

OVERLAPPING TALK IN ELF TEAM MEETINGS

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Abstract	
<p>The aim of the study was to find out how second-language speakers of English use overlapping talk in team meetings. There were two focuses in this study 1) find out what types of overlapping talk is in the data and how they function, and 2) is there a difference between these and what has been found in previous research. The reasoning for the second focus was that the data set used in this thesis differed from those used in CA before in terms of its speakers. In previous research the speakers were mostly first-language speakers and learners of English.</p>	
<p>The data was comprised of 3 meetings from a volunteering organization. The 5 participants of the meeting all spoke a different first-language and were all second-language speakers of English. The working language of the organization was English, and all of the communication done in the organization used English. The meetings all had the same agenda that was set by the organization. Audio recordings of the meetings were used as data.</p>	
<p>Conversation analysis was used to analyze the data. The data was first transcribed. Observations about the data as well as previous literature were used to analyze the data. In previous research, overlapping talk has been seen as a systematic part of conversations and rarely an interruption. (Sacks et al., 1974). In ELF and overlap the main theme of reference was collaboration (see e.g., Konakahara, 2015). These two assumptions among others were used as points of reference for spotting patterns and deviance in the data.</p>	
<p>The main findings in the data were six different types of overlapping talk. Most of them were response tokens or small words such as <i>yeah, mm hm, okay</i> which were used to indicate agreement or acknowledgment of the ongoing turn. The smaller categories included cases like helping out others, questions, and disagreeing with the ongoing turn.</p>	
<p>The results from the study showed that the themes and patterns found in this data set showed similarities between previous research done with an ELF data set and other data that has looked at overlap. The themes discovered in ELF conversations of collaboration carried on in this study as well. Some deviant cases showcased differences from other data but were not conclusive enough to be stated as different or new without further investigation.</p>	
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<p>Tutkimuksen tarkoituksena on saada selville, kuinka Englantia toisena kielenä käyttävät henkilöt puhuvat päällekkäin tiimitapaamisissa. Tutkimuksessa tarkkaillaan 1) minkälaisina funktoina päällekkäin puhuminen ilmenee ja 2) siihen eroaako tämä aikaisemmissa tutkimuksissa löydettyihin toimintamalleihin. Alan aikaisemmissa tutkimuksissa data koostuu pitkälti Englantia ensimmäisenä kielenä puhuvista henkilöistä tai sitten Englantia opiskelevista henkilöistä.</p> <p>Tutkimusaineistonä käytettiin kolmea vapaaehtoisjärjestön tiimitapaamista, jotka äänitettiin kolmen eri viikon aikana. Kokoukseen osallistui viisi kansainvälistä henkilöä, joista kukaan ei puhunut englantia äidinkielenään ja kokouksen työkielenä toimi englanti. Kokoukset olivat pituudeltaan noin 45 minuuttia. Kokouksissa oli organisaation itse asettama agenda, jonka mukaan kokoukset etenivät.</p> <p>Keskusteluanalyysi valittiin tutkimuskeinoksi. Data litteroitiin, ja analyysi tapahtui huomioiden avulla aikaisempiin tutkimuksiin nojaten. Aikaisemmissa tutkimuksissa päällekkäin puhumista on pidetty systeemattisena osana puhetta, joka harvemmin tapahtuu tahallisena keskeyttämisenä (Sacks et al., 1974). ELF (English as a lingua franca) tutkimuksessa on havaittu päällekkäin puhumisen tapahtuvan auttamisen ja yhteistyön merkeissä keskustelussa (Konakahara, 2015). Nämä kaksi olettamuusta toimivat muiden ohessa osana datan tutkimista.</p> <p>Analyysissa löyettiin kuusi erityyppistä päällekkäin puhumisen lajia. Näistä suurin osa kuului minimipalautteisiin, joita ovat sanat kuten, <i>yeah, mm hm, okay</i> joiden tarkoitus on ilmaista ymmärrystä tai myöntymistä keskustelussa. Pienemmissä kategorioissa löytyi esimerkiksi auttamisen tavoittelua, kysymysten esitystä sekä eriävien mielipiteiden ilmaisua.</p> <p>Tutkimuksen tulokset olivat niin kuin tutkimuksen alussa odotettiin. Tutkimuksessa käytetty data käytäytyi samantapaisesti kuin aikaisempien tutkimusten data tilanteissa, jossa oli päällekkäin puhumista. Aikaisempien ELF tutkimusten yhteisöllisyys ja auttavaisuus tuli esiin myös tässä datassa. Joukossa oli myös muutama tapaus, joista löytyi poikkeavaisuuksia, mutta tarvittaisiin lisä tutkimusta, jotta tiedettäisiin, onko nämä systemaattisia vai vain yksittäisiä tapauksia.</p> <p>Asiasanat conversation analysis, overlap, turn-taking, English as a lingua franca, intercultural communication.</p> <p>Säilytyspaikka Jyväskylän yliopisto</p> <p>Muita tietoja</p>	

TABLES

TABLE 1	Overlaps based on categories.....	31
TABLE 2	Acknowledgement overlaps based on categories.....	32

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1	INTRODUCTION.....	1
2	OVERLAPPING TALK.....	5
2.1	Overlap as a feature of turn-taking	5
2.2	Simultaneous talk in CA research	8
2.2.1	Overlap	9
2.2.2	Interruptions	12
3	ELF STUDY FIELD.....	14
3.1	English as a Lingua Franca	15
3.2	Conversation analysis and English as a lingua franca	17
4	THE PRESENT STUDY.....	23
4.1	Research questions.....	23
4.2	Data	25
4.3	Method.....	26
4.3.1	Conversation analysis as a method	26
4.3.2	From transcribing to analysing a data set.....	28
5	FINDINGS	31
5.1	Acknowledgements	32
5.1.1	Acknowledgement of turn information.....	33
5.1.2	Agreement with turn	35
5.1.3	Confirmation of turn.....	37
5.2	Disagreement.....	38
5.3	Receiving help through overlap	41
5.4	Inserting Information	44
5.5	Questions.....	46
5.6	Other types.....	49
5.6.1	Giving up turn	49
5.6.2	Delayed Response	51
5.6.3	Signaling the end of topic.....	53
6	DISCUSSION.....	55
7	CONCLUSION	60
	REFERENCES.....	63
	APPENDICES	68

APPENDIX 1 Transcribing Conventions	68
APPENDIX 2: Participants	69

1 INTRODUCTION

English is a rapidly growing global language, and 90% of its speakers are foreign-language speakers (Charles, 2007, p. 3), meaning that they speak another language as their first-language. The use of English has opened up a new world of information and conversations that can be had between people who do not share the same first-language. These conversations between speakers of English bring about new research opportunities with a more diverse understanding of language and communication. More companies are adopting English as their working language due to the rise in international workforces with the aim of inclusion in the workplace.

This thesis aims to look into overlapping talk in a team meeting that uses English as a Lingua Franca (ELF) or a common language between speakers who do not share the same first-language. More specifically, the analysis will focus on what types of overlapping talk can be found in the data, and their functions in the conversations had in the data. The second part of the analysis aims to determine how the results of this study compare to findings from previous literature. The reason why it felt like the right focus was that there is not much previous research done on ELF and overlapping talk, and it would be of importance to compare how different data sets see overlap happening in conversation.

The field of study that this thesis belongs to is Conversation Analysis which is interested in the sequential organization of talk in naturally occurring conversations. This can include, for example, how turns are taken or kept in conversation (see, e.g., Sacks et al., 1974). More specifically, the study is looking into overlap, which is a feature of turn-taking that happens more often than one would think. The basic rule in conversation seems to be that one person talks at a time and long silences are to be avoided (Sacks, 2004). Overlapping talk could be considered as the breaker of the rule, but it has been studied that there is a lot of systematicity in how overlap happens (see, e.g., Jefferson, 1984, 2004, Sacks, 2004), and therefore it cannot be treated as something abnormal but rather a part of normal conversation behavior.

The method used to analyze the data set is Conversation analysis (CA). The reason for choosing CA as a tool for analyzing this data was that it offered the possibility to look at the data as closely as possible without allowing outside biases to dictate whether or not the phenomena found had something to do with culture. The conversation participants are people who use ELF in their everyday life and how they communicate in conversation is the key focus. CA allows us to draw conclusions only on what comes up in conversation, and this will help determine if there are factors in conversation related to ELF for example. Overlap was chosen as the focus for this thesis as it offered a possibility to collect a data set that showcases a variety of situations from the conversation that would give a broader understanding of the data. Previous research on ELF often focuses on misunderstandings (Kaur, 2011) or orientation to language (Pietikäinen, 2020), which as phenomena itself are more likely to be caused by language proficiency or cultural differences. Overlap seemed like a phenomenon to give a broader understanding of how this data set is compared to those before.

Most CA research into second-language users and ELF is based around the classroom. Meaning that the conversations happen in a setting where the language knowledge is still being learned. (Konakahara, 2020). This is one of the reasons it was seen as important to view this set of data through the lens of ELF as used in normal interactions where the participants are on even ground rather than a teaching situation where there is an active teacher, making them a more knowledgeable person in the conversation. On the other end of the spectrum ELF studies often focus on businesses and how ELF is used to do business (see, e.g., Franceschi, 2017) In this thesis, the participants in the data are all from different backgrounds and speak English as a second-language, so there is no advantage for any one of them. The data comes from a volunteering organization which is somewhere in between these two fields of ELF research.

The data itself consists of 3 physical team meetings between a group of 5 individuals whom all work for the same volunteering organization. The group members have a very diverse linguistic background and use English as their communication tool. The data offers a uniqueness to the Conversation Analysis field as most of the studies done on overlap have been done using first-language speaker data (see, e.g., Sacks et al., 1974, Jefferson, 1984). The data is also unique in its ELF setting as most research uses data from universities (Konakahara, 2015) or businesses like Firth (1990, 1996). The data from this thesis is somewhat of a mix as the group are university students but the conversations happen in a business meeting-like manner.

Studying ELF interactions through CA offers a multilingual perspective to the field and broadens the perspective through which we view conversation (Konakahara, 2020). Previous research has mostly been done with first-language users, which is why it is important to bring these data sets to view. While this thesis is not equipped to make claims on ELF interactions as a whole, it is a piece of work aimed to broaden the type of data analyzed in CA. The findings in the ELF field, in general, seem to point to the fact that ELF users have connections to the culture that they come from, which

leads to misunderstandings in communication, whereas in CA research in conversation, this does not come apparent much (Kaur, 2011). This serves as a reason for choosing to use CA as a tool of analysis as it does not have a bias in what is being discussed but only looks at how conversation happens. What does become apparent is the way participants treat the conversation. This way, we can understand if there is something present in talk itself that is apparently ELF related.

In previous research, overlap has been studied by determining what is the starting point of overlap, how participants treat overlap and how it is resolved (see, e.g., Jefferson, 1984, Schegloff, 2000, Gardner, 2001). English as a lingua franca and CA field is still developing and has mostly focused on finding out what are the differences between first-language speaker data and second-language speaker data (Firth 1996). The focus was chosen to be on a more specific section of ELF conversations in order to contribute a perspective to the field that has not been studied extensively yet. Wolfartsberger (2011) has, for example touched on the topic of overlap and ELF, but the research is still quite general.

ELF research on overlapping talk has not been studied extensively yet, which is why there is a need for further investigation. Previously Cogo and Dewey (2012) have studied simultaneous talk in ELF data and found that there were cooperative and competitive types. Konakahara (2015) is another researcher who has touched on the subject. She wrote about overlapping questions and also found a cooperative nature to overlap. Wolfartsberger (2011) also found a collaborative aspect to overlap as participants used overlap in assisting in a word-search situation. This theme of collaboration and co-operation will be looked at closely with this data to see if there is a pattern to be detected in ELF conversations and overlap. *Overlapping talk* and *simultaneous talk* will be referred to when talking about points in conversation that two or more people are talking at the same time. *Overlap* is used as the umbrella term for all talk where more than one person is speaking at a time. More detailed explanations of these concepts can be found in chapters 2 and 3.

At the end of this chapter, let us gather an understanding of how the present thesis is structured. The thesis is divided into two main parts: previous research into CA and ELF and the analysis part of the thesis. Chapter 2 aims to better the understanding of the background knowledge and research done in the field. The chapter is divided into two parts to cover different topics related to CA. The first half is dedicated to understanding overlapping talk as a concept, and the latter focuses on different types of overlapping talk. Chapter three rounds out the previous research portion of this thesis. The chapter will discuss ELF as a concept and briefly outline the current research topics. In the second part of the chapter, there will be a discussion on how ELF and CA have been studied previously. After this, in Chapter 4, the methods and data used in this thesis will be introduced further. The introduction of the research questions will happen in this chapter. Chapter 5 is where the analysis of the data takes place. This chapter will present the types of overlapping talk found in the data and

further examine them to see how they function. Previous research will be looked at to see if there are connections. Chapter 6 will discuss the findings and how we can relate them to the ELF field, and if it is possible. The last chapter is a conclusion of all of the results found in this thesis and will discuss further developments to be made in the field.

2 OVERLAPPING TALK

This study uses conversation analysis (CA) as the main tool for organizing and analyzing the material. The main phenomena that are studied in this thesis are overlap or simultaneous talk in conversation. In this chapter, I will explain concepts such as turn-taking in conversation and overlap, as they create a major part of what will be covered in chapter 5 findings. Conversation analysis is the exploration of previously unknown regularities in human interaction (Sidnell & Stivers, 2012, p. 77). CA was chosen for this study as there was an interest in the behavior that happens inside intercultural team meetings. CA allows the researcher to start from the data and work from there allowing all the features of talk in these meetings to come forward fully without making assumptions. As CA is focused on understanding exactly what goes on in conversation without taking into consideration the outside influences it was seen as the most suitable approach to take in analyzing the data in this study.

This chapter is divided into two sections. The first section, sub-chapter 2.1 explains the overall concept of turn-taking a feature of conversation that CA is interested in analyzing, and how overlap happens from a turn-taking perspective. In the second sub-chapter 2.2, we will further explore the previous research on overlapping talk using CA as an analytical tool. The most common types of overlap found in previous research will be highlighted in this section.

2.1 Overlap as a feature of turn-taking

Schegloff (2007, p.2) talks about turn-taking and how all human interaction is based on cycles of turns where the participants inspect a turn and then respond to what they have analyzed. Every turn can be seen as holding a message, an action that the speaker wants to convey in the turn. Then the participants analyze this message and respond. (Schegloff, 2007, pp. 2-3) Overlap is a feature of turn-taking that is not meant to

happen when looking at the primary rules of conversations. Conversations are supposed to happen in a one speaker at a time manner. Speakers by default want to avoid both long gaps between turns as well as the overlap between turns. These two however are very contradictory as by avoiding long gaps in conversations the possibility of overlap increases. Turns are usually constructed of syntactic units such as sentences, a turn can consist of multiple sentence compounds but usually end in a syntactic point. (Sacks, 2004, pp. 45–47)

Firstly, to understand how overlap happens in conversation it is good to understand some primary observables when it comes to conversation. Sacks et al. (1974) collected a list of 14 observables from the conversations they analyzed. They (1974, pp. 700–701) wrote down these 14 observables:

- (1) Speaker-change recurs, or at least occurs (cf. ?4.1, below).
- (2) Overwhelmingly, one party talks at a time (cf. ?4.2).
- (3) Occurrences of more than one speaker at a time are common, but brief (cf. ?4.3).
- (4) Transitions (from one turn to a next) with no gap and no overlap are common. Together with transitions characterized by slight gap or slight overlap, they make up the vast majority of transitions (cf. ?4.4). (5) Turn order is not fixed, but varies (cf. ?4.5).
- (6) Turn size is not fixed, but varies (cf. ?4.6).
- (7) Length of conversation is not specified in advance (cf. ?4.7).
- (8) What parties say is not specified in advance (cf. ?4.8).
- (9) Relative distribution of turns is not specified in advance (cf. ?4.9).
- (10) Number of parties can vary (cf. ?4.10).
- (11) Talk can be continuous or discontinuous (cf. ?4.11).
- (12) Turn-allocation techniques are obviously used. A current speaker may select a next speaker (as when he addresses a question to another party); or parties may self-select in starting to talk (cf. ?4.12).
- (13) Various 'turn-constructional units' are employed; e.g., turns can be projectedly 'one word long', or they can be sentential in length (cf. ?4.13).
- (14) Repair mechanisms exist for dealing with turn-taking errors and violations ; e.g., if two parties find themselves talking at the same time, one of them will stop prematurely, thus repairing the trouble (cf. ?4.14).

Sack et al., 1974, pp. 700–701

An important takeaway from this set of observables is that the only constant in conversation is change. For example, point (7) and (8) tell us that what will be said in conversation is not determined beforehand and the length of the conversation is not specified in advance. Points (3) and (4) relate to overlap and indicate that it is not that rare and often falls to points where speaker change could take place. *Transition-relevance places* (TRP) are what Sacks et al. (1974, p. 703) call them. Transition-relevance places are completion points of turn-constructional units, where a turn reaches a possible end, and a new speaker could begin talking. TCU's are for example in the English language similar to phrases and sentences. When a participant is able to predict a TCU ending a TRP comes into being. (Sacks et al., 1974, pp. 702–703.)

Point 14 from the above list by Sacks et al. (1974) is interesting to look at in terms of overlap. It talks about repair mechanisms for dealing with turn-taking errors. It gives an understanding that in conversation if there are situations where two or more speakers find themselves talking at the same time there will be a repair to reprimand the situation and one or all of the speakers will stop talking to not be in overlap with others.

From Sacks et al. (1974) above point (12) mentions turn-allocation methods. These are ways in which inside conversation it is decided how a turn is passed. They (Sacks et al., 1974, p. 704) provide a turn-taking model that lists some of the common features of turn-taking in conversation, a set of rules that apply to turn-taking:

- (1) At the initial transition-relevance place of any turn:
 - (a) If the current speaker has selected the next speaker, the selected-speaker has the right and must take the next turn.
 - (b) If the current speaker has not selected the next speaker, any potential next speaker may self-select but does not have to. The first speaker to start acquires the right to the turn.
 - (c) If the current speaker has not selected the next speaker, s/he may continue if s/he wishes unless another speaker self-selects.
- (2) If speaker change has not taken place in a situation where rule c has operated and the current speaker has continued, the rule set a-c applies again for each next transition-relevance place until speaker change occurs.

Sack et al., 1974, p. 704

These turn-taking rules above state that in order for a turn to be passed to someone else in the conversation there should be a transition-relevance place. At this place either a person selected by the current speaker will take the turn or someone else takes the turn. Rule C states that if no one is selected the current turn taker can continue. Rule 2 states that if rule c is provoked then the set of a to c can continue on and on.

These rules explain in part where and how overlap happens. Especially rules 1b and 1c can cause overlap easily. In these points in conversation if the current speaker does not select a person to go next it can lead to competition on getting the next turn and can lead to overlap for example. Now that there is an understanding of when overlap happens in conversation from the point of view of turn-taking in the next chapters the definition of overlap will be discussed as well as research on overlap.

From previous CA research on turn-taking from Sacks et al. (1974) there can a conclusion made that conversation happens in a systematic way that has a lot of variation. The basis of any conversation is that one person talks at a time and according to the rules stated above these turns can have differing lengths. This creates the foundation for overlapping talk to happen primarily. In the following chapters more places where overlap becomes present will be discussed.

2.2 Simultaneous talk in CA research

This sub-chapter of the thesis focuses on exploring previous overlap research that uses CA as a method. The first section of this sub-chapter will look into how overlapping talk has been defined by previous research. The second portion will look at specific types of overlap that have been discovered. For example, (Goodwin, 1986, Schegloff, 2000, 1981, Gardner, 2001) have studied overlap and its different forms.

To better define what overlap is and why that is the term used in this thesis, in this chapter there will be views presented from past research on how overlap should be defined. Some researchers see overlap as interruptions and some view this as problematic. Drew (2009, p.72) talks about treating overlapping talk as interruptions is a moral category and should not be used without consideration when overlap is talked about as not all overlapping talk is interruptions. He points out that using the word interruption gives off a display of power and also suggests blame on the person doing the interrupting.

Schegloff (2000, pp. 3, 7) defines overlap and simultaneous talk as something that happens when there is more than one speaker at a time. He also talks about overlap and the problematic use of the word interruption as it includes serious problems but does not detail what these problems are. Hutchby (1996, pp. 77-78) elaborates that the term interruption denies or challenges the current speaker the chance to complete their turn.

Sacks (2004, p. 40) is one of the scholars who used the term interruption when talking about overlapping talk. Specifically, he divided it into two categories: overlap and interruption. Overlap happens when the next turn-taker starts talking at the completion point of the previous turn to avoid a gap or silence in the conversation. Interruptions happen when a new speaker starts talking in the middle of the turn with

intent before a transition-relevance place is presented. (Sacks, 2004, pp. 40-41) Sacks (2004, pp. 50-51) discusses the difference between overlap and interruptions. Overlap is said to happen when a current turn is seen as ending. The next turn-taker can either self-select themselves or be selected by the previous turn-taker. Either way, the next turn-taker sees the turn ending and, to avoid a gap in conversation, takes on the turn too soon, resulting in overlap. Interruptions are seen by Sacks (2004, pp. 50-51) as points in conversation where the turn starts within the previous speakers turn, which means that there is no endpoint in sight and another person starts the conversation from the middle of another person's turn.

Drew (2009, p.71) talks about the points made by one of the founding works of CA, Sacks et al. (1974), especially about the point of only one person should talk at a time, which was a conclusion Sacks et al. (1974) came to based on their research. Drew (2009, p.71) challenges this claim as he points out that there are many instances where people talk over each other and overlap is not avoided as Sacks et al. (1974) suggested. He suggests that overlap is not breakdowns or chaos, but rather it is generated systematically by the participants of the conversation (Drew, 2009, p.72).

Now that there is a better understanding of how overlap is defined as a term and the discussions around this term in relation to using interruption and overlap in discussion about this phenomenon. The following sub-chapters will delve further into what types of overlap have been discovered in previous research. Chapter 2.2.1 will discuss different types of discoveries made under the term overlap. Even though the term interruption is not used in this thesis as a definition for overlapping talk as it is seen as having a negative connotation, chapter 2.2.2 will briefly outline research done using the term interruption.

2.2.1 Overlap

Gail Jefferson is one of the first researchers who studied overlap using CA. Jefferson (2004) lists some of the findings that she has made in regard to naturally occurring talk and overlap. She introduces four categories of systematic procedures. The first includes overlaps where independent knowledge is presented by simultaneous talk. This can present, for example, by stating the same utterance at the same time by multiple speakers. The second is a display of recognition in the middle of a turn, for example, saying yes while the other person is still talking. The third kind of overlap happens at the possible completion points of a turn where the other person starts talking before the previous turn ends. As a fourth one, she presents the overlap that happens after longer pauses in conversation where two people start their turn simultaneously. (Jefferson, 2004, pp. 44-45)

Schegloff (2000, pp. 4-6) also divides overlap into four categories of overlap. The first is terminal overlaps where the next speaker predicts the end of the current turn

and starts talking prematurely. According to Schegloff (2000, p. 5), these kinds of overlaps self-liquidate, meaning that the current speaker finishes the ongoing turn quickly. They do not need to be managed in any way, deeming them to be unproblematic. The second category is “continuers” of speech. These are instances such as uh huh or hmm. These instances are short and require no further acknowledgment (Schegloff, 2000, p. 5). Conditional access to the turn is the third type of overlap, according to Schegloff (2000, p. 5–6). These are instances where the current speaker invites another into their turn to, for example, give further information like a word or a name. The last category given by Schegloff (2000, p. 6) is “chordal”. This kind of overlap is a type of behavior that is meant to simultaneously take place, like laughter or shared greetings, which are a demonstration of attentive listening and very finely coordinated.

Both Schegloff (2000) and Jefferson (2004) mention short responses that happen during conversation. Gardner (2001) discovered similar aspects in conversation. According to Gardner (2001, p. 6), these short tokens were usually present at points of conversation where there might have been grammar, intonation, or pragmatic completion, in other words, at the end of a turn. These include words such as yeah/yes or mm hm. Yeah, in particular has been studied frequently as a part of conversation and can be seen as a versatile token in conversation. Jefferson (1984, pp.199-200) found that yeah is used, for example, in places where one is preparing to take the next turn in conversation or to indicate a topic shift. It can also be seen as an indication of agreement. In the following example, we can see how yeah can be used in overlap.

Example 1 Team meeting 3¹

1	Lisa	well Amy you supposed >to see< the profile
2		persona that (-) did couple of months [ago?]
3	Amy	[y:eah.]
4	Lisa	yeah <u>so</u> now as as an lcp commission (.) a:nd with the
5		>help of< (-) w:e ask him to do it <u>again</u>

In the example above, we can see that on lines 1 and 2 Lisa is asking a question from Amy. On line 3 Amy answers the question by agreeing to the information stated in the question. Here the overlap yeah is at the end of a turn point as suggested by Gardner (2001, p.6).

Mm and Mm hmm Are another set of short tokens that are often heard in response to a turn in overlap. Jefferson (1984, p.200), for example, states that mm is used

¹ All of the examples in this thesis are from a data set recorded my me of team meetings. There are a total of 3 meetings. All personal information such as names and places have been anonymized to protect the identity of the participants.

as a way to signal to the ongoing turn that they are listening to the turn. Like yeah, this type of token appears mostly alone in the turn and does not disrupt the ongoing turn. As these types of words often appear in overlap and have different meanings when used at different positions, intonation can be seen as an indicator of the contribution to the conversation. Gardner (2001, pp. 16-22) states that When these short tokens have a falling intonation, they are most likely used as acknowledgment tokens meaning that they acknowledge something in the conversation. When they have a rising intonation, they are most likely acting as continuers, words that encourage the person in the ongoing turn to continue.

Gardner (2001) discusses two other types of short responses that can happen in overlap. Newsmarkers are response tokens that indicate that the information received in the previous turn has been somewhat newsworthy or new information to the recipient (Gardner, 2001, p. 40). Oh, right and really and minimal questions are the most common newsmarkers, with oh being the one that has been studied the most. (Gardner, 2001, p. 40) Change of activity tokens are, as their name suggests, a token that indicates a transition to a new activity in conversation. The tokens that are most typical of this are okay and alright. Along with acknowledgment tokens and newsmarkers, change of activity tokens are produced mostly with a flat or falling intonation. (Gardner, 2001, p. 22)

Moving on from short response tokens, we can look at other functions of overlap in conversation. Conditional access to turn has been introduced by Schegloff (2000), who puts various types of overlap into this category. What they have in common is that they invite another speaker into the turn. The most common occurrence of this are word searches, places where a participant is looking for a word and another participant steps into the turn to help (Schegloff, 2000, pp. 5-6). The second type is a collaborative utterance where the speaker invites the recipient to finish the turn. (Schegloff, 2000, p.6). In example 2 is a good representation of how word searches manifest into access to turn.

Example 2 Team meeting 1

1 Lisa >this is a GA< when we decide the membership fee↑
2 so either it stays either we need to: (.) reduce it
3 Lisa or (.)°opposite° make it more ↑ [o:r
4 Jane increase it
5 Lisa yeah thank you

On line 2, it can be seen already that Lisa is having trouble coming up with the words she needs from elongating the words and taking short pauses. Then on line 3,

she uses an alternative wording where Jane takes this as an invitation to the turn and provides the correct wording for Lisa. From line 5 we can see that the access to turn was welcomed and beneficial to the turn holder by Lisa saying thank you.

Lastly, for this chapter, let us look at overlaps which Schegloff (2000, p. 5) calls terminal overlaps, which happen when the next speaker identifies that the previous turn is coming to an end and starts to talk prematurely. These overlaps self-liquidate, meaning that the current speaker finishes the ongoing turn and the next one starts after without problem (Schegloff 2000, p. 5). There is no need for any action in these kinds of overlaps. In the example below will be a demonstration of this type of overlap.

Example 3 Team meeting 1

1 Lisa	>did you contact< all 47 sign ups?
2 Amy	Yeah. Yeah.=
3 Lisa	=and how [many]
4 Amy	[I did a]
5 Lisa	of them >set the consultation meeting?<

Example 3 provides a typical scenario where terminal overlap happens. Here Amy is answering a question presented by Lisa, and she assumes that after getting an affirmative answer to her question, she continues with the conversation. In contrast, Amy does continue her turn but quickly hands it back to Lisa as the conversation continues with another question of the same topic. Here we can assume that Lisa took Amy's answer as an end of turn and selected herself to continue on with the next turn.

2.2.2 Interruptions

Goldberg (1990) discusses in her article about the relationship of power with interruptions by dividing them into three categories: power, rapport, and neutral acts. Overlap, in general, does not challenge the speakers' right to complete their turn, whereas interruptions by nature do just that, challenge the speaker and do not give them the space to finish their turn. (Goldberg 1990, p. 884) Interruptions can be seen as a spectrum when it comes to challenging the speaker. On one end of the spectrum, they wish to help or understand the speaker further, and on the other end of the spectrum, the aim is to undermine the speaker and steal the turn. In this chapter, four types of interruptions will be presented. Neutral, Rapport, Competitive, and Power type interruptions (Goldberg, 1990, pp. 888-899.) Goldberg (1990) created these categories as a way for researchers to use as tools to determine different functions of overlapping talk.

It is important to note that there are differing opinions about using the word interruption when considering overlapping talk as an interruption can have moral implications and be perceived as solely negative (Drew, 2009). There is an implication

of power that comes with using the word interruption, and it suggests blame on the person who is doing the interrupting (Drew, 2009, p. 72). Most of the time, overlaps are positive or neutral in manner and do not possess features that the implication of interruption brings. Goldberg (1990) also talks about a linear string of actions that can be neutral and positive in the actions. Because of this moral implication, the concept of interruption will not be used in this thesis, but rather simultaneous talk or overlapping talk when talking about cases from the data.

Neutral interruptions are described as cases that address the immediate needs of the ongoing turn. It might ask for a repair, repeat or clarification of the ongoing turn. These interruptions are not treated as face-threatening, nor do they wish to take power away from the ongoing turn. The speaker is not expected to let go of their turn, and once the interruption is done, the turn continues. (Goldberg, 1990, pp. 888-889) A common manifestation of this is of a participant asking a question that elaborates the ongoing turn as the participant is unclear on some information or wants to know more.

Rapport interruptions can contribute to the development of the turn by offering informative or evaluative comments. It is common to see some shift in conversation made by these interruptions but are not as severe as in the power type. This is a way for the listener to give feedback to the speaker that they understand the conversation and have a continued interest in the topic. (Goldberg, 1990, pp. 894-896) The listener can offer their opinion on the topic or give feedback on the turn.

Power type interruptions can be divided into process control strategies where the interruption is used to initiate a topic change by questions and requests. The second is content control, which is accomplished by making assertions or statements that have nothing to do with the topic discussed in the ongoing turn. Process control is seen as a less face-threatening act. (Goldberg, 1990, p. 892)

The ideas that Goldberg (1990) brings on interruptions work on a linear structure. There is still a way to understand the specifics of rapport and power interruptions as they are differentiated by degree rather than kind. Those cases which are considered power can be considered rapport in another case. (Goldberg, 1990, p. 899)

3 ELF STUDY FIELD

When comparing the number of people who speak English as their first-language to the people who speak English as a foreign language, it is difficult to comprehend how such a relatively small language has gotten the power it has now globally. In the year 2000, there were around 375 million people who spoke English as their first-language and 750 million people who spoke English as a foreign language (Barančicová & Zerzová, 2015). It can also be argued that almost 90% of people who speak English do not speak English as their native language (Charles, 2007, p. 3). This sets English in a unique position as usually the linguistic norms are set by the majority of speakers, and in the case of English, that would be the second-language speakers. As it is now, the linguistic rules that native speakers have set still carry on within the second-language speaking world as well. (Barančicová & Zerzová, 2015, p. 31) Usually, when learning a foreign language, the goal is to communicate with the native population. However, the question is this still the goal when learning English is becoming more relevant with the rise of English as a universal language. Barančicová and Zerzová (2015) discuss in their study if native speakers mind the mistakes that non-native speakers make and most of them answered that they did not mind them even though they noticed them happening (Barančicová & Zerzová, 2015, p. 39). It brings about the thought that would it matter if English was spoken in a more simplistic way where grammar would not go as far as it does in native speakers. The basis of this background research follows this idea stated above of finding out more from ELF.

In the first sub-chapter, I will be looking into topics of English used as a lingua franca (ELF) from an international perspective (see Barančicová & Zerzová 2015) as well as from a business perspective (see Franceschi 2017). Those seem to be two of the most prominent fields that study ELF. I will delve deeper into how ELF has been studied in finding out what the current trends in research are. Chapter 3.2 focuses on the previous research that has been done when ELF data has been analyzed using CA as a method. The chapter will also showcase research that has been made especially

dealing with ELF, CA, and overlap, which is the focus of this thesis. (see, e.g., Cogo and Dewey, 2012).

3.1 English as a Lingua Franca

The following sub-chapter details some of the main fields through which ELF has been studied. The most common data sets come from multilingual classrooms like in Kopsidou (2016) or from universities where ELF is used as a teaching language (Watterson, 2008). There will be discussions about misunderstanding studies (Mauranen, 2006, Thambi, 2014) as that is a theme that has been studied extensively relating to ELF. Business ELF is a category that is receiving a lot of research in communication and will also be discussed briefly along with workplace communication. This chapter is meant to give a brief understanding of how ELF has been studied overall before delving into how CA studies ELF in chapter 3.2.

Multilingual and multicultural classrooms benefit from English even though it might not be set as the teaching language. In the following paragraphs, studies in ELF and the classroom will be discussed to find out what kind of research is done in the field. Kopsidou (2016) found that when dealing with a multicultural classroom where one language was Greek, as the study took place in a Greek university, the teacher would switch to English to avoid miscommunication even though it was not the teaching language. Pietikäinen (2014) studied couples who used English as the language of their everyday communication because they did not share the same first-language. In the study, it was discovered that to either prevent misunderstandings or avoid them, one of them would use a word in their first-language in the midst of talking in English.

Increasingly around the world, English is used as the contact language in classrooms to learn another foreign language. Turnbull (2018) discusses English as the contact language in Japanese classrooms, where Japanese is taught as a second-language for people who do not speak Japanese or English as their first-language. This creates a situation where for each speaker, most likely three languages are involved in the learning process of a new language because most likely they will not understand all of the English they are taught and have to refer back to their first-language in order to understand it in Japanese and connect that to the contact language as that is the tool used for learning.

Speaking in a second-language has been studied for as long as people have been talking in languages other than the one they were brought up speaking. Misunderstandings could generally be thought of as happening more often because the command of the language is much poorer than the one that one would be native in (Mauranen, 2006). At the same time, it can be said that misunderstandings might happen more rarely between second-language speakers as the language used would be more

simplistic than that of a native speaker (Mauranen, 2006). Watterson (2008) discovered that repetition and simplification were used as the most common way to correct misunderstandings in a group of second-language English speaking university students.

BELF or Business English as a lingua franca is a term used widely in the business and communication research that has been done. I thought it important to bring this aspect into the study to showcase how English has gained its place as one of the most used languages in business. In the following paragraphs, some directions in which BELF has been studied will be presented. The two directions of study in BELF are from a linguistic perspective and an international business communication perspective (Ehrenreich, 2010, p. 3). There is a distinction to be made between people who speak English as their native language and then people who use English as a way of international communication. The language is different, and BEFL can be seen as a shared language between its speakers and does not belong to anyone. (Ehrenreich, 2010, p. 3)

Workplace communication and the use of English as a common language there has been studied from both linguistic and communicational sides. The concept of miscommunication is often brushed on in these studies. In Thambi's (2014) article, miscommunication is looked at through proper etiquette, tone, and other soft skills to reduce miscommunication. Harnish et al. (2009) identified a form of crosstalk within non-native English speakers in a professional setting. They approach the issue from a linguistic perspective identifying mispronunciation, conceptual misinterpretations, and semiotic interference as the causes of crosstalk or miscommunication between non-native speakers.

English is used as a language worldwide to conduct business. Many companies choose to switch their working language to English even though their businesses might be based in entirely non-English speaking countries. Franceschi (2017) believes that English is seen as a neutral language as usually no one within the company speaks it as their mother tongue and therefore could have an advantage over the others in communication situations. Barančicová & Zerzová (2015) touch on this issue in their study of English used in international meetings where both native and non-native speakers were present. They found that non-native speakers often commented on the fact that native speakers do not take into consideration who they are speaking to and can sometimes use language that is not easy to understand or use difficult words that a person who does not speak English as a first-language will have a hard time understanding. (Barančicová & Zerzová, 2015, p. 44)

Leadership and ELF have been studied by, for example, Du-Babcock and Tanaka (2017) in their research on how English is used in decision making in meetings among Asian business professionals. In a study by Philipson (2008), he argues that the neutrality of English used in a business setting is questionable because English, despite being a so-called international language, still carries the norms and values of its native speakers. Therefore Du-Babcock and Tanaka (2017) also argue that studying English

as lingua in a place like Asia is important because there English speakers are not a majority, and the power-imbalances can be much more relevant and on the forefront.

The studies that deal with ELF as a concept are most often ones that use classrooms and universities as a place to gather data, such as Kopsidou (2016) and Pietikäinen (2014). On the other hand, there is an emphasis on the business aspect of ELF as increasingly more companies are switching their operating language to English to be more inclusive in their workplace communications (see, e.g., Franceschi, 2017). The next chapter will delve deeper into how ELF data has been used in conversation analysis and how previous research sees overlap, especially as that is of interest in the present study.

3.2 Conversation analysis and English as a lingua franca

The focus of this thesis is overlap and the question of how overlap is used in ELF conversation and can we give the first-language that the participants speak merit over their conversation when it is done using ELF. Stivers et al. (2009) in a study relating to how different languages use turn-taking and overlap preferences bring about the issue of turn-taking and their universality. Are turn-taking units a universal issue, or are there differences between languages on how turn units are taken? They test out two hypotheses that of a universal system where there is little cultural variability and a cultural variability hypothesis which would suggest that turn-taking is language and culture-dependent. They found support for the universal system hypothesis, which would indicate that turn-taking is not culture-dependent. There were differences between languages on how soon the next turn would start after the last, but the differences were relatively small. This could not be seen as language-dependent because languages belonging in the same group showed differing results. Some languages showed bigger gaps between turns, and this was grouped to be from the overall tempo of the language. (Stivers et al., 2009) Overall, it seems that it is more likely that all languages seem to gravitate toward fewer gaps in between turns, but also less overlap. This point made by Stivers et al. (2009) is good to use as a ground when talking about ELF data as in CA, the turn-taking structures are at the core of what is being studied.

The CA and ELF/LF research field is still growing, and the research is still quite inconclusive. The first study published about CA and LF was done by Jordan and Fuller (1975), where they discuss sense-making and trouble-managing in terms of LF. The article was groundbreaking in itself, but only in the 90's the research into CA and LF truly started to spread and produce more content to the field with works from Firth (1990, 1996) and Firth and Wagner (1997). The research into second-language speaking, in general, focuses heavily on classroom or so-called formal interactions of language. (Firth & Wagner, 1997, p. 286). Firth (1996, 2009, 2012) takes LF interactions from

business calls, bringing in another perspective to how LF's are used in everyday life. In this chapter, I will bring light to different aspects of ELF studies that have used CA to analyze their data.

Conversation analysis bases a lot of its analysis on the fact that the people present in the conversation share knowledge of conversational practices and linguistic and interactional competencies. Based on these, a lot of standard and patterned conversation phenomena like different conversation tokens have been found. (Firth, 1996, p. 239). What happens when the common ground is swept away, as, happens when using English as a lingua franca as the participants might not share the same linguistic competencies. Are there differences in how conversations with ELF participants happen? This is the phenomenon I will dive further into in this chapter, building on the studies done by Firth (1996, 2009) and other researchers who came to the field later. A lot of the research done in ELF has been done in the past ten years (see, e.g., Kaur 2011, 2016, 2020, Konakahara, 2015).

The question of how much credit can we give to the differentiation of LF data from that of the more traditional data used in CA is a topic that Firth (1996) discusses. Firth (1996) does not want to discard the norms and practices found by, for example, Sacks et al. (1974, which were discussed in the previous chapter. Hy instead introduces a new data set into the field that in theory renders problematic the assumptions that have been made by researchers before. The aim of his study (Firth, 1996) was to find, are the assumptions made by Sacks et al. (1974) about turn-taking, for example, applicable to this type of data. Some of Firth's findings are hard to justify from a CA perspective as in the interactions he has transcribed, while to an outsider, a misunderstanding seems to be happening, neither of the participants is treating it as a misunderstanding. This is a concept that Firth (1996) explores in relation to ELF data. (Firth, 1996, p. 243).

Let it pass and *make it normal* are concepts that Firth (1996, pp. 243–245) discovers when using CA to analyze his ELF data. The *let it pass* concept manifests in situations where the participant allows something in the conversation pass without understanding the concept. It becomes apparent in CA when the same participant, in a later turn, demonstrates that they are, in fact, not familiar with a term or word in the conversation. This can be seen as a passivity from the hearer. Make it normal is another concept that Firth (1996, pp. 245–247) presents. This relates to situations where a participant uses grammatically incorrect words or expressions, and this is then either ignored or re-used by the other participant in the conversation. It seems normal in these conversations that small details of incorrectness are not paid attention to and thus made standard as a part of their conversation.

Firth (2009) discusses the normality we should be giving to LF interactions. There is a lot of focus on studies about what is extraordinary or out of the norm in LF interactions and not on what it accomplishes. In business settings, the LF interactions are not treated as extraordinary but as a means of normal communication. Discrepancies

or errors in grammar are not paid attention to and are treated as a normal from a conversation analysis point of view. (Firth, 2009). Kaur (2011) also brings this issue about as the rest of the research field has found a multitude of misunderstandings that happen in ELF discussions. In CA, the opposite could be argued or that the conversation done in ELF does not directly correlate to the misunderstanding.

Misunderstandings and corrections are still researched in CA and ELF despite it being hard to distinguish if the reason for misunderstanding is rooted in ELF. Kaur (2020) found in his study on ELF discussions had outside of the classroom, three different types of other-corrections that participants used. The first was when a participant used a word that was incorrect for the context of the conversation. The second when an approximation was used instead of a more precise term. The third was when the participant made an utterance completion that the other participants did not see as correct. Kaur (2020, p. 5) found that when a participant of ELF conversation used a word that did not fit in the local context, the recipient would correct the other without delay or gap, sometimes resulting in overlap. Other-correction also happened when an active word search was happening by the other participant in the conversation. Using terms to describe a word that is not found prompts other-correction in ELF discussions as well.

In Kaur's (2011) study focusing on ELF discussions and misunderstandings, it was discovered that misunderstandings did not arise from participants' differences in culture but rather from the ambiguity in the speaker's utterances. This happened, for example, when a speaker uses a term or a word that the other participant is not familiar with or the word is wrong in the context of the situation. Kaur (2011, p. 102) depicted that in ELF interactions where there is a clear misunderstanding, the culprit can often be mishearing a word or part of a turn which then prompts the other participant to repeat the word they think they heard and launch a repair sequence where the word is corrected. These findings further support the phenomena of Kaur (2020), where other-corrections were discussed as here again the with the support of others, repair sequences are launched, and misunderstandings are solved in ELF conversation.

Meierkord (2000) approaches ELF from a discursive perspective and examines how turns are used in small-talk interactions. There were two conclusions made. The first involved the participants' desire to save face. It was seen by them not using expressions that the other participants might not understand, thus avoiding putting them in uncomfortable situations. The other conclusion was that participants want to assure the others of benevolent behavior. This can be seen in the use of supportive backchannels such as being verbal about agreement or laughter. (Meierkord, 2000) In this behavior, we can see the orientation to others like in Kaur (2011) and (2020), where the essential factor in conversation is to achieve mutual understanding in conversation.

Siegel (2018) analyses the phenomena of superficial intersubjectivity in ELF discussions through CA. The study was done with data from students in a Japanese

international university. The study looked at repair sequences made in talk. In ELF conversations, it was found that when one cannot locate a word in English or the word is not understood by the other participant, and a substitute word will be found. There was also an observation that participants did not always seek to fully understand matters discussed and demonstrated a certain tolerance for ambiguity. (Siegel, 2018). These findings support the points made by (Kaur, 2011, 2020, Meierkord, 2000), where misunderstandings and ambiguity are tolerated in order to gain mutual understanding in conversation.

Toomaneejinda and Harding (2018) use a group of master's degree students who use ELF as a contact language to study disagreement using CA. They found four ways in which participants disagreed in an academic setting. The first was a *focus shift* where the participant would not agree or disagree with a previous statement but instead shift the focus away from the point made. *Other initiated disagreement turn dependence* in another disagreement type found in the study. In this, the participant would not express disagreement directly but rather chose to agree with a person that had made an opposing argument before. The third type discussed was *turn-throwing*, where the speaker would direct their turn to another participant with, for example, asking what their thoughts on the matter are. Gaze was the last topic mentioned.

Another interesting finding in ELF and CA studies is how participants relate back to their first-language in conversation. Pietikäinen (2020) uses data from couples who use ELF to communicate with each other as a premise for her study. She found that the non-native status of the language used is not brought up in conversation. There is a slight orientation to language present in cases where one does not know how to say something and recalls it by stating, "I don't know how to say it in Finnish," for example. She also found that self-repair in talk was more common than other-repair in these conversations. Similar to Pietikäinen (2020), Vettorel's (2019) article focuses on how communication strategies are used in ELF through CA. The study looked at cases where words that asked for repetition and clarification were used like *sorry* or *again*. These were situations where code-switching between languages has occurred, for example. It was seen in the data that participants used their own linguistic and cultural backgrounds and even enjoyed sharing them in discussion.

The focus point of this thesis is to look into overlap in ELF conversation. In order to gain a better understanding of how the topic has been approached before, the last section of this chapter will look at previous research on overlap in ELF conversations. Overlap has been studied with ELF data sets by Cogo and Dewey (2012), Konakahara (2015), and Wolfartsberger (2011), for example. In this section, I will look at the previous research done in ELF conversation overlaps that uses CA as a study method.

Wolfartsberger (2011, p. 177), in her research on business meeting conservations involving ELF speakers and overlap, states that simultaneous speech is a frequent phenomenon that is perceived as standard by the participants. Wolfartsberger (2011), in her article on ELF and turn-taking, finds that participants use overlap in assisting

with word-search situations. Collaborative orientation is common in ELF interactions where overlap is used to help in difficult topics or offer a shared understanding. (Wolfsberger, 2011, pp. 172–173). Kaur (2020, p8) talks about collaborative utterance building as a feature of ELF as well. This is when a participant in the conversation offers a word or a phrase to other participants when there seems to be difficulty retrieving the word.

Cogo and Dewey (2012, p. 142) discuss simultaneous talk in their corpus on ELF. They talk about backchannels in overlap, which are latched to the main speaker's turn. These backchannels are instances of acknowledgment like *mhm* indicating the person is encouraging the other to go on with their turn. This is similar to what studies in overlap have found previously (Gardner, 2001). These findings support the conclusions found earlier in this chapter by Kaur (2011, 2020), where the important factor of the conversation is to gain mutual understanding with the help of others in the conversation.

Similar characteristics can be seen in Cogo and Dewey (2012, p. 143-144) in their chapter on ELF, and simultaneous talk identifies two different types of overlap: cooperative and competitive. Co-operative overlap happened when there is overlap during a turn, but the overlap does not aim to claim the floor from the original turn. Competitive overlap happens when another participant talks while the original turn taker is talking, sometimes leading to interruptions leading to the original turn taker relinquishing their turn before they intended to. Competitive overlap is not seen as inherently problematic or uncooperative, even though the aim is to claim the floor. This is as the overlap can contribute to the conversation in terms of clarifying information, for example.

Konakahara (2015) examines overlapping questions in her article where the data comes from university students who use ELF as a communication tool. She found that there were two types of overlap which were not interruptions, overlapping continuers such as *mm hmm*, and overlapping questions and statements that contribute something to the ongoing turn (Konakahara, 2015, p.42). It was concluded that most of the overlapping happened at possible TRPs. The overlaps are not seen as interruptive in nature, and participants cooperate in conversation when these take place. Overlap is seen as evidence of cooperative behavior in conversations where ELF is used. (Konakahara 2015)

With this previous research done in ELF data using CA as a method, it can be seen that the results of the studies have been that overlap is mainly used as a collaborative tool (see, e.g., Konakahara, 2015) between the participants of the conversation. The previous research in the field overall points that there are more similarities in all data used in CA than differences when it comes to ELF. One of the biggest findings in CA that is supported by a multitude of studies is that different language proficiencies and different background cultures result in fewer misunderstandings than what has been found in other research fields. (See, e.g., Firth, 1996, 2009, 2012) This would

suggest that at least what becomes apparent in the conversations of these ELF situations, the willingness to understand and collaborate in conversation is high.

4 THE PRESENT STUDY

In order to understand how this study was conducted, it is vital to look further into the material and method used to conduct this thesis. The research in this thesis is based around a data set of 3 team meetings had by an intercultural team. The aim was to find out what happened in conversation in those meetings. With that aim in mind, CA was chosen as it offers a method in which the researcher does not need to rely on speculations but can construct from the data how the participants of conversation co-construct talk. (Kaur, 2016). Overlap, in particular, was then chosen to gain access to a wide variety of different situations in conversation while still having a focus on a specific phenomenon.

In the following chapters, the process of acquiring the data, defining the research questions, and choosing the method will be explained further. The first section, sub-chapter 4.1, looks at the research questions of this thesis and aims to give background and reasoning for the chosen topic. The second sub-chapter, 4.2, describes the data used in this thesis. This includes background of the participants and the practicalities of the meetings recorded. The last sub-chapter, 4.3, describes the method chosen for analyzing the data CA in more detail. The sub-chapter will start with a brief history of the method and explain why this was the chosen method for this thesis.

4.1 Research questions

This study aims to gather a better understanding of how multilingual teams use English as a common language. As this is a big topic, it was narrowed down to how intercultural teams orient to overlap in conversation and what kind of overlap happens in multilingual team meetings. The reason why overlap was chosen is that as a phenomenon, it is not specific to language. Previous research into ELF has focused on phenomena such as misunderstandings (see, e.g., Kaur, 2011). That type of phenomenon

creates an understanding that it happens in ELF interactions and is related to it. When looking at overlap, it was easy to see a wide variety of situations that arise from conversation that would not necessarily have anything to do with ELF itself. To aid in the process of understanding how this happens, the following research questions were developed.

What kind of overlap emerge in a multilingual team meeting?

- I. *What functions do these overlaps have?*
- II. *How do found functions relate to norms discovered previously by conversation analytic work on overlapping talk?*

The focus of the study revolves around all types of overlap as it gives the best scope possible for identifying different patterns in conversation. Overlap in previous studies has been divided mostly into types of overlap that challenge the on-going turn and those which do not (Goldberg, 1990, Schegloff, 2000, Jefferson, 1984, Jefferson, 2004). I decided to focus on both aspects to understand better, do the overlaps happen as they would in first-language speaker conversations around which most previous studies on overlap and turn-taking have focused on (Goldberg, 1990, Schegloff, 2000, Gardner, 2001, Jefferson, 2004). Or is there a fundamental difference in some aspects of the way conversations are had as none of the speakers are first-language speakers of English. Previous research into ELF and overlap has found that the participants have an orientation to collaboration, and overlap is used as a tool to help other participants (Cogo and Dewey, 2012, Konakahara, 2015, Wolfartsberger, 2011). That aspect will be examined to see if there will be similar aspects coming across in this data.

Looking at functions of overlap was chosen to see what is accomplished by the overlap in the conversation. Keeping this in mind will give the best possible understanding of why overlap was used in these cases and find out if there is any correlation between overlap and the language used in the meeting. This thesis's results are being related back to previous research when that is not what CA is fundamentally about. The reason behind this is that there is still not that much research on ELF and overlap. It would be interesting to contrast the previous research on overlap to see if there are indeed differences and can it be said that these differences are caused by ELF or just this certain type of data set.

4.2 Data

The data of this study consists of 3 weekly meetings of 5 people, all of whom work for the same volunteer organization. The meeting agenda is always the same, with one person leading the meeting and four others who are responsible for different aspects of the organization. The agenda starts with analyzing if the tasks set for the previous week have been fulfilled and, if not why. The meeting then moves onto updates from the five areas that each person from the team is responsible for. At the end of the meeting, there is a space for general updates and inquiries. It is common that only one person is speaking at a time, during the updates and at the end is a space for questions. This meeting setup might correlate to the types and amounts of overlap found in the data. The meetings all last from 40 minutes to 1 hour. The data was collected over the course of one month weekly. Originally, there were four meetings, but one of them was disregarded because one member of the team was not present. It was deemed that for the scope of this thesis, it would be more beneficial to analyze the three meetings that all had the same participants and agenda.

In order to understand the data better, it is important to also discuss the background of the study participants. The group is an international group composed of 5 people. All of them volunteer for the organization that the meeting is held by on top of studying full time. None of them speak English as their first-language but use it daily in their higher education in university. All of their degrees are in English. Two of the participants share the same first-language, and the other three speak different first-languages. All participants are in their early 20s and have lived in Finland for over two years.

The meetings all took place in a conference room where a recording device was placed. The participants were given notice of the recording, but no further instruction was given in order for the conversations to not be affected by the recording. Before the first meeting, the basic idea of the study was presented to the participants, and they all were given a consent form to make sure everything was clear and the data would not be used outside of this study. All of the names and any other personal information were changed in the data, which was explained to the participants.

The data collection method was chosen because the meetings offered a perfect opportunity to inspect a semi-formal conversation between an intercultural team that would happen over time. There was also a group dynamic inside the team that made it interesting. Inside of the organization that these participants volunteered at this team consisted of four people who were each leading a section of the organization and one person who lead the whole organization and the team.

There was only an audio recording made of the data because it was felt that a video recording would affect the natural flow of the meeting and be too distracting for the participants. This, of course, affects the end result as facial expressions, hand

gestures, and more cannot be detected through the audio. There were also instances where the audio is of low quality because of background noises or other noises made by the participants making it hard to transcribe certain points of the conversation.

4.3 Method

To start the method section of this thesis, it is essential to note that while there is research in the ELF field that uses CA as a method, it is still relatively new compared to the history of CA. There are also differing views on whether or not using CA to analyze ELF is good. According to Kaur (2016), CA is a good tool to use in analyzing ELF data. Like in native language talk, the participants of ELF conversations rely on a common set of procedures and methods to produce and understand talk. ELF can be problematic as a feature of CA data as the method relies only on what is made apparent in conversation. Firth (2009) observes behaviors of *let it pass* and *make it normal* strategies in talk, which are hard to justify in the eyes of CA as it cannot be known unless it is made apparent in conversation what is the purpose of these strategies. (Kaur 2016) The *let it pass* and *make it normal* strategies were discussed in chapter 3 of this thesis. Despite this possible conflict of interest, CA was chosen as it was seen as a way to focus on the core of the conversations had in these meetings and try to see if there are, in fact, any phenomenon that come apparent in the conversation that might note to the ELF factor of the data.

The following sections of this sub-chapter will cover some history of CA to better understand how it has evolved. Through this, it will also explain where in the CA field this thesis finds its place. There will be an evaluation of CA as a method to see how it has been perceived in previous research. Lastly, there will be an explanation of how the process of analyzing the data was done, from transcribing to categorizing the data.

4.3.1 Conversation analysis as a method

The basic method of analysis in CA revolves around moving back and forth between detailed cases found in the source data and a more rounded view of what the cases collectively tell (Sidnell & Stivers, 2012, p. 77). Unlike many others, CA starts its theorizing from observations. It does not usually draw a hypothesis on what might happen but rather shows what has already happened. CA relies on tapes of recording that can be examined repeatedly and do not change over time. The goal is to identify details that occur consistently in talk. (Sidnell & Stivers, 2012, p. 87) In analyzing the data, it is important to note that while a collection of similar actions in turn-taking is a great way of collecting evidence. It is also important to note the deviant cases that do not

follow the norm of actions usually taken in the instance (Sidnell & Stivers 2012, p. 79–80). Psathas (1995, pp. 1–3) also discusses the basic assumptions that make up conversation analysis. The first is that the conversation participants produce the conversation, and it cannot be determined beforehand how the conversation should go. The conversation and the social actions are meaningful to those present, and the actions have a natural order which can then be revealed and analyzed through conversation analysis. The most important thing is not how many times the same phenomenon happens but rather how the occurrence is structured.

The history of CA starts in the late 1950s to early 1960s when CA started to emerge from Harvey Sacks and Emanuel Schegloff. The interest in everyday conversations and social sciences was the focus of their studies. Harold Garfinkel is said to have been a major contributor to the emergence of CA as, when Sacks and Schegloff were studying conversations, Garfinkel was developing an area called ethnomethodology. Ethnomethodology is considered the study of ‘common-sense activities. (ten Have, 1999, p. 6) Two major themes emerged from their studies in CA: categorization and sequential organization (ten Have, 1999, p. 6). The outcome of these themes is that the meaning of an utterance in a conversation is dependent on its sequential position, meaning how it relates to the other utterances in the conversation (ten Have, 1999, p. 6).

From the beginning of CA, talk and interaction in everyday situations are at the heart of what conversation analysis studies. Cameron (2001, p. 87) talks about ‘conversation,’ how the phrase ‘talk-in-interaction’ should be used to convey the meaning of CA, as the issues that CA deals with were originally rooted in interactive talk. As a term, conversation analysis can be regarded as misleading. Psathas (1995, p.2) also talks about interaction analysis or talk-in-interaction would be better as these units are what CA is interested in. Psathas (1995, pp. 1–3) argues that CA concentrates on concrete details in interaction and that the basic idea of CA is to find the rules and structures that make up a conversation.

During the emergence of CA, the analysis concentrated solely on the organization of talk. As CA developed, also how institutional surroundings affect interactions have been studied. The non-institutional interaction is “pure CA,” and institutional interactions are “applied CA.” (ten Have, 1999, p.8) It is important to also make a distinction between “pure” CA, which started the methodology, and “applied” CA, which has become more popular in the later years. Pure CA deals with general sociality aspects and applied CA with interactions in a specific context for a specific purpose (ten Have, 1999, p. 162).

CA was subject to heavy criticism when it emerged as it was seen as radical and a break from the traditions in the field (Sandlund, 2004, p. 35). Criticism was given to the fact that CA had unreliable data as there were not enough samples of the same instance, and that made it hard for the results to be generalized (Sandlund, 2004, p.

35). From my perspective it is important to make assumptions from singular cases as those can lead to similar patterns found in other data later on.

Antaki (2011) talks in his book about applied CA having six different types in the spectrum, which will be briefly discussed to understand more deeply where this particular study lies in. *Foundational applied CA* tackles issues that arise in other fields of study, like how CA first started with sociology others have taken it into their field as Levinson did in a study about clearing up speech-acts and how they might develop in real-time and not from culturally fixed rules. (Antaki, 2011, p. 3) *Social-problem applied CA* is a form of CA that aims to reveal more on how social problems arise in speech. However, it is hard to distinguish the line between CA and discourse analysis in these cases most of the time as they start looking at forms of speech rather than just sequential analysis. (Antaki, 2011, p. 4) *Communicational applied CA* is one of the biggest in terms of research. In this category, the interest is in so-called deficit interaction, like how second-language speakers do not apply the same norms to their discussions and people with autism do not perform the same conversational sequences in interaction. (Antaki, 2011, p. 5) *Diagnostic applied CA* is still widely uncharted but has taken an interest in how people with underlying conditions describe their conditions. (Antaki, 2011, p. 6). *Institutional applied CA* is another field that already has a considerable amount of research delving into the issues of institutional talk. These are differentiated as they have their own rules and points of behavior. (Antaki, 2011, pp. 7-8) *Interventionalist applied CA* makes present a pre-existing problem with a strong sense that the analysis conducted will provide an answer to said question (Antaki, 2011, pp. 8-9).

The present study lies somewhere in between institutional applied CA and communicational applied CA. The premise of this study takes place in a team meeting where there are certain rules and points of behavior that are evoked, making it an interest in the institutional applied CA. The data can be considered to be under institutional interactions as Heritage (2005, p. 106) lists that in institutional interactions, the participants are oriented to a certain goal that relates to their institutional identities (like in this study, the team has a common purpose for the organization that they are volunteering for). They also have constraints on what is considered appropriate to discuss during the interaction that is made apparent by the way participants point them out. On the other hand, the interest of the study is to see how second-language speakers use overlap in these meetings.

4.3.2 From transcribing to analysing a data set

To start this sub-chapter, it is important to note that the transcriptions in this thesis and any transcriptions for that matter are not perfect and cannot fully represent the original data and meetings where the data comes from. Coates and Thornborrow (1999) discuss the difficulty of accurately transcribing data and the issue of

researchers' claims of having perfect transcripts or that the transcripts themselves are the data. They also note that because different researchers have a different focus when transcribing, phoneticians will focus on making sure to have a fine-grained phonetic transcript, and a narrative analyst will transcribe in so-called idea units. So there are as many different forms of transcripts as there are researchers. (Coates and Thornborrow, 1999, pp. 594–596)

Conversation analysis has different stages for studying data. The general idea is to gather the data, transcribe the recordings, analyzing selected parts of the data, and reporting the findings. These steps usually appear in cycles and not in neat order. (ten Have, 1999, p. 48) The data should be considered 'naturally occurring,' meaning that the conversations were not had for the purpose of the study. There are some cases in 'applied CA' where the conversation is about a certain pre-decided topic. (ten Have, 1999, p. 50). In these, the aim is to look into how the specific reason for the conversation affects or is shown in the conversations had.

To start the analyses process transcribing takes place first. CA uses quite universal transcribing methods. Jefferson created the most used one (see, e.g., 1984), but the level of detail might depend on the study and its purpose. The main point is to capture what has been said and how it has been said (ten Have, 1999, p. 76). Transcription conventions used in this study can be found in appendix 1. CA has the assumption that when analyzing the data, the interaction is not dependent on the persons or the setting of the conversation (Psathas, 1999, p. 45). The purpose of CA is to study speakers that attend a socially organized interaction, and the analysis should emerge from the observation, not speculation (Atkinson & Heritage, 1984, p. 1). For this study, a rough transcript was made for all of the material. After that, instances of overlap were identified in the material. These instances were then transcribed again to gain a more detailed understanding of what is happening in the instances of overlap.

After the transcribing was done, in this study, analyzing the data started with identifying all instances of overlapping talk in the three recordings based on the conversation analysis research done before (Jefferson, 1984, Schegloff, 2000). After the initial analysis, some cases of overlap were left out of the analysis. There were a few instances where the group split into two and were having two different conversations simultaneously were also excluded from the material as that is not a point of interest for this particular study that aims to look at instances of the whole groups overlap. Also, cases, where a participant was sneezing or coughing in overlap were excluded as they did not add to the conversation at hand.

The next step of the analysis was to categorize the overlap into types. This was first done by separating the shorter overlaps, which Gardner (2001) and Schegloff (2000) categorize as response tokens. These include short utterances such as *yes* or *mm hm*. These were separated as they made up the majority of the data. Longer and more complex instances of overlap were then categorized based on their function in the

conversation. In the next chapter, *Findings*, there will be a detailed analysis of these categories that were found from this data set.

5 FINDINGS

This chapter of the thesis will discuss the cases of overlap present in the data and aim to categorize the findings based on the function they served in the conversations. By function, it is meant what becomes visible in the overlap. There were six main categories which resulted from 159 cases of overlap found in the data. Two categories were further divided into more specific categories based on what became visible in the overlap. The categories that will be looked into further in the following chapters are *Acknowledgements*, *Disagreements*, *Helping out*, *Adding information*, *Questions*, and *Other types*. Both *Acknowledgements* and *Other types* are further divided into smaller categories. A few examples from each category will be highlighted in the following sub-chapters with the aim of explaining to the reader how these categories were accomplished.

TABLE 1 Overlaps based on categories

Categories of Overlap		
1	Acknowledgement	88
2	Disagreement	10
3	Helping out	12
4	Inserting information	8
5	Questions	30
6	Other	11
	Total	159

Table 1 shows the distribution between overlap categories can be seen to give a brief outlook on how the distribution is. While the analysis of this thesis is qualitative, it seemed important to give the reader an idea of how the overlaps were distributed in the data. There are many cases where the overlap is brief in the Acknowledgement

category, and in other places, it has more of an effect on the conversation. Four out of the six categories had around 10 cases of overlap. The two bigger categories were Acknowledgements and Questions, with Acknowledgements taking almost half of the cases of overlap. The acknowledgments category consists of smaller overlaps such as saying *okay* or *mm hm*, which are a part of conversation culture. In previous studies have often been found to appear often (Schegloff, 2000). The questions category was also larger than the other categories with 30 cases. This could partly be explained by the fact that in this category, the overlap resulted from wanting to either correct some information in the turn or find out more, meaning there was an instant need for correction making it possibly more natural to overlap an ongoing turn.

The sub-chapters below aim to describe each of the types. What is the aim that comes visible in the participants overlapping talk? There will also be a discussion on do the functions here relate to previous research done into overlapping talk by first-language speakers (see, e.g., Gardner, 2001, Schegloff, 2000, Goodwin, 1986, Goldberg, 1990). There will be discussion on do these overlaps have things in common with the ELF research that was showcased in chapter 3. Points will also be made on whether the participants of the conversations are foreign-language speakers affect the flow of the conversation and overlapping situations.

5.1 Acknowledgements

Acknowledgments in this study refer to situations where the participants in the conversation acknowledge something that is being said in the turn resulting in overlap. That can be acknowledging the information within the turn, agreement with the turn, confirmation of the turn, and positive reaction to information in the turn. All of the four categories will be further discussed in the following chapters. The common factor between all of these overlaps is the fact that they are quite short and are not treated as disturbing or problematic to the turn. There were altogether 88 cases in this category, making it the most significant cause of overlap in the data. In table 2 the sub-categories can be seen, which will be further introduced in the following sub-chapters of the same name to better understand what kind of overlap was present the most.

TABLE 2 Acknowledgement overlaps based on categories

Acknowledgement		
1	Of turn	30
2	Agreement	50
3	Confirmation	8
	Total	88

In previous literature, similar instances have been studied quite extensively. Gardner (2001) talks about response tokens which are short listener responses to what is happening in the turn. Schegloff (2000, p. 5) also talks about “continuers” in his research in overlap, which uses short responses that do not harm the ongoing turn. These are some of the most researched instances of overlap and have many definitions within the field. This study is trying to see what the cases are trying to accomplish within the conversation. The following 3 sub-chapters will further discuss how it became apparent that these were the functions that the overlaps served.

5.1.1 Acknowledgement of turn information

Acknowledgment of the turn information is a collection of 30 cases of instances where participants of the conversation acknowledge some of the information stated in the turn. Most often, they were short wordings of *okay* and *mm hm*. They were there to acknowledge that the turn is going on and the participant is listening in. According to Goodwin (1986, p. 210), these would go into the category of continuers. The main purpose is to indicate to the speaker that they understand what is going on in the turn and wish for the turn-taker to continue their turn. Below will be two examples of the most common cases found in this category.

Example 4, Team meeting 1

1	Kate	So is she staying here for the summer?
2	Ella	ye:ah I think she's gonna to be here (.) during at least like
3		at least during (.) er (.)end of May, June and July.
4		but in August she <u>may</u> travel back to Vietman for
5		her [summer] vacation
6	Kate	[okay]
7	Ella	a:nd uh about ↑performance↑ management tool

In example 4 can be seen the use of the word *okay* as acknowledgment of information. In most cases, *okay* was used after one receives an answer to a question, just like in this example. On line 1 Kate asks a question to Ella, and on line 6 she implies that she received the answer to her question by using *okay*. So, the *okay* here is not used to agree with the information but just acknowledge that they received the answer they were looking for and allows the turn-taker to continue with their topics. The *okay* is placed where one can anticipate the end of the turn/response. As August marks the end of summer and it has been mentioned, it could be concluded that Ella is coming to an end with her response here which prompts the use of *okay*.

As this question was prompted during Ella's update in the meeting, it is expected that she takes the next turn after the question is answered. Ella, on line 7 continues with her updates in a seemingly normal manner showing no negativity towards the overlap. There is a slight elongation of the word *and* which is followed by *uh* at the beginning of the new turn which would most likely indicate that she is searching for the topic that she would bring up next. The word *performance* is said with a slight rise in pitch which is another indication that this is now the new topic that she is bringing up.

Mm hm is one response token in conversation that has been studied a lot in the past and the implication it has in conversations (see, e.g., Gardner, 2001, Goodwin, 1986, Schegloff, 1981). In the data, it was also very prominent in overlap situations. Some of the key characteristics of this particular token are the facts that it appears by itself in a turn and is not followed by anything else (Gardner, 2001, pp. 25–26). Also, depending on the function it serves in the turn, it can have a rising or a falling intonation. A falling intonation would indicate agreement with the turn, and a rising intonation would indicate just acknowledgment of the fact that the turn was still going on. (Gardner, 2001, pp. 16, 22, 34)

Example 5, Team meeting 3

1	Jane	like the report needs to be sent to the auditor
2		with >all the invoices< that we have in thi:s in the
3		office. [with] the papers. so a::h I s:ay that u::h
4	Lisa	[mm hm ↑]
5	Jane	we gonna a: go thro:ugh with Anna tomorrow
6		s:o end of this week.
7	Lisa	okay

In this data, *mm hm* was used mostly in the same ways as can be detected by previous research. In example 5 *mm hm* is used with a rising intonation, and it is used to communicate acknowledgement of the turn. Gardner (2001, pp. 16, 22, 34) has examined similar cases as well. In the example Jane is explaining to the group about the financial report and when it should be ready. On line 4 Lisa shows her acknowledgement of the topic with *mm hm*.

The placement of the response token is also of note here. On line 3 after the word *office*, there is a clear break in the turn. The period after the word *office* indicates a slightly falling intonation that signals the end of an utterance and a possible end of turn, which could be detected by Lisa and prompt her turn. In previous research this has also been noted that the use of response tokens centers around possible end of turns (e.g., Jefferson, 1984).

5.1.2 Agreement with turn

In this category of Acknowledgment are cases where the participants expressed agreement with what was conveyed in the on-going turn. This was one of the largest categories with 50 cases. Most of the cases were of the word *yeah* as the token used to express agreement. The word *yeah* and the different functions it can have in conversations have been studied before by, for example, Gardner (2001) and Jefferson (1984). In relation to overlap, Gardner (2001, p. 2) puts *yeah* mostly in a category called acknowledgment tokens, as *yeah* in conversations propose agreement or understanding of the turn. As in previous research, most of the cases in the agreement category were of the word *yeah*.

Example 6, Team meeting 2

- 1 Lisa it's supposed to be on a more like level of in terms of (.)
2 like strategies that you ↓ ↓ want to [implement]
3 Kate [°yeah °]
4 Lisa so I don't know.

Example 7, Team meeting 3

- 1 Lisa so (.) annual report will be: it's done. it's gonna be
2 approved (0.2) on this Thursday↑ [and for financial
3 Jane [yeah ↑
4 Lisa statements let- not only are they supposed to be done but
5 they supposed to be approved by ga >so for that reason we
5 gonna have an extra qa↑<

In examples 6 and 7, the most common use of *yeah* and the most common type of case in the agreement category can be seen. They are used at points of possible completion of turns like where a turn could be seen as ending, like in example 7 Jane utters *yeah* at a point where Lisa uses the word *and* which would indicate an end of turn and continuation. This is something also Jefferson (1984, pp. 199–200) pointed out in her research on the topic. The use of *yeah* is not seen as problematic at all. This is not seen as a disturbance in the conversation but as a quick sign of agreement with whatever the person is saying in their turn.

Intonation is a point that can be brought up just like in the previous chapter with the use of *mm hm* as in previous research when *yeah* is used as a sign of agreement it is common to see a falling intonation when used as a sign of agreement or as an acknowledgment token (Gardner, 2001, pp. 16, 22, 34.) Based on this, the use of intonation in the case of *yeah* varied and is not necessarily consistent with what has been said previously. In most cases there was no intonation shift to be detected, or like in example 7 there was a rising intonation shift even though it was used as a sign of agreement by Jane. What can be detected from the use of intonation in these examples is the volume of agreement. This meaning that in example 6 where Kate uses *yeah* on line 3, it is very quiet and done without intonation, indicating the agreement almost passively. In example 7 Jane's use of *yeah* is more upbeat and has a rising intonation. This can be the result of how Lisa on line 2 seemingly has trouble remembering the day of the meeting with the pause and rising intonation on the word *Thursday*, so Jane can be seen as almost answering a question with the *yeah* and confirming Lisa's statement as correct and agreeable.

Example 8, Team meeting 1

1	Kate	Yeah↓ I mean when you think about success that we could have
2		handled [differently↑]
3	Amy	[YES]
4	Kate	we did spend too much time as an eb [there↑] but then
5	Amy	[°mm hm °]
6	Kate	<u>again</u> it's like they were attacking us even bef:ore
7		(.) like we could <u>bond</u>

Volume of voice seemed to indicate the level of involvement in the agreement. In most cases, *yeah* was used as a sign of almost silent support to what was being said in the conversation, like in example 8 above. This can be seen as on line 3 Amy almost shouts the word *yes* as an indication that she agrees with what Kate is saying. This also seems to encourage Kate to further continue with her point on lines 4-7, whereas in example 6 where this almost silent agreement was given, the topic shifted quite quickly as the agreement expressed a point of completion. Here in example 8, there is also a possible point but because of the strong agreement received it could be interpreted that Kate takes that as a sign to elaborate. On line 5 Amy comes in now with a very quiet *mm hm* almost inaudible to indicate further agreement or acknowledgment of the turn, which could be seen as further encouragement for Kate to continue her point.

5.1.3 Confirmation of turn

Cases that functioned as confirmations of information inside of the turn were found in the material eight times in overlapping situations. There were primarily two types of ways this came into being, either by two participants finishing a sentence together as a way for the other participant to initiate confirmation that the information in the turn is correct. The other type was cases where another participant confirmed what was being said as true. Schegloff (2000) talks about cases where the utterances are finished together as conditional access to turn, which is close to what is happening in some of the cases present in the data of this study. The other type of overlap is hard to locate in one category of previous research. However, it could be interpreted as a part of the rapport power continuum of interruptions explained by Goldberg (1990). Below will be a more detailed pondering of the two types of examples in the category and what is being accomplished with overlap.

Example 9, Team meeting 3

- | | | | |
|---|------|------------------------------------|------------|
| 1 | Lisa | and you have one to one right↑ (.) | [tomorrow] |
| 2 | Ella | | [tomorrow] |
| 3 | Lisa | can you ask him↑? | |
| 4 | Ella | yeah | |

Finishing sentences together was the most common way of indicating confirmation during overlap in the material. In example 9 this can be seen on line 2 where Ella finishes the sentence together with Lisa. On line 1 Lisa is saying something that directly involves Ella and confirms that something is happening tomorrow and gets this confirmation from Ella in the form of finishing the sentence together with her. There is no questioning of what this finishing together means, and Lisa is not asking for additional confirmation, but the utterance is enough to confirm the information. On line 1 Lisa uses a rising intonation at the end of *right*, indicating that this is a question to Ella. There is a brief pause after which Lisa and Ella finish the turn together with *tomorrow*.

Example 10, Team meeting 2

1 Ella and then I will do the: the lda the final lda with her.
2 and then I will explai--
3 Amy =buh she can do it [alone
4 Lisa [she can do it alone
5 Ella okay (.) >but then< (.) it should be like I have to
6 explain it ↓to her

In example 10, Ella explains to the team what she needs to do with a member of the organization. On line 3 Amy enters the turn simultaneously as Ella is possibly finishing a turn and Ella stops her turn quite quickly on line 2. Amy has a differing view on how Ella should do this task as she is using the word *but* and on line 4 Lisa voices her confirmation to Amy's turn by stating the same thing. On line 5 it can be seen that Ella either accepts or acknowledges their view on the matter with the *okay* used. There is a slight pause after which she indicates her reasoning for wanting to do things her way. The whole interaction is very calm, and there are no rising voices which would indicate that this is a calm exchange of views, and Ella does not get discouraged even though there are two people stating different views to hers as she is very calm on lines 5 and 6 as she is taking breaks between her wordings.

5.2 Disagreement

There were 10 cases where sequences of overlap functioned seemed as disagreement with what the turn-taker was saying in their turn. In this sub-chapter cases where disagreement happened will be presented. Goldberg (1990, p. 896) talks about competitive interruptions in relations to cases like these. The participants aim to stay on topic of the conversation but present altering opinions or beliefs into the conversation. This is also mostly what is happening in the cases of this category. Below examples of different aspects found in the cases will be presented.

Example 11, Team meeting 3

1 Lisa yeah so so Kyl:e↑ [wasn't that dedicated to]
2 Amy [SO WHEN I]
3 Lisa to create [a folder to put the projects there?
4 Amy [NO NO NO
5 they're from the partner countries from Kyle s:o
6 [when he send them I just
7 Lisa [°>okay whatever I'll just put them in a folder<°

In example 11, a disagreement case can be seen. In the example Lisa is discussing something that Amy has done and is not agreeing with how it was handled. Amy tries to explain her side on line 2 with raising her voice but Lisa continues her turn. On line 4 Amy tries again and gets the turn to explain. This leads to Lisa saying on line 7 *okay whatever* indicating that she is so to speak over the topic of conversation and moves on to the next topic. Raising one's voice seems to be the main way to get the turn to themselves during these instances where disagreement is taking place. It is also interesting to note that on line 7 where Lisa indicates that she is done with the conversation she uses a very low pitch compared to her other turns in the conversation. The turn is also delivered quicker than the previous conversation. This could be a sign that Lisa is uncomfortable discussing the matter further or is giving a sign of defeat on the topic at hand.

Example 12, Team meeting 1

1 Lisa we're like a huge family. (.) WELL they claim that we
2 as a huge family or they trying to set that environment
3 but ↑ in a real world it °doesn't work like that°.
4 yo::u are co-workers (.) and most of the time 80%
5 of the time nothing more. (.) [but in (-)↑
6 Amy [but I guess there is a
7 team culture what team [culture
8 Lisa [BUT you are not friends
9 with your co-workers have you worked before?
10 you do you did [°right°]
11 Amy [yeah]
12 Lisa areyou areyou friends with your co-workers?
13 Amy yeah
14 Lisa ARE YOU friends with the person who higher on you

15 on the position?
16 Amy YES but te[ams]
17 Lisa [TEAMS] YES but they're FRIENDS inside of
18 the team see? They told you that the- they're friends
19 inside the team and they feel connected to you
20 but they not connected to us

Another point worth recognizing is that the original turn-taker seems to be in control of when and for how long they give up their turn for, in a case of disagreement. In example 12 there are several points where Lisa, who is the current turn-taker, cuts Amy, who is the person coming into the turn, and takes back her turn. On line 6 Amy is beginning to make her point regarding the discussion and on line 8 Lisa takes the turn back not acknowledging what Amy has said. She continues her point to ask a question to Amy on line 10 as well as line 12 giving Amy space to answer yes or no questions. On line 16 Amy again tries to state her opinion on the matter but is cut off by Lisa, the original turn-taker. The same situation can also be seen happening in example 12, where Lisa is the original turn-taker and has more power to overturn distribution and how much the so-called disturbance to her turn is allowed to occur.

It is interesting to note where in the turn the overlaps happen in this situation. On line 5 Lisa is taking a short break before the overlap happens meaning that it could be interpreted as an end of turn and it would be natural for Amy to jump in and interpret the situation as such. Lisa also sees it as such as she is the one to drop out on line 5 and let Amy continue. On line 7 there is no possible end of turn detected that would make Lisa jump in on the turn when she does. The jumping in is done with a loud voice which might be why Amy does not try to get the turn back after Lisa on lines 8 to 15 dominates the conversation. On line 16 Amy also raises her voice during overlap to indicate an answer to Lisa's question and to start a longer turn which is shortly taken by Lisa also using a high volume.

In the material, all of the cases of disagreement happened between Lisa and Amy. Most often it was with Lisa commenting on something happening in Amy's activities in the organization. So, the points made here cannot be made that generic as they happened between two people, and it cannot be said that the same things would have happened if these situations would have happened between any other members of the group. It is worth mentioning that as Lisa is the team leader of the group it was found that in these cases of disagreement, she was the one mostly in control of how the turns were distributed and for how long the other participant was talked.

It should also be noted that in the data these situations are not treated as hostile or negative by the participants. As can be seen in the examples the participants are not indicating in any way that they are displeased with the way the conversation is going. Other than the raised voices, which could be an indication of slight discomfort in the conversation, there is no negativity to be detected. After these instances were over the

participants went on with the conversations with a regular tone of voice and no indication of hurt feelings or anything like that, which could be taken as an indication that these cases of disagreement are seen as a normal part of the meetings.

5.3 Receiving help through overlap

One of the functions that were present in overlap in the material was the participants helping out each other in the present turn. It manifested itself in helping out other participants with word-searches and finishing turns. This is very close to what Schegloff (2000, p. 5) calls conditional access to turn, which indicates overlap where the speaker invites another person to take part in the turn. There are two main types of overlap in this category, word search and collaborative utterance (Schegloff, 2000, pp. 5-6). Much like in Schegloff (2000), these cases of overlap are inviting another person into the turn, and these are treated as harmful or threatening in any form. There were altogether 12 cases in this category.

Example 13, Team meeting 1

1 Lisa >this is a GA< when we decide the membership fee↑
2 so either it stays either we need to: (.) reduce it
3 or (.)°opposite° make it more ↑ [o:r]
4 Jane [increase it]
5 Lisa yeah thank you

Example 14, Team meeting 1

1 Lisa is it (.) u::h (.) >what's the na(h.)me of that membership
2 criteria wait<. (.) so it's a document that's created
3 by the end of each term↑ which states what happen
4 during the term which is u::h yearly docu[ment]
5 Jane [what]
6 annual report?
7 Lisa yeah THANK YOU I for(hh.) got

Both examples 13 and 14 listed above are cases where it can be seen that the turn-taker is struggling with a word search. It can be seen in example 14, where on lines 1-4, Lisa is struggling with retrieving the word *annual report*. There are pauses in her speech which indicate that she is having trouble with the wording. She also elongates

some words like on line 4, the word *uh*. This is a sign for Jane to help out with the turn, which she does on line 5 with a question. This is a very neutral way of entering the turn that does not challenge the current turn-taker. In example 14 there is laughter involved from Lisa on two instances in the conversation. The first is on line 1 where she laughs during the word *name*, which could be seen as a further indication that she is in need of a word search. The second laugh comes on line 7 during the word *forgot*.

Example 13 and 14 both end with Lisa giving validation to the person who entered the turn by saying *thank you*. This is an indication that the entering of the turn was welcomed and helpful for the turn-taker. In example 14, Lisa even admits that she forgot the term that she was searching for even furthering the function of validation for entering the turn. She also raises her voice while saying *thank you* which can be taken as a sign of emphasis on the phrase.

A third point to be made on the function of helping out in examples 13 and 14 is that the participant entering the turn is showcasing very active listening by jumping in with the right word. This indicates that the participant was following the turn closely to be able to jump in straight away. In example 14, especially when Jane on line 5 starts helping out with the word search by stating it as a question *What annual report?* as if she is also not sure if this is the right word, she is searching but is willing and able to help out as Lisa is seemingly struggling with the word search.

It is interesting to note also how the second participant comes into the turn in these examples as they are both different. In example 14 Jane comes in line 5 during a possible end of turn as there is a tone shift upwards from Lisa. Jane states the word that could describe what Lisa is looking for and is proved right on line 5. In example 14 Jane uses a question to come into the turn. One explanation that could be a reason why these were different is the type of word that is being looked for. As in example 13 Lisa has already stated what she means one line 3 with *make it more* whereas in example 14 there is only the description of the word Lisa is looking for.

Example 15, Team meeting 2

1	Lisa	last year (.) u:h in July we have a tm summit in order
2		to be prepared for the: mm =
3	Ella	=[autumn]
4	Lisa	[autumn] recruitment why↑ because autumn
5		recruitment is (.) <u>always</u> bigger than the winter recruitment

In Examples 13 and 14 the turn-taker acknowledged the fact that the person who entered their turn was helping them. In the majority of the cases though like example 16 the help was not acknowledged at all or very minimally. In example 15 the signs for a word-search can be seen with the elongated *the* and *mm* on line 2 where Ella very quickly enters the turn and ends up saying the word *autumn* at the same time as Lisa

as this was the word she was searching. From there the overlap is not acknowledged in anyway but Lisa continues her turn normally from there. This can be an indication that these kinds of overlap or in general helping out with word-searches happen so often between second-language speakers that they do not need to be acknowledged. Another way it can be interpret as is that Lisa already knew the word, which makes Ella's overlap unnecessary that is deemed by Lisa as something that does not need to be acknowledged.

Example 16, Team meeting 3

1 Kate he said that he's just gonna like (.) you know (.)
2 [say anything]
3 Ella [let it go.]
4 Kate and yeah on Friday we'll talk and everything
5 °and I dunno he's okay now°

Example 17, Team meeting 2

1 Lisa the team was a little bit (.) way too strange the way they all
2 sta-started leaving at at (.) like different time
3 the point is that they didn't have a: (.)° [proper closing] °
4 Ella [team debrief]
5 Lisa everything actually all standards are supposed to
6 be covered in closing there's like barely half of them
7 covered

In most cases of this type of function, there is some acknowledgment of the overlap in conversation. In examples 13 and 14 above this was done by stating appreciation by saying *thank you* to the person helping with a word search. In example 16 Kate is explaining about a meeting she had that did not go well. On line 1 there is a sign for word search indicated by pauses before and after saying, *you know*, and this leads to Ella stating, *let it go* on line 3 at the same time as Kate says *say anything* on line 2. On line 4 Kate acknowledges the overlap with an emphasized *yeah* while moving on with her statement. This can be seen as a more neutral way than the ones displayed above in examples 13 and 14.

In example 17 we see a slightly different reaction to the overlap compared to previous examples. On lines 1-3 Lisa is showing signs of a word search as there are pauses in her talk as well as struggle in producing and articulating words. On line 4 Ella comes in with a suggested word *team debrief* in overlap. On line 5 Lisa

acknowledges the overlap but states that that was not what she was looking for exactly. She states *everything actually* which would suggest that the word Ella offered was only a part of what Lisa was looking for. Here again, the overlap is not seen as anything problematic, but there is no apparent appreciation for helping with the word search, as seen in other examples above in this chapter.

The phenomena of receiving help in conversation overlap is something that has been touched upon in previous ELF and CA literature. For example, Cogo and Dewey (2012) who came across competitive and co-operative overlap in conversation. Wolfartsberger (2011) noticed a similar phenomenon where word-search situations often used overlap to offer assistance to the ongoing turn. This would suggest that a prominent feature of ELF discussions is collaboration. There will be more pondering made on this point in the next chapter 6 discussions on if we can claim that this is, in fact, something that could indicate that this is indeed an ELF conversation.

5.4 Inserting Information

In this category were 8 cases where the participants were inserting information into the ongoing turn, whether it be their own opinion on the matter or information based on their own experiences. It was at times hard to differentiate these and disagreements found in chapter 5.2, the main difference here where the participants are inserting their own opinion it is not met with either any reaction from the other participants or it is met with positivity, whereas with disagreement there was always a differing opinion presented by the other participant. Based on previous research, these show similarity to the spectrum of rapport and competitive interruptions by Goldberg (1990). Two of the main functions of this category will be presented in the examples below.

Example 18, Team meeting 3

- 1 Amy I sent her an email↓(.) and >right after that< I asked
2 weather she receive she said no↓ [and she's usually
3 Lisa [normally what I did
4 normally what I did is °I stalked them on Facebook°
5 Amy Kyle said °we shouldn't do that °
6 Lisa I KNOW but they didn't put the number like wh(h.)at
7 can I do abo(h.)ut this.

The first function in this category are cases where additional information is being presented to help the turn-taker. In example 18 on line 3 Lisa inserts how she used to

handle the same situation as Amy is having right now and Amy addresses that this is something that is not recommended to be done anymore before going back to her turn. These instances are not seen as a threat to the original turn and are treated as such. Amy acknowledges the situation and moves on from it without further discussion. The overlap can be seen as adding to the conversation at hand and does not start a further discussion that leads to disagreements. The tones used are very calm and peaceful.

The overlap happens at a point where a turn could be seen as ending. On line 2 Amy uses a falling intonation at the word *no*, which could be taken as a sign that she has finished her turn. She continues her turn for a short while but drops out to give Lisa the turn. Lisa also repeats on line 4 what she said during the overlap possibly to make her point clearer. On line 5, we can see Amy questioning this information as this is something that she has been told not to do. On line 6 Lisa acknowledges that she is aware that this is not how it should be done by saying *I know*. It is also said in a higher volume, which could be taken as a point of emphasis.

Example 19, Team meeting 1

1 Lisa but this is what it is (.) like from my perspective
2 >I don't need to be friends< with anyone who I work.
3 but if people ↑think so↑ I can put efforts in this for su(h.)re
4 Amy [okay it depends on the]
5 Jane [so we're not friends] We're not fri(h.)ends anymore
6 we just work together hh.
7 Amy i think it also depends on the culture (.) background
8 or something like [that because
9 Kate [yea:h
10 Lisa [I think it depends on the
11 personality I just I came to (-) not because of
 the fri(h.)ends But I'm at the same time I I become friends
12 with
13 people that I want to be friends.

In example 19 there is an air of humor present in this exchange that might account for how the overlaps are treated. On line 3, during the word *sure*, Lisa laughs during her turn, which prompts the overlap during lines 4 and 5 where, on line Jane jokes that they are also not friends and laughs during the word *friends* and at the end of her turn. Also in Lisa's last turn on line 12 there is another point of laughter during

the word *friends*. This would suggest that the conversation here is light and not taken too seriously by the participants.

An interesting point in these types of longer overlaps is that by nature, people try to stay away from overlap. That does not seem to be the case in this category where overlap is almost encouraged to happen as it is seen as adding something to the value of the conversation. The participants do not treat these situations as something out of the ordinary but as a part of the conversation at large. From ELF and CA research, similar points have been made by Cogo and Dewey (2012), who found collaborative overlap in their research where the aim was not to take the turn but to add and contribute to the turn at hand.

5.5 Questions

One of the biggest categories in terms of functions of overlap was questions. There were altogether 30 cases where overlap was caused by questions. In the general sense, these overlaps were not seen as problematic, as the floor was handed back to the original turn-taker almost immediately after the question was presented. Goldberg (1990, pp. 888–889) talks about neutral interruptions, which address the immediate needs of a turn and ask for repair or repeat inside the turn. Most of the cases in the questions category could also have been treated as neutral interruptions based on the characteristics listed by Goldberg (1990). This chapter will deal with the themes which rose in most of the examples on what these overlaps functioned as.

Example 20, Team meeting 2

- | | | |
|---|------|--|
| 1 | Lisa | U:M npm tickets <u>I</u> am planning to buy it soon↑ I don't |
| 2 | | [remembe- |
| 3 | Ella | [what is that? |
| 4 | Jane | national presidents meeting |
| 5 | Lisa | yeah= |
| 6 | Jane | =>whereisit<? |
| 7 | Lisa | Oulu mm I don't remember (.) if we schedule <u>that</u> |
| 8 | | in our budget money |

Example 21, Team meeting 2

1 Ella u:m And >the I haven't he:ar anything< from Kevin about
2 lda again so I don't [know
3 Lisa [about what ?
4 Ella initial lda (.) like I think there is still some member
5 who hasn't had the lda in [th:e] (.) platform
6 Lisa [a::h]

Examples 20 and 21 represent the most used function of overlap in the questions' category. In both examples, the function is to grasp the full meaning of what is being said in the on-going turn. The goal is to make sure that they have all of the information about the turn. In example 20, Ella is confused by the acronym said by Lisa on line 1 and asks, *what is that?* to have access to the full information of the turn. Jane jumps in on line 4 to explain what the acronym means, and Lisa confirms it on line 5. After this, the conversation slides a bit off topic with Jane making another question but continues to normal once the questions have been answered. The participants do not seem to take any issue in another member not knowing something but are ready to help out in order for the whole group to have the same understanding. In example 21 Lisa is confused about the topic that Ella is discussing and asks *about what?* to indicate that she is confused about what is being talked about. This leads to Ella discussing the matter further and opening the topic more to achieve this understanding.

In example 20, Ella's overlap simply asks for elaboration on a concept that is being discussed and the conversation takes a slight detour before going back to the original topic. On line 7 we can see Lisa going back to where the overlap happened during *I don't remember* on line 2 and finishes the thought on line 7. The questions in the interaction are short and the answers are short and quick as well, so it does not need much thought or input from the conversation. In example 21 the overlapping question brings about a conversation that requires more input from the conversation. On line 4, after Lisa's overlapping question Ella says *initial lda* and there is a small gap after those words, which would indicate that she is looking if Lisa understands her meaning with the addition of *initial* to what she originally said on lines 1 and 2. After the pause, she begins to explain the matter further meaning that Lisa possibly indicated visually that she does not understand. On line 6 we get Lisa's confirmation that her question has been answered to with the overlapping *ah* sound. This brings us to another difference between these two examples. In example 20 there is a verbal confirmation that the question has been answered to, whereas in example 21, there is no verbal confirmation.

Example 22, Team meeting 1

1 Amy okay (.) team leader↑ team members (.) team member
2 one has this job role >team member two has this job
3 role< [and]
4 Lisa [u::::h]
5 Jane [what about the job description?]
6 Amy [wait wait wait wait] then plus a job
7 description.

While most of the cases in the questions' category were treated by the participants as non-problematic and even welcomed in the turn, there was a case (example 22) where it can be seen that the participant was, if not irritated by the overlap but at least was not welcoming it. In the example Amy is explaining her solution to a problem the team is having, and first on line 4 Lisa is about to enter the turn and on line 5 Jane beats Lisa to it and asks a question. From line 6 it can be seen that Amy is not happy with the overlap as she emphasizes the words *wait wait wait wait* to indicate that she was not done with her turn.

Amy also emphasizes the waiting with the two inner uses of the word *wait* were said with an emphasis on those words. From Amy's response to the overlap, it is possible that this is seen as an interruption to her turn. In Amy's first turn on lines 1 and 2, there can be seen signs that she is rushing to get her turn out as if anticipating another person's turn. Which could have been made with visual markers, but as those are not present in the data, it cannot be said for sure. Amy starts speeding her speech on line 2 which could be seen as a sign of rushing.

Example 23, Team meeting 2

1 Amy because th:e one who's going to Romania said that
2 she can't be here in person [so we have to
3 Lisa [where is she↑
4 Amy make it online
5 she's in Finland but she said she'll be in somewhere else

Another interesting point can be seen in example 23, where on line 3, Lisa is asking a question to Amy about the specifics of a customer. Here Amy only reacts to the overlap on line 5 after she has finished her point in the turn and only after that

continues with answering the question Lisa has made. It also shows that this overlap is welcomed into the turn as there is no acknowledgment of the turn immediately.

Overall, all of the examples from the questions' category add to the points made in sub-chapter 5.3 about the collaborative and active nature of the conversations in this data. There is a clear indication that the participants are active listeners and seek further information immediately in the conversation. Konakahara (2015) studied overlapping questions in ELF conversation and found that the questions were not treated as interruptive by nature and seen as helping to contribute to the on-going turn. The participants in the study used these overlapping questions to co-operate and build turns together. Similar outcomes can be seen in this category as well.

5.6 Other types

In the other types' category is a collection of cases present in the data a handful of times. It cannot be classified as happening systematically but was felt to be significant enough to analyze and mention in the data discussions. There are 3 types of overlap in the category. They are *giving up turn*, *delayed responses* and *signaling the end of topic*. In the first two categories features of the participants language proficiency will be discussed. As mentioned, these cases cannot be made into conclusions on if they are a common occurrence but will be worth discussing to get a full understanding of what happens in these intercultural meetings.

5.6.1 Giving up turn

There were two cases of overlap where a participant is taking a pause in conversation, which another participant sees as an end of turn and starts their turn only for the previous turn-taker to continue their turn but fail to do so. Both cases happened between Amy and Lisa. The participant chooses to give up their turn and give space for the other participant to continue a turn that they already started. Below both cases will be discussed in more detail.

Example 24, Team meeting 1

1 Lisa ↑↑did you contacted all 47 sign ups?
2 Amy Yeah↑ (.) Yeah.
3 Lisa and how [many of them
4 Amy [I did a
5 Lisa °set the consultation meeting°?
6 Amy I can give >it to you< by end of today↓

In example 24, Lisa is asking a question to Amy and on line 2 Amy answers with *yeah yeah*, which Lisa presumably takes as an adequate answer as she is beginning another question in the topic on line 3, and on line 4 Amy is continuing her turn after a short pause apparently at which time Lisa has already begun her next turn. The situation dissolves with Amy deciding to cut her turn short and gives Lisa an opportunity to finish her turn that she already had a chance to begin.

It is also interesting in example 24 to note that on line 5 after the overlap happens, Lisa's tone goes down. She indicates that she will only ask the question and give the turn back to Lisa. Line 5 indicates that Amy does not regard the overlap as anything and continues answering Lisa's question. This is most likely a reaction to the overlap that happened, and Lisa uses the tone as a response to the overlap on line 4.

Example 25, Team meeting 1

1 Amy people were just signing up because (.) I don't
2 kno:w that's why we were complaining that they
3 were irrelevant numbers↓ (.)
4 Lisa I was [actually
5 Amy [and they were
6 Lisa I will ask other LC's because some LC's have
7 the same number some lc with lower

In example 25, almost an identical situation to example 24 can be seen. Here on line 3, it can be seen that Amy is pausing at a point that could be interpreted as an end of turn point as she has finished a sentence at this point. She also has a falling intonation at the end of *numbers* which would indicate that she is coming to an end of turn. On line 4, Lisa jumps in with her own turn, and on line 5, it can be seen that Amy is trying to continue her turn, and the pause on line 3 was indeed a pause and not a stop. Here again, Amy chooses not to let her turn go and lets Lisa continue with the turn that she has started.

In terms of language and especially second-language speakers, these cases could be seen as a result of language proficiency and not detecting turn ends correctly or then having longer pauses before starting a new point in the conversation overlaps could be seen as deriving from there. One thing that can be noticed from the data overall is the fact that Amy as a participant takes longer breaks between sentences/utterances than the other participants overall, which could more easily lead to this overlap of Lisa not understanding that Amy is taking a pause. There has not been an end of turn point yet. As there are only two cases in this category, it is impossible to state this as an absolute truth. Further investigation would need to be done to see if this is a phenomenon present elsewhere.

5.6.2 Delayed Response

In this category of overlap 2 cases were found. Overlap was present when there was a gap in the conversation where a response to a question or statement comes later than it should rather than as a direct response. It resulted in overlap with the new turn that has already started to happen. This could be seen as happening because of language proficiency and slower progression of turn changes and just basic language production being slower with second-language speakers as both in this chapter. In the previous chapter, this sort of delay in production can be seen. Of course, the number of cases is quite low to make this sort of assumptions from the data, but it could be counted as something worth further research in the area.

Example 26, Team meeting 2

1 Kate I think I even wrote it down it down somewhere
2 but (.) I just forgot.
3 Jane Na:h it [just]
4 Ella [it's the] problem with having too many
5 notebook

Example 27, Team meeting 1

1 Ella we were going to have like 2 tl's for next (.) semester
2 but then we have some problem related to Mary and Beth
3 that they are moving away from (name of city), right? (.)
4 So [I]
5 Lisa [well] it's not confirmed [yet]
6 Kate [yeah]
7 Ella Yeah [yeah but that why I kind of put like
8 Kate [we will know at the end of may.
9 Ella question mark there [so] it's gonna change if they move
10 Kate [yeah]

In both cases examples, 26 and 27, the participant has started a new topic of discussion before a response to a previous turn is presented. In example 26, Kate has finished her turn on line 2, and Jane has been selected to take the turn next and is starting her turn when Ella on line 4 jumps in to comment on Kate's turn. This is not treated as a very problematic overlap as Jane just continues with the conversation after the comment has been made. In the example, Ella asks a question to Kate and Lisa on line 3 and does not receive any verbal answer straight away, so she continues her turn on line 4 when on line 5, Lisa responds to her question. Even further on in the conversation on line 8, Kate also provides a delayed addition to the answer Lisa gave, making the conversation full of overlap for several turns.

It is hard to say are the instances in this chapter and in the previous chapter related to language proficiency and the fact that second-language speakers would have slower production of language than first-language speakers resulting in this sort of overlap, or are these situations just happening randomly in conversation where turn endpoints are mistaken, and other's turns are not noticed as happening before it is too late to stop the overlap from happening. Stivers et al. (2009) talk in their article about how all languages abide more or less by a universal code of avoiding overlap and too long gaps in conversation. So these overlaps cannot be said to be derived from cultural context either, where overlapping directly over another person's turn would be a normal occurrence in the language.

5.6.3 Signaling the end of topic

In this category 2 cases were found where overlap was used to signal the end of a topic in conversation and ask for a new topic to be introduced. Gardner (2001, pp. 54–57) calls these change of activity tokens which are used as transition tools to introduce a new topic to the conversation. *Okay* and *alright* are words which are most often used in these situations according to Gardner (2001, pp. 54–55). In these findings *okay* was used in both cases. These cases will be discussed below in more detail.

Example 28, Team meeting 1

1 Amy yeah so I hope we: [use that
2 Lisa [okay what's next
3 Amy the next one she said (.) u:h she (.) there was an
4 expectation gap↑

Here in example 28 Amy is just finishing her point in the conversation when on line 2, Lisa comes in asking Amy what is next on her list as this happened during her updates part of the meeting. Amy then on line 3, moves on to the next topic as she is in agreement that the previous topic has finished as she was able to finish her turn during the overlap in the conversation. This happens at an end of turn point, so it is possible that this was not meant to be said in an overlap. The overlap here is accepted and Amy moves onto the next topic without addressing the overlap or the wish to move forward.

Example 29, Team meeting 1

1 Lisa at the sa(h.)me time I I became friends with people
2 that I want to be friends (.) not [because of]
3 Amy [ok(h.)ay] let's
4 move on please=
5 Jane =let's move on=
6 Kate =yeah

Example 28 differs slightly from example 29 in how the overlap presents itself as on lines 1 and 2, Lisa is still in the middle of her turn when Amy uses overlap to express that she would like to move on from the topic. Then on lines 5 and 6, both Jane and Kate agree with Amy that they also want to continue from the topic. Lisa chooses to go along with the wish of the majority and does not try to get her turn back, and

they continue on with the conversation. Lisa, on line 1, is laughing in conversation. Amy is also laughing on line 3, which would indicate that the conversation at hand is light-hearted. In chapter 5.4 there was a similar discovery where the participants were laughing during the turns that lead to overlap. This could be an indication that during laughter or humorous situations overlap is seen as more acceptable or prone to longer cases of overlap. Here on lines 4-6 the participants speak very closely to one another almost in overlap when they are agreeing to moving on from the topic.

6 DISCUSSION

In this chapter, a summary will be presented of the findings from the data. There will be a discussion on what implications can be made from the material presented in the previous chapter. The reader will be able to get an understanding of how the data from this thesis can be related back to the findings from the previous research done in the field of overlap and CA. This chapter also aims to better explain the overall results for the research questions that were presented in chapter 4. To refresh, the questions were the following:

What kind of overlap emerge in a multilingual team meeting?

- I. *What functions do these overlaps have?*
- II. *How do found functions relate to norms discovered previously by conversation analytic work on overlapping talk?*

In sub-chapters 5.1 to 5.6, six different types of overlap were presented. These were categorized based on what the overlaps made happen in the conversation. I will go through each chapter and highlight the main findings and discuss how they can be related to the previous research done into overlap and if there were any deviant cases found in the data. After findings from each type of overlap are presented, there will be discussion on where in the field does this thesis sit and what kind of future revelations can be found from this data and the research field in CA in general.

In chapter 5.1 on Acknowledgements, short overlaps which mostly acted as response tokens were found. The findings in this thesis were similar to previous research done (see, e.g., Gardner, 2001, Schegloff, 2000, Goodwin, 1986). The overlap was mostly present during the possible end of turns and acted as a way to agree or acknowledge what was going on in the turn. *Mm hm* and *yeah* were the most common tokens used in this data. They appeared alone in the conversation and were present during the ends of a turn. There was a correlation found between the tone of voice and

these overlaps. Most of the overlap in this category is presented in a very quiet tone. They were at times almost hard to hear. These overlaps were passing acknowledgments of the information. When a participant used a higher volume and tone, the overlap was agreeing to something in the conversation, or it had more of an effect in the conversation. Most of the overlap in this data came from this category.

In chapter 5.2, overlaps that functioned as a disagreement were looked at. Pitch and tone changes were a big factor in how overlap played out in this category. The overlap was made with a louder voice than the surrounding conversation in these cases. The original turn-taker of the conversation seemed to be in charge of how long they allowed the turn resulted from overlap to continue and when the person using overlap to gain access to a turn would speak. There was also a similarity to previous research, especially to Goldberg (1990) and competitive interruptions discussed in the research. The disagreement overlaps happened only between two participants in the data. These were deviant in relation to the previous research discussed in chapter 3 on ELF and CA, as in these studies the collaboration and collectiveness were at the forefront. This could be because the data in this study had people who were already very familiar with each other before the data collection. Most of the data used in previous ELF research has come from university settings or business meetings. In contrast, the data in this thesis belongs somewhere in the middle of university friends and business.

In chapter 5.3, the participants received help in overlap from other participants of the conversation. This was mostly present through word-searches which is also a topic that has been studied by, for example, Schegloff (2000). Word searches could be identified by participants pausing more than normal, elongating words, and using statements that indicate that they do not know the word they are looking for. The main finding in this category was that there is a presence of collaboration in the conversations in the data that matches with previous research on ELF and CA (see, e.g., Coco and Dewey, 2012, Wolfartsberger, 2011). Wolfartsberger (2011), in her article, found that in ELF, turn-taking overlap was used to assist in word-search situations. This is a statement that was also supported by the findings in this thesis as all of the cases in chapter 5.3 the main purpose was to help out with word-searches or generally the turn-taker. Collaboration and collectiveness could be seen by participants expressing gratitude and acknowledging the overlap positively in this category.

Chapter 5.4 had cases where the participants were providing/inserting information into the conversation through overlap. Most of these were done during possible end of turns which would support the claims of Sacks et al. (1974) that the goal is to have one speaker at a time but also gaps in conversation are avoided making these kinds of overlap common. Humor and laughter were also present in one of the cases here, which resulted in a lot of overlap in a short period of time. In this category, the prominence of collaboration between participants was highlighted too. This is an

aspect that has been a predominant theme in previous ELF and CA studies (see, e.g., Cogo and Dewey, 2012, Kaur, 2020, Konakahara, 2015).

5.5 Category tackled questions that were presented in overlap with the turn. Goldberg (1990) has discussed similar cases that happen when there is an immediate need to enter a turn. The questions were presented immediately in the turn, not at possible end of turns. Participants mostly asked for additional information for something presented in the turn in which the overlap happened with. These overlaps were treated as a natural part of the conversation.

Questions in ELF conversation and overlap were studied by Konakahara (2015) before. She found that questions in overlap were welcomed and not treated as problematic. She also stated that these overlaps were resolved in collaboration by the participants in her data. A similar conclusion can be made by the findings in this thesis. There was one deviant case in the data set that treated the overlap as not welcomed in the turn. This overlap was met with resistance from the original turn taker, but the overlap was still addressed and resolved in the end.

The last types of overlap were miscellaneous and happened only a handful of times, not making them a category on their own. In the first two cases *giving up turn* was the function. Here the participant either had a pause in conversation before continuing the turn, or two people started a turn at the same time. *Delayed response* was the second function discussed in the last sub-chapter. There were two cases of overlap where the participants had moved on with the conversation topic when another participant would respond in overlap to a statement made by the previous turn. In both of these functions, *giving up turn* and *delayed response*, there could be an indication that these overlaps resulted from the language proficiency of the participants. They might have a slower reaction time as discussions are had in their second-language. There is not enough evidence to confidently make a claim that this would be the case as there were only four instances where this happened, and the rest of the data where overlap happened suggest that the participants have a very high understanding of English and are able to have discussions and solve overlap effectively.

The very last category of overlap present in the data was *signaling the end of topic* where in two cases, the participant verbally asks to move to another topic in overlapping talk. One of them happened near an end of the turn, which would indicate that the overlap is accidental. This is something that Gardner (2001) also studied when talking about change of activity tokens. The other time it happened in the data, it was not during an end of turn but rather in the middle. There was humor and laughter present in this situation which made the overlap not perceived in a negative way.

One of the more unexpected findings from the data was that group dynamics were present in how overlap happened. There were three functions *disagreement*, *signaling the end of topic* and *giving up turn* where all of the cases happened between Lisa and Amy. Overall, Lisa was the most common participant to use overlap in conversation in the data. This could be a result of the fact that she acted as the group leader in

the conversation, but it was not made apparent through conversation. The amount of overlap found in the data can be an indication of how involved the participants were in the conversation and supports the statement that a lot of active listening and collaboration is present in ELF conversations.

The answer to the second research question on *How do found functions relate to norms discovered previously by conversation analytic work on overlapping talk?* Mostly as has been mentioned above, the findings from this dataset were similar to that of previous research, and there was not much that deviated from it. There are a couple of points that were made that could potentially be a result of the fact that the premise of the data was a multilingual team meeting. These mostly came up in the other types category where there were four cases that were interesting from this point of view. These were *giving up turn* and *delayed response*. All four of these instances had a delay in turn structure present in the conversation. These, of course, could all be individual instances and have nothing to with the fact that the participants were second-language speakers of English, and there would have to be more research done to determine if this is indeed a factor to be considered. Overall, it can be said that the nature of these overlaps was indeed very similar to that found in first-language speaker data.

In chapter 3.3, CA and ELF studies by Firth (1996, 1997, 2009) and others were discussed. It would be important to make a reference to them here in relation to what the previous studies found and what was found in this data set. Firth (1996) talks about the assumptions made by Sacks et al. (1974) on the basics of turn-taking and discusses are they applicable to ELF data. In this data set, it can certainly be said that the same type of structure can be found in this data as there is in the fundamental studies of CA. The overlap patterns that were present in this thesis, for the most part, had similar patterns to those of previous research.

Firth (1996) also discusses that there are cases which from a CA perspective are hard to prove but seem to be significant anyway, like participants talking with wrong grammar and so on, but as the other participants or the person, themselves does not react to it in any way it cannot be taken as a meaningful finding in terms of CA research. This was a similar struggle that happened in this study, and with this data set that there were findings that seemed important, but because of the nature of CA could not be proven to be so. For example, in the last chapter of the findings, there were 4 cases where it seemed that the issue in overlap was the participants' language proficiency, but because it was not made apparent by the participants of the conversation that this was the case, we cannot confidently make assumptions that it was indeed because of this at least with the framework that CA has.

Let it pass and make it normal were the two big themes that Firth (1996) could prove through CA as happening in ELF conversations. The Let it pass concept relates to letting something in the conversation go without understanding it and make it normal to handle situations where there is grammatically incorrect speech used, and it is either ignored or re-used by the participants. (Firth, 1996, pp. 245–247) Neither of these

tendencies were found in the material present in this study. It could be because the nature of instances in this thesis is overlapping talk and that this is not something that would come up in situations like this. To be sure if this is something that comes up in the data, a re-visit to the data would have to be made.

Wolfartsberger (2011) also states that simultaneous speech is a frequent phenomenon that is perceived as normal in ELF conversation. This is also the case from this data set as there was only one instance where there was a note to overlap not being appreciated. However, the rest of the cases treated overlap as a normal part of the conversation and did not show any signs of it being a negative factor. On a general note, the findings from this thesis contribute to the discussion on whether or not ELF conversations should be treated differently from first-language data and does ELF data have its own sets of behaviors. From this data set, it can be said that the ELF aspect of the data did not become apparent in conversation a lot, and most of the overlap found in the data was similar to findings made with first-language speakers. At the same time, there were similarities to findings from the ELF and CA field as well, the main one being that participants orient to the conversation in a collaborative manner and are very active in participation.

This thesis acted as a contribution to the growing field of ELF and CA research with the aim of finding out if overlap happened in the same way as in data where first-language speakers were involved. Overlap was used as the analysis point. It served as a feature of talk that was easy to spot in the data and was a way to find out a multitude of aspects while not being a feature that would inherently be unique to ELF misunderstandings in conversation for example. The main findings were that the overlap present had similar features to that of previous research and found similar themes to research done in the ELF field. Language proficiency and breaks in conversation became one of the topics that could be an interest for further research.

7 CONCLUSION

This thesis aimed to look into overlap in multilingual team meetings where the participants use English as a lingua franca in their communication. There were two focuses in the study, first to find out what types of overlap exist in these meetings, and two do these findings match with the findings of previous studies as the data set was different from most studies in the CA field. The reason overlap was chosen as a focus was that there is much focus in the ELF and CA field on finding situations of misunderstanding or other things, which would indicate would already indicate that ELF is somehow different. Overlap seemed like a good ground to get a more general understanding of how ELF conversation is. It is not looking for a specific phenomenon like misunderstanding but rather how across-the-board situations where people talk over each other were treated in the data.

The study results showed that there were six different types of overlap in the material: *Acknowledgements*, *Disagreements*, *Helping out*, *Adding information*, *Questions*, and *Other types*. The cases of overlap were overall welcomed into the conversation, and there was only one case where there was an implication that it might not have been welcomed. The cases were treated as a normal part of the conversation, and there were no signs that the overlaps were treated as an abnormality apart from one case. There was a clear orientation to collaboration and collectiveness in these instances of overlap. It showed that the participants of the conversation were listening to each other actively as they were eager to jump into the conversation even at points where it caused overlap. In other ELF studies like Cogo and Dewey (2012), a similar phenomenon of helping out and acting collaboratively has been found.

Most of the overlap was present at points where there would have been a natural end of turn present, making it a natural point at which the next participant starts a turn. This reinforces Sacks et al.'s (1974) point that the aim is to have only one speaker in a conversation at a time as the overlaps happen when there is going to be a gap most likely in the conversation. The statement that gaps are avoided made by Sacks et al. (1974) would be supported by these results as well.

Tone and volume of speech acted as the main indicators on how overlap was produced and perceived by the participants. This aspect came across in most of the findings from the data. In disagreement situations, the tones and volume were high. Agreements had a variety of tones depending on the level of agreement. In previous research, this has also been the case (see, e.g., Gardner, 2001, Jefferson, 1984).

One of the main findings was that the data presented in this study had many similarities to previous data where overlap has been studied. This allows us to make an assumption that perhaps the turn-taking systematics that were described by Sacks et al. (1974) would be applicable to all kinds of data no matter the level of linguistic proficiency. Of course, this cannot be said with certainty as the participants in the data were all studying in English university programs which would indicate that their level of English is quite high.

Firth (1996) had a similar aim of finding out if these norms apply to ELF data and found it hard to justify findings relating to ELF specifically through CA. There was a similar struggle in this thesis. At the same time, there were certain themes such as having a collaborative orientation to the conversation and having participants that showed very active listening that was also present in previous studies in the ELF field. It is still a question of how much credit do we give to the fact that the participants are using ELF and how much to just the conversation they are having despite the language being ELF.

There were a few discoveries made that would show a difference in this data compared to previous data, but the findings were quite preliminary and cannot be stated as something true. There were differences in how intonation was used in overlap compared to previous studies, for example, and indications that the speakers were, in fact, second-language speakers became visible in 4 cases where there was evidence that the reaction time to something said in the term was longer than it would normally be as there was already a new topic in discussion. Of course, as said before, these were individual cases, and more research should be done in order to understand these are something that potentially happens systematically or as one-off cases.

For further research, there were two cases where laughter and humor were involved in the overlap. In these cases, the overlap happened in the middle of turns and not at possible end of turns, like is the case in most of the findings. It would be an interesting topic to explore further how humor and laughter affect the placement and function of overlap in conversation. Language proficiency was quite high amongst the participants, and outside of word searches, there was no seen difficulty in producing English in conversation. The research into ELF using CA should continue in general as there is a large number of people using ELF as a communication tool online and in person. In terms of overlap and ELF, the journey of uncovering patterns in overlap should continue with different types of data to see if the emerging patterns of collectiveness and collaboration transcend across different fields. For example, with the current world context, it would be interesting to study how online meetings overcome

and take steps to avoid overlap in conversation through online meeting platforms such as zoom or skype.

This study was limited in the researchers' knowledge on the topic of CA, which could result in the findings being more superficial as there was a lack of experience in working with CA data. The same can be said about the actual data as this was the first time delving into transcribing such a large piece of data that there could have been errors in identifying overlap as well as transcribing all of the material. The data was collected on an audio device that was placed on the table during the meeting, which caused some of the audio to be of bad quality and harder to transcribe. The transcribing process was the most time-consuming part of the research, and the result was still far from perfect. During the collection time, it was also decided not to film the participants, which also limited the diversity of the data as no facial expressions or hand movements were captured.

To conclude, this study hoped to increase knowledge on the nature of overlapping talk in English as a lingua franca conversation. The field of ELF studies and CA is still growing, and this study can offer a view into how English is used by high-level English speakers. As the field around ELF data that use CA to analyze it is still growing, this thesis aims to give something of value in overlap research. Previously overlap has been researched by Konakahara (2015), Cogo and Dewey (2012), and Wolfartsberger (2011) and touched on by others, but there is still a lot to be learned from this. The hope is that this thesis can be used as a reference point to other researchers when studying ELF data to see if there are similarities in the patterns detected by CA. This thesis was also able to find similar themes to other ELF research on the collaborative nature of ELF conversations. Findings from this thesis imply that when people who use ELF and have a high proficiency in the language use overlap as a tool to better communicate with one another. Overlap in conversation is used when agreeing with one another, when wanting to further understand one another, and wanting to help one another in conversation.

It is still important to further research the field of ELF discussions using CA as a tool as English is only gaining a stable place as the common communication tool used all over the world. Especially interesting still are the aspects of collaboration and collectiveness that are present in ELF conversation. The data used in this thesis could still be used as a data set to find out if there are more places in conversation outside of overlap instances where this collaborative aspect of ELF discussions plays out. Overall it is important to find out more about turn-taking patterns in these conversations as it might bring a better understanding of how different ELF discussions are to those had with first-language English speakers. Using ELF as a reference can gain access to understanding if culture has something to do with speech patterns and turn-taking in conversation the more we study ELF from a CA perspective.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1 Transcribing Conventions

[words]

words]	overlapping speech
↑	rising intonation
↓	falling intonation
(xx)	unidentified word or short utterance
(xxx)	unidentified longer utterance
(words)	probably the word in brackets
(-)	name blanked out for privacy
(.)	short pause, less than one second
(3.5)	timed pause, length in brackets
°words°	quiet speech
WORDS	loud speech
<u>emphasis</u>	emphasis on the underlined syllable
> words <	quicker than surrounding speech
<words>	slower than surrounding speech
no:	extension
words=	
=words	latching speech
no-yes	self-repair
hh.	laughter

APPENDIX 2: Participants

Lisa	Participant 1
Jane	Participant 2
Ella	Participant 3
Kate	Participant 4
Amy	Participant 5