisfactory result from all the parties' point of view, which results in the use of the following communication strategies in the repair work processes: providing information (PI), promising future information (PFI) or action (PFA), requesting for information (REQI) or action (REQA), and expressing views or opinions (EV). As to the last strategy, expressing views, the expert power vested in the two technical experts, F5 and F6, seems to legitimize the use of this strategy in the messages under scrutiny, since no other interactant expresses views as clearly separated from facts as F5 and F6 do.

The outline of the repair work messages primarily doing repair work on the following page shows the placement and order of the various communication strategies used to carry out repair work in relation to the three repair work strategies, i.e. the A, J and R utterances.

	Pre-sequence	Core Message	Post-sequence
Message 12		A - R - J - PFI	
Message 13		PI - R - PFA - J	A - PFA
Message 14	J	PFA	A - R - A
Message 15		PI - J - R - REQA	A
Message 16		R-EV-REQI-PFA-PI-EV-J	A
Message 17		R-PI-PFA-PI-R-J-A-PI	PI
Message 18	R	PI-PFA	A-R-J-EV

A varied selection of communication strategies used jointly to convey the primary communicative purpose is at work in this category of messages. The strategies represented in the core message of the seven messages primarily doing repair works are as follows: providing information (PI), promising future information (PFI) or action (PFA), requesting for information (REQI) or action (REQA), and expressing views or opinions (EV). The strategy of PFA in message (13) is repeated in the post-sequence, and message (18) includes the strategy of EV in the post-sequence. No other pre- or post-sequence includes these strategies. The high or highish severity level involved in the discourse events can be suggested to influence the factual, straight-to-the-point approach adopted in two messages before either the apologetic (A), justification (J), or responsibility (R) utterances.

The use of the strategy of expressing views by the two technical experts F5 and F6 in messages (16) and (18) respectively can be suggested to be legitimized by the expert role, and the subsequent authority, vested on the two informants in the discourse events. The strategy of expressing views in the messages cc:ed to management level staff enables the technical experts to initiate discussion on recurrent high-severity-level problems, such as safety hazards. Further, it can be suggested that expressing views and opinions about important issues gives them an opportunity to present their personal dimension of their competence and expertise in the knowledge of the subject matter. Expressing views and opinions will be discussed further in Chapter 4.2.4 when analysing the messages doing primarily repair work with no utterance of apology or regret.

The core message in the reply message (12) is initiated with the **apologetic utterance** (A) *Sorry* replying to a question *Any news on the 'LOST' xxxx skid?* in the enclosed initial message. *Sorry* functions as submitting a conventionally appropriate negative reply to the question followed by a responsibility (R) utterance shifting the responsibility to the shipping company with the justification before promising future information, which is provided in message (13). Messages (12) and (13) by a Finnish operative level staff member can be regarded as representing high severity level, since the availability of the material is at stake and the MMC management level staff is involved in the interaction. The post-sequences of five messages include an apology or regret utterance, which seems to be the most typical placement for the A utterances in the messages primarily doing repair work including an apology or regret. The core message use of *Sorry* can be regarded as conventionally appropriate usage functioning to provide a concise reply to an utterance in previous communication in the same way as in messages primarily providing information involving low severity level. The message final *Sorry for the inconvenience.* utterance in message (15) can equally be regarded as an appropriately conventional closing in peer-to-peer communication in a reader's party responsibility discourse event. The repeated genuine A utterance in message (14) functions as conveying the highish severity level of the situation and represents the conventionally expected appropriacy and politeness level in the discourse event. In messages (16) and (18) the apologetic utterances show how emotions are at work; in message (16) the utterance *Sorry for my frustration.* explicates the reason for the utterance, and in message (18) the utterance implicates frustration or irony, i.e. *We are so sorry as we have designed so bad identification system in the first year of production 1976 as we couldn't imagine, the 99 cast a week limit would be ever exceeded.*

The reply message (16), written by a Finnish operative level technical expert to a British MCC management level staff member, can be regarded as representing high severity level, since prospective safety hazards were involved. Hence the core-message-initial utterance of writer's party **responsibility** (WPR) with no pre-sequence utterances. On the other hand, message (17) by the same writer to an American MMC management level staff member assumes the same strategy in a discourse event with a lower severity level concerning incorrect information on a document. It may be suggested that the strategy resorted to by the Finnish technical expert may partly represent idiosyncratic language use, since the same outline is adopted by her in various situations doing repair work. Also, the use of the same outline may indicate that a deliberated outline for managing such situations is at work. Message (17) includes a core-message WPR utterance prior to the core repair work strategies followed by the justification, a human error, which the writer regrets in a conventionally appropriate way with the utterance *which we regret.*

It is notable that the frequency of the use of the communication strategies under analysis in the pre-sequences in the messages primarily doing repair work is lower than in the pre-sequences of messages primarily either requesting for action or information, or messages primarily providing information. The pre-sequence in message (14) by an American customer as a reply to an American MMC staff member's message on non-payment of a credit note by the customer includes a **justification utterance** (J) after a prospective introduction before the core message promise of future action. The J utterance functions to give reasons for the delayed payment, simultaneously implicating a shift of personal responsibility to the writer's party before explicating the promise of payment. This strategy can be regarded as functioning as doing face work for the writer in the high severity level discourse event, involving also financial ramifications, preceded by several contacts by the American MMC staff to urge for the delayed payment. It can be suggested that in the discourse event represented by message (14), the American MMC staff member has the power in Yli-Jokipii's (1994) terms, since the customer has failed to issue a credit note to the mill in Finland and the writer had notified the customer of the negligence several times. Comparisons concerning the generic message structures between the present messages and the messages doing repair work not explicating an apology or regret utterance will be made in Chapter 4.2.4.

4.2.2.4 Summary

This chapter summarizes the analyses of the generic message structures adapted from Herring's (1996) macrosegment structure with the subsequent communication strategies. The message categories included are the messages primarily requesting for action or information, messages primarily providing information, and messages primarily doing repair work, all explicating an utterance of apology or regret. Further, the repair work strategies of expressing apology or regret (A), explicating responsibility (R), and expressing justification (J) introduced by Meier (1996) and as elicited in the present analyses are included in the summary. The focus is on the placement and order and the functions of the communication strategies in relation to each other in the generic message structure. Again, it has to be remembered that the low number of messages analysed under each category does not allow any extensive generalizations outside the present material.

The five messages **primarily requesting for action or information**, all representing routine discourse situations involving low severity level, have the most variation in the placement and order of the communication strategies in the messages. However, the primary communication purpose is expressed in the core message in three out of the five messages. The pre-sequence of two messages includes the R, J or A strategies prior to the utterances of the primary communication purpose in the core message. Three messages include the A, J and R repair work strategies before or after the primary communicative purpose utterance. The post-sequence includes four A utterances, one message including three A utterances, one in the core and two in the post-sequence. There are two post-message R and J utterances. Thus, in the present category, the post-sequence is more loaded with various strategies than the pre-sequence segment.

Four messages requesting for action or information represent operative level peer-to-peer communication concerning documentation, and the messages are exchanged in discourse events requiring fast processing of the matter. Hence, the writer either utters the request message-initially or utters the responsibility and the justification for the request either after of before the request. Evidently, the R and J utterances are placed prior to the request utterance in situations in which the requesting is due to the writer's personal negligence and the writers want to mitigate the threat on their own face for having mismanaged a routine task, since all the messages acknowledge the writer's responsibility explicitly for the request made, i.e. the extra work caused. Thus, the indirect organization of communication strategies for persuasive and convincing messages is applied here. The apologetic utterance is expressed also either prior to or after the request, utilizing the conventionally appropriate utterances of apology or regret showing empathy or solidarity towards the reader mainly for the extra work caused by the writer. In three messages the justifications are given elaborately, which is suggested to be idiosyncratic language usage between informants of high familiarity level with high frequency of message exchange. Thus, the routine nature and the instantaneity requirement seem to make it unnecessary for the writers to use a carefully considered strategy plan, and they act according to each situation with some instances of idiosyncrasies explaining the use.

The primary communicative purpose of the reply or follow-up **messages primarily providing information** is placed in the core message. In these messages the pre-sequence in five out of a total of six messages includes an apology, which mainly functions as a concise response to an earlier e-mail message. The message-initial apologetic utterance implies that the reaction or reply by the writer will be negative from the reader's point of view. Typically the previous e-mail message is enclosed. Four messages use the indirect strategy organization, by placing the R and J strategies before the utterance of the primary communicative purpose, either in the pre-sequence (2 messages) or in the core message (2 messages). In the two remaining messages the primary communicative purpose of providing information is placed before the R and J strategies. It can be suggested that the four messages using the indirect organization, two messages involving horizontal operative level interaction and two messages vertically upward interaction, are typical for persuasive and convincing interaction in e-mail interaction, regardless of the direction of interaction. One message by a technical expert writing upwards utilizes a strategy order typical for the writer, i.e. a factual, straight-to-the-point strategy, expressing the primary information before the R and J strategies, when writing in a situation allowing references to documents or standards which legitimize the refusal of the request or suggestion by the customer. In two messages the A utterance is repeated in the post-sequence, one with a repeated R utterance. The post-sequence of the message by the technical expert includes a requestive utterance factually providing a source of information, a reference to a document legitimizing the refusal. Thus, in the category of messages primarily providing information, the post-sequence is the least loaded segment in terms of the frequency of use of the various communicative strategies under scrutiny in the macrosegment structure of messages.

In the category of the reply or follow-up **messages primarily doing repair work** the various strategies required for repair work and the subsequent negotiation process are placed in the core message, except for one instance of each of the following strategies: promising future action, expressing views, and providing information, all placed in the post-sequence segment. Six messages out of the seven are written vertically upwards, which evidences the highest frequency of management involvement in the interaction in the three categories of messages under scrutiny. Six messages out of a total of seven include more than one repair work strategy, which implies the negotiation aspect of repair work in the present messages. Most A strategies are placed in the post-sequence segment, evidencing the importance of dealing with the matter before explicating an utterance of apology or regret, which in most situations is a conventional expression of regret, or in two messages an expression of personal frustration. The pre-sequence segment in only two messages includes one strategy, one message containing a J strategy and one message an R strategy. Thus, the pre-sequence in the present category is the least loaded segment, conveying the importance of going straight to the point in the present repair work situations. The J and R strategies in terms of their placement in the macrosegments and their order in relation to the other strategies needed for negotiating problematic situations do not appear consistently in the same order in different discourse events. However, most frequently they are placed in the core message in between the other strategies of negotiation, with the exception of two messages. The placement of the J and R strategies also reinforces the negotiation nature of interaction where it is necessary to give justifications and target the responsibility to the right parties. Three messages are WPR messages, one message is a RPR message and two messages are 3rdPR messages, i.e. the external shipping company is responsible for the lost consignment.

Basing on the analysis of the 18 repair work messages with various primary communicative purposes under scrutiny, it can be maintained that the operative level staff sends messages primarily in discourse events involving routine repair work with low or lowish severity level in terms of financial ramifications or face or image threat for the parties involved. This is due to the operative level staff's position-derived daily tasks and duties to deal with documentation, in order to ensure successful processing of the various business transactions to satisfy the parties involved. Further, in routine repair work situations, the writer's personal or the writer's party responsibility is acknowledged readily with an explicit utterance of responsibility or bad performance, followed or preceded by an utterance of personal apology for the mishap or error caused. Of the messages including repair work and uttering apology or regret, all the six messages with the primary communicative purpose of providing information, all the five messages requesting for action or information, and two messages with the primary communicative purpose of doing repair work involve routine discourse situations.

The less routinized the repair work discourse events become, the more the management level staff gets involved in the repair work. However, the management level participates in interaction in six routine discourse events in the present data. Basing on this finding it may be suggested that the postulation by Zachary (1994) and Nantz and Drexel (1995) about the flattening of hierarchies and abolishing intermediary screens or traditional hierarchies between interactants in organizations, due to the introduction of electronic mail systems, holds true in the present data. Another difference between the routine and non-routine discourse events requiring repair work is the admittance to responsibility. In the non-routine situations the technical experts together with the management level negotiate the repair work process. The responsibility for the mishaps is shifted from the writer's personal responsibility to the writer's party responsibility or to a 3rd-party responsibility. Thus it can be maintained that the primary actors responsible for the problematic situations requiring repair work are other than the writer and the reader of the messages. Further, the apologies explicated in the non-routine repair work messages can be claimed to be utterances of regret rather than offers of genuine apologies, or they convey the meaning *I am sorry to tell you / I regret to tell you.*

However, expressions of apology by uttering the word *apology*, *sorry* intensified by either *so* or *very*, and repeated apologetic utterances in some messages can be suggested to fulfil the requirement for sincerity in that they offer genuine utterances of apology.

4.2.3 Messages not uttering apology or regret

The second main category of repair work messages in the present data, i.e. the repair work messages without an explicit utterance of apology or regret, are analysed in the present chapter. The two pervading communication strategies that are used in a variety of repair work situations and subjected to analysis in the present chapter are the explicit or implicit expressions of responsibility (R), including refusals of responsibility (ReR), and expressions of justification (J). Further, the present chapter deals with the communication strategies necessary when doing repair work through electronic mail messages. As pointed out in Chapter 4.2.2.3, the messages primarily doing repair work involve a varied range of necessary communication strategies, which facilitate the achievement of successful solutions to problematic situations through negotiation. The negotiation processes aim at ensuring satisfactory results from all the parties' point of view. Therefore, the communication strategies at work in the repair work processes under scrutiny include the following: providing information (PI), promising future action (PFA), informing of action taken (IAT), requesting (REQ) for information or action, and expressing views or opinions (EV), or giving suggestions (GS).

In line with the analysis of the repair work messages with an explicit apology or regret utterance, the present analysis focuses on the placement, order and the combination of the various communication strategies in the generic macrosegment structure of the 22 repair work messages which do not contain an expression of apology or regret. Although no explicit apology or regret is expressed, the primary communicative purpose of the 22 messages under analysis is that of doing repair work. No categorization similar to Chapter 4.2.2 is made. Instead, the aim is to suggest a 'strategic landscape', i.e. a macrosegment schema, visualizing the strategic links within and across the macrosegments as well as the various communication strategies in these messages. As suggested in Chapter 4.2.2, the sequential organization of the repair work messages created by the placement, order and combination of the various communication strategies seems to be an important factor in holding the interaction together. The pre-sequences and post-sequences include links to previous and future interaction and to the core message. These links establish and maintain coherence across messages and thus also discourse events. In the 22 repair work messages which do not utter an apology or regret, the communication strategies utilized in the core message share the consistency of the subject matter more intensively than in the 18 repair work messages uttering an apology, considering the frequency, placement and order or the communication strategies in the macrosegment. The pre-sequence in these 22 messages is much less used for communication strategies, the post-sequence is mainly used for requesting for action or information, expressing views and giving suggestions. Further, the linguistic utterances are more implicit than the utterances in the 18 routine repair work messages. Thus, the communication strategies and the linguistic utterances placed in the macrosegment of the 22 messages are more polypragmatic than in the 18 repair work messages with an apologetic utterance. Hence a different approach from that applied in Chapter 4.2.2.

Consequently, instead of presenting all the appearances of the communication strategies and their placement and order in the 22 messages under scrutiny, the present analysis assumes a more holistic approach. A summarizing table presenting a typical placement and order of the strategy appearances in the macrosegment structure is followed by a discussion on the general tendencies in the 22 repair work messages, in terms of the strategy placement, order and combination. Again, it needs to be pointed out that the placement and order of communication strategies in all the 22 messages are not those presented in Table 13.

The frequencies of the various communication strategies are presented in the same table to facilitate the discussion on their functions and to compare the conclusions with those arrived at when analysing the 18 repair work messages with an explicit an apology or regret utterance. Tables presenting the macrosegment structures of the 22 messages with all the appearances of the subsequent communication strategies are in Appendix 2.

4.2.3.1 Analysis of messages not uttering apology or regret

The primary communicative purpose of all the 22 messages analysed in this chapter is doing repair work, and the presentation of the macrosegments and the subsequent communication strategies, together with their frequencies in the 22 messages are given in one table, Table 13. Most messages represent interaction in non-routine discourse events from either of the two business partner's point of view, i.e. the supplier or the customer, since the subject matters concern either reported shortfalls or delays in deliveries, alleged defects or deviations in the material delivered, possible safety hazards in packing, or long-term delays in payments by customers. Further, there are messages in the present category which deal with problems due to dissemination of information to the MMC personnel and, consequently, to the customer. Thus, the corporate image is at stake in the present discourse events, even though the interactants' personal face concerns are also involved in some discourse events.

Repair work message (22) is a reply message by a Finnish management-level interactant to a British management-level interactant. The writer refuses responsibility message-initially by explicating the customer's responsibility and urges action by the customer in an assertive way message-finally.

Message (22) *B1 (First name), we cannot be responsible for 8+ tons cut to sheets and noticed that it is no good. It is a responsibility of a customer to stop production immediately after a couple of sheets. Had we processed this material we would have been able to do good commercial material from the coil. We do not have any use for the material. Also the invoice xxxxx due 15.10. needs to be settled on time/F2 (TIA)*

A frequency-based summary of the appearances of the various communication strategies is presented in Table 13. Thus, e.g. number 6 for the communication strategy of refusing responsibility in the core message indicates that there are altogether six instances of this function in these 22 messages. The frequency-based summary is presented, since the communication strategy order presented in Table 13 is applied in 16 messages out of a total of 22. Thus, there are fewer deviations in the order of the communication strategies in this category than in the category of the 18 messages uttering an apology or regret. The deviations in the order in the latter messages can be explained by the differing primary communication purposes of the messages.

The total frequency figure of the appearances for some communication strategies in Table 13 is higher than the number of messages analysed, since some strategies are repeated in several messages. For instance, in some messages there are recurring responsibility (R) and justification (J) utterances, or PI and EV utterances occurring consecutively.

Table 13. Macrosegments with frequencies of communication strategies in repair work messages excluding apology.

FREQUENCIES OF COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES IN MACROSEGMENTS	
Repair Work Messages Excluding Apology or Regret Utterance	
	Total Frequencies
Epistolary Conventions	
First name	4
Hello(,) Hi, Good morning First name/s	5
Pre-sequence	
Refer to Previous Communication/Enclosed Message	2
Provide Prospective Introduction	2
Core Message	
Refuse Responsibility	6
Provide Information	28
Inform of Action Taken	3
Express Views	17
Give Suggestions	3
Express Justification, Reason (H->S type)	19
Admit Responsibility, Bad Performance (S->H type)	9
Promise Future Action	4
Request for Action or Information	4
Post-sequence	
Provide Information	1
Request for Action or Information	7
Express Views	4
Give Suggestions	5
Admit Responsibility, Bad Performance (S->H type)	1
Promise Future Action	1
Epistolary Conventions	
Complimentary close	18
First name	16
First name and Family name	2
Three Letter Initials (TIA)	4

The messages in the category of repair work interaction not uttering an apology are longer and, consequently, the number of the communication strategies used in the core message macrosegment is higher than in the 18 repair work messages uttering an apology or regret. This is due to the fact that most messages utilize the straight-to-the-point approach thus making the core message macrosegment the most focused one of the three. Further, the non-routine nature and the subsequent high or highish severity level make it necessary for the writers to elaborate on the subject matter more than in routine, more straightforward situations where responsibilities are uttered readily with apology and justification utterances prior to or after them.

The problems of classifications and categorizations when ascribing the communication strategies, comprising utterances, syntactic sentences or sentence fragments or groups of sentences to a particular strategy category derive from the ambiguous and polypragmatic nature of the utterances. Lexico-grammatical elements together with typographical tools are used to facilitate the analysis, aided by contextualization cues and discourse-event-specific factors to categorize the communication strategies under their various types in the pre-sequences, in the core messages, and in the post-sequences. For the analysis of some messages, informants were interviewed (e.g. message (35) by F6, and messages (38), (39) and (40) to F14).

A sample analysis of three interrogative sentences and two declarative sentences in message (24) aims at visualizing the problemacy involved in the categorization of the communication strategies in accordance with their context-specific textual-pragmatic functions. Message (24) is written out in full in Appendix 1 on page 288. The polypragmatic nature of linguistic utterances is exemplified by message (24), written by the female technical expert F5. In the present data, there are two technical experts who use interrogative utterances that can be interpreted as double-purpose utterances, either as requesting for information or as making suggestions. There are three post-sequence initial interrogative sentences in message (24) by F5. The sentence *What is the application?* is categorized under the strategy of requesting for information, relying on the negotiation requirement postulation of repair work situations. The second interrogative sentence *Could they use the material for less demanding purposes?* may have two alternative interpretations. Instead of interpreting the sentence as an utterance requesting for information, a competing interpretation of a strategy of suggesting could be offered, independent of the use of the modal verb *could*, since the expert role vested on F5 in the present discourse event enables her to suggest an alternative use for the material. The reason for this is that the extent and form of an individual's verbal performances are directly related to the individual's level of power in an organization. A concept of 'speaker power', in the present situation enabled by the expert role of the interactant, helps explain why certain groups' verbal performances are similar, i.e. in the present data the two technical experts'. The interrogative form of uttering a suggestion in message (24) may be explained by the direction of communication, i.e. F5 is interacting vertically upward and she uses an indirect, mitigated utterance to give a suggestion not to impose on the reader's face. The third question *Are they able to slit the coils?* could equally well be categorized under the strategy of giving a suggestion. However, in the present context, due to the genuine interrogative nature of the first utterance in the post-sequence, the two subsequent interrogative utterances are similarly categorized under the strategy of requesting information, since interrogatives can be regarded as urges to reply, i.e. request to provide information. The two last utterances in the post-sequence, *We believe that the edge trop of the master coil was too steep. The coils would be OK after slitting.* are assigned under the strategy of expressing views. The utterance *We* *believe* serves the function of withholding F5's full commitment to the proposition, the modal verb *would* serving the function of withholding F5's certainty to the proposition in the message-final sentence, thus allowing the interpretation of expressing views. Similar discourse-event-specific factors have been considered when assigning communication strategies under various categories in the pre-sequences, in the core message, and in the post-sequences, in all of the 22 messages analysed in this chapter.

4.2.3.2 Summary

A total of 18 messages out of the 22 are written by Finnish interactants, ten messages by F5, three messages by F6, the two technical experts. Four messages are written by F2 and one by F9, both management level staff members. One message is by A2, an American operative level interactant, and three messages by B3, a British operative level interactant. The messages written by the MMC staff interactants can be categorized under messages doing repair work for a 3rd party, A2 doing repair work for a non-paying customer, and B3 doing repair work for a bank and non-paying customers. The involvement of management-level interactants indicates the higher severity level of discourse events in the second main category of repair work messages when compared to the messages with an apologetic utterance, assigned under the first main category. In addition, the responsibility relationships are more varied in the second category, including explicit third-party responsibility discourse events.

The approach of going straight to the point, i.e. the core message, without any pre-sequence communication strategies is the most typical strategy in the 22 messages. There are two references to earlier interaction or enclosed messages, and two instances of providing prospective introductions, compared to the 21 instances of different communication strategies used in the 18 repair work messages uttering an apology or regret. In the present non-routine discourse events, often requiring negotiation before concluding the matter, the straight-to-the point approach seems to be appropriate. The reasons are various. Firstly, the fact that there are no writer's responsibility (WR) messages abolishes the need to give justifications, to admit responsibility or utter an apology or regret message-initially, which is frequently done in the 18 messages with an apologetic utterance. Secondly, the routine nature and the consequent low severity level enable conversational and informal style resulting in the use of conversational turns and small talk in the pre-sequences in some of the 18 messages. Further, the 18 messages include initial messages, which impose a requirement of providing background information or some references to earlier communication in the pre-sequence, which is not necessary in the present 22 reply or follow-up messages which enclose the previous e-mail messages into the reply or follow-up repair work message.

Finally, it can be suggested that the high or highish severity level of the matter, involving interaction with the management level, influences the interaction in the present discourse events making the messages more well-thought-out in terms of their structure and organization. The management level staff, either Finnish or MMC, is involved in 20 messages, a fact reinforcing the severe nature of the discourse events. The involvement of management is made possible by the cc: option of e-mail systems, which also is an indication of flattening hierarchies and leaner organizations. On the other hand, the interactants involved in the present discourse events deal with recurrent situations according to their organizational or expert positions. F2 as the management level staff is in charge of negotiating the business terms, including prices and delivery times, as well as the problems in the quality of the materials delivered to the customer. Frequently, the messages reporting complaints by the customer are forwarded by F2 to either F5 or F6, the technical experts in charge of disseminating information about the production processed and the measurements and test procedures the materials have gone through before being delivered to the customer. Thus, the recurrent nature of the discourse events requiring the involvement of the relevant staff members emphasizes the deliberated structure and organization of the messages primarily doing repair work.

However, a competing explanation for some message structures may be idiosyncratic use. For instance, F5 applies a similar message structure of going straight to the point also in her repair work messages uttering a regret (e.g. messages 16 and 17), both messages primarily doing repair work. Thus, the primary communicative purpose can be interpreted to cause the similar message structure.

4.2.4 Discussion and comparison of findings

Contrary to the 18 repair work messages uttering an apology or regret, the 22 repair work messages under analysis here do not utter apology or regret, neither do all of them acknowledge responsibility, neither writer's party responsibility (WPR) nor 3rd-party responsibility (3rdPR). Further, there are no messages explicating or implicating the writer's responsibility (WR). Even though customer satisfaction is one of the core corporate values explicated in the group's corporate mission, it becomes evident in messages doing repair work that the supplier, the mill in Finland, has to prioritize the feasibility issues, which in this context can be suggested to be an element of supplier satisfaction. Thus, in some repair work situations, Finnish informants do not assume responsibility offhand, neither WR nor WPR. Instead, writers state the necessity of thorough test or measurement results, despite the fact that customers find complaints justified, i.e. customers think that problems are caused by the supplier's action. The approach resorted to by writers in such cases is in line with Hobbs' (1995) and Tyler's (1997) postulations, according to which the legal constraints and the danger of incurring legal liability in corporate communication may prevent writers from admitting to responsibility, and also from apologizing, and result in corporations offering justifications or explanations to restore the corporate image during repair work processes. The avoidance of explicit acknowledgement of responsibility and utterances of apology or regret may result in some readers experiencing the interaction as strategically ambiguous and non-transparent. The choice of this strategy may also be one of the reasons why MMC staff want to improve dissemination of information. However, it may be suggested that the corporate image together with individual image considerations prevent writers from admitting to responsibility, and thus refusing responsibility can be regarded as a face or image saving device for writers or the party they represent. The responsibility relationships may also be shared knowledge between writers and readers, which makes an explicit utterance of responsibility unnecessary. The non-personal nature of responsibility of the messages reinforces the severity level of the messages, again contrary to the 18 messages uttering an apology or regret, of which 50 % (9 messages) represent discourse events explicating writer's responsibility. In the 22 messages, six messages refuse the writer's party responsibility explicitly. Four messages explicate WPR, three messages explicate 3rdPR, and the remaining 9 messages implicitly refuse responsibility by referring to standards and documents for the approved procedures applied by the supplier in their production, testings or other procedure, actually providing information for the reader.

Thus, in the implicit responsibility discourse events the communication strategy of providing information serves as justification or accounts for not acknowledging responsibility before carrying out further investigations or testings. Informants' strategy of uttering justifications and accounts implicitly through providing information in the present data is in line with Trosborg's (1995:398) findings, according to which explicit justifications and accounts occur frequently in support of apologies. In the present 22 repair work messages apologies are not uttered, and consequently responsibilities are not explicated, which makes the interaction implicit, including the other repair work strategies, e.g. providing justifications and accounts.

On the other hand, in some messages, not explicating responsibility, the shared knowledge between the writer and the reader serves as an implicit tool for targeting the responsibility without uttering it.

The post-sequences have the same frequency of strategies as detected in the 18 repair work messages uttering an apology, the difference being in the strategies represented. In the 22 messages primarily doing repair work without an apology or regret, there are no justification (J) utterances in the post-sequence. All the 19 occurrences of the J utterances are placed in the core message where the subject matter is mainly dealt with in the 22 messages. The post-sequence in the 22 messages mainly functions as a request for action or information, an expression of views and suggestions. These future-oriented strategies linking the present messages to further interaction are all integral elements of the successful negotiation processes to solve the problematic discourse events requiring repair work in the present data.

Another difference between the 22 messages when compared with the 18 repair work messages with an apology or regret is the frequency of use of the strategies of expressing views or giving suggestions. There were two instances of the strategy of expressing views in the core of message (16) by F5, and one instance in the post-sequence in message (18) by F6, both representing the category of primarily doing repair work. No instances of the strategy of giving suggestions were detected in the other messages uttering apology. Expressing views, according to Searle (1976), is categorized under representatives (Levinson 1994:230) and is an utterance type that commits the speaker to the truth value of the expressed proposition. In the present work, the strategy of expressing views refers both to utterances explicating and implicating the writer's commitment to their truthfulness. This strategy category includes utterances of opinion, belief, understanding or judgement in relation to some aspect of the subject matter interacted. Giving suggestions is typically categorized under directives (e.g. Leech 1995:217) with less force of propositions than in directing communication strategies. When giving suggestions, the utterer expresses a plan or idea concerning the actions of others, and in some cases of the utterer too. Suggestions relate to possible courses of action, which may or may not be carried out. Suggestions can be categorized into hearer-directed, speaker-directed, group-directed, or outgroup-directed; the first three categories are represented in the present data. The linguistic utterances used to express views or give suggestions vary and are polypragmatic in the present data, which was visualized in the sample analysis of message (24). The frequent occurrences of the two communication strategies, expressing views and giving suggestions, indicate that they are integral for doing repair work in the discourse events under analysis. In some messages, the two strategies are so intensely intertwined that the identification of the primary strategy and the subsequent categorization does not happen without problems.

Basing on the present data, it can be suggested that the two technical experts in the present corpus, the female interactant F5, and the male interactant F6, use 'the e-mail arena' to initiate discussion, express views and give suggestions concerning the recurrent problematic issues they find important to be solved. The concept of 'the e-mail arena' refers to the multiple-addressee option offered by the electronic mail systems, which F5 and F6 utilize by sending their messages to several addressees and cc:ing the messages to an audience not necessarily actively participating in the interaction but who need to be aware of the present state of the matters to ensure efficient dissemination of information. Herring (1996) postulates that females have a tendency to modify their views by hedging. However, in the present data there does not seem to be significant difference in modification between females and males, and both seem to mitigate their utterances in order not to sound too imposing and to add to the tentativeness of their utterances inviting negotiation on the topics interacted. Further, due to their expert role and the subsequent expert power vested on them, both F5 and F6 seem to find themselves legitimized to explicate their views and opinions in an assertive way also to the management level addressees. However, both F5 and F6 seem to ensure that they make a distinction between views and facts. As to suggestions, in her messages to the management level interactants, often cc:ed to the Finnish management level interactants, F5 uses the explicit utterance *I suggest* or a more implicit *Let's* to function as conveying the idea that the management level in the last resort has the legitimate power to make the final decisions in the matters, after hearing her expert opinion or after getting her suggestion concerning the subject matter.

4.3 Messages including requestive utterances

The previous chapter concentrated on various aspects of repair work and the macrosegment structure of repair work interaction and the subsequent repair work strategies. In this chapter, various aspects of direct imperative form requests will be discussed first as examples of English language usage in electronic mail interaction, an allegedly new way of using language, in order to suggest some tendencies of variation and change in e-mail interaction when compared to traditional written business discourse. The discussion of requests will lead to a detailed discussion of the various forms and functions of requests as elicited in the 40 repair work messages under scrutiny in Chapter 4.4. The decision to include a detailed discussion on requests is seen adequate in the present work for two reasons. Firstly, there are intriguing postulations and hypotheses made, and recommendations given in research and business communication course books concerning requesting. Thus, the first aim is to discuss the tenability of the postulations and recommendations in the present context. Secondly, as became evident in the analysis of the macrosegment structure of repair work messages, requesting strategies constitute an integral part of repair work strategies, especially, but not only, in repair work interaction aiming at achieving negotiation and dialogue between interactants.

4.3.1 Directness and appropriateness

Requests can be placed on a continuum basing on their relative requestive or directive force. There are different syntactic categories available to utter requests, i.e. imperative, declarative, and interrogative, and they are all used in the messages under scrutiny for requesting purposes with or without interpersonal metadiscourse. The discussion on the use of direct imperative utterances in requests and the absence of interpersonal metadiscoursal elements to mitigate requestive utterances is found justified, since direct imperative utterances have traditionally been regarded as dispreferred forms violating the norms of especially written business interaction. However, normative business communication course books frequently fail to deal with contextual factors when banning the use of direct imperative forms. Contextual elements are analysed to suggest reasons for the use of the 'dispreferred' form in the present data to give insights into discussions e.g. in business interaction classes with business students. Business-interaction-related as well as non-business-interaction-related studies are discussed to give background to the postulations put forward in the present discussion. Examples from the whole corpus of 279 messages are given, not only from the 40 repair work messages, on which the present work focuses, since the whole corpus allows for a more extensive discussion on the requestive utterances, and consequently a discussion on the alleged change and variation developments in e-mail interaction when compared to traditional mailed, written business interaction.

In the present data, the use of the interpersonal metadiscoursal elements involving expressing face redress, e.g. modal verbs *can* and *could* with or without *please*, seems to be a more typical, i.e. preferred, unmarked choice made by default in expressing requests when compared with the use of the more economical direct imperative form with a performative verb which explicates the illocutionary force of the request in question. However, there are instances when writers have resorted to the direct imperative verb form with a period, and not with an exclamation mark or question mark, i.e. the bald on-record strategy introduced by Brown and Levinson (1987), a linguistic form that traditionally has been regarded as dispreferred, marked linguistic form in written business communication, since the direct imperative form is suggested to be an impolite, or even rude, utterance, violating the tact maxim by Leech (1995:104-110). (for 'marked' and 'unmarked' see e.g. Leech 1995:75-76, 101; and for 'preferred' and 'dispreferred' sequences see e.g. Levinson 1994:307-308)

The context in which direct imperative forms are used can be expected to provide some justification for their use. A typical discourse event for such a dispreferred linguistic choice is exemplified by a routinized situation in which the writer, a Finnish female, as part of her daily routine tasks, on her own initiative or as a response to a previous contact concerning the same topic, sends a number of similar messages to the same addressee, an American male, during the same day or at regular intervals containing a straightforward request to do something. The requested act can be said to produce a light burden on the addressee in terms of the weightiness of the writer's request; in Leech's terms (1995:123-124) it is costly neither to the addressee nor to the addresser. The requested act is typically a request to read a computer file for further information to enable the addressee for instance to fill in some specific documents or to receive further information for a business transaction to proceed as in the examples below:

See the database for comments.
Check the database for comments.
Check claims database.

Thus, the primary proposition of the requestive utterances above can be regarded as beneficial from the addressee's point of view, since it provides information for the addressee to facilitate his business transaction with the customer. On Leech's (1995) cost-benefit scale it is possible to place such utterances at the lower end of the continuum, and thus they can be regarded as more tactful, polite, than e.g. the utterance *Peel the potatoes.* in which the propositional content can be regarded as more costly, i.e. it requires more effort, in terms of time and physical strain, from the addressee, than in the above examples. Thus, one way of reasoning for the use of direct imperative forms, i.e. a face-threatening act expressed with no redress, is to resort to Leech's cost-benefit idea.

However, it can be questioned if the communicative function of the above messages is primarily requesting. Pragmatically, they can be understood as multifunctional utterances, since the utterance evidently includes the communicative purpose of informing the addressee that the writer of the messages has updated the computer files, something that happens on a regular basis, a fact which is known to both communicators, i.e. it is shared knowledge. The subject line in these messages is as follows: *(Customer name) claim*, which serves as an intertextual reference to shared knowledge concerning the customer claiming for something and the situation in which the claim has been submitted. As a matter of fact, it can be suggested that, basing on the shared knowledge of the purpose of the claims database, the writer of the messages cited above primarily informs the addressee that the information the addressee needs to proceed with the business transactions with the customers is accessible in the shared computer files, and the writer uses a linguistic form typically assigned to requesting messages, i.e. *See / Check the database.* Consequently, it can be claimed that the syntactic category of imperatives, or impositives in Leech's pragmatic terms, in these messages is used to pass information between the writer and the reader. Thus, the utterance is not by definition imposing or face threatening or impolite to the addressee and does not require the use of linguistic softening devices for politeness' sake by the writer. The recognition of this multifunctionality of linguistic forms, or nondiscreteness (a notion by Butler 1990:140, 151, 169, to refer to ambiguity in the modal arena), adds to the need to call for a comprehensive consideration of contextual variables in the analysis of the messages.

As stated above, the direct imperative form is not regarded as a conventional way of conveying requests in business interaction. It is regarded as dispreferred for its directness and the allegedly high degree of imposition and face threat involved in it from the addressee's point of view, traditionally interpreted as conveying an overt expression of authority and power which the writer is exercising on the addressee/s. In Fairclough's opinion (1993:222), the direct imperative form can be regarded as a breach of the code in terms of unilinear colonization, a code model for discursive practice. The code model assumes a static local order of discourse, and naturalized conventions that are normatively instantiated in practice, and practice is simply following the norms (Fairclough 1989:29, 1993:43, 68). Various written business communication course books warn against the use of imperative forms in requests. Guffey (1997:166), for instance, recommends the following requestive utterance: *Will you please answer the following questions about your payroll service.* According to Guffey, the request sounds like a questions but, as a matter of fact, "... it is a disguised command. Since you expect an action rather than a reply, punctuate this polite command with a period instead of a question mark." The only specimen documents with direct imperative forms without *please*, the reader-oriented courtesy subjunct (Quirk et al. 1985:569) in Guffey's book are direct sales letters in which the addressees are prompted to act in one way or another, usually in the closing paragraph (1997:277-283). Concerning the punctuation of the direct imperative utterances under analysis, a period is frequently used. Thus, it is evident that more real-life examples should be exposed to discussions in business interaction classes.

The addressee of the messages with direct imperative forms discussed above, an American male, tends to use straightforward, reduced language in his messages. Typical request messages for information written by him are comprised of interrogative sentences, such as the following: *What is the difference between HB30 hardness scale and HRB? Thanks.* with the word *Hardness* on the subject line, *or Shall I sell for second choice?* with *(Company name) Claim Inv xxxxx* on the subject line, with no greeting or name to sign off the message. The two messages with an interrogative sentence by the American male can be interpreted as requests for more information, and the way they are expressed in their contexts can be regarded as reflecting familiarity between the informants and informality of the contexts. Thus, it can be suggested that the Finnish writer of the direct imperatives has adopted a similar mode in her interaction with this specific addressee to match the interaction style he uses. Further, it can be suggested that the use of straightforward, reduced language forms has become a shared value mutually appreciated by the two informants in their routinized interaction, and the use of highly transparent imperative form is regarded as appropriate in these particular contexts, where a compact and clear reference to the source of information needed, i.e. claims database, is explicated. If this suggestion is accepted, context-specific idiosyncratic language use can be argued to be one explanative factor for some direct imperative forms in the present data.

In addition to being regarded as an appropriate form in the contexts described above, it may be further suggested that the direct imperative form without the typical negative politeness device *please* is experienced as polite enough for the contexts, satisfying interactants' shared expectations. A certain interactional balance between clarity and non-coerciveness is necessary for any utterance to count as polite and that indirect, ambiguous and unclear constructions, e.g. off-record indirect requests, may make it difficult for the addressee to interpret the utterance, making readers waste time in the interpretation process and thus making the request rather impolite (Blum-Kulka 1987:145). Blum-Kulka's suggestion is in line with Grice's (1975) Cooperative Principle and its interaction with the Politeness

Principle. In today's male-dominated workplace it is assumed that social interaction is secondary, and transactional interactions and referential meaning predominate (Holmes 1995:195, 214, 217). Consequently, Holmes suggests that especially men regard linguistic politeness to be verbal 'frippery' and thus unnecessary in contexts where 'real' interaction takes place between apparent equals (Holmes' quotes). Holmes, however, questions the viability of the suggestions that the simple, direct and even confrontational style favoured by usually men is the most effective way of interaction in many contexts. The writer of the direct imperative forms referred to above is an operative level Finnish female, which shows that not only males use direct, unhedged utterances in their interaction, as is indicated by Holmes (1995) on many occasions. Further, direct imperative forms are not indications of power relations in the present data, since the addressee is a management level American interactant.

Blum-Kulka's (1987) and Holmes' (1995) assertions about the viability of direct forms can be regarded to be valid to some extent in some contexts in today's hectic business world, at least in electronic mail interaction, which is a medium used to interact issues of urgency in recurrent situations with high frequency of message exchange. Also Kasper (1990:205-206) refers to a research (Holmqvist and Andersen, 1987), according to which the need for truthfulness, clarity and brevity overrules face and politeness concerns in highly task-oriented discourse. Writers of direct imperative utterances in the present data seem to interpret politeness in terms of what is acceptable and appropriate, and economical, in each context. Basing on the discussion on direct imperative utterances above, it can be suggested that some writers in real-life business contexts seem to be ready to reject equating politeness with specific communicative purposes, or lexical items, or syntactic constructions, which is exemplified in the present analysis of direct imperative forms by the omission of the conventional politeness marker *please*, typically used to redress the face-threat of requesting. Further, it has to be remembered that the discourse in the present work represents intra-company interaction, interaction between colleagues. This may explain the use of direct language in part.

4.3.2 Power and roles intertwined

One aspect of social context, here termed as the corporate context, are power relations and power roles of the informants at each stage of the business transactions carried out by them, since power relations and roles are generally suggested to influence the rhetorical use of language. Relative power in interaction is defined as the degree to which an interactant can impose his own plans and self-evaluations (face) at the expense of other interactant (Brown and Levinson 1987:77). B/L postulate that the weightiness of face-threat will reflect the degree of imposition involved. Further, the degree of face threat involved in any linguistic expression will be determined by the power differences between interactants, their level of familiarity, and the degree of imposition involved in the content of the speech act (Brown and Levinson 1987). Leech (1995:126) refers to power as authority of one interactant over another.

In her study of requests in written professional business discourse, Yli-Jokipii (1994) relies on a trichotomy in terms of power relations, i.e. positive power (+P), negative power (-P), and neutral power (±P). The writers and readers of messages in Yli-Jokipii's data act either as buyers or sellers of the merchandise, and the party possessing the merchandise demanded has more power over the other party. According to the social exchange theory (Roloff 1981, Shelby 1991), the buyer possesses the merchandise demanded and has power (+P) over the seller, since the buyer has the purchasing power or custom of the product; consequently the seller has less power (-P). The macrolevel power refers to the static transactional kind of power quality embedded in the organizational role of the interactants, and the dynamic kind of power appears on the microlevel in interaction in individual situations. Neutral power (±P) is reserved for situations in which the power quality is not relevant or identifiable on the macrolevel (ibid. 1994:52-54)

The power relations in the present study need to be approached from a somewhat different angle, since the parties interacting are not directly in the same relationship as described in Yli-Jokipii's treatment. In the present work, the Finnish office or mill staff represent the seller or the supplier party, whereas the overseas office staff, working in the Metal Marketing Companies (MMCs) as part of the group of companies, have an intermediary role between the seller and the customers. Thus, in the present context the power qualities differ from those described in Yli-Jokipii's approach.

It is suggested that a factor which affects interpersonal communication, whether written or spoken, is the status of the communicators, and the notion of status is defined in social terms containing two aspects: inherent status and relative status (Bargiela-Chiappini & Harris 1996:636). Inherent status is gained by a person holding a powerful position, and it is acknowledged by all members inside and outside the business community. The relative status is a result of the power that an individual can exercise in an inter-personal relationship, or that a department of group commands in an inter-group relationship. Relative status provides its holders with less power and clout than inherent status since it usually does not operate beyond corporate boundaries. Depending on contextual factors, both aspects of status may co-exist in the same person, or group, and they can be activated simultaneously, or they can be mutually exclusive. Intra-organizational relative status relates directly to the hierarchical distance between two interactants, whereas in intra- or inter-departmental interaction recognition of relative status is dependent on social and psychological variables, such as personality, experience, knowledge, etc. The writers conclude that "it is all the more relevant that each individual act of written (and spoken) communication be viewed as contextualized, goal-oriented and potentially aimed at defining the relational space between two parties. This space, characterized by pragmatic features which are realized in written, or spoken interaction, becomes increasingly more variegated as the relationship between the two interactants develops, with background knowledge becoming more important and requiring more retrieval work in order to interpret what is taking place." (ibid. 1996:638-639)

As suggested above, the linguistic expressions chosen by interactants may encode e.g. the relative power relationship between participants e.g. in requesting situations. Bargiela-Chiappini and Harris (1996) hypothesize that in business interaction participants use politeness strategies reflecting the writer's own relative, and possibly inherent, status, and which also acknowledge the reader's own relative, and possibly inherent, status. Further, they predict that the power relationship between the writer and the reader together with the weightiness of the writer's request affect the degree of politeness recorded in the texts, although not necessarily at the same time and in the same measure. Bargiela-Chiappini and Harris maintain that the weight of imposition is determined not only by the weightiness of the request, which itself may trigger face-saving strategies, but also by interpersonal factors such as power and relational distance. According to their findings, *please* with imperative request type appears in routine documents, and in their data this type is interpreted as reflecting the lack of social distance between the writer and the reader. Further, in their analyses, in requests proper no relevant correlation emerges between the use of *please* and variation of power and distance, and the degree of imposition of the request overrides status considerations as a motivation for linguistic politeness. Their finding that there are syntactic, lexical and structural variation in the texts studied suggests that writers use a variety of request strategies in different situations, which supports a probabilistic view of the pragmatic principles of language. Bargiela-Chiappini and Harris (1996:658) conclude that their findings seem to support the non-additive model of politeness (Holtgraves & Yang 1992) insofar as power, status, social distance and imposition are not independent variables across a variety of request types, thus confirming previous experimental work (Craig et al., 1986) and questioning Brown and Levinson's (1987) cumulative influence model. Basing on the present data it can be suggested that e.g. in less routinized requesting messages, in which the scope of the request expressed is wider in terms of cost and benefit to the writer and the addressee/s and in which the potential reward is high, both the inherent and relative power statuses are conveyed in the utterances used to make requests. However, it can be argued that the relative status of interactants, displayed by e.g. their experience, knowledge and expertise, has more importance when expressing views and giving suggestions than in requesting situations in the present repair work interaction. The influence of writer's and addressee's statuses will be discussed when analysing the use of interpersonal metadiscourse in Chapter 5.

In some discourse events, informants can be placed on divergent levels in the corporate hierarchy, e.g. the Finnish female representing operative level and the American male representing management level referred to in Chapter 4.3.1. Thus, they are not interacting as peers or equals in terms of their hierarchical position. However, the expert role held by the Finnish female informant elevates her power status and authority, both inherent and relative in Bargiela-Chiappini and Harris' (1996) terms. The level of familiarity between the two informants is high, thanks to their regular interaction, not only via e-mail, which may be regarded as motivation and justification for the direct imperative forms, with or without *please*, in the context. The use of the direct imperative request utterances without *please* may be motivated by the fact that the interactants experience themselves as peers or equals, and see no need to use demarkers of authority, or to soften the direct imperative utterances by the use of the politeness word *please*. Grundy (1995:128, 135) refers to the relationship between interactants, including power relationship, mutual familiarity and solidarity, and asserts that one of the functions of language is to imply the most appropriate speaker-addressee relationship.

4.3.3 Variation and changing discursive conventions

The immediate origins and motivations of discursive change in relation to social and cultural change lie in the problematization of conventions for interactants. The problematizations have their origins and motivations in contradictions (Fairclough 1993:96). This approach can be applied to the interpretation of the direct imperative utterances under analysis here. It can be suggested that there is a contradiction in forwarding a short routinized, urgent message to the addressee in the most economical way, and at the same time in the most appropriate way from both interactants' point of view. By using imperative forms, the writer expresses the proposition directly, baldly on record, and thus saves the reader's time in the interpretation and inference process of the utterance. In a business discourse carried out through electronic mail, directness, in the present work interpreted as representing economical use of language and as appropriate for routinized discourse events, may produce a dilemma to writers who are conscious of the traditional business communication conventions. They have to solve the problem between the traditional convention of being polite and not being too direct and imposing toward the addressee, on the one hand, and the new convention of being clear and economical in interaction, on the other hand. The new conventions referred to are e.g. some electronic mail etiquette guides published and consulted for the present work (Angell & Heslop 1994, Outokumpu Concern E-mail Etiquette 1995, Ruokakangas & Matthan 1999). Writers of direct imperative forms have made subjective decisions of crossing boundaries, combining conventions of written and conversational use of language, by drawing on conversational conventions of interaction instead of conventions of written interaction. In oral interaction between persons of equal status and high level of familiarity and not involving a high degree of imposition, direct imperative forms in requests seem to be generally regarded as appropriate, acceptable forms of interaction in the present data. Also, a point needs to be made that the communicative function of some of the direct imperative forms is that of providing information, not that of requesting primarily.

Direct imperative forms in the present data can be suggested to represent a local order of discourse, since the use of the direct imperative forms is mainly limited to routinized contexts requiring interactants to carry out tasks defined clearly by corporate hierarchy. The local order of discourse and the subsequent decision making process are referred to as synthetic personalization, a simulation of private, face-to-face discourse in public mass-audience discourse, which can be linked to the spread of conversational discourse from the private domain of life into institutional settings (Fairclough 1993:98, 219). The discussion on the influence of advertising discourse on business interaction points out that advertising discourse resorts to conversational language, such as the direct imperative (e.g. Yli-Jokipii 1994:159). Fragmentation is a term used when referring to discourse norms and conventions being more open to conversational style (Fairclough 1993:223). Fragmentation seems to result in a relaxation of the regulation of discursive practice, and the notion of negotiative model emphasizes that where conventions can no longer be taken as given, there is a consequential need for interactants to negotiate, almost always implicitly, which discourse elements are to be drawn upon (Fairclough 1993:223). A competing explanation for the use of direct imperative forms by some writers under analysis, and thus for the suggested change in the discursive practice, is interference from various guide books and computer software manuals. Analysis of messages conveying other primary communicative purposes than requesting by some writers in the present data show that they use direct imperative forms when indicating sources of information in named guide books or standards, or when giving straightforward instructions to addressee/s of how to use the software under discussion, parts of message texts being copied from guide books or standards or software user manuals. If this explanation is accepted as one source of change in discursive practice made possible by the communication medium, the main motivation, instead of trying to be conversational, is probably the need to be clear, concise and economical. Further, this explanation discards politeness considerations.

It is suggested that which forms are conventionalized depends on culture-specific norms and values, which may change over time, just as language changes (Sifianou, 1992). Sifianou uses the notion of 'utilizable' form or strategy, which refers to the idea of a form being appropriate for the situation. The change Sifianou refers to can be regarded as having to do with the change in the interaction culture in business, e.g. etiquette and norms, influenced by the introduction of the new communication medium, the electronic mail system, and several other factors. Thus, it can be argued that the specific strategy a person chooses at a particular point to convey interactional practices will depend on various factors (Kakavá, 1997:185). The conversational contract approach (Fraser 1990:234) makes a primary distinction between implicated politeness and anticipated politeness. It is argued that in a given interaction, each party brings an understanding of some initial set of rights and obligations that will determine, at least for the preliminary stages, what the participants can expect from each other. During the course of time, or due to a change in the context, it is possible to renegotiate the conversational contract: the two parties may readjust just what rights and what obligations they hold in relation to each other (Fraser 1990:232). Referring to the analysis of the direct imperative forms in the present data, Fraser's conversational contract approach in terms of the renegotiation of the rights and obligations seems to be applicable in analysing interaction between informants in various discourse events. Further, the co-existence of inherent and relative power status in requesting interaction seems to be negotiated during different stages of interaction processes in various discourse events, the interactants operating within chains of roles with changing roles and power status in the sequences of interaction.

To conclude, it can be suggested that the contextual factors, the renegotiated statuses and authority of the informants and the subsequent power relations, the informants' high level of familiarity with each other, the frequency and recurrence of interaction on similar topics, i.e. the routinized discourse events, and the experience-based established way of interacting with each other via e-mail concerning the routinized topic, among other things, can be regarded as motivations for the use of direct imperative forms in the routinized discourse events in the present data. Further, it can be suggested that the use of direct imperative forms, sometimes modified by *please*, has become a conventionalized, mutually valued and perceived as appropriate and utilizable linguistic form to express requests between informants, due to their experience in e-mail interaction with each other. Thus, the direct imperative forms are in line with the belief and value system conventions of the speech community in question in electronic mail interaction. It can be assumed that informants have at least an implicit understanding of what is regarded as appropriate and polite, or inappropriate or impolite, linguistic behaviour in each discourse event. The direct imperative form has been categorized as an impolite (Brown and Levinson 1987) or a rude (Leech 1995) linguistic form to express requests. These postulations can hardly be regarded as tenable in the present context, since it is difficult to find reasons for informants to be impolite or rude, especially knowing their linguistic competence, including pragmatic competence of some informants using direct imperative forms. All writers have been exposed to the use of English as a language of interaction in their long professional careers. The use of direct imperative forms is not an uncommon form of requesting in Finnish business interaction, and thus the use of direct imperative forms may also be explained as a transfer phenomenon in the present data realized by Finnish informants, which neither can be regarded as a reliable explanation due to the informants' linguistic competence. Further, also native writers in English use imperative forms in routinized requests. Consequently, it can be concluded that it is both the societal and individual attitudes that motivate the informants' choice of linguistic expressions in the occasions discussed above.

The following message is addressed by a British management-level male informant to a Finnish operative-level female informant. The message is cc:ed to one Finnish female and one London office female member of the staff, both operative level informants.

Subject: (Customer company name)
I have entered a new claim. (First name) advise if you want me to visit - problem is flatness and they say they cannot decoil flat.

The above message is an example of a multiple-addressee message in which the actual requestee, the person who is asked to do something, has been named to explicate the expected actor. The above message shows that direct imperative forms to explicate requests are used also by native writers of English in the present data in routinized requesting situations. In the example above, interaction takes places vertically downward. However, direct imperative forms are used in interaction in all directions, in horizontal as well as in vertically upward and downward interaction. Thus, it can be suggested that in interaction between native English writing informants and Finnish informants writing in English, the use of direct imperative utterances without modifying devices is regarded as appropriate usage in conveying routinized requesting communicative purposes. Further, it is not interference from the Finnish business usage, since also native writers of English use it. It is argued that it is the context of interaction in a broad sense that allows for the use of direct imperative utterances.

However, the above type of maximal economy through the use of imperative forms by which the writer utters only the proposition to be conveyed is not predominant in the present data, and there is variation in the forms of requesting utterances, as exemplified below:

Please check the mill comments.
Line Inc. asked if the MD temp could be +3 / +12?
Please advise

The politeness word *please* is included, and in the latter example an indirect interrogative sentence with a question mark conveying a request for information is used to emphasize the requestive force.

On Fraser's view (1990:233), the use of *please* is an example of an utterance, similarly to the use of *Sir* as a title or respect, which in virtue of its meaning encode speaker intention to convey deference. In the present analysis, the use of *please* can hardly be interpreted as conveying deference, since it is used frequently in interaction between equal informants with hardly any need to convey deference. Further, the use of *please* as used in the example above in *Please advise* is a typical message-final utterance to reinforce the requestive force of direct or indirect requestive utterances, *please* functioning as a conventional, routinized politeness utterance. Thus, it is suggested that in routinized requesting messages with or without pre- or post-sequences, *please* with a direct imperative form functions as a request marker, conventionally polite, to mitigate the force of direct imperative verb forms.

4.4 Forms and functions of requestive utterances in repair work messages

The present chapter is devoted to analysing the forms and functions of requestive utterances as elicited in the 40 repair work messages under analysis. Chapter 4.2 concentrated on the analysis of the sequential, macrosegment structure as well as the order of various communication strategies in the repair work messages, including messages with the primary communication purpose of requesting and messages with requestive utterances. In the ensuing analyses of the repair work messages, the focus will be on the forms of the requestive utterances as well as the functional properties of utterances categorized as requests. By default, the structural realizations of requests are imperative and interrogative clauses, including modal-initial clauses. The present treatment includes interrogative forms, which can be understood as elicitations for a verbal response. However, for instance in real-life business interaction, the structural variety in requestive utterances is more versatile. Consequently, in the analyses to follow, reasons for including declarative clauses into requestive utterances will be discussed to justify the categorization resorted to in the present chapter.

The requestive utterances in the repair work messages have been divided into two categories for the present analysis, i.e. direct requestive utterances and indirect requestive utterances. Henceforth the notions of 'direct requests' and 'indirect requests' will be used for brevity. The category of direct requests is identified primarily basing on the lexico-grammatical properties of the utterances, but semantic, or functional properties and the contextual environment together with the extra-discourse components have been utilized to identify the primary function of each utterance in its context of use. Thus, references to contextual factors will be made in the analyses of especially indirect requestive utterances, in order to give pragmatic justification for the postulations made of the requestivity of the utterances categorized as requests. Further, paralinguistic aspects will be included into the present analysis through the discussion of the use of punctuation in utterances suggested as indirect requests, especially the use of the exclamation mark, question mark and period.

It can be argued that categorization systems and stages are of secondary importance when compared to the actual analysis, even though decisions of categorization always influence the analysis itself. The present categorization is a tool-kit for analysing requests and it is justified by the suggestion that the functional properties of direct requests in terms of the expected response by the reader are similar, i.e. direct requests function as requesting for action by the reader, except for those which function as providing authoritative sources of information for readers. The functional properties of indirect requests as to the expected or likely responses are more varied, and context-derived or extra-discourse factors are needed for the interpretation of the pragmatic force of utterances. The use of interpersonal metadiscourse, in terms of the functions it serves in different contexts in requestive utterances, will be discussed in Chapter 5.

The 18 messages in which an apology or regret is explicated, i.e. messages (1) - (18), are typically written in discourse events in which the writer explicates responsibility, i.e. the writer's responsibility, the writer's party responsibility, or a third-party responsibility. Consequently, the messages with an utterance of apology or regret more often provide an instant solution for the problem or the mishap, and there is not as much need for negotiation as in messages written in discourse events in which the writer neither explicates responsibility nor utters apology or regret. The inclusion of an apology or regret typically implicates that there is no need for a dialogue concerning the issue interacted between the informants. Thus, the 18 repair work messages with an explicit utterance of apology or regret for the problem or mishap interacted are more routinized in nature as compared to the 22 repair work messages excluding an utterance of apology or regret, which typically require or expect dialogue or negotiation between the parties, in order to find solutions for problematic situations. All the 22 repair work messages not uttering an apology or regret, i.e. messages (19) - (40), have the primary communicative purpose of doing repair work. It can be suggested that requestive utterances in repair work messages primarily doing repair work without an utterance of apology or regret aim at dialogue which in Halliday's (1985:68–69) approach refers to an interaction involving the exchange of a commodity, in this case exchange of information. Further, Halliday (1985) maintains that the essential determinant in distinguishing the functional properties of utterances is the expected or likely response by the hearer and its discretionary alternative.

It has to be pointed out here that the notion of 'routinized' in its present usage refers to the repetitive, recurrent nature of mishaps or problematic situations, as a result of which the informants have a shared understanding, shared knowledge, of the established procedures of managing the situations for the satisfaction of the parties involved. Thus, the notion of 'routinized' does not mean to imply that the informants would have underestimating attitudes concerning the seriousness of the situation. According to this logic, a 'routinized' discourse event may involve a high severity level, as well as face-threat to some of the parties involved.

Repair work messages uttering apology or regret

Repair work messages from (1) through (5) have the primary communicative purpose of **requesting** either for action or for information. The five messages all include at least one requestive utterance. In the present treatment in certain contexts, interrogative utterances are interpreted as functioning as indirect requests for information. Interrogative clauses, or questions in semantic terms, include modal-initial interrogative utterances that are assigned a formulaic status, or a status of an idiom, in business interaction (see e.g. Clear 1987:65, Yli-Jokipii 1994:149).

The primary communicative purpose of repair work messages from (6) through (11) is to **provide information**. Two messages in this category include utterances that lexico-grammatically can be categorized as requestive utterances but which pragmatically serve other functions. Contextually, the lexico-grammatical imperative utterance in message (10) can be interpreted as primarily functioning as providing a source of information for the reader, i.e. *For further details, please refer to Document xxx.* The utterance in message (8) is a standardized, conventional utterance of apology, *Please extend my apologies to all concerned*, functioning as a statement expressing sympathy for the reader and other parties concerned. Strictly speaking, this utterance is a fuzzy borderline case in that it includes a request for action, since the reader is explicitly asked to forward the writer's apology. However, it can be questioned if the reader will act as an intermediary between the writer and the parties concerned to forward the apology. In the present pragmatic analysis, neither of the two utterances is categorized as requestive utterances.

Repair work messages from (12) through (18) primarily **do repair work**, and four of the seven messages include a requestive utterance. However, the grammatically requestive utterance in message (14) functions as conveying an apology in a standardized, conventional way by *Please accept my apology.* Consequently, the utterance is not categorized as a requestive utterance.

Repair work messages not uttering apology or regret

In the 22 messages with the primary communicative purpose of **doing repair work** without an utterance of apology or regret, there are utterances such as *Please check the database.* in message (27), *See sections xx in message* (29), *See appendix 1.* in message (32), and *Please, read XXXX* in message (37). Lexico-grammatically these utterances are direct imperatives, i.e. requests for action. However, their pragmatic function in their context of use is to provide readers with further information in the discourse events in which readers have forwarded complaints or requests from customers, and writers do not find the complaints or the requests justified. Thus, the utterances function as references to sources of authoritative information, and it can be suggested that writers use the references to sources to support their assertive statements and to improve their credibility when rejecting the complaints or requests intermediated by the reader, or when encouraging readers into negotiations concerning the issues. Consequently, in the present analysis the four utterances discussed above are not categorized as requests, due to contextual factors. The brackets in Table 14 indicate the exclusion of the four utterances.

The table below presents the occurrences of the various requestive utterances in the 40 repair work messages with various primary communicative purposes. Messages from (1) through (18) include an utterance of apology or regret, whereas messages from (19) through (40) do not utter apology or regret. The requestive utterances, detached from the original messages, are listed under each message in the order of their appearance in the messages. The other communicative strategies and their order of appearance in messages (1) - (18) are displayed in Tables 10, 11, and 12 in Chapter 4.2, and those for message (19) - (40) in Appendix 2.

The functions of the various utterances categorized as requestive utterances and the justifications for the categorizations will be discussed in more detail in Chapters 4.4.1 and 4.4.2. The chapters provide some specimen messages or extracts from messages as targets for sample analysis to visualize the approaches into interpretations and to validate the analysis. A more in-depth analysis of some utterances will be included in the analysis of the functions of interpersonal metadiscourse in Chapter 5, in order to avoid overlap in analysis. The discussion on direct requests is compact and it focuses on the specific functions of direct requests in the 40 repair work messages. The discussion in Chapter 4.3 included the whole corpus of 279 messages and requests in them.

Table 14. Requestive utterances in repair work messages.

	DIRECT REQUEST	INDIRECT REQUEST
1 Repair work messages uttering apology or regret		
Messages requesting for action or information		
Message 1		*I need to get a credit issued...*
		..., but I have to get a credit issued...
	Please get a credit issued...	
		...the price should of have .xx not .xxx
		The credit should be around $xxx.xx

Message 2	*..., so please have credit xxx voided.*	
Message 3	*... please send to PR.*	*... you should do those changes.*
Message 4		*Can you please make an additional surcharge...*
Message 5		*Can you advise which coil number and if we set it up for all coils ...*

<u>Messages providing information</u>

Message (6) - (11) No occurrences of utterances functioning as requestive utterances.

<u>Messages doing repair work</u>

Message 15		*Is it possible to change the draft date again -*
Message 16		*Was this the first time when the customer experienced loose or broken banding? ...* *Do you know if there has been any safety hazards because of the problem?*
Message 17		*If you print the same certificate now, it will show x.xx % C.*

2 Repair work messages not uttering apology or regret

<u>Messages doing repair work</u>

Message 20		*I suggest the missing ones will be added to...*
Message 21	*Please formulate an answer to...*	*Obviously we should consider remedies...* *..., so let's consider them later.*
Message 22		*Also the invoice xxxx... needs to be settled ...*
Message 23		*... I think either (First name) or (First name) should deal with him.*
Message 24		*What is the application?* *Could they use the material for less demanding purposes?* *Are they able to slit the coils?*
Message 25		*Let's take the material back.*
Message 26		*Where did they measure?*
Message 27	*(Please check the database.)*	
Message 29	*(See sections 16, 17, 18 and 19 ...)*	*Is the customer of ... saying that ...?* *What were the results?*
Message 31	*Please contact the insurance company.*	
Message 32	*(See appendix 1.)*	
Message 33		*I suggest we accept the claim.*

Message 34		*It was not quite clear if the same material was retested or a similar material of another coil - you said just "same operation".*
Message 37	*(Please, read xxxx ...)*	
Message 38		*I wonder if something should be sent from the mill as I don't seem to be getting any joy!*
Message 40		*... and we both think that I should write the managing director a letter informing him that we were charged £xx for their cheque, £xx of that amount because of their mistake.*

The number of requestive utterances using imperative forms, all with the politeness word *please*, totals five. As pointed out above, the lexico-grammatical requestive utterances used in messages (27), (29), (32) and (37) are interpreted as functioning as providing further information for readers. Thus, they are not counted as requestive utterances in the present treatment. The utterances interpreted as functioning as indirect requests for action or information total 27. Reasons for the supremacy of indirect requestive utterances in terms of the frequency of occurrences will be suggested in the following chapters.

4.4.1 Direct requests

Direct imperative forms as elicited in the whole corpus of 279 electronic mail messages with different primary communicative purposes, without or with the politeness word *please*, were discussed in-depth in Chapter 4.3 in order to suggest some postulations concerning variation and changing discursive conventions in the use of electronic mail requestive utterances when compared to traditional business requests in terms of conventions applied by and recommendations suggested to business professionals. The postulations made in Chapter 4.3 acknowledge the assumption made by other research that the imperative forms are regarded to stand for a rational discourse strategy which is attributed to informal discourse events involving a high degree of familiarity between the interactants (Yli-Jokipii 1994: 151, with reference to Kasher 1986:109-112). The present chapter concentrates on the analysis of direct requests as elicited in the repair work messages.

As indicated in Table 14, the five direct requests are all in the form of *please* + direct imperative verb form urging the reader for action. Three of the utterances are used in repair work messages including an utterance of apology or regret, with the main communicative purpose of requesting for action, i.e. messages (1), (2), and (3). The interaction in these discourse events takes place between operative level peers, and the discourse events represent routine situations, since documentation is the topic of discourse. As suggested earlier, the informants share knowledge of the established procedure to manage such situations, and the direct imperative requestive forms are used to express the actions needed to rectify the error. The politeness word *please* is used to ensure the conventionally appropriate stance in writer's responsibility peer-to-peer interaction, since such communicative situations in the present context, i.e. requesting in routinized situations between peers, can be regarded as involving a lower degree of FTAs as compared to requests made in less routinized requesting situations and between non-equals.

In the present data, the rhetorical structure of the message in which the direct requestive utterances are used, i.e. messages (1), (2), and (3), seems to be representative of the type of recurring communicative situations where the author's core communicative goal is to request the addressee to do a routine task to make sure that the transactions proceed in the most efficient and effective way from both the writer's and the addressee's point of view as well as from the customer's point of view. Situations allegedly become routinized when informants interact frequently on a regular basis concerning recurring communicative purposes and goals. Thus, the expected response, action, i.e. compliance, by the reader, is also shared knowledge between informants. The structure or stretch of such requestive messages seems to be similar; messages tend to be from two to three sentences long, the first or the first two sentences giving the essential background information backed up by the subject heading also stating either the core proposition or naming the customer or organization the matter concerns, and one of the message-final sentences either explicating or implicating the illocutionary force of the utterance, i.e. requesting. Message (31) is an example of a requestive message resorting to this structure. The reply message (31) does not include an apology, but includes an utterance of responsibility and justification, i.e. third-party responsibility. Message (31) represents upward vertical interaction in a routine situation, which is conveyed by the structure of the messages and the assertive utterances used in the message:

Message (31)

To: A1
cc: F3
Subject: Re: (Customer company name) xxxxx/xx, heat xxxxx-xx
This is a transport defect and therefore an insurance case. Please contact the insurance company.
Rgds F5 (First name)

The direct requestive utterance used in message (21), which is displayed in Appendix 1, is written in management-level horizontal interaction, and it appears in the post sequence of the message. The message admits writer-party responsibility and gives a detailed account of the delay in the core message, excluding an utterance of apology or regret. Allegedly, the writer does not find apologizing necessary, since the message is addressed to a British management-level informant who is to intermediate the core message content to the customer, made explicit by the utterance *Please formulate an answer to (Customer company name).* Again, the politeness word *please* is used to secure the conventional appropriateness of the direct requestive utterance.

It can be concluded that in repair work discourse events, direct requestive utterances are used in both horizontal and vertical interaction in situations to request action in recurrent and, consequently, routinized situations. Informants use direct imperative forms, mitigated by the use of *please*, to urge action that is in accordance with the established procedure for each problematic situation, and thus the expected reaction, compliance, by the reader is shared knowledge between informants. In such discourse events, the use of direct imperative requestive utterances improves the efficiency of interaction by being explicit and transparent lexico-grammatically, which facilitates the interpretation process by readers. Basing on a tentative survey of other messages with various primary communicative purposes in the present data, the use of direct imperative requestive forms in other messages seems to be in line with their use in repair work messages.

4.4.2 Indirect requests

In the present chapter, a total of 27 occurrences of indirect requestive utterances will be divided into lexico-grammatical sub-categories for their analysis. Contextual factors as well as extra-discourse-event factors will be discussed to give justification for the inclusion of the various utterances into each category.

4.4.2.1 Modal-initial interrogatives

It can be maintained that when using sentences as utterances, it is not their truth value that determines what they mean so much as whether we understand what they are used to do. Sentences have their formal properties, e.g. interrogative sentences are used to ask question, but they also have their functional properties, e.g. modal-initial reader-oriented interrogative sentences as utterances are typically used to express requests in business interaction. According to this logic, the utterance *Can you advise which coil number* is syntactically a question about the addressee's ability to give advise concerning something named in the message. However, in the present business context, it can primarily be regarded as functioning as a request for information. For instance, Grundy (1995:98-99) supports such interpretation by stating that it is not just asking questions all interrogative sentences are used for; they can be used indirectly to give orders, or to make assertions, or to express requests.

In messages (4) and (5), which both utter an apology in a writer-responsible discourse event and primarily request for action in order to put the matter right, the reader-oriented modal verb *can* functions as expressing a request for action and information, i.e. *Can you please make an additional surcharge invoice for cert. xxxxx.*, and *Can you advise which coil number and if we set it up for all coils on all specs or just a trial on one order.* respectively. Categorically interpreted, modal-initial interrogative sentences expect a *yes* or *no* reply. However, the interrogative utterances in the two messages are interpreted as conventional, idiomatic and unmarked request forms for business requests. The interrogative utterance is used to make a request by the modal verb *can*, which is regarded to convey the writer's conventionally appropriate attitude, by asking a question rather than by stating or commanding in a writer-responsible discourse event. It expresses an attempt to face redress, which is enforced by the use of the hedging politeness particle *please* in message (4) in operative-level peer-to-peer interaction. Message (5) represents upward vertical interaction. However, the absence of *please* can hardly be explained by the direction of interaction. Rather, it can be suggested, basing on a tentative survey of other messages including requests in the present data, that the absence of *please* in such discourse events is regarded as appropriate usage and does not indicate the power relations between the informants.

The two modal-initial requests in messages (4) and (5) do not appear with a question mark but with a period, which may function as reinforcing the requestivity of the two interrogative utterances. A competing explanation is that the use of the period is not conscious, since the choice of the utterance *Can you please* + verb + object, independent of punctuation, used in routinized situation in some messages in the present data, can be assumed to be validated by the mutual knowledge between the participants of the politeness or rather of the appropriateness strategies for such discourse events in the present business setting. It can be suggested that communicative intentions become mutual contextual knowledge to discourse participants and help in choosing contextually appropriate ways of expression.

Yli-Jokipii (1994:147) refers to this formal category of interrogatives as modal-initial utterances. The preverbal politeness particle *please* conventionally explicates that the function of the interrogative utterance is that of a request, and not that of a question inquiring the addressee's ability or willingness to perform the act. In the present context, the absence of *please* in the modal-initial interrogative utterance does not obscure the interpretation of the utterance by the reader as a request for information. An adequate interpretation of the utterance by the reader as a request is facilitated by the preceding contextual information and contextual cues, i.e. embedded text sequences, such as *I believe you sent me information about that*, and *My problem is I deleted the message*. It is suggested by several research that the use of the preverbal politeness particle *please* in declarative and interrogative utterances makes the requestivity explicit (see e.g. Grundy 1996:96), and thus facilitates the addressee's process of interpretation. Also Markkanen (1985:91) maintains that interrogatives can be assigned a directive function by attaching *please* to them, as with any declarative sentence. In its function of conveying politeness, the preverbal position of *please* seems to be the most common position for *please* in the present corpus when considering also the messages not analysed.

There is one occurrence of the modal *could* initiating an interrogative sentence in message (24), *Could they use the material for less demanding purposes?* The utterance with the pronoun *they* is customer-oriented and it can be regarded as functioning as an inquiry if it is possible for the customer to consider other uses for the material. A more relevant interpretation is that the utterance functions as suggesting that the customer find alternative uses for the material. Also this interpretation expects a verbal reaction from the reader, i.e. it is a request for information. It is suggested that *could* can be regarded as more polite than *can* in modal-initial interrogatives to express requests (e.g. Brown and Levinson 1987, Leech 1995). Basing on the use of *can* and *could* in modal-initial requests in the present corpus, it can be suggested that the two modal verbs seem to be used interchangeably, not meant to denote different levels of politeness, since the same writers seem to be using all of them independently of the contexts.

Due to the limited number of messages analysed here, no generalizations of the frequency of modal-initial requestive utterances are attempted. However, the low number of modal-initial requests in the present repair work messages may imply a more general tendency in business interaction, i.e. there are only two modal-initial indirect requestive utterances, both by American informants, among the 32 requestive utterances under analysis. The overall frequency of modal-initial requests also in Yli-Jokipii's (1994) corpus is quite low, and the British groups seem to favour the modal-initial requests to a greater degree than the American groups, with no occurrences by the Finnish group. Yli-Jokipii suggests that the use of modal-initial requests indicates attitudes towards the directness, or indirectness, of discourse in the business register. In addition, modal verbs can be regarded to allow for greater finesse in communication, subtle indications of the attitudes of the writer and of the writer's opinions regarding the proposition. In business communication, modal-initial requests are traditionally regarded to represent conventional, routine, polite requests. The occurrences in messages (4) and (5) appear in routine situations.

In Yli-Jokipii's interpretation the more frequent use of modal-initial requests by British writers compared to American writers in her corpus may indicate that the American business writing is more open for innovations and individualism (1994:165). In the present repair work messages, an explanative factor for the low frequency might be that especially Finnish writers, i.e. management-level and technical expert writers, are willing to encourage readers into dialogue in the less routinized repair work discourse events. This willingness is expressed by stating suggestions, which are interpreted as indirect request forms in the present analysis, or by non-modal-initial interrogative utterances, i.e. urges to respond, when requesting for more information. Yli-Jokipii (1994:165) suggests that the reason for the absence of modal-initial requests in the Finnish group may result from the fact that Finnish business writing tends to be formal and prone to utterances not requiring a personal tone, which a modal-initial request would entail. The use of non-modal initial interrogatives enables writers to avoid using personal tone. As a matter of fact, only one interrogative sentence in the present data, in addition to the two *can you* utterances, addresses the reader directly, i.e. *Do you know if* in message (16). However, in the present data, the frequency of modal-initial requestive utterances is higher if all messages with various primary communicative purposes were included in the analyses, with the occurrences of the modal verbs *can*, *could* and *would* with or without *please* in modal-initial interrogatives, as exemplified in the following messages or extracts of messages:

> *Could you please check and tell me whether..., ... but could you confirm.*
> *Can you please allocate on the system. (First name) can you please reissue ...*
> *Would you pls check what has happened..., but pls return.*

As to the use of punctuation, basing on a tentative analysis of requesting utterances in the present corpus, it can be suggested that the use of a period and a question mark is rather random, and consequently it can be questioned whether writers' choices between a period and a question mark are conscious or unconscious. In the contexts in which the requesting utterances are expressed, punctuation is evidently not the most decisive factor in giving an utterance the expected force. Instead, writers seem to rely either on structural or linguistic devices, and/or contextual factors but also on extra-contextual elements to explicate or implicate the pragmatic force of utterances.

4.4.2.2 Non-modal-initial interrogatives

Several researches refer to the conversational nature and style of electronic mail language and interaction. In the repair work messages under scrutiny, the frequent use of interrogative utterances functioning primarily as requests for further information can be regarded as a conversational feature. In this category, there are interrogative utterances representing both the class of interrogatives expecting a *yes* or *no* reply, and the class of WH-questions which can be referred to as an open-ended category of interrogatives. Contextually, both classes are treated as elicitations for a verbal response more elaborate than *yes* or *no*.

There are three interrogative utterances in messages (15) and (16), both including an utterance of apology and primarily doing repair work. A total of six interrogatives appear in messages (24), (26), and (29), with one occurrence of *could* in message (24) analysed with modal-initial utterances above. The four latter messages exclude an utterance of apology and have the primary communicative purpose of doing repair work.

Non-modal interrogatives are used to convey requests for information in different discourse events. Message (15) is about documentation procedure and represents operative-level peer-to-peer interaction. The utterance *Is it possible to change the draft date again - I know we can't change the invoice.* is lexico-grammatically an interrogative, and in the present treatment, the utterance is interpreted as functioning as a request for a verbal response, i.e. further information by the reader. The writer explains the background to the issue, and the requestive interrogative utterance is expressed message-finally before the utterance of apology, *Sorry for the inconvenience.*, which implies that the writer expects the reader to act, i.e. to provide information, since there is no other requestive utterance in the message.

Further, punctuation, i.e. a period and not a question mark, implies that the pragmatic force of the interrogative utterance is not that of a question.

The reply message (16) represents upward vertical interaction and implicates writer's party responsibility. The two message-initial interrogative utterances, with question marks, function as requests for further information concerning the matter, *Was this the first time when the customer experienced loose or broken banding?, Do you know if there has been any safety hazards because of the problem?*. In message (24), there are three post-sequence interrogative utterances functioning as requests for further information to enable the writer to look deeper into the matter. The core message explains the test procedure carried out, together with the test results acquired. The interrogative *What is the application?* is an explicit request for responsive information. The functions of the second interrogative requestive utterance *Could they use the material for less demanding purposes?* were discussed under modal-initial interrogatives in Chapter 4.4.2.1. The third interrogative utterance *Are they able to slit the coils?,* lexico-grammatically inquires the customer's ability to slit the coils. Contextually, however, the writer expects the reader to forward the customer's views and information to the writer, and thus the utterances are interpreted as functioning as requests for information. In the reply message (26), also representing upward vertical interaction, the writer places the utterance *Where did they measure .xxx?* in the middle of the core message, after having reported the acceptable test procedure and the test results. The utterance functions as requesting the reader to intermediate more specific information concerning the customer's measuring results. The positioning of the interrogative requestive utterance before an extract from a standard, which supports the writer's test procedure reported message-initially, functions as questioning the reliability of the customer's procedure simultaneously, and adds to the assertiveness of the writer's statements. The utterances with the pronoun *they* and the noun *the customer* make the intermediary position of the MMC staff between the Finnish staff and customers explicit.

Message (29) is a reply message and represents interaction between operative level peers, but also management level is involved, since the message is cc:ed to two management level informants and a technical expert. The core message is a detailed account of test procedures, with references to standards and manuals defining acceptable test procedures, in order to convince the reader and the customer of the rightness of the test results in a certificate submitted by the writer's party. One reference to a source is made by a direct imperative form without *please*. The post sequence of the message comprises two interrogative requestive utterances, both of which primarily request for a response by the reader. Further, the first requestive utterance, *Is the customer of ... saying that ...?,* functions as questioning the justification of the customer's inquiry and complaint, simultaneously expecting a verbal response from the reader. The details concerning the required and acceptable test procedures add to the assertive, questioning nature of the utterance. The second question, *Where did they measure?,* primarily requests for additional information.

The eight non-modal-initial interrogative requestive utterances discussed in this chapter are explicit and clear enough in their contexts of use to enable the reader to interpret them as requests for further information or response. Message (15) includes an interrogative utterance functioning as a request for action. The seven utterances requesting for information, by their explicit or implicit references to customers, expect readers to consult customers for the information requested for by the writer. Thus, the contextual transparency of the interrogative utterances may justify their categorization as requests for information. As to the contextual factors, electronic mail interaction allegedly aims at brevity and economical language use. The use of interrogative utterances, such as *Is it possible to change*, instead of conventionally or structurally more explicit requestive forms, such as *Please advise me if...*, or *Can / Could / Would you (please) advise me if it is possible to change ...*, adds to the economy of language use by simple and compact utterance structures.

Further, it can be suggested that interrogative utterances are typical forms of oral discourse to request for information, to acquire participants' opinions, to receive responses to suggestions, etc. In electronic mail interaction, in which also other linguistic elements of oral discourse have been detected, writers' aim at using conversational, informal elements may explain the frequent use of non-modal-initial interrogative requestive utterances in repair work messages primarily doing repair work, aiming at creating dialogue between interactants. Further, seven occurrences of a total of eight occurrences in this sub-category are produced by one Finnish informant. Consequently, an additional explanation for the use of non-modal-initial interrogative requestive utterances is that they represent idiosyncratic use in the present data. The eight occurrences of non-modal initial interrogatives account for 25 % of a total of 32 requestive utterances, a frequency that clearly exceeds the corresponding frequencies in Yli-Jokipii's (1994:152) research varying between 0 % for the Finnish group and 12 % for the British text book group. The high frequency in the present data may be due to the nature of the media of interaction, i.e. electronic mail, and the type of messages, i.e. repair work messages, many of which encourage readers' verbal feedback. As pointed out above, electronic mail discourse allows for the use of informal, conversational language, and interrogative sentences are typical of oral discourse in which an immediate verbal response is expected. Further, the option for an instant reply in writing is available for interactants. These factors can be suggested to explain the high frequency of non-modal-initial interrogative utterances in the present data. Again, the limitations of the present data, i.e. the low number of messages, needs to be remembered.

4.4.2.3 Declaratives

The sub-category of declarative sentences includes utterances used to express suggestions explicitly or implicitly. The linguistic forms discussed here are the verb *suggest*, the expression *let's*, the modal verb *should*, and the *if*-clause. Basing on contextual and extra-contextual factors the more implicit utterances expressing suggestions are interpreted as functioning as the writer's urges to the reader to participate in dialogue, i.e. they are interpreted as requests for a verbal response. The linguistic forms under scrutiny in this chapter will be analysed in more detail for their interpersonal metadiscoursal functions in Chapter 5.

Explicit and implicit suggestions

Suggest

In the present contexts of use, two utterances explicating the performative verb *suggest* are interpreted as functioning as requests for a response by the reader, i.e. the writer invites the reader to participate a dialogue concerning the issue interacted. In the reply message (20), in interaction between management-level informants, the message-final utterance *I suggest the missing ones will be added to xxxxx-xx to read 103 pcs?* follows the writer's information concerning a delayed delivery. Before finalizing documentation for the delivery, the writer wants to receive the reader's opinion of the matter. The request for the reader's opinion or information is expressed by the utterance with the verb *suggest*. The requestive interpretation of the utterance is reinforced by the question mark at the end of the utterance.

Message (33), also explicating the verb *suggest*, represents upward vertical interaction and is written by the female technical expert concerning a complaint by a customer as follows: *Thanks for the sample. The defect is an old over-rolled scratch. The source is not known. I suggest we accept the claim.* In the present context of use, the utterance receives its requestive interpretation from the fact that the technical expert, independent of her expert power, is not in a position of making the final decision concerning the matter. The message is cc:ed to her Finnish superior, who has the final say in the matter. Thus, in the present context, the utterance with *suggest* can be interpreted as functioning as a request for a response by the two management level persons as addressees of the message.

Let's

Message (21), exchanged between two management-level informants, uses the utterance *let's* + verb to suggest a course of action, simultaneously expecting a response from the reader/s. The utterance with the expression *let's* is not explicit in its requestive force and, consequently, contextual determinants are resorted to in interpreting its primary functions in its contexts of use. The post-sequence initiates by a direct requestive utterance *Please formulate an answer to*. The message-final sentence includes two utterances referring to the same idea of requesting the readers opinion or further information, i.e. *Obviously we should consider remedies for future but I do not know what they think of this situation, so let's consider them later.* The message-final utterance *so let's consider them later.* reinforces the idea of welcoming a response from the reader, i.e. the sentence functions here as a request for the reader's views and opinions.

Message (25) is a message reporting that a customer is rejecting a delivery, unless they are granted a discount price, and it is written in upward vertical interaction by the female technical expert to an American management-level informant, cc:ed to a Finnish management-level informant. The female technical expert's reply message is as follows: *Let's take the material back. We would like to have the material sold as prime.* Similarly to the utterance in message (33) with the verb *suggest*, the technical expert does not possess the authority to make the final decision in the matter. Thus, the utterance *Let's take the material back.* can be interpreted as functioning as a request for a verbal response by the two management-level informants who are the addressees of the message and the decision-makers.

Should

In the present treatment, the more implicit end of the requestive continuum is represented by the utterances interpreted as suggestions functioning as requestive utterances, expecting readers' verbal response by giving their opinions or views, or further information intermediated from customers. Thus, these suggestive utterances function as welcoming readers' participation in discourse concerning the issues interacted. The modal verb *should* in its epistemic reading functions as expressing suggestions rather than expressing obligation in the following discourse events under analysis. The occurrence of should in message (21) was discussed above, under *let's*.

There are two instances of a reader-party–oriented use of the modal verb *should* in suggesting a course of action, i.e. *I think either (First name) or (First name) should deal with him.* in message (23), and *I wonder if something should be sent from the mill as I don't seem to be getting any joy!* in message (38), both written by an American operative-level female informant to a Finnish management-level female informant. The two persons named in the utterance in message (23) are Finnish management-level employees, and in the present context it can be proposed that the operative-level employee finds it appropriate to suggest a course of action rather than request it directly. In message (38), the agentless expression *if something should be sent from the mill...!* can be interpreted to urge the reader to react verbally to the writer's inquiry of opinion. The sentence final exclamation mark functions as adding to the requestive force of the utterance.

In message (40), exchanged between the same interactants as message (38) in a similar situation, the writer-oriented utterance *and we both think that I should write the managing director a letter informing him that we were charged £xx for their cheque, £xx of that amount because of their mistake.* The expression *we both think that I should write* can be interpreted as functioning as suggesting a verbal response by the reader, i.e. acceptance or refusal of the suggestion. Contextually, this seems to be a relevant interpretation, since in both discourse events, i.e. message (38) and message (40), the Finnish management-level female informant gave an instant positive and encouraging response to the two messages.

If-clause

In message (17), the utterance *If you print the same certificate now, it will show x.xx % C.* is interpreted as functioning as a suggestion to the reader to do something, i.e. pragmatically it can be interpreted as requesting for action, due to contextual factors. The message replies to a message reporting a flawed certificate. The writer admits the error and utters regret for the error in the certificate. The reasons partly explaining the error are discussed in the message, and the utterance *If you print the same certificate now, it will show x.xx % C.* functions as an urge to the reader to print out a new, updated certificate to replace the outdated one. The utterance is multifunctional, which is expressed by the conditional *if*-clause, since the utterance allows the writer to provide information simultaneously as she expresses a request for action.

Modal verbs of obligation

Three different messages are discussed as examples of different discourse events as to their direction of interaction, severity level and responsibility relationships.

Message (1) is written by an American operative-level informant to her Finnish peer about documentation. The message abounds in modal verb expressions of varying degrees of obligation which are used to request for action by the reader. Further, in the post sequence, there is one direct imperative request for action. In order to facilitate the understanding of the analysis of the requestive utterances in the message, it is written in full below:

Message (1)

To: F1
cc:
Subject: Invoice xxxxxx
Hi F1 (First name)
I need to get a credit issued because of an overcharge. I made the mistake....sorry. I was supposed to ship xx (.xxx) material to (Customer's first name), but instead I shipped xx (.xx) material. The customer decided that he needed the material that I sent (lucky for me), but I have to get a credit issued because of the price difference.
Please get a credit issued for item 4.......the price should of have .xxx not .xx. The credit should be around $xxx.xx.

The modal verbs *need to* and *have to* are used with agentless verb forms *get a credit issued*, and in both utterances the modal verbs express root modality, or obligation. Even though the writer uses writer-oriented expressions *I need to* and *I have to*, it is shared knowledge between the writer and the reader, implicated by the agentless *get a credit issued*, that the reader is supposed to do something, i.e. the expected response by the reader is to issue the credit according to the writer's instructions. The high-value modal verbs of obligation convey social obligation, which is shared knowledge between the interactants; both know that the credit is to be issued to solve the problematic situation. The primary request for action, to issue credit, is expressed by three different utterances, by one direct request expression and two indirect request expressions. It can be suggested that the two utterances using the modal verb *should* are used as 'sub-request', or secondary-level and tertiary-level requests. Allegedly, the utterance *the price should of have .xxx not .xx.* conveys a request that the right price be included in the credit document, and the utterance *The credit should be around* implies a request that the credit amount be checked by the reader before issuing the credit document. Otherwise it is difficult to interpret the use of the evaluative adverb *around* in this context.

The modal verb *need to* is used in its agentless form in message (22) in management level interaction, involving high severity level, as follows: *Also the invoice xxxxx due 15.10 needs to be settled on time/F2.* The writer refuses responsibility for the mishap caused by the customer, and the message includes the writer's refusal of taking the material back. It is shared knowledge between the writer and the reader that in such events the customer is responsible for paying for the material. Thus, the use of the impersonal modal verb utterance of obligation is made possible by the shared knowledge, and supposedly also by the legitimate power held by the writer, and it functions as the writer's urge to the customer to pay, i.e. it is a request for action.

The sentence including the modal verb *should* in message (3) is as follows: *I could have changed them today, but as I didnt know if xxxx mm width is slit edges or mill edges, for that reason you should do those changes.* Message (3) represents operative-level peer-to-peer interaction in a discourse event to inform the reader about neglect by the writer, for which the writer apologizes message-initially. The utterance with the reader-oriented modal verb *should* functions as a request for action and *should* expresses obligation. *Should* is used to mitigate the request, since the reason for requesting the reader to act is the writer's neglect. Thus, the indirect request expressed by *should* simultaneously diminishes imposition on the peer-reader.

Other declarative sentences

In the post sequence of the reply message (34), a declarative sentence allegedly functions as a request for further information from the reader. The message-final sentence, after a tentative explanation of the test procedure, welcomes the reader's specification of some wording in his initial message. The message-final sentence *It was not quite clear if the same material was retested or a similar material of another coil - you said just "same operation".* may explain the tentativeness of the core message, and it can be suggested that the responsibility for the tentative nature of the message is partly shifted to the reader by the message-final sentence.

4.4.2.4 Summary

Direct imperative forms, modal-initial interrogative utterances, non-modal-initial interrogatives, and some declarative sentences are categorized under requestive utterances in the present chapter for the analysis of their functional properties. In the present analysis, a number of interrogative utterances are interpreted as requests for action or information, even though the subject of the clause is not the reader (cf. Yli-Jokipii 1994:164). This is due to the intermediary position the Metal Marketing Company (MMC) informants are holding between the customer and the Finnish supplier, which was exemplified in messages (16) and (24). The MMC informants, i.e. American, British, Dutch and French informants, operate as intermediaries between Finnish writers and non-Finnish customers, including discourse events of both horizontal and vertical interaction. Thus, some requestive utterances expressed by Finnish informants expect physical action or verbal response by the reader, some utterances expect the reader to intermediate a request for action or a request for information to customers. Some of the messages presuppose the MMC staff to forward views or information from customers to Finnish writers. Sometimes customers are explicitly referred to as *the customer* and *they*, or, alternatively, implicitly by agentless structures, such as *Also the invoice ... needs to be settled on time.* In some discourse events, e.g. *What were the results?,* intra- or extra-discourse contextual cues facilitate the interpretation of interrogative utterances as requests for information.

Direct imperative forms are used by Finnish writers to request for action by the reader in horizontal and upward and downward interaction in writer-responsible and third-party responsibility discourse events. The majority of requests uttered by Finnish writers are indirect requests, using mainly non-modal-initial utterances and suggestions, such as *I suggest*, or *let's*, to welcome readers' opinions and views or information from customers, in order to maintain or launch dialogue or negotiation process concerning issues that require repair work. The present work does not include the analysis of 'voice', i.e. who is speaking at each time, and who is spoken to at each time. However, an analysis of 'voice' would be an interesting aspect to study in the future also in the present corpus.

Direct request forms are used by MMC informants in operative-level peer-to-peer interaction to request for action concerning documentation in writer-responsible discourse events, i.e. they express requests for issuing, voiding and changing documents, since it is the Finnish informants' task-related duty to manage documentation. Indirect request forms are more frequent, and they are used to request for action by the reader, or for a verbal response by the reader. The requestive utterances by MMC informants also include suggestions in upward vertical interaction and the suggestions function as requests to Finnish readers to provide their opinions or information concerning the suggestions made.

To conclude, the requestive utterances expressed by MMC informants are more routinized in that they frequently concern a problematic issue or a mishap that is solved if Finnish readers' expected responses, either physical or verbal reactions, comply with MMC writers' request. The requestive utterances expressed by Finnish informants frequently presuppose readers' joining in or maintaining a process of negotiation by making sure that all the three parties, the Finnish mill staff, the MMC staff and customers, have an opportunity to participate, on the one hand, and are ready to contribute to dialogue or negotiation, on the other hand, in order to secure solutions satisfactory for all parties.

5 ANALYSIS OF FUNCTIONS OF INTERPERSONAL METADISCOURSE

5.1 Introduction

The treatment of interpersonal metadiscourse elements in the present repair work messages relies on the functional approach elaborated by Halliday (1973) in seeking to consider and identify the role of the various linguistic utterances in different discourse events in terms of their functions in building meaning. In messages doing repair work, a typical feature of interaction is a tendency to seek agreement and maintain cooperation between the parties represented by the interactants. Interpersonal metadiscourse is understood to be represented by the expressions conveying the writer's role in the situations in which the text functions, and the writer's hopes for the kinds of interpretations and subsequent responses the readers might make (cf. Vande Kopple 1985). Further, interpersonal metadiscourse is taken to be interactional, evaluative and expressive of the level of personality of the discourse in making readers aware of the author's attitudes toward both the propositional content and the readers of the text, thus enabling the creation of an author-reader relationship (cf. Crismore et al. 1993, Hyland 1998a, 1998b). Nikula (1996:95) points out that the increasing interest in involvement ties in with the more general interest in language as a mediator of affect, or emotive use of language. Further, emotive language enables speakers, in addition to conveying factual information, to express attitudes and feelings through language. Nikula uses the notion of 'involvement' as a sign of emotional connection and engagement that the writer feels in the discourse event towards the subject matter and/or the other participants in interaction (ibid. 1996:97).

The previous chapter was devoted to the analyses of the macrosegment structures and the subsequent communication strategies or textual-pragmatic functions in the 40 repair work messages under analysis, with a special focus on requestive utterances. The discussion on selected discourse event components was included, in order to elaborate on the contextual and situation-specific factors allegedly influencing the language use. The focus was on the placement, order and combination of the primary communicative purpose of the messages in the generic message structure, in relation to the elements of repair work strategies suggested by Meier (1995).

The macrosegment structure framework was presented, in order to facilitate the analysis of the functions and strategic uses of interpersonal metadiscourse in the 40 repair work messages, since the aim of the present analysis is to discuss the interpersonal metadiscoursal occurrences and their functions within, and in combination with the various macrosegments and the subsequent textual-pragmatic functions of the messages. The notion of 'strategic use' presupposes that writers regulate the use of interpersonal metadiscourse according to situational needs and constraints. The present approach is based on the postulation that it is essential to describe the discourse event components and the general strategic landscape, or macrosegment schema, of linguistic utterances, in order to be able to acquire insights into the polypragmatic nature of linguistic utterances. The context-dependency means that the interpretations of interpersonal metadiscourse are arrived at by making use of clusters of different linguistic, typographic and contextual features. The present treatment is supported by e.g. Enkvist's (1975) approach, according to whom some linguistic expressions or textual sequences can be interpreted as metadiscourse only in relation to another linguistic expression or text sequence. Also Crismore and Farnsworth (1990) acknowledge the situation-specific and text-type-specific uses of metadiscourse. Verschueren (1999:143) refers to the idea of building utterance clusters and points out the negotiability aspect in them. He maintains that all principles guiding the organization of utterances at the discourse or suprasentential level are also involved in the building of utterance clusters, and discourse topics are chosen and developed progressively, resulting in a rhetorical structure which consists of identifiable relations between the utterances of which the cluster is composed (ibid. 1999:143).

The functional categorization of the interpersonal metadiscourse, which in the present study of intra-corporate repair work interaction includes also linguistic devices used in the main discourse (see pages 20 and 40), was presented in Table 3 in Chapter 2.1.4, including examples of the linguistic items realizing each function. The analysis of the interpersonal metadiscoursal elements recognizes the polypragmatic nature or multifunctionality of the linguistic elements under scrutiny. This is visualized in Table 3 by the reappearance of some linguistic structures in the examples section. Thus, a linguistic utterance may have different functions in different discourse events on the one hand, and one linguistic utterance may have several functions, i.e. primary and secondary, in the same discourse event, on the other hand. However, each utterance with its context-specific interpretation conveying the primary function appears only once in the table. This "fuzziness" or indeterminacy causes overlap between the functional categories, i.e. there are linguistic expressions assigned to one category, in accordance with the primary function, that include meanings associated with the other. Some utterances are discussed under several functional categories in the analysis part in this chapter, in order to visualize the polypragmatic nature of utterances on the practical level. Thus, a discussion on the more implicit, or subtler, uses of interpersonal metadiscourse embedded in the messages is included. For instance Swales (1990) refers to multifunctionality and subsequent classification problems, due to the difficulty of establishing boundaries of definition. In some contexts, interpersonal metadiscoursal elements and propositional content are intertwined, causing problems in assigning the various polypragmatic elements into discrete categories. In order to alleviate the categorization problem, a discussion on various discourse-event-derived interpretations of the linguistic realizations of interpersonal metadiscourse will be included. For instance, the conditions of appropriate and conventional language use, central to successful interaction in the business arena, are considered in the analysis. In her division of pragmatic force modifiers into implicit and explicit, Nikula (1996:51) refers to Östman's (1986, 1987) suggestion that a distinction between the explicit and the implicit in language is of primary importance in pragmatics. According to Östman's (1986:25-26) argument a linguistic expression can be given a truth-conditional meaning only with respect to the explicit choices it manifests. Implicitness goes beyond literal meaning, and accounts for non-truth conditional aspects in language use (Nikula 1996:51). In Nikula's (1996:53) treatment, explicit modifiers are transparent in that they indicate quite clearly the speaker's attitude to the message that s/he, for example, wants to make reservations regarding its validity or preciseness. Implicit modification is more directly related to the speaker's attitudes and relationship to the addressee.

The rhetorical functions of interpersonal metadiscourse elements are the basis for the present categorization. Further, the categorization of the interpersonal metadiscourse presented in Table 3 acknowledges the explicitness principle of the linguistic elements in their contexts of use in that the categorization is based on what appears to be the primary function of the linguistic elements in the specific contexts. On deciding the primary function, both explicit linguistic utterances, i.e. lexical and syntactic means, and implicit elements, including discourse-event parameters, together with graphical elements, i.e. punctuation and typographical marks, are used to support the interpretations arrived at.

As pointed out earlier, context-specific factors have been utilized to shed light on the more implicit, subtler functions of the interpersonal metadiscoursal elements when assigning them under the various functional categories. Among the context-specific factors are such discourse event parameters as the primary communication purpose, the nature of topic, e.g. the severity level, the writers' positions and roles and their subsequent tasks and duties, the frequency of interaction and the resulting familiarity level. In addition to the discourse event components listed above and discussed in Chapter 3.2, such questions as what is regarded as conventional, appropriate language use in each discourse event, what is regarded to be shared knowledge between the interactants to enable the use of implicit expressions, or what are the other explicit utterances in the surrounding message chunks that make the meanings of the interpersonal metadiscourse utterances more explicit will be addressed. The linguistic elements functioning as interpersonal metadiscourse in the present analysis can be individual words, e.g. *Sorry.* and *Thanks.*, phrases, whole sentences or clauses, sentence or clause fragments. The graphical language includes e.g. periods, question marks, exclamation marks, and capitalization.

The terms pre-sequence, core message and post-sequence in the text below refer to the division of the 40 repair work messages into the five macrosegments as elicited in the present data and discussed in Chapter 3.4.1 and depicted in Table 7. The five macrosegment categories are (1) Epistolary Conventions, such as greetings; (2) Pre-sequence; (3) Core Message; (4) Post-sequence; and (5) Epistolary Conventions, such as complimentary closes and names.

5.2 Express affective values and attitudes

Interpersonal metadiscourse elements showing the writer's attitudes toward the propositional content constitute a category typically labelled as attitude markers (e.g. Vande Kopple 1985, Crismore 1989, Crismore et al. 1993, Hyland 1998a, 1998b, Louhiala-Salminen 1999). Crismore et al. (1993:53) include the interpersonal metadiscourse expressing the writer's attitude toward the readers into attitude markers, thus allowing a wider coverage. By expressing attitudes toward the content or the reader/s, the writer can convey judgements of importance, obligation, surprise, agreement or disagreement. These elements will be under analysis in Chapter 5.2.3. The present analysis of interpersonal metadiscourse initiates with a discussion of the functions of the explicit utterances of apology or regret, i.e. utterances with the words *apology*, *regret*, *sorry*, and *unfortunately*. These utterances convey the writer's affective values, i.e. regret toward the reader or the third party involved, or offer a sincere apology for what was caused by the writer or the writer's party or the third party involved. These apologetic utterances function as bringing about, or maintaining or restoring convergence, harmony, or as expressing solidarity between the interactants. The function of establishing convergence is discussed in detail in Chapter 5.2.1. The analysis agrees with the idea that emotive interaction, i.e. intentional, strategic signalling of affect in discourse, is inherently strategic behaviour, since speakers aim at achieving some interactional ends by expressing their emotions (Caffi & Janney 1994:328). The utterances including the words *apology*, *regret*, *sorry*, and *unfortunately* as instances of interpersonal metadiscourse are analysed first, since the present work focuses on repair work interaction, and the presence or absence of the communication strategy of uttering apology or regret was used as a decisive factor in dividing the 40 repair work messages into two main categories, i.e. those uttering and those not uttering apology or regret, in Chapter 4.2.

For the analysis of the apologetic utterances functioning as establishing convergence, the messages have been divided into three categories according to their primary communicative purpose, in order to utilize the analysis of the generic message structure and the analysis of the combination of the various communication strategies in Chapter 4.2. The analysis of the functions of other interpersonal metadiscourse takes into consideration the primary communicative purpose of the messages and other discourse event components, even though the analysis does not rely on a similar division utilized in this chapter.

Further, some interpersonal metadiscoursal elements, including apologetic utterances, involving expressions of affective values and attitudes towards the propositional content, the reader, the writer's party or the third party involved, are interpreted as functioning as expressing the writer's emotions in the present data. Messages (16) and (18), both primarily doing repair work and uttering *sorry*, are analysed in Chapter 5.2.2, since the utterances of apology and regret function primarily as expressing the writers' emotions, including frustration (message 16) and irony (message 18). These discourse-event-specific interpretations were decisive in assigning the utterances under a different category from the other utterances with *apology*, *regret*, *sorry*, and *unfortunately*. In addition, e.g. message (28), not uttering regret or apology, includes two instances of explicit interpersonal metadiscourse functioning as expressing the writer's personal emotions, also discussed in Chapter 5.2.2.

5.2.1 Establish convergence

In messages doing repair work explicating regret or apology, the words *sorry*, *to regret*, *apology* and *unfortunately* convey the writer's affective values, i.e. regret or genuine apology, toward the reader or the reader's party. In some discourse events, the scope of the apologetic utterance is also the third party involved, e.g. the customer, or the Finnish supplier's party. In the discourse events in which an interactant expresses regret, or offers a genuine apology for having caused inconvenience or extra work for the reader, the primary function of the expressions of apology or regret is to contribute to bringing about or maintaining convergence, harmony between the writer and the reader.

The following analysis includes ample exemplification of messages written in different discourse events, in order to offer tangible material for validating the analysis and showing how the various interpretations have been arrived at in the present analysis, in which inferencing relies heavily on discourse event components. At points, whole messages will be included, as well as extracts from the 40 repair work messages. However, all the 40 repair work messages are displayed in full in Appendix 1 for readers' further scrutiny.

Messages Primarily Requesting for Action or Information

There is variation in the placement of the apology or regret utterances (A) between messages with different primary communicative purposes. In repair work messages primarily requesting for action or information, the A utterance is either in the post-sequence (four instances) or in the core message (two instances), preceded by the primary communicative purpose utterance and the utterances of responsibility (R) and utterances of justification (J). A detailed discussion on the order and combinations of the various textual-pragmatic functions, including the A, R and J utterances, was included in Chapter 4.2.2.1.

Post-sequence A utterance

The following initial message (4) represents interaction between operative level female peers. The writer requests for action regarding documentation after having given justification for the requests, accepts personal responsibility for the mishap, and expresses regret for what has happened.

Message (4)

To: F1
cc:
Subject: xxxxxx
Ok, despite the fact that I actually have a post-it-note stuck to my computer that says "Bonehead Remember Surcharges!" I still forgot to add a surcharge to a (Customer name) stock order I just did.
Can you please make an additional surcharge invoice for cert. XXXXX. The surcharge is .XXXXX
Thanks and ***sorry*** *I forgot.*
....A2 (first name)

A similar strategy to express regret message-finally in the post-sequence is used in message (5) which represents upward vertical communication, i.e. an American middle management level male employee writing to a Finnish operative level female employee. The writer requests the reader to resend the information he deleted, which he explicates as the reason for his request for information, thus accepting personal responsibility for causing double work for the reader. The A utterance in message (5) is an intensified *So sorry* utterance. Intensification functions as emphasizing the genuine nature of the utterance of regret. Intensification of apologetic utterances will be discussed further in Chapter 5.4.2.

As stated earlier, there are four instances of utterances of regret in the post-sequence in the routine, low severity, writer responsibility discourse events which represent horizontal or vertical interaction and primarily request for action or information concerning documentation. This shows that it is appropriate, when requesting in such events, to close the message with a conventionalized and routinized utterance of regret. The apologizers' expressions of regret can be interpreted as an appropriate and conventional way of behaviour implying sympathy, conveying solidarity or shared feelings with the reader, since the writer personally caused the extra work for the colleague. The aim is to contribute to bringing about or maintaining convergence, harmony between the writer and the reader. The utterance *Thanks* is frequently used either before or after the utterance of regret.

Pre-sequence A utterance

The reply message (3) represents interaction between operative level female peers, the writer explicating personal responsibility and the justification for the mishap in the pre-sequence before the A utterance. Message (3) is the only message primarily requesting for action with the pre-sequence A utterance.

Message (3)

Hello A2(First name),
I totally forgot that question. I'm ***very sorry*** *for that.*
Production people said that it is ok to make those changes but latest on Monday. I could have changed them today, but as I didnt know if xxxx mm width is slit edges or mill edges, for that reason you should do those changes. After changing them please send them to PR.
Thanks and regards,
F1 (First name)

In the present data, there are messages in which the utterance of regret or apology (A) is expressed in a less routinized way. The use of *I'm* or *I am* with *sorry*, or *my apology* emphasizing the writer's personal responsibility, and the intensification by *so* or *very*, add to the sincerity of the apologetic utterances and the writer's commitment to them, reinforcing the idea of the writer offering an apology rather than uttering regret. Also the message-initial placement of the A utterance after the acknowledgement of personal responsibility and utterance of justification reinforce the interpretation of a genuine apology in peer-to-peer interaction.

Repeated A utterances

Message (2) represents routine, low severity level, operative level peer-to-peer interaction with explicated writer's responsibility (WR), and recurring utterances of apology and regret.

Message (2)

Hi F1 (First name)
Ok, you know the e-mail that I sent to you regarding the wrong price........ well, anyway, I received a credit invoice. ***Unfortunately*** *I just realized something when I was doubling checking the credit amount...I did not need the credit because I priced the item right for the type of material and finish (xx) that I sent to (Customer first name)*
I am sorry *about requesting a credit when I didn't need one, so please have credit XXXX voided.*
Thanks and ***sorry****.....A2 (first name)*

The message includes three apologetic expressions, *unfortunately* in the core message, *I am sorry* and *sorry* in the post-sequence. The message is a follow-up message, and it is about voiding a credit. The writer requested the reader to issue the credit in her previous message. *Unfortunately* in the core message initiates the discourse on the reason for writing the message, showing the writer's commiseration and sympathy for having asked her peer reader to devise unnecessary documentation and for having to ask her again to do extra work, i.e. to void the documentation produced.

The first pre-sequence utterance of apology (A), followed by the reason for the apology, and the second utterance of apology emphasize the genuine nature of the offer of apology, regarded as appropriate in the present discourse event in peer interaction. The fact that there are three A utterances can be interpreted as an indication of the writer's personal frustration for having caused extra work to her peer. Also, it can be suggested that peer-to-peer interaction, resulting in the reader's doing unnecessary extra work, due to the negligence and errors by the writer, is especially sensitive to such imposition and poses face threat for both the writer and the reader. Acknowledging the responsibility for requesting and cancelling the request poses face threat to the writer, and informing of the recurrent extra work or requesting the extra work from the reader poses face threat to the reader because of the imposition. The writer tries to mitigate the imposition on the reader by offering an apology by the repeated A utterances, in order to avoid impinging on the peer's face. A competing interpretation for the reoccurrence of the A utterances is that this message represents conversational style, and there is no pre-planned structure for the message. For instance, the syntax and the message-initial *Ok*, and *well, anyway* are indications of the suggested conversational style.

According to Meier's (1995) repair work approach, the writer's linguistic contribution in maintaining or restoring harmony, convergence between the writer and the reader, or expressing solidarity with the reader is a strategy of "the writer seeing the things the reader's way". The apologetic utterances *sorry* and *unfortunately* in the present routine repair work messages, which primarily request for action or information and contain an explicit utterance of the writer's responsibility by acknowledging an error and represent horizontal and vertical interaction, go under this repair work strategy suggested by Meier (1995). The justifications or accounts offered function as making "the reader see the things the writer's way". In the present analysis, the communication strategies of uttering responsibility (R) and justification (J) are not categorized under interpersonal metadiscouse as such. However, the R and J utterances may include elements of interpersonal metadiscourse, and these elements are categorized according to their interpersonal functions.

Messages Primarily Providing Information

Five messages out of a total of six repair work messages primarily providing information have an initial utterance of apology or regret (A), and in two messages the A utterance is repeated in the post-sequence. Thus the typical placement of the A utterance in this category is prior to the primary communicative purpose utterance and the utterances of responsibility (R) and justification (J).

Pre-sequence A utterance, repeated in post-sequence

In the reply message (9) and the follow-up message (11), the main communicative purpose is to provide corrective information concerning specification of information in documentation, which can be regarded as a routine situation in business interaction. In message (9), the interaction takes place horizontally between operative level peers, and in message (11) vertically upwards. In both messages, the core-message-initial *Sorry* functions as implying the writer's readiness to accept personal responsibility for the mismanagement of the matter. Thus, the writers' choice is the same functionally-appropriate, conventionalized expression of regret, regardless the difference between the discourse events in their direction of communication.

Message (9)

Sorry *- I mean xxxxxx and xxxxxx!*
Rgds, B3 (First name)

Message (11)

Hi, B1! (First name)
Sorry *that I didn't notice the thickness tolerance (not our production either).*
The best is x,xx in total. I changed now to 'xxxx' which gives +/- x,xx mm.
Rgds, F8 (First name)

In the reply message (6), the message-initial *Sorry* functions as conveying that the writer's response the reader's earlier message is negative, it refuses the request made in the reader's message. The initial placement of the expressions of regret functions as speeding up the recipient's interpretation process and thus the whole communication of the main topic in the present context, which can be regarded as a routine situation. The message-initial *sorry* utterance in the reply messages (6) and (7), primarily providing information and enclosing the requesting initial message, can be interpreted as having multiple functions.

Message (6) *Sorry, A1*
As fast shipment in question we do not have time to add anything to marking.
Kind regards, F1 (First name)

Message (7) *F4, **so sorry.** The customer has telephoned to say that his accountant sent back 981716 - so (Name of bank) should have it by now. As there is only 20 days between the Bills he has decided that he will keep things as they are. AHHHHH! Customers! So he will return 991833 to (Name of bank) this week!*
Sorry for the trouble.
Rgds, B3 (First name)

Both message (6) and message (7) refuse a request. Message (6) refuses the customer's request and message (7) refuses the reader's request; both requests are expressed in the initial messages enclosed to the reply messages (6) and (7). Both cases are 3rd-party responsibility (3rd-PR) cases, i.e. the customer is responsible, and the refusal is communicated vertically upwards in message (6) and between operative level peers in message (7). The justifications for the refusals are either explicated (message 7) by references to the customer and emphasized by graphical language, or it can be regarded as shared knowledge (message 6). As in messages (2), (3), (4) and (5), the A utterances in messages (6) and (7) can be interpreted as functioning as expressing the writers' affective value, i.e. utterances of regret used as a conventional expression in situations involving low severity level. The repeated and rephrased expression of regret in the reply message (7), i.e. *Sorry for the trouble.* is an alternative routine formula expression for *Sorry for the inconvenience.* uttered in message (15), used also in routine situations if the utterer or the reader is not responsible, neither personally nor collectively, for the mishap. In the business arena, such routine situations are not perceived as requiring an elaborate A utterance. The utterance *Sorry for the trouble.*, together with the references to the customer, function as creating harmony and common ground between the interactants by an inside joke behind the customer's back, by uttering *AHHHHH! Customers!* In the present discourse event, the apologetic utterance is repeated twice, which increases the writer's sincerity of the expression of regret.

A second message with the communicative purpose of providing information and including a double apology explicates the third party responsible for the mishap by naming the person primarily in charge. The follow-up message (8) represents interaction between operative level peers. Even though the writer's party responsibility is explicated earlier in the message, the post-sequence apologetic expression uses the first person singular *I* and the first person singular possessive *my*.

Message (8)

Good morning F1 and F7 (First names),
*I am **very sorry** but I received the wrong information from (First name) about the max skid weight for U200 and U201.*
*Once again **Please accept my apology** for the inconvenience of doing this over.*
My best regards to you both.
A4 (First name)

An utterance with *apology* is used also in message (14), primarily doing repair work and written by an American customer to an American member of MMC staff. In both messages, the noun *apology* is used in repeated, rephrased apologetic expressions with the possessive pronoun *my*. Both in message (8) and (14) the first person pronoun *my* is used when the writer's party is responsible, not the writer personally. This shows the writers' willingness to admit collective responsibility on behalf of the party they represent. In both cases, the repeated, rephrased apologetic utterances can be interpreted as functioning as a non-routine strategy in emphasizing the sincerity and genuineness of the feeling of regret and also the severity of the situation, especially in message (14).

Core-message A utterance

The reply message (10) represents upward vertical interaction involving low severity. The core-message utterance *unfortunately* after the main communicative purpose statement functions as conveying the writer's regret for not being able to accept the reader's suggestion presented in the initial message. The writer's party responsibility is assumed, and the refusal is justified by referring to a packing standard applied in the branch.

When summarizing the use and functions of the apology or regret (A) utterances, in messages primarily providing information, it appears that the following postulations can be made. In the routinized reply or follow-up messages, regardless of the interactants' positions or roles, the routinized expressions of regret, appropriate for the discourse events, are typically placed in the pre-sequence, and they primarily aim at establishing convergence or harmony between the interactants. Simultaneously, the A utterance functions as a concise and instant response to earlier interaction, conveying a negative reply in some aspect in relation to the previous interaction. The latter function seems to be of significant importance in the pre-sequence A utterances. The feeling of regret is emphasized in the routinized situations by intensifying the *sorry* utterances with the words *so* and *very*. Especially the native writers of English resort to intensification, which according to Suszczynska (1999) can be explained, at least partly, as a strategic choice in discourse events when the apologetic force of the expression of regret, *Sorry.* or *I am sorry*, is regarded as too weak. In addition, the recurring A utterances or utterances with the expression my apology can be regarded as the writer's genuine offers of apology for requesting non-expected processing of documents, in situations representing both horizontal and vertical interaction. Regarding the utterances with the noun *apology*, it can be suggested that even though the writers do not assume personal responsibility explicitly, the use of the utterance with the singular first person pronoun *my* with *apology* shows that the messages are writer's responsibility messages in the first place. It can be suggested that the expressions of regret with *sorry* are used more frequently than sincere offers of apology in the present routine discourse events. The former pose less face-threat for both the writer and the reader; a genuine offer of apology assumes the reader's willingness to forgive the writer.

The repair work messages primarily providing information include the strategy "the writer seeing the things the reader's way" (Meier 1995). There are several utterances used to carry out the strategy in the different discourse events, i.e. the utterances of regret, expressed by *sorry* with or without intensification, and the explicit offers of apology, expressed by *apology*. These utterances aim at maintaining or restoring convergence or harmony between the writer and the reader, or alternatively at expressing solidarity in interaction between peers. The explicit utterances of responsibility, i.e. acknowledgements of bad performance, are included in the same strategy. The utterances of justifications function as making "the reader see the things the writer's way" (Meier 1995).

Messages Primarily Doing Repair Work

The post-sequence of the seven messages primarily doing repair work is the typical placement for the utterances of regret or apology (A utterance), since in five messages the A utterance is in the post-sequence. There are two core-message A utterances and no occurrences in the pre-sequence. Thus the A utterance is typically preceded by both the utterances of primary communicative purpose and the utterances of responsibility (R) and justification (J).

The following analysis discusses five messages primarily doing repair work. The discourse events are more variable in this category than in the two categories analysed above, especially as to their responsibility aspects and level of severity. The A utterances in messages (16) and (18) will be under scrutiny in Chapter 5.2.2 when analysing how writers express emotions and feelings in their messages.

Core-message A utterance

In the reply message (17), addressed to an American and a Finnish middle management person, A5, the female technical expert, admits the writer's party responsibility message-initially on behalf of the mill in Finland. The situation involves errors in documentation, which do not affect the customer's operations directly. Thus, the discourse event can be regarded as a routine situation not involving a high level of severity. After acknowledging responsibility, providing information and justification for the mishap core-message-initially, the routinized apologetic expression *This is a human error **which we regret*** is uttered in the middle of the core message.

The use of the plural first person pronoun *we* functions as admitting writer's party responsibility collectively for the error. The expression of regret is a conventional utterance of regret regarded as appropriate in the present situation which involves low level of severity and represents upward vertical interaction with no need for elaborate apologetic expressions. Meier's (1995) repair work strategy of "the writer seeing the things in the reader's way", carried out by the regret utterance and the utterance of responsibility in the routine situation, aims at maintaining harmony between the interactants. The justification, human error, functions as making "the reader see the things the writer's way". The post-sequence provides relevant details for future use to ensure better understanding of the documentation by the reader and the customer.

The reply message (12) involves the 3rd-party responsibility, i.e. the shipping company responsibility. A Finnish operative level person provides tentative information about a lost consignment to American and Finnish middle management level persons. Since the availability of the material for the customer is at stake, the reply message (12) is sent urgently after the receipt of the initial message. Therefore, the discourse event involves highish severity level. However, this is a routine situation in the business arena, to some extent, because losses of consignments occur.

Message (12)

Hello A1 and F3,
***Sorry**, that person in shipping department who has been investigating the matter not in, back only on Friday. Anyhow, (Shipping company name) people promised to get us some information for tomorrow. I'll inform you then.*
Kind regards,
F1 (First name)

The utterance *Sorry* replies to the question asked in the initial message enclosed to message (12), *Any news on the 'LOST' xxxx skid?* The core message explicates the third party responsible, i.e. the shipping company, after the justifications for not providing the information earlier, for which the writer apologizes. Thus, the core-message-initial *sorry* functions as indicating that the writer has not been able to find more information about the matter for reasons explicated after the utterance *sorry*. *Sorry* can be interpreted here not only as a routine expression of regret but rather as an offer of apology, since the writer's party, i.e. the supplier's shipping department, is partly responsible for the negligence of not having responded earlier.

Post-sequence A utterances

Message (13) is a follow-up message about the same matter as message (12). The core message provides information, explicates the third party responsible for the mishap including the justification, with the promise for future action, before uttering regret with *Sorry it took so long time.* in the post-sequence.

The utterance *Sorry it took so long time.* uses a routine formula expression, similar to the message-final expressions *Sorry for the inconvenience.* in message (15), and *Sorry for the trouble.* in message (7). However, the writer explicates the situation-specific reason for the regret in the highish severity level discourse event. Uttering the reason reinforces the interpretation that the writer utters *Sorry it took so long time.* as an offer of apology on behalf of the others responsible for not having disseminated the information earlier. Since the supplier's corporate image is also at stake, the utterance of apology can be regarded as an image-saving device. The strategy of positioning the apologetic expression in the post-sequence enables the writer to explain the present state of the matter and the action that the writer's party will take to put the matter right. This strategy indicates the increasing severity level of the discourse event, due to the continuous delay in providing final information about the lost consignment. The high severity level factor also reinforces the interpretation of the *sorry* utterance as a sincere offer of apology.

In Meier's (1995) terms, when uttering *sorry* in messages (12) and (13) and by explicating responsibility, the writer applies the strategy of "the writer seeing the things the reader's way" by expressing regret or offering apology for the delay, in order to bring about harmony between the writer and the reader, and the customer in the last resort. The J utterance aims at persuading "the reader see the things the writer's way".

Concerning message (14), it can be suggested that A2, an American female MMC staff member, as the recipient of message (14) has the power in the discourse event, since A2 has urged AC1, the customer company representative, to respond to her earlier contacts several times, due to the long delay in payment by the customer's company. Message (14) is written in full, since it is the only message, in the data under analysis, written by a customer.

Message (14)

A2 (First name), I had given the credit information to (First name) so that a credit could be issued and there has been a great debate over how to input this credit into our "new system". I realize that this problem does not concern you but we have been speaking with our corporate computer "geeks" and they have finally decided on how to issue the credit, so.......... to make a long story short the credit is being issued today. ***I am sorry*** *for the delay in taking care of this.* ***Please extend my apologies*** *to all concerned.*
Best Regards,
AC1 (First name)

The financial implications to the Finnish supplier, caused by the delay in payment, increase the level of severity of the situation with the extended delay. The customer's company image is at stake, together with AC1's personal face threat. Further, A2 in her intermediary position feels partly responsible for the mismanaged collection of the payment. Message (14) can be regarded as a writer's party responsibility message, since the writer explicates other personnel in his company in the core message, in order to shift the responsibility for the non-payment of the credit. However, the two message-final utterances of apology in the post-sequence can be regarded as genuine, sincere offers of apology, since the expressions explicate the writer's personal responsibility for the delay. The emphatic expression of regret, i.e. *I am sorry for the delay in taking care of this.*, including the *I am* element together with the reason for the regret, reinforce the interpretation of the offer of apology. Further, the repeated apologetic utterance using the singular first person possessive pronoun *my* with the noun *apologies* function as a genuine utterance of apology.

The placement of the two apologetic utterances in the post-sequence after the justifications and the promise of payment function to shift some of the responsibility away from the writer, and give the writer an opportunity to break the good news, *the credit is being issued today*, before acknowledging partial personal responsibility by the two apologetic utterances. The final placement of the apologetic utterances can be regarded as mitigating the personal face threat to the writer, caused by the high severity level situation, whereas the justifications provided cannot be regarded as image-saving strategies for the customer company.

Thus, it can be suggested that the way the writer explains the situation aims at absolution, to use Meier's (1995) terms, i.e. "the writer tries to make the reader see things from his personal point of view", not from the customer company's point of view. The personal stance assumed by the writer can be suggested to result from the personally imposing style A2 is using in her initial message to AC1, against which AC1 is protecting himself in message (14).

The initial message (15), primarily doing repair work and including an indirect request for information, represents interaction between peers. However, the extra work to the reader, resulting from the expected compliance with the request for action, is not caused by the writer. The supplier, the reader's party, sent wrong goods, and the customer is ready to accept the goods on the named condition, i.e. the customer has the power to request for extension in the payment time, a change in the draft date. The reader's party responsibility is implied in the sentence *Well the customer is saying that because they did us a favour and offloaded instead of refusing and (supplier's name) having to pay storage charges, they want the invoice date to be 10.02.99.* The sentence includes the justification, prior to the request for the confirming information, expressed by the interrogative *Is it possible to change the draft date again.* The inclusive pronoun *us* refers to the writer and the reader's party. Message (15) is one of the few repair work messages in the present data to involve reader's party responsibility, which is implicated. It may be suggested that the pre-sequence small talk on weather functions as softening the tone of the message.

Message (15)

Hi F4 (First name)
How are coping with the terrible weather? Is it still as cold today - I heard yesterday it was - 41!
I have a problem with (Customer company name). Do you remember we altered the due date of draft xxxxxx? Well the customer is saying that because they did us a favour and offloaded instead of refusing and (supplier's name) having to pay storage charges, they want the invoice date to be 10.02.99 Is it possible to change the draft date again - I know we can't change the invoice.
Sorry for the inconvenience.
Rgds, B3 (First name)

The A utterance expresses regret for the additional work to the reader, this time caused by the customer's request, due to the reader's party mistake. The conventional message-final expression of regret, *Sorry for the inconvenience.*, similar in form to *Sorry for the trouble.* in message (7), can be regarded as a routine formula, a situation-bound utterance, the occurrence of which is conventionalized and tied to standardized discourse events in business interaction. In the business arena, such routine situations are not perceived as requiring elaborate apologetic expressions. The message implies the reader's party responsibility, which is shared knowledge between the interactants. The routine situation-specific *Sorry for the inconvenience.* functions as avoiding emphasizing the reader's party responsibility, and thus can be regarded as an utterance saving the reader's face. According to Meier's (1995) repair work approach, the routine formula *Sorry for the inconvenience.* utterance can be regarded as a strategy of "the reader and the writer meeting halfway" in this reader's party responsibility situation; the writer expects a verbal response from the reader and hopes for a return to status quo by resolving the problematic situation in a routinized way through documentation.

In the category of messages primarily doing repair work, the A utterances are expressed in various situations, from routine situations to situations involving high severity level with either the writer's party, third-party or reader's party responsibility. The A utterances are mainly placed in the post sequence, except for two messages. The A utterances expressed in these situations are also variable and longer than *sorry*, evidently due to the high severity level of the situations, except for one message-initial *Sorry* functioning as a negative reply and simultaneously as an utterance of apology for not being more efficient in the situation. In the only routine situation, concerning documentation, a routine utterance *which we regret* is used in the core message. One high severity-level message has two A utterances in the post-sequence for emphasizing the genuinity of the apologetic utterances. Two A utterances, typical of routine situations, i.e. *Sorry it took so long time.* and *Sorry for the convenience.* can be suggested to have a complementary function of a genuine utterance of apology, especially the former one, since it utters the reason for the apology.

5.2.2 Express emotions and feelings

This chapter includes an analysis of the messages containing interpersonal metadiscourse used to express emotions and feelings. Since the function of expressing emotions and feelings is an intriguing aspect of language use in business interaction, the ensuing analysis takes a close look at the messages. The expressions of emotions and feelings include implicit linguistic means, and discourse event components are called for, in order to arrive at the interpretations in each discourse event.

Messages (16) and (18) include an apologetic utterance with *sorry*. The utterances do not aim at bringing about harmony or convergence primarily, but function as expressing the writer's personal feelings in the discourse event they are uttered. Message (28) without an apologetic utterance includes the writer's explicit expressions of personal emotions. Message (7) contains joking, showing the writer's willingness to relate with the reader and to create common ground in the discourse event. Further, messages (35) and (1) use linguistic expressions interpreted as interpersonal metadiscourse conveying the writers' feelings. That the writers convey their feelings in only six repair work messages may indicate that business interaction uses as-a-matter-of-fact stance rather than resorts to emotionalism.

In message (16), primarily doing repair work, the interaction happens vertically upwards. The writer, F5, the female technical expert, replies to an initial message by a middle management employee in London concerning a complaint from a customer. The message is cc:ed to the Finnish middle management level person who is in charge of Britain and to an operative level office clerk in Finland. The core message includes a request for information to enable further investigations by the mill personnel in Finland. Secondly, the core message informs the customer via the reader about the future action concerning the next shipment. The involvement of the managerial level in interaction concerning customer's complaints indicates the high severity level of the situation. Further, the level of severity can be regarded as high, since the problematic situation may have caused a safety hazard for the customer. The writer admits responsibility by the utterances in the core message by explicating the words *loose or broken banding*, *safety hazards*, and *the problem*.

Message (16)

Was this the first time when the customer experienced loose or broken banding? Perhaps they have seen some cases, but have not reported them. Do you know if there has been any safety hazards because of the problem?
The quality department will audit the next shipment. It will take place in July, week 27 according to F8 (First name).
For your info ... We have audited one Canadian customer because of similar problems for the last two years, a couple of times a month. I have not seen any fast improvement. Auditing and inspecting seems to be the only way to educate people here in the mill. I thought that our fine automatic packaging line would solve this type of problems, but automation is not a solution. ***Sorry for my frustration.***
Rgds, F5

The message-final utterance *Sorry for my frustration.* refers to the post-sequence personal views, *I have not seen any fast improvement.*, and *I thought that our fine automatic packaging line would solve this type of problems, but automation is not a solution.*, which serve as explicit reasons for the utterance of regret. Thus, the target of the utterance of regret is not primarily the mishap, the problematic situation the customer has experienced, due to loose or broken banding of the merchandise. Instead, the writer expresses regret for having to inform of the recurrent bad management of the problem at the mill on behalf of the mill personnel. Primarily, the utterance *Sorry for my frustration.* can be interpreted as an expression of personal frustration, and the writer utters regret for communicating it so openly; the message is addressed also to the management level personnel in Finland, in order to acquire bigger audience. This frustration interpretation, i.e. expressing emotions, is supported by the explicit utterance of the noun *frustration* in the apologetic utterance.

In her expert role, the writer uses the subsequent power to give her opinions of the management of the recurrent problem and to initiate discussion on the problem. Cc:ing the message displays the writer's willingness to disseminate information to the persons concerned, in order to make things function better. Thus, a complementary interpretation for the *Sorry for my frustration.* utterance is that it functions as an implicit urge on the middle management persons to take action to improve the auditing and inspection procedures at the mill. Allegedly, initiating improvements is part of the writer's expert power but out of the scope of the writer's legitimate power. The strategy the writer resorts to in the present discourse event can be regarded as absolution (Meier 1995), "the writer and the reader meeting halfway" in that she tries to make the reader see things from her personal point of view. The writer implies that she, together with the other technical experts, has done the utmost to improve the situation, and due to her frustration, and relying on her technical expertise and the subsequent authority and power, asks for absolution.

In the reply message (18), F6, the male technical expert, provides information to an American middle management person. The message is cc:ed to a Finnish middle management person in charge of the United States, and to F5, the female technical expert. In the pre-sequence, after the prospective introduction and the reference to previous communication from three years earlier, the writer acknowledges responsibility by admitting that the information provided in 1996 is obsolete. Thus it is a writer's party responsibility case. The level of severity is low, since the message is about specific markings in documentation with no direct negative implications on the customer's operation. This is explicated by the writer in the post-sequence utterance *I don't see, why the customer should really know the actual dates of the casts produced in our mill.* This utterance functions as alleviating the writer's responsibility by providing justification for not providing updated information earlier, since there is no urgent need for that, as the writer explicitly states. The core messages promises future action and provides tentative information.

Message (18)

Good morning!
The information regarding heat identification is such as defined in our Quality Assurance Manual, paragraph 8.1.1.
This is just stating the same what I told in year 1996. This is however an obsolete information since 1997 already.
The updated QA Manual will be issued at the end of this year. That will give also the official updated explanation for melt and slab identification. I will give to you an unofficial explanation only in the meantime.
As you certainly know, our production was constantly increasing during 1996 and 1997. Finally, more than 100 casts a week were produced thus exceeding the two digits limits reserved for the running melt number. We were forced to change the "weeknumbers" to the succeeding weeks any time as the 99th cast was done. This is the situation still now: the real calendar week 35 is just at the beginning, however our melts are running at the "weeknumber" 841 already! The first cast of this year 80101 according to the old notation was done 29th December 1997 already! Thus there is no correspondence of the melt numbers to the real week anymore.
***We are so sorry** as we have designed so bad identification system in the first year of production 1976 as we couldn't imagine, the 99 casts a week limit would be ever exceeded. Now we know, it was a big mistake.*
I don't see, why the customer should really know the actual dates of the casts produced in our mill. The product identification must be the same as shown on the test certificates. That's all what is required, in my humble opinion.
regards,
F6 (First name and Family name)

The post-sequence initial utterance or regret *We are so sorry* can be interpreted as having multiple functions. It can be interpreted as a collective expression of a genuine feeling of regret, emphasized by the use of *we*, for having designed a system that became outdated unexpectedly, expressed with some ironic stance by referring to year 1976 in year 1999. Primarily, the apologetic utterance can be interpreted as conveying irony, reinforced by the writer's suspect of the relevance of the reader's request for the information to be forwarded to the customer. This suspect is expressed in the final paragraph in the post sequence. The idea of irony is reinforced by the overwhelming explanation of the numbering system, together with the utterances to emphasize the commitment to the responsibility, e.g. *We are so sorry, as we have designed so bad identification system in ... 1976,* and *Now we know, it was a big mistake.* The utterances sound overtly exaggerated for the low severity level discourse event. Further, the writer's message-final interpersonal metadiscourse utterance *In my humble opinion.*, placed after having given very specific and detailed information and reassuring views evidencing his expertise, can be interpreted as functioning as reinforcing the ironic stance. The writer of message (18) admits that, if interactants explicate or implicate criticism or suspect toward information by or toward the corporation, the criticism and suspect easily provoke him into using aggressive or ironic style in his reply messages (e-mail message by F5 29.11.1999). The multiple use of the emphatic interpersonal utterances, the two instance of *so*, *Now we know*, *I don't see*, *really* and *in my humble opinion* signal that the writer finds the topic, the customer's request for information, annoying. The writer's attitude when conveying his views, which are disparaging with the customer's views, is assertive and shows that he feels rather strongly about the matter. The use of the utterance of regret in this message can be regarded as idiosyncratic use of language. The primary function of the utterance *We are so sorry* in the present discourse event does not match with the repair work strategy categories suggested by Meier (1995).

Message (28) by F5 replies two questions put by B1, a management level employee in his enclosed reply message to message (16) written by F5.

Message (28)

We use stainless steel bands for eye banding on the automatic packing line. The strapping equipment was originally designed for zink coated steel. Stainless bands work harden rapidly during banding. This equipment was one source of the problems because of inadequate power.
There were also problems with the automation. At first, the computers did not comprehend the packing codes (P3 etc.). Then we deleted all the notes for the line, and the operators did not understand the codes. Now we rely on coding. P3 stands for 4 eye bands. ***What irritates me the most,*** *is that the line operators just pass the loose or broken coils, even though the amount of bands is insufficient!*
The circumferential bands come from slitting lines. All the shifts of the three lines have to be trained to avoid off-centre strapping.
The operating engineers have quite a job motivating their personnel. The quality awareness is not first class. ***I sometimes feel that the operators do not care*** *a bit what they are doing.*
Rgds F5 (First name)

The first two paragraphs in the core message reply to the two questions by B1 in the enclosed message about strapping and the automatic packing line. The writer admits writer's party responsibility and explicates the reasons, the computers and the personnel on the packing line. The *we* pronoun, which refers to the mill personnel, changes into *I* and *me* when the writer gives her opinions and views of the reasons after expressing the facts. The writer initiates the utterances of views and opinions by the expressions explicating her personal feelings, i.e. *What irritates me the most*, and *I sometimes feel*, which are used to mitigate the force of the utterance to follow and to avoid explicating too negative an attitude toward the group of people named. The expressions can be interpreted as expressing the writer's frustration, caused by the recurrent problems. The exclamation mark at the end of *What irritates me the most*, emphasizes the personal emotions involved in the utterance. Further, the emotional emphasis is added by the use of *just*, *not a bit*, *quite* a in the surrounding text to give more force to her emotional expressions. Thus, the female writer separates views and opinions, involving personal emotions, explicitly from facts in her primarily informative message (c.f. Holmes 1995). The technical expertise the writer possesses gives her authority to explicate the reasons for the problems and to explicate her assertive views and opinions concerning the recurrent problem in the similar way she did in message (16), both messages being addressed or cc:ed to Finnish and British management level persons. Basing on her findings on the use of pragmatic force modifiers, Nikula (1996:102) argues that speakers often choose to play down the pragmatic force of their opinions. The interactants in Nikula's research did not know each other beforehand, which explains the strategies used to "take the sharpest edge off the opinions". The different discourse events in the present data in terms of the power roles and familiarity level of the interactants, among other things, explain the differences in strategy use, compared to Nikula's findings. Similarly to the strategy F5 uses in message (16), the present strategy can be regarded as asking for absolution according to Meier's (1995) approach, i.e. "the writer and the reader meeting halfway". Again, F5 tries to make the reader see the things from her personal point of view. In her expert role, relying on her technical expertise and the subsequent power, F5 gives her assertive views and opinions and expresses her feelings overtly.

The follow-up message (7) between operative level peers, analysed in Chapter 5.2.1 for the expressions of regret and apology, contains a humorous utterance, *AHHHHH! Customers!*, which can be interpreted as an inside joke behind the customer's back in a discourse event in which the writer refuses the reader's request for a change in documentation. Primarily, the capitalized sigh becomes an exclamation according to e-mail etiquette, the exclamation idea being strengthened by the multiple *H* followed by an exclamation mark. The utterance explicitly targets the exclamation, and subsequent criticism, at the customer. The two utterances function as creating harmony and common ground with the reader in a humorous way to relate with the reader rather than with the customer. Simultaneously, the utterance expresses solidarity towards the reader, who has to cope with the customer's 'whims'. The strategy of "the writer seeing the things the reader's way" (Meier 1995) is involved in the solidarity interpretation.

The writer of the follow-up message (35) uses three adjectives primarily to convey his personal feeling of frustration in explaining the same issue for a second time to the same recipient. The follow-up message initiates with the utterance *There may be a **trivial** explanation too...* The adjective *trivial* in the present context indicates that the explanation offered in the previous message was factual. The message-final text sequence offers the writer's explicit views of the necessity of the discussion on this topic, i.e. the writer signals his wish to end the discourse in an explicit way, simultaneously conveying his personal feelings by the use of the adjectives *hypothetical* and *meaningless*:

> *I think, continuing this **hypothetical** discussion is more or less **meaningless** without knowing all the details about sample taking, preparation and tension test conditions etc...*

The three dots at the end of the statements convey that the writer finds the further explanations asked for by the reader as unnecessary, since there are no comprehensive test results to rely on, due to missing information, which was explicated in the previous message by the writer. The writer of message (1) uses a parenthetical utterance *(lucky for me)*, corresponding to the impersonal 'luckily', to convey her feeling of relief in a discourse event where she explains an error she made and which was resolved by the customer's acceptance of the wrong material, *The customer decided that he needed the material that I sent (lucky for me), but ....* The utterance *(lucky for me)* is an example of the multifunctionality of interpersonal metadiscourse and will be discussed further in Chapter 5.3.2 for its conversational features.

5.2.3 Express attitudes

According to the classification of interpersonal metadiscourse by Crismore et al. (1993:53) (see also Hyland 1998a:230), elements showing the writer's affective values, attitudes toward the propositional content and/or readers can be categorized as attitude markers. The attitudes expressed can convey surprise, judgements of importance, agreement, disagreement, and obligation. Expressions of affective values toward the textual information and/or the reader, i.e. expressions of regret and apology functioning to establish convergence, and expressions of emotions, were analysed in Chapters 5.2.1 and 5.2.2. The present chapter focuses on the expressions of attitudes, initiating with the expressions of obligation using modal verbs.

Modal verbs of obligation

Basing on his study of metadiscourse in CEO's letters, Hyland (1998a:239) suggests that necessity modals such as *must*, *have to*, *need*, and *should* contribute to affective appeals by promoting alignment and relationship between the writer's and reader's goals and desires, and they can be used to emphasize a priori assumptions about shared purposes and understandings. These modal verbs in Hyland's corpus convey the belief that something is to be done or should be done, simultaneously presupposing the reader's compliance. Referring to his study of scientific articles, Hyland (1998b:450) maintains that utterances to convey writers' attitudes, including necessity modals, while subtlely displaying affect, primarily appear to be persuasive by expressing propositional attitudes and evaluations. In doing that, these utterances tend to refer to issues that the author finds important, interesting or unexpected, and the writer aims at fitting claims and assertions into the anticipated background understandings of the reader in an appropriate way.

In the present data, various linguistic expressions are used to convey obligation of different degrees of semantic force; e.g. Halliday (1985) refers to a division into high, median, and low levels of semantic force. Some occurrences of the modal verbs will be presented embedded in their interactional contexts displaying the whole message, allowing the analysis to take into consideration other modal elements, together with other interpersonal metadiscoursal elements, which appear in the preceding and following text sequences, in order to facilitate the interpretation of the sometimes ambiguous and subtle expressions. Modal verbs expressing obligation are ambiguous with respect to their root or epistemic status and, consequently, the interpretation of these expressions is determined in part by context. For instance, the root or deontic interpretation of *must* in *You must be finished by now.* conveys social obligation, i.e. 'you are obliged to be finished', whereas the epistemic interpretation of *must* in the same utterance conveys the utterer's belief that 'you are finished', considering typical time taken to accomplish various tasks (Turnbull and Saxton 1997:150). The modal verbs under the present analysis convey obligation of varying degrees. Root modal expressions may convey writers' attitudes and judgements, and also that writers, readers, or a third party are obligated or compelled to do the action named in the proposition. In the present contexts, social obligation and readers' compliance are imposed by the positions and roles held by the interactants and the subsequent tasks assigned to them to carry out business transactions in a successful and ethical way. Also mutual understanding of the shared purposes between the interactants play a role in how root modal expressions are perceived and interpreted, and complied with. Further, references to various standards, and statutory, certified or customary tests and measurements and established procedures impose social obligation and expect readers' compliance. In the present data, different verbs expressing various degrees of obligation are either reader-oriented, reader's party-oriented, writer-oriented, writer's party-oriented, or customer-oriented. The ensuing discussion on the use of different verbs of obligation will rely on the division of messages into categories according to the orientation of the obligation or necessity, in order to see if the expected actor/s influence the writers' choices of necessity verbs in each context. The analysis includes the modal verb *should* in its primary function of conveying obligation. The use of the modal verb *should* will be discussed for its secondary function of mitigating or diminishing the force of necessity in some utterances in Chapter 5.5.2.

Customer-orientation

In the present data, there are two occurrences of verbs of obligation oriented to the customer's action, i.e. *need to* in message (22) and *should* in message (18).

In his reply message (22), the Finnish male management level writer refuses responsibility for the mishap reported by a customer. The writer uses the message-final expression *Also the invoice xxxxxx due 15.10* ***needs to be settled*** *on time/F2 (TIA)*, in order to emphasize the obligatory nature of the proposition and the requirement for the customer's compliance with the payment requirement by the due date agreed on, i.e. to pay for the material they have accepted, and misused, according to the management writer. In the present context, the use of the verb of obligation with high force is compatible with the general assertive stance in the message. The reader is a British management level male person in a position to forward the writer's assertive request to the customer. By using the impersonal form *needs to be settled* the writer supposedly aims at mitigating the impositive force of his utterance, even though the utterance does not pose a threat to the reader's face directly, but only indirectly, due to the reader's intermediate position between the writer and the customer.

Message (18) includes the verb *should* with customer-orientation. The modal verb *should* is the most frequently used modal verb in the present repair work interaction. The modal verb *should* in message (18) is used in the post-sequence in an indirect interrogative sentence in which the writer explicates his doubts concerning customers' requirement to receive updated information about the heat numbering system as follows: *I don't see, why the customers* ***should*** *really know the actual dates of the casts produced in our mill.* The expressions *I don't* *see* and *really* add to the emphasis of the writer's doubtful view of customers' requirement. In this context, the writer uses *should* to convey his propositional attitudes, i.e. judgements and evaluations about the necessity of the customer's inquiry, relying on his technical expertise and thus expects compliance. *Should* represents median level semantic force in the present context, which allows a mitigated tone in conveying opposing views to the reader's views in message (18), which contains some features of irony referred to in Chapter 5.2.2.

Reader-orientation or reader's party-orientation

Message (1) was analysed regarding the requestivity of the modal verbs in Chapter 4.4.2.3 when discussing the forms and functions of requestive utterances in repair work messages. The message represents horizontal operative level interaction with low severity level and abounds in modal verb expressions of varying degrees.

Message (1)

Hi F1 (First name)
***I need to get** a credit issued because of an overcharge. I made the mistake....sorry. I was supposed to ship XX (.xxx) material to (Customer's first name), but I instead I shipped XX (.xxx) material. The customer decided that he needed the material that I sent (lucky for me), but **I have to get** a credit issued because of the price difference.*
***Please get** a credit issued for item 4.......the price **should** of have ..xx not .xxx. The credit **should** be around $xxx.xx.*
Thanks,
....A2 (first name)

The primary requests, expressed by the writer-oriented forms *I need to* and *I have to*, are indirect in that they do not address the reader directly. Instead, the agentless form *get a credit issued* is used to do face work by not impinging directly on the reader's face in a writer responsibility situation. The writer-oriented root modal expressions *I need to* and *I have* to initiate utterances explaining the required procedure to complete the incomplete, or to correct negligence caused by the writer.

The writer uses high-level modal verbs of obligation in the present context, since it is shared assumption and understanding between the writer and the reader that, according to the company hierarchy and corporate policy, the reader is to comply with the writer's request in the present context to safeguard customer satisfaction. This type of obligation can be referred to as social obligation, in the present data explicated also by references to various standards, guide books and test results and test procedures in a persuasive way, in order to convince readers of the rightness of the information provided or views offered. The use of the first person pronoun *I* can be interpreted as mitigating the enforcement of *need to* and *have to*, and simultaneously conveying that the writer is responsible. The utterance of regret *sorry*, the use of *please* in the direct request, and the use of *thanks* contribute to the face work by aiming at downgrading the requesting utterances. The writer-oriented *I was supposed to* initiates the reason for the mishap, for which the writer acknowledges responsibility in the previous sentence. In the present context, it can be suggested that by providing reasons, the writer protects the reader's face and by acknowledging responsibility the writer enhances her own face by implicating that she is an ethical, responsible person (cf. Turnbull and Saxton 1997:156).

The message-final modal verb expressions including *should* are used to convey implicit 'sub-requests' (the present writer's quote) in that they request the reader to include the details provided in the credit document to be issued. The agentless utterances with *should* involve reader-oriented obligation, since compliance by the reader is expected, due to the reader's position-derived tasks. The utterances with *should* can be interpreted as having a secondary function of diminishing the force of the utterances. This interpretation is suggested, since *should* is used in the post-sequence in 'secondary requests' after the rather assertive 'primary request', which is expressed by *I need to get* and *I have to get a credit issued.* The message is initiated by the assertive primary request utterance *I need to get*, repeated two times, which may be an indication of the unplanned, conversational stance in the message. The use of the form *should* in the indirect requests may indicate the writer's willingness to soften the tone at the end of the discourse, simultaneously serving as a face-saving device.

In message (3), the reader-oriented expression *you should* is used to express an indirect request in a routine situation between two operative-level peers, a Finnish writer and an American reader. The writer acknowledges responsibility for a neglect of a task, utters regret, and provides account for the request message-initially. In the present writer-responsible situation the explicit reader-oriented *you should* in the utterance *I could have changed them today, bus as I didnt know if xxxx mm was width or slit edges, for that reason* ***you should do*** *those changes.* can be regarded as rather imposing. Research suggests that among native speakers of English *should* carries a strong semantic force and can be classified under high modality markers (He 1993:510). A reader-oriented modal verb involving high level of obligation would not be necessary in the present context, since the reader's compliance is expected due to the shared knowledge of the position-derived duties of the peer-reader and the importance of the matter from the customer's point of view.

Further, in message (21) the modal verb *should* is used in an expression to make a suggestion in management level peer-to-peer interaction involving highish severity level, i.e. the issue is delayed deliveries. The utterance with *should* in the post sequence of the message is as follows: *Please formulate and answer to (Customer company name). Obviously* ***we should*** *consider remedies for future but I do not know what they think of this situation, so let's consider them later.* In the core message, the writer acknowledges writer's party responsibility and gives detailed account of what caused the delays. The expression *Obviously* ***we should*** *consider remedies for future*, implies that the writer in his managerial position as the supplier's representative conveys social obligation in that he expects to receive the reader's views of the matter before making the final decision of the remedies, which is made explicit by the use of the inclusive *we.* Thus the verb of obligation is both writer- and reader-oriented. Even though the writer uses the median or low level necessity verb *should*, he expects compliance by the reader, which is reinforced by the sentence-final utterance *so let's consider them later.*

The writer of message (23) conveys her judgement and evaluation of the necessity of her indirect suggestion to her operative level peer reader. The suggested act aims at urging a customer to remit an overdue credit. The utterance *You can check with me in a week or two and if I haven't received the invoice for scrap credit in the mail then I think either F3(First name) or (First name)* ***should*** *deal with him.* involves two management level staff members in Finland, named in the message, as expected actors of the task in question instead of the reader. The compliance is to be decided by the management level persons named. The writer aims at avoiding imposition on the management level persons by using the expressions *I think.* Further, the form *should* in expressing the writer's evaluation of the necessity in the present context is not as imposing as in message (3), which involves reader-oriented obligation. The elaborate background information and the final sentence to emphasize the reader's party interests in the matter are used in a persuasive way to explicate the importance of the matter from the reader's party point of view.

The reader- or reader-party oriented utterance with *should* in message (38) representing upward vertical interaction, *I wonder if something* ***should be sent*** *from the mill as I don't seem to be getting any joy!*, has the same function as *should* in message (23). The impersonalized verb form functions as adding to the mitigating stance. It is shared knowledge that the modal expression of obligation involves the mill's staff in Finland, and consequently the writer uses the impersonal form with the tentative sentence-initial utterance *I wonder if*, in order not to sound too imposing on the managerial level reader. The compliance depends on the management-level reader's evaluation of the situation.

The high-level modal verb *have to* in message (15) implies the reader's party-orientation in the utterance, conveying that the mill in Finland is responsible for the mishap. Simultaneously, the root modal expression implies the reason for why the reader's party is to comply with the customer's request reported in message (15), i.e. to change the draft date. The reader's party has sent wrong goods, which the customer offloaded subject to payment of the storage charges by the mill in Finland. Compliance with the writer's suggestion is expected, based on the shared knowledge and understanding between the writer and the reader; in the present reader's party responsibility situation the reader's party is responsible for covering the extra costs as agreed on, and is expected to put the matter right through documentation. The use of the high-level root modal verb *have to* in the sentence *Well the customer is saying that because they did us a favour and offloaded instead of refusing and (mill in Finland)* ***having to pay*** *storage charges, they want the invoice date to be 10.02.99.* is the only utterance in the message to convey the reader's party responsibility in a subtle way.

Writer-orientation

As discussed above, the utterance *Obviously* ***we should*** *consider remedies for future but I do not know what they think of this situation, so let's consider them later.* in message (21) includes the modal verb ***should***, which conveys both writer- and reader-orientation.

Message (40) represents vertically upward interaction involving highish severity level, since extra costs have been incurred to the mill in Finland due to a mistake a customer has made. The writer-oriented modal expression *I should* is used in the following core-message-final sentence *I have discussed this with B6 (First name and Family name) - (Customer company name) is his customer, and we both think that* ***I should write*** *the managing director a letter informing him that we were charged £xx for their cheque, £xx of that amount because of their mistake.* The writer-oriented modal expression *I should* is used to suggest a means or a method as to how possibly collect the charges paid, i.e. by informing the customer of the matter and relying on their ethical way of doing business. In expressing the writer-oriented, task-derived judgement of the necessity of the procedure by uttering *I should*, the writer relies on her experience in collection procedure, which is shared knowledge between the interactants. The expression is persuasive in that it relies on the writer's experience and the shared understanding of the necessity of the action suggested by the writer. Allegedly, the writer expects compliance by the reader, i.e. a verbal response accepting the suggestion. Thus, the modal expression contributes to affective appeals by referring to an issue that is important for the interactants. In doing that, the writer expresses her attitude of achieving joint goals with the reader and simultaneously promotes alignment with the reader.

Writer's party orientation

A majority of the verbs of obligation conveying the writer's judgements or evaluations about the necessity of the propositions expressed are writer's party-oriented in the 40 repair work messages.

Message (21) was analysed for the use of the modal verb *should* under the reader- or reader's party-orientation category. Message (21) represents management level peer-to-peer interaction involving highish severity level, i.e. the issue is delayed deliveries. In the core message, the writer acknowledges writer's party responsibility and gives detailed account of what caused the delays. The high-value root modal verb *have to* is used in the two utterances when reporting the justification for the delays, i.e. *This means that correction grindings were late and **had to be finished** before 4N material. Then there was also secondary reasons like material ran out or defective material **had to be changed.*** The writer uses the modal verb in the past tense to refer to the customary procedures necessary to be followed, in order to guarantee successful processing of materials at the mill. The impersonal verb forms, including the modal verb *have to*, represent professional jargon used in order to focus on the action and not on the actors. In repair work interaction, impersonalization can be suggested to do face-work, since it allows for excluding a personalized actor.

In message (18) the male technical expert uses the high-level root modal verb *be forced to* impersonally to refer to the actions which, according to the writer's judgement and evaluation, were necessary for the writer's party to do for the reasons explained. Thus, the past tense modal verb utterance *we were forced to* is used in the core message to provide justification for the change in the heat numbering system which the reader and customers find confusing, in the same way the writer or message (21) used *had to*.

The writer of message (18) refers to production reasons in a detailed way to add to the authority of the information provided, and to justify the use of such a forceful expression of obligation.

> *As you certainly know, our production was constantly increasing during 1996 and 1997. Finally, more than 100 casts a week were produced thus exceeding the two digits limits reserved for the running melt number.* ***We were forced to change*** *the "weeknumbers" to the succeeding weeks any time as the 99th cast was done.*

Message (17) by the female technical expert and message (35) by the male technical expert represent upward vertical interaction. Both deal with technical tests and measurements of materials and the subsequent documentation, the understanding of which produces problems for customers. Both interactions involve writer's party-orientation in their use of the modal verb *should*. In message (17), the writer acknowledges writer's party responsibility for the incorrect information, and the modal verb *should* is used to provide corrective information, at the same time expressing obligation toward the writer's party, *The time of 22 minutes on cert. xxxx dated 11.01.99 was incorrect. It* ***should*** *be 49 minutes.* Thus, *should* in the present context can partly be interpreted to convey epistemic modality. A more assertive, emphatic expression relevant for the context would have been *It is to be, It must be*. However, the obligation aspect is prevalent in the utterance in that the modal verb *should* provides the correct information, had the customary, right procedure been followed by the person who devised the certificate. According to this interpretation, the sentence including *should* conveys obligation on the writer's party actors, 'the compiler of the certificate is to write 49 minutes in accordance with test results instead of the incorrect 22 minutes'.

In message (35), the modal verb expression *should* is used in the core message in conveying the writer's view of the strength values tested at the mill in Finland. After having given an assertive explanation concerning the test results in the previous message, the writer gives further explanations in a follow-up message on the reader's request as follows: *Another explanation: one sample was taken parallel to rolling direction and the other one perpendicular to rolling direction. The sample direction has effect on the strength values. The perpendicular test piece* ***should have*** *higher strength.* The writer relies on his earlier experience in similar situations when discussing alternative testing methods. The writer does not acknowledge responsibility for the deviations reported by the customer, and justifies this by references to the unavailability of the necessary information. In the present context, the writer gives his views of the issue by conveying his judgements and evaluations. Accepting this interpretation, the modal *should* represents epistemic modality expressing the writer's belief or opinion, rather than root modality expressing obligation. However, it can be suggested that the utterance involves an assessment of necessity, as in message (17), in that the utterance with the modal verb *should* aims at matching the writer's claims, assertions and judgements into the anticipated background understanding of the reader in an appropriate way. In sum, it is admitted that the utterances with the modal verb *should* in messages (17) and (35) are borderline cases in that the epistemic modality aspect is present in both of them.

In message (28), the female technical expert gives her assertive opinion by using the writer's party-oriented high-level modal verb *have to*, in order to express a solution she finds obligatory in solving the present recurrent problem, *All the shifts of the three lines **have to be trained** to avoid off-centre strapping.* The message is written in a non-routine situation involving safety hazards for the customer, and the writer acknowledges writer's party responsibility for the problem. The expert position legitimizes the expressions of the forceful and emotional evaluations and judgements toward the writer's party, conveyed with assertive and emphatic linguistic utterances, including *have to*, after having elaborated on the background and the reasons for the recurring problem. Allegedly, the writer uses this forum to initiate discussion on the recurrent problem, since she addresses the message also to a management level person.

In message (37), the writer's party-oriented verb *have to* functions as giving emphasis to the writer's statement of a fact conveyed in a situation in which the writer expresses his views and argumentation in a discourse event involving conditions, which make it difficult for the writer to assert anything too definite. The message is written by the male technical expert and it is about delayed deliveries due to testing procedure, and the utterance including the conditions is placed in the core message, *They could send it immediately if the test results are ready, otherwise they **have to delay** shipment two days for instance.* The writer's party-oriented *they have to delay* conveys the writer's evaluation and judgement about the necessity of the action under the named conditions.

Two instances of the root modal verb *shall* function as expressing obligation in similar situations in the present data. One occurrence is in message (29), written by the female technical expert to an American operative-level informant, and the other one in message (37), written by the male technical expert to Finnish and French management-level informants. *Shall* can be regarded as writer's party-oriented utterance, and it is borrowed in its present function from standards, representing technical jargon, to express obligation when explaining the necessary test and measuring procedures required for various processes. In the two messages, the statements including *shall* are extracts or direct loans from the named standards, and they are used in a persuasive way, in order to convince readers of the rightness of the information, and the necessity of the testing procedure, in order to support the claims and views offered in the messages to gain readers' compliance. The message-initial utterances are as follows: *xxxx states that tension test specimens* ***shall be taken*** *from finished material and...* in message (29), and *Tension test specimens* ***shall be taken*** *from finished materials...* in message (37).

In message (18) three modal verb expressions are used in the post-sequence in which the writer explicates his doubts concerning customers' requirement to receive updated information about the heat numbering system. The expression with *should* was discussed under customer-orientation in this chapter. The post-sequence is as follows:

> *I don't see, why the customers* ***should*** *really know the actual dates of the casts produced in our mill. The product identification* ***must be*** *the same as shown on the test certificates. That's all what* ***is required****, in my humble opinion.*

The writer gives his reasons for his doubts by implicit references to standards and documents to acquire the reader's compliance by using two high-level modal verbs *must* and *require* in their impersonalized forms, conveying writer's party-orientation and the subsequent obligation to comply with the requirements of official standards. By doing this, the writer relies on the shared knowledge between the reader and the writer concerning the applicability of certain standards and documents in the branch. Allegedly, the writer uses the message-final utterance, *in my humble opinion*, using the adjective *humble* in its opposite meaning in an ironic way, relying on the reader's prior experience of the writer's expertise and credibility in providing information and offering views in similar discourse events. The writer uses the adjective *humble* as an understatement to signal the ironic stance of the utterance.

Adjectives or adverbs

In the present data, there are adjectives and adverbs used to bring in interpersonal elements into interaction, by revealing writers' attitudes toward propositions. The use of the adverb *unfortunately*, which functions as expressing the writer's affective values, i.e. regret or genuine apology towards the reader, was analysed in Chapter 5.2.1.

The adjectives and adverbs analysed in their contexts of use convey the writers' personal evaluation of the topic discussed, i.e. they are used as triggers to help the reader make inferences of the writers' attitudes towards the discourse issues. Message (40) initiates by an evaluative utterance in a sentence *It seems* ***very unfair*** *that we have to pay the charges for the* *mistake (Customer company name) made, but I don't think we are able to get the money from the customer.* The evaluative *very unfair* is used by an operative level interactant writing to a management level person in a discourse situation involving high severity level, i.e. the supplier in Finland has lost money due to a customer's mistake. The writer gives her evaluative opinion of the customer's behaviour, which she finds unethical. However, by using the sentence-initial *It seems*, the writer aims at withholding her full commitment to her evaluation. In the same message, the evaluative superlative form *the best* is used message-finally to give views of how to reclaim the money. After having offered her suggestion of the procedure, the writer conveys an evaluation of her suggestion by the expression *I think this is* ***the best*** *we can do under the circumstances.* The expression *I think* and *under the circumstances*, the latter referring to the writer's suspicions concerning the reclaim, mitigate the evaluative expression in order to save her face if the reader does not comply with the suggestions offered by the writer.

In message (38), written by the same interactant as message (40) to the same reader in a similar discourse event, i.e. the customer owes the supplier in Finland, the core message-final expression *I'm not confident* conveys in a rather assertive way the writer's suspicion of what was told to her by a bank's representative concerning the collection procedure. The bank's representative name is given in the message and the writer utters her suspicion in the following statement: *She says that they have "escalated us to top priority", but* ***I'm not confident*** *that anything is being done.* The quotation marks in the utterance do not serve as signalling a direct loan from the bank's representative's statement only, but can be interpreted in the present context as emphasizing the writer's suspicion, and perhaps sarcasm, toward the statement. The utterance *she says* can be interpreted as meaning 'she claims' in the present context. This interpretation receives its justification from the fact that it has taken a long time for the bank people to take care of the matter, as stated message-initially by the writer, *Just to let you know that a month after our meeting little has changed.* Since the writer has reason not to confide in the bank's representative's statements, she uses an assertive and a somewhat sarcastic tone in her message.

Message (16) represents upward vertical, high severity level interaction, i.e. there are safety hazards involved with the strapping of material. The writer acknowledges the writer's party responsibility message-initially, and promises future action to prevent similar flaws. The post-sequence conveys the writer's personal views of the management of the recurrent problem, referring to the personnel as the primary reason for the problem by writing *Auditing and* *inspecting seems to be the* ***only*** *way to educate people here in the mill.* The adjective *only* can be interpreted to convey root modal obligation, 'people have to be educated by auditing and inspecting', which is mitigated by the verb *seems*. As a matter of fact, the same writer uses a root modal expression in message (28), i.e. *All the shifts* ***have to be trained*** *to avoid off-centre strapping.* The utterance at the end of the sequence, before the message-final utterance of regret, includes an evaluative adjective *fine*; *I thought that our* ***fine*** *automatic packaging line would solve this type of problems, but automation is not a solution.* The use of the evaluative *fine* can be interpreted to convey the writer's sarcastic or frustrated attitude toward the automatic packing system. Message (28) explicates the problems with automation as follows: *There were also problems with the automation.* The writer's party-oriented evaluation included in the utterance *our* ***fine*** *automatic packaging line* conveys the writer's view that if the personnel does not do their jobs properly, enhanced technical solutions do not help. The message is addressed to a Finnish management level person, probably to report the recurrent problem and to initiate discussion on the recurrent problem to solve it by training and inspecting the personnel.

In the present data, three instances of the adverb *finally* are used in past tense sentences to refer to events of the past, with an influence on the present state of affairs. In earlier research, *finally* has been treated as textual metadiscourse under the categories of text connectives (Vande Kopple 1985), sequencers (Crismore et al. 1993), frame markers (Hyland 1998a), or organizers (Louhiala-Salminen 1999). In the reply message (14), an American customer explains to an American MMC staff member the reasons for their non-payment. The writer refuses full personal responsibility for the negligence in the core message, partly by shifting the responsibility to the computing department, in the following way: *I realize that this problem does not concern you but we have been speaking with our corporate computer "geeks" and they have* ***finally*** *decided on how to issue the credit,.* The writer's party-oriented adjective *finally* conveys the writer's negative attitude toward the efficiency of their computer department. The use of the inverted commas or quotation marks in *"geeks"* can be regarded as emphasizing the writer's negative or derogatory attitude toward the computing personnel. The shifting of responsibility to a named department and the negative attitudes expressed toward the personnel function as doing face work for the writer. On the other hand, by doing this, the writer puts the corporate image at stake.

The adverb *finally* is used in message (21), in which a Finnish management level person reports the reasons for late deliveries and acknowledges writer's party responsibility message-initially. The first paragraph explains the reasons in detail, and the second paragraph initiates by the sentence *Polishing **finally** started during week 825 anf (Customer company name) material was done.* The use of the adverb *finally* functions to convey the writer's readiness to acknowledge responsibility on the one hand, and the writer's annoyance for the mismanagement of the matter by the mill in Finland, on the other hand. The sentence to follow reinforces this interpretation, *The result was that we were 3 weeks late from confirmations and 4 weeks from their request.*

In message (18) the adverb *finally* is used primarily to convey temporal aspects when providing a historical background to the discourse topic, and consequently is not assigned under attitudinal interpersonal metadiscourse. However, the writer's annoyance is conveyed partly by the adverb *finally*, together with other interpersonal metadiscourse elements.

In the reply message (34) the adverb *hardly* denotes writer's suspicious attitude concerning the two hours' time limit suggested by the reader in his initial message as long enough for further processing of material, *Two hours after coldrolling is **hardly** long enough to reach the ambient temperature.* In the previous sentence *may* is used to convey the writer's views of the same matter, *Temperature changes in order of 5 C degrees only **may** have dramatic effect on the strength values.* Mitigation does face work for the writer, since he can maintain his face and image as an expert in a discourse event in which there are no exact test results available, as explicated by him message-finally, *It was not quite clear if the same material was retested or a similar material of another coil - you said just "same operation".* By stating this, the writer shifts the responsibility for the missing, exact information to the reader, in a mitigated way, though, by uttering *It was not quite clear if.* The inverted commas in "*same operation*" are not interpreted as attitudinal interpersonal metadiscourse in the present context; they indicate a direct loan from the reader's initial message, which is enclosed to message (34).

5.2.4 Summary

The initial positioning of the apologetic utterances in reply messages functions as facilitating the interpretation process of the core communicative purpose, aided by the initial message enclosed to the reply message. The final positioning of the repeated and rephrased apologetic expressions in messages in the present data function to emphasize the severity level of the situations, by uttering the responsibility with justifications before the utterances of regret or offers of apology, showing the writer's genuine feeling of sympathy and commiseration with the reader for the harm or extra work caused to the reader, typically not by the writer personally.

The utterances with the words *sorry*, *apology*, *regret* and *unfortunately* as elicited in the present data in messages doing repair work, are mostly used in a routinized, functionally appropriate way in the various communication situations. The utterances convey the feeling of regret, or offer an apology for the inconvenience caused to the reader either by the writer personally or by a third party, functioning at bringing about or maintaining harmony or solidarity between the interactants. The routinized word *sorry*, used to express the feeling of regret alone or intensified by *so* and *very* as part of an apologetic utterance, is the most used word in the various communication situations. There are two instances with the noun *apology*, both utterances interpreted as genuine offers of apology. The majority of the discourse situations involving repair work strategies represent interaction between peers who deal with routine matters, i.e. documentation, with a low level of severity of violation. In situations involving upward interaction, there are no major differences in expressing the feelings of regret when compared to situations involving communication downwards or between peers.

Further, two apologetic utterances in the present data function as conveying the writers' personal feelings, i.e. frustration and irony. One message contains humour in an attempt to create common ground and harmony with the reader when informing of a customer's refusal. Typography and punctuation are used to reinforce the humorous aspect of the utterance. A writer of a message, not uttering an apology or regret, expresses irritation and frustration due to a recurring problem. Frustration and irritation are expressed in high severity level situations, and irony in a more routine situation, both interactions involving vertical upward interaction. The utterance, *In my humble opinion.*, can be interpreted to function in the discourse event as an ironic comment from the technical expert. The writers' expert roles can be suggested to empower the expressions of personal feelings in the discourse event. Further, the repetitive utterances of request (message 1) and the repetitive apologetic utterances (message 2) can be regarded as functioning as showing how emotions, i.e. personal frustration, influence the message structure and the linguistic utterances in the present messages. However, these utterances of request as such are not categorized under interpersonal metadiscourse, but the linguistically explicit interpersonal elements included in the repetitive utterances are categorized under the functions of interpersonal metadiscourse.

In order to express their affective attitudes in repair work interaction in the present data, the writers use verbs of obligation mainly in conveying their evaluations and judgements about the necessity of the propositions expressed. The present work categorizes the different utterances conveying various degrees of obligation into customer-oriented, reader- or reader's party-oriented, writer-oriented, and writer's party-oriented utterances of obligation. The highest frequency, i.e. eleven occurrences, is in the writer's party-oriented category of verbs of obligation. There are two utterances with the modal verb *should*, but both are borderline cases in their expressing necessity, since the epistemic meaning is present in both discourse events. Further, the writer's party-oriented category includes a wide range of high-level expressions of necessity, including *have to*, *be forced to*, *must*, *shall*, and *require*. The two utterances with the formal modal verb *shall* are from extracts from official standards. All the messages in this category have the primary communicative purpose of doing repair work, two including an apology. All involve management level personnel, and the two technical experts, except for one messages, which is exchanged between two management level persons. The discourse events involve either writer's party responsibility, or they represent situations in which responsibility is not acknowledged by the writer, including both high and low severity level events. Thus, it can be suggested that interactants possessing a managerial position or holding an expert role are prone to interact in situations in which it appropriate to convey attitudes and judgements about the necessity of actions in an assertive way to achieve readers' compliance, knowing that the expected actors represent the writer's party. The expressions of necessity are explicit and transparent for the readers to arrive at interpretations expected by the writers.

The most frequently used reader-oriented or reader's party-oriented modal verb of obligation is *should*, represented by six occurrences in discourse events representing both horizontal operative-level or management-level interaction (five instances), or upward vertical interaction (one instance). The discourse events are either the writer- or writer's party-oriented (four occurrence), customer-oriented (two occurrences), or the reader- or reader's party-oriented (one occurrence) situations, involving from low to high severity level. In this category, two high-level verbs of obligation, i.e. one occurrence of *need to* and two occurrences of *have to* are used. Basing on the above findings, it can be argued that more mitigated forms than in the previous category are used when conveying evaluations and judgements in obligating the reader or the reader's party.

The two occurrences of *should* in the writer-orientation category involve a management level reader, both involving a high severity level of the discourse event. This may indicate that the obligation is expressed in a form of a suggestion, also in management-level peer-to-peer interaction, when the reader is involved in the obligation. The customer-oriented situation, involving management-level interactants, allows for the use of a stronger verb, i.e. *need to*, since the writer expects the reader to filter the utterance on forwarding it to the customer.

In the present repair work interaction, writers use a variety of adjectives and adverbs to express their personal evaluations and judgements of the propositional content they convey in their messages. It is probably easy to predict, inferring from the type of interaction under scrutiny, i.e. repair work interaction, that most adjectives and adverbs have negatively charged connotations in their contexts of use, independent of the positive face value of the words, such as *fine*, *the best* and *fine*. Frequently, the adjectives or adverbs have writer- or writer-party-orientation, which may explain the negative stance in them. Other adverbs and adjectives with one or more occurrences are the following: *unfair*, *I'm not confident*, *the only*, *finally* (three occurrences), and *hardly*.

5.3 Bring about personalized stance

5.3.1 Introduction

Assigning conversational features that are considered as part of interpersonal metadiscourse under its own category in the present analysis results from the suggestions that electronic mail language is conversational, informal in nature; sometimes it is referred to as "conversation in the written mode". The aim of the present analysis is to seek evidence to these suggestions. Due to the limited number of messages analysed, the ensuing analysis primarily aims at discussing the functions and strategic uses of the various lexical-phrasal and typographical elements bringing about conversational and personal nature in the discourse. Thus, the frequencies of occurrences of the various conversational elements are not the main focus of the analysis. Syntax is not under scrutiny in the present work.

The role of discourse within society and culture can be seen as historically variable, and it can be argued that in modern and contemporary society discourse has taken on a major role in sociocultural reproduction of change (Fairclough 1995:2). Contemporary cultural values emphasize informality, and the predominant shift is toward speech-like forms in writing. Further, the overall democratizing development of societies ties in with the informalization of contemporary society, which displays itself in the conversationalization of the public discourse practices, including professional discourse. Discourse practices are taking on an increasingly conversational nature, restructuring the boundaries between the traditional public and private spheres (Fairclough 1992:204).

Research on influences of computer-mediated communication (CMC), or electronic language, on organizational communication (e.g. Zachary 1994, Nanz & Drexel 1995) suggest that the introduction of electronic interaction systems in organizations has partly accelerated the development of leaner, and consequently more democratic organizations. The new technology does not only make interaction more feasible within and between organizations. It also encourages interaction across organizational hierarchies. For instance, in electronic mail systems, there is practically no screening to prevent communication, thanks to writers' direct access to recipients' e-mail addresses. The general democratizing of society and organizations, aided partly by the above developments, is claimed to have effect on the interactional behaviour of members of organizations, and also on the language used in electronic interaction. As pointed out by Fairclough (1992, 1995), conversationalization is colonizing various professional practices.

In electronic systems, the possibility of virtually instantaneous interaction in the written mode, with no physical distance constraints between participants, sets electronic language apart from both written and spoken discourse. The range of electronic discourse continuum is as wide as that of spoken and written discourse. The relations between spoken and written discourse are complex and, therefore, comparisons between texts should consider various factors influencing the discourse events in which the texts have been produced. As suggested by Sarangi and Roberts (1999), members of organizations and workplaces share interactional practices, but interaction between members is dynamic, since members' texts and talk change due to the general developments in society and organizations, as suggested above (Fairclough 1992, 1995). The change may take place by regulation or without regulation. An example of a change factor influencing discourse practices in organizations is the advent of the new technology, i.e. electronic mail systems. It is postulated by several writers on e-mail language (e.g. Rubin 1992, Alatalo 1996, Gains 1999, Louhiala-Salminen 1995, 1999) that e-mail language is conversational in nature; some claim that e-mail language is an offshoot of conversation.

The interactional conventions and practices change, and the appearance of marked texts (c.f. Biber 1988:52-58), i.e. deviating in some aspect from the conventions of traditional business writing, sent in the written mode via e-mail have become acceptable in today's business interaction. This development is in line with the general tendency toward informality and personalized writing in the public domain, allowing writers to project their identities into texts. Conversationalization of written discourse can be seen as an orientation to individuals rather than to their positions, roles, or the power they hold. Thus, it can also be suggested that the tendency to eliminate overt power markers is closely associated with a tendency toward informality and more democratic discourse (Fairclough 1992:204). Some messages in the present data contain features associated with speaking, i.e. syntactic and lexical features. The aim of the ensuing analysis is to explore the extent to which the barriers between the conventional written business discourse and the more informal and personal discourse practices are rejected in the professional written interaction under scrutiny. The change tendencies in electronic mail interaction were discussed in more detail in Chapter 4.3.3.

This chapter deals with the lexical-phrasal elements of interpersonal metadiscourse which function as bringing about conversational nature into the 40 repair work messages, and which consequently introduce informality into discourse and make it more personalized when compared to traditional written business discourse. The primary function of some linguistic utterances is other than bringing about conversational nature into discourse, and consequently they will be analysed under other functional categories for their primary functions. The lexical-phrasal elements included in the present analysis are either single lexical items, e.g. *Ok*, or multiple lexical items, e.g. *well anyway*. The linguistic elements assigned under this category are regarded as explicitly including conversational features of language use. The syntactic features to add to the conversational nature of messages are not included. Instances of small talk and various wishes with direct addresses of persons, e.g. *Good morning F1 and F7*, are discussed in this chapter, and it is argued that these chunks receive their interpersonal metadiscoursal interpretations by their contexts.

The linguistic features functioning as emphasizing a conversational, and consequently personalized nature of the messages under analysis are assigned under interpersonal metadiscourse, since they convey the writer's willingness to introduce an informal atmosphere into the discourse event and establish a feeling of closeness, or togetherness with the reader/s. The personalized, informal style allows writers to project themselves into discourse as individuals, rather than as role-holders. The suggestion of closeness leads to an argument that the conversational linguistic elements used in the discourse events under analysis can be regarded as unmarked, or preferred expressions, since expressions of preferred establish closeness and connection, whereas expressions of dispreferred create distance and lack of connection between interactants (c.f. Yule 1996:82).

The present analysis makes use of some basic notions of conversational analysis; some lexical-phrasal elements analysed can be regarded as turn-taking or turn-indicating devices, or devices indicating topic shifts. Further, some utterances or sequences of utterances can be regarded as adjacency pairs. However, questions or requests for information are not automatically assigned under interpersonal metadiscourse, even though they can be regarded as the first part in the sequence of adjacency pairs. In the present data, there are dots or dashes used to indicate a pause or a silence in the discourse, which correspond to pauses in oral discourse. Some writers use capitalization and exclamation marks to introduce conversational features into discourse. These typographical devices are not counted as interpersonal metadiscourse, unless there are clear contextual cues for doing so. E.g. the writer of message (18) evidently uses the two utterance-final exclamation marks to emphasize the confusing nature of information, i.e. *This is the situation still now: the real calendar week 35 is just at the beginning, however our melts are running at the "weeknumber" 841! The first cast of this year 80101 according to the old notation was done 29th December 1997 already!* The confusing nature of the word *weeknumber* in inverted commas is explicated by the utterance, *Thus there is no correspondence of the melt numbers to the real week anymore.* In message (37), the same writer uses the exclamation mark to emphasize the opposing nature of the information he gives, compared to what the reader suggested earlier, *I checked four certificates for material for xxx to (Customer company name) during last week: all certificates were in time!* The reader had suggested earlier that most deliveries are late. In oral discourse, prosody is used for the purpose; in written discourse, writers make use of typographical devices to convey the subtle, implicit meanings.

The data under scrutiny abounds in contracted forms regarded as conversational features in traditional business writing, such as *I'm*, *I don't*. These instances are not counted as interpersonal metadiscourse, since they represent the appropriate, preferred expressions in e-mail messages aiming at economy in language use. However, in some discourse events the full forms, such as *we do not*, are counted as interpersonal metadiscourse, since they are interpreted as functioning as emphasizing the force of the utterance or the writer's certainty toward the proposition.

Addressing the reader by the first name without a greeting *Hi* or *Hello*, both message-initially or in the message text, is regarded as interpersonal metadiscourse. This conversational usage can be regarded as an effort to emphasize the personal, intimate relationship between the interactants emphasizing orientation to person rather than to position, typical of oral interaction in English, and non-typical for written business interaction. In message (14), in a writer's party responsibility discourse situation representing high severity level, the direct address of the reader by her first name emphasizes the idea of I-to-you discourse, in which the writer explains the justifications for the mishap, and launches the good news before acknowledging personal responsibility. Also message (7) has a message-initial direct address of the reader before the intensified *sorry* utterance. In messages (21) and (22), a Finnish male management-level interactant addresses his management-level addressees by their first names. This can be regarded as indicating the writer's aim at using a personalized stance, involving readers explicitly, in discourse events with high severity level, involving the writer's party responsibility. The Finnish male writer does not use a greeting of any kind in his other messages.

The message-initial greetings *Hi* and *Hello* are not regarded as interpersonal metadiscouse, since they are conventional e-mail usage. The corporate e-mail etiquette, published in 1996, recommends the use of these utterances to open e-mail messages in informal discourse events in English. A generic greeting, *Hello to you, everyone*, is used to open the discourse in message (13), which is a multiple-addressee message written vertically upwards in a high severity level situation involving 3rd-party responsibility. Evidently, with this interpersonal device, the writer aims at achieving an informal, more personal and conversational approach by addressing the readers by the generic *you* and *everyone* before launching the bad news: the lost consignment was never found. The writer uses a complimentary close *Kind regards* in this message. The most often used epistolary conventions, represented by the complementary closes *Regards* or *Best regards*, or the abbreviated *Rgds* or *Brgds*, recommended by the corporate e-mail etiquette, are not counted as interpersonal metadiscourse. The complimentary closes that explicitly emphasize the relationship between the writer and the reader, above the conventions of written business interaction, are counted as interpersonal metadiscourse. An operative level peer-to-peer message (8), written in a routine situation, opens by a salutation addressing the two readers by their first names, *Good morning F1 and F7*. The writer signs off by the complimentary close *My best regards to you both*. The first-person possessive pronoun *my* and the second-person pronoun *you* indicate the familiarity between the interactants and the writer's willingness to maintain a close relationship with the readers. Thus, the salutation utterance and the complimentary close utterance in message (8) are assigned under conversational interpersonal metadiscourse.

The abbreviated words used in the running text, such as *cert.* for *certification*, *docs* for *documents*, *info* for *information*, *max* for *maximum*, *min* for *minute/s* or *minimum*, or *specs* for *specifications*, are regarded as professional jargon and economic language use in the present discourse events, comparable to e.g. initialisms and acronyms, and consequently are not assigned under interpersonal metadiscourse subcategories. However, the utterance *For your info...*, which includes the abbreviation *info*, is counted as interpersonal metadiscourse, because it is regarded as representing a conversational, personalized style in that it addresses the reader directly when initiating a new turn in discourse. Thus it creates a familiar relationship, I-writing-to-you, in vertically upward interaction when the writer elaborates on the problems in a discourse event involving high severity level. The emphasis on the pronoun *you* can also suggest that the writer is using her power as a technical expert to initiate this discussion with the management level, signalling that the information is not supposed to be forwarded to the customer.

The present work acknowledges the polypragmatic and frequently ambiguous nature of interpersonal metadiscourse. Consequently, the lexical-phrasal elements assigned under various interpersonal metadiscourse categories may signal several functions simultaneously. Additionally, some functions may be carried out by several lexical-phrasal elements. Hence the reoccurrence of some lexical-phrasal elements in the ensuing analysis when compared with the previous chapter and the chapters to follow.

5.3.2 Analysis of conversational features

Sorry, *Thanks* and Typographical Devices

The message-initial utterance *sorry* can be regarded as a linguistic element adding to the conversational nature of the e-mail messages under scrutiny. It typically serves as a compact response to earlier interaction, to which it provides a negative reply, especially in messages primarily providing information.

Message (12) is a message from a string of four messages in the data sent and forwarded about the same matter, a lost consignment. The follow-up message represents upward vertical interaction with high severity level.

Message (12)

To: A1, F3
cc:
Subject: (Customer company name)
Hello A1 and F3, (First names)
***Sorry**, that person in shipping department who has been investigating the matter not in, back only on Friday. (Shipping company name) people promised to get us some information for tomorrow. I'll inform you then.*
Kind regards,
F1 (First name)

The utterance *sorry*, separated by a comma from the following text sequence, initiates discourse on the main topic in a conversational way. In the present context, the utterance *sorry* serves as a direct reply to the question asked by A1 in his initial message, *Any news on the 'LOST' XXX skid?* before explaining the details of the matter.

The utterance *sorry* in message (1) preceded by the acceptance of responsibility and four dots, *I made the mistake**....sorry**.*, is regarded as interpersonal metadiscourse.

Message (1)

To: F1
cc:
Subject: Invoice xxxxxx
Hi F1 (First name)
*I need a credit issued because of an overcharge. I made the mistake **....sorry**. I was supposed to ship XX (.xxx) material to (Customer's first name), but instead I shipped XX (.xx) material. The customer decided that he needed the material that I sent (lucky for me), but I have to get a credit issued because of the price difference.*
Please get a credit issued for item 4........the price should of have .xx not .xxx. The credit should be around $xxx.xx.
Thanks,
....A2 (first name)

The four dots before the utterance *sorry* signal a pause or a silence, a feature of oral discourse, placed before or after an expression of regret or an offer of apology. The pause is used to reinforce the genuinity of the expression in this speaker responsibility situation. The other functions and the polypragmatic nature of the *sorry* utterances were discussed in chapter 5.2.1 and 5.2.2.

The politeness expression *Thanks*, the conversational variant of *Thank you*, is polypragmatic in nature in the present data. It is frequently used in messages including requests. The form *Thanks* functions as adding to the conversational nature of the messages, in addition to its primary function as reinforcing the requestive force of the direct and indirect requesting utterances, which typically precede the post-sequence utterance *Thanks*.

The typographically marked phrasal comment *(lucky for me)* will be analysed under idiomatic expressions in this chapter.

I think, I mean

I think can be regarded as a speaker-oriented discourse marker, typical of oral discourse. It is referred to as an opinion opener when it is expressed utterance-initially. However, *I think* may have other positions, i.e. at the end of an utterance or in the middle of an utterance. Holmes (1990:187) maintains that the function of *I think* varies with its syntactic position in an utterance. Further, Holmes points out that *I think* has a complex range of both affective and epistemic meanings. In most research, the utterance *I think* has been categorized under hedges functioning as attenuating the force of utterances by explicitly signalling that the speaker is not fully committed to what s/he says. Other research relying more on the context-specific functions treats *I think* differently. *I think* may have the function of expressing the writer's uncertainty and tentativeness toward the propositions, but also that of expressing emphatic, assertive statements to add weight to e.g. opinions and views.

In her research on pragmatic force modifiers, Nikula (1996:106) refers to the use of *I think* or *I don't think* as a device enabling writers to play down negative comments and to emphasize their status as personal opinions rather than pieces of factual information. In the present data, the utterances *I think* and *I don't think* are used in messages primarily doing repair work when writers express their opinions. Thus, by using *I think* or *I don't think*, the emphasis is on interaction, rather than on conveying factual information, and writers welcome exchange of opinions in negotiating problematic issues, in order to put matters right.

The two examples in this chapter aim at visualizing the conversational nature of the utterances with *I think* in their contexts of use. Message (23) is written in operative level peer-to-peer interaction, representing non-routine situation involving highish severity level. It is the fifth message exchanged about a delayed issue of a credit note by a customer. The conversational interpretation of *I think* in the sentence *You can check with me in a week or two and if I haven't received the invoice for scrap credit in the mail then* ***I think*** *either F3 or (First name) should deal with him.* is reinforced by the conversational syntax in the sentence. A Finnish management level person uses *I think* in message (36) in replying to an inquiry by a French MMC person concerning late deliveries as follows: *Dear Fr2 (First name), We discussed about XXX in our internal Quality-meeting. Fastest and most popular way to solve the problem is to delay the delivery since certificate is ready.* ***I think*** *that in 90% of cases certificate is on time. We'll also try to accelerate transportation, testing, writing certs. Guys from XXX are today here and we'll also discuss with them.* Again it is postulated that the syntax and the general informal style reinforce the conversational nature of the utterance *I think.*

However, it is acknowledged that the utterance *I think* has more prevalent primary functions in the present repair work interaction. Utterances with *I think* will be analysed further in Chapter 5.4.2 when discussing emphatic interpersonal discourse. Chapter 5.5.2 will focus on the mitigating functions of *I think.*

Message (9) is a routine follow-up message responding to a previous message giving corrective information concerning credit notes and drafts. The message represents operative-level peer-to-peer interaction and involves low severity level. The message-initial utterance *Sorry -* ***I mean*** *xxxxxx and xxxxxx!* conveys the writer's regret for having given wrong information in the previous message. The message-final exclamation mark strengthens the force of the expression of regret, and can be regarded as a typographical device for prosodic emphasis. The dash after *sorry* indicates a pause before launching the corrective information. In oral discourse, the utterance *sorry* may be followed or preceded by a pause, which adds to the emphasis of the expression of regret. *I mean* is primarily a speaker-oriented repair device, which functions as focusing the listener's attention on a modification or clarification of the previous utterance. It is frequently used as a marker of informality to reduce social distance between the speaker and the addressee (Stubbe and Holmes 1995:70). In this context, the utterance *I mean* is a conversational way of expressing that the writer wants to correct the information she gave earlier. The utterance *I mean* can be interpreted as functioning as an implicit expression of personal responsibility for the wrong information, thus indicating topical involvement and signalling that the writer is engaged with what she writes. *I mean* in message (9) is the only instance of *I mean* in the present repair work messages.

<u>*I thought, Thought*</u>

In message (16), the writer uses the past tense form *I thought* of *I think* when referring to the past in her discourse concerning a recurrent problem. The utterance is used in the text sequence to express the writer's opinions and views. The use of the past tense reinforces the writer's personal involvement in the matter in that she conveys the idea that she has been preoccupied by the problem for a long time. Thus, by expressing involvement with the topic, the writer aims at creating common ground with the reader in a personalized way by using the expression *I thought*. The text passage including the utterance *I thought* is discussed further when *a bit*, *a couple of*, *just*, and *quite a* are analysed later in this chapter.

The past tense spoken form *Thought* is used discourse-initially in message (39) starting a prospective introduction into the topic of the message indicated on the subject line, ***Thought*** *I'd keep you up to date with the latest developments. Thought* represents conversational, personalized style, and the personal stance is reinforced by the frequent use of the first person pronoun *I*, together with the direct reference to the reader by the second person pronoun *you* in the discourse-initial statement.

<u>Pragmatic Particles and Phrases, and Typographical Devices</u>

Message (2) represents operative-level peer-to-peer interaction between interactants who interact frequently on a regular basis, mainly concerning documentation. Message (2) is a follow-up message to message (1), which includes some conversational features, such as typography and the utterance *(lucky for me)*.

Message (2)

Hi F1 (First name)
Ok, you know *the below e-mail that I sent to you regarding the wrong price........**well anyway**, I received a credit invoice. Unfortunately I just realized something when I was doubling checking the credit amount.......I did not need the credit because I priced the item right for the type of material and finish (xx) that I sent to (Customer name).*
I am sorry about requesting a credit when I didn't need one, ***so*** *please have credit xxxxxx voided.*
Thanks and sorry.......A2 (first name)

The conversational style used in message (2) is more prominent than in message (1). The pre-sequence-initial pragmatic particle *Ok*, right after the greeting, the pragmatic particles *you know* and *well anyway*, the latter proceeded by eight dots, are the lexical and typographical items representing conversational style in message (2). There is another set of seven dots in message (2) before the expression of responsibility in the core message, serving as a pause before explicating writer's responsibility. Further, in message (2), the dots can be interpreted as corresponding to pauses in oral discourse to serve as transitions to a new topic. The conversational pragmatic particle *so* in the message-final requestive utterance serves as a topic-shift device. The writer of message (14) uses ten dots for the latter purpose in the core message, and the conversational utterance *so* before the dots together with the utterance *to make a long story short* after the dots are examples of how dots and *so* are used as a transition to a new topic, the main issue of the message. Message (7) uses a dash before the conversational *so* to serve as a pause and to indicate a topic shift. The *so* particle can also be interpreted as functioning as a cohesive element, which indicates that what follows has some relevance to what was written before the particle and the preceding dots. The pragmatic particle *so* is presented in the table listing types of transitions and their matching words and phrases under the summary and the result categories in a normative guidebook on e-mail language (Angell & Heslop 1994:63). The conversational nature of message (7) is emphasized by the multifunctional capitalized sigh *AHHHHH!*, discussed further in Chapter 5.2.2. The writer of messages (1) and (2) uses a varying number of dots in her messages, between four to seven, before her first name when signing off, which may be influenced by a recommendation by some writers of e-mail etiquette guide books to "put one or two hyphens before your name on a separate line to set if off from the text of your message" (Angell & Heslop 1994:31).

In message (2), after the message-initial *Ok*, the conversational, multifunctional utterance *you know*, frequent in relaxed and casual discourse (Holmes 1990:192), functions as explicitly referring to the reader. According to Kangasharju (1998:140 - 142), the continuer *ok* is used in discourse e.g. when there is nothing to repair in the discourse of the recipient, i.e. it is a device to indicate acknowledgement. However, a fundamental characteristic of the response particle *ok* is that its meaning is created in interaction. In the present context *Ok* functions as initiating discourse. From the point of view of discourse structure, the reader-oriented *you know* is used to initiate the reference to the enclosed previous message. From a pragmatic point of view, expressions like *you know*, according to Hyland (1998b:444), explicitly address the reader, either by selectively focusing their attention or by including them as participants in the discourse event. The utterance *you know* signals the writer's involvement with the reader, and its interpersonal force is in its capacity to express the writer's willingness to reduce distance with the reader. The range of contexts of use of *you know* reveals that it is a complex and sophisticated pragmatic particle. It may act as a turn-yielding device, as a signal of linguistic imprecision of the message, as an appeal to the reader for reassuring feedback, or as a signal that the writer attributes understanding to the listener. *You know* has other broad interactive functions, e.g. it can express the writer's confidence in the reader's sharing of relevant knowledge, reassuring the reader of the validity of the proposition, expressing uncertainty regarding the reader's attitude (Holmes 1990:189, Stubbe and Holmes 1995:69). In the present context, *you know*, directly addressing the reader by *you*, explicitly focuses the reader's attention to the enclosed e-mail. It is not typical of writers of e-mail messages in the present data to make such explicitly focused references to the enclosed messages. It is possible that the explicit reference to the enclosed message is meant to help the reader to focus on the main issue right from the beginning. The conversational linguistic elements *Ok*, *you know*, and *well anyway* function as creating a familiar, informal atmosphere between operative-level peer interactants in a writer responsible situation. At the same time these utterances serve as introductory turns, or transitional utterances to new topics in the message. *Ok* initiates the whole discourse, *you know* serves to identify the general topic of the discourse, and *well anyway* serves as an utterance to state the present state of the matters. The six to eight dots in message (2) reinforce the conversational nature by signalling pauses before introducing a new topic to the discourse.

However, a fundamental characteristic of the response particle *ok* is that its meaning is created in interaction. In message (3), in the utterance *Production people said that it is **ok** to make those changes*, *ok* is a conversational replacement for the written discourse word *possible*, and it adds to the informality of interaction. Message (4), analysed in Chapter 5.2.2, starts with the conversational *Ok*, placed in the pre-sequence, and it primarily functions as a conversational turn-initiating device at the beginning of the message, and it aims at creating a familiar atmosphere between the operative level peers in a writer responsible discourse event. Message (24) has *OK* in the post-sequence, which gives views and suggestions; *We believe that the edge trop of the master coil was too steep. The coils would be **OK** after slitting.* The compact and economic *OK* in the latter suggestory utterance, in which the writer's certainty to the proposition is withheld by the use of *would*, is a conversational variant of 'usable, acceptable by the customer'. Thus, in the present contexts *ok* does not primarily function as a response particle in the way Kangasharju (1998) suggests.

The writer of message (18) uses the conversational phrase *As you certainly know,* core message-initially as a transition to the background information of the main topic. The reader is involved explicitly by the use of *you*. The writer makes use of the emphatic *as you know* and *certainly* to convey that, as a matter of fact, what is to follow is supposed to be shared knowledge between the interactants. The use of exclamation marks at the end of two utterances in the core message also signals the emphatic nature of the utterances. The core message text sequence uses the pronouns *we* and *our* or impersonalization, when explaining the main topic. The use of the pronoun *I* in the pre-sequence utterance *This is just stating the same what I told in year 1996.*, and the post-sequence utterance *I don't see, why the customer should really know the actual dates of the casts produced in our mill.* shows the writer's involvement in the matter and indicates that the writer is allegedly irritated by being asked to explain the matter repeatedly. The personalized I-to-you approach in giving opinions and views emphasizes the conversational nature of the discourse. The direct reference to the reader by *you* when referring to the shared knowledge between the writer and the reader, emphasized by the adverb *certainly* together with the other explicit or implicit devices discussed above, can be suggested to pose a threat on the reader's face.

In message (23), the conversational expression *....in otherwords* is used in operative-level peer-to-peer interaction by an American interactant as a summarizing transition to the expression of personal views of a customer's action explained in the preceding text. The phrase *in other words* is an utterance which introduces a paraphrase of the preceding utterance (Intaraprawat & Steffensen 1995:260), and is categorized under textual metadiscourse. In the present informal, conversational context, however, it is assigned under interpersonal metadiscourse, since it is interpreted as adding to the informality, or conversational nature of the discourse event. It is used utterance-initially in the message as follows: *I have received verbal confirmation from (Customer company name) that they will credit us back the scrap. Even though I received verbal confirmation, I do not know how long it will take for them to get around to giving us the credit back**....in otherwords** I don't know if he was just telling me this so that I will leave him alone.* The four dots signal a conversational pause before the verbal utterance as well as the transition to a new topic.

<u>Small Talk</u>

Small talk is a central aspect of initiating oral discourse in the English-speaking world. Small talk is primarily social in nature, and it is used to build a friendly relationship with the other participants, so that the whole interaction becomes co-operative. In business contexts, e.g. Americans use small talk as an ad hoc prelude to real business because involved discussions about non-task-related topics are construed as irrelevant (Yamada 1990, 1992). Morand (1995) refers to the possible unfortunate consequences of small talk in intercultural encounters between native and non-native speakers of English. Small talk can be used for filling the silent gaps in discourse. An American may take refuge in small talk rather than staying silent. Asian listeners may experience it as trivial and wonder why a business professional should lower himself to such superficialities. Alternatively, Asians may attempt to interpret small talk as being significant to the business part of the discourse, and end in confusion or with a false impression (Yamada 1990, 1992).

In the present data, small talk is rare, and the topics of small talk are either the weather or holidays, and small talk sequences are placed either at the beginning or at the end of messages. Message (15) is the only repair work message including small talk. The message is written in a reader's party responsible situation with highish severity level, allegedly aiming at creating a friendly, familiar atmosphere before launching the main topic, negative from the point of view of the reader's party. The pre-sequence small talk chunk, *How are coping with the terrible weather? Is it still as cold today - I heard yesterday it was -41!*, includes a dash and an exclamation mark to add to the conversational nature of the small talk utterance. The use of the pragmatic particle *well* in the core message, at the beginning of the utterance explicating the reason for the request, serves as a turn-initial conversational utterance and adds to the familiar, informal style created by the pre-sequence small talk.

Let's / Let us

Let is used in the first person plural imperative utterance *let us*, or in its oral variant *let's*, as an auxiliary expressive of a request, command, warning, suggestion, etc. (Webster 1989:822). It is used as a conventionalized, informal style in oral discourse, e.g. as a suggestory formula. The interpretative comment *let us* presents the text as a piece of interpersonal interaction, establishes an interpersonal relationship between the writer, the expository I, and the reader, the explicit or implicit you (Nash 1992:24). In research on metadiscourse, the *let us* or *let's* constructions have been categorized under interpersonal metadiscourse, typically under the subcategory called "commentary" (e.g. Crismore et al. 1993:54, Intaraprawat & Steffensen 1995:264)) because it involves the reader directly, bidding for cooperation, and thus functions to build writer-reader relationship. The writer brings in the reader into the text by using the inclusive pronoun *us*, which refers both to the writer and the reader.

The *let's* utterance with the inclusive pronoun *us* can be regarded as being used in a persuasive way in the reply message (19), which represents management level interaction involving highish severity level. The post-sequence conversational *Let's see* utterance in ***Let's see** how good material it will be this time* can be interpreted as functioning as diverting the readers attention to a new topic from the main topic, i.e. delay in delivery, which is negative from the reader's point of view, since the writer gives tentative information regarding the reader's earlier inquiry. *Let's see* functions as adding to the reader involvement into the matter and the reference to the future, together with the use of the adjective *good*, aim at achieving a positive tone to the message and to soften the unspecified and negative core content information. The persuasiveness interpretation is possible in the present context, since the writer aims at making the shared interest of the writer and the reader transparent by using the inclusive *us* pronoun. In message (19) the writer's strategic use of the utterance *Let's see* functions as diverting the reader's attention from the past, the delay of delivery, to the future, the quality of future deliveries.

Message (21) is another example of management-level interaction involving highish severity level, and it also explains delays in deliveries. *Let's* is used in the message-final sentence *Obviously we should consider remedies for future but I do not know what they think of this situation, so* ***let's*** *consider them later.* The utterance *let's* is future-oriented as in message (19). The utterance in the present context falls into the category of suggestory formula, and it may represent idiosyncratic use. *Let's* is uttered after the writer has expressed his views in a tentative way to be considered by the reader. The inclusive *us*, used in the context in which *they* is used to refer to the customer, emphasizes the writer's aim at creating a personalized relationship with the reader, in order to solve the problem in the best possible way. The message-initial direct address by the first name of the reader and the conversational pragmatic particle *so* before the utterance *let's* add to the conversational nature in the message.

Message (25) represents vertically upward communication in a highish severity-level situation. Contextually, the *let's* utterance in ***Let's*** *take the material back.* can be interpreted as expressing a request or, alternatively, a suggestion. In the present context, the utterance can be interpreted as a request for action conveying, *Please send the material back.*, expressed by the writer basing on her technical expertise and subsequent power. However, there is a contextually competing interpretation for the utterance. The message is cc:ed to the Finnish management level person, and the use of the inclusive *us* can be regarded to include F5, the writer, and F3, the Finnish area sales manager. So, the utterance ***Let's*** *take the material back.* can be interpreted as conveying a suggestion to F3 who, as a decision maker concerning the business aspects of the transaction, has the final say in the decision making.

<u>*Around, a Bit, a Couple of, Just, Quite a*</u>

The approximate adverb *around* primarily functions as a strategy to withhold writer's full commitment to the statement. The adverb *around* in the present context in message (1) is a surprising instance of the use of the adverb, since the writer gives precise information concerning the total of the credit note including dollars and cents, i.e. *The credit should be* ***around*** *$xxx.xx.* The sentence uses the modal verb *should*, which expresses obligation, i.e. something must or should be done or should happen. A context-specific interpretation for the statement containing *around*, together with *should*, is that it functions as an implicit request to the reader to check the total of the credit note before issuing it and it is used in a way typical of oral discourse.

The spoken language expression *a couple of* is used in some repair work messages, mainly in text sequences where opinions and views are expressed. For instance message (16), representing upward vertical interaction, contains such an expression in the text sequence after the main factual information, *For your info ... We have audited one Canadian customer because of similar problems for the last two years,* ***a couple of*** *times a month. I have not seen any fast improvement. Auditing and inspecting seems to be the only way to educate people here in the mill. I thought that our fine automatic packaging line would solve this type of problems, but automation is not a solution. Sorry for my frustration.* The approximate expression *a couple of* matches with the writer's tentative style, e.g. *seems*, *I thought*, *would*, when expressing her opinions and views. *A couple of* is also used in management level interaction situation in message (22), in which the writer refuses responsibility explicitly.

The writer of message (28), analysed for its emotive aspect in Chapter 5.2.2, expresses her assertive views and opinions, and she separates them explicitly from the factual information she gives in the message. The utterances of views use expressions such as *What irritates me the most*, *I sometimes feel*, which show that the writer gets personal and emotional when writing upwards in the high severity-level situation. The utterances are as follow: *What irritates me the most, is that the line operators* ***just*** *pass the loose or broken coils, even though the amount of bands is insufficient!*, *The operating engineers have* ***quite a*** *job motivating their personnel.*, and *I sometimes feel that the operators do not care* ***a bit*** *what they are doing.* The conversational, personalized style when expressing views and opinions is emphasized by the use of the modifying devices *a bit*, *just*, and *quite a*, which can receive an emphatic or mitigating interpretation depending on the context (Nikula 1996:50). The writer of message (28) does not use such modifying devices in her messages when giving factual information. In the message the devices have an emphatic function rather than a mitigating one. The exclamation mark at the end of the sentence with *just* reinforces the emphatic interpretation. Thus, the devices are counted as interpersonal metadiscourse because they are interpreted as creating rapport with the reader through creating a sense of commitment and engagement with the topic.

In message (38), the modifier *just* yields the message-initial utterance a mitigating tone in upward vertical interaction, ***Just*** *to let you know that a month after our meeting little has changed.* In the present context, *just* can be interpreted as functioning as a conversational, discourse-initiating expression with neither an emphatic nor mitigating effect.

<u>*Yes*</u>

The message-initial response particle *Yes* is used in the reply message (30) directly giving an affirmative reply to the question put forward in the enclosed message. The utterance *Yes* is a conversational element in the message initiating a turn in interaction. That the message asking the question is enclosed, enables the use of the utterance *yes* as a discourse-initial utterance in a conversational way.

<u>Idiomatic Expressions</u>

The typographically marked expression *(lucky for me)* in message (1) is an utterance typical of oral discourse. It is personalized in that it contains the first person pronoun *me* including a direct reference to the writer. By placing it in the brackets, the writer uses it as a personal comment in a conversational way, allowing the display of the writer's personal feelings. The brackets can be regarded as serving as typographical pauses before and after the utterance, and thus they reinforce the conversational nature of the personal comment. In the familiar peer-to-peer and low severity-level situation, the writer assumes personal responsibility for the mistake and the utterance *(lucky for me)* explicates the writer's personal attitude toward the propositional content of the previous utterance, presenting the writer as an individual.

In message (14) the expression *so.......... to make a long story short*, used by an American customer writing to an operative level member of the American MMC staff after having elaborated on the justifications for the non-payment of a credit, is a conversational way to indicate a topic shift in discourse. The use of the pragmatic particle *so* followed by ten dots emphasizes the transition to the main topic in the message.

In management level interaction in message (22), involving high severity level, the writer uses a conversational expression *it is no good* after having refused responsibility discourse-initially, i.e. *B1, we cannot be responsible for 8+ tons cut to sheets and not noticed that **it is no good**.* The conversational style is initiated by the message-initial direct address of the reader. The message also contains the conversational adverb of approximation, *a couple of*. The use of the conversational style indicates the familiarity level between the interactants. Further, the explicit refusal of responsibility and the conversational expressions can be explained by the fact that the customer, not the reader, is responsible for the mishap and the passive voice refers to the customer.

Message (39) closes with an idiomatic expression typical of oral discourse, *So far so good...* The three dots at the end of the expression indicate that the writer is not totally confident with the information she gave in the message.

<u>Colloquialism</u>

A Finnish senior management level interactant uses the colloquial noun *guys* in his message to a French management level interactant in a statement ***Guys** from XXX are today here and we'll also discuss with them.* The use of the spoken variant of *persons* or *people* evidently indicates the familiar, informal relationship between the peer interactants. A week later when one of the technical experts in the data writes message (37) to the same person about the same matter referring to the same persons, he uses a more formal way of reference by writing the person's first and family names and the company name. This message represents upward vertical interaction and it conveys a more distant relationship between the interactants, even though both writers address the reader by his first name and sign off by using their first name.

A slang expression is used by an American customer in message (14) when referring to the computer people in his company when discussing the responsibility for the non-payment of the credit. The statement *I realize that this problem does not concern you but we have been speaking with our corporate computer **"geeks"** and they have finally decided to issue the credit.* The use of the inverted commas with the noun *geeks* may indicate that the writer is aware of the 'off-recordness' (the present writer's quotes) of the word. On the other hand, when the writer refers to the computer department and the systems he addresses as *our "new system"*. The use of the inverted commas may also be interpreted as functioning as conveying the writer's negative attitudes toward the computer department's work, which he claims to be the main reason for the non-payment of the credit to the supplier in Finland.

5.3.3 Summary

It is postulated that conversationalization is colonizing professional interactional practices and that discourse practices are taking on an increasingly conversational nature (Fairclough 1992). As suggested reasons for this conversationalization are, among others, the general democratizing of societies and workplaces and the new communication technology, including electronic mail systems. The postulation concerning the increased conversationalization of discourse seems to hold true in the present business-context repair work interaction via electronic mail. The high or highish familiarity level between the interactants, due to regular interaction via e-mail and other media, and the corporate policy aiming at diminishing the importance of hierarchical levels may be among the most important explanatory factors for the use of informal, conversational style in e-mail discourse in intra-corporate interaction in the present data. The technical properties built-in in e-mail systems facilitate instantaneous, spoken-like interaction in the written mode in real-time between interactants representing all organizational levels. Further, it can be argued that interactional practices between experienced users of e-mail systems have become shared, including the conversational stance in interaction in the present data. Convesationalization of discourse is not idiosyncratic language use since it is resorted to by most writers in the present data, independent of their organizational or expert position. It can be argued that the personalized style of oral discourse is used when writers aim at creating dialogue with readers, including discourse events involving high severity level. These events require persuasion and both writers' and readers' involvement is conveyed by expressions bringing about closeness and openness in interaction. However, writers use conversational features also when interacting in routine situations. If syntactic features were included in the analysis, conversational aspects would be even more prominent in the present data. It must be pointed out that the conversational elements analysed in this chapter may have other, primary interpersonal metadiscoursal functions in their contexts of use. These functions are discussed further under each interpersonal metadiscourse category.

The use of the conversational elements in the present business e-mail discourse indicates that the conversational features, which traditionally and conventionally have been seen as characteristics associated with speaking, are regarded as appropriate, and acceptable behaviour. However, it would be a mistake to underestimate the continuing power of the traditional conventions of written business interaction in the present data. Nevertheless, the change toward more conversational and informal style is visible. Thus, in the present discourse events the messages with conversational features cannot be regarded as marked texts. There are memoranda or minutes of meetings sent as attachments to report discussion and decisions made at meetings. In addition, there are extracts from various documents, e.g. standards or manuals, forwarded to recipients. Such documents can be regarded as representing the conventionally unmarked, written end of the continuum of messages, partly because they are planned and prepared beforehand applying the corporate standards. The majority of the messages, however, are instantaneous texts, composed on-line.

The linguistic elements representing oral discourse variants and typographical devices used by interactants in the way prosody is used in oral discourse in the present data are variable. First names are used message-initially or elsewhere in the message to address the reader directly and personally to create rapport between the interactants. Further, personalized salutations, such as *Good morning F1 and F7*, used with non-standard complimentary closes, such as *My best regards to you both*, reinforce the informal and close relationships typical of oral discourse, together with the person pronouns *I*, *we* and *you*.

Typographical devices, including dots and dashes, indicate the pauses of oral discourse. Further, exclamation marks are used to convey the emphatic prosodic feature, typical of spoken language usage.

Message-initial *Sorry* or *sorry* preceded by dots add to the conversational nature of discourse, even though they have other, more primary functions in the present data. The utterance *thanks*, which is the conversational version of *thank you*, is used as a routine message-final expression in messages including requests showing appreciation and urging the reader's compliance of the request.

The speaker-oriented utterance *I think*, typical of oral discourse, is briefly referred to in this chapter. The more primary functions will be analysed in Chapters 5.4.2 and 5.5.2. The informal speaker-oriented repair tool *I mean* which often signals informality and closeness between interactants is used once in the present repair work interaction. The message-initial, oral discourse utterance *Thought* and its written version *I thought* involve conversational stance in the discourse events in which they are used. Three instances of *let's*, primarily however suggesting or requesting a course of action, are also discussed in this chapter with secondary conversational functions.

The conversational pragmatic particle *ok* is multifunctional in the present data. It may convey the meaning of something being 'possible', or 'acceptable, usable', or it may function as a discourse-initial, turn-initiating linguistic element to open a discussion on the discourse topic. Other pragmatic particles bringing about conversational nature into discourse in the present data are the following: *you know*, *well anyway*, *....in otherwords*. The response particle *Yes* is used message-initially serving as a direct response to the question asked in the initial message enclosed to the reply message.

Small talk, typical of oral discourse, is rare in the present data: there is only one occurrence of it in the current repair work interaction. Its message-initial placement allegedly aims at creating an informal, familiar atmosphere in a discourse event in which the reader's party is responsible for accepting a customer's request. That small talk is so rare in the present data may be explained by the economy of language use in that solving the problematic situations is of primary importance for interactants knowing each other well. Traditionally, written business discourse has not included small talk, which may also explain the low frequency of small talk.

The evaluative expressions, such as *around*, *a bit*, *a couple*, *just* and *quite a*, represent the conversational features of discourse, simultaneously serving other functions which will be discussed further in the ensuing chapters.

Expressions idiomatic to oral discourse, including *(lucky for me)*, *it is no good*, and *So far so good...* function as conveying affective attitudes toward the propositions. The utterance *so..........to make a long story short* initiates a turn, which summarizes the justification given in the message.

Two occurrences of colloquialism were detected, i.e. *guys* and *"geeks"*, the latter in inverted commas, either indicating that the writer is conscious of the colloquial style, or that the writer has a negative attitude toward the persons he refers to, who according to the writer are responsible for the mismanagement of the matter discussed in the message.

When summarizing the functions of interpersonal metadiscoursal utterances in the concluding chapter in the current work, discourse-event-specific components will be introduced into the discussion in answering the primary research question and the secondary research questions.

5.4 Convey certainty and force

5.4.1 Introduction

Repair work is done in the present data to bring about change in the reader's knowledge base or attitudes. Consequently, repair work is persuasive and argumentative in nature in seeking the reader's acceptance of the information provided, the justifications offered, and the views and opinions presented. Among other things, the interpersonal function of language allows writers to express comments, attitudes, and evaluation of the ideational content in the propositions that they assert and state, to express the relationship between writers and readers, and to acknowledge readers' need for involvement and negotiation in knowledge-making. Reader-involvement and negotiation process are both important aspects in repair work situations. Further, the interpersonal aspect of language is concerned with the language as the mediator of role (Halliday 1973, 1985). Thus, implications of writers' roles on their language usage will be discussed in the ensuing analysis.

Emphatic interpersonal metadiscourse functions as informing readers of writers' intentions, meanings, and attitudes, and as influencing, i.e. convincing and persuading, readers to accept the information, accounts and views offered by writers. Further, emphatic interpersonal metadiscourse elements allow writers to display their knowledge and expertise in forecasting or expecting reactions and responses to the propositions conveyed. Additionally, research suggests that in argumentative writing, metadiscourse is prevalent since writers refer frequently to the state of the argument, to readers' understanding of it, and to writers' understanding of their own arguments (Hyland 1998a, Crismore 1989). Thus, it can be assumed that writers' expert role and the subsequent knowledge and power base display themselves in texts showing that writers have certain emphatic roles or positions either through their expertise or their positions in organizational hierarchies.

Research suggests that metadiscourse is typical of argumentative writing, allowing writers to refer to the state of the argument, to readers' understanding of it, and to their own understanding of their own arguments. In the present data, attributions to external sources, such as standards and test reports, are used to support the assertions made by the writers in repair work messages. This strategy can be regarded as an instance of explicit intertextuality. Further, there are various linguistic elements used for rhetorical purposes in emphasizing the force of writers' utterances, or their commitment to propositions, or their certainty or assurance in messages. In persuasive and argumentative discourse events, the use of such linguistic elements may signal writers' wish to place themselves and their readers into certain social structural formations. Relying on their perceived expertise and knowledge base, writers legitimize such rhetorical use. Emphatic interpersonal metadiscourse is used to underline the writer's certainty of the utterances, and to boost writers' presence in discourse events through expressing certainty, assurance and conviction in the information and opinions and views provided (Hyland 1998a).

Messages (26) and (32), both primarily doing repair work without an apology, written by a female technical expert, serve as exemplification in illustrating the assertive nature of interaction when doing repair work. The layout of the messages is that of the original messages.

Message (26)

To: A5
cc:F3
Subject: Re: (Customer company name) Inv xxxxx Coil xxx, heat xx
Our documents from the XX mill and XX line indicate that the material is within the requested thickness range. The lowest reading was 2.55 mm (=0.100"). Where did they measure? ASTM A480 states that the thickness measurements are taken at least 3/8 in. (=9.52 mm) from the longitudinal edge.
Rgds F5 (First name)

Message (32)

To:B1
cc:F2
Subject: Re: (Customer company name)
There was no reason to carry out an EDS on the face side of the weld.

> *The cross section across the "different" area did not show any porosity. Visual examination of the surface in this area did not show any difference either. See appendix 1. The weld surface looks the same throughout the run.*

EDS does not help if we do not know what to look for! Slag islands on the back are clear. They appear throughout the root side. They were the only visible clusters.
Rgds F5 (First name)

The emphatic style of the above repair work messages is partly achieved by drawing on external sources to underline the authority of the assertions, i.e. the writer's references to various standards, documents and extracts from test reports in the indented text sequence in message (32) function as adding to the credibility of the assertions. Thus, the information provided and justifications offered derive from protocols and precise measurements and tests, which offer clearly defined and circumscribed limits for the repair work in the discourse event. This feature is typical of hard-pure disciplines in the academic field (Hyland 1998b). Further, it is suggested that the sentence structures, predominantly concise main clauses, add to the assertiveness of repair work messages.

There are only two person pronoun forms, *our* and *they*, used in message (26), and one *we* in message (32). The use of impersonal agents in references to certificates, such as *Our documents from ... indicate that.*, conveys assertiveness and distance in the two messages. Thus, authors' presence and authority are boosted by other linguistic means than by the use of personal pronouns including writers (cf. Hyland 1998a). In message (26), there is one interrogative clause *Where did they measure?* requesting for further information, and it illustrates the negotiation aspect of repair work interaction. Message (32) includes an exclamation mark to emphasize the certainty, or full commitment of the writer and the writer's party to what is being said.

5.4.2 Analysis of emphatic linguistic elements

Adverbs

Adverbs, such as *certainly*, *obviously*, *actually, totally*, are used in utterances under analysis to convey the writer's certainty, commitment, assurance, and conviction to the information provided, accounts offered, and views and opinions expressed.

The emphatic adverbs *certainly* and *obviously* involve the writer's validation of the content, or the writer's stance toward the content, and they strengthen the writer's commitment to the proposition but do not change the truth-value of the assertion. They may be used when a statement is challenged or is expected to be challenged (Intaraprawat & Steffensen 1995:258).

The reply message (18) is written by the male technical expert and addressed to an American middle management person and cc:ed to a Finnish middle management and the female technical expert, F5. The message provides information and acknowledges responsibility for the obsolete information. The severity level is low since the obsolete information does not have negative influences on customers' operations.

Message (18)

Good morning!
The information regarding heat identification is such as defined in our Quality Assurance Manual, paragraph 8.1.1.
*This is **just** to stating the same what I told you in year 1996. This is however an obsolete information since 1997 already.*
*The updated QA Manual will be issued at the end of this year. That will give also the official updated explanation for melt and slab identification. I will give to you an unofficial explanation **only** in the meantime.*
*As you **certainly** know, our production was constantly increasing during 1996 and 1997. Finally, more than 100 casts a week were produced thus exceeding the two digits limits reserved for the running melt number. We were forced to change the "weeknumbers" to the succeeding weeks any time as the 99th cast was done. This is the situation still now: the real calendar week 35 is just at the beginning, however our melts are running at the "weeknumber" 841 already! The first cast of this year 80101 according to the old notation was done 29th December 1997 already! Thus there is no correspondence of the melt numbers to the real week anymore.*
*We are **so** sorry as we have designed **so** bad identification system in the first year of production 1976 as we couldn't imagine, the 99 casts a week limit would ever be exceeded. Now we know, it was a big mistake.*
*I dont' see, why the customer should **really** know the actual dates of the casts produced in our mill. The product identification must be the same as shown on the test certificates. That's all what is required, in my humble opinion.*
regards,
F6 (First name and Family name)

The emphatic adverb *certainly* is used in the reply message (18) in a writer's party responsibility situation by F6, a technical expert. The adverb is used in a reader-oriented, sentence-initial conversational utterance *As you **certainly** know, our production was constantly increasing during 1996 and 1997.* to initiate discussion of shared knowledge between the reader and the writer. The message provides information concerning the numbering system, which confuses customers and the recipient, A5. The shared knowledge of the obsolete numbering system, assumed as shared by the writer of the message, is given as the reason for the need to change the numbering system, which is the topic of the message. By building on the shared knowledge, the writer aims at convincing the reader of the efficacy of his statement. The use of the adverb *certainly* in the reader-oriented utterance can be suggested as imposing on the reader's face, since the use of *certainly* emphasizes the writer's certainty of his explicit presupposition that the reader knows, or should know. The two exclamation marks, used in the same paragraph at the end of the sentences discussing the present and the past situation, add to the emphatic nature of the core message paragraph.

In message (18), the adverb *really* is categorized under interpersonal metadiscourse emphasizing the writer's certainty of the proposition uttered. The writer, a technical expert, expresses his opinions in an assertive way regarding the matter he assumes is shared knowledge between himself and the reader. The expression of opinion in the post-sequence is as follows: *I don't see, why the customer should* ***really*** *know the actual dates of the casts produced in our mill. The product identification must be the same as shown on the test certificates. That's all what is required, in my humble opinion.* The change of personal pronoun to *I,* instead of the pronoun *we* used in the core message, gives the writer an opportunity to express his expert views and opinions on the matter. The expert role gives the writer the authority to question the customer's requests to know the details of the numbering system. *I don't see* emphasizes the writer's personal attitude and commitment towards the proposition expressed in the indirect interrogative sentence to follow. The modal verb *should,* which signals the writer's attitude toward the proposition, expresses the writer's evaluative comment conveying suspect concerning the customers need in a mitigated way. *Really* in the present context can be interpreted as emphasizing the writer's commitment to the proposition. Because metadiscourse may be used for different functions simultaneously, it is not always easy to identify categories of metadiscourse that function exclusively either interpersonally or textually, and to separate metadiscourse and ideational content with confidence. In the present context, the use of the attitudinal verb *must* and the impersonal verb form *is required* emphasize the writer's certainty of and commitment to the proposition. The expert knowledge of the right procedure gives the writer the authority to use such emphatic language. The ironic remark *in my humble opinion* can be regarded to express the writer's sarcastic attitude in the present context. The complimentary close with the first name and family name reinforce the formal and authoritative stance in the message.

The adverbs *just* and *only* are used in message (18) to emphasize the certainty of the propositions uttered in the message in the following way: *This is* ***just*** *stating the same what I told you in year 1996.* and *I will give to you an unofficial explanation* ***only*** *in the meantime.* The context of use, repeating outdated information and giving tentative information since updated information cannot be provided, indicates the writer's willingness to emphasize the preliminary nature of the information. The technical expert does not want to jeopardize his expert position by giving information that has not been officially publicized by the organization. In addition, the writer's want to save his face and expert image as a disseminator of reliable information can be suggested to influence the use of the emphatic *just* and *only* in the message. Further, the message-initial placement of the utterances containing the two adverbs reinforces their function as emphasizing the preliminary nature of the information to follow.

The intensification of the apologetic utterances by *so* and *very* is suggested to strengthen the force of the otherwise weak and routinized *I'm sorry* or *I am sorry* expressions of apology or regret (Suszczynska 1999:1060). Also Hyland (1998a:228, 1998b:442) maintains that emphatics, a category of interpersonal metadiscourse, imply certainty or indicate the writer's assurance and emphasize the force of the proposition. According to Louhiala-Salminen (1999:132), Hyland's statement is vague in that "force can refer to various aspects in a text that do not necessarily have anything to do with the writer's commitment to the truth-value of the proposition that they strengthen". The present work does not fully acknowledge Louhiala-Salminen's point of view, since in the present data the function of the intensifying adverbs *so* and *very* is to add to the sincerity of the apologetic expression and to indicate the writer's commitment to the expression of apology or regret. Thus, *so* and *very* are categorized under interpersonal metadiscourse (cf. Crismore et al. 1993:48), since in the present context they are regarded as qualifying words strengthening, emphasizing the sincerity of the utterance *I am sorry*, thus conveying a genuine offer of apology rather than uttering regret. The discourse events in which the adverbs *so* and *very* occur are either the writer's or the writer's party responsibility situations (four instances), or customer's responsibility situations (one instance), all involving low severity level. The intensifying adverbs *so* and *very* used in apologetic utterances were discussed in Chapter 5.2.1.

It is argued that the adverb *so* is used in the reply message (18) in the way suggested by Hyland (1998a, 1998b) and Suszczynska (1996), i.e. to strengthen the force of the utterance, in the following sentences: *We are* ***so*** *sorry as we have designed* ***so*** *bad identification system in the first year of production 1976 as we couldn't imagine, the 99 casts a week limit would be ever exceeded.* It can be suggested that in messages (13) and (18) the adverb *so* primarily intensifies the force of the utterances. However, it can be questioned if the adverb *so* indicates the writer's genuine commitment to the utterances. Instead, it can be maintained that in message (18) there is some irony involved in the intensified utterance of apology and the intensified utterance of justification as suggested in Chapter 5.2.2.

The intensifying adverb *so* is used in message (13) in combination with the apologetic expression including the reason for the apology as follows: *Sorry it took* ***so*** *long time.* In a third party responsibility case the adverb *so* conveys the writer's evaluative attitude concerning the delay.

Obviously is used in message (21), which is a reply message by F2 to B2 concerning late deliveries to a customer, and consequently it is written in a writer's party responsibility situation involving highish severity level. The adverb *obviously* is used in the post-sequence of the message, *Please formulate an answer to (Customer company name).* ***Obviously*** *we should consider remedies for future but I do not know what they think of this situation, so let's consider them later.* Basing on his long-established experience in dealing with similar cases, the writer utters *obviously* sentence-initially to convey his commitment to the suggestion. Thus, the writer-oriented adverb *obviously* functions as emphasizing the writer's certainty regarding his views and suggestions in the present discourse event. On the other hand, the modal verb *should*, to express the writer's attitude to the proposition in this context used with the verb *consider*, has the effect of toning down the emphatic adverb *obviously,* and consequently, the writer's certainty, which adds to the tentativeness of his view. *I do not know*, and *let's consider them later* can also be interpreted to function as withholding the writer's certainty concerning his view. It can be suggested that the use of the interpersonal metadiscourse elements aim at emphasizing the negotiation aspect of repair work situations by welcoming responses from the recipient and the customer. The present discourse event in which *obviously* is used shows that the functions and categories of interpersonal metadiscourse are a matter of degree, and that they are complex, non-discrete, and fuzzy. As Louhiala-Salminen (1999:133) suggests, e.g. elements categorized as emphatics could be placed on a gliding scale, where there is absolute and explicit certainty of the proposition at one end, and more implicit, partial commitment to part of the proposition at the other.

The qualifier *totally* is used in a message-initial utterance in the reply message (3), which acknowledges the writer's responsibility in a routine situation, *I* ***totally*** *forgot that question. I'm very sorry for that.* The adverb *totally* conveys the writer's full commitment to the utterance of responsibility for the mishap. The apologetic utterance enforced with *very* adds to the writer's commitment to the apologetic utterance and the responsibility, which she is ready to acknowledge.

The adverb *actually* can be regarded as interpersonal metadiscourse emphasizing the writer's commitment to the proposition expressed in the following utterance in message (4): *Ok, despite the fact that I* ***actually*** *have a post-it-note stuck to my computer that says "Bonehead*

Remember Surcharges!" I ***still*** *forgot to add a surcharge to a (Customer name) stock order I just did.* The writer made a mistake in documentation and is ready to explicate her responsibility. *Actually* and *still* are used in the same sentence when explicating what the result was, i.e. the writer forgot. *Actually* and *still* get additional emphatic force from the conversational contrast they are placed in the present context of use in relation to other utterances in the same sentence; *actually* is used in the utterance to explicate how the writer tried to make sure to do everything right, and *still* is used in the utterance to report the flawed result caused by her forgetting the crucial fact. The adverb *just* is used temporally in the context, and consequently it is not categorized under interpersonal metadiscourse.

The two qualifiers, *usually* in message (35) and *generally* in message (37) are categorized as emphatic interpersonal metadiscourse expressing the writer's certainty of the propositions. The utterance in the follow-up message (35), which refuses responsibility repeatedly, contains the adverb *usually*, *The strength depends on reduction and there are* ***usually*** *visible thickness differences for each pass.* The utterance with the adverb *generally* is used in the follow-up message acknowledging writer's party responsibility, ***Generally,*** *85 % of the OSP certificates were ready in time for all deliveries during the month May. Some materials to (Customer company name) were finished and tested couple of months before date of shipping.* The writer uses the two qualifiers to add to the certainty of his assertions when explaining the difference in thickness (message 35) and the delays in deliveries (message 37). The qualifier *usually* conveys that the difference in thickness is customary and acceptable for the process within given limits, and therefore should be no reason for a complaint. The writer's statement acquires its certainty from the writer's long-established experience of similar cases. The adverb *generally*, combined with the percentage 85 %, functions as adding to the certainty of the writer's statement, since it conveys the meaning that only in 15 % of the cases the customer's complaints are justified. Thus, the statement containing *generally* together with the statements to follow, which both include opposing information to what the reader has suggested previously, function as giving assertive justification for the writer's party not experiencing the situation as serious as the reader and the customer. Frequently, the adverbs *generally* and *usually* are interpreted as withholding the writer's full commitment to the statements, but in the present analysis the mitigating interpretation is contested due to the context-specific factors discussed above.

<u>High level verbs</u>

In the present work, the category of emphatic interpersonal metadiscoursal elements also includes high level verbs, e.g. epistemic verbs or verbs of cognition, such as *I think*, *we think*, *I don't think*, *I know*, *we know*; or verbs expressing views, such as *I believe*, *we believe*. By the use of these interpersonal elements, the writers or the writer's party explicitly intrude as narrators, and the elements signal the writer's state of consciousness, indicating readiness to disseminate new information and offer views, in order to establish communication links for the exchange of information (Crismore 1989:58, 60). The exchange of information and opinions and the use of linguistic elements to show the willingness, or reluctance, to this exchange are important for repair work discourse. These verbs are used in the present data in the first person, singular and plural, present tense of the indicative mood with an appropriate complement clause to express the writer's views. Generally these elements have been categorized under hedges, emphatics and/or certainty markers by other research (e.g. Crimsoned et al. 1993, Hyland 1998a, 1998b, Louhiala-Salminen 1999). In the present work, *I think* was briefly referred to when analysing utterances introducing conversational nature into discourse. The present analysis relies on discourse-specific factors in assigning these verbs under interpersonal metadiscourse. Thus, in some discourse events *I think* is used to add emphasis and weight to statements of e.g. opinions and views. This emphatic use will be discussed in this chapter. However, *I think* may have the function of conveying the writer's uncertainty and tentativeness toward the proposition. These occurrences will be analysed in Chapter 5.5.2. The following analysis of some selected messages with *I/we think*, or *I don't* think will exemplify the polypragmatism involved in these utterances.

There are utterances, including the verb *I think*, used to emphasize the writer's commitment to the truth of the proposition. In message (35) the male technical expert writes as follows: ***I think**, continuing this hypothetical discussion is more or less meaningless without knowing all the details about sample taking, preparation and tension test conditions etc...* The message is a follow-up message replying to the reader's request for further explanations. In the previous message, i.e. message (34), the writer provided one factual explanation, and in message (35) he submits three additional explanations, which he calls hypothetical. Authorized by his expert role, he asserts his view, which is emphasized by the sentence-initial utterance *I think* to indicate his full commitment to the truth-value of the proposition. The emphatic nature of the utterance is increased by the use of the two adjectives *hypothetical* and *meaningless*. The opening utterance *There may a trivial explanation too...*, together with the *Another explanation:*, and *One more explanation...* further emphasize the writer's assertively sarcastic opinion about the necessity of further explanations. The message-final sentence *We cannot check in our production if there are any changes of properties in coldrolled state over longer times because we don't test our samples after Sendzimir mill but in annealed condition.* reinforces the proposition expressed in the sentence initiated by *I think.* The message-final sentence implies that the testing is carried out by a customary procedure and there is no way the writer can check the real reason for the alleged thickness variation. Thus, in the present context *I think* is used in order to emphasize the writer's certainty of or commitment to the proposition, rather than in order to mitigate the proposition expressed in the complement sentence.

Message (18), which was analysed for its emphatic adverbs above, is by the same writer as message (35) and contains the utterance *That's all what is required, **in my humble opinion.*** with a similar function to the utterance *I think* in message (35). The message-final sequence conveying the writer's opinions and views closes with the above utterance *in my humble opinion*, which can be interpreted as an understatement, conveying the writer's irritation.

Message (40) was analysed in Chapter 5.3.2 for its conversational interpersonal metadiscourse features. For the analysis of the three utterances with *think*, message (40) is written in full. The interpretations of the utterances with *think* arrived at in the present context visualize the complex nature of the utterances and the need for context-derived analysis and the acceptance of the multifunctional nature of interpersonal metadiscourse. Message (40) includes both the mitigating and emphatic functions, which were detected also by e.g. Holmes (1990) and Nikula (1996) in their research data.

Message (40)

To: F14
cc:
Subject: Re: Bank charges
Good morning,
*It seems very unfair that we have to pay the charges for the mistake XXX made, but **I don't think** we are able to get the money from the customer. I have discussed this with B6 - XXX is his customer, and **we both think** that I should write the managing director a letter informing him that we were charged £xx for their cheque, £xx of that amount because of their mistake. **I think** this is the best we can do under the circumstances.*
Rgds, B3 (First name)

Basing on her earlier experience from similar cases, B3 uses the expression *I don't think* to indicate her certainty of the statement or her commitment to the truth-value of the proposition to follow. With the reference to her management level superior, B6, the female operative level writer gains authority to utter the emphatic *we both think*, which again emphasizes the writer's certainty of her utterance. However, the two sentences are contradictory in content in that the first one is pessimistic about gaining the money back, whereas the second sentence is more optimistic regarding the money lost due to the customer's mistake. The message-final utterance with *I think* is less emphatic than *we both think*, and it is used to indicate that the writer is giving her personal opinion. Considering the discourse event, i.e. upward vertical interaction involving highish severity level, an interpretation for the utterance *I think* is that the writer is expressing her views and giving suggestion concerning the problem in a mitigated way in order to avoid impinging on the managerial level interactant's face. The suggested two divergent interpretations manifest the complex and fuzzy nature of interpersonal metadiscourse. The present context of use also allegedly shows that interactants do not use *I think* in a consciously strategic way.

Message (5) is by an American management level interactant requesting for information he received earlier by e-mail, which is expressed by ***I believe** you sent me info about that.* The utterance *I believe* receives its emphatic interpretation from utterances to follow; *My problem is I deleted the message.* This assertion explicates that the message was sent. Further, the message-final utterance *So sorry.* implies that the writer apologizes genuinely for the double work he has caused to the reader. Thus, *I believe* in the present discourse event is used to indicate the writer's commitment to the truth-value of the proposition.

The writer, the female technical expert, uses *I believe* (message 27) and *we believe* (message 24) when giving her opinions about the discourse topic. In message (27) she asserts the following: *This is not the first time (Customer company name) rejects coils because of poor flatness. **I believe** their leveller is not powerful enough.* The utterance *I believe* can be interpreted to function as expressing the writer's commitment to the truth-value of the proposition. The technical expert writer builds the authority of her view on her earlier experience with the customer, which is explicated in the sentence prior to the sentence *I believe*. However, the following statements *It is up to you, if you want to inspect the claim. Please check the database.* can be suggested to indicate that the management-level reader is to decide concerning compliance with the writer's assertion uttered in the sentence *I believe their leveller is not powerful enough.*

In message (24) the same writer uses the first person plural pronoun form *we believe* in an assertive message not acknowledging full responsibility for the deviations in material. References to test results are used to legitimize the refusal of responsibility, e.g. *As I informed you earlier, our records do not show any deviation.* By using the plural person pronoun *we*, the writer increases the authority of the utterance ***We believe*** *that the edge trop of the master coil was too steep.*, and adds to the writer's commitment to the proposition. Again, however, it can be suggested that the preceding questions suggesting alternative uses for the material imply that the writer withholds full commitment to the statement initiated by *We believe.* Further, the questions asked imply that the writer is ready to assume partial responsibility, since the quality of the material is not exactly what the customer ordered. Thus, mitigation is used adjacent or close to emphatics with the effect of toning down the emphatics.

The suggested functions of *I believe* and *we believe* in different discourse events show the complexity and fuzziness of categorization of interpersonal metadiscourse and the importance of discourse-specific factors in analysing their various functions. In the present contexts, the discourse event-specific factors, i.e. the preceding and following utterances, are used to mitigate the writer's full commitment to the propositions expressed by the utterances *I believe, we believe.* Expressing reservation and caution in the above discourse events can be regarded as contextually appropriate language use. This may be interpreted to show the writer's reluctance to be too imposing on the reader on the one hand, or the writer's aim to maintain her expert image (messages 24 and 27) in a process of negotiating the final solution to the matter on the other hand. Hence the avoidance of mitigation in asserting conclusive statements.

I know is used in a reader's party responsibility situation involving highish severity level in message (15). The customer received wrong goods, and the writer is requesting the reader to change the draft date by the utterance *Is it possible to change the draft date again -* ***I know*** *we can't change the invoice.* The interrogative sentence can be interpreted as a request in the present reader's responsibility situation, and the message-final apologetic utterance *Sorry for the inconvenience.* can be suggested to reinforce the requestive force of the interrogative sentence. The utterance *I know we can't change the invoice.* excludes the other option, i.e. changing the invoice, thus leaving no other choice for the reader than change the draft date to put the matter right for the customer. This idea is enforced by the use of the cognitive verb construction *I know*, which functions as indicating the writer's full commitment to the proposition basing on her experience-derived shared knowledge.

Now we know is used by the male technical expert in the post-sequence of message (18) replying to A5's request concerning the heat numbering system, which causes confusion among customers. After an elaborate and detailed explanation of the system, the technical expert utters regret as follows: *We are so sorry as we have designed so bad identification system in the first year of production 1976 as we couldn't imagine, the 99 casts a week limit would be ever exceeded.* ***Now we know****, it was a big mistake.* The expression *now we know* can be interpreted as emphasizing the writer's full commitment to the truth-value of the proposition, since it is explicitly stated in the core message that a new system has been introduced and updated information will be submitted to the reader in due course. The first person plural pronoun *we* refers to the mill in Finland, including the writer and excluding the reader. However, the preceding text sequences and the final paragraph imply the writer's sarcastic attitude toward the request and the customers' willingness to know the details of the numbering system.

I don't see appears in message (18) in the utterance in which the writer expresses his opinion in the post sequence, ***I don't see****, why the customer should really know the actual dates of the casts produced in our mill. The product identification must be the same as shown on the test certificates. That's all what is required, in my humble opinion.* The writer uses the pronoun *we* and *our* in the core message when explaining the numbering system. In the post sequence, the writer uses the singular pronoun *I* to indicate that he is expressing his personal views on the subject matter. In the present context, the utterance *I don't see* functions as expressing the writer's commitment to the proposition. The expert role of the writer legitimizes the use of the emphatic utterance *I don't see.* Also the two sentences to follow give authority to the writer's opinion, since they imply that the writer is referring to standards and protocols setting the limits for the product identification system. The message-final utterance which contains an understatement, i.e. *in my humble opinion*, adds to the sarcastic nature of the message written by the male technical expert.

Full forms vs. contractions

Contemporary business communication course books are permissive regarding the use of contracted forms, instead of full forms, in all but the most formal business reports, and they suggest that clarity of business writing is further enhanced by language that sounds like conversation (e.g. Guffey 1997:135). According to a writing guidebook for the electronic mail, contractions help e-mail discourse sound conversational and informal, and allow the writer to achieve a warm, down-to-earth tone in interaction. However, the writers of the guide book warn against the hidden wordiness in contractions, e.g. *I've got a book* should be *I have a book.*, or against the clumsy and seldom-used contractions, e.g. *The boss'll get you for that.* or *I should've known.* Further, the writers recommend the use of written-out words or phrases if the writer aims at a more formal tone or wants to add a special emphasis to utterances (Angell & Heslop 1994:56-57). The notion of 'written-out words' to mean 'full forms of words' is used by Angell and Heslop (1994).

As discussed in Chapter 5.3, practically all writers of the present repair work messages use conversational elements, either lexical or syntactic, in their interaction in various discourse events. Thus, it can be suggested that the writers possess knowledge of the appropriate formality level, shared between interactants when choosing the conversational stance in discourse, which represents a close, personal relationship with the reader, as opposed to the more formal, distancing written style.

As to the use of contraction and written-out words, both seem to be used by various writers, also in the same message, regardless of their cultural background. The contracted words are *is*, *is not*, *I am*, *I am not*, *cannot*, *do not*, *does not*, *will*, *will not*, *could not*, and *would not*. The contracted forms are frequently used with the first person pronouns *I* and *we*, especially with *will*, with no instances of other pronouns and nouns or the seldom-used contractions. Contractions are frequent also in negative statements, such as *I don't, we don't*. However, there are idiosyncrasies in the use of contraction. For instance, the male technical expert, uses the contracted form of *will* in one instance only in altogether 48 messages, i.e. *I'll*, even though he uses the forms *I don't* or *we don't* frequently. Basing on a preliminary analysis of the contexts, it can be suggested that the male technical expert uses the full form of the future tense, e.g. *I will*, *we will*, in an emphatic way, especially in repair work messages, to convey the idea that the writer (*I*) or the writer's party (*we*) are fully committed to what he asserts in his expert role. On the other hand, the use of the contracted forms with *I* and *we* are used to express the writer's personal views or the writer's party views. There are two interactants in the present data with no contraction in their messages. Interactant F2, a male Finnish management level interactant, uses no contractions in his 12 messages. The 50 messages written by F5, the female technical expert, contain no contractions either. Thus, basing on these findings, caution has to be taken when suggesting that in the present repair work messages some full word forms are used emphatically to express the writer's full commitment to the truth-value of the proposition. The use of full forms may represent either idiosyncratic usage or non-conscious non-strategic usage.

The following extracts from various messages suggest that the full forms, i.e. written-out word forms, can be interpreted as emphatic modifiers in some contexts. Message (6) is written by F1, an operative level female employee, to her operative level peer, and the writer implicates message-initially the customer's responsibility for the refusal, and the utterance *we do not have* in the present context is regarded as indicating the writer's certainty and full commitment to the proposition.

Message (6)

To: A1
cc:
Subject: XXXX xxxxx
Sorry, A1
As fast shipment in question ***we do not have time*** *to add anything to marking.*
F1 (First name)

The fragmented utterance *As fast shipment in question* together with the conversational apologetic utterance *Sorry, A1*, which addresses the reader after the apology, conveys that the message is familiar and conversational in nature. Thus the full word form *we do not have* allows for the emphatic interpretation.

The emphatic use of *will* was referred to above when discussing the male technical expert's use of contracted word forms. Further, it can be suggested that when he refers to standards, manuals, test results or procedures, or his superior/s to authorize his statements, views or claims, he uses full word forms, such as *Standards* ***do not*** *specify*, *this* ***is*** *clearly* ***not*** *a safe minimum*, *The coil* ***does not*** *contain immediately after coldrolling the rollpass ends*, or *we* ***can not*** *arrange any reasonable sample taking.* In addition, according to the male technical expert, he tends to maintain a rather formal style in his messages with interactants he is not familiar with, i.e. does not interact regularly with (e-mail interview 23.11.1999). The formal style includes the use of full word forms instead of contracted ones.

As suggested earlier, contraction is a fuzzy category of emphatic interpersonal metadiscourse, involving idiosyncratic language usage in the present data. A more in-depth analysis of the discourse events would give more insights into the functions of contraction vs. full word forms in the present electronic mail messages. This, however, is out of the scope of the present work.

5.4.3 Summary

As suggested earlier in the present analysis, emphatic interpersonal metadiscourse functions as conveying writers' intentions, meanings, and attitudes toward readers, in convincing readers of the certainty of the information provided, and in persuading readers to accept the information, accounts and views offered by the writers. In addition, emphatic interpersonal metadiscoursal devices allow writers to display their competence by displaying their knowledge and expertise by assertive statements. Further, writers signal explicit certainty when they forecast or expect readers' negative or opposing reactions and responses to the propositions expressed. In the present data, the writers convey their expert roles and the knowledge and subsequent power base in messages by linguistic means by signaling these roles and authority vested on them either through their expertise and knowledge, or their positions in the organizational hierarchy.

In the present repair work messages, the emphatic interpersonal metadiscourse is primarily used when presenting factual information, i.e. the writers convey what they know is true, or what they believe or trust is true. The writers use assertive expressions when providing factual information, and in doing so they frequently rely on intertextual evidence, i.e. they refer to external sources, such as certificates, standards, manuals and guidebooks to give credibility to their assertions. Further, the writers rely on their expertise and knowledge when asserting opinions and views in conveying what they believe and trust is true. Evidently, some writers in the present repair work messages aim at displaying their personal competence by assertive linguistic expressions, including emphatic interpersonal metadiscourse, in order to upgrade their expert and organizational roles.

The emphatic style is prevalent in repair work messages refusing partly or totally the writer's or the writer's party responsibility for the problematic situation. In the present data, the messages with the primary communicative purpose of doing repair work typically do not acknowledge full responsibility for the situation before negotiating the matter. The emphatic style used in such repair work messages, supported by references to standards, documents and test reports, which abolish the need for rhetorical validation of the information or justifications offered, may explain why the variety of interpersonal metadiscourse is rather limited in emphasizing the force or certainty of utterances, or the writer's commitment to the propositions in the present data.

It is suggested in earlier research that emphatic interpersonal metadiscourse elements may be used when a statement is challenged or is expected to be challenged. Thus, a low frequency of emphatics may indicate that potential challenges to the statement are not anticipated (Intaraprawat and Steffensen 1995:267), due to the acknowledged expert role or the organizational position of writers in the present data. Thirdly, shared knowledge between interactants concerning the required procedures to put matters right may also explain why challenges to statements are not expected. According to Hyland (1998b:449), the limited use of interpersonal metadiscourse in the hard-pure disciplines in the academic arena may reflect the textual practices of the hard-pure disciplines, and a reluctance to project a prominent authorial presence in presenting claims to readers. As pointed out earlier in the present study, the use of impersonalization can be regarded as part of the writer's professional jargon allowing the writer's concentration on the action rather than the actor in the discourse event. However, e.g. the reply message (18), analysed in this chapter, is written by the male technical expert, and it abounds in emphatic interpersonal metadiscourse elements, together with other elements of interpersonal metadiscourse. The repair work situations for the two technical experts, female F5 and male F6, are quite similar in the present data. The analysis includes 13 messages by F5 and four by F6, whose messages however are longer. The number of emphatic interpersonal elements in F6's messages is twice as high as that in F5's messages. Thus, it can be suggested that the excessive use of the emphatic elements by F6, especially in message (18), can be explained by situation-specific idiosyncratic use. Consequently, it can be suggested that the use of emphatic interpersonal metadiscourse elements in the present data is overexemplified by one interactant.

It is worth pointing out that the use of emphatic interpersonal metadiscourse is closely intertwined with the use of mitigating interpersonal metadiscourse in the present data. The composite use of the various interpersonal metadiscoursal elements evidences writers' respect for readers in making a distinction between factual information and views and opinions, in order to give the right impression of the state of the matters on the one hand. On the other hand, the clustering of interpersonal metadiscourse conveys writers' reluctance or willingness to welcome a dialogue with readers on the issues interacted. Thus, it can be suggested that the professional writers are contextually aware of the need to either emphasize or mitigate their commitment to the propositions, or the certainty or force of their utterances. Creating a balance between emphatic interpersonal metadiscourse and mitigating interpersonal metadiscourse in the present repair work messages will be discussed further in Chapter 5.5.3.

5.5 Withhold writer's full commitment

5.5.1 Introduction

Mention must again be made of the multifunctionality of interpersonal metadiscoursal elements, including linguistic elements used to express the writer's reluctance to fully commit herself or himself to the truth-value of the propositional content in statements, or alternatively a desire not to express full commitment to the statement categorically (e.g. Hyland 1996:251). In research on metadiscourse, the linguistic elements to serve these functions are frequently referred to as hedges when expressing epistemic uncertainty (e.g. Crismore et al. 1993, Hyland 1998a, 1998b, Louhiala-Salminen 1999). In the ensuing analysis of repair work discourse, a prevalent complementary function can be assigned to the function of withholding writer's full commitment to the truth-value of the statements, i.e. that of expressing and reporting the writer's reservation and caution concerning the degree of commitment she or he wishes to invest in providing views and opinions and putting forward claims, in order to achieve or maintain dialogue in the process of doing repair work and negotiating the solution to the problem. Writers use this type of modification to express a weakened or moderated belief in their assertions, thus leaving it to readers' discretion to accept or reject writers' suggestions and claims.

It is also suggested that the use of forms such as *may, probably*, and *it is possible* indicate writers' sincerity and intention to produce ethical discourse by explicitly expressing what they know to be true, what they assume or believe, and what needs to be supported by evidence (Intaraprawat & Steffensen 1995:258). Thus, these lexical forms allow writers to moderate their statements when anticipating reader responses. This provides space for negotiation in repair work discourse and results in deeper reader-involvement by offering readers the option to form and put forward their own judgments in the process of negotiating solutions to problems. Further, the use of these lexical forms may serve as a way of saving the writer's face if the suggestion or assertion turns out to be incorrect. On the other hand, the reader's face may be at stake when the writer refuses the reader's request or gives other negative response from the reader's point of view. In academic writing, hedging with both epistemic and interpersonal functions is regarded as constituting a central aspect of argumentation in presenting claims for ratification in each academic arena, recognizing readers' need for consideration and respect and enabling writers to anticipate possible opposition to claims by expressing statements with precision, caution, and humility (Hyland 1998b:451).

Consequently, it is suggested that hedges have an affective role, since they signal the writer's positive attitude toward feedback from the readers in repair work discourse, i.e. they encourage readers' participation in dialogue, in order to achieve shared understanding to be able to agree on conflicting or problematic issues. In the process of repair work negotiation, readers' and writers' roles alternate, which may increase writers' willingness to express reservation and caution by linguistic means.

Due to the polysemic character of some linguistic elements emanating from the writer's aim to perform various functions simultaneously, some utterances are versatile enough in function to fit into more than one category. The linguistic elements expressing epistemic uncertainty in the present study are expressions which contain e.g. modal auxiliaries *could*, *may*, *should* and *would*, modal adverbs *perhaps* and *probably*, or an adverb *not completely*, as well as expressions which signal tentativeness and writers' caution in conveying the propositional content of statements in the context, e.g. *seem*, *try*, *let say*, *I wonder if*. Due to the overlapping categories, the present chapter will discuss some linguistic elements already analysed in more detail under some other functional categories, e.g. *I think*, *should*. These overlaps allegedly conceal the problematics of discrete categories in showing that some linguistic elements may serve several functions in different discourse event, and one utterance may have several functions, primary and secondary, in the same context of use. Since the present analysis relies on contextual factors and makes note of the composite or clustered use of various interpersonal metadiscourse elements, whole messages will be under analysis under some categories to enable a more holistic stance in the analysis. Consequently, several linguistic elements expressing the writers' lack of full commitment to the propositional content will be analysed under the same category, i.e. *perhaps*, *seem*, and *would* under the modal adverbs category. References to and comparisons with other research on written discourse in the ensuing analysis of the epistemic modal auxiliaries are rare, due to the fact that other researches consulted for the present work do not include a detailed discussion of the contextual use of these linguistic elements. The alleged reason for the shortage of discussion is the infrequent occurrences of these elements in research (cf. Crismore 1989:269, Nikula 1996:75, Hyland 1998a, Louhiala-Salminen 1996, 1999), except for *would* which was one of the most frequently occurring hedging element e.g. in corporate rhetoric data (Hyland 1998a:231).

5.5.2 Analysis of expressions withholding full commitment

Would

According to Louhiala-Salminen (1999:132), a desire not to express full commitment to the statement categorically "is so tightly interwoven with what could be called 'business style' (modal auxiliaries are frequently used to show a polite attitude) that this type of 'softening' was not regarded as a hedge in this study, but was instead categorized as an attitude marker showing politeness, as would in the following example: I would suggest that we meet in the lobby of the BBB hotel the next morning around 09.00H. (F/NS)" (Louhiala-Salminen's quotes). In the present repair work messages, the modal verb *would* is not used in the politeness function in the way it was used in Louhiala-Salminen's data.

In the present study, there are occurrences of the hypothetical *would* with the primary function of expressing the conditional mode, as exemplified in the extracts from messages (18), (22) and (39). *We are so sorry as we have designed so bad identification system in the first year of production 1976 as we couldn't imagine, the 99 casts as week limit* ***would*** *be ever exceeded. Now we know, it was a big mistake.* In the above statement in the post sequence in message (18), the writer uses the hypothetical *would* to report impersonalized past action, which is indicated by the reference to year 1976 and the other writer-party-oriented past tense verb forms, i.e. *we have designed* and *we couldn't.* In message (22) the writer-oriented modal verb *would* in the sentence *Had we processed this material we* ***would*** *have been able to do good commercial material from the coil.* is used primarily as a hypothetical conditional form to refer to an imagined, successful process asserted as possible to be carried out by the supplier, as opposed to the materialized, flawed process by the customer. Relying on his expertise and experience from similar cases, the writer's statement functions as convincing the reader of the justification of the writer's refusal. The message-initial and the message-final statements add to the assertiveness of the message. Alternatively, and more speculatively, it can be suggested that by using the conditional verb form instead of a non-conditional verb form, which would have been a relevant option in the present context, the writer withdraws full commitment to the propositional content of his statement, which allows for the mitigated interpretation. Further, the expression *a couple of* indicates some uncertainty in the writer's assertions. In message (39), the modal verb *would* is used as a conditional form in the sentence *If I had sent the tracer they* ***would*** *not have responded for at least a day!* The utterance is preceded by an explicit condition, which is expressed by the *if*-clause. A complementary function can be read into the conditional sentence in the present context. The use of the conditional sentence is explained by the fact that the writer asked the management level reader to request the person mentioned in message (39) to send the tracers to the customers. Thus, when reading intertextually into the utterance more information than it actually contains, the conditional sentence functions as playing down the writer's share in the collection process and, consequently, emphasizes the reader's part in the successful process. This strategy can be regarded as showing the writer's willingness to express her appreciation toward the management level reader's action and the writer's readiness to create alignment with the reader.

Message (19) represents a writer's party responsibility discourse event, involving highish severity level due to delayed deliveries to a customer. The writer, a Finnish management level interactant replying to a British management level interactant, has allegedly made a careful decision concerning the degree of commitment and certainty he wishes to invest in his statements.

Message (19)

To: B1
cc:
Subject: Re: (Customer company name)
She has two coils: on the first one items xxxxx-xx-xx, xxxxx-xx-xx, xxxxx-xx then on the second one xxxxx-xx and xxxxx-xx. These will be processed soonest. I ***would*** *say during this week and despatch next. Then xxxxx-xx is on slab and she tries to get it ready by week 830. Let's see how good material it will be this time/F2 (TIA)*

The writer-oriented modal verb *would* in the utterance *I would say* is used to express reservation concerning the final due date of the delayed delivery. The utterance *I would say* is used to specify the vague, uncommitted temporal expression *soonest* in the preceding sentence when referring to the time of production. However, the utterance *I would say* is ambiguous and vague, and in fact increases the tentativeness of the message. The non-commitment to the truth-value of the statements is reinforced by the verb *try* in the utterance *she tries to get it ready by week 830.* The singular third person pronoun *she* refers to a person in charge of the paperwork necessary for the transaction. The ambiguous expressions, i.e. *soonest*, *I would say*, and the verb *try*, encode information about the possibility of the proposition not being true and provide an ethical way out, should the statements turn out to be incorrect. The use of the impersonalized forms and the use of *she* can be interpreted as functioning as explicating that the writer is not personally in charge of the delay and that he only acts as an intermediary to inform of the present state of the process. Consequently, in the present context, it can be suggested that the writer's reluctance to express unequivocal certainty is a way of doing face work if his information proves out to be wrong. The message-final utterance *Let's see* was analysed in Chapter 5.3.2. Message (19) is an example of discourse which contains a cluster of several interpersonal elements with similar rhetorical functions, i.e. they offer the writer a respectable way out in case the information provided turns out to be faulty.

The writer of message (25), the female technical expert, uses the modal verb *would* to make a tentative statement after a suggestion she made message-initially to avoid imposing on her superior. The message is cc:ed to F3, a Finnish management level interactant, who is in power of making the final decision concerning the material to be returned. In the sentence *Let's take the material back. We **would** like to have the material sold as prime.* the mitigated utterance *We would like to* functions as conveying the writer's party willingness to gain a better price for the material, as opposed to the discount price offered by the customer. The writer-party-oriented utterance *We would like to* can be regarded as a conventional, standard phrase in professional business interaction to be used in discourse to refer to the writer's or the writer's party's future plans in a tentative way.

The writer of message (30), the female technical expert, replies to a message reporting a defect in the material.

Message (30) *Yes, it is the same mother coil xxxxxxx-xx, XXX xxxxx/xx. The coil did not go through the tension levelling line. Our inspectors thought the defect (cellulite) **would not** harm.*

The modal verb form *would* can be interpreted as a conditional form, reporting past action. In the present context, a complementary interpretation can be suggested, i.e. the conditional form *would* is used to mitigate the statement of the writer's party responsibility.

<u>*Can/Could*</u>

The modal verbs *can* and *could* in their epistemic reading, i.e. when signaling uncertainty, are typically categorized under hedges in research on metadiscourse (e.g. Crismore et al. 1993:50, Louhiala-Salminen 1999:125). In the repair work messages under scrutiny, the use of the modal verb *could* in the epistemic uncertainty function is rare. Only three occurrences of the epistemic uncertainty function were detected, one in message (24), one in message (35), which will be analysed under the subcategory of *May*, and one in message (37), which will be analysed under the subcategory of *Modal adverbs*, since their functions are closely intertwined with the functions of other epistemic modal expressions.

Further, the modal verbs *can* and *could* are used in modal-initial interrogatives functioning as requests for information and for action in the present data. In professional business discourse, the two modal verbs are used in a conventional, routinized way to signal tact, or politeness with or without *please* in requests.

In the present data, the utterances with the modal verb *could* have other functions, as illustrated in message (14), written by an American customer. In the sentence *I had given the credit information to (First name) so that a credit* ***could*** *be issued and there has been a great debate over how to input this credit into our "new system"*, the modal verb *could* primarily refers to imaginary, hypothetical past action by the writer's party in a discourse event, involving writer's party responsibility for the non-payment of a credit. The use of the past perfect tense form *I had given* in the message-initial main clause indicates that the writer acknowledges the long delay in their payment. The modal verb *could* in its present function as expressing the actor's ability is not counted as interpersonal metadiscourse in the ensuing analysis.

In message (24), the use of the person pronoun *I* in the first paragraph indicates that the writer uses her expert role to authorize the legitimacy of the information provided, i.e. refusal to accept the customer's complaint. The refusal is expressed in an assertive and categorical way by referring to the customary test procedure and ensuing test results. The information in the second paragraph reinforces the legitimacy of the refusal.

Message (24)

The lowest reading, which I measured from the sample, was 3.79 mm. I took the reading from 10 mm from the untrimmed edge. The ordered minimum gauge was 3.87.
As I informed you earlier, our records do not show any deviation. Our inspectors measure the thickness about 40 mm from the edge. The thickness measurements in the HR mill are taken along the center line of the coil.
What is the application? ***Could*** *they use the material for less demanding purposes? Are they able to slit the coils? We believe that the edge trop of the master coil was too steep. The coils would be OK after slitting.*

The post sequence in message (24) contains interrogative sentences that, except for the first one *What is the application?*, can be interpreted as functioning as suggestions for alternative uses for the unsatisfactory material. The utterance initiated by *We believe* increases the authorization of the refusal, and the first person plural pronoun *we* is used to involve other experts in the mill in Finland to back up the writer's statements. However, the interrogative sentences suggesting alternative uses for the material, and especially the use of the modal verbs *could* and *would* in the statements, can be interpreted as functioning as withholding the writer's full commitment to the propositional content of the suggestions by adding tentativeness and caution into the utterances. Simultaneously, it can be argued that the writer assumes some degree of responsibility by offering the suggestions for alternative uses. Further, the interrogative form suggestions convey the writer's willingness to continue a dialogue on the issue. The result of the dialogue can be seen in message (25), which was analysed under the subcategory of *Would* in this chapter.

<u>May</u>

In the repair work messages under analysis, there are two instances of the modal verb *may* in its epistemic uncertainty function, both used by the male technical expert in two messages. The modal verb *may* is used by the writer in his messages providing explanations, i.e. further information and views, to the reader.

Message (34) is a reply message to Fr1's initial message asking for an explanation to a deviation in material reported by a customer. The explanations by F6 include tentativeness and caution, and e.g. the linguistic expressions *a lot*, *small* and *dramatic* instead of specific figures convey that there are situational factors constraining the interaction.

Message (34)

To: Fr1
cc: F10, F9
Subject: Re: (Customer company name) - Technical assistance
The grade xxx-x is especially sensitive for temperature during test.The martensite amount in tension is higher for xxx than any other austenitic steel and it varies a lot with small changes of temperature during plastic deformation (also in coldrolling). The more there is martensite the higher xxx values are. Temperature changes in order of 5 C degrees only ***may*** *have dramatic effect on the strength values. Two hours after coldrolling is hardly long enough to reach the ambient temperature.*
It was not quite clear if the same material was retested or a similar material of another coil - you said just "same operation".
brgds,
F6 (First name and Family name)

There are no unambiguous test results available for the specific case, and consequently it is difficult for the writer to provide exact information, which he is used to providing in his response messages in similar contexts. The use of the modal verb *may* and the adverb *hardly* convey that the writer is giving his opinions and views rather than providing factual information. The post-sequence sentence contains two adverbs, i.e. *quite* and *just*, which in the present context may be interpreted to have a mitigating effect. The adverbs *quite* and *just* mitigate the writer's utterance, and their use conveys that the wording in the reader's initial message was not clear enough to enable the writer to give a more detailed reply. The use of the linguistic expressions to add to the tentativeness in message (34) evidence the writer's aim to signal his assessment of the degree of the certainty of his statements and his commitment to them. Thus, it is evident that the male writer is ready to indicate that he is giving his opinions and views and not facts. This suggestion is not totally in line with Holmes' (1996) postulation; Holmes maintains that the tendency to modify views by hedging is a female phenomenon in interaction. In the present context, however, the writer is the male technical expert. In message (34), the post-sequence sentence can be interpreted to be face-saving for the writer and the reader equally. It can be suggested that the statement allows the writer to indicate why his reply is not more specific without voicing direct criticism, and simultaneously the mitigated utterance allows the writer to avoid imposition on the reader. The quotation marks in the present context are not counted as interpersonal metadiscourse, since they indicate a direct loan from the initial message.

The reader of message (34) is not content with the explanations, i.e. views, provided by F6, and thus the follow-up message (35) is written.

Message (35)

To: Fr1
cc: F10, F9
Subject: Re: (Customer company name) - Technical assistance
There ***may*** *be a trivial explanation too...*
The coil does not contain immediately after coldrolling the rollpass ends with variable thickness (i.e. coldrolling reduction).
The strength depends on reduction and there are usually visible thickness differences for each pass. If the first sample was taken at the very most end of the coil and the next sample e.g. at 100 cm distance, they have different strengths too. The first one is thicker (less reduction) with a lower strength.
Another explanation: one sample was taken parallel to rolling direction and the other one perpendicular to rolling direction. The sample direction has effect on the strength values. The perpendicular testpiece should have higher strength.
One more explanation...
The test temperatures were different (1. in July, 2. in December). They could verify the effect of test temperatures by heating up a testpiece let say to 50 degrees and compare with results at 20 degrees C.
I think continuing this hypothetical discussion is more or less meaningless without knowing all the details about sample taking, preparation and tension test conditions etc..

We cannot check in our production if there are any changes in properties in coldrolled state over longer times because we don't test our samples after Sendzimir mill but in annealed condition.
Best regards,
F6 (First name and Family name)

The follow-up message (35) is more detailed and specific in terms of technical information when compared to message (34). However, the writer continues to use tentative expressions, i.e. the three modal auxiliaries *may*, *should* and *could* in their epistemic uncertainty functions, and *let say* in order to maintain the non-committed stance in his further explanations, or hypothesizing as he explicates it in his sentence *I think continuing this hypothetical discussion is more or less meaningless without knowing all the details about sample taking, preparation and tension test conditions etc.* Thus, the writer points out that he does not possess the necessary knowledgebase in the present discourse event. In this sentence, the writer explicates the reason for his reluctance to deal with this matter, i.e. the missing details make it impossible for him to give a reliable account of the case. The utterance *I think* primarily has an emphatic effect in the present context, since the writer relies on his professional expertise in uttering his opinion. Thus, *I think* can be interpreted as emphasizing the force of the view, whereas the utterance *more or less* can be suggested to mitigate the force of the view expressed by making it sound less categorical. Messages (34) and (35) show that a writer possessing an expert role in the discourse community is ready to signal by linguistic means that he is reluctant to assume an expert role in the two discourse events, i.e. he finds it natural to move from one role to another role depending on the discourse topic (cf. Nikula 1996:185-186). Message (35) was analysed in Chapters 5.2 and 5.3 for the other interpersonal metadiscourse functions, including the annoyance and irony aspects of the message.

<u>*Should*</u>

In the present data, the modal verb *should* is used to convey obligation and utterances with the primary function of expressing necessity and obligation were analysed in Chapter 5.3.2. This chapter discusses the utterances in which the modal verb *should* has the primary function of mitigating utterances or expressing reservation and caution. The ensuing analysis discusses various discourse events in terms of the positions held by the interactants, and consequently the direction of interaction.

Message (7) represents operative-level peer-to-peer interaction, in a routine, third party responsibility situation. The writer of message (7) conveys her uncertainty concerning the information she is providing by the use of the epistemic modal auxiliary *should* in the utterance *The customer has telephoned to say that his accountant sent back xxxxxx - so (Name of Bank)* ***should*** *have it by now.* The documentation has been discussed between the writer and the reader in earlier communication. Basing on that knowledge, the writer launches the information by resorting to a tentative expression in order to avoid committing herself in her intermediary position between the customer and the supplier in Finland in case the proposition proves out to be false. Thus, *should* can be interpreted as functioning simultaneously as a face-saving device for the writer.

Message (23) also represents operative-level peer-to-peer situation and involves high severity level, due to non-payment by a customer.

Message (23)

To: F1
cc:
Subject: SCRAP CREDIT
Hi F1 (First name)
I have received verbal confirmation from (Customer company name) that they will credit us back the scrap. Even though I received verbal confirmation, I do not know how long it will take for them to get around to giving us credit back....in otherwords I don't know if he was just telling me this so that I will leave him alone.
The person that I spoke with is AC1 (First name and Family name). You can check with me in a week or two and if I haven't received the invoice for scrap credit in the mail then I think either F3 (First name) or (First name) ***should*** *deal with him. I have explained that the mill wants the information, so AC1 has been aware of your need for this to be taken care of.*
Regards,
....A2 (first name)

In message (23), the operative level interactant uses the utterances *I do not know* and *I don't know* to indicate her willingness to withhold full commitment to the information she forwards to the reader from the customer, simultaneously signaling her mistrust towards the named customer's information. The non-payment of the credit has taken a long time to deal with, and is still under process. The writer's opinion suggesting future action to solve the problem is expressed in a hedged way, i.e. the writer uses the writer-oriented discourse particle *I think* to explicate that she provides her personal opinion and the epistemic modal verb *should* to convey caution concerning her suggestion involving management-level persons. Allegedly, the writer uses hedges, including *should*, in her statement since she finds herself in no position to give advice to the management level persons named as possible actors in the message, i.e. she does face-work by avoiding impingement on the reader.

The reply message (18) is written in full in Chapter 5.4.2 for the analysis of the emphatic interpersonal metadiscourse used by the writer when explaining a numbering system basing on a customer's inquiry. The discourse event involves low severity level. The writer is the male technical expert and the message is addressed to an American management-level person and cc:ed to two Finnish management-level persons and the female technical expert. In the post-sequence paragraph, the male technical expert expresses his opinion to the reader concerning the customer's inquiry by uttering *I don't see, why the customer **should** really know the actual dates of the casts produced in our mill.* By using the modal auxiliary *should*, the writer aims at softening, mitigating the force of his view which is expressed in the indirect interrogative sentence. Simultaneously, the utterance includes the writer's suspect concerning the appropriateness of the customer's inquiry.

In message (38), the use of the modal verb *should* is used similar to that in message (23), which was analysed above. Message (38) represents upward vertical interaction, with high severity level, due to non-payment by customers. In the utterance by a British operative-level person to a Finnish management-level person *I wonder if something **should** be sent from the mill* the modal verb *should* is used to avoid conveying imposition on a management-level interactant. The utterance uses an agentless form, allowing for the exclusion of a named actor. However, it is shared knowledge between the reader and the writer that the reader is a prospective actor. By using a mitigated stance in the utterance, the reader is to make a decision about the compliance with the suggestion.

Message (21) represents management-level peer-to-peer interaction and it is written to provide justification message-initially for a delayed delivery, summarized as follows: *So original production schedule could not be maintained. This is the reason in one sentence.* The post sequence urges action involving both the reader, i.e. *Please formulate an answer to (Customer company name)*, and the reader and the writer jointly, i.e. *Obviously we **should** consider remedies for future.* In the latter statement the inclusive first person pronoun *we* excludes the customer. The writer aims at conveying a request in a form of a suggestion, and thus the reader- and writer-oriented modal verb *should* in the present context can be interpreted as having a secondary function of mitigating the obligation included in the utterance. Consequently, the utterance can be regarded as encouraging the reader into dialogue with the writer, in order to solve the problematic situation in the best possible way for all parties concerned. By mitigating the suggestory utterance, the writer leaves space for a choice to the management-level reader as to compliance.

Verb *Seem*

In addition to the verb *seem*, message (40) contains other interpersonal metadiscoursal elements to modify the utterances. Message (40) was analysed in Chapter 5.4.2 under the category of the writer-oriented discourse marker *I think*. In her message to a management level female employee, the operative level female writer expresses her uncertainty about her assertion by using the attitudinal, evaluative verb *seem* which, however, is not attributed explicitly and overtly to the writer as e.g. in the utterance *It seems to me*. Allegedly, the verb *seem* in its present message-initial position is used to alleviate the force of the writer's statement or opinion, which criticizes the customer company named in the message, ***It seems*** *very unfair that we have to pay the charges for the mistake (Customer company name) made, but I don't think we are able to get the money from the customer.* The writer-oriented modal verb form *I should* in its epistemic reading also indicates the writer's uncertainty concerning her suggestion in vertically upward discourse event.

In message (16), the female technical expert writer uses the verb *seem* in the same function as the writer of message (40) as follows: *Auditing and inspecting* ***seems*** *to be the only way to educate people here in the mill.* The writer conveys her uncertainty concerning her statement and the utterance indicates that she is expressing her opinion concerning the solution of the problem under discussion.

The writer of message (38) is the same as the writer of message (40), which was analysed above, and it represent upward vertical interaction with two management-level addressees.

Message (38)

To: F14, F15
cc:
Subject: (Name of Bank) Update
Hi
Just to let you know that a month after our meeting little has changed. We are still being charged for tracers, but as yet nothing has been sent to the customer. I spoke to (First name) this afternoon and she confirmed that they were not being sent. She says they have "escalated us to top priority", but I'm not confident that anything is being done.
I wonder if something should be sent from the mill as ***I don't seem*** *to be getting any joy!*
Best regards, B3

The utterance *I don't seem* differs from the use of the verb *seem* in messages (40) and (16) in that the utterance is attributed to the writer. The above sentence represents a statement containing a cluster of linguistic expressions, *I wonder if*, *should* and *I don't seem*, which function as conveying the writer's reservation and caution concerning her suggestion in a discourse event in which the suggested action involves the reader or the reader's party as the actor. As hypothesized earlier, i.e. in Chapter 5.4.2 when analysing the utterances *I think* and *I don't think*, the same writer's overt readiness to convey uncertainty by the use of various linguistic devices, in order to moderate her suggestions or views, can be interpreted as representing idiosyncrasy. This readiness may result from the fact that, in her messages to the management level addressee, i.e. in upward vertical interaction, the writer aims at avoiding imposition on the management level reader's face in giving suggestions or expressing opinions concerning problematic issues and solutions to them.

Adverbs *Perhaps, Probably, Not completely*

In message (16) the modal adverb *perhaps* shows the technical expert writer's lack of full commitment to her statement. The tentativeness is reinforced by the use of the pronoun *some*, which adds to the uncertainty of the statement when discussing the acknowledgment of responsibility for the mishap. Further, the expressions *a couple of*, *seems* and *would* emphasize the tentative nature of the message, indicating that the writer is conveying her opinions and views rather than factual information.

Message (16)

To: B1
cc: F2, F8
Subject: Re: (Customer company name) - strapping
*Was this the first time when the customer experienced loose or broken banding? **Perhaps** they have seen some cases, but have not reported them. Do you know if there has been any safety hazards because of the problem?*
The quality department will audit the next shipment. It will take place in July, week 27 according to F8 (First name).
For you info ... We have audited one Canadian customer because of similar problems for the last two years, a couple of times a month. I have not seen any fast improvement. Auditing and inspecting seems to be the only way to educate people here in the mill. I though that our fine automatic packaging line would solve this type of problem, but automation is not a solution. Sorry for my frustration.
Rgds, F5 (First name)

The writer of message (17) acknowledges responsibility for submitting incorrect information on a certificate. The negative form *not completely* in the sentence *The annealing time of 22 min was **not completely** wrong, because it was the time at 1950 F after hot rolling.* is used by the technical expert writer in a sentence explaining the origins of the incorrect information.

The utterance *not completely* serves as an introduction to a justification that partly refuses full responsibility for the information stated as incorrect message-initially.

Message (37) represents upward vertical interaction and involves highish severity level, since it is about delayed deliveries to European customers.

Message (37)

To: F9, Fr2, F11
cc: D1, D2, F12
Subject: Re: (Customer company name) - certificates
Hello Fr2 (First name),
Please read ASME SA-480 chapter 13.1 Tension Test and 13.1: Tension test specimens shall be taken from finished material...
.
Delayed shipments to (Customer company name) (waiting for test results) are ***probably*** *the most economical and practical way to solve the problem.*
We had meeting with D1/OSP last week. They will look for a way how to check the testing status of material to (Customer company name). They could send it immediately if the test results are ready, otherwise they have to delay shipment two days for instance.
I checked four certificates for material for OSP to (Customer company name) during last week: all certificates were in time! Generally, 85 % of the OSP certificates were ready in time for all deliveries during the month May. Some materials to (Customer company name) were finished and tested couple of months before date of shipping.
best regards, F6 (First name)

In message (37) the modal adverb *probably* is used in a similar way to *perhaps* in message (16). The adverb *probably* conveys the technical expert writer's uncertainty concerning his statement of opinion. The epistemic modal verb *could* and the expression *for instance* add to the tentativeness of the writer's statements. The expressions *some* and *a couple of* function as reinforcing the tentative nature of the message. In the present context, it can be suggested that the writer finds the situation problematic due to circumstances not fully under the writer's party control. In earlier communication it became evident that there is a prescribed procedure to be followed when delivering the materials. The procedure is under scrutiny for improvement, to which the statements with *could* and *for instance* refer to, whereas the adverb *probably*, the pronoun *some* and the expression *couple of* refer to the present procedure. It is suggested by other research (e.g. Hyland 1998a:238) that in business contexts, mitigating the directness of utterances is used to present disappointing results or failed projects, since it safeguards writers against overstating an assertion which later proves to have been in error. Thus, in the present context, the tentative stance aims at indicating that the writer lacks unambiguous information for the future procedure, and simultaneously does face-work for the writer's party.

Performative verb *Suggest*

In message (33), the verb *suggest* is used in upward vertical interaction by a technical expert giving her suggestion concerning a justified claim by a customer. The writer acknowledges the responsibility for the defect explicitly by giving the reason for the defect. The message is also cc:ed to a Finnish management level employee, who has the power to make the final decision concerning the matter. The explicit performative verb *suggest* functions as showing the writer's uncertainty concerning her opinion, and simultaneously it conveys the writer's respect for the readers' faces by not being too imposing in tone.

Message (33)

To: A1
cc: F3
Subject: (Customer company name) sample, xxxxx/xx, heat xxxxxx
Thanks for the sample. The defect is an old over-rolled scratch. The source is not known. ***I suggest*** *we accept the claim.*
Rgds F5 (First name)

Message (20) is written by a Finnish management level employee to a British management level employee concerning a delay in delivery, for which the writer's party is responsible. The performative verb *suggest* functions as welcoming the reader's opinion concerning the solution proposed by the writer. The question mark at the end of the statement adds to the uncertainty the writer feels about his suggestion, and increases the need for the reader's opinion concerning the suggestion. Thus the message-final sentence urges the reader's participation in discourse by giving his consent to the procedure proposed by the writer.

Message (20)

To: B1
cc:
Subject: Re: (Customer company name)
We have done now 5.5 mm plates except 3 missing. Despatch on Friday at. ***I suggest*** *the missing ones will be added to xxxxx-xx to read 103?/F2(TIA)*

5.5.3 Summary

Repair work interaction involves the use of the rhetoric strategies of persuasion and argumentation among other communication strategies when the writers aim at presenting their information and opinions and views in a strategically rational way in each discourse event. In many discourse events under the present analysis, the interactants aim at creating a process of negotiation to maintain or achieve mutual understanding in problematic situations by linguistic means, with the aim of not sounding too assertive or categorical. The analysis above indicates that various elements of interpersonal metadiscourse are used to give effect to the various strategic aims in repair work interaction.

The present chapter deals with the linguistic devices to convey the writer's aim to withhold full commitment to the truth-value of her or his statements, or her or his avoidance of sounding too categorical when asserting something. In the present chapter, there are various references to the previous chapter dealing with interpersonal metadiscourse elements to emphasize certainty or force of writers' utterances. The appearance of various types of interpersonal metadiscourse devices in the same message, e.g. emphatics and hedges, primarily signal the writers' aim at indicating a clear distinction between the utterances of factual information provided and opinions and views given in their messages. Consequently, it can be suggested that there is a strategic balance between the use of e.g. emphatics and hedges in the present professional business interaction.

As pointed out in Chapter 5.4.3, interactants primarily use emphatics to indicate their commitment to the certainty of their utterances. The use of various emphatic elements also adds to the credibility of interactants' statements. Frequently, the high degree of certainty derives from the writers' expert roles, which legitimizes the assertive stance in their utterances. The expertise is either technical or commercial in nature, enhanced by long-established experience in the branch of some interactants, including the operative level employees' expertise in documentation. On the one hand, professional writers use emphatics to convey their knowledge and expertise, and the subsequent authority and competence; the use of emphatics in assertive expression signals the factuality and evidentiality of the information provided to the reader. On the other hand, by using e.g. hedges as analyzed in the present chapter, writers withhold their full commitment to the propositional content of their utterances, or express uncertainty or caution when unambiguous information is not available.

As suggested in earlier research on interpersonal metadiscourse (e.g. Intaraprawat & Steffensen 1995:258), the use of linguistic strategies to express reservation and caution as well as to convey the writer's lack of full commitment to the truth value of propositional content, when reliable evidence is not available, signals the writers' aim at producing ethical texts. By explicitly indicating tentativeness, the writers signal their sincerity as to the degree of certainty of their statements. Simultaneously, the use of tentative and mitigated statements in interaction signals the writers' willingness to launch or maintain a dialogue in presenting her or his statements for further scrutiny and ratification by readers. By encouraging feedback from the readers, the writers express affective appeals by showing respect for the readers' opinions and views. As suggested earlier in the present work, creating dialogue by various communication strategies in repair work interaction is important to guarantee a mutually acceptable solution to problems. In order to achieve this primary goal of repair work interaction, the involvement of all parties concerned is required, the employees of the Finnish mill, the employees of the Metal Marketing Companies, and the customers' representatives, who are involved only indirectly in the present data, except for one message, i.e. message (14) by an American customer. Further, as suggested in the analyses above, interpersonal metadiscourse devices, both emphatics and hedges, in some contexts of use, signal the writers' aim at doing face-work, either to save their own faces or the writer's party's face, or alternatively the reader's or the reader's party's face.

6 CONCLUDING DISCUSSION

6.1 Introduction

The concluding chapter will give an overview of the findings of the analyses from the previous chapters. As each chapter discusses and summarizes the findings in detail, the findings will not be listed and discussed categorically in this chapter. The discussion on the general research aims and findings will be amalgamated with or embedded in the ensuing discussions when providing answers to the primary and secondary research questions formulated for the analysis in Chapter 3.5. Further, this chapter will raise some issues for discussion which were not touched upon in detail in the present work but which seem to require particular attention in a pragmatic qualitative case study of the current type. Some issues will be highlighted and approached from a different angle from the one resorted to in the previous chapters, including the interplay between the macrolevel factors and microlevel parameters in discourse. A treatment of some issues in the concluding chapter aims at emphasizing the multiplicity and intricate nature of discourse and a need for analyses incorporating the multi-layerdness of interaction. Thus, discussions on these issues will be implicative of directions for further research aims and topics. This chapter will also include a discussion on the limitations of the present work referred to in earlier chapters of the work.

The central aim of the present work has been to investigate the functions of interpersonal metadiscourse in repair work interaction in the business arena. Thus, the focus has been on a microlevel feature of discourse. Context-specificity in interpreting the microlevel features has incorporated the macrolevel factors into the analyses. The data comprises real-life business electronic mail interaction, and the main focus of analysis has been on 40 repair work messages written in English by American, British and Finnish informants. The electronic mail interaction under scrutiny represents intra-corporate business interaction, since the informants work for the same group of companies, involving members of the main company in Finland and those of two Metal Marketing Companies (MMC), one in Chicago and one in London. Despite the multicultural background of the interactants, the current study does not assume an intercultural perspective. The analyses in the previous chapters have sought to consider the different layers of interaction and their interrelatedness, which was called for by e.g. Charles (1994:301) in her thesis on business negotiations. The business relationship prevailing between the interactants in the present work differs from that in Charles' research, or Yli-Jokipii's (1994) research on business requests in that the current business relationship is intra-corporate, not inter-corporate involving direct interaction between the seller and the buyer as in Charles' research. In the present work, the MMC staff has an intermediary position between the Finnish seller, i.e. supplier, and American and British customers, which allegedly influences the use of interpersonal metadiscourse in the current data. Charles refers to the business relationship layer as the superstructural layer. As stated above, the main focus in the present work is on repair work interaction, defined as aiming at solving problematic situations from the point of view of one of the three parties involved, and achieving solutions acceptable by the three parties involved, i.e. the Finnish supplier, American or British customers, and the MMC personnel, whose role is that of an intermediary. Charles refers to a negotiation event as the macrostructural level. The present work adopts a slightly modified approach in that the business relationship component is included in the discourse event components. Thus, the present work resorts to the notion of microlevel parameters, i.e. the linguistic and typographical elements, and the macrolevel parameters represented by the discourse event components, including the business relationship as one discourse event component. However, discourse event components are to some extent used as explaining factors to the prevailing business relationship (Chapter 3.2).

The discourse event component model in the current treatment is a modified model via Collot and Belmore (1996) from Biber (1988) for its adaptability for the purposes of the present work. In her research, Charles (1994:317) calls for a new approach in teaching business English by maintaining that communicative functions and notions should be replaced with tactical and rhetorical moves. The current work has pursued, at least tentatively, to respond to this call in an effort to examine the macrosegments structure of the 40 repair work electronic mail messages (Herring 1996), in order to find possible interlinks between the placement and order of different textual-pragmatic functions, or communication strategies, and the possible strategic uses of various linguistic elements within those macrosegment structures and the subsequent communication strategies. The concepts used in the present work are divergent from those used by Charles, but the aims can be regarded as parallel. The inclusion of the discussion on the discourse event components and the representations of various communication strategies in messages conveying various communicative purposes in different discourse events acknowledges a contextually-focused approach in analysing repair work interaction in the present work. The suggestions and replies proffered, basing on such a limited data as in the current work, will be tentative and include proposals for further research with more extensive authentic data, in order to test the tenability of the assumptions made and replies provided by the present work.

This chapter will provide answers to the research questions put forward in Chapter 3.5, and the questions will be repeated here for convenience. The current work set out to address the following primary research question: What functions does interpersonal metadiscourse have in the 40 repair work messages under analysis? Consequently, the central emphasis is on a microlevel feature of repair work interaction. Secondary research questions closely related to the primary research question, involving both linguistic and educational dimensions, are as follows:

> What are the possible influences of discourse event components on the use and functions of interpersonal metadiscourse in the repair work interaction under analysis?
>
> To what extent is Meier's (1995) repair work strategy approach applicable for the purposes of the analysis of the present repair work interaction?
>
> Is it possible to compile and suggest a prototypical macrosegment structure for the 40 repair work messages under scrutiny?
>
> Is there interplay between the possible prototypical macrosegment message structure and
> a) the strategic use of various repair work strategies suggested by Meier (1995), e.g. utterances of apology, responsibility, and justification, in relation to other communication strategies included in the repair work messages under examination;
> b) the strategic use of interpersonal metadiscourse in the repair work interaction under analysis?
>
> Do various request forms have context-specific functions in the present repair work interaction?

One macrolevel parameter referred to in the opening chapters of the current work is the communication medium used to send and receive messages in the present data, i.e. the electronic mail system. The most often assumed implication of the electronic medium on business interaction is a development toward more informal and personalized, i.e. conversational, stance in interaction. The present work acknowledged this assumption. As a matter of fact, the linguistic elements in bringing about conversational nature in the current repair work interaction were assigned a functional interpersonal subcategory of their own, since they are interpreted as creating rapport with the reader. The functions of interpersonal metadiscourse will be discussed in more detail in the present chapter and that discussion will further elaborate on the various discourse event factors allegedly influencing the way in which repair work discourse is carried out in the present data.

Conversationalization of electronic mail interaction will be raised for discussion in the concluding chapter, due to the several postulations made in previous research on e-mail interaction. Further, in the present work there are frequent references to and various postulations made concerning some ramifications of the electronic mail system as a catalyst and factor of variation and change in discursive practices. As a matter of fact, it was hypothesized that e-mail interaction is conversational in nature. It is felt that this issue deserves a general discussion, involving some other macrolevel parameters external to discourse events, in order to incorporate other aspects of e-mail interaction in this concluding discussion, in addition to the functional aspect of personalization of discourse derived from the conversational nature of e-mail interaction.

6.2 Societal and organizational change and conversationalization of discourse

Conversationalization of business discourse is experienced as one of the explicit ramifications of the use of electronic mail systems as a medium of interaction, and the tenability of this assumption can be regarded as a general research aim of the present work. The analysis of the functions of interpersonal metadiscourse yielded the conclusion that conversationalization of e-mail interaction is a reality in the current data. Further, the analysis evidenced that e-mail interaction is a hybrid of the written and spoken modes of language, at least in those discourse events in which explicit linguistic variants of oral discourse were detected. As pointed out earlier, the current work excluded the analysis of syntax when discussing conversational features in bringing about personalized stance in interaction. Conversational features allow for a deeper writer- and reader-involvement into discourse by making it more personalized.

Thus, it can be argued that writers use conversational strategies in pursuit of an informal and close relationship with the reader. In the current intra-corporate data, however, the familiarity level between interactants is high. Consequently, it can be assumed that writers are 'bilingual' or 'trilingual' in that they are capable of making distinct choices between the more formal written mode and the more informal oral mode, and moving somewhere in between the two ends on the spoken-written continuum, as was explicitly stated by one informant in the e-mail questionnaire (23.11.2000). Thus, Howard's (1997:6) argument that there is overlap between media forms, due to which it is difficult to conceive of a radically new and distinct form of interaction that does not in some way participate in the old, holds true in the present data.

A further question was posed asking if it is the advent of the electronic mail system in itself that encourages organizational developments and change, including the subsequent changes in interactional practices when compared to traditional ways of written business interaction, or if there are other forces in interplay with the technological advances of communication methods. The range of electronic language is wide, and the present discussion covers business e-mail interaction only, which is a sphere as varied as corporations and individuals involved. From the point of view of corporations perceived as organizations aspiring to make profit, e-mail systems offer added-value by speeding up communication, which results in openness and efficiency in global and local corporate decision-making processes. Thus, as businesses have become more candid and democratic, they have become more vulnerable to global and local threats, both internal and external due to their high reliance on electronic media.

In the discussion on the relationship between written discourse and technological and organizational change within workplaces, the general democratization development is seen as an important catalyst of change in interactional behaviour. Electronic mail is referred to as a new form of social interaction, which encourages and increases interaction, candour and transparency when businesses are aspiring towards leaner organizations. These aspirations are partly facilitated by e-mail systems, since paucity of screening systems allows a more efficient dissemination of information in that any employee can initiate discussions and participate discussion on practically any issue or topic. The new system allows for the change of interactant roles, i.e. audience may become writers, addressors may become readers or audience, and addressees may become writers despite their organizational positions or roles and subsequent tasks. Thus, e-mail systems merit 'knowers' and disseminators of information over organizational positions which employees are vested with. A further change factor, which influences the interactional behaviour in businesses, is the general democratizing development of society and public discourse. Research also refers to the consumerization of public discourse, aided and influenced by e.g. advertising in media.

It is acknowledged that there is a transfer effect from the social and organizational developments discussed above. However, the current analysis indicates that there may be a stronger transfer effect at play in corporate interaction, deriving from the interactional situations and the interactants involved in them. Electronic mail interaction represents written dialogic discourse and it simulates the outline of the dyadic oral discourse in some aspects. For instance, the following factors add to the dialogic, conversational stance in e-mail interaction: virtual on-line interactivity is made possible by the technology, interactivity and the dialogic nature are emphasized by the enclosed initial messages or extracts from them to which reply or follow-up messages respond, e-mail messages have replaced telephone calls or routine face-to-face meetings and the linguistic features of telephone calls or face-to-face interaction are transferred to e-mail interaction. There are corporate e-mail etiquettes published, e.g. in the group of companies represented in the present work. However, basing on a study conducted in the same group of companies in 1996, there were several informants, including some of the present informants, who did not know about the etiquette, and consequently could not resort to the corporate rules imposed on e-mail interaction. Still, these informants' interactional behaviour was not deviant from the interactional behaviour of those who were familiar with the rules imposed. It is assumed that much of interactional behaviour is idiosyncratic behaviour, and much of it is norm-based interactional behaviour, i.e. shared interactional practices are developed by the members of the discourse community through interaction. As an example of such development was the discussion in the current work in Chapter 4.4.1 in the treatment of direct requestive forms. Further, it is assumed that transfer effect from pioneers, i.e. e-mail interactants with long experience in using e-mail, and power holders, organizational or expert power, in individual interactional situations is more notable than transfer effect from the general change developments in society and organizations. Thus, as the use of conversational features in e-mail interaction is taken to be a rhetorical strategy functioning as bringing about informality and closeness, i.e. making discourse more personalized and adding to the reader- and writer-involvement, the following postulation can be put forward: Rhetorical strategies emerge and become shared through interactional needs and purposes rather than through imposition from authorities and they are not ethnically determined *per se*. Thus, rhetoric can be seen as a decisive factor in creating shared interactional community.

6.3 Answers to secondary research questions

The following chapter pursues to reply the secondary research questions before assigning the primary research question, starting with the following subquestion: **To what extent is Meier's (1995) repair work strategy approach applicable for the purposes of the analysis of the present repair work interaction?** As defined by Meier (1995:388), repair work interaction is carried out to remedy any damage incurred to an actor's image upon the establishment of a responsibility link between the actor and behaviour which fell below the standard perceived as expected by a particular group. Meier's approach allows for the inclusion of a third-party responsibility link and the writer's face concerns in the treatment of repair work interaction, and it does not assume any preordained politeness status for interactional behaviour or particular strategy types. Thus, in the current interactional situations the notion of 'appropriateness' and 'involvement' override the notion of 'politeness' in view of the intermediary position of the interactants and the concomitant third-party responsibility link.

Of Meier's repair work strategies, the utterances of apology or regret (A), utterances of responsibility (R) and utterances of justification (J) were chosen for closer scrutiny in the current work when analysing the macrosegment structure of repair work messages and the order and placement of different communication strategies in messages. The 18 messages including an A utterance were divided into three categories in accordance with their primary communicative purpose to test the applicability of Meier's repair work approach on the one hand, and to receive insights from real-life business interaction for comparison with the suggestions and postulations put forward in business interaction course books concerning especially the requirement of apologizing in repair work discourse on the other hand. The messages not uttering A were not divided into subcategories, since the primary communicative purpose of all the 22 messages is that of doing repair work. The utterances of justification (J) will be discussed when answering the research question concerning the viability of the suggested macrosegment structure of repair work messages.

A detailed analysis of the 40 messages was enlightening in that it showed a rather direct interplay between the presence or absence of utterances of apology or regret and utterances of explicit responsibility on the one hand, and the interplay between the A and R utterances and the routine or non-routine nature of repair work messages, which in turn is closely intertwined with the severity level of the discourse topic. As pointed out in previous chapters, the notion of 'routine' in the current context implies that problems in routine discourse events are taken care of offhand, by an immediate verbal or physical action, i.e. the reader responds verbally to the writer's request for information or the reader acts instantly in accordance with the writer's request for action. Routine situations are typically taken care of by documentation, and consequently they involve low severity level. Whenever financial implications are involved for either customers or the Finnish supplier, in the form of late deliveries to customers or non-payments by customers, or whenever problems recur, the severity level increases.

Basing on the findings from the analysis of the occurrences of Meier's repair work strategies, it can be concluded that writers are ready to explicate responsibility (R), and consequently utter apology or regret (A) in routine situations in which either the writer personally or the writer's party is responsible for mishaps. In routine situations also third-party responsibility is explicated. The less routinized the discourse event gets as to the severity level of the situation and the complexity of solutions to problems, i.e. the more there is need for negotiation, the more reluctant writers become to acknowledge responsibility explicitly and utter apology or regret for what has happened. In recurring problematic situations A is uttered to show attitudes or personal emotions.

Messages without an A utterance represent highish or high level of severity in that it is not possible for writers to offer final solutions to problems offhand. Consequently, repair work messages not uttering apology or regret frequently aim at creating dialogue with readers, sometimes necessitating customers' involvement, in order to tackle problems. Various communication strategies are used in urging readers to participate in negotiation processes. Different requestive utterances, including direct form requests or explicit requests and more implicit, indirect request forms, i.e. modal-initial, interrogative and declarative sentences, are used to maintain or continue negotiation.

The positions or roles of interactants influence the absence or presence of the utterances of apology or regret and utterances of responsibility in that the interactants have their position- and role-derived tasks to manage. Consequently, the operative-level interactants are more involved in routine situations, and due to the management-level interactants' responsibility to manage severe business issues, i.e. delays in deliveries and non-payments by customers, and the technical expert interactants' responsibility to deal with severe technical problems, i.e. quality issues and safety issues, the management-level interactants and the technical experts are more often involved in non-routine discourse events, in which apology or regret or responsibility is not uttered readily and explicitly.

The findings from the analysis of the use of the A and R utterances show that discourse-event-specific factors influence the choice and use of the communication strategies of uttering A and R. The routine or non-routine nature, and consequently the severity level of topics are decisive in assigning the right person with adequate power and expertise to deal with each discourse event. A further discourse-event factor influencing the choice between the use or non-use of A and/or R utterances are the legal constraints imposed on writers from within corporations and their policy guidelines. In order to avoid legal proceedings in terms of responsibility and subsequent financial ramifications, writers resort to implicit communication strategies rather than explicit ones in acknowledging or refusing responsibility. The choice of the non-use of the A and/or R strategies, which is possible in the framework of Meier's (1995) repair work approach, may also indicate that corporate image concerns are prevalent. Not uttering apology or/and responsibility can be regarded as a strategy of implicitly refusing responsibility in discourse events in which there are no authoritative facts to evidence responsibility relationships between the parties involved. The non-use may imply that e.g. Finnish writers aim at preserving their expert, business or technical, image as 'knowers' or 'disseminators of facts' and the subsequent status as holders of expert and/or information power. Thus, the avoidance of uttering A and /or R can be regarded as implying that writers' faces are at stake. Nikula (1996:226) suggests that different roles can mean different needs for speakers to use modifiers. Applied to the present data, it can be suggested that different roles for interactants mean different needs for interactants to choose discourse-event-specific repair work strategies.

The repair work strategy approach suggested by Meier (1995) allowed for the inclusion of the messages not uttering apology or regret and responsibility, due to which the analysis of the 40 repair work messages was made possible. Further, Meier's focus on the writer's face, or the corporate image concerns instead of the reader's face concerns alone was an aspect adequate for analysing the interaction in the present data, especially in messages primarily doing repair work and not uttering apology and responsibility. The inclusion of a third-party responsibility link established flexibility in interpreting the more implicit linguistic utterances in the present analysis of intra-corporate interaction, in which the American and British interactants utter e.g. customers' responsibility in their intermediary position between customers and the Finnish supplier. Further, the notion of 'appropriateness' instead of 'politeness' seemed to be more relevant in the present intra-corporate interaction in which interactants' goals cohere, i.e. they all aim at both customer- and supplier-satisfaction simultaneously. Thus, Meier's repair work strategy is applicable for an analysis of data of current type.

The findings from the analysis of the use or non-use of the utterances of apology or regret and responsibility imply also that more attention should be paid to context-specificity in teaching business interaction and in business interaction course book, in order to be able to offer relevant insights to future business professionals concerning their interactional behaviour. In sum, suggestions discarding contextual factors offered by course books, such as "One apology is enough" and "Never end on an apology" (Moon 1999:59), should not be taken at face value and ought to be challenged when teaching context-specific use of business English.

The following secondary research question to be tackled is **if it is possible to compile and suggest a prototypical macrosegment structure for the 40 repair work messages under scrutiny?** Further, a second subquestion will be replied simultaneously, i.e. **Is there interplay between the possible prototypical macrosegment message structure and a) the strategic use of various repair work strategies suggested by Meier (1995), e.g. utterances of apology, responsibility and justification, in relation to other communication strategies included in the repair work messages under examination?** The b) section of this subquestion will be replied when answering the primary research question in Chapter 6.4.

It was pointed out in the previous chapters that the present work assumed neither the 'genre' nor the 'text type' approach. In building up a sequential structure of messages, the present work came up with a macrosegment structure model adapted from Herring (1996) with subsequent textual-pragmatic functions or communication strategies displayed in the structure outlines. In chapter 4.2, the 40 repair work messages were divided into subcategories in accordance with their communicative purposes, after dividing the messages into two main categories, i.e. those uttering an apology or regret and those not uttering an apology. This division was made, since it was found relevant for the discussion on the presence or absence of the A and R utterances. A summarizing description of the findings will be given, and some concluding remarks will be made by references to Paltridge's (1995, 1996) notion of 'sufficient similarity' in his genre and prototype approach. A point has to be made concerning the limitations of the present data; due to the low number of messages under analysis no attempt is made to offer generalizing suggestions.

Finding answers, if only tentative, to this question will have bearing on teaching the use of context-specific business English. Business course books suggest structural outlines or strategic organizations for messages, including business messages requiring persuasion and convincing of readers. Repair work interaction analysed in the current work is persuasive in nature, especially the non-routine discourse events. Persuasion and convincing was pursued by utilizing e.g. the communication strategy of uttering justifications (J) in support of the facts presented, or views and opinions offered, or by providing authoritative information by references to standards, manuals and customary procedure in testing materials. Also interpersonal metadiscourse was used for persuasive goals; they will be discussed when replying the primary research question.

The 18 repair work messages analysed in the first category were those including an utterance of apology or regret. There were similarities and dissimilarities revealed within and across the different message categories in the order and placement of strategies, including routine and non-routine messages and messages with varying degrees of severity, from high to low.

As to the messages uttering apology or regret, in messages primarily requesting for action or information, or primarily providing information, the primary communicative purpose was placed in the core message in ten messages out of a total of eleven messages. In the seven messages primarily doing repair work, the core message was the sequence most frequently loaded with several communication strategies of conveying repair work. It is assumed that the primary communicative purpose is intertwined with specific discourse event components, and consequently each communicative purpose category will be discussed separately below.

In the five messages primarily requesting for action or information, the A utterances had the highest occurrence rate in the post-sequence, i.e. four occurrences in five messages. The messages are routine, low severity-level messages with writer's responsibility and represent operative-level peer-to-peer interaction. In such discourse events it seemed to be appropriate to utter apology or regret message-finally, after having uttered R and J, either in the pre-sequence or in the core message. In four messages, justification was uttered before the primary communicative purpose, which shows compliance with the indirect strategic organization. In four messages, the writer's responsibility was uttered before the main communicative purpose, which shows the writer's willingness to acknowledge personal responsibility in routine situations.

In the six routine messages primarily providing information, the A utterances had the highest occurrence rate in the pre-sequence, i.e. five occurrences in six messages. The message-initial A utterances functioned as negative replies to issue interacted. In the placement of the J and R utterances there was more variation in relation to the utterance of the primary communicative purpose; in four messages they were placed before the primary communicative purpose, either in the pre-sequence or the core message. The discourse events in this category were variable in that they represented either the writer's or writer's party or third-party responsibility situations, which may explain the variation in the placement and order of the J and R utterances when compared to the messages primarily requesting, all writer's responsibility situations. Relying on such a low number of messages, it is difficult to find any clear evidence for the variation.

The seven messages primarily doing repair work represent both routine and non-routine discourse events, five messages involving high or highish severity level. The A utterances were placed in the post-sequence, except for two messages, in which they were in the core message. The message-final placement indicates that writers uttered apology or regret after having communicated other necessary strategies. Again, in this category there was variation in the placement and order of the R and J utterances in relation to the primary communicative purpose utterance, allegedly due to the variation in the severity level and the responsibility relationships, i.e. there were writer's party, the reader's party and the third-party responsibility situations represented. As to the order of the R and J utterances in relation to each other, there is similarity in that in 13 messages out of a total of 18 messages the R utterance precedes the J utterance, mainly in routine writer's or writer's party responsibility situations (11 occurrences). Thus, in routine situations, writers acknowledged personal or writer's party responsibility readily. In five messages, the J utterance preceded the R utterance, two discourse events involving 3rd-party responsibility and two non-routine situations. The findings from the present data empower the conclusion that writers use the direct message organization in routine situations and resort to the use of the indirect organization of messages in less routinized discourse events in which persuasion is needed, i.e. provide justification before uttering responsibility and the core issue, as suggested by business course books (e.g. Airas-Junkkari 1992, Guffey 1997, Moon 1999).

The above summary yields a conclusion that in the most routine discourse events involving either the writer's or the writer's party responsibility, i.e. discourse events with the primary communicative purpose of either requesting or providing information concerning documentation, writers tend to resort to a uniform communicative-purpose-specific sequential structure of messages in terms of the order and placement of the three repair work strategies under scrutiny in relation to the primary communicative purpose utterance. As the severity level increases and the reader's party responsibility or the 3rd-party responsibility is involved, there seems to be more variation especially in the order of the repair work strategies in relation to each other.

The second main category of repair work messages comprises 22 messages, mainly non-routine, with the primary communicative purpose of doing repair work not uttering an apology. Thus, two repair work strategies were under analysis, i.e. the utterances of justification and responsibility. Due to the non-routine nature of messages, and consequently a high or highish severity level, corporate image concerns and writers' face concerns were involved in some discourse events. Messages in this category are longer than in the first category, since the purpose of launching or maintaining negotiation about problematic issues makes the discourse non-routine and persuasive in nature, which necessitated the use of a wide range of communication strategies as suggested in Chapter 4.2.3.1, in which chapter also a frequency-based table depicting the order of the various communication strategies was presented. As many as 16 messages out of a total of 22 messages applied the message schema in this message category. Thus, it was found that there are fewer deviations in the order of communication strategies in this message category when compared to the first category of messages uttering an apology. The deviations in the order of communication strategies in the latter category are suggested to result from the differing primary communicative purposes of the three sub-groups of messages. One of the notable deviations when compared to the messages uttering an apology is that writers went straight to the point, i.e. there were only four occurrences of any communication strategies used in the pre-sequence section of messages. Consequently, the core-message sequence became the most loaded one with different communication strategies, similarly to messages primarily doing repair work uttering an apology. This is assumed to be due to the fact that messages in this category are responses to earlier communication, or reply or follow-up messages to initial messages, which strategically justifies the straight-to-the-point approach. Further, this strategy can be explained by the high severity level situations and the consequent formality, due to which there are no message-initial conversational turns or small talk included in the pre-sequence. In addition, the high or highish severity level of discourse events, involving interaction with the management level, seems to influence the discourse in that messages were well-thought-out, or pre-planned, in terms of their structure and organization by interactants who are experienced in managing similar situations. This category included either explicit or implicit refusals of responsibility (six occurrences), with ten occurrences of explicit or implicit utterances of responsibility with no writer's responsibility situations represented. Justifications (19 occurrences) were typically uttered before responsibility in the core message. This indicates that the indirect message organization was used mostly in this message category, which order was used also in two non-routine messages primarily doing repair work and uttering apology or regret. Thus, there is reason to suggest that the indirect message organization results from the non-routine nature and the high or highish severity level of discourse events requiring persuasion and convincing of readers.

Basing on the analysis of a limited number of messages as to their sequential message structure, it can be concluded that the primary communicative purpose in each discourse event seems to influence the order and placement of the three repair work strategies in relation to communication strategies conveying the primary communicative purpose of messages. However, there was one similarity in all messages, i.e. the primary communicative purpose was conveyed by communication strategies placed in the core message sequence. How routine or non-routine or how severe the discourse event is, is closely intertwined with the placement of the other textual-pragmatic functions, or communication strategies in the messages. However, in order to test out the observations made basing on the current qualitative analysis with a limited corpus of messages, the categorizations of messages in accordance with their primary communicative purposes and the suggested macrosegment schemata need to be subjected to further scrutiny with more comprehensive data and applied to quantification.

Paltridge (1995) incorporates both social and cognitive aspect of language comprehension and productions and integrates them into a framework in the perception and production of communicative events as instances of particular genres. He presents a framework for genre analysis, with a level of delicacy sufficient to uncover a genre prototype and the range of stereotypical properties associated with it. Paltridge (1995:396) suggests that assigning a text to a prototype genre does not necessarily involve an exact match in terms of characteristics or properties. According to Paltridge, it rather draws on the approach of 'sufficient similarity', according to which texts can be assigned to a prototype genre on pragmatic criteria alone. Paltridge's (1995:397, 403) allows for assigning texts to genres in the absence of those features that are found to be present in most instances intuitively seen as typical, without requiring further adaptation of the structural framework. In sum, Paltridge's prototype genre of 'sufficient similarity' aims to have sufficient explanatory power to accommodate the assignment to the genre of texts lacking a number of properties that, at first sight, might seem to be essential for a text to be treated as an instance of the genre-prototype.

In the current data, the tentative findings from the analyses of the macrosegment structure of repair work messages imply that the present categorization and segmentation of messages for the analysis was relevant in the current data. In pursuit of suggesting a system or model to describe and categorize messages for linguistic analysis, the categorization of messages according to their communicative purpose and the use of discourse-event-specific components as explaining factors for interactants' linguistic behaviour in their use of different communication strategies within and across the various messages segments can be regarded as well founded and worth further development as a tool for analysing real-life business interaction of the current type. The analysis showed that there are similarities and differences in message structures, and context-specific factors could be found to explain similarities as well as dissimilarities in the macrosegment structures. In some discourse events, difficulties of assigning specific linguistic utterances under certain communication strategy types emerged. Inferencing and interpretation of explicit and implicit utterances were called for, together with extra-discourse-event knowledge acquired by e.g. interviews of informants and management level staff by e-mail or telephone. Consequently, a five-segment message structure framework was created, and each utterance was placed under one of the five segments. As a result, four various message structure schemata were offered, and all the 40 messages under scrutiny were placed under one of the four schemata, basing on their 'sufficient similarity' as to their primary communicative purpose and the concomitant communication strategies conveyed by context-specific linguistic utterances.

As pointed out in the previous chapters, the current work does not aim at including a comprehensive discussion of 'genre', since the present work departs from the 'genre' approach. Further, the references to Paltridge's (1995) suggestions concerning the genre-prototype with 'sufficient similarity' as to the properties of genres was an attempt to give justification for the approach assumed in the present work. Regarding her electronic mail message schema, Herring (1996) points out that the order of the communication strategies in her corpus roughly corresponds to the linear order she depicts in her schema and that no single messages contain all of the functions listed. Consequently, relying on Paltridge's and Herring's perceptions, it is maintained that by dividing the repair work messages into categories basing on their primary communicative purpose, it is possible to compile and suggest not one prototypical macrosegment structure but four macrosegment structures under which each of the 40 repair work messages can be placed. This provides that 'sufficient similarity' is accepted as a requirement for prototypical macrosegment structure and that pragmatic criteria alone are accepted for interpretations of the most implicit communication strategies in assigning them into the four structure schemata. In the current work, the first division was into repair work messages uttering apology or regret and messages not uttering apology or regret. Further, the former category was divided into three subcategories in accordance with their primary communicative purpose. Hence the four categories of repair work messages.

Before answering the primary research question, one further secondary research question needs to be addressed, i.e. **Do various request forms have context-specific functions in the present repair work interaction?** The two remaining secondary research questions are closely related to the primary research questions and will be replied simultaneously with the primary question.

Expressing requests is an important communication strategy in interaction, also in business interaction, including the current repair work interaction. The forms and functions of the requestive utterances in the present data vary according to the primary communicative purposes of the messages in the current repair work interaction. Thus, as will be concluded below basing on the analysis of request forms and functions in Chapter 4.4, various request forms have context-specific functions in the present repair work interaction.

All five routine messages primarily requesting for action or information with an utterance of apology or regret included a requestive utterance explicit in its context of use, including direct imperative forms, modal-initial interrogatives, and declarative sentences with obligating modal verbs. All situations were routine, writer's responsibility situations, involving low severity level, and four messages represented operative-level peer-to-peer interaction. In such situations contextually explicit requestive utterances were regarded as appropriate usage, even if they were direct and obligating. It can be concluded that explicit requesting behaviour is regarded as appropriate in routine situations not posing face threat to either of the interactants, since it is mainly (eight occurrences out of a total of ten occurrences) the Metal Marketing Company staff requesting the Finnish mill staff to do documentation, which is the Finnish staff's task-related duty. Thus, the empowerment to express a contextually explicit request derives from the duty- and task-based relationship between the interactants.

There were no occurrences of requestive utterances in messages primarily providing information with an utterance of apology or regret. All the six messages are either reply or follow-up messages, and messages assigned under this category indicated a strong focus on the routine aspect in that the absence of requests implicitly and the information provided explicitly indicated that writers expect that the information they provided offered a solution to the problems interacted offhand.

In messages primarily doing repair work both uttering an apology or regret and not uttering it, the requestive forms were similar to each other in the two categories, and requests were more indirect and implicit than in the category with the primary communicative purpose of requesting. The following requestive forms were detected: interrogatives are frequent, including only one modal-initial interrogative; declarative sentences with suggestory formula including obligating verbs; and declaratives (two occurrences) with context-specific requestive interpretations. In four messages in this category, there were direct imperative forms, which receive a context-specific interpretation of the communication purpose of providing additional information, and consequently they were not counted as requestive utterances in the present data. Interpreting a lexically explicit direct request form context-specifically as functioning as a strategy to provide information, indicates that no utterance was taken at face value in the present work. That there were requestive utterances in 19 messages out of a total of 29 messages conveyed that messages with the primary communicative purpose of doing repair work frequently included the aim of achieving or maintaining a negotiation process between the interactants to arrive at a solution acceptable by all the parties involved. The high frequency of interrogatives and only one occurrence of modal-initial requests, which are used in traditional written business requesting, in expressing requests for mainly further information conveyed that the stance in interaction was conversational. It can be concluded that together with the expressions of mitigated views and opinions, implicit requestive utterances are important strategic devices when writers in the present data pursue to achieve reader-involvement in non-routine repair work interaction, involving highish or high severity level, often carried out by management-level interactants or technical experts as part of their task-related duties deriving either from their organizational positions or their expert roles, i.e. 'knowers' or 'disseminators of information'. Also the fact that some situations represent upward vertical interaction may explain the use of the indirect and implicit request forms to avoid imposition on management-level readers. It can be argued that management-level interactants and technical experts are empowered through their professionalism and expertise to explicate or implicate in non-routine repair work discourse events the need for negotiation by expressing requestive utterances or by expressing their views or opinions instead of offering solutions offhand. This conclusion is in line with Nikula's (1996) argument, according to which implicit modifiers are powerful means by which speakers can assume shared assumptions to create a sense of common interests in ways that are less threatening than doing so explicitly by, e.g. resorting to emphasis or exaggeration. Assuming shared assumptions implicitly leaves speakers more options to negotiate, because implicit modifiers make such subtle claims to reciprocity that they can, if challenged, be denied (1996:228).

6.4 Answers to primary research question and related subquestions

Primarily, the present work is to answer the following question: **What functions does interpersonal metadiscourse have in the 40 repair work messages under analysis?** In answering this question, two secondary questions are sought answers to simultaneously, i.e. **What are the possible influences of discourse event components on the use and functions of interpersonal metadiscourse in the repair work interaction under analysis?** and **Is there interplay between the possible prototypical macrosegment message structure and b) the strategic use of interpersonal metadiscourse in the repair work interaction under analysis?** The a) section of this secondary research question was answered in Chapter 6.3 on page 257.

The first category of interpersonal metadiscoursal functions in the current data presented in Table 3 in Chapter 2.1.4 is that of expressing affective values and attitudes, which was divided into three subcategories, i.e. establishing convergence in messages with utterances of apology or regret (A), expressing emotions and feelings, and expressing attitudes. There seems to be interplay between the message structure and the strategic use of interpersonal metadiscourse in the interaction under scrutiny.

In establishing convergence, or bringing about or maintaining harmony or solidarity between interactants, in messages primarily requesting for action or for information, the A utterances had the highest occurrence rate in the post-sequence, i.e. four occurrences in five messages. In can be assumed that in routine messages representing operative-level peer-to-peer interaction, with low severity-level and writer's responsibility explicated, it is strategically appropriate to utter apology or regret message-finally, after the acknowledgement of responsibility (R) and utterance of justification (J) and the primary communicative purpose. In the routine reply or follow-up messages primarily providing information, involving both operative-level and management-level interactants, the A utterances were most frequently placed in the pre-sequence. Their primary message-initial function seems to be to provide replies negative in some respect to the issues interacted, thus speeding up readers' interpretation process of the issues. As to the messages primarily doing repair work, the A utterances were most frequently used in the post-sequence, except for two messages, in which they were in the core message. The message-final placement conveys a strategy of uttering apology or regret after having communicated other necessary repair work strategies in discourse events which involve high or highish severity level (five discourse events out of a total of seven).

The functional category of expressing emotions and feelings includes implicit linguistic utterances and typography, and context-specificity was resorted to in interpretations. Typography, i.e. an exclamation mark with capital letters, was used to reinforce a humorous utterance in routine operative-level peer-to-peer interaction. Two A utterances were used to express writers' frustration and ironic stance rather than apology or regret for what had happened, two occurrences in the same message explicated the writer's feeling of irritation and frustration, and three explicit adjectives in the same message conveyed the writer's irritation for being asked about the same issue repeatedly, all in the core message or post-sequence after detail accounts of the core issues. The messages containing the expressions of emotions and feelings were written by the two technical experts in situations involving high or highish severity level, and consequently the management level's involvement was called for. The show of the writers' feelings and emotions can be taken as an indication of their genuine involvement in the issues they interact. Another indication possible to detect is that, authorized by their expert roles, technical experts express their views and opinions in discourse events they find important or difficult to solve. Allegedly the technical experts function as disseminators of information or initiators of discussions on important issues, since the messages are cc:ed to Finnish management-level interactants. The placement of the expressions of feelings and emotions after the main issues indicates the writer's aptitude for explaining the core topic before giving their opinions and views, sometimes coloured by expressions of feelings and emotions.

Expressing attitudes toward the propositional content and/or readers or a third party took the form of modal verbs of obligation with customer-, reader- or reader's party, writer- or writer's party orientation. Adjectives and adverbs were used to express suspicion and judgements of importance or urgency of matters. As to the placement of the various expressions of writers' attitudes, it was impossible to pinpoint interplay between the message structure and the strategic use, due to the variable nature of the discourse event components combined with the low number of messages analysed. In the analysis of the modal verbs of obligation one tendency was detected, and consequently it can be argued that interactants vested with either a managerial position or an expert role interact, in accordance with their positions or roles, in discourse events in which they regard it as appropriate to convey their attitudes and judgements about the necessity and obligatory nature of the expected action in an assertive, explicit way in order to achieve readers' compliance. Thus, persuasion is taken care of by being explicitly assertive. These discourse events primarily do repair work in which writer's party responsibility is conveyed or responsibility is not acknowledged, with both low and high severity level.

The second functional category of personalized interaction was discussed in Chapter 6.2. This chapter focuses on the functional aspects of the conversational linguistic features detected in the current data. In the present intra-corporate interaction the style is personalized, close and familiar by default, since interactants are well acquainted with each other. Thus, a personalized stance in interaction is natural between interactants who know each other, not only through e-mail interaction but also through other means of communication, face-to-face meetings, telephone calls and letters exchanged. In the current data, the familiarity level explains the use of the conversational interpersonal metadiscourse. It cannot be regarded as idiosyncratic use, since most writers use conversational linguistic expressions in their messages, including management- and operative-level interactants. Conversational utterances were used both in routine situations and in non-routine situations. It is argued that, in the current data, writers used conversational style in discourse events with high or highish severity level, in order to create dialogue, and consequently to launch a negotiation process with readers. E.g. interrogative sentences served this purpose. Further, writers used conversational utterances when they express their opinions and views and aimed at doing that in a personalized way, displaying themselves as individuals rather as role holders, e.g. technical experts. Non-routine situations were persuasive in nature and both writers' and readers' involvement was necessary and it was conveyed by expressions bringing about closeness and openness in interaction. In this category, it was difficult to find any general tendency in the placement of the conversational utterances in the macrosegment structure.

Certainty and force are conveyed by emphatic linguistic expressions that function as conveying writers' intentions, expectations and attitudes toward readers. In the current data, assertive language was used when presenting factual information without any interpersonal metadiscourse. Emphatic interpersonal metadiscourse was used, however, especially for persuasion and convincing of readers of the certainty of the information provided. Thus, by using emphatic language, writers conveyed what they knew was true, or what they believed was true, and simultaneously they upgraded their expert or organizational positions. Frequently, explicit references to standards, certificates or manuals applicable in the branch were made to give authority to the factual statements. This may partly explain the rather limited range of interpersonal metadiscourse in emphasizing certainty and force in the present data. Further, writers relied on their expertise and knowledge by conveying their views and opinions in an assertive way in persuading readers to accept them in lieu of factual information, which could not be offered in every discourse event. Conveying opinions and views in addition to, or instead of factual information took place in messages primarily doing repair work, i.e. non-routine situations frequently involving high or highish severity level. When negative response or non-compliance was expected, writers conveyed explicit certainty and assertiveness by forceful linguistic expressions. Further, writers, especially the technical experts, used emphatic expressions to display their competence by displaying their knowledge and expertise by assertive language. The expressions of certainty and force were prevalent in discourse events in which writers refused partly or totally the writer's or the writer's party responsibility in messages, which fell into the category of messages primarily doing repair work.

It was pointed out in Chapters 5.4.3 and 5.5.3 that the use of emphatic interpersonal metadiscourse is closely interlinked with the use of mitigating interpersonal metadiscourse in the present data. In the current repair interaction, writers used interpersonal metadiscoursal devices to convey their willingness to withhold full commitment to the propositions, or their avoidance of expressing views and opinions too categorically when e.g. unambiguous information was not available. By explicitly indicating tentativeness in expressing views and opinions, writers signalled their sincerity as to the degree of certainty of their statements. Writers showed their willingness to create dialogue with readers by not sounding too assertive or categorical and by presenting their statements for further scrutiny and ratification by readers. The intertwinedness between emphatic language and mitigated language can be seen as an indication of writers' respect and consideration of readers in making explicit the difference between what they knew was factual information and what they conveyed as their opinions and views. By making this distinction explicit by the use of interpersonal metadiscourse expressing reservation and caution, writers gave the correct account of the state of the matter and simultaneously display themselves as ethical writers. As to the interplay between emphatic language and mitigated language, and the prototypical macrosegment message structure, it was difficult to detect intertwinedness in the present limited data.

6.5 Limitations of the work and implications for future research

The most notable limitation of the current work is the corpus itself. Firstly, due to the scarcity of authentic business material available for research purposes, the number of messages analysed is low in the present work with an aim to suggest a model of categorizing messages in a systematic way according to specific criteria. Due to the low number of messages analysed, and consequently the low number of occurrences of interpersonal metadiscoursal elements, no quantification was resorted to in the analysis of interpersonal metadiscourse, which was the main focus of the current work. The second limitation in the corpus is in that it was collected from one corporation. The fact that the corpus represents intra-corporate interaction cannot be regarded as a limitation as such. As a matter of fact, intra-corporate angle introduces a new parameter of discourse event components when compared to previous research on business interaction, mainly focusing on inter-corporate interaction. Due to the first limitation, the corpus is too restricted in the number for making generalizations over the use of interpersonal metadiscourse and especially over the influence of the discourse event components on the use and functions of interpersonal metadiscourse, which were two focused research questions closely interlinked with each other. Resulting from the second limitation, the current work is a case study and consequently the findings reveal the interactional behaviour of interactants in one group of companies. Thus, there are dangers in generalizing over the findings, since allegedly the interactional behaviour is influenced by corporate-internal norms, including the use of interpersonal metadiscourse for various functions, at least to some extent as suggested in the concluding discussion above. By analysing interaction in other businesses, a wider perspective of more general interactional behaviour would be collated. The present study focuses on repair work interaction, which can be seen as a limitation. However, in the present study it is regarded as an advantage in that, by concentrating on a specific type of interactional behaviour, it is possible to focus on the contextual specificity of the discourse events under scrutiny so often called for by researches and business professionals.

As quantification was not relevant with the current limited corpus, the approach assumed in the present work relies heavily on the contexts of language use and discourse event factors in every message analysed. The contexts and the subsequent factors were closely scrutinized when analysing the interactants' linguistic behaviour and findings collated in the previous chapters of the present work. Finally, the findings were discussed and conclusions were drawn in the concluding discussion in Chapters 6.2, 6.3 and 6.4. To overcome at least some of the limitations of the current work, which relies on qualitative methods of analysis, tools for analysis were assumed not only from linguistics or applied linguistics, but also by making use of business communication, business management and corporate crisis management research to include a wider perspective into the analysis of real-life business interaction. Additionally, interviews of the Finnish informants via e-mail were carried out, together with some telephone interviews of Finnish senior management-level staff, in order to gain more information to facilitate and support the analysis of the most implicit utterances and strategies used. The inferencing and interpretation process of the linguistic utterances in the present work was facilitated also by the present writer's earlier involvement with some of the informants in two ways, firstly by analysing their e-mail messages written in Finnish for a previous study project and by training them in the use context-specific business English. Thus, the present writer had a good knowledge of the general context and business environment of the present data, not too deep, however, to result in an insider analysis of the discourse events.

The findings from the present work, even if tentative, indicate that the methods of analysis used in the present work were able to give insight into the current repair work interaction and is worth further testing and development. For the purposes of the present study, the categorization of the 40 repair work messages into four subcategories basing on their primary communicative purpose seemed to be relevant in that some tentative tendencies between the communicative purpose, discourse event factors and linguistic behaviour could be detected. For instance, the routine or non-routine nature and the subsequent severity level of discourse events, the roles or positions held by interactants seemed to be intertwined in some discourse events in ways that give reason to suggest that descriptive models suggested in the present work involving the various layers of interaction and the interdependencies between them is relevant for analysis of data of current type. Consequently, further analysis of repair work interaction with a more representative data is called for, in order to produce more valid, reliable and objective findings. The more comprehensive data would represent each primary communicative purpose, in order to acquire generalizable results and in order to test the tenability of both Meier's (1995) repair work model and the electronic mail message schema suggested by Herring (1996). Further, an analysis of the functions of interpersonal metadiscourse in a wider corpus is required, in order to produce results to enhance the understanding of the context-specificity and the multifunctional and ambiguous nature of interpersonal metadiscourse.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Airas, P. and T. Junkkari 1992. *Business Friend 2. Teacher's Guide.* Vantaa: Weilin & Göös.

Alatalo, P. 1996. *Oisko mun tarttenu maksaa teräsmyynnin ale siitä kaupasta? - Puhutun kielen varianttien esiintyminen Outokumpu Polarit Oy:n sähköpostiviesteissä.* Master's thesis, Helsinki School of Economics and Business Administration.

Angell, D. and B. Heslop 1994. *The Elements of E-mail Style. Communicate Effectively via Electronic Mail.* Addison-Wesley Publishing Company.

Bakhtin, M. 1986. *Speech Genres and Other Late Essays.* Austin: University of Texas Press.

Bargiela-Chiappini, F. and S. Harris 1996. *Requests and status in Business correspondence.* Journal of Pragmatics, 28. 635-662.

Bargiela-Chiappini, F. and S. Harris 1997. *The languages of business: Introduction and overview* In F. Bargiela-Chiappini and S. Harris (eds.) *The Languages of Business: An International Perspective.* Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.

Bhatia, V. 1993. *Analysing genre: Language Use in Professional Settings.* London: Longman.

Biber, D. 1988. *Variation across speech and writing.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Biber, D. 1991. *On the exploitation of computerized corpora in variation studies.* In K. Aijmer and B. Altenberg (eds.) *English Corpus Linguistics: Studies in Honour of Jan Svartvik.* London: Longman. 204-220.

Biber, D. 1992. *On the complexity of discourse complexity: A multidimensional analysis.* Discourse Processes, 15. 133-163.

Blum-Kulka, S. 1987. *Indirectness and politeness in requests: same or different?* Journal of Pragmatics, 11. 131-146.

Blum-Kulka, S. 1992. *The metapragmatics of politeness in Israeli society.* In R. J. Watts, S. Ide and K. Ehlich (eds.) *Politeness in language. Studies in its history, theory and practice.* Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter. 255-280.

Boone, L. E., D. L. Kurtz and J. R. Block 1994. *Contemporary Business Communication.* Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall Inc

Brown, G. and S. C. Levinson 1987. *Politeness: Some Universals in Language Usage.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. First published in 1978 in E. N. Goody (ed.) *Questions and Politeness: Strategies in Social Interaction.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 56-289.

Brown, G. and G. Yule 1983 (1993). *Discourse analysis.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Butler, C. 1990. *Qualifications in science: Modal meanings in scientific texts.* In W. Nash (ed.) *The Writing Scholar: Studies in academic discourse.* Newbury Park, CA: SAGE. 137-170.

Caffi, C. and R. W. Janney 1994. *Toward a pragmatics of emotive communication.* Journal of Pragmatics, 22. 235-373.

Caffi, C. 1997. *On mitigation.* Journal of Pragmatics, 31. 881-909.

Charles, M. 1994. *Layered Negotiations in Business: Interdependencies between discourse and the Business Relationship.* PhD thesis, University of Birmingham, UK.

Clear, J. 1987. *A modest proposal: the grammar of speech acts.* In M. Coulthard (ed.) *Discussing Discourse.* Birmingham: University of Birmingham. 63-79.

Collot, M. and N. Belmore 1996. *Electronic language: a new variety of English.* In Herring, S. C. (ed.), *Computer-Mediated Communication: Linguistic, Social and Cross-cultural Perspectives.* Amsterdam & Philadelphia: Benjamins. 13-28.

Crismore, A. 1989. *Talking with Readers: Metadiscourse as Rhetorical Act.* New York: Peter Lang Publishers.

Crismore, A. 1990. *Metadiscourse and Discourse Processes: Interactions and Issues.* Discourse Processes, 13. 191-205.

Crismore, A. and R. Farnsworth, R. 1990. *Metadiscourse in popular and professional discourse.* In W. Nash (ed.) *The writing scholar: Studies in the language and conventions of academic discourse.* Newbury Park, CA: SAGE.

Crismore, A., R. Markkanen and M. S. Steffensen 1993. *Metadiscourse in Persuasive Writing, A Study of Texts Written by American and Finnish University Students.* Written Communication, 10. 39-71.

Delany, P. 1995. *The Discourse of Computer-Supported Media: Reading and Writing on Usenet.* In A. Gurr, P. Hardman and L. Kelly (eds.) *The Yearbook of English Studies. Non-standard Englishes and the New Media. Special Number.* Leeds: W. S. Maney & Son Ltd. 213-224.

Drew, P. J. Heritage 1992. *Analyzing talk at work: an introduction.* In P. Drew and J. Heritage (eds.) *Talk at work.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 3-65.

Dudley-Evans, T. and M. J. St John 1998. *Developments in Esp. A multi-disciplinary approach.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Eggins, S. and Slade, D. 1997. Analysing Casual Conversation. London: Cassell.

Enkvist, N. E. 1975. *Tekstilingvistiikan peruskäsitteitä.* Helsinki: Gaudeamus.

Fairclough, N. 1989 (1992). *Language and Power.* Singapore: Longman Singapore Publishers Pte Ltd.

Fairclough, N. 1993. *Discourse and Social Change.* Cambridge: Polity Press.

Fairclough, N. 1995. *Critical Discourse Analysis: The Critical Study of Language.* London: Longman.

Fairclough, N. 1996. *Technoligisation of discourse.* In C. R. Caldas-Coulthard and M. Coulthard (eds.) *Texts and Practices. Readings in Critical Discourse Analysis.* 71-83.

Fimbel, N. 1994. *Communicating realistically: Taking account of politics in international business communication.* Journal of Business Communication, 31. 7-26.

Fraser, B. 1990. *Perspectives on Politeness.* Journal of Pragmatics, 14. 219-236.

Gains, J. 1999. *Electronic Mail - A New Style of Communication or Just a New Medium? An investigation into the Text Features of E-mail.* English for Specific Purposes, 18(1). 81-101.

Grundy, P. 1995. *Doing Pragmatics.* Chatham, Kent: Mackays of Chatham plc.

Guffey, M. E. 1997. *Business Communication: Process & Product.* Cincinnati: South-Western College Publishing.

Haas, C. and J. Hayes 1986. *What Did I Just Say? Reading Problems in Writing with the Machine.* Research in the Teaching of English, 20. 22-35.

Halliday, M. A. K. 1973. *Explorations in the Functions of Language.* London: Edward Arnold.

Halliday, M. A. K. 1985 (1994). *An Introduction to functional grammar: A systemic interpretation of English for text linguistics.* London: Edward Arnold.

Halliday, M.A.K. 1989. *Spoken and written language.* Hong Kong: Oxford University Press.

Halliday, M.A.K. and R. Hasan 1989. *Language, context, and text: aspects of language in a social-semiotic perspective.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Harris, Z. 1970. *Papers in structural and transformational linguistics.* Dordrecht, Holland:D. Reidel.

Hawisher G. E. and C. Moran 1993. *Electronic Mail and the Writing Instructor.* College English, 55(6). 664-680.

He, A. W. 1993. *Exploring modality in institutional interactions: Cases from academic counselling encounters.* Text, 13(2). 503-528.

Heikkinen, V. 1999. *Ideologinen merkitys kriittisen tekstintutkimuksen teoriassa ja käytännössä.* Doctoral Dissertation, University of Oulu. Vaasa: Suomen Kirjallisuuden Seuran Toimituksia 728.

Herring, S. C. 1996. *Two Variants of an Electronic Message Schema.* In S. C. Herring (ed.) *Computer-Mediated Communication: Linguistic, Social and Cross-Cultural*

Perspectives. Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company. 81-106.

Hobbs, J. D. 1995. *Treachery by any other name: A case study of the Toshiba public relations crisis*. Management Communication Quarterly, 8. 322-346.

Holmes, J. 1990. *Hedges and boosters in women's and men's speech*. Language & Communication, 10(3).185-205.

Holmes, J. 1995. *Women, men and politeness*. Singapore: Longman Singapore Publishers Pte Ltd.

Howard, T. W. 1992. *Wide-Area Computer-Mediated Communication in Business Writing*. The Bulletin of the Association of Business Communication. December 1992. 10-112.

Howard, T. W. 1997. *a rhetoric of electronic communities*. Greenwich: Ablex Publishing Corporation.

Hyland, K. 1996. *Talking to the academy: Forms of hedging in science research articles*. Written Communication, 13(2). 251-281.

Hyland, K. 1998a. *Exploring corporate rhetoric: metadiscourse in the CEO's letter*. The Journal of Business Communication, 35(2). 224-245.

Hyland, K. 1998b. *Persuasion and context: The pragmatics of academic metadiscourse*. Journal of Pragmatics, 30. 437-455.

Intaraprawat, P. and M. Steffensen 1995. *The use of metadiscourse in good and poor ESL essays*. Journal of Second Language Writing, 4(3). 253-272.

Johansson, R. P-L. 1998. *Elektronisesta postista ja sen käytöstä yritysviestinnässä*. Master's Thesis, University of Helsinki.

Kakavá, C. 1997. *Politeness and the particularities of requests*. International Journal of the Sociology of Language, 126. 181-198.

Kalaja, P. and S. Leppänen 1991. *Communication and Discourse across Cultures and Languages*. In K. Sajavaara, D. March and T. Keto (eds.) *Communication and Discourse across Culture and Languages* (AFinLA Yearbook 1991). Jyväskylä: AFinLA. 267-275.

Kalaja, P. and S. Leppänen 1994. *Computer Conferencing: A Forum for Written Interaction*. In H. Jung and R. Vanderplank (eds.) *Barriers and Bridges: Media Technology in Language Learning*. Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang. 81-91.

Kangasharju, H. 1998. *Alignment in Disagreement: Building Alliances in Multiperson Interaction*. Doctoral Dissertation, University of Helsinki. Manuscript version.

Kasper, G. 1990. *Linguistic politeness: current research issues.* Journal of Pragmatics, 14. 193-218.

Katz, S.M. 1998. *A Newcomer Gains Power: An Analysis of the Role of Rhetorical Expertise.* The Journal of Business Communication, 35(4).419-442.

Korenman, J. and N. Wyatt 1996. *Group dynamics in an e-mail forum.* In S. C. Herring (ed.) *Computer-Mediated Communication: Linguistic, Social and Cross-Cultural Perspectives.* 225-242.

Leech, G. 1983 (1995). *Principles of Pragmatics.* Singapore: Longman Singapore Publishers Pte Ltd.

Levinson, S. C. 1983 (1994). *Pragmatics.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Longacre, R. E. 1992. *The discourse strategy of an appeals letter.* In W. Mann and S. A. Thompson (eds.), *Discourse Description: Diverse Linguistic Analyses of a Fund-Raising Text.* Amsterdam: John Benjamins. 109-130.

Louhiala-Salminen, L. 1995. *"Drop me a fax, will you?": A Study of Written Business Communication.* Reports from the Department of English No. 10, University of Jyväskylä.

Louhiala-Salminen, L. 1999. *From Business Correspondence to Message Exchange: The Notion of Genre in Business Communication.* Doctoral Dissertation, University of Jyväskylä. Publications of the Centre for Applied Language Studies, University of Jyväskylä. Jyväskylä: University Printing House.

Luukka, M-R. 1992. *Akateemista metadiskurssia. Tieteellisten tekstien tekstuaalisia, interpersoonalisia ja kontekstuaalisia piirteitä.* Jyväskylä: University of Jyväskylä.

Luukka, M-R. 1995. *Puhuttua ja kirjoitettua tiedettä: funktionaalinen ja yhteisöllinen näkökulma tieteen kielen interpersonaalisiin piirteisiin.* Doctoral Dissertation, University of Jyväskylä. Jyväskylä: University of Jyväskylä.

Luukka, M-R. and R. Markkanen 1997. *Impersonalization as a Form of Hedging.* In R. Markkanen and H. Schröder (eds.) *Hedging and Discourse: Approaches to the Analysis of a Pragmatic Phenomenon in Acedemic Texts.* Berlin: Walter de Gruyter.

Maier, P. 1993. *Politeness Strategies in Business Letters by Native and Non-Native English Speakers.* English for Specific Purposes, 11. 189-205.

Markkanen, R. 1985. *Cross Language Studies in Pragmatics.* (Jyväskylä Cross Language Studies 11). Jyväskylä:University of Jyväskylä.

Mauranen, A. 1993. *Contrastive ESP rhetoric: Metatext in Finnish-English economics texts.* English for Specific Purposes, 12. 3-22.

Meier, A. J. 1995. *Passages of Politeness.* Journal of Pragmatics. 24. 381-392.

Moon, C. 1999. *Communicate with Confidence. A compendium of communication skills for international business in English.* Jyväskylä: Yrityskirjat Oy.

Morand, D. A. 1995. *Forms of address and status leveling in organizations.* Business Horizons, 38(6). 32-39.

Moreno, A.I. 1997. *Genre Constraints Across Languages: Causal Metatext in Spanish and English RAs.* English for Specific Purposes, 16(3).161-179.

Nanz, K. S. and C. L. Drexel 1995. *Incorporating Electronic Mail into the Business Communication Course.* Business Communication Quarterly. A publication of the Association for Business Communication, 58(3). 45-51.

Nash, W. 1990. *Introduction: The Stuff These People Write.* In W. Nash (ed.) *Writing Scholar. Studies in Academic Discourse.* London: SAGE. 8-30.

Nash, W. 1992. *Un uncommon tongue.* London: Routledge.

Nikula, T. 1996. *Pragmatic Force Modifiers. A Study in Interlanguage Pragmatics.* Doctoral Dissertation, University of Jyväskylä. Jyväskylä: University of Jyväskylä.

Oksa, J. 1990. *Tekniikan voittokulkua ja sosiaalista kompastelua.* Politiikka 1/1990. Helsinki. 67-69.

Olshtain, E. 1989. *Apologies Across Languages.* In S. Blum-Kulka, J. House and G. Kasper (eds.) *Cross-Cultural Pragmatics: Requests and Apologies.* Norwood, Nj: Ablex. 155-173.

Olshtain, E. and A. D. Cohen 1983. *Apology: A speech act set.* In N. Wolfson and E. Judd (eds.) *Sociolinguistics and language acquisition.* Rowley, MA: Newbury House.

Outokumpu 1999. *OCDP Final Report: Profitable Growth through Better Communications.* Final Report of Intercultural Intra-Corporate Training Program.

Paltridge, B. 1995. *Working with genre: A pragmatic perspective.* Journal of Pragmatics, 24. 393-406.

Paltridge, B. 1996. *Genre, text type, and the language learning classroom.* ELT Journal, 50. Oxford University Press. 237-243.

Quirk R., G. Greenbaum, G. Leech and J. Svartvik 1985. *A Comprehensive Grammar of the English Language.* London: Longman.

Richards, J. 1993. *Foreword.* In T. Boswood, R. Hoffman and P. Tung *English for Professional Communication.* Hong Kong: City Polytechnic of Hong Kong.

Roberts, C., E. Davies and T. Jupp 1992. *Language and Discrimination: A Study of Communication in Multi-ethnic Workplaces.* London: Longman.

Roberts, C. and S. Sarangi 1993. *'Culture' revisited in intercultural communication.* In T. Boswood, R. Hoffman and P. Tung (eds.) *Perspectives on English for professional communication.* Hong Kong: City Polytechnic of Hong Kong. 97-114.

Rubin, A. 1992. *Kirjeitä puhelinlankoja pitkin. Tietoverkon käyttöä ja sähköpostin käyttäjän tarpeita selvittävä tutkimus.* Master's Thesis. University of Turku.

Rubin, A.1995. *Ihmisen murros ja muuttuva symboliuniversumi.* In A. Keskinen (ed.), *Teledemokratia: Tietoverkot ja yhteiskunta.* Helsinki: Painatuskeskus Oy. 102-176.

Ruokakangas, S. and Matthan, J. 1999. *101 em@il-vinkkiä in English.* Jyväskylä:Gummerus.

Sarangi, S. 1998. *Rethinking recontextualization in professional discourse studies: An epilogue.* Text, 18(2). 301-318.

Sarangi, S. and C. Roberts 1999. *The Dynamics of Interactional and Institutional Orders in Work-Related Settings.* In S. Sarangi and C. Roberts (eds.) *Talk, Work and Institutional Order: Discourse in Medical, Mediation and Management Settings.* Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter.

Selfe, C. L. 1989. *"Redefining Literacy: The Multilayered Grammars of Computers.* In G. E. Hawisher and C. L. Selfe (eds.) *Critical Perspectives on Computers and Composition Instruction.* New York: Teacher College P. 3-15.

Shackleton, V. 1998. *Business Leadership.* Routledge.

Shapiro, N. Z. and R. H. Anderson 1985. *Toward and Ethics and Etiquette for Electronic Mail.* Santa Monica: The Rand Corporation.

Shelby, A. 1988. *A macro theory of management communication.* The Journal of Business Communication, 25(1). 13-27.

Shelby, A, 1998. *Communication quality revisited: Exploring the link with persuasive effects.* The Journal of Business Communication, 35(3). 387-404.

Sifianou, M. 1992. *Politeness Phenomena in England and Greece: A Cross-Cultural Perspective.* Oxford: Clarendon Press.

Sifianou, M. 1993. *Off-record indirectness and the notion of imposition.* Multilingua, 12. 69-79.

Smith, L. E. 1987. *Introduction: Discourse Strategies and Cross-Cultural Communication.* In L. E. Smith (ed.) *Discourse Across Cultures: Strategies in World Englishes.* London: Prentice Hall. 1-6.

Spolsky, B. 1998. *Sociolinguistics.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Stubbe, M. and J. Holmes 1995. *You know, eh and other 'exasperating expressions': An analysis of social and stylistic variation in the use of pragmatic devices in a sample of New Zealand English.* Language & Communication, 15(1). 63-88.

Suszczynska, M. 1999. *Apologizing in English, Polish and Hungarian: Different languages, different strategies.* Journal of Pragmatics, 31. 1053-1065.

Swales, J. M. 1990. *Genre Analysis. English in academic and research settings.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Tanskanen, S-K. 2000. *Collaborating towards Coherence: Lexical Cohesion across Spoken and Written Discourse in English.* Doctoral Dissertation, University of Turku. Turku: Pallosalama Oy.

Telenius, J. 1994. *Guiding the Reader: The Use of Metatext in Master's Theses Written in English.* Master's Thesis. Helsinki School of Economics and Business Administration.

Tihinen, R. 1995. *Millainen on hyvä sähköpostiviesti.* Espoo: Outokumpu Oy Concern.

Trosborg, A. 1995. *Interlanguage Pragmatics: Requests, Complaints and Apologies.* Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter.

Turnbull, W. and K. L. Saxton 1997. *Modal expressions as facework in refusals to comply with requests: I think I should say 'no' right now.* Journal of Pragmatics, 27. 145-181.

Tyler, L. 1997. *Liability means never being able to say you're sorry.* Management Communication Quarterly, 11(1). 51 p.

Valero-Garces, C. 1996. *Contrastive ESP rhetoric: Metatext in Spanish-English Economics texts.* English for Specific Purposes, 15(4). 279-294.

Vande Kopple, W. J. 1985. *Some exploratory discourse on metadiscourse,* College Composition and Communication, 36. 82-93.

Vande Kopple, W. J. 1988. *Metadiscourse and the recall of modality markers.* Visible Language, XXII (2/3). 233-271.

Webster's Encyclopedic Unabridged Dictionary of the English Language 1987. New York: Gramercy Books.

Werkhofer, K. 1992. *Traditional and modern views: The social constitution and the power of politeness.* In R. J. Watts, S. Ide and K. Ehlich (eds.) *Politeness in language.* Berlin: Mouton. 155-199.

Verschueren, J. 1991. *A pragmatic perspective on international communication.* In J. Blommaert and J. Verschueren (eds.) *The pragmatics of intercultural and* *international communication.* Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company. 187-210.

Verschueren, J. 1999. *Understanding Pragmatics.* New York: Oxford University Press Inc.

Wierzbicka, A. 1985. *Different Cultures, different languages, different speech acts.* Journal of Pragmatics, 9. 145-178.

Wierzbicka, A. 1991. *Cross-cultural pragmatics: The semantics of human interaction.* Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter.

Williams, J. M. 1985 (1989). *Style: Ten lessons in clarity and grace.* Boston: Scott, Foresman.

Witte, S. 1992. *Context, text, intertext: Towards a constructivist semiotic of writing.* Written Communication, 9. 237-308.

Vollmer, H. J. and E. Olshtain 1989. *The Language of Apologies in German.* In S. Blum-Kulka, J. House and G. Kasper (eds.) *Cross-Cultural Pragmatics: Requests and Apologies.* Norwood, NJ: Ablex. 197-218.

Yamada, H. 1990. *Topic management and turn distribution is business meetings: American versus Japanese strategies.* Text, 100. 271-295.

Yamada, H. 1992. *American and Japanese Business Discourse: A Comparison of Interactional Styles.* Norwood, NJ: Ablex Publishing Corporation.

Yin, R. K. 1994. *Case Study Research: Design and Methods.* California: SAGE Publications. 2nd edition.

Yli-Jokipii, H. 1994. *Requests in Professional Discourse: A Cross-Cultural Study of British, American and Finnish Business Writing.* Doctoral Dissertation, University of Turku. Annales Academiae Scientiarum Fennicae Dissertationes Humanarum Litterarum 71. Helsinki: Suomalainen tiedeakatemia.

Yule, G. 1996. *Pragmatics.* Hong Kong: Oxford University Press.

Zachary. D. 1994. *It's a mail thing. Electronic messaging gets a rating EX.* The Wall Street Journal, 75, June 22. 1.

Ziv, O. 1996. *Writing to Work: How Using E-mail Can Reflect Techological and Organizational Change.* In S. C. Herring (ed.) *Computer-Mediated Communication: Linguistic, Social and Cross-Cultural Perspectives.* 243-263.

APPENDIX 1

MESSAGES DOING REPAIR WORK

The repair work messages under analysis are listed consecutively below, applying the same numbering system as in the analysis part of the work. The message texts are written out as they appeared in the original messages, strictly obeying the original paragraphing and spelling. Thus, e.g. spelling errors have not been corrected. Confidential business information has been deleted and replaced by x's in the running text. The deleted company and persons' names have been replaced by explanatory texts in the brackets, indicating the deleted information in each case. The abbreviation TIA stands for three-letter initial abbreviation, indicating the intra-corporate three-letter initials used by employees in their intra-corporate interaction. The messages enclosed to messages (1) - (40) have not been written out below.

Messages Uttering Apology or Regret

Primary communicative purpose, Requesting for action or information

Message (1)
To: F1
cc:
Subject: Invoice xxxxxx
Hi F1 (First name)
I need to get a credit issued because of an overcharge. I made the mistake....sorry. I was supposed to ship XX (.xxx) material to (Customer's first name), but instead I shipped XX(.xx) material. The customer decided that he needed the material that I sent (lucky for me), but I have to get a credit issued because of the price difference.
Please get a credit issued for item 4.......the price should of have .xx not .xxx. The credit should be around $xxx.xx.
Thanks,
....A2(first name)

Message (2)
To: F1
cc:
Subject: Re: Invoice xxxxxx
Hi F1 (First name)
Ok, you know the below e-mail that I sent to you regarding the wrong price........well anyway, I received a credit invoice. Unfortunately I just realized something when I was doubling checking the credit amount.......I did not need the credit because I priced the item right for the type of material and finish (xx) that I sent to (Customer's first name).
I am sorry about requesting a credit when I didn't need one, so please have credit xxxxxx voided.
Thanks and sorry......A2 (first name)

Message (3)
To: A2
cc:
Subject: Re: (Customer company name) change
Hello A2 (First name),
I totally forgot that question. I'm very sorry for that.
Production people said that it is ok to make those changes but latest on Monday. I could have changed them today, but as I didnt know if xxxx mm width is slit edges or mill edges, for that reason you should do those changes. After changing them please send to PR.
Thanks and regards,
F1 (First name)

Message (4)
To: F1
cc:
Subject: xxxxxx
Ok, despite the fact that I actually have a post-it-note stuck to my computer that says "Bonehead Remember Surcharges!" I still forgot to add a surcharge to a (Customer company name) stock order I just did.
Can you please make an additional surcharge invoice for cert. xxxxxx. The surcharge is .xxxx
Thanks and sorry I forgot.
....A2 (first name)

Message (5)
To: F1
cc:
Subject: (Customer company name)
Hi F1,
I have a question regarding the paper interleaving for (Customer company name). They wanted interleaving to be about 31 meters from the ID of the coil and I believe you sent me info about that. The mill was going to try a particular coil. My problem is I deleted the message. Can you advise which coil number and if we set it up for all coils on all specs or just a trial on one order.
So sorry.
Thanks and
Best regards
A1 (First name)

<u>Primary communicative purpose, Providing information</u>

Message (6)
To: A1
cc:
Subject: XXXX xxxxx
Sorry, A1 (First name)
As fast shipment in question we do not have time to add anything to marking.
Kind regards,
F1 (First name)

Message (7)
To: F4
cc:
Subject: (Customer company name)
F4 (First name), so sorry. The customer has telephoned to say that his accountant sent back xxxxxx - so (Bank name) should have it by now. As there is only 20 days between the Bills he has decided that he will keep things as they are. AHHHHH! Customers! So he will return xxxxxx to (Bank name) this week!
Sorry for the trouble.
Rgds, B3 (First name)

Message (8)
To: F1
cc: F7
Subject: (Customer company name)
Good morning F1 and F7 (First names),
I am very sorry but I received the wrong information from A3(First name) about the max skid weight for U200 and U201.
A1(First name) checked with the customer and they can accept xxxx kgs max skid weight, with xxx max coil weight.
I have changed the open orders to show this. Once again Please accept my apology for the inconvenience of doing this over.
My best regards to you both.
A4 (First name)

Message (9)
To: F4
cc:
Subject: Re: (Customer company name)
Sorry - I mean 541053 and 545173!
Rgds, B3 (First name)

Message (10)
To: B6
cc: F2, F8
Subject: (Customer company name); packing eye to sky
We put four wooden spacers between the individual slit coils on a pallet. The topmost coil of the pallet is protected with a cardboard disc. A similar disc is also used on the bottom. Unfortunately, we are not able to change the type of spacers because of the fully automated packing line. The new line was not designed to use circles/doughnuts either. For further details, please refer to Document V PAK 003 E - Approved Packing Types, Coil Packing.
Rgds F5 (First name)

Message (11)
To: B1, F5
cc:
Subject: Re: (Customer company name) Enq xxxxx/xx-xx
Hi, B1! (First name)
Sorry that I didn't notice the thickness tolerance (not our production department either).
The best is x,xx in total. I changed now to 'xxxx' which gives +/-x,xx mm.
Rgds
F8 (First name)

Primary communicative purpose, Doing repair work

Message (12)
To: A1, F3
cc:
Subject: (Customer company name)
Hello A1 and F3, (First names)
Sorry, that person in shipping department who has been investigating the matter not in, back only on Friday. Anyhow, (Shipping company name) people promised to get us some information for tomorrow. I'll inform you then.
Kind regards,
F1(First name)

Message (13)
To: A1, A3
cc: F3
Subject: (Customer company name) xxxxx/xx, load xxxx
Hello to you, everyone
(Shipping company name) people have been checking where the package Xxxxxxx hiding but so far nothing found.
Today we'll issue credit note for the invoice xxxxxx as (Customer company name) never got the package.
Sorry it took so long time. In case the package can be found somewhere we'll issue new documents accordingly.
Kind regards,
F1(First name)

Message (14)
To: A2
cc:
Subject: Re: Hey
A2 (First name), I had given the credit information to (First name) so that a credit could be issued and there has been a great debate over how to input this credit into our "new system". I realize that this problem does not concern you but we have been speaking with our corporate computer "geeks" and they have finally decided on how to issue the credit, so......... to make a long story short the credit is being issued today. I am sorry for the delay in taking care of this. Please extend my apologies to all concerned.
Best Regards,
AC1 (First name)

Message (15)
To: F4
cc:
Subject: (Customer company name)
Hi F4 (First name)
How are coping with the terrible weather? Is it still as cold today - I heard yesterday it was -41!
I have a problem with (Customer company name). Do you remember we altered the due date of draft xxxxxx? Well the customer is saying that because they did us a favour and offloaded instead of refusing and (Finnish supplier's name) having to pay storage charges, they want the invoice date to be 10.02.99. Is it possible to change the draft date again - I know we can't change the invoice.
Sorry for the inconvenience.
Rgds, B3 (First name)

Message (16)
To: B1
cc: F2, F8
Subject: Re: (Customer company name) - strapping
Was this the first time when the customer experienced loose or broken banding? Perhaps they have seen some cases, but have not reported them. Do you know if there has been any safety hazards because of the problem?
The quality department will audit the next shipment. It will take place in July, week 27 according to F8 (First name).
For your info ... We have audited one Canadian customer because of similar problems for the last two years, a couple of times a month. I have not seen any fast improvement. Auditing and inspecting seems to be the only way to educate people here in the mill. I thought that our fine automatic packaging line would solve this type of problems, but automation is not a solution.
Sorry for my frustration.
Rgds F5 (First name)

Message (17)
To: A1
cc: F3, F6
Subject: (Customer company name); certs xxxxxx & xxxxxx
The time of 22 minutes on cert. xxxxxx dated 11.01.99 was incorrect. It should be 49 minutes. We will update the certificate to show 49 min. which is the annealing time after cold rolling.
The annealing time of 22 min was not completely wrong, because it was the time at xxxx F after hot rolling. The coil is also shorter at this stage of the process. The writer of the certificate looked at the wrong mill report. This is a human error, which we regret.
The carbon content is correct on both certificates. We changed the program in 1999 by rounding up the carbon content. Cert. xxxxxx was created in 1998. Therefore, it showed x.xxx % C. If you print the same certificate now, it will show x.xx % C.
According to the current edition of ASTM A 240, the accuracy is better for low carbon grades than the normal one. L grades have one digit more: max. x.xxx % C. The normal grades contain max. x.xx % C.
Best regards,
F5 (First name)

Message (18)
To: A5
cc:F3, F5, F9
Subject: Re: Heat Numbers
Good morning!
The information regarding heat identification is such as defined in our Quality Assurance Manual, paragraph 8.1.1.
This is just stating the same what I told in year 1996. This is however an obsolete information since 1997 already.
The updated QA Manual will be issued at the end of this year. That will give also the official updated explanation for melt and slab identification. I will give to you an unofficial explanation only in the meantime.
As you certainly know, our production was constantly increasing during 1996 and 1997. Finally, more than 100 casts a week were produced thus exceeding the two digits limits reserved for the running melt number. We were forced to change the "weeknumbers" to the succeeding weeks any time as the 99th cast was done. This is the situation still now: the real calendar week 35 is just at the beginning, however our melts are running at the "weeknumber" 841 already! The first cast of this year 80101 according to the old notation was done 29th December 1997 already! Thus there is no correspondence of the melt numbers to the real week anymore.
We are so sorry as we have designed so bad identification system in the first year of production 1976 as we couldn't imagine, the 99 casts a week limit would be ever exceeded. Now we know, it was a big mistake.
I don't see, why the customer should really know the actual dates of the casts produced in our mill.
The product identification must be the same as shown on the test certificates. That's all what is required, in my humble opinion.
regards,
F6 (First name and Family name)

Messages not Uttering Apology nor Regret

<u>Primary communicative purpose, Doing repair work</u>

Message (19)
To: B1
cc:
Subject: Re: (Customer company name)
She has two coils: on the first one items xxxxx-xx-xx, xxxxx-xx-xx-xx, xxxxx-xx then on the second one xxxxx-xx and xxxxx-xx. These will be processed soonest. I would say during this week and despatch next. Then xxxxx-xx is on slab and she tries to get it ready by week 830. Let's see how good material it will be this time/F2 (TIA)

Message (20)
To: B1
cc:
Subject: Re: (Customer company name)
We have done now x.x mm plates except 3 missing. Despatch on Friday boat. I suggest the missing ones will be added to xxxxx-xx to read 103 pcs?/F2 (TIA)

Message (21)
To: B2
cc:
Subject: (Customer company name), late deliveries, xxxxx-xxx
B2 (First name), the first reason for these items was delayed polishing. Schedule was originally week 823 but was delayed by production reasons. This means that correction grindings were late and had to be finished before 4N material. Then there was also secondary reasons like material ran out or defective material and had to be changed.
Polishing finally started during week 825 anf (Customer company name) material was done on Sunday 28.6. and despatch was on Wednesday. The result was that we were 3 weeks late from confirmations and 4 weeks from their request.
So original production schedule could not be maintained. This is the cause in one sentence.
Please formulate an answer to (Customer company name). Obviously we should consider remedies for future but I do not know what they think of this situation, so let's consider them later.
Rgds//F2 (TIA)

Message (22)
To: B1
cc:
Subject: Re: (Customer company name) XX xxx/XXxxx
B1 (First name), we cannot be responsible for 8+ tons cut to sheets and not noticed that it is no good. It is a responsibility of a customer to stop production immediately after a couple of sheets. Had we processed this material we would have been able to do good commercial material from the coil. We do not have any use for the material. Also the invoice xxxxx due 15.10 needs to be settled on time/F2 (TIA)

Message (23)
To: F1
cc:
Subject: SCRAP CREDIT
Hi F1 (First name)
I have received verbal confirmation from (Customer company name) that they will credit us back the scrap. Even though I received verbal confirmation, I do not know how long it will take for them to get around to giving us credit back....in otherwords I don't know if he was just telling me this so that I will leave him alone.
The person that I spoke with is AC1 (First name and Family name). You can check with me in a week or two and if I haven't received the invoice for scrap credit in the mail then I think either FI3 or (a person's first name) should deal with him. I have explained that the mill wants the information, so AC1 has been aware of your need for this to be taken care of.
Regards,
....A2 (first name)

Message (24)
To: A1
cc: F3
Subject: (Customer company name) sample, heat xxxxx
The lowest reading, which I measured from the sample, was x.xx mm. I took the reading from 10 mm from the untrimmed edge. The ordered minimum gauge was x.xx mm.
As I informed you earlier, our records do not show any deviation. Our inspectors measure the thickness about 40 mm from the edge. The thickness measurements in the HR mill are taken along the center line of the coil.
What is the application? Could they use the material for less demanding purposes? Are they able to slit the coils? We believe that the edge trop of the master coil was too steep. The coils would be OK after slitting.
Rgds F5 (First name)

Message (25)
To: A1
cc: F3
Subject: (Customer company name) sample, heat xxxxxx
Let's *take the material back. We would like to have the material sold as prime.*
Rgds F5 (First name)

Message (26)
To: A5
cc: F3
Subject: Re: (Customer company name) Inv xxxxxx Coil Xxxxxxx, heat xxxxxx
Our documents from the HR mill and A&P line indicate that the material is within the requested thickness range. The lowest reading was x.xxmm (=x.xxx"). Where did they measure .xxx? ASTM A480 states that thickness measurements are taken at least 3/8 in. (=9.52 mm) from the longitudinal edge.
Rgds F5 (First name)

Message (27)
To: B1
cc: B5, F2, F8
Subject: Re: (Customer company name) XX xxx
Hi B1 (First name),
This is not the first time (Customer company name) rejects coils because of poor flatness. I believe their leveller is not powerful enough. It is up to you, if you want to inspect the claim. Please check the database.
Rgds F5 (First name)

Message (28)

To: B1

cc:F2

Subject: Re: (Customer company name) - strapping

We use stainless steel bands for eye banding on the automatic packing line. The strapping equipment was originally designed for zink coated carbon steel. Stainless bands work harden rapidly during banding. This equipment was one source of the problems because of its inadequate power.

There were also problems with the automation. At first, the computers did not comprehend the packing codes (P3 etc.). Then we deleted all the notes for the line, and the operators did not understand the codes. Now we rely on coding. P3 stands for 4 eye bands. What irritates me the most, is that the line operators just pass the loose or broken coils, even though the amount of bands is insufficient!

The circumferential bands come from slitting lines. All the shifts of the three lines have to be trained to avoid off-centre strapping.

The operating engineers have quite a job motivating their personnel. The quality awareness is not first class. I sometimes feel that the operators do not care a bit what they are doing.

Rgds F5 (First name)

Message (29)

To: A3

cc: A1, F3, F6

Subject: Re: CERT. xxxxxx

The number of tests, test specimens, special tests and test methods are described in ASTM A 480/A 480M Standard Specifications for General Requirements for Flat-Rolled Stainless and Heat-Resisting Steel Plate, Sheet, and Strip. See sections 16, 17, 18 and 19 of ASTM A480. We perform tension tests and measure Rockwell hardness according to ASTM A370 Standard Test Methods and Definitions for Mechanical Testing of Steel Products. ASTM A480 states that tension test specimens shall be taken from finished material and hardness tests may be made on the grip ends of the tension specimens before they are subjected to the tension test. The tests are made using calibrated instruments.

Is the customer of (Wholesaler company name) saying that our product does not meet the mechanical requirements of type 321 steel in ASTM A240/A240M Standard Specification for Heat-Resisting Chromium and Chromium-Nickel Stainless Steel Plate, Sheet, and Strip for Pressure Vessels? What were the results?

Rgds, F5 (First name)

Message (30)

To: A5

cc: F3

Subject: Re: (Customer company name)

Yes, it is the same mother coil xxxxxx-xx, XXXX xxxxx/xx. The coil did not go through the tension levelling line. Our inspectors thought the defect (cellulite) would not harm.

Rgds, F5 (First name)

Message (31)
To: A1
cc: F3
Subject: Re: (Customer company name) xxxxx/xx, heat xxxxxx-xx
This is a transport defect and therefore an insurance case. Please contact the insurance company. Rgds F5 (First name)

Message (32)
To: B1
cc: F2
Subject: Re: (Customer company name)
There was no reason to carry out an EDS on the face side of the weld.

The cross section across the "different" area did not show any porosity. Visual examination of the surface in this area did not show any difference either. See appendix 1. The weld surface looks the same throughout the run.

EDS does not help if we do not know what to look for! Slag islands on the back are clear. They appear throughout the root side. They were the only visible clusters.
Rgds F5 (First name)

Message (33)
To: A1
cc: F3
Subject: (Customer company name) sample, xxxxxx/xx, heat xxxxxx
Thanks for the sample. The defect is an old over-rolled scratch. The source is not known. I suggest we accept the claim.
Rgds F5 (First name)

Message (34)
To: Fr1
cc: F10, F9
Subject: Re: (Customer company name) - Technical assistance
The grade xxx-x is especially sensitive for temperature during test. The martensite amount in tension is higher for xxx than any other austenitic steel and it varies a lot with small changes of temperature during plastic deformation (also in coldrolling). The more there is martensite the higher UTS values are. Temperature changes in order of x C degrees only may have dramatic effect on the strength values. Two hours after coldrolling is hardly long enough to reach the ambient temperature.
It was not quite clear if the same material was retested or a similar material of another coil - you said just "same operation".
brgds,
F6 (First name and family name)

Message (35)

To: Fr1
cc: F10, F9
Subject: Re: (Customer company name) - Technical assistance
There may be a trivial explanation too...
The coil does not contain immediately after coldrolling the rollpass ends with variable thickness (i.e. coldrolling reduction).
The strength depends on reduction and there are usually visible thickness differences for each pass. It the first sample was taken at the very most end of the coil and the next sample e.g. at 100 cm distance, they have different strengths too. The first one is thicker (less reduction) with a lower strength.
Another explanation: one sample was taken parallel to rolling direction and the other one perpendicular to rolling direction. The sample direction has effect on the strength values. The perpendicular testpiece should have higher strength.
One more explanation...
The test temperatures were different (1. in July, 2. in December). They could verify the effect of test temperatures by heating up a testpiece let say to xx degrees and compare with results at xx degrees C.
I think, continuing this hypothetical discussion is more or less meaningless without knowing all the details about sample taking, preparation and tension test conditions etc..
We cannot check in our production if there are any changes of properties in coldrolled state over longer times because we don't test our samples after Sendzimir mill but in annealed condition.
Best regards,
F6 (First name and family name)

Message (36)

To: Fr2, F11
cc: F6, F13
Subject: (Customer company name)-certificates
Dear Fr2 (First name)
We discussed about (Customer company name) in our internal Quality -meeting. Fastest and most popular way to solve the problem is to delay the delivery since certificate is ready. I think that in 90 of cases certificate is on time.
We'll also try to accelerate transportation, testing, writing certs. Guys from XXX are today here and we'll also discuss with them.
F9 (First name)

Message (37)
To: F9, Fr2, F11
cc: D1, D2, F12
Subject: Re: (Customer company name) - certificates
Hello Fr2 (First name),
Please, read ASME SA-480 chapter 13.1 Tension Test and 13.1.1: Tension test specimens shall be taken from finished material...
It is not the answer of question taking so long time but the fact that we can not arrange any reasonable sample taking on annealing pickling line without negotiations for a) permission by TUEV and b) agreement with our production.
Delayed shipments to (Customer company name) (waiting for test results) are probably the most economical and practical way to solve the problem.
We had meeting with (XX/XXX last week. They will look for a way how to check the testing status of material to (Customer company name). They could send it immediately if the test results are ready, otherwise they have to delay shipment two days for instance.
I checked four certificates for material for XXX to (Customer company name) during last week: all certificates were in time! Generally, 85 % of the XXX certificates were ready in time for all deliveries during the month May. Some materials to (Customer company name) were finished and tested couple of moths before date of shipping.
best regards, F6 (First name)

Message (38)
To: F14, F15
cc:
Subject: (Bank name)
Hi
Just to let you know that a month after our meeting little has changed. We are still being charged for tracers, but as yet nothing has been sent to the customer. I spoke to (First name) this afternoon and she confirmed that they were not being sent. She says they have "escalated us to top priority", but I'm not confident that anything is being done.
I wonder if something should be sent from the mill as I don't seem to be getting any joy!
Best regards,
B3 (First name)

Message (39)
To: F14
cc:
Subject: Tracers
Hello!
Thought I'd keep you upto date with the latest developments. (First name) has sent tracers to about 6 customers, and the response has been good. Within 1 hour of being sent I had three customers contacting me re invoice queries etc. If I had sent the tracers they would not have responded for at least a day!
Also I have asked her to trace all customers who pay by cheque but are still in the system - (Customer company name), (Customer company name) etc.
So far so good...
Rgds, F3 (First name)

Message (40)

To: F14

cc:

Subject: Re: Bank charges

Good morning

It seems very unfair that we have to pay the charges for the mistake (Customer company name) made, but I don't think we are able to get the money from the customer. I have discussed this with B6 (First name and family name) - (Customer company name) is his customer, and we both think that I should write the managing director a letter informing him that we were charged £xx for their cheque, £xx of that amount because of their mistake. I think this is the best we can do under the circumstances.

Rgds, F3 (First name)

APPENDIX 2

MACROSEGMENT STRUCTURES OF MESSAGES (19) – (40)

Main Communicative Purpose - DRW = Doing Repair Work						repairs 7a		
RM = Reply Message, IM = Initial Message, FM = Follow-up Message								
WR/WPR = Writer's/Writer's Party Responsibility, 3rdP = 3rd Pary Responsibility			RPR = Reader's Party Responsibility					
No Apology/Regret Utterance	WPR	WPR	WPR	3rdPR (CR)	3rdPR (CR	No explic.	No explic.	No ecplic.
Informants	F2>B1	F2>B1	F2>B2	F2>B1	A2>F1	F5>A1	F5>A1	F5>A5
Message	M19/RM	M20/FU	M21/RM	M22/RM	M23/FU	M24/RM	M25/RM	M26/RM
Epistolary Conventions								
First name			1	1	1			
Hello(,), Good morning First name/s								
Pre-sequence								
Refer to Previous Communication/Enclosed Message								
Provide Prospective Introduction								
Core Message								
Refuse Responsibility				2		2		1
Provide Information	1	1	3	5	2	1,3		2
Inform of Action Taken	2		5		3			
Express Views,					4			
Give Suggestions							1	
Express Justification, Reason (H->S type)			2,4	3,4			2	4
Admit Responsibility, Bad Performance (S->H type)			6,7					
Promise Future Action	3	2						
Request for Action or Information - Indirect				6				3
Post-sequence								
Provide Information					5			
Request for Action or Information			8		6	4		
Express Views	4		9			5		
Give Suggestions		3	10		7	6		
Admit Responsibility, Bad Performance (S->H type)					8			
Promise Future Action								
Epistolary Conventions								
Complimentary close			11		9	7	3	5
First name					10	8	4	6
First name and Family name								
Three Letter Initials (TIA)	5	4	12	7				

Main Communicative Purpose - DRW = Doing Repair Work						repairs 8a		
RM = Reply Message, IM = Initial Message, FM = Follow-up Message								
WR/WPR = Writer's/Writer's Party Responsibility, 3rdP = 3rd Pary Responsibility			RPR = Reader's Party Responsibility					
No Apology/Regret Utterance	No explic.	WPR	No explic.	WPR	3rdPR(IC)	No explic.	WPR	No explic.
Informants	F5>B1	F5>B1	F5>A3	F5>A5	F5>A1	F5>B1	F5>A1	F6>Fr1
Message	M27/RM	M28/RM	M29/RM	M30/RM	M31/RM	M32/RM	M33/RM	M34/RM
Epistolary Conventions								
First name								
Hello(,) Hi, Good morning First name/s	1							
Pre-sequence								
Refer to Previous Communication/Enclosed Message				1			1	
Provide Prospective Introduction								
Core Message								
Refuse Responsibility			3			1		
Provide Information	2	1,6,8	1	2		2,5		1
Inform of Action Taken								
Express Views	3	7,11						2
Give Suggestions							4	
Express Justification, Reason (H->S type)	4	3,5,9	4	3	1	3,4	3	
Admit Responsibility, Bad Performance (S->H type)		2,4,10		4	2		2	
Promise Future Action								
Request for Action or Information - Indirect			2		3			
Post-sequence								
Provide Information								
Request for Action or Information	5,6		5					3
Express Views								
Give Suggestions								
Admit Responsibility, Bad Performance (S->H type)								
Promise Future Action								
Epistolary Conventions								
Complimentary close	7	12	6	5	4	6	5	4
First name	8	13	7	6	5	7	6	
First name and Family name								5

Main Communicative Purpose - DRW = Doing Repair Work						repairs 9a
RM = Reply Message, IM = Initial Message, FM = Follow-up Message						
WR/WPR = Writer's/Writer's Party Responsibility, 3rdP = 3rd Pary Responsibility			RPR = Reader's Party Responsibility			
No Apology/Regret Utterance	No explic.	No explic.	3rd/WPR	3rdPR	3rdPR	3rdPR
Informants	F6>Fr1	F9>Fr2	F6>Fr2	B3>F14	B3>F14	B3>F14
Message	M35/FU	M36/RM	M37/FU	M38/FU	M39/FU	M40/FU
Epistolary Conventions						
First name		1				
Hello(,) Hi, Good morning First name/s			1	1	1	1
Pre-sequence						
Refer to Previous Communication/Enclosed Message		2				
Provide Prospective Introduction					2	
Core Message						
Refuse Responsibility	7					
Provide Information	2,3,4	3	2,7,9	3	3,5	4
Inform of Action Taken						
Express Views	1,5,6	4	4,6	2,5	4	2,3,6
Give Suggestions						5
Express Justification, Reason (H->S type)	8		3,5			
Admit Responsibility, Bad Performance (S->H type)				4		
Promise Future Action		5	8			
Request for Action or Information - Indirect						
Post-sequence						
Provide Information						
Request for Action or Information						
Express Views					6	
Give Suggestions				6		
Admit Responsibility, Bad Performance (S->H type)						
Promise Future Action		6				
Epistolary Conventions						
Complimentary close	9		10	7	7	7
First name		7	11	8	8	8
First name and Family name	10					