

UNIVERSITY OF JYVÄSKYLÄ

FINNISH PROFESSIONALS WITH LIMITED ENGLISH
PROFICIENCY: A STUDY OF LANGUAGE ATTITUDES
AND LANGUAGE USE

A Pro Gradu Thesis in English

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Tämän tutkielman tarkoituksena on selvittää, mitä mieltä heikosti englantia osaavat suomalaiset työntekijät ovat englannin kielen käytöstä suomalaisessa työelämässä. Tutkielma on osa tutkimusprojektia *English Voices in Finnish Society*, joka puolestaan kuuluu englannin kielen vaihtelun, kontaktien ja muutoksen tutkimuksen huippuyksikköön VARIENG. Tämä tutkielma lisää tutkimusprojektiin heikosti englannin kieltä osaavien, mutta silti sitä työelämässä käyttävien suomalaisten näkökulman. Tutkimuskysymykset ovat: 1) Millaisissa tilanteissa haastateltavat kohtaavat englantia työssään? ja 2) Millainen asenne haastateltavilla on englannin kielen käyttöä kohtaan suomalaisessa työelämässä?

Tutkimusaineistona on yhdeksän puolistrukturoitua teemahaastattelua. Haastateltavat ovat iältään n. 40-50-vuotiaita suomalaisia, jotka ovat opiskelleet englantia korkeintaan kymmenen vuotta. Haastateltavat työskentelevät eri tehtävissä saman kansainvälisen massa- ja paperiteollisuuden alan teknologiakonsernin tehtaassa Keski-Suomessa. Konsernin virallinen kieli on englanti. Haastattelut nauhoitettiin, litteroitiin ja haastateltavien vastauksista tutkittiin asenteita diskurssianalyttisin menetelmin.

Tutkielman tulokset osoittavat, että haastateltavat käyttävät englantia työssään lähes päivittäin. Kielenkäyttötilanteet ovat vaihtelevia, ja kaikki kielen osa-alueet nousevat esille haastatteluvastauksissa. Suuri osa haastateltavien englannin kielen käytöstä oli yrityksen sisäistä viestintää.

Haastateltavien asenteet englannin kieltä kohtaan olivat monimuotoisia, ja ne koostuivat neutraaleista, positiivisista ja negatiivisista mielipiteistä ja tunteista englannin kieltä kohtaan. Englanti nähtiin muun muassa suurena ja tärkeänä globaalina kielenä, välttämättömänä, luonnollisena ja käytännöllisenä työkielenä, sekä välineenä joka avaa ovia maailmalle, mutta voi toimia myös esteenä tai statussymbolina. Huomattavaa on myös, että englannin kielen käyttö herätti haastateltavissa sekä positiivisia että negatiivisia tunteita.

Haastateltavien heikko englannin kielen taito vaikuttaa heidän elämäänsä siten, että osalla haastateltavista on ollut viestintäongelmia töissä, ja joku myöntää, että uralla eteneminen on kompastunut heikkoon kielitaitoon. Joskus haastateltavia ärsyttää englannin kielen käyttö yrityksen sisäisessä viestinnässä, ja he toivoisivat, että enemmän informaatiota olisi saatavilla suomeksi. Kaikki haastateltavat ovat sitä mieltä, että englannin kielen taito vaikuttaa henkilön työmahdollisuuksiin Suomessa. Tämä tutkielma osoittaa, että suomalaiset työntekijät eivät suhtaudu englannin kielen käyttöön työkielenä yksiselitteisesti, vaan näkevät siinä sekä mahdollisuuksia että uhkakuvia. Tämä tutkielma osoittaa myös, että suomalaisessa työelämässä on nykyään tärkeää osata vieraita kieliä, erityisesti englantia.

Asiasanat: Limited English proficiency, working life, language attitudes

Contents

1 INTRODUCTION.....	6
2 ENGLISH IN FINLAND	11
2.1 ENGLISH AS A GLOBAL LANGUAGE	11
2.2 PROBLEMATIZING GLOBAL ENGLISH	15
2.3 PREVIOUS STUDIES ON THE USE OF ENGLISH IN WORKING LIFE IN FINLAND..	19
2.3.1 Situations where the Finns need English at work.....	20
2.3.2 Finns' language proficiency and need for language instruction	25
3 LANGUAGE ATTITUDES	29
3.1 DEFINITION OF ATTITUDE AND LANGUAGE ATTITUDE.....	29
3.1.1 Mentalist view of attitudes	30
3.1.2 Behaviourist and discursive view of attitudes.....	33
3.2. METHODS IN THE MEASUREMENT OF LANGUAGE ATTITUDES.....	35
3.2.1 Direct methods.....	36
3.2.2 Indirect methods.....	38
3.2.3 Discourse analysis	40
3.3 PREVIOUS STUDIES ON LANGUAGE ATTITUDES	42
3.3.1 Previous studies on Finns' language attitudes towards English.....	42
3.3.2 Attitudes to global English in countries around the world	45
4 RESEARCH DESIGN	53
4.1 RESEARCH QUESTIONS	53
4.2 THE SELECTION OF METHODOLOGY AND DATA.....	54
4.3 ANALYTIC FRAMEWORK.....	58
5 THE ANALYSIS.....	61
5.1 INTERVIEWEES' BACKGROUND INFORMATION	61
5.2 SITUATIONS WHERE THE INTERVIEWEES ENCOUNTER ENGLISH AT WORK	68
5.2.1 Situations of language use	68
5.2.2 Interviewees' perceived strengths and weaknesses in English	76
5.3 INTERVIEWEES' ATTITUDE TOWARDS THE USE OF ENGLISH IN FINNISH WORKING LIFE.....	79
5.3.1 Global English.....	79
5.3.2 English as a working language.....	81
5.3.3 English as an instrument.....	85
6 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION	103
THE BIBLIOGRAPHY	109
APPENDIX 1: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS	115
APPENDIX 2: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS TRANSLATED INTO ENGLISH.....	117

List of figures

Figure 1. The three circles of English (Crystal 1997: 54)13
Figure 2. A three-component model of attitude (Baker 1992: 13).....30
Figure 3. A Likert scale.....37
Figure 4. A semantic differentiation scale.....37
Figure 5. The interviewees' overall education and length of English studies
estimated in years.....61
Figure 6. The interviewees' self-evaluation of their English proficiency level
and of the importance of English in their job62

1 INTRODUCTION

When looking at the Situations Vacant sections of Finnish newspapers (*Helsingin Sanomat*), recruiting web pages (*Aarresaari* and *Oikotie*) and the homepages of Finland's biggest companies, it is noticeable that language skills are mentioned in most job advertisements, and that English is the language that is most commonly mentioned. In a sample of 200 job advertisements from the above-mentioned sources, *good, fluent* or *excellent* English skills were mentioned in over 80% of the advertisements. Finnish skills were mentioned in 25% of the advertisements, general communication skills in 40% of the job advertisements and Swedish skills in 22 of the job advertisements. If language skills were mentioned in the job advertisement, the language that was asked for was English. (Seppälä 2004.)

Why are English skills so valued in a country where Finnish, Swedish, Saami, Finnish Sign Language and Romani – but not English – have official status, the majority of the population 91% speaks Finnish and only 0.2% speak English as their native language (Väestörakenne 2004) and thus English is for the most people a foreign language? Evidently, English skills are needed in working life in Finland nowadays. That is because our business environment has changed in recent years. Our companies have become international, and so companies need to uphold relations with shareholders and customers abroad, and the employees need to communicate with other employees in a multicultural workplace. English has become the common language, *lingua franca*, in Finnish business settings like it is all over the world (Pahta 2004: 37).

Several Finnish companies, for example Metso, Nokia and Nordea, have chosen English as their official language (Pahta 2004: 37). Having one common language for the company is practical because employees can travel from one location to another and there is no need for translation. English is used in negotiations between people of different nationalities, none of whom are native speakers of English, because this puts all negotiators to an equal

position (Pahta 2004: 39). But using a language that is not your mother tongue may also cause problems such as misunderstandings, loss of valuable information or inequality between employees with different levels of language skills. One starting point for this study was the question: if you are not very good at English, can you be in a good position in today's work market? If you do not understand much English, can you do all the required tasks in your job in Finland? And how do you feel about the use of English in Finnish working life? Do you feel left out? So I decided to study Finns who need English at work but have limited English skills.

Another starting point for this study were the findings of a research that was carried out in Denmark in 1999 (see Preisler 1999 and Preisler 2003): it was found that English is used in Denmark without translation for example in music, films, shop signs and advertisements. It was also found that at least 20 per cent of the Danes – this means over 400 000 people, most of whom are over 45 years old – have *little* or *no* ability to understand those English messages, or to give directions, discuss opinions or write letters in English. The people in this group said that they often have to skip the English passages in texts, and that they feel angry or frustrated as a result, but they also mentioned that they would like to learn English to increase their job opportunities, to understand the English that they hear in their everyday lives, and to meet people from other countries. So also the people with poor English skills were found to have a positive attitude towards the use of English in Denmark. (Preisler 1999: 253-257, 2003: 123-124.) I then wanted to find similar people in Finland and find out whether they have felt similar frustrations and what kind of attitudes they have towards English.

The purpose of this study is to examine how Finnish people who need English at work but are not proficient in English see the use of English in Finnish working life. The purpose is to know whether Finns with limited English skills feel that they cannot understand some of the English surrounding them. Another aim of the study is to know what kinds of feelings the English language creates to Finns with limited English skills, and

whether they still have a positive attitude towards English. This study is part of the research project *English Voices in Finnish Society*¹ of the University of Jyväskylä, which studies the use of English in media, education and professional settings in Finland. The results of this study, and especially the answers to the second research question, will complement the picture of the use of English in working life in Finland because the topic has not yet been studied from the point of view of people with limited language skills.

This is a qualitative study and the data consists of nine individual interviews. The qualitative approach and small sample of informants makes it possible to concentrate on the personal feelings, opinions and experiences of the informants. On a broader level, this study will offer new information about the effects of globalisation of economy on the individual. In other words, how do decisions made at the corporation (e.g. that English be the official language of the company) affect every day work of employees who only have limited English skills? This study differs from previous studies because the focus is on Finnish professionals who only have limited English skills, as opposed to most previous studies (e.g. Huhta 1999, Louhiala-Salminen 1999b, Sinkkonen 1997) which have concentrated on the language needs and language use of professionals who occupy relatively high positions in the Finnish working life or who have a higher education degree containing several years of English studies. In the following chapter, those studies will be presented and their results will be synthesized.

In order to find out what the informants of the study think about the use of English in Finnish working life, two main research questions were formed. The first research question is:

1. In what kinds of situations do the research participants encounter English at work?

¹ A research project that started in 2003 and continues today as part of the research unit VARIENG, which is the Centre of Excellence for the Study of Variation, Contacts and Change in English, shared by the University of Jyväskylä and the University of Helsinki and funded by the Academy of Finland in 2006-2011.

The results of this question were thought to benefit the workplace of the research participants – especially those who are planning their language studies – and also for example language instructors, because this study will give information about the practical language use situations and the needs for language instruction of Finnish people who need English in working life. It was also thought that the answers to this question would reveal how much the interviewees actually need to use English and how big the role of English really is in their everyday work and so their attitudes towards English could be explained better against this background.

The second research question is:

2. What kind of attitudes do the research participants have towards the use of English in Finnish working life?

This question will examine whether the research participants find the use of English in Finland positive or negative and what it makes them think and how it makes them feel on a personal level.

A qualitative approach was adopted to analyse the findings and the data was collected by interviews. The informants of the study are nine employees (one female, eight male) of a global engineering and technology corporation in the pulp and paper industry. All the informants work in this company's technology centre in Central Finland, where the corporate language is English. The informants were selected on the basis of their English skills: they all have studied English no more than ten years, and at the moment they are studying English at the lowest proficiency level groups at their workplace. The informants represent different ages (from 39 to 57 years old), different educational backgrounds (from folk school followed by vocational school to matriculation examination and/or a polytechnic degree), and different organizational positions at their workplace (e.g. foreman, workshop manager, senior application engineer, project chief engineer).

In chapter 2, the use of English as an international language all around the world and the use of English as a language of working life in Finland is discussed. Also some previous studies on the Finns' language use and the need for foreign languages at work are reviewed. In chapter 3, the nature of language attitudes is discussed and some previous studies on language attitudes are reviewed. In chapter 4, the research method of the present study is explained, and in chapter 5 the results will be described, discussed and compared with previous studies, and finally in the discussion and conclusion chapter of this study some conclusions will be drawn from the present study.

2 ENGLISH IN FINLAND

In this chapter, the spread of English as a global language and some problem-areas related to this development are discussed. This chapter also presents some previous studies on Finnish students', business people's and civil servants' varied situations of English use, as well as on their language strengths, weaknesses, most difficult situations of English use and needs for language instruction. This overview on issues related to global English and on previous studies on Finns' language skills and language use will offer background information to the interview answers of the present study.

2.1 English as a global language

The world is getting smaller – we can say that we all live in one 'global village' now. Finland is very much part of the increasingly interdependent global economy, like other Scandinavian countries. For example in the year 2001, The Finnish Ministry of Trade and Industry defined corporate internationalization as one of the most important areas in its industrial policy (Taavitsainen and Pahta 2003: 7). Crystal (1997: 8, 11) remarks that the globalisation of economy has become possible in the 20th century thanks to technological advances in the mobility of people (travelling), and in faster and easier mobility of information (telegraph, telephone and radio). Furthermore, Louhiala-Salminen (1999a: 100-101) explains that today's global business environment in Scandinavia, Europe and the rest of the world results from the following five trends: 1. Internationalization of companies, 2. Mergers and acquisitions within individual countries as well as across borders, 3. Expansion and consolidation of the European Union, 4. Changes in communications technology and 5. Emphasis on communication.

Internationalization of companies, mergers and acquisitions within individual countries as well as across borders, and changes in communications technology mean in practise that big, small, and medium-

sized companies are establishing contacts with businesses and organisations in other countries. For example, several Finnish companies (e.g. Merita bank, Enso, Valio) have merged with companies from other countries in recent years. That has caused the need for interaction between share holders, customers and colleagues who come from different countries and different cultural backgrounds. It also means that working groups or teams can be internationally dispersed. New communications technology (e.g. computers, e-mail, mobile phones, teleconferences) makes this possible. The consequence of this trend is of course that employees in many sectors need to adapt themselves to a new business culture. It also means that more and more people in all kinds of jobs and with different educational backgrounds need to operate in an international language.

In addition to changes in ownership structure and business partners and the use of communications technology, working life has changed in recent years so that communication skills are now more emphasised. In practise this means that companies do not use translators as much as they used to, but also the so called subject specialists are expected to have language skills. Several researchers (e.g. Graddol 2000: 43, 54, Huhta 1999: 12, Louhiala-Salminen 1999a: 101, Mercer (1996 as quoted by Graddol 2000: 43), Sinkkonen 1997: 164) state that there no longer is a division between employees who handle international tasks and employees who only handle national tasks. Since the communication practises have changed as explained above, today's employees need a wide range of linguistic abilities and also the demands on employees' competence in English are rising (Graddol 2000: 43). As a result, communication skills are nowadays one of the key areas of professional expertise that are taken into consideration when new employees are recruited. (Graddol 2000: 54, Huhta 1999: 12, Louhiala-Salminen 1999a: 100-101.)

Many international companies have chosen English as their internal company language, also in Finland (Louhiala-Salminen 1999a: 100, Pahta 2004: 37). This is often a practical choice, because English is the language that

most people are expected to know nowadays. In fact, English is the most widely spoken language in the world today. All around the world, English is the most commonly used *lingua franca* (common language) in international business, diplomacy, science, media, higher education and tourism. Approximately one quarter, perhaps even one third of the world's population knows some English (Pahta 2004: 28) and in the late-1990s, this meant between 1.2 and 1.5 billion people (Crystal 1997: 4-5). The terms *International English*, *global English*, *English as a world language* and *world English* are often used interchangeably to mean the fact English is spoken and understood by a large group of people all around the world.

English became the world language because of the political, military and economic power of its speakers (Crystal 1997: 7). Before the beginning of the 19th century, the British Empire held industrial, trading, and political power around the globe and during the 20th century, the United States became the undisputable world power (Crystal 1997: 8, Graddol 2000: 8). Both of those countries are English-speaking. Nowadays, English has “a special role that is recognized in every country” (Crystal 1997: 2). This means that the English language has a large number of native speakers, it has official status in many countries and it is studied widely at schools (Crystal 1997: 2-3).

English speakers are usually divided into three categories according to a model of three concentric circles suggested by Baj Kachru in 1985 (see figure 1 below).

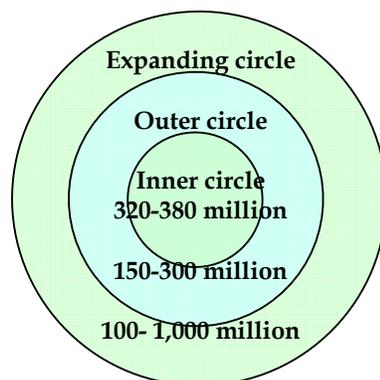


Figure 1. The three circles of English (Crystal 1997: 54)

According to this model, English has three types of speakers: those who speak *English as a mother tongue (L1)*, those who speak *English as a second language (L2, ESL)* and those who speak *English as a foreign language (EFL)*. Speakers of English as a mother tongue (L1) belong to the inner circle and they live in countries such as the United States, the United Kingdom and Australia. Speakers of countries where English is used as a second or official language (L2) belong to the outer circle. In the outer circle countries, English has a special position, which means English is used in intranational communication: in the country's administration, in its judicial institutions, in its media or as the language of its educational system (Pahta 2004: 31). The outer circle countries include for example former British colonies, such as India, Hong Kong or Namibia. Finland belongs to the expanding circle of English users (EFL). The expanding circle includes countries where English is taught as a foreign language and is used for example in education when teaching through English. (Kachru 1985: 12-13.) It is estimated that English has about 320-380 L1 speakers, about 300-500 million ESL speakers, and from 500 to 1 000 million ESL speakers (Crystal 2003: 61). Especially the group of ESL speakers is widening, which is confirmed by the fact that English is the most taught foreign language in over a hundred countries (e.g. China, Russia, Germany, France) and it is an obligatory subject in many European countries, for example in Sweden, Denmark and the Netherlands (Pahta 2004: 32). People want to study English because by using English, they can have commercial, cultural and technological contacts with people from other countries all around the world (Crystal 1997: 4).

However, it must be pointed out that the boundary between these different circles is not always clear-cut. The difference in the use of English in the expanding circle countries (EFL) and the outer circle countries (ESL) is supposed to be that in the EFL countries English is used primarily for communication with speakers from other countries, whereas in the ESL countries English is used for intranational communication in the country's

official institutions (Graddol 2000: 11). In reality the competence in English in both the outer circle countries and the expanding circle countries can vary from native-like fluency to extremely poor (Graddol 2000: 11). Furthermore, English can be even be more used in an expanding circle country (e.g. in Scandinavia or The Netherlands) than in an outer circle country where English is supposed to have a special place (Crystal 1997: 56). The following chapter will discuss some problem-areas of global English in more detail.

2.2 Problematizing global English

The position of English as a dominant world language can be problematic. People have expressed various concerns about having only one global language in the world. Some of those concerns are presented in this chapter because they could appear in the language attitudes of the interviewees of the present study as well.

Perhaps the strongest threat of having only one global language is that people will be put in an unequal position – L1 speakers and other proficient speakers of English would be in the most advantageous position in that case. In business world this means, for example, that native speakers and proficient non-natives may be favoured when recruiting employees to an international company, or that a business presentation of a native or near-native speaker is evaluated as more competent and more selling than that of a non-native speaker with more limited English skills. In academic world this means, for example, that non-native speakers and people who are not proficient in English are in a less-advantaged position for example when submitting papers to international scientific journals, most of which are published in English (Crystal 1997: 102, Graddol 2000: 38). Also since most studies are published in English, people who do not understand English will not be able to access that information, and if people are used to reading studies only in English, research that is reported in other languages may go

unnoticed (Tardy 2004: 263, see also Ammon 2001). Also, when browsing for information about recent research in a scientific database in the Internet, you need English. Both Crystal (1997: 108) and Graddol (2000: 50) are alarmed about the power of English on the Internet because it could divide people into two classes of citizens based on their proficiency to access information from English-language web sites.

Another threat of having only one global language is that people will no longer learn other foreign languages, which would make all other languages unnecessary, and which could ultimately lead to language change of the national language (e.g. if many loan words enter that language), or even language death (Crystal 1997: 12-13, Pahta 2004: 39). The most critical scholars speak about the hegemony of English, linguistic imperialism (see, e.g. Modiano 2001 and Philipson and Skuttnab-Kangas 1997), and about the gate keeping role of English. In that discourse, English is seen as a language of power. As explained before, English spread to the position of world language as a result of the power of the British Empire, and now some people see that English is still used in the same way as a tool of imperialism or capitalism and that it is a language of colonialists or oppressors. In this view, English is the gate to knowledge which is acquired through education, to well-being and social rise – and the use of English (and the fact that not all people know English) upholds social, political and economic inequality globally. (Graddol 2000: 38, Pahta 2004: 39.)

It is also a problem that since English is already used so widely, the language can no longer be controlled (Crystal 1997: 130). It has been estimated that the number of L2 and EFL speakers will outnumber the L1 speakers in the future (Crystal 1997: 130, Graddol 2000: 2). This means that we no longer know who 'owns' the language, in other words, which is the correct variety, and which variety should be taught and used? This may cause problems in the description, codification, standardisation, nativization and teaching of English, as well as in attitudes about recognition of various varieties and subvarieties of English. (Graddol 2000: 3, 56, Kachru 1985: 14-

15.)

One other disadvantage of the use of global English is a change in the status of English in a country. This means that English would be used instead of the national language in some specific areas of life. For example, in countries such as Argentina, Belgium, Denmark, Norway, Sweden and Switzerland, the use of English in intranational communication is increasing (e.g. in professional discourse, higher education, administration or media). These countries, which are still today considered to be countries of the expanding circle, appear to be in the process of shifting from EFL towards L2 status. This means that it is estimated that in those countries English will gain the status of a second language and thus the country would shift to the outer circle of English use. (Graddol 2000: 11, Pahta 2004: 31, Taavitsainen and Pahta 2003: 3.)

A change in the status of English in the expanding circle countries could lead into domain loss of the national language. This means that if English is used more and more for example in science, media, and business life, the national language can lose its ability to function in those areas (Hiidenmaa et al. 2003). One example of this has already been seen in the field of science: in the late 1990's, Swedish and Danish experts were required to write encyclopaedia articles in their mother tongue, but it proved difficult to find authors who could write about their field of study in Swedish or in Danish because they are so used to using English (Taavitsainen and Pahta 2003: 4). Accordingly, Taavitsainen and Pahta (2003: 3, 6) argue that the danger of domain loss is most imminent in Finland as well, in the areas of education, research and business world. To prevent such domain loss from happening, and to make sure that the general audience will still be able to read, write and discuss about science, scholars who usually publish in English are now encouraged to write and present their thoughts to non-academic audiences in their mother tongue (Taavitsainen and Pahta 2003: 8).

An extreme case of domain loss of the national language is diglossia, where one language is used for prestige purposes (i.e. in business, education

or government) and another language is used for domestic purposes (i.e. at home or in blue-collar work). Philipson and Skuttnab-Kangas (1997: 35) argue that in Scandinavia and the Netherlands there are already trends visible (although it is uncertain how things will develop) of a diglossia, with English being the high prestige language and the national language being the low language. If the national language can only be used in informal communication, and the use of English is required in business, education or government, then “competence in English may become essential for social functioning and upward social mobility” (Philipson and Skuttnab-Kangas 1997: 35). In Finland, it has been suggested (see Hiidenmaa et al. 2003) that a gap could emerge between the business, science and governing ‘elite’ of the country who actively use English at their work, and the ‘common people’ who do not. This could result in a situation where the people who do not actively use English at work would not be able to access some information or decisions made or would be left outside an English-speaking group at their workplace (Hiidenmaa et al. 2003).

This ‘gap hypothesis’ appeared in autumn 2003 in a discussion chain of Letters-to-the-Editor of the newspaper *Helsingin Sanomat*. The writers (Hiidenmaa et al. 2003) who supported the hypothesis claimed that while English is used in Finland as a medium of international communication for practical reasons, it is also used in order to show that the speaker belongs to the group that has power and prestige. Taavitsainen and Pahta (2003: 8) investigated the use of English as a value symbol of prestige and modernity in the names of consumer goods and businesses, in advertising and in fashionable expressions by browsing a telephone directory of the Helsinki area. They found out that for instance several fitness centres, hairdresser’s, barber’s shops, restaurants, electricians, companies providing temporary workers and companies giving dance lessons had English names, or names that were a mixture of Finnish and English, and they also observed that for example job advertisements and educational advertisements published in *Helsingin Sanomat* are sometimes a mixture of English and Finnish, with no

apparent reason other than to look modern or prestigious. (Taavitsainen and Pahta 2003: 8-9.) This same trend takes place in other parts of the world as well, for example in South-America in Argentina, as pointed out by Nielsen (2003: 204).

So by using English words and expressions, a speaker can construct himself or herself an identity as a person of power and prestige; and thus the English language becomes a value symbol that marks a person's social status (Hiidenmaa et al. 2003, Preisler 2003: 111). The danger of this use of English as a value symbol is that it could lead to diminishing use of the national language. Hiidenmaa et al. (2003) give the example that since the 'elite' uses power and sets an example for the rest of the staff, then for example, if the management uses English, the personnel will also do the same because they want to use the common language to bind the group together. Thus also the personnel will be obliged to start learning English, thus increasing the situations where English is used at work (Hiidenmaa et al. 2003).

2.3 Previous studies on the use of English in working life in Finland

How much is English then used in Finland and how much is English part of Finns' lives? The answer to this question could be similar to the numbers found in a questionnaire survey that was administered to a random sample (n=856) of the adult population in Denmark in 1999. Denmark and Finland are countries similar in size, location and the ways English is used in the country: both are EFL countries where English is learned at school and heard on the TV, films, radio and music and seen, for example, on company names and in advertisements. (Preisler 1999: 247-255.) The results of the Danish survey indicated that about one fourth (23%) of the whole Danish population and about half (45%) of the adult Danes encounter English in computer programs at least once a week, and one fourth (25%) every day (Preisler 2003: 114). About one third (27%) of the Danish adult population speaks English at least once a week, and 12% writes English at least once a week. Almost all,

93%, of adult Danes hear English at least once a week and 80% at least once a day, 88% see or read English at least once a week and 50% at least once a day (Preisler 2003: 114). So the results show that English is widely used in Denmark (Preisler 1999: 247). Because of the above-mentioned similarities between Denmark and Finland, one can conclude that English is as widely used in Finland as well. Almost all Danes, and supposedly also almost all Finns, hear English every day.

Several previous studies have been carried out in Finland about the Finns' use of foreign languages at their work or at their studies. Those previous studies include Pro Gradu theses, dissertations and survey reports. The research participants of these studies have been Finnish students, Finnish business professionals or Finnish civil servants, and these studies have focussed on the research participants' language use situations, language proficiency or on their need for language instruction. The following chapter will provide a review of previous studies on the Finns' use of English at work, but it should be noted that these studies differ a bit from the present study because the previous studies reviewed here do not focus on people at some specific level of language proficiency and more specifically, no previous studies on Finns with limited English skills were found.

2.3.1 Situations where the Finns need English at work

Situations where Finns need English at school or at work have been studied at least by Huhta (1999), Louhiala-Salminen (1999b), Helle (1995), Penttinen (2002), Sinkkonen (1997), Lehtonen (2004) and Määttä (2005). Next, these studies will be presented and their results will be synthesized.

Huhta's (1999) and Louhiala-Salminen's (1999b) target group were Finnish business people. Huhta (1999: 44-50) examined language and communication skills in Finnish industry and business, as part of the PROLANG project of the Leonardo program of the European Union, by interviewing a total of 197 employees in a total of 69 large and small

mechanical engineering companies, companies in electrical engineering and electronics, forestry and paper companies, chemical engineering companies and service companies. In the same year, Louhiala-Salminen (1999b: 1-4) studied the role of the electronic media, fax and email in international business communication in a questionnaire survey that was administered to 123 Finnish business graduates (both men and women), academic engineers (most of them men) or executive secretaries (all of them women) aged from under 30 to over 50. The respondents represent different business sectors, companies of different sizes, and various organizational positions at all hierarchical levels, and so it can be said that the results of this survey, which will be discussed in more detail later, represent well the general views of Finnish business people (Louhiala-Salminen 1999b: 2-4).

The studies of Lehtonen (2004) and Määttä (2005) are Pro Gradu Thesis for the Department of Languages of the University of Jyväskylä. Lehtonen (2004: 93) explored Finnish employees' views on English focusing only on the use of English in internal company communication. The aim of the study was to examine the employees' attitudes towards English used for internal communications and the challenges that the employees face when communicating in English at work. Lehtonen's data consists of seven employee interviews. (Lehtonen 2004: 93.) Määttä (2005: 7-8) studied the perceptions of nine Finnish business people on the role of English as a common working language in today's intercultural business world. The study also focussed on the respondents' perceptions of the impact of their Finnish cultural background on their intercultural business communication, and on which intercultural skills the Finnish business people found important in order for them to succeed in intercultural business communication (Määttä 2005: 52-53). The respondents were nine managers or executives from different small or middle sized Finnish companies from Central Finland (Määttä 2005: 7). The data was collected by conducting face-to-face themed interviews (Määttä 2005: 141).

Penttinen (2002) and Helle (1995) studied Finnish polytechnic or

university students' learning needs and attitudes towards English. Penttinen's (2002: 73) study was a PhD Thesis on the teaching and learning needs of English at polytechnic level. The data consists of 297 questionnaires received from Finnish English teachers, Finnish working life representatives from North-Karelian companies engaged in foreign trade, and the majority of the responses were received from Finnish first, second, or third-year students from the degree programme of Business Administration of North Karelia Polytechnic (Penttinen 2002: 77-78). Helle (1995: 9) examined Turku School of Business Administration students' (n=124) current and anticipated need of English, target proficiency expectations, views of language and expectations and wishes regarding the content of English courses by means of questionnaires.

Sinkkonen's (1997) study differs a bit from the first ones because the respondents are not business people. This was a survey on language proficiency and language needs of 1277 Finnish civil servants from the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, the Ministry of the Environment, the Ministry of Finance and the Ministry of Trade and Industry (Sinkkonen 1997: 43). The data was gathered by means of questionnaires (n=468) and interviews (n=22) (Sinkkonen 1997: 51, 53).

The results of all the above studies indicate that a large number of Finnish business people need English at work. Lehtonen's (2004: 93) and Määttä's (2005: 141) interviewees reported that they use English at work daily. Similarly, only 8% of Louhiala-Salminen's (1999b: 4) respondents said that they had never used English and only 11% said that they do not need English at all in their current job. Indeed, almost half (45%) of the business people surveyed by Louhiala-Salminen (1999b: 4) said that they need English daily, one fifth (20%) said that they need English weekly, and one fourth (25%) said that they need English more rarely. Furthermore, Huhta (1999: 12) found that although the extent and context of communication varies, all business employees, irrespective of educational background, need workplace communication in foreign languages.

The same seems to be true for civil servants: Sinkkonen (1997: 164) concluded that almost all civil servants' work includes some intercultural tasks. The amount of international tasks – which in the case of civil servants included being members of committees, working groups, advisory boards and international or co-operative projects, managing relations with individual persons or international organisations, taking part in conferences and seminars and making official trips and receiving visitors – varied a great deal among the research participants (Sinkkonen 1997: 75-76). On average, the civil servants had international tasks monthly, but the biggest group of respondents (24%) was those who had international tasks weekly. More than one fifth (22%) of the respondents had international tasks daily, 17% had no international tasks, 21% had international tasks a few times a year and 16% monthly. (Sinkkonen 1997: 75.)

The above-mentioned studies also list the most common language use situations and the most often used channels of communication of the research participants. All studies present their findings in a slightly different form so it is somewhat difficult to compare the findings. One common finding, however, in the studies that focussed on Finnish business people was that Finnish business people need English in reading everyday texts (such as e-mail), and in reading business texts (such as instructions, manuals and journals) (Huhta 1999: 100, Penttinen 2002: 113). Lehtonen (2004: 93) found that reading is Finnish business professionals' most needed skill. The previous studies conducted on Finnish students also revealed that Finnish students need English reading skills for studying other subjects (Helle 1995: 21, Penttinen 2002: 184).

A large part of Finnish business people's work day also involves everyday social oral communication (e.g. discussions on daily events, receiving visitors, telling about work and socialising during company and other visits) and business oral communication (e.g. speeches, presentations, demonstrations, meetings, negotiations, client contacts and speaking on the telephone) (Huhta 1999:100, Lehtonen 2004: 93, Penttinen 2002: 113).

Lehtonen (2004: 93) found that Finnish professionals who need English at their work use English the most in meetings. As a similar example, Nielsen (2003: 203) remarks that Argentinean employees of Argentinean or international companies use English the most in regional or international meetings, international conferences, in-service training, or when interacting with company headquarters either face-to-face or via the phone or e-mail. Finnish students reported using everyday and social oral communication skills in English often in their free time (Helle 1995: 21, Penttinen 2002: 184). Huhta (1999: 100) concluded that Finnish business people find oral language skills more important than reading or writing skills in a foreign language. The Finnish company representatives who took part in Penttinen's (2002: 184) survey also found business oral communication more important than reading, everyday social oral communication, business writing, or culture.

Finnish business professionals need to write in English when describing processes, doing technical documentation, and when writing faxes, e-mail messages, inquiries, daily updates, and messages related to travel or deliveries (Huhta 1999: 100, Louhiala-Salminen 1999b: 6-10). Penttinen (2002: 113) found that business writing was not as common as reading or speaking. In contrast, Lehtonen (2004: 93) found that the employees need written English (most often this means sending and receiving e-mail) more than they need spoken English. Finally, Louhiala-Salminen's (1999b: 6) respondents found speaking and writing to be equally important communication skills in business communication: they estimated that the need for oral skills is 51% and for written skills 49%. In addition to reading, speaking and writing, Finnish business people were also found to use English in communication situations related to culture (e.g. intercultural communication, telling facts about countries) (Penttinen 2002: 113). All in all, the language use situations seemed to be varied, and no area of language skills stood out as clearly the most often used channel of communication.

2.3.2 Finns' language proficiency and need for language instruction

Language proficiency of the general Finnish population was studied in 1995 in an Adult Education Survey and in 2000 in a Eurobarometer survey on Europeans and Languages. The Adult Education Survey revealed that almost three in four (72%) adult Finns could speak at least one language other than their mother tongue. It also revealed that Finnish women were more proficient in languages than men, and that younger Finns were more proficient in foreign languages than older Finns. (Taavitsainen and Pahta 2003: 6.) A general conclusion of the Eurobarometer survey was that English is the foreign language that most Europeans know. According to the survey, more than half (60%) of the Finnish, about half of the Austrians and Germans, and almost all (80%) Swedish, Danish and Dutch know some English. (Eurobarometer 54 Special.) These large percentages may explain in part why it has been suggested that Sweden, Denmark and the Netherlands could be in the process of shifting from the expanding circle to the outer circle of English use. Also by looking at the amount of Finns studying English, it can be inferred that the majority of Finns speak English at least to some degree: in the year 2000, practically all (98%) Finnish pupils in the three highest classes of basic education ('yläkoulu') studied English, and over a half of the adult population participated in adult education, where language courses are the most popular discipline (Pahta 2004: 32-33, Taavitsainen and Pahta 2003: 6).

In addition to those general surveys, several academic theses, dissertations, and other types of surveys have been conducted on the language proficiency of more focussed groups of Finns. At least Huhta (1999), Isotalus (2002), Konivuori (2002), Korhonen (2002), Penttinen (2002) and Sinkkonen (1997) have examined Finnish students', Finnish business people's or Finnish civil servants' language proficiency including their strengths, weaknesses, most difficult communication situations, and need for language training.

Isotalus' (2002) and Konivuori's (2002) studies were Pro Gradu theses and they both studied Finnish expatriates. Isotalus (2002: 2) interviewed and observed 7 Mexicans and 8 Finns who were working in Finnish-led companies in Mexico, about their Finnish-Mexican interpersonal communication in the business context. Konivuori (2002: 2, 46-47) interviewed 13 Finnish expatriates, whose educational background was engineering or commercial studies, and who were working in the same Finnish multinational company in Great-Britain, about their adaptation to the foreign culture. Both studies aimed to examine what kind of differences the expatriates had noticed in communication and ways of life in the new culture and the expatriates' strengths, weaknesses and difficult situations in intercultural communication (Isotalus 2002: 2, Konivuori 2002: 43-47). Isotalus (2002: 2) found that there were differences in the Mexican and Finnish communication culture and in what was expected in different social situations. Konivuori (2002: 2) found that the biggest differences in the Finnish and English communication cultures were politeness and small talk.

Korhonen's (2002: 92-95) study was a PhD Thesis on the effectiveness of a one-credit course of intercultural training in developing Finnish Bachelor of Engineering students (n=117) behaviour and skills. The students took part in an English course (24 lessons plus self-study using a hypermedia-based program) about international communication and answered questionnaires before, during and after the course (Korhonen 2002: 92-95).

The previous studies mentioned here have identified some typical strong areas or typical problem areas of Finns as regards different language use situations. Generally speaking, non-native speakers tend to be better in reading than in writing or speaking in the target language (Tardy 2004: 263). Huhta (1999: 100) confirms this finding and says that Finnish business people's strengths in foreign languages are reading, listening and writing skills. Also Lehtonen's (2004: 94) interviewees' strengths in English were command of technical terminology in their own field. In contrast, the polytechnic students that Penttinen (2002: 189) studied evaluated their oral

proficiency higher than their reading or writing proficiency. A common finding in the previous studies on Finns' language proficiency was that Finns' most common weaknesses in languages were found to be oral skills (both speaking and listening comprehension), lack of social and communicative competence, and unawareness of intercultural issues (Huhta 1999: 12, Isotalus 2002: 2, 100, Konivuori 2002: 2, 75-76, Korhonen 2002: 26-27, Lehtonen 2004: 94, Määttä 2005: 146, Penttinen 2002: 185-186, Sinkkonen 1997: 89). The Finnish students that Penttinen (2002: 189) surveyed were again different from the business people of civil servants: the Finnish students evaluated writing proficiency as their biggest weakness in English.

The most difficult language use situations for Finns as reported in these previous studies most often involved oral communication. The most difficult language use situations for the Finns were found to be visits, meetings and negotiations, problem solving, understanding native speakers' accents and dialects, talking on the phone, and discussing everyday things outside the working environment (Huhta 1999: 12, 100, Korhonen 2002: 26-27, Konivuori 2002: 75-76, Lehtonen 2004: 94, Määttä 2005: 145, Penttinen 2002: 185-186). These are common problem areas for many non-native speakers: also Tardy's (2004: 259-262) study on foreign graduate students in the USA revealed that the foreign students found spoken interaction situations (e.g. discussions, conferences, jokes, colloquial situations) difficult because of the fast speech of the native speakers and because of possible misunderstandings. In addition, some of Korhonen's (2002: 145) students mentioned that they do not have enough courage to speak English, and Konivuori's (2002: 75) expatriates reported experiencing some culture shock.

Konivuori (2002) and Korhonen (2002), who studied Finns' intercultural communication skills, found that expatriates and students with limited experience of intercultural communication were at first concerned with their insufficient linguistic competence in English (i.e. concrete language use situations were found to be the most difficult), but that during the expatriate experience or after taking a course in intercultural competence, their

conception of language proficiency changed to become more comprehensive, which means that the effect of culture on language was recognised better than before and they found the situations that required pragmatic or cultural knowledge to be the most difficult language use situations (Konivuori 2002: 75, Korhonen 2002: 145-146). After the course or the expatriate experience, students and business professionals found intercultural competence an integral and equal part of engineers' professional qualifications and hoped for more language and culture training from international personnel management (Konivuori 2002: 2, Korhonen 2002: 146, 174)

As practical needs for language training, Isotalus (2002: 2), Korhonen (2002: 178-179), Konivuori (2002: 2) and Huhta (1999: 12) say that the Finns ought to be made more aware of possible intercultural differences in communication, and that Finnish professionals would benefit from more training in social and communicative competence in order for them to succeed in cross-cultural communication. Another common hope for the Finns language training is oral communication skills. Huhta's (1999: 100) survey on Finnish business people indicates that both work-related and school language education are criticised for too little instruction on oral skills. Similarly, Sinkkonen's (1997: 161) survey on Finnish civil servants revealed that the respondents would have wanted more instruction on oral language skills, and Penttinen's (2002: 185) survey on Finnish students', company representatives', and teachers' hopes for language training revealed all these groups hopes for more language training on business oral communication and everyday and social communication.

This chapter has presented some of the Finns' typical strengths and weaknesses in English, which might appear in interview responses of the present study also. The results of the previous studies are somewhat difficult to compare, but one common finding seems to be that Finn's typical weakness and an area of language skills that should be developed is oral skills. Some findings of the previous studies presented in this chapter will be further discussed in chapter 3.3.2.

3 LANGUAGE ATTITUDES

In this chapter, definitions of the concepts *attitude* and *language attitude* are discussed, and previous studies on non-native speakers' attitudes towards English all around the world are presented.

3.1 Definition of attitude and language attitude

It has been established a long ago that the way we speak influences what kind of impressions the listeners get about us. These impressions –attitudes – are, however, difficult to define. This means that we all have some idea of what an attitude is, for example, I can say that “I have a positive attitude towards working during weekends” when actually I mean that I think that I should work during weekends, I like the busy hours during weekends or I think that I can benefit from working during weekends. Thus in everyday speech we use the term *attitude* quite freely to refer to opinions, ideas, conceptions, beliefs and attitudes that we have towards objects, ideas or people. As Eiser (1986: 11) points out, attitude is a very natural phenomenon but at the same time a very complicated one. Thus far, researchers have not reached a common definition for the term attitude (Ajzen 1988: 4, Billig 1987: 175, Potter and Wetherell 1987: 43, Ryan, Giles and Sebastian 1982: 7). What most researchers agree upon is that attitudes are subjective experiences, involve evaluations of different kinds of attitude objects, and are related to behaviour (Eiser 1986: 11-13). The most common definition for attitude is that attitudes are positive or negative evaluations of somebody or something.

The term *language attitude* means attitudes that are precisely about language. Usually this means attitudes towards different languages, varieties of one language or the speakers of a language. (Fasold 1984: 148, Kalaja 1999: 46.) According to Fasold (1984: 148), the term *language attitudes* can also mean attitudes towards “all sorts of behaviour concerning language [...], including attitudes toward language maintenance and planning effort”. Baker (1992:

29) adds to the previously mentioned attitude objects also attitudes to language variation, dialect and speech style, language learning, language lessons and language preference.

3.1.1 Mentalist view of attitudes

Many researchers think that attitudes are mentalist constructions. A famous definition is that of Allport (from 1935), which states that an attitude is “a mental or neural state of readiness, organized through experience, exerting a directive or dynamic influence upon the individual’s response to all objects and situations with which it is related” (Allport 1935 as quoted by Baker 1992: 11). According to this view, attitudes are hypothetical constructs. This means that attitudes are seen as internal units located in the human mind, which have been formed when a specific kind of stimulus has been present (Baker 1992: 10-11, Kalaja 1999: 47). If attitudes are internal units of the mind, a person’s attitudes cannot be directly observable by other people but can only be studied on the basis of the person’s self-reports or by inferring them from the direction and persistence of the person’s external behaviour (Ajzen 1988: 2-3, Baker 1992: 11, Fasold 1984: 147, Gardner 1985: 132).

In the mentalist tradition, attitudes are often represented as forming a three-component model (Ajzen 1988: 4, Baker 1992: 12, Kalaja 1999: 47, Oskamp 1991: 8-9) This tradition stems as far back as Plato (Baker 1992: 12). A three-component model of attitudes is demonstrated in figure 2.

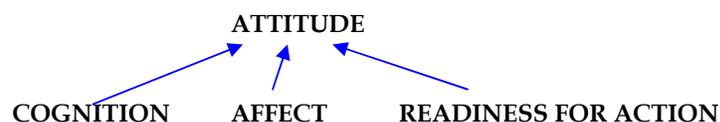


Figure 2. A three-component model of attitude (Baker 1992: 13)

The three-component model of attitudes can be explained by the definition of Rosenberg and Hovland (1960: 3, as quoted by Eiser 1986: 53), according to

which: “attitudes are predispositions to respond to some class of stimuli with certain classes of response”, those classes of response being affective, cognitive and behavioural (or conative). According to this view, measurable independent variables such as persons, situations, social issues and other attitude objects function as stimuli and develop attitudes, which consist of three parts: affect (e.g. verbal statements about evaluative feelings and preferences), cognition (e.g. verbal statements of opinions, thoughts and beliefs) and behaviour (overt actions and statements of intent, e.g. verbal statements concerning behaviour). These verbal statements are dependent variables and they can be measured. (Baker 1992: 12, Eiser 1986: 53-54.) When applied to language attitudes, the mentalist view means that the attitude object is for example a variety of a language or the speakers of a language and that the attitude object generates thoughts and feelings in people and possibly makes them act in a certain way (Kalaja 1999: 47.) For example, a positive attitude towards English could mean that you say that learning English is important because English is valuable as a common language between scientists. The affective component could mean that you love the English language for being beautiful or that you are mad about Shakespeare’s poetry. And the behavioural component could mean that you read lots of novels in English or take part in English classes in your free time.

If we believe in the three-component view of attitudes, we can make subtle distinctions between attitude and related terms (Baker 1992: 13). Attitudes should comprise all three components as explained above. Thus according to Baker (1992: 14), *opinions* are overt beliefs without affective reactions, and opinions are also always verbalisable, while attitudes may be latent, conveyed by non-verbal and verbal processes. *Beliefs*, on the other hand, are viewed in the mentalist tradition as one subcomponent of attitudes and in order to understand a person’s attitude, we would need to ask not only “Is knowledge of English important, yes or no?” but also “Do you like English?”. Edwards (1982: 20) points out that many attitude questionnaires are in fact *belief* questionnaires. There are also theorists who think that affect

is not part of attitude and others who think that behaviour is a separate thing from attitude because people can have attitudes about behaviour too (see e.g. Gardner 1985: 9, Oskamp 1991: 10-11).

The three-component view of attitudes has also been criticized. Perhaps the greatest controversy concerning attitudes is the debate about the degree to which a person's attitude and behaviour have a direct relationship. Many theorists consider behaviour to be an important part in attitudes. For example for Ajzen (1988: 4, italics added) an attitude is a "disposition to *respond* favourably or unfavourably to an object, person, institution, or event". Sarnoff (1970, as quoted by Cargile et al. 1994: 221, italics added) defines an attitude as a "disposition to *react* favourably or unfavourably to a class of objects" and according to Baker (1992: 10, italics added), "attitude is a hypothetical construct used to explain the direction and persistence of human *behaviour*". In consequence, according to the mentalist definition, if we know a person's attitude, we should be able to make predictions about their behaviour (Baker 1992: 13, Fasold 1984: 148, Gardner 1982: 132)

The relationship between attitude and behaviour in language attitudes has been established: it has been found that a positive attitude towards a language affects the outcomes of second language education so that success in second language learning increases if you have good motivation (Baker 1992: 12, Fasold 1984: 148, see also Gardner and Lambert 1972 and Gardner 1985). Gardner and Lambert have identified two components of language attitudes: an instrumental orientation and an integrative orientation (Baker 1992: 31). Instrumental motivation means that the student has pragmatic or utilitarian motives. According to Mc Clelland (1958, 1961, as quoted by Baker 1992: 32), instrumental attitude is mostly self-oriented and individualistic and connected with the need for achievement. For example, a person might want to study a foreign language in order to gain social recognition, economic advantages, in order to advance in their career, or to get personal success or self enhancement (Baker 1992: 32, Gardner and Lambert 1972: 14). In contrast, integrative attitude is mostly social and interpersonal in

orientation and is connected with the need for affiliation (Baker 1976 as quoted by Baker 1992: 32). A student with integrative motivation might want to study a foreign language because he or she wants to attach to, gain friends from, or identify with the speakers of that language and their cultural activities (Baker 1992: 32, Gardner and Lambert 1972: 14).

However, as Fasold (1984: 148) rightly points out, we have to remember that while attitudes can influence behaviour to a certain degree, they do not determine it totally because behaviour is determined by other factors also. It has been established in several studies that people do not always behave in the way that their verbally expressed attitudes would indicate. This was demonstrated already in the 1930s when the researcher LaPiere travelled in the United States with a Chinese couple. LaPiere had sent hotels and restaurants a letter asking them if they would serve a Chinese couple, and almost all hotels and restaurants answered negatively (i.e. the statement of attitude was negative). However, when LaPiere and the Chinese couple entered those institutions in person, they got good service in all places (i.e. behaviour was positive). (Eiser 1986: 52-53.) Furthermore, Fasold (1984: 147) reminds us of a problem that attitude researchers may face, which is that people may 'trick' with their behaviour. For example, the research participants' self-reported data about their attitudes can be of questionable validity (i.e. people can lie), or inferring attitudes from the research participants' behaviour can divert the researchers attention away from what they actually observed (Fasold 1984: 147).

3.1.2 Behaviourist and discursive view of attitudes

A second view of attitudes is the behaviourist view. This differs from the mentalist view in that in the behaviourist view, attitudes are viewed as single units, which are found simply in the responses people make to social situations, i.e. as response to stimulus (Fasold 1984: 147-148). In the behaviourist research tradition, researchers do not ask for self-reports or

indirect inferences of attitudes but they find it sufficient to observe, tabulate, and analyze overt behaviour (Fasold 1984: 148). However, attitudes defined this way cannot be used to predict other behaviour (Agheyisi and Fishman 1970: 138, as quoted by Fasold 1984: 148). The behaviourist view of attitude is not used in the present study because the data was collected by interviews and there were no opportunities to observe the interviewees' behaviour.

In addition, there is a more recent view to attitudes, and it is the discursive view, outlined by Potter and Wetherell (1987). In the discursive view, attitudes are defined socially, in the social-constructivist paradigm, which means that social reality, as people perceive it, is built in social interaction through language (Helkama, Myllyniemi and Liebkind 1998: 225, Kalaja 1999: 62). In the discursive view, language attitudes are longer viewed as a static input-output mechanism, or as the respondents' positive or negative reactions to stimuli (Billig 1987: 177-178, Kalaja 1999: 62-63). Instead, language attitudes are seen as everyday linguistic action or as discourse practices in interaction situations (Kalaja 1999: 62-63). Thus attitudes can be said to be part of the public debate about languages and the speakers of those languages (Kalaja 1999: 63). Attitudes are not your reactions to stimuli but they are the act of expressing your opinion for or against an issue. Attitudes are formed in a conflict situation where the opponents justify their own views, criticise the opposing view, and debate about the topic in general (Billig 1987: 177-178 as quoted by Kalaja 1999: 62-63).

In the discursive view, attitudes are not viewed to be as stable as in the mentalist tradition. Attitudes can vary from one situation to another and even within one situation, depending on who you are exchanging attitudes with and what kinds of arguments are put forward. Furthermore, attitudes are not expected to influence behaviour to the same extent as was thought before. (Cargile et al. 1994: 218, Kalaja 1999: 63.) In the discursive paradigm, instead of asking "What is person A's attitude towards a language?", we could ask "How does A present her opinion in different situations?", "When does she present her opinion in form x or in form y?" or "What is A's reason

for presenting her opinion in form x or in form y?" (Kalaja 1999: 63).

The view of attitude applied in the present study combines aspects of the traditional view and of the discursive view. This will be further discussed in chapter 4.2.

3.2. Methods in the measurement of language attitudes

Language attitudes are social at heart. This means that the language and the speakers of that language are closely connected in people's minds. In consequence, some languages are viewed positively because their speakers are valued in the society, because of the speakers' high social order, status, or power. (Kalaja 1999: 47.) The first language attitude studies in the 1960s surveyed the attitudes of English-speaking and French-speaking Canadians towards English and French in Canada. The results indicated that attitudes towards English were more positive than attitudes towards French, and this was presumably due to the English-speaking populations' higher status in the Canadian society. Since then, language attitudes have been studied widely. Language attitude study has roots in different disciplines, including the social psychology of language, sociology of language, sociolinguistics, anthropological linguistics, communication and discourse analysis (Cargile et al. 1994: 211). According to Kalaja (1999: 48-49), research has primarily concentrated on describing the attitudes of individuals or the attitudes of groups of people towards foreign languages in general, or towards the social or regional dialects of one language, which could be the mother tongue or a second language, or towards the speakers of these languages.

Language attitudes have been studied from different points of view in different disciplines, and that is why the studies have used different research methods and data (see Cargile et al. 1994, Fasold 1984: 147-179, Giles and Coupland 1991: 33-59, Oskamp 1991: 18, Ryan, Giles and Hewstone 1988, Ryan, Giles and Sebastian 1982). There are three main investigation techniques for studying language attitudes: the direct method, the indirect

method, and other methods. All methods which do not involve asking respondents for their views or opinions about things fall into the category *other methods*, and they include, for example, observation of different groups' language use and roles in different communities, and content analysis, which means analysing the content of, for example, official documents and statistics, reports of commissions, newspaper articles, job advertisements, language guides, proverbs and manner guides (Cargile et al. 1994: 212-213, Fasold 1984: 149-152, Kalaja 1999: 48-49). Direct methods and indirect methods are presented in more detail below.

3.2.1 Direct methods

Using a direct method when measuring language attitudes means that people are simply asked about their attitudes. Direct methods have most often been used to study people's attitudes towards two languages, or towards regional and social dialects of one language: for example to compare Black English with Standard American English. Also for example people's reactions to linguistic or non-linguistic features, such as pronunciation, speech pace, word choice or the speaker's gender, have been studied with the direct method. (Kalaja 1999: 49.) Asking people directly about their attitudes can be done via interviews or questionnaires, and both interviews and questionnaires can contain open or closed questions (Fasold 1984: 152, Kalaja 1999: 49, Oskamp 1991: 48).

Open questions mean that the respondents answer in their own words. This gives the respondents freedom to present their views. The respondents have been asked, for example, to listen to a speech sample and to evaluate the speaker by using their own words (Kalaja 1999: 49). While open questions give the respondents much freedom, they also allow them to stray from the topic and the answers may be difficult to score (Fasold 1984: 152).

Closed-end questions mean that the respondents answer with one of the alternative answers provided by the researcher. Closed-end questions in

language attitude studies often include a statement such as “English is a beautiful language”, after which the respondent has to choose the correct alternative that indicates his or her attitude towards the matter from the options provided by the researcher. The answers can be *yes-no* answers or multiple choice (Fasold 1984: 152). In addition, a Likert scale is often used, which means, for example, that the respondents choose their degree of agreement with the statement from a five-point scale, as demonstrated in figure 3 (Baker 1992: 17-18, Kalaja 1999: 49).

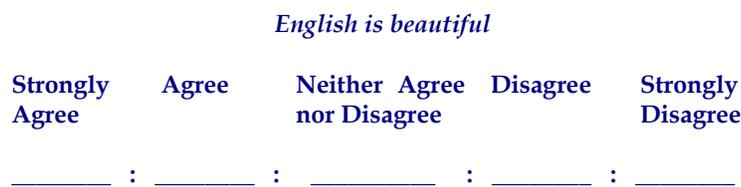


Figure 3. A Likert scale

Another option would be to use the semantic differentiation technique, originally designed by Osgood (see Ajzen 1988: 10-13), which consists of pairs of bipolar adjectives such as *beautiful – ugly*. These words are placed at each end of seven-point scale and the respondents are asked to put a mark on the scale on the spot that best describes their attitude (see figure 4).



Figure 4. A semantic differentiation scale

The responses on the scale are scored from -3 on the negative side of the scale to +3 on the positive side of the scale, and the sum of all the responses of the questionnaire is the measure of the respondent’s attitude (Ajzen 1988: 11).

It is very unlikely that any attitude measurement will reveal an individual’s attitudes perfectly (Baker 1992: 18, Potter and Wetherell 1987: 43). Thus several points of criticism have been made about the direct method

of measuring language attitudes. One point of criticism is that the respondents' self-reported data is not always valid (Fasold 1984: 147). Respondents may answer in a certain way because they want to appear prestigious and socially desirable. Consciously or unconsciously people tend to give answers that put them in the best light, and so their response may not accurately reflect their own personal attitude. (Baker 1992: 19, Hyrkstedt 1997: 21, Ryan, Giles and Hewstone 1988: 1070-1071.) The second point of criticism is that the purpose of the research, as well as the researcher himself or herself can affect the research subjects' answers. For example, during the interview, the interviewer's linguistic and nonlinguistic behaviour may accidentally indicate to the interviewee what the 'proper' responses are in each case. (Baker 1992: 19, Ryan, Giles and Hewstone 1988: 1071.) To be as reliable as possible, the attitude questionnaire needs to provide a wide variety of favourable, unfavourable and even complex attitudes, and it needs to be executed on a representative but not atypical sample of people (Baker 1992: 19). Finally, it can also be questioned whether the direct method is in fact direct or not, if in any case the researcher has to infer the research subject's attitude from their behaviour pattern or from their self-reports of what their attitudes are. (Hyrkstedt 1997: 21).

3.2.2 Indirect methods

An indirect method in measuring language attitudes means that the research subjects do not know that their language attitudes are being investigated. This is often done using the matched-guise technique, which was developed by Lambert, Hodgson, Gardner and Fillenbaum in the 1960s (Fasold 1984: 150, Kalaja 1999: 50, Ryan, Giles and Sebastian 1982: 8). The matched-guise technique is the most commonly used technique in language attitude studies. In matched-guise studies, research subjects listen to speech samples and evaluate the speakers (e.g. are they confident, sophisticated, easy-going), and that is why this approach is often referred to as the *speaker evaluation paradigm*

(Cargile et al. 1994: 213, Kalaja 1999: 49-50, Ryan, Giles and Hewstone 1988: 1968). It is assumed that the speech style and the accent that the research subjects hear on the tape will trigger associations between a certain speech style or accent and a certain group of speakers, and thus the speech sample is thought to evoke social stereotypes in the research subject's mind (Edwards 1982: 22, Giles and Coupland 1991: 34).

In fact, the matched-guise technique studies research subjects' attitudes towards speakers of languages and not towards languages as such (Edwards 1982: 22, Kalaja 1999: 50). Matched-guise studies are conducted so that the researchers first make a stimulus tape. The tapes contain speech samples from speakers who are bilingual or who speak fluently the two dialects that are being investigated. Each speaker reads the same passage of a text in both languages/dialects to make sure that the research subjects do not react to the speakers' voice or to the text's content but to the language that they hear on the tape. The research subjects are made to believe that all speech samples are read by different people. (Kalaja 1999: 50.) After listening to the speech samples, the research subjects are asked to evaluate the speakers and this often means filling in semantic differentiation scales (e.g. *intelligent* _ _ _ _ _ *stupid*), by choosing the best adjectives or by reading statements such as "speaker 1 seems to be sophisticated" and then choosing the best option from a Likert-scale (Fasold 1984: 150, Kalaja 1999: 50-51).

The matched-guise technique has been criticised also. As in the case of the direct method, doubts have been raised about whether the matched-guise technique will reveal an individual's attitudes perfectly (Baker 1992: 18). The matched-guise technique has been criticised especially about its validity and reliability, i.e. whether the indirect technique can access the real attitudes in people's minds, and if the measurements are reliable or not (Kalaja 1999: 62, See also Fasold 1984: 153-154). Measuring language attitudes in a language studio is very far from everyday life (Fasold 1984: 155, Ryan, Giles and Hewstone 1988: 1075). The content of the speech sample has an effect on the results, as does the way the text is read (Cargile et al 1994: 214, Fasold 1984:

153, Kalaja 1999: 61). The choice of research subjects has been criticised because most of the research subjects have been university students and they may have been given a role (e.g. a personnel manager). Also the research subjects may have been studied in situations where they have been passive observers instead of active participants (Kalaja 1999: 61). The indirect language attitude measurement technique has also been criticised of the fact that the researcher has written the questionnaire questions and the answer options, and thus the research subjects' can only answer with the alternatives proposed by the researcher and cannot give justifications for their choices or express alternative views (Kalaja 1999: 61). It has also been questioned whether a language can be described only with simple adjectives. (Kalaja 1999: 61.) Furthermore, it is difficult to compare attitudes because the sets of questions have been different in different studies, and not many researchers have attempted to explain language attitudes. (Kalaja 1999: 62.)

3.2.3 Discourse analysis

In the discursive view, language attitudes are viewed as discourse practices in interaction situations (Billig 1987: 177-178, Kalaja 1999: 62-63). Attitudes are the act of expressing your opinion for or against an issue. Attitudes can vary from one situation to another and even within one situation depending on who you are exchanging attitudes with and what kinds of arguments are put forward (Cargile et al. 1994: 218, Kalaja 1999: 63). Direct or indirect methods, which were outlined above, cannot measure language attitudes that are defined in this way. In the discursive view, the study of language attitudes should be done by means of discourse analysis (Kalaja 1999: 63). Discourse analysis is a good method for this purpose because it is based on the beliefs, among others, that language is used for many purposes, that meanings arise from the interplay of communicative acts and that texts are never 'neutral' (Giles and Coupland 1991: 54, Kalaja 1999: 63). Discourse analysts believe that texts try to establish or overturn rhetorical, political and

ideological positions, through complex and often inconsistent means (Giles and Coupland 1991: 54). Giles and Coupland (1991: 54) compare the 'social evaluations' produced in relation to 'stimuli' in textual and contextual interconnections to face-to-face encounters: texts which are interpreted (like face-to-face encounters) are always the result of the pre-existing social schemata.

In discourse analysis type of language attitude studies, the data can be everyday conversation or writings (Kalaja 1999: 64). The research participants can speak or write quite freely. The research participants' speech is often a reaction to the questions asked by the interviewer so the attitudes are constructed in the interview situation as co-operation between both parties. In other words, language attitudes are inferred through constructive and interpretative processes, which make use of the social actors' contextual and textual knowledge (Giles and Coupland 1991: 53). Investigating attitudes in the discursive paradigm is investigating how the attitudes are presented in texts linguistically (Kalaja and Hyrkstedt 2000: 373). Discourse analysts study, for example, categorisations, common places and interpretative repertoires of texts (Potter and Wetherell 1987 as quoted by Kalaja and Hyrkstedt 2000: 374). Most studies have investigated interpretative repertoires, which mean the vocabulary and ways of speaking, syntactic structures and metaphors through which the descriptions are constructed. The researchers also ask: "What is the function of these different interpretations of a phenomenon in discourse?". In this way, studying language attitudes is actually systematic analysis of spoken or written text. Instead of trying to measure people's language attitudes objectively (like in the matched-guise technique, for example), the discursive approach examines the processes of generating meaning, and the way language attitudes are constructed (Giles and Coupland 1991: 54). Discursive language attitude study is qualitative rather than quantitative in nature. (Kalaja and Hyrkstedt 2000: 374.)

3.3 Previous studies on language attitudes

As Hyrkstedt (1997: 13) points out, previous research on language attitudes has concentrated very much on the attitudes of native speakers or bilingual speakers (see e.g. Baker 1992). Since the research participants of this study are non-native speakers of English, in this chapter, some previous studies conducted on the language attitudes of non-native speakers of English in countries all around the world are reviewed. This chapter has been divided into two parts: chapter 3.3.1 presents some general surveys and Pro Gradu theses that have been conducted on the Finns' language attitudes, and chapter 3.3.2 presents some language attitude studies that have been done in countries outside Finland. In addition, language attitudes of Finns from the studies reviewed in chapter 2.3. are presented in chapter 3.3.2.

3.3.1 Previous studies on Finns' language attitudes towards English

General attitude surveys carried out on the Finns' language attitudes reveal that the overall attitude of Finns towards English is positive, but that the Finns are also concerned with the relationship between English and the national language Finnish, perhaps a little more than other Europeans. To illustrate, the Eurobarometer survey about Europeans and languages conducted in the year 2000 revealed that the majority of the Finns (58%, n=c. 1.000) do think that everyone in the European Union should be able to speak English, but this is the lowest percentage in the European Union. Furthermore, as much as 90% of Finns think that it is important to protect our own languages, and this is one of the highest percentages in Europe. (Eurobarometer 54 Special.) An Internet query conducted one year later (2001) revealed a bigger percentage of Finns who find English important. In that survey almost all respondents (97%, n=1952) considered English the most important language besides Finnish. Attitudes towards English varied between different age groups so that older people thought that the position of

English is too dominant in Finland, while younger people did not think so. (Taavitsainen and Pahta 2003: 6.)

In addition to general surveys, Finns' language attitudes have been studied in several academic theses, and some of them are reviewed here. First of all, Henriksson (1996) studied in her Pro Gradu thesis the attitudes towards anglicisms of students (n=130) from an upper secondary school ('lukio') and from an adult education centre ('työväenopisto'). The research subjects read a text sample with anglicisms and a text sample without anglicisms and then evaluated the texts and their writers in a questionnaire (Henriksson 1996: 79). The most significant finding of this study was that the respondents were more positive towards their own mother tongue than towards the text samples containing English words (Henriksson 1996: 77).

Kansikas' (2002) Pro Gradu thesis was about young Finns' (n=70, aged 16-18) attitudes towards several foreign languages. The research participants filled in questionnaire by adding the name of the most appropriate language in sentences that contained descriptive adjectives, and they were asked to form sentences from eight languages so that the sentence described what a particular language sounds like or is appropriate for, for example: "*__ is the most beautiful language*"; "*I would like to learn __*"; "*The English language is suited for __*" (Kansikas 2002: 41-42). English was rated the most accurate, the easiest and the richest language, mostly nice and easy, and mostly suitable for TV-series and movies (Kansikas 2002: 2).

Haapea (1999: 2) studied in her Pro Gradu thesis upper secondary school and vocational school ('ammattikoulu') students' (n=210) attitudes towards varieties of English by using the matched-guise technique. The research participants listened to a speech sample from a British, American, African and Finnish speaker, and evaluated the accent and the speaker on a semantic differentiation scale. The main findings were that the upper secondary school students and female students held a more positive attitude towards the speakers and their accents than did the vocational college students or male students, and that all respondents held a more positive

attitude towards native speakers and their accents than towards non-native speakers and their accents. (Haapea 1999: 2.)

Finally, Hyrkstedt (1997: 38) studied in her Pro Gradu thesis university and polytechnic students' (n=57) attitudes towards the use of English in Finland. The study adhered to the discursive view of attitudes: it was argued that the respondents' attitudes were formed in their written responses to a letter-to-the-Editor constructed by the researcher (see Kalaja 1999: 64-67 and Hyrkstedt and Kalaja 1998). The research participants wrote responses to a letter-to-the-Editor containing arguments about the relationship of the Finnish and the English languages and about the Finns' competence in English, but they did not know that their language attitudes were being investigated (Hyrkstedt 1997: 34-36). The responses were divided into two categories and seven interpretative repertoires based on whether the research participants agreed with the arguments of the letter-to-the-Editor, and based on the type of discourse (e.g. choice of vocabulary, syntactic structures, metaphors) that they used in their texts (Hyrkstedt and Kalaja 1998: 350-351).

The responses that were identified as having a negative attitude towards English were divided into segregating, national-romanticist, fatalist and realist interpretative repertoires. Writers in these categories were concerned about Finnish under the influence of English, thought that Finnish and the national characteristics of Finns should be respected more, that the language proficiency of Finns is controlled by anonymous social powers and institutions, or were concerned about all Finns being treated equally. (Hyrkstedt and Kalaja 1998: 350-352.) The responses that were identified as having a positive attitude towards English were divided into the nationalist, empirist and utilitarian interpretative repertoires. Writers in these categories tried to strengthen the status of Finnish, the identity of the Finns, and the image of Finland, neutralize the arguments of the original letter-to-the-Editor, and convince the reader of their text of the advantages of borrowing words from English into Finnish (Hyrkstedt and Kalaja 1998: 350-352).

The previous studies presented above differ from the present study in

the following ways: they have had a different target group (mostly students under 20 years old), a different research method (e.g. matched-guise technique), or they have focussed on a different area of English (e.g. anglicisms, accents, what different languages sound like) than the present study, which focuses on people who already are in working life and on English used in working life. What is useful in the previous studies reviewed above, however, is that they provided some ideas of the kinds of attitudes that might appear in the interviews of this study as well. Especially Hyrkstedt's study illustrated what kind of words and arguments Finns have used before to describe their views towards English.

3.3.2 Attitudes to global English in countries around the world

This chapter presents some language attitude studies conducted with non-native speakers of English in countries all around the world. The language attitude studies selected here come from as wide apart places as Scandinavia (Denmark), Eastern Europe (Moldova), North America (the United States), South America (Argentina) and Asia (Hong Kong). These are countries where the English language plays different roles: in the USA (where English is L1) and in Hong Kong (which is a L2 country - English has been the official language of the country since 1892 (Yang and Lau 2003: 108)) English has a recognised role in the government, administrations and education and so it is expected that people know English. On the other hand, Denmark, Moldova and Argentina are expanding circle countries, which means that English is a foreign language for most citizens. English has not been largely present in the society of these countries before, but is nowadays present many people's everyday lives (e.g. on satellite and cable TV, computers, Internet, company names, posters, advertisements) and professional lives.

In most of these countries, like in Finland, one main reason for using English is economic reasons. For instance, Flowerdeux et al. (1998 as quoted by Yang and Lau 2003: 109) explain that Hong Kong is a centre for

international trade, finance, and information, and thus many international companies have investments there, which also calls for a work force that has high-level English skills. Similarly, Nielsen (2003: 202-203) reports that because of the growth in international trade and investment – most of which is American – English is widely used and important in the business world in Argentina, and so as a result, greater English skills are demanded from local employees and so also the number of English courses offered and financed by companies, or taken by the employees privately, has increased.

The attitude studies conducted in these countries differ somewhat from each other. First, the Danish study made by Preisler (2003: 125) was a survey on the Danish adult population's (n=856) attitudes and problems towards the use of English in everyday life. The research method was quantitative analysis of responses to an attitude questionnaire, which contained questions about how often the respondents met English, what they thought about the presence of English in Danish society, and why were they learning English (Preisler 1999: 247-255). The Argentinean study (Nielsen 2003) also focussed on the general adult population, but is different from the Danish one in that Nielsen did not conduct an empirical study himself, but describes the status of English in Argentina based on his own observations of people's everyday life, economic conditions and language policy of the country, and by analysing the international contacts and language groups present in the Argentinean society throughout the country's history.

Second, the American study (Tardy 2004), and the studies made in Moldova (Ciscel 2002) and Hong Kong (Yang and Lau 2003) focussed on the attitudes of a more restricted population: students. Tardy (2004: 253-254) studied the experiences with and attitudes to the use of English as a language of science of graduate students (n=45), who were taking English-support courses at university in the United States. Most research participants were South-Korean or Chinese and under 35 years old. The data was collected by questionnaires and focus group interviews. (Tardy 2004: 253-254.) Yang and Lau (2003: 108) studied whether Hong Kong Chinese university students

(n=42) found their English courses at the City University of Hong Kong satisfactory. The data of this longitudinal study was collected in the course of the students' university career with questionnaires, group discussions, written reflective papers and group interviews (Yang and Lau 2003: 111-112). Finally, Ciscel (2002: 410) studied language attitudes and language use of students (n=65, mean age 24 years) in institutions of higher learning in Moldova. The research participants, who were all learning English in the capital city Chişinău, first answered a self-report questionnaire about their proficiency, use, motivation and attitude towards their first language, second language, and English; and then wrote a letter-to-the-editor as a response to a fake letter-to-the-editor written by the researcher, which was the indirect attitudinal measurement technique outlined by Hyrkstedt (1997) (Ciscel 2002: 410). The purpose was to investigate their language attitudes towards the three national languages: Romanian, Moldovan and Russian, and towards the widely taught foreign language English (Ciscel 2002: 403, 409).

Next, the language attitudes that appeared in these studies are presented and compared with the language attitudes that appeared in the Finnish studies that were introduced in chapter 2.3. The attitudes are presented in theme groups. The first five themes include positive attitudes and the last three themes include negative attitudes towards English.

Worldwide access

A common finding in language attitude studies conducted on non-native speakers of English was that the research participants thought that English gives them access to every place in the world. For example, almost all (96%) of the Asian graduate students thought that the benefits of using English as a language of science were ease of information sharing, and communication among professionals worldwide (Tardy 2004: 258, 261). The adult Danes also considered English to be an important instrument because it enables global communication and broadens people's cultural horizon (Preisler 1999: 247, 253). Likewise, Lehtonen's (2004: 93) interviewees felt that using English

made them part of a wide international business community, and they found English to be a natural and obvious part of their business community, as well as an essential instrument or tool for the company to function and compete efficiently. Similarly, Määttä's (2005: 143) interviewees found English a safe, accepted, and neutral language for international business encounters.

Instrumental function

A common finding was also that the research participants wanted to learn English for instrumental reasons. All of the following: Finnish civil servants (Sinkkonen 1997: 164), Finnish business people (Määttä 2005: 67-68), Finnish business students (Helle 1995: 21), Hong Kong Chinese students (Yang and Lau 2003: 112-114), Moldovan students (Ciscel 2002: 403-417) and Danish (Preisler 1999: 255) and Argentinean adults (Nielsen 2003: 199) believed that being proficient in English would increase their job opportunities. In addition to this, the Finnish civil servants thought that not having adequate language skills could be a problem in getting a job or it might result in somebody losing an interesting job opportunity (Sinkkonen 1997: 164). Likewise, the Hong Kong Chinese students thought that being proficient in Chinese would not help them get a good job (Yang and Lau 2003: 112-114), Moldovan students thought that learning English could promise people economic or socio-cultural advantages or provide them with commercial opportunities (Ciscel 2002: 403-417) and Finnish business students found English language skills necessary for studying other subjects (Helle 1995: 21). It was also found that the Argentineans think that English is needed in order to pursue graduate university education (Nielsen 2003: 199), and that the Danish adults want to learn English in order to meet people from other countries (Preisler 1999: 255).

Prestige symbol

It was found in many of these studies that the English language carries positive connotations of prestige to non-natives speakers. To illustrate,

Nielsen (2003: 207-208) says that because of the legacy of the British minority group who at the turn of the 20th century had enormous possessions and businesses in Argentina, the English language is still nowadays a symbol of prestige and modernity in Argentina, and so people who are proficient in English are seen as having an advantage over others. The Hong Kong Chinese students did not think that Chinese language skills are more respectable and useful than English in Hong Kong – which means that they thought that the English language is respectable (Yang and Lau 2003: 112-114). Also Preisler (1999: 247) concludes that English is highly prestigious in Denmark based on the fact that about two thirds of the respondents of the questionnaire thought that all Danish adults ought to be able to speak and understand spoken English without any problems.

Motivation

Because of the above-mentioned reasons (i.e. economic and instrumental), most non-natives were found to be highly motivated to learn English (see e.g. Ciscel 2002: 415-417, Helle 1995: 21, Lehtonen 2004: 93, Nielsen 2003: 207-208, Preisler 1999: 255). The Danish people with limited English skills seemed to have an integrative motivation, which can be inferred from the fact that they wanted to learn English in order to meet people from other countries. Most non-natives, however, seemed to have an instrumental motivation to learn English, which can be inferred from the fact that they thought that learning English would increase their job opportunities, give them economic or material advantages, or simply help them cope better with their jobs.

Importance

Most people who were surveyed in these studies found English a very important language for themselves and for their country. Most research participants also had a positive attitude towards English. To illustrate, almost all Asian graduate students (96%) found that there are benefits to the use of English as a language of science (Tardy 2004: 258, 261), all Danes regardless

of their level of English proficiency had a predominantly positive attitude towards the use of English in Denmark (Preisler 1999: 256-257), Finnish employees interviewed by Lehtonen (2004: 93) and the Finnish business people interviewed by Määttä (2005: 142) had a very positive attitude towards English as a corporate or business language, most Finnish civil servants surveyed by Sinkkonen (1997: 165) had a very positive attitude towards internationalization, and the Moldovan students held positive attitudes toward their first language, second language and English, and the most positive attitudes they had towards English (Ciscel 2002: 412).

Inequality

The above-mentioned beliefs and feelings expressed about the English language were all positive. However, also some negative beliefs and feelings towards English were expressed in the previous language attitude studies conducted to non-native speakers of English.

First, some of the Danes with limited English skills reported feeling left out because they do not understand all the English that they meet in the Danish society and that the rest of the population understands because they know more English (Preisler 1999: 253, 2003: 124). Preisler (1999: 253) suggests that the people with limited English skills are in fact 'functionally illiterate' in those situations. In addition, several Finnish managers or executives reported that they sometimes feel disadvantaged or insecure about their own communicational skills when speaking with native speakers of English (Määttä 2005: 145). Also almost all (80%) of the Asian graduate students surveyed by Tardy (2004: 258) felt that they were in a disadvantaged position compared with native speakers. Many of the graduate students reported feeling power imbalance as non-native scientists and thought that research not published in English may be overlooked, that natives speakers have unfair advantage, and that misunderstandings among researchers can occur (Tardy 2004: 259-261).

Negative feelings

Second, some non-native speakers of English reported that they sometimes have felt angry, frustrated or upset because they have had difficulties in communicating clearly in English. The people who felt like this were the Danes with poor English skills, who reported having these feelings as a result of having to skip English passages in texts (Preisler 2003: 124). Also the Asian graduate students had felt frustrated because they had had to spend a long time on learning and mastering a second language and they still had communication difficulties (Tardy 2004: 263). Tardy (2004: 263) points out that previous studies on more senior-level scholars have found similar feelings. Also the Finnish civil servants found the international tasks meaningful and challenging but laborious (Sinkkonen 1997: 165).

Threat to national languages

The third negative aspect of global English that was common in many previous language attitude studies was that some non-native speakers of English saw English as a threat to their national language. The Asian graduate students were afraid of a lack of diversity resulting from the use of English as a language of science and feared the death of other languages, the dominance of English culture, and a reduction in the number of journals (Tardy 2004: 258). Also about one fourth (26%) of the Danish respondents found English to be a threat to the Danish language, about one fifth (19%) found English a threat to the Danish culture, and about one fifth (16%) found English simply “a craze not to be taken seriously” (Preisler 1999: 247.)

It seems that the empirical studies reviewed in this chapter give evidence of the fact that the role of English is growing in the expanding circle countries. The non-native speakers’ attitudes reveal that they find English to be the number one global language spoken all around the world nowadays. These studies also revealed that non-native speakers from all around the world find English proficiency useful because English is so widely used or

prestigious. Most non-native speakers surveyed in these studies wanted to learn more English in order to keep up with the growing need to use it or in order to improve their job prospects.

On the basis of these previous studies it seems that non-native speakers can also see English as a threat. The fears that appeared in these studies have also been expressed by language experts (as reviewed in chapter 2.2). Also language experts are concerned that global English could put L1 speakers and advanced non-native speakers of English in an advantaged position when compared to less proficient non-native speakers. However, compared with language researchers who speak about language death or linguistic imperialism, the fears expressed by the non-native speakers of these studies were perhaps less strong, and concerned more their personal well-being (e.g. their own research being overlooked) than the well-being of languages or groups of speakers, which is what language experts are concerned for.

All in all, the previous studies reviewed in this chapter showed that non-native speakers of English had various positive and negative attitudes towards English. Perhaps the fact that these studies from all around the world reveal very similar attitudes towards English proves that English is a very big and widely used English, and has a very similar status in countries that are as wide apart geographically as, for example, Moldova and Argentina or Denmark and Hong Kong.

These previous studies differ from the present study in that their target groups have been the general population, undergraduate students or graduate students, and not people who need English at work, as in this study. Also, these previous studies are not focussed on people at some specific level of language proficiency. No previous language attitude studies focussing on non-native speakers of English with limited English proficiency were found for this review. However, the previous studies selected are valuable for the present study because they gave some useful ideas of the kinds of attitudes that could appear in this study as well.

4 RESEARCH DESIGN

4.1 Research questions

The aim of this study is to examine how Finnish people who need English at work but are not proficient in English see the use of English in Finnish working life. The research questions are:

1. In what kinds of situations do the research participants encounter English at work?
2. What kind of attitudes do the research participants have towards the use of English in Finnish working life?
 - What do they think about the use of English in Finnish working life?
 - e.g. "English is used because of globalisation of the economy", "English should not be used in information bulletins in a Finnish workplace"
 - How do they feel about the use of English in Finnish working life?
 - e.g. "Being required to use English makes me feel embarrassed/proud/annoyed", "English is a threat to the Finnish language".

The answers to the first research question will provide information about the research participants' practical language needs, and especially on how much and in what kind of situations they need to use English and how important the role of English is in their work. The results of the first research question will benefit the research participants' workplace, language instructors, and researchers who study the presence of English in Finnish working life. The answers to the first research question will provide background to the second research question, since the frequency of English use situations will indicate how necessary it is to study their attitudes as well, and the frequency and variability of the situations where the research participants use English may help to explain their attitudes.

The answers to the second research question will complement the picture of the use of English in working life in Finland from the point of view of people with limited language skills. The answers will reveal whether the people who need English in their work but are not proficient in English feel that they can cope with their tasks, how they see their chances of career advancement, and whether they feel somehow left out if they, for example, cannot understand all the English surrounding them. The answers to the second research question will also reveal what kinds of opinions and feelings the use of English at work produces for the research participants.

I hope that by examining the role of English and the beliefs and feelings evoked by English for the Finns with limited English proficiency, this study will provide some new information to the research project *English Voices in Finnish Society*², which investigates the use of English in media, education and professional settings in Finland. This study also aims to show what kind of effects the globalisation of economy can have on the lives of individual people. More specifically, this study aims to show how the language policy of a company, according to which English is the official language, can affect the every day work of employees who only have limited English skills.

4.2 The selection of methodology and data

In order to get in-depth information about the research participants' experiences of English use and attitudes towards English in their own words, a qualitative approach was adopted. The research participants' attitudes and experiences were investigated by using a direct method: the data was collected in semi-structured focussed individual interviews. Another option would have been to collect the data by questionnaires, but interviews were chosen because it is possible that questionnaires would not have given as

² A research project that started in 2003 and continues today as part of the research unit VARIENG, which is the Centre of Excellence for the Study of Variation, Contacts and Change in English, shared by the University of Jyväskylä and the University of Helsinki and funded by the Academy of Finland in 2006-2011.

detailed responses. Semi-structured focussed interviews mean that the researcher has the same series of questions for each interviewee, but the order and the exact wordings of the questions can vary between interviews.

This study combines aspects of the mentalist and of the discursive view of attitudes. The mentalist view is considered in the research questions and in the themes for the semi-structured interviews. The first research question corresponds to the *belief* part of attitude (see e.g. Baker 1992: 12-13 or chapter 3.1.1 of this study) and the second research question corresponds to the *affect* part of attitude (see e.g. Baker 1992: 12-13 or chapter 3.1.1 of this study). The interview themes included questions on the research participants' beliefs and feelings towards English, because these were thought to be different aspects of their attitudes towards English.

The discursive view (see e.g. Kalaja 1999: 62-63 or chapter 3.1.2 of this study) was considered in the interviews and in analysing the data. According to the discursive view, attitudes can be formed in a conflict situation where the opponents justify their views, criticise the opposing view, and debate about the topic in general (Billig 1987: 177-178 as quoted by Kalaja 1999: 62-63), which means that the interviewees can form their attitudes during the interview while discussing with the interviewer. Semi-structured focussed interviews can resemble a naturally occurring conversation so they seemed to be a good data collection method for the purposes of this study.

Positive aspects of interviews containing open questions are that the research participants can speak about the issues that are important for them. Open questions give the research participants the possibility and the freedom to use their own words because there are no *yes-no* answers, multiple choice, ranking schemes, or answer options provided by the researcher (see e.g. Fasold 1984: 152 and Kalaja 1999: 61). A semi-structured interview was also thought to be a good choice because it enables the interviewer to focus the questions during the interview and to ask for clarifications. The interviewer's task is not to try to find out the true attitude of the interviewees, but to capture the interviewees' views of a theme in order to understand the world

from their point of view. (Briggs 1986: 22, Kvale 1996: 1, 7). Good interview data allows the researcher to study the interviewees' subjective experiences.

Negative aspects of open questions and interviews include the fact that open questions are more difficult to score and classify than closed questions would be. Also it should be remembered that the interview as a social interaction situation influences the form and content of what is said (Briggs 1986: 22). It should be borne in mind that both the interviewer and the interviewee are active participants in the conversation and they make the meaning of the conversation together, and so it is possible that the interviewee affects the interviewees' answers and, for example, accidentally indicates to the interviewee what the 'proper' responses are. (Baker 1992: 19, Holstein and Gubrium 1995: 4, Ryan, Giles and Hewstone 1988: 1071.)

The themes for the semi-structured focussed interviews were:

- 1) Background information (the questions in this group had to do with the interviewees' age, education, job and skills needed in that job),
- 2) Previous English studies (the questions in this group included, e.g. the interviewees' self-evaluation of their English proficiency and of their strengths and weaknesses in English, their reasons for participating in English classes and their description of English as a language),
- 3) Use of English in Finland (the questions in this group had to do with, e.g. the interviewees' perceived need for foreign languages in their job, their views about the use of Finnish vs. English at their workplace and their positive and/or negative memories of English use),
- 4) General attitude towards English (this group included questions on why the interviewees thought English is used in Finland and what they found to be the positive and negative aspects in its use), and
- 5) Current English studies (the questions in this group included e.g. estimates of how the interviewees will need English in the future).

A full list of the interview questions can be found in appendix 1.

The aim was to interview people who are not very good at English but who nevertheless need English at their work. A possible target group for this

study was found at a technology centre of a global engineering and technology corporation in the pulp and paper industry located in Central Finland. The corporation operates globally and has employees and customers from many different nationalities. The official language is English, and the language policy of the corporation is that all staff should be able to understand at least written English. As a result, all staff, from manufacturing workers to administration, can take part in language and communication courses as part of personnel training. Courses are offered in 10 different languages, English being the most widely studied language. (Korpela 2004, personal communication.) At this workplace, English courses are offered at proficiency levels 1-9, as defined by the language instruction provider. Level 1 is the beginners' level and 9 the most advanced level. The target group for this study was chosen to be the thirteen employees at this workplace, who were studying English in different groups but with the same teacher at levels 1, 2 or 3, which are the lowest proficiency level groups possible.

When the target group had been chosen, the candidates were sent an e-mail explaining them the overall aims of this study and inquiring about their willingness to take part. The purpose was to help the candidates generate ideas for the upcoming interviews. The candidates were told that the aim of this study was to study people who need English at their work, and who participate in English classes. It was not mentioned that the interviewees' language attitudes would be studied or that they had been selected on the basis of their low English proficiency because that could have affected their willingness to participate. All candidates contacted agreed to be interviewed.

Due to the qualitative nature of the study, thirteen interviewees seemed to be an adequate number. A decision was made to focus on employees of only one company because when the working environment of the interviewees is similar (even though the research participants do different kind of jobs in the company), it will be possible to describe the situations where the employees of this particular company need English. This information would not have been as coherent if the research participants had

came from different companies. Also the fact that all research participants study English at approximately the same proficiency level means that their backgrounds as regards how much they have studied English are quite similar. Yet due to the small number of interviewees, any conclusions or generalisations of the results should be made with caution.

4.3 Analytic framework

The interviews took place at the interviewees' workplace during their working hours. The interviews were held in Finnish and they were recorded with a tape-recorder. Each interview lasted c. 30 minutes. The conversations were quite casual and at times the researcher added her own comments to the conversation too, in order to make the interviewees react to some statements and to form their attitude as a reaction to the statements and in order to make the situation more relaxed. Later, the tape-recorded interviews were transcribed. Pauses or overlaps were not included in the transcription.

The following chapter contains excerpts from the interviews. The excerpts are verbatim transcriptions apart from some utterances such as *mmm*, *niinku*, *siis* or repetition of the first syllable of the word, which may have been left out. The eliminated utterances do not influence the content of the excerpts. In the transcriptions, the symbol [xx] stands for a word or words that were not understood because they were pronounced unclearly or because the voice on the tape is too quiet. The symbol [...] stands for words or passages that were left out because they include confidential information or a digression from the point. The researcher's comments or clarifications are written in square brackets []. A question mark ? at the end of the interviewer's line denotes that the line was a question. The interviewees can be singled out from numbers 1-9 which correspond to their age order.

After the interviews, an additional e-mail was sent to the interviewees asking them some additional questions that made it possible to compare their background information in the form of tables. The additional questions

dealt with the interviewees' age, education, English proficiency level (self-assessment) and importance of English in their job. A full list of the questions can be found in appendix 3. After this it was noticed that there was considerable variation in the interviewees' educational background and English proficiency, with some interviewees having relatively good English skills, in fact. Thus a decision was made to focus the study more and to concentrate on studying those interviewees who had the least English studies. Then the four youngest candidates were eliminated, and only the answers of the nine oldest interviewees are included in the analysis. These interviewees have in common the fact that they have studied English less than 10 years, and most of that time in adult education in their free time.

To answer the first research question, all situations of English use mentioned by the interviewees were listed and put into an order of frequency. To answer the second research question, the data was categorised in order to find common themes. The aim was to find out both what the interviewees said about English (cf. the *belief* part of attitude in the mentalist tradition) and what kind of feelings they expressed about English (cf. the *affect* part of attitude in the mentalist tradition). The common themes were identified by listing the mentioned positive, neutral and negative beliefs and positive and negative feelings. In forming the themes, discourse analytical language study (cf. Hyrkstedt 1997) was used. The themes were formed by analysing the content and the word choices of the interviewees' answers.

Analysing the content of the interview answers meant paying close attention to what the interviewees said. For example, some interviewees explained having felt frustration because of their limited English proficiency. The following extract, in which the interviewee uses affective words such as *oon kärsiny* ['I have suffered'], *ahdistusta* ['anxiety'], *ois se kiva kun hallitsis tuon kielen paremminkin* ['it would be nice to be able to speak that language better'], *ei tarviis niin jännittää* ['I wouldn't need to be so nervous'] to talk about the use of English, demonstrates this:

Interview extract 1:

- Interviewer: muistatko tilanteita joissa kohtasit englanninkieltä ja se herätti ahdistusta tai ärsytti?
- Interviewee 4: kyllä se varsinkin sillon mat sanotaan ensimmäisiä kertoja kun ties että tulee joku asiakas esimerkiksi johonkii palaveriin kun tuota sitä ei kovin hyvänä sitä omaa kielitaitoo niinku piä vieläkkää nii kyllä mä sanon ihan suoraan että kyllä mä oon niinku kärsiny oon kärsiny tässä työnteossa että vaikka se nyt ei ulospäin oo näkyne mut just tämmöstä ahdistusta siitä että kun ois se kiva kun hallitsis tuon kielen paremminkin että ei sitten tarviis niin jännittää sitä

This interview extract was included in the theme *frustration* on the basis of its content.

Analysing the word choice of the interview answers meant paying close attention what kind of words, what specific words, or what ways of speaking the interviewees used when speaking about English. For example, specific attention was paid to the complements and attributes that the interviewees attached to the word *English* in their sentences and to the adjectives and verbs that they used in the sentences where they spoke about English. The words and phrases used by one or several interviewees were grouped together to form themes. The following interview extract, in which the interviewee uses the phrases: *semmonen avain* ['a key'], *se auttaa monessa asiassa* ['it helps in many situations'], *sehän antaa [...] varmuutta* ['it gives you self-confidence'] to talk about English, demonstrates this:

Interview extract 2:

- Interviewer: millanen kieli englannin kieli mielestäsi on?
- Interviewee 2: no en mä nyt se on semmonen avain mitä nyt tietysti kun sitä sitte tavallaan päivittäin kuitenkin törmää sitä kielioppia alkaa pikku hiljaa ymmärtää
- Interviewer: no sitten toinen kysymys mitä englantia sinulle merkitsee?
- Interviewee 2: no tuota ainakii että se ainakii auttaa monessa asiassa varmaan pärjäämään aina ainakii jos työelämässä sehän antaa kumminkii kyllähän se varmaan [xx] varmuutta ja sitte muutenkii että onhan se mukavempi matkustellakii tuolla lomamatkoilla tai jossain jos törmää ihan vieraisiin ihmisiin jossain nii ossais sitte käyttää ei ois tuppisuuna [xx] vaikka tietä

This extract was included in the theme *English gives* because the words that appear in the extract mean something related to giving.

In the following chapter, the data and the interview answers will be discussed in more detail.

5 THE ANALYSIS

This chapter is divided into three parts: chapter 5.1 presents the interviewees' background information, chapter 5.2 presents answers to research question one, and chapter 5.3 presents answers to research question two.

5.1 Interviewees' background information

One interviewee is female and eight are male. The age of the interviewees ranges from 39 to 57. The interviewees' jobs are, in age order from youngest to oldest: manager in quality control operations, project chief engineer, archivist, workshop manager, development engineer, foreman, manufacturing design engineer, senior application engineer, and foreman. All interviewees work in the same technology centre of a global corporation in Central Finland and are native speakers of Finnish.

The interviewees' overall education in years is illustrated in figure 6:

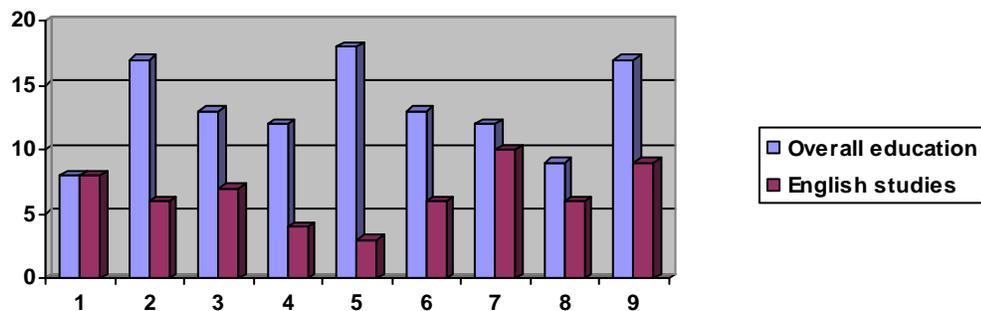


Figure 5. The interviewees' overall education and length of English studies estimated in years

As can be seen from the bars, the interviewees vary in their educational background. The two youngest interviewees, numbers 1 and 2, are under 40 years old and have been to comprehensive school and to a vocational school preceding the polytechnics (i.e. 'tekninen opisto'). The majority of the respondents, numbers 3-9, are over 45 years old and have gone through the folk school ('kansakoulu') – secondary school ('oppikoulu') system. Five of

them have a vocational school level degree and two have a polytechnic ('ammatti-korkeakoulu') level degree. Only three respondents have an upper secondary school ('lukio') school-leaving certificate. The explanation for the long bars of overall education is that the interviewees have studied their first or second vocational degree as adults, by working and studying at the same time, and that has prolonged their overall education in years.

It can also be seen from figure 6 that the interviewees have studied English an uneven number of years. The length of their English studies is not equal to the length of their overall education, so that the interviewees with the longest overall education do not seem to have the longest English studies. What should be noted is that for all interviewees the bar for English studies is shorter than the bar for overall education. The short bars for English studies are partly explained by the interviewees' age. The seven oldest interviewees, who are over 45 years old, have been to folk school and/or secondary school, and in that educational system, foreign language studies started later than today, and usually the first foreign language was Swedish or German. Several interviewees explained that they have started studying English from the basics as adults because of their weak background.

The additional questions sent to the interviewees by e-mail asked them, among other things, to evaluate their current English proficiency on a scale 1-5 (1=poor, 5=excellent). The answers are shown in figure 7:

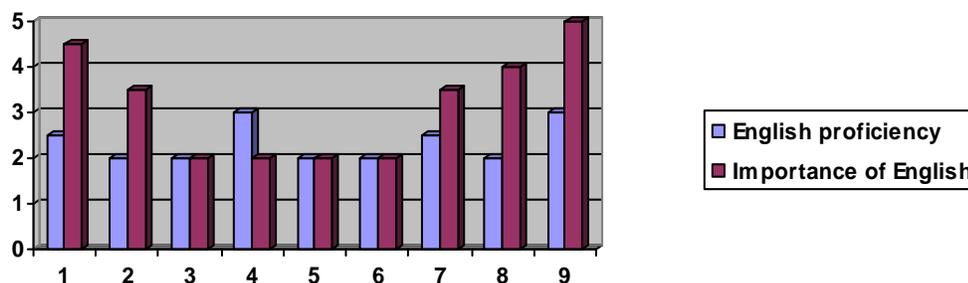


Figure 6. The interviewees' self-evaluation of their English proficiency level and of the importance of English in their job

As can be seen from figure 7, most interviewees evaluated themselves below

the intermediate grade 3 on indicated scale. Two interviewees chose grade 3, two chose 2.5 and five interviewees chose grade 2. The interviewees who have studied English the least chose grade 2, so the length of English studies correlates with their language proficiency to some extent. In these numerical self-evaluations the interviewees were quite modest since none of them positioned themselves above the intermediate grade on this scale. However, no-one used the lowest possible grade either. These numerical self-evaluations, as well as the interviewees' verbal interview answers, give some indication of how they seem to understand the term *language proficiency*.

View of language proficiency

When asked to evaluate their English skills verbally, the interviewees seemed to be more positive towards their skills than they were in the numerical evaluations. For example, the interviewees described their English skills as: *ei järisyttävän hyvää* ['not very good'], *välttävä* ['adequate'] or *tydyttävä minus* ['satisfactory minus']. The following extract, in which the interviewee describes his skills as *en mä nyt sano että mikään loistava* ['I wouldn't say that my skills are great'], demonstrates this:

Interview extract 3:

Interviewer: kuinka arvioisit tällä hetkellä englannin kielen taitoasi?

Interviewee 2: no en mä nyt sano että mikään loistava mutta kyllä mä puhumaan pystyn jonkin verran ja pärjään ainakii vielä tähän asti

The interviewees' verbal self-evaluations do point to mediocre skills, but with a positive tone: they emphasised that they "can manage" with their skills. When considering the fact that the interviewees are studying English at the lowest possible proficiency level groups at their workplace, it seems notable that no-one evaluated their English skills as *poor* or *elementary*. A probable reason for this is that the interviewees are modest with their aims: they seem to think that their English is good or at an adequate level (already) when they can understand their interlocutor tolerably and get their message

across, and they are not concerned about speaking without mistakes or about experiencing fine nuances with English. The following extract, in which the interviewee tells that he is studying English in order to have more courage to speak when travelling, illustrates this view:

Interview extract 4:

Interviewer: millasia tavoitteita sä oot asettanu sille englannin opiskelulle?
 Interviewee 5: no semmoset tavoitteet että rohkeemmin uskaltas puhua kyllä mä tuota pärjään tuolla maailmalla oon ollu saksassa muutaman pari kertaa puolassa työmatkalla amerikoissa pari kertaa ja kyllä mä siellä pärjään itkseni että mä saan syyäkseni ja saan asian toimitettua siellä ja saan vielä hotellihuoneekin

As can be seen from interview extracts 3 and 4, the interviewees used the expressions *kyllä mä puhumaan pystyn jonkin verran* [‘I can speak [English] to some extent’], *kyllä mä [...] pärjään* [‘I can manage’] and *saan asiani toimitettua siellä* [‘I can do the required tasks there’] when describing their language proficiency. These word choices indicate that the interviewees saw their skills in a positive light, and that they understood the term *language proficiency* as the ability to get things done. It seems that for them, being proficient in English means being able to manage everyday tasks in English, such as finding one’s way at the airport or ordering food in a restaurant. Previous studies on Finns’ language skills have reached similar results. For example, Lehtonen’s (2004: 94) interviewees – who were supposedly better in English than the interviewees of the present study – evaluated their own English skills modestly as *sufficient*, *satisfactory*, or *good*. Also Konivuori (2002: 65) reports that her interviewees also saw language proficiency as the ability to express themselves and to get things done and expressed this view with the Finnish verb *päriätä* (‘to manage’). The interviewees’ view of language proficiency is further discussed in chapter 5.2.1.

Importance and motivation

As mentioned before, none of the interviewees said that they have only *little* or *no* proficiency in English, which means that the present interviewees are

not in a similar situation than the 20% of Danes who were found to have little or no understanding of English song lyrics, films, short instructions or books in the Danish study (Preisler 1999: 253). Most of the 'English-have-nots' found in the Danish study were over 45 years old and did not have as much English instruction at school as the younger Danes have (Preisler 1999: 253, 2003: 123-124). Most interviewees of the present study are also over 45 years old and did not have much language instruction at school either, but nevertheless they have better English skills than the 'English-have-nots'. All interviewees of the present study meet the requirements of their company, according to which they should be able to understand at least written English text (Korpela 2004, personal communication).

The fact that English is the official language of the company in question has a direct influence on the interviewees' everyday life at work. In the individual interviews, half of the interviewees estimated that they need English at work daily, and another half said that they need English at least weekly. These frequencies are very similar to those found in Louhiala-Salminen (1999b: 4), Lehtonen (2004: 93) and Määttä (2005: 64). The fact that the interviewees of the present study reported using English very often shows, like previous studies have shown before (see, e.g. Graddol 2000: 43, 54, Huhta 1999: 12, or chapter 2.3 of this study), that the need for English does not depend on the employee's job description or educational background but all employees need English.

Furthermore, the importance of English in the interviewees' work can be seen in figure 7, which also shows how the interviewees rated the importance of English skills in their job. The answers varied between grades 2 and 5 on a scale 1-5 (1=little importance, 5=vital). About half of the interviewees chose grade 2 so they thought that English skills were not very important in their current job. In the interviews these respondents described the need for English in their current job as *ei hirmu suuri* ['not that great'], *ei niin hirveesti tarvetta käyttää* ['there's not much need to use'], or *suomen kielellä kyllä pärjää* ['you can manage in Finnish]. However, another half of the

interviewees found English skills very important in their job. They chose grades 3½, 4, 4½ or 5 and described English skills as *olennainen osa* ['an integral part], *todella merkittävä osa* ['a very significant part], or *ihan aa ja oo* ['vital'] in their job. Consider the following example, in which the interviewee suggests that English may even be more necessary than Finnish at their workplace:

Interview extract 5:

Interviewer: [...] sepä minua kiinnostaa että minkä takia sitä englantia niin paljo?
 Interviewee 9: no kun sitä täällä tarvitaan kaikessa kaikki nää ohjelmat lehdet vieraat ja ja sitten jos sä käyt kato ulkomaillaki reissulla välillä on nii sielläkii pitäs osata sitte oonhan mä käyny amerikkassa japanissa kaks kertaa sitte oon näissä saksassa käyny sveitsissä ranskassa ruotsissa norjassa näissä niin että tuota että näissä pitäs kato osata kun sä lähet tuohon johonkii reissuun nii sehän on ensimmäisenä katu tulee matkustaminen sitten pitäs kommunikoida ja osata mennä johonkii ja lähtee ja tulla kotiaki osata sitte eikö että kyllä sitä niinku tarvitaan enempi kuin suomea mä oon sanon ihan suoraan että enempi kuin suomee tarvittas sitä täällä että melekeen niinku pärjäis paremmin sillä

It is important to notice that this interviewee thinks that English may be needed more than Finnish in his job. This demonstrates that English has become very much needed in the workplace in question.

It should also be noted when comparing the two sets of bars of figure 7 that almost all interviewees rated the need for English as high as or higher than their English proficiency. This is an important finding and it shows that the interviewees have the need to improve their English skills. The interviewees all said that they had started to study English because they need English at work or because they wanted to keep the language active. The interviewees' aims were to improve their English skills in general, to acquire good practical command of English to be able to manage better in their daily work tasks, or to get more courage to speak. These aims reflect their specific needs because the interviewees had only limited English proficiency, they said that they need English at work, and they found speaking to be one of their biggest weaknesses in English. It seems quite clear that the interviewees had an instrumental motivation to learn English (for

discussion about instrumental motivation, see e.g. Baker 1992: 31-32 and chapter 3.1.1 of this study).

In addition to that, the interviewees were also strong advocates for English instruction, as demonstrated by the following interview extracts, in which the interviewees tell that they have encouraged their own children to study English because it will be needed in all professions in the future, and that they have realized the importance of English proficiency in the field of international trade as adults:

Interview extract 6:

- Interviewer: kun mietit omaa perhettäsi niin luuletko että he kohtaa englantia yhtä paljon kuin sinä?
- Interviewee 4: [...] olen kyllä yrittänyt vähän näille muksuille aina silloin tällöin puhua että yrittäkkää nyt lukea ja oppia se koska ei semmosta ammattia varmaan nykypäivänä ennää oo etteikö sitä jonkun verran tarviis että ei tarviis sitten vanhempana alottaa alusta että sitä ei ehken tiiä tajuako nykyajan nuoret sitä vielä että kuinka paljon sitä sitten kuiteskin työelämässä tarvii [...]
- Interviewer: tulevaisuudessa arveletko tarvitsevasti englannin kielen taitoa?
- Interviewee 4: kyllä varmaan ja niin niin paljon kun vaan oppii nii kaiken voi hy[xx] sitä aina vaan tarvii mitä enämpi sitä osaan en mä sitä epäile yhtään ettei sitä tarviiis

Interview extract 7:

- Interviewer: kuinka suuri osuus kielitaidolla on tässä ammattitaidossasi?
- Interviewee 8: joo no tietenkii tarvitaan tämmöstä teknistä taitoa niin tuota enimmäkseen mutta kyllä siinä tietysti on niinku tämmönen tämmönen niinku jossain määrin myös semmonen henkilötaito tämmöset sosiaaliset kielitaidotkii [...] niin se kielitaito kyllä melkeen niinku siinä munkii hommassa nii saattaa [xx] fiksua [xx] niinku mekin tekniikassa opiskellaan ja näitäkii elikkä sitte se harha mikä mullakii oli nuoruudessa että lähetään tekuun englannin kieltä tai kieliä pakoon se ei kyllä siitä on tullu susi [xx] ei voi lähtee pakoon et kyl se on niinku se on ihan aa ja oo kyllä se näissä hommissa joissa nyt ollaan kansainvälisissä myyntityössä

These examples also show that these interviewees think that the need for English is going grow in the future as well. The interviewees' message to young Finns seems to be a strong urge to study foreign languages.

The following chapter will describe the concrete situations in which the interviewees use English at work and the attitudes the interviewees have towards to use of English at work in more detail.

5.2 Situations where the interviewees encounter English at work

This chapter presents and discusses the language use situations mentioned by the interviewees and the interviewees' perceived strengths and weaknesses in English.

5.2.1 Situations of language use

According to the training manager of the company that provides the language training for the interviewee's workplace, the employees in this workplace need English skills in reading and writing different kinds of written documentation such as task descriptions, manuals, operating instructions, installation drawings, technical reports, e-mails and memos (Korpela 2004, personal communication). In addition, oral skills, negotiation skills and presentation skills are needed in telephone conversations and meetings. These situations were all mentioned in the interviews. Each interviewee mentioned several situations. The most common situations where the interviewees of the present study encounter English at work are:

- E-mail
- Business trips abroad
- Company-internal meetings and reports
- Written documentation to customers
- Operating instructions
- Visitors
- Computer software
- Telephone
- Intranet
- Foreign colleagues
- Trade journals

This list shows that the situations where the interviewees use English at work are varied. The list includes situations of using English in-house as well as abroad. The mentioned situations involve all areas of language skills: reading, writing, speaking and listening. The situations on the list also include both routine like tasks (e.g. reading operating instructions) and demanding communication situations (e.g. giving oral presentations). Next, the situations mentioned by the interviewees will be discussed in more detail, and compared with those identified in previous studies of Finn's English use that were reviewed in chapter 2.3.1.

Varied situations

The most common situation where the interviewees use English at work is in e-mail. All interviewees mentioned that they read and write e-mail messages daily, or at least weekly. In the following extract the interviewee mentions that there are days when he gets more e-mail in English than in Finnish:

Interview extract 8:

- Interviewer: no sitten oisin kysynyt että ihan konkreettisista tilanteista missä englantiin törmää täällä työpaikalla missä sitä kuulee tai näkee tai joutuu lukemaan tai kirjoittamaan?
- Interviewee 9: tietokoneohjelmissa sitten tulee sähköpostia tulee englanniksi tulee joskus aika paljonkin ettei muuta kun englantia

This extract demonstrates that e-mail as a new communication technology has affected Finnish working life so that many employees come into contact with English via e-mail often.

Other situations where the interviewees need to read English were reading work-related operating instructions, operating instructions of the manufacturing machines and other computer software. In addition, some interviewees reported reading a trade journal or news about their company in their intranet in English. The interviewees also use written English when writing documentation to customers, including technical and installation drawings of paper machines, delivery notes, promotional material, project

descriptions, and other types of reports.

In addition to written language, the interviewees need oral communication skills in their work. The majority of the interviewees said that they have been on business trips abroad. Depending on their job, on business trips they give presentations, negotiate or socialize with customers, solve technical problems, ask for progress reports, or explain a process, working method, installation or maintenance of a machine to customers. In addition, on business trips the travellers need to find their way in airports and hotels. Oral skills are also needed when guiding visitors in the factory or answering the visitors' questions about their work. In addition, some interviewees mentioned that they speak English on the telephone with their foreign colleagues, or with their non-Finnish colleagues in Finland. The following extract illustrates the variety of the situations, in that both using spoken English on the telephone, and using written English when reading e-mail, technical specifications and operating instructions, are mentioned:

Interview extract 9:

- Interviewer: entä työssäsi konkreettisia tilanteita? [in which you encounter English]
 Interviewee 8: no se on puhelimessa kun puhelimessahan se on meillä on agentteja tuolla [name of the company] amerikan puolella ja siellä niinkun kollegojen kanssa joutuu käsittelemään näitä ihan ihan siis päivän rutiineita ja sähköposti on semmonen vois sanoo että kaikkein yleisin
 Interviewer: onko se lukeminen vai niinku kirjoittaminen yleisin?
 Interviewee 8: lukeminen no sekä että sanosin että enämpi lukee mut kyllä kirjottaa kanssa että siinä mielessä että meillähän tää kaikki dokumentaatio niinku semmonen tekninen erittely mikä menee asiakkaalle sehän on sehän on niinku enämpi tarjousinsinöörin hommaan sehän on se erittelyn teko englannin kielellä ihan mut kyl se lukemiseen silti kuitenkin enempi meillähän on kaikki ohjeistuskin on tänä päivänä ihan pelkästään englannin kielellä työhön liittyvä ohjeistus sekä tekninen että siis muukin toimintaohjeistus

It seems that the employees of this technology centre of a global company located in Central Finland have nowadays lots of contacts with colleagues or customers abroad. When reading this interview extract, it should be noted that the interviewee uses the words *päivän rutiineita* ['daily routines'] to discuss the situations where he uses English at work. So his word choices indicate that the use of English in his work is very commonplace.

Whether written or spoken English is used more depends on the interviewee's current job or task, or as one interviewee pointed out, on the status of an ongoing project. About half of the interviewees say that they need to read the most. Reading was found to be the most common language use situation also in the studies by Huhta (1999: 100), Lehtonen (2004: 93) and Penttinen (2002: 113). Two interviewees said that they need to write the most, and one interviewee said that he needs to speak the most. All interviewees need oral language skills for speaking about work-related things (e.g. explain how a machine works) and about everyday things (e.g. small talk on daily events), like Huhta (1999: 100), Lehtonen (2004: 93) and Penttinen (2002: 113) have found too. But probably the reason why most interviewees do not consider speaking to be their most common communication situation is that most of them are engineers by profession, and so they need oral English in-house and on business trips for explaining how a machine works or for managing everyday tasks, but as they are not sales-people, they do not need to give presentations or take part in negotiations with customers.

In addition to situations having to do with work, some interviewees also discussed the constant presence of English in their everyday lives. For example, they remarked that nowadays they encounter English in their free time on the TV, in TV commercials, in the media (especially on the Internet) and in the names of companies and shops. Some of the interviewees seemed to disapprove the use of English in those situations. This view is manifested in their answers where they say that English is present 'everywhere'. The following extract, where the interviewee says that *kaikki* ['all'] commercials or names of shops are in English, demonstrates this:

Interview extract 10:

Interviewer: miten kuvailisit englannin kieltä?

Interviewee 5: näistä vieraista kielistä nii helpoimmin opittava johtuu just siitä kun sitä tulee se on mainoksetkii on englanninkielisiä televisiossa kauppojen nimet kaikki on englanninkielisiä ja että siinä mielessä en mä nyt siitä oikein muuta ossaa se niinku tarttuu sitten

In reality all commercials broadcast on Finnish TV and all names of shops in

Finland are not in English, so when using the word *kaikki*, the interviewee is exaggerating, possibly to add emphasis to his statement or to express his disapproval of the use of English in those situations. The expression: *se niinku tarttuu sitten* ['it [=English] can be learned from there [=commercials, names of shops]'] points to the fact that English can be acquired in out-of-classroom settings, which implies that English is very prevalent in Finnish media and commercial life. The following extract is another example of discussing the constant presence of English because the interviewee says that since the use of English is spreading, and since it is already assumed that people know English, it could be possible that the use of English will continue to spread so that one day English will be a second national language in Finland:

Interview extract 11:

Interviewer: kun minun mielestä telkkarissa kun ihmisiä haastatellaan ei ole aina suomennettu haastatteluja oletetaan että ihmiset osaa [...] se on uus juttu
 Interviewee 7: joo on joo ja kyllä joo ei sitä välttämättä suomennettu oo kyllä se varmaan menee tässä koko ajan menee kehitys eteenpäin aina vaan se on kohta kuin toinen kotimainen kieli se englanti

This interviewee seems to be convinced that the use of English will keep spreading and he calls this phenomenon *kehitys* ['development']. Perhaps he thinks that the presence of English in Finnish society is already so strong that it can no longer be controlled or stopped. There seems to be some exaggeration in his words as well, which could imply that he disapproves of the spreading of English.

It should be pointed out that only two interviewees talked about English being present 'everywhere' on the TV, Internet and in names of companies and shops. All in all, the interviewees spoke more about *active use* situations (i.e. situations where they speak, read or write in English) than *passive use* situations (i.e. situations where they operate computers or machinery through English software, watch films in English, or listen or see advertisements or commercials in English), which are the terms that Preisler (1999: 241) uses of these language use situations. The majority of the interviewees remarked that they do not use much English in their free time,

which is the opposite situation to the Finnish students surveyed by Helle (1995: 21) and Penttinen (2002: 184). The explanation for the difference is probably that young Finns use English on the Internet, or hear it in movies and music, whereas the present interviewees, most of whom are over 45 years old, have other interests. Almost all situations where the interviewees reported using English in their free time involved travelling abroad on holidays. The reason why the interviewees did not report using much English in their free time could also be that they understood that using English only means speaking in English, and they only speak English outside their working environment in their holidays abroad. Or possibly the interviewees do not pay much attention to the English (e.g. in television commercials) around them when they do not need to actively use the language for practical purposes at work. Also the fact that the interviews took place in the interviewees' workplace probably influenced them so that they mostly told about work-related situations of English use.

Company-internal communication

As the varied situations above show, the interviewees use English for the two purposes mentioned by Mercer (1996: 87) and Graddol (2000: 43), which are communication between professionals and workers within the same line of work (e.g. team working), and communication between professionals and people who are not members of that same trade or profession (e.g. communication between the company and its clients, customers or the general public). The interviewees did not estimate how big part of their communication takes place internally and externally. A point for comparison could be the Finnish business people that Louhiala-Salminen (1999b: 6-7) surveyed, who estimated that about one fourth (24%) of their English communication is internal (e.g. with colleagues within the multinational corporation), and about three fourths (76%) external (e.g. with customers and suppliers). Probably for the present interviewees the share of internal

communication is bigger than that because company-internal meetings and reports were at the top of the list of the most common situations mentioned.

Thus one significant finding of this study is that the interviewees, who work in a technology centre located in Central Finland amongst Finnish-speaking people, frequently use English in-house. The company-internal situations where English is used include meetings and presentations and their memos, information bulletins from the head office, progress reports to the head office, in-house training (e.g. training to use a new machine or computer software), presenting or reporting of a campaign or project in-house, and meetings with customers who have come to the factory. The interviewees found knowledge of English very important to be able to cope with their company-internal tasks. To demonstrate, in the following extract the interviewee explains that English is used in company-internal promotional material, e-mail, progress reports, presentations because their workplace is part of a global corporation that has offices worldwide:

Interview extract 12:

Interviewer: kertoisitko sitten millaisia on tilanteita missä englantia kohtaat?

Interviewee 4: no tietenkii varmaan justiisa saattaa tulla teknistä spekkiä jostakii meiän tuotteesta joutuu törmäämään tekninen erittely [...] sit tietysti jos joskus ostetaan jotakii nii laitetta vimpainta tänne nii yleensä ne sitten tuppaa ne käyttöohjeet [...] sitte tämmönen myyntimateriaali sitten tietysti tytäryhtiöltä tuolta tulee jonkin verran sähköpostia että tuota nii paljon niinku tässä ollaan kuitenkin maailmanlaajuinen konserni nii meillä on tämmöset pääkonttori vaatii raportoimaan jotakii nii kyllähän ne niinku englanninkieliset kaikki ne pohjat on siellä taikka esitellään joku uus homma nii kyllä ne sitten englannin kielellä ylleesä tulee että aika paljohan täällä niinku liikkuu ihan englanninkielistä materiaalia talon sisälläkin ihan sen takia koska meillä nyt on ympäri maailmaa näitä toimipisteitä

The issue of using English in company-internal communication in the workplace in question will be further discussed in chapter 5.3.2 of this study.

'Euro-English'

The interviewees do not always use English with native speakers of English. The interviewees said that they use English both with native and non-native

speakers of English, but that using English as a lingua franca with other non-native speakers (e.g. with the French, Germans or Chinese) is more common. In addition, the interviewees sometimes use English with other Finns, for example in company-internal e-mails or presentations, as discussed above. The fact that the interviewees often use English in situations where both participants are non-native speakers of English is consistent with the findings of Louhiala-Salminen (1999b: 5), who estimated that about one third (32%) of the people Finnish business professionals speak or write English to are native speakers, and about two thirds (68%) are non-native speakers of English. Louhiala-Salminen (1999b: 5) calls the English used between non-native speakers - that is neither American English nor British English but something in between - 'Euro-English'. On the basis of their definitions of a good language user, it seems that the present interviewees are using a certain type of 'Euro-English' too. They did not say that they are trying to use a specific variety of English (i.e. British English or American English), but stressed the fact that the most important thing is to get your message across, as was discussed in chapter 5.1. The following interview extract demonstrates this:

Interview extract 13:

Interviewer: no kuinka itellesi onko näistä englannin opinnoista ollu hyötyä?

Interviewee 2: on kyllä [...] joka kerta melkeen jotain uutta oppii saa sitä rohkeuttakin vähän enemmän käyttää sitä kun huomaat että siellä pärjää nii tiät pärjät sitte missä ei nyt tartte ihan lauserakenteen mukaan välttämättä ei [xx] vastapuolikaan [xx] sitä varmaan on ehkä liian tuijottaa siihen että pitä mennä sama kun kirjottaa sähköpostin siinä tulee sitten alkaa pähkäillä mikähän artikkeli tähän

The interviewee's comment: *ei nyt tartte ihan lauserakenteen mukaan* ['grammar rules do not need to be followed perfectly'] is an example of a practical view of language proficiency, according to which conveying the message is important but aesthetic value or grammatical accuracy of the message is not important, especially among non-native speakers. The Finnish business people interviewed by Määttä (2005: 141-142) had very similar views about the English not needing to be perfect, and they, too, reported often sending e-mail messages to their Finnish colleagues or customers in English.

5.2.2 Interviewees' perceived strengths and weaknesses in English

When asked to evaluate their strengths and weaknesses in English, most interviewees mentioned one or several items of both. The most commonly mentioned strengths were: vocabulary, especially technical vocabulary of paper machines, listening comprehension, understanding written text, and speaking or courage to speak.

Mercer (1996: 87) points out that company-internal communication demands specialised language skills such as field-specific vocabulary from the speakers. Technical vocabulary was probably found to be a strength for the present interviewees because it is something that can be acquired in the course of the working career from work-related texts. Reading and listening were among the most common strengths of these interviewees and also of the Finnish business professionals surveyed by Huhta (1999: 100). Also the command of specialised vocabulary in their own field was mentioned as a strength. Similar conclusions were drawn by Lehtonen (2004: 94). It was somewhat surprising that some interviewees mentioned courage to speak to be their strength because in previous studies on Finns' language skills (e.g. Huhta 1999: 12, Lehtonen 2004: 94, Sinkkonen 1997: 162) speaking was found to be one of the Finns' biggest weaknesses. Perhaps the fact that some interviewees mentioned courage to speak as their strength reflects the fact that they do not expect their English to be perfect but are happy to have the courage to open their mouth and to deliver their message.

However, speaking and listening comprehension did also appear among the most commonly mentioned weaknesses. Some interviewees said that the most difficult situation is speaking with native speakers of English because it is difficult to understand their accent, dialect, fast speech or word choices, and also because the situation is unequal: the non-native speaker always feels more nervous or anxious than the native speaker. The following interview extract demonstrates how a Finn with limited English proficiency has problems in understanding the English that he hears:

Interview extract 14:

- Interviewer: monestihan ihmiset just sanoo että suullinen kielitaito on se vähä heikko kohta tai että
- Interviewee 9: nii ja sitte se siinä että toinen puhuu sitä niin äkkiä ja nopeesti nii tuota se että sä saat siitä toisen puheesta selvää se siinä on kato joku semmonen kun se puhuu sitä hirveen nopeesti ja se pitäs sitten hirveen hitaasti että pystys kääntämään sanoja suomeksi ja saamaan selville mitä se tarkoittaa tai silleen että jos puhuu hirveen nopeesti nii se ei niinku saa selvää se on ehkä se kuunteleminen kuullun ymmärtäminen se on niinku vaikein se minulle ainakii on että siitä saa jonkun jutuista selvää sitte

One explanation for this interviewee's problems in listening comprehension might be his age (which is 57): speaking and listening skills were not taught as much as they are nowadays because different teaching methods were prevalent then. In addition to speaking and listening comprehension, other weaknesses reported were pronunciation, grammar, technical vocabulary and writing. Technical vocabulary was found to be difficult because it is so specialized that translations cannot be found in general dictionaries, and writing, grammar and pronunciation were found to be difficult because the interviewees do not have a solid base in English from school.

Furthermore, speaking on the telephone (with native or non-native speakers), especially if the telephone call was unexpected, speaking in public, unexpected meetings, and speaking of everyday, not work-related things were also mentioned as difficult communication situations. Perhaps the interviewees' mediocre English proficiency explains why they find oral communication difficult: speaking happens fast, and especially in telephone conversations you need to react fast and rely on your listening and speaking skills and you cannot even use body language to support your message. On the other hand, these weaknesses do not seem to be unique for Finns with limited English proficiency, because understanding native speakers' accents and dialects, talking on the phone, and discussing everyday things outside the working environment were found to be problems also for more proficient Finns in previous studies (see e.g. Huhta 1999: 157-158, Korhonen 2002: 26-27, Konivuori 2002: 75-76, Lehtonen 2004: 94, Penttinen 2002: 185-186).

One difference between the previous studies conducted on Finns'

language skills and the present study is that these Finnish professionals with limited English proficiency mentioned more weaknesses relating to linguistic competence, such as problems with grammar, vocabulary or listening comprehension. For example, they told about incidents where they have had to ask for help in translations, avoid conversations with foreigners, or ask for someone else to come to the phone. The importance of intercultural knowledge, which appears prominent in several previous studies (see, e.g. Huhta 1999: 12, Isotalus 2002: 2, Konivuori 2002: 2, Korhonen 2002: 178-179) did not seem to be a concern for the present interviewees. The interviewees did not remember situations or language-related problems having to do with cultural differences in intercultural communication, and the reason for this could be that they are not much aware of cultural differences. Another possible reason could be the interviewees' low proficiency of English: they still have linguistic problems (e.g. understanding the interlocutor or expressing their message accurately) and are perhaps not yet at the level where intercultural competence would be the main problem. It may also be that having used English mainly in Finland – as opposed to the research participants of the expatriate studies (e.g. Isotalus 2002, Konivuori 2002, Korhonen 2002) – the interviewees have never encountered situations demanding intercultural communicative competence.

To sum up, all the strengths, weaknesses and difficult situations mentioned by the interviewees have also been found in previous studies on Finns' language proficiency, which suggests that the strengths and weaknesses of Finns with limited English proficiency are similar than the strengths and weaknesses of those Finns who have better English skills.

5.3 Interviewees' attitude towards the use of English in Finnish working life

This chapter discusses the interviewees' attitudes towards English in Finnish working life. The chapter is divided into three parts: *Global English*, *English as a working language* and *English as an instrument*. These titles represent the main themes identified in the interviewees' answers. Each theme consists of the interviewees' neutral, positive or negative beliefs and feelings towards English, and those are thought to be different aspects of the interviewees' attitudes towards English. The variety of the themes and aspects reveals that the interviewees were able to look at the issue of English in Finnish working life from several different perspectives. This, in turn, shows that their attitudes are not uncomplicated but mixed and even conflicting.

5.3.1 Global English

The most commonly mentioned attribute to the word *English* in the interviewees' answers was *maailmankieli* ['global language']. Synonyms for this mentioned in the interviews were *kansainvälinen kieli* ['international language'], *yhteinen maailmanlaajuinen kieli* ['common global language'], *maailman yleisin kieli* ['the most common language in the world'], *suurin kieli* ['the biggest language'] and *yleiskieli* ['general language']. These attributes seemed to carry positive connotations for the interviewees and often in the same sentence where the interviewees used the word *maailmankieli* or a synonym, they also used the words *hyödyllinen* ['useful'] or *tärkeä* ['important'], as demonstrated by the following interview extract, where the interviewee describes English as the most common language in the world, as a very important language and as a general language:

Interview extract 15:

Interviewer: ootko ikinä miettinyt mitä englannin kieli kielenä sinulle merkitsee?

Interviewee 7: no mitäs mä sitä merkinnyt miettinyt mutta kyllä se nyt on tuota sellasta

miettiny oon että se maailman yleisin kieli on sillä pärjää joka paikassa siinä mielessä se on hyvin tärkeä kieli ja hyvä osatakkii sillä kuitenkin pärjää ja tulee toimeen maassa kuin maassa tietysti riippuen riippuen siitä minkäkielisessä maassa on nii siinä mielessä se on semmonen yleiskieli

Interviewer: joo se on maailman osatuin vieras kieli

Interviewee 7: nii varmasti on olkoon missä euroopan maassa ranska italia italiassa vaikka missä maassa kiinassa nii siellä tuota noin japanissa nii joku osaa puhua englantiakii se on aika tärkeä tärkeehän se on kielenä

The interviewees seemed to be well aware of the fact that English is the most widely spoken language in the world and the most commonly used lingua franca in Finnish working life nowadays. For example in the interview extract above the interviewee's references to various countries where English can be used suggest that he does not question the position of English as a global language but seems to accept it as a fact, as was the case also with the attitudes studies for non-native speakers of English (e.g. Nielsen 2003, Preisler 2003, Tardy 2004).

The interviewees also seemed to consider the English language and internationalization to be interconnected. Most interviewees said that English is something that represents, comes along with, or brings about internationalization in the Finnish working life, and most interviewees saw internationalization as something positive. They explained that a global, common language is a positive factor for Finland because it brings new people to Finland, enriches the society, improves the Finns' language skills and makes Finland a more international place, as demonstrated by the following extracts, where the interviewees use the positive expressions: *onhan se [...] kansainvälistyminen [...] hieno asia* ['internationalization is a good thing'], *kyllä se [=use of English] rikastuttaa tätä koko yhteiskuntaa* ['the use of English enriches the whole society'] and *hyvä että tallainen yhteinen maailmanlaajuinen kieli on olemassa* ['good that this common global language exists'], to describe English:

Interview extract 16:

Interviewer: mitä hyvää on englannin kielen käytössä suomessa?

Interviewee 3: no onhan se tietysti kansainvälistyminen että on tällainen yhteinen kieli sitä suomee ei kuitenkaan [xx] osaa että onhan se tällaisissa hieno asia että

täältä löytyy ylipäätänsä

Interview extract 17:

- Interviewer: mitä hyvää on mielestäsi englannin kielen käytössä suomessa?
 Interviewee 8: kyllä se antaa tietenkii niinkun kansainvälistä näkemystä ja tuo uusia ihmisiä tänne tietenkii että jos täällä saa työpaikkoja varmaan hekin sillä ja kyllä se varmaan niinkun rikastuttaa tätä koko yhteiskuntaa

Interview extract 18:

- Interviewer: mitä hyvää on englannin kielen käytöstä suomessa?
 Interviewee 4: no kyllähän se varmasti tuo kansainvälistyminen yleensäkin koska maailma sikäli kuitenkin pienenee koko ajan että jos tänne jäähään puhtaasti suomen kielen varraan nii minusta tuntuu että ollaan sitten taas aika yksin [xx] eu [xx] laaja [xx] kansainvälisyttähän se tuo [xx] se tulee kuitenkin se on hyvä että tällainen yhteinen maailmanlaajuinen kieli on olemassa

These examples give the impression that English is something so strong and powerful that it can protect a whole country. The interviewees seemed to believe in the positive effects of internationalization brings on Finland, and they saw English as a medium through which the Finns can network with other countries. Positive beliefs about internationalization have also been found in several previous studies, for example in Lehtonen's (2004: 93), Määttä (2005: 142), Nielsen (2003: 207-208), Preisler (1999: 147), Sinkkonen (1997: 165), Tardy (2004: 258, 261) and Yang and Lau (2003: 109). To illustrate, some of the civil servants surveyed by Sinkkonen (1997: 165) said that international tasks were good because they brought with them new points of view, new contacts, interesting tasks, and the possibility to learn new things.

5.3.2 English as a working language

Official language or practical language?

The second most commonly mentioned attribute to the word *English*, mentioned by half of the interviewees, was *virallinen kieli* ['official language']. The interviewees were talking about the official language of their own corporation when using this attribute. As in the case of global English, also the word *virallinen* ['official'] was often mentioned in the same sentence with

the word *tärkeä* ['important'], as demonstrated by the following interview extract:

Interview extract 19:

Interviewer: mitä englanti sinulle merkitsee?

Interviewee 3: kieli ihan niinkö musta tuntuu että se nykyaikana ois kuitenkin tämmönen aika tärkeä sillä lailla että vaikka se nyt ei suomessa mutta esimerkiks täällä [name of the company] se on virallinen kieli että hyvä olis osata englantia

Graddol (2000: 12) suggest that in global companies nowadays, the national language is often used between co-workers as a language of solidarity and intimacy, and English, in contrast, is used as a language of distance, formality and officialdom. Perhaps the words *virallinen* and *tärkeä* used by the interviewee in the extract above point to this kind of view to the use of English in Finnish working life. So perhaps she sees English, at least partly, as something formal, official, stiff or distant. Perhaps also the previously mentioned beliefs about English being something strong and powerful point to this kind of high regard for the 'official' language.

However, this was only one aspect of the interviewees' attitudes towards English as a language of work. At the same time most interviewees seemed to have a very practical and 'down-to-earth' understanding of the reasons to use English at their workplace. This approach came across in several interviewees' answers, and often the word *työkieli* ['working language'] was used:

Interview extract 20:

Interviewer: entä kielitaito miten suuressa osassa pidät sitä tässä ammattitaidossasi?

Interviewee 6: no kyllä sillä tietynlainen merkitys on meillähän on nämä toiminnanohjausjärjestelmät englanninkieliset [name of the company] työkieli tavallaan englanti

The following interview extract gives further illustration of a practical view to the use of English at work:

Interview extract 21:

Interviewer: millanen kieli englannin kieli on sinun mielestä?

- Interviewee 1: no miltä se kuulostaa vai siis mitä se tarkoittaa
 Interviewer: no ihan voit tulkita tämän niinku ite ymmärrät millanen kieli englannin kieli on?
 Interviewee 1: no se on se maailmankieli en mä muuta ei se oo erityisen kaunista jos vertaa esimerkiksi johonkii venäjään mutta
 Interviewer: joo mitä englannin kieli sinulle merkitsee?
 Interviewee 1: se merkitsee sitä että kun kun käytännössähän suurin osa näistä neuvotteluista ja palavereista mitä meillä on [xx] mitä merk[xx] työhön käydään englanniks
 Interviewer: nii se on sitten tärkeä?
 Interviewee 1: nii

In interview extract 24, the interviewee says that English: *ei oo erityisen kaunista* ['is not very beautiful'], and the implication of this statement seems to be that even is the interviewee does not find English beautiful, it is very practical and useful. The interviewee also says that *käytännössähän* ['in practice'] most of their meetings and negotiations take place in English, suggests that he sees English as a practical – and again important – medium of communication. Interviewees' practical view of the use of English was also seen in that they explained how English is used at their workplace in company-internal task descriptions, manuals or memos that have a wider circulation, because it is cheaper and less time consuming to write documents, manuals or memos in one language only. So the interviewees explained that for reasons of practicality, democracy and economy English is used as a working language in company-internal communication.

Natural and automatic

As Taavitsainen and Pahta (2003: 7) point out, in the Finnish branches of global companies the use of English depends on the situation, and the present interviewees stressed this, too. First, a few interviewees explained that in international projects in their company the language of the customer (e.g. German, Spanish, Russian, Chinese) is used as much as possible, and that only when the seller does not speak these languages well enough, communication takes place in English. The second example mentioned was that Finnish is used in everyday communication among Finnish co-workers.

But like Lehtonen (2004: 93) and Määttä (2005: 142-143) remark, if there is even one person in a meeting or team who does not speak Finnish, communication tends to occur in English, automatically. The interviewees also used words and phrases that indicate that they see the use of English at their workplace as something natural or automatic. For example, in the following extract, the interviewee remarks that Finnish is used among Finns-speaking colleagues normally, but that the language of e-mails that have a global circulation is automatically English, for practical reasons:

Interview extract 22:

- Interviewer: pitäskö sun mielestä näissä mainituissa tilanteissa mitä teillä on sähköpostit käyttöohjeet käyttää enemmän suomea?
- Interviewee 7: kyllä kyllä pitäs tietysti ensisijaisesti suomee käyttää mutta niille jotka menee tuommoseen kansainväliseen jotka menee ulkomaille niin vaihetaan kieli ja se on automaattisesti englanti kun suomalaiset keskenään puhuu ne kommunikoi tietyst suomeks mutta [xx] ei ymmärrä välttämättä [xx] kansainvälisellä kielellä keskenään varmaankin sitten [name of the company] on kansainvälinen yhtiö nii saattaa olla asiat jonkin muun toimii ympäri maapalloo tulee semmonen asia sitä ei voi kirjottaa kun englanniks se on vähän niinku käytäntö sanelee ne tilaisuudet millon sitä käytetään

The interviewee's phrase: *niille jotka menee [...] kansainväliseen [...]ulkomaille niin vaihetaan kieli ja se on automaattisesti englanti* ['the language of e-mails that go abroad is automatically changed into English'] seems to suggest that using English is as easy as pressing a button, because it takes place so automatically. This perhaps indicates that English has become a natural part of communication of the Finnish branches of global companies. And this is not a new finding: also Lehtonen's (2004: 93) interviewees found English a natural and obvious part of their business community and Määttä's (2005: 143) interviewees perceived of English as a natural, safe, accepted, and most neutral choice for the language of international business encounters. All this suggests that Finnish working life seems to be changing in the ways described in chapter 2.1. In other words, English seems to have become an integral part of Finnish working life.

5.3.3 English as an instrument

Functions as a tool

As discussed above, the interviewees saw English as an instrument to be used at work or as a medium of communication between people who come from different parts of the world. The most neutral (i.e. meaning that there were no affective words in the sentence or clearly positive or negative evaluations of English) of these views included saying that people need the common language to get their message across or to do their job if the job includes international communication. Consider the following example:

Interview extract 23:

Interviewer: mitä englantia sinulle merkitsee?

Interviewee 8: no se nyt on se on toinen virallinen kieli täällä tässä yhtiössä [name of the company] ja monessa muussa yhtiössä niinku [name of the company] ja näissä asiakasyhtiöissä suomalaisissa että kyllä se on ihan semmoinen väline jolla pystyy kommunikoimaan ja se on niinku tänä päivänä tosiaan niinku ihan siviilielämässäki

Here the interviewee defines English as: *väline jolla pystyy kommunikoimaan* [‘medium of communication’], which perhaps indicates that English is something natural that people can carry with them and use when needed. English was also found to be a useful lingua franca, as demonstrated by the following example, where the interviewee describes his experiences in a business trip in India, where he had written a text for his Indian colleagues:

Interview extract 24:

Interviewer: no tuota muistatko ite semmosia tilanteita että kohtasit englantia ja vaikkapa tunsit olosi iloiseksi tai ylpeäksi?

Interviewee 7: englannin kielen niinku käytöstä vai kyllä joskus semmosia tietysti muistuu se kun tuota intiahan on semmoinen eksoottinen maa ja me on tuota käyty kauppaa sen kanssa ja tuota vietiin sitä paperikoneen osaa sinne ja sitte kun ne on yks intialainen paikallinen hemmo jouduin siinä sen kanssa asioita hoiteleen niin kyllä se jälkeenpäin vielä kiitteli että hyvin hoidit homman [xx] kun joutuu semmosen pitkän tekstin tekemään niin vielä että ymmärtää siinä mielessä vaikka niinku saattaa jäädä jotain pari sanaa pois prepositioita helposti saattaa tulla väärinkäsitys kun asian ymmärtää niin sehän on tietysti hyvä että meni perille

This extract shows that the interviewee was happy because his message got through even though there were some mistakes left in the text. Without English as an instrument, the work in India would have been left undone. Seeing English as an instrument is a finding that appears in previous studies as well. For example, the professionals interviewed by Lehtonen (2004: 93), and the business people interviewed by Määttä (2005: 144) were found to need English in order to achieve their goals as business communicators.

Functions as a door or a key

In addition to seeing English as a neutral, practical tool, several interviewees also saw English as an instrument in a very positive way as a facilitator, or as a key that eases your access to different places. According to these interviewees, English is a great help when travelling, and it also gives people self-confidence and broadens their world view. These views are demonstrated in the examples below, where the interviewees speak about what the English language is like or what it means for them:

Interview extract 25:

- Interviewer: millanen kieli englannin kieli mielestäsi on?
 Interviewee 2: no en mä nyt se on semmonen avain mitä nyt tietysti kun sitä sitte tavallaan päivittäin kuitenkin törmää sitä kielioppia alkaa pikku hiljaa ymmärtää
 Interviewer: no sitten toinen kysymys mitä englanti sinulle merkitsee
 Interviewee 2: no tuota ainakii että se ainakii auttaa monessa asiassa varmaan pärjäämään aina ainakii jos työelämässä sehän antaa kumminkii kyllähän se varmaan [xx] varmuutta ja sitte muutenkii että onhan se mukavempi matkustellakii tuolla lomamatkoilla tai jossain jos törmää ihan vieraisiin ihmisiin jossain nii ossais sitte käyttää ei ois tuppisuuna [xx] vaikka tietä

Interview extract 26:

- Interviewer: mitä englanti sinulle merkitsee?
 Interviewee 5: kielenä vai maana
 Interviewer: kielenä
 Interviewee 5: no ehkä se on sitä kansainvälistymistä ja sitä ja helpottaa elämä tuolla sitten lomareissuillakin tulin tässä justiin pari viikkoo sitten kanarialla nii kyllä siellä vaan englannilla yrittää ei sielläkään tuu sitä espanjaa sanottua kuin gracias non comprendo

In extract 28, the interviewee uses the metaphor *avain* ['key'] to describe English and says that English gives him self-confidence. In extract 29, the

interviewee says that the English language *helpottaa elämää* ['makes [my] life easier'] because he can communicate in English when travelling abroad. Similar positive attitudes have been expressed in previous studies as well. For example, the majority (89%) of the Danish people saw English as a window to the world, improving people's language skills or broadening their cultural horizon (Preisler 2003: 123, 1999: 247). For the Asian graduate students in the USA, the English language meant worldwide access and ease of information sharing (Tardy 2004: 258, 261), and the Moldovan students found English a language that could give them economic or socio-cultural advantages (Ciscel 2002: 403-417).

Functions as an obstacle

While one aspect of English mentioned by almost all interviewees was seeing English as an enabling key, several interviewees also discussed the reverse side of this and pointed out that not knowing English can mean not having access to certain information, and so the need to use English can also have negative consequences. The first negative consequence of using English in Finnish working life mentioned by the interviewees was that not knowing English can put people in an unequal position. Half of the interviewees remarked that it is nowadays already assumed that people know English. This can cause inequality between employees who are at different levels of English proficiency but would need to access the same information that is offered in English. Some interviewees explained how it is possible that not all employees understand the company-internal information bulletins that are distributed only in English. Furthermore, one interviewee remarked how not knowing English may be dangerous and possibly a safety risk, referring especially to regulations according to which emergency stop buttons of machines must be marked with text in the national language:

Interview extract 27:

Interviewee 4: täytyy ymmärtää sitä meitä on ihmisiä monentasosia tässäki asiassa ja

niillähän voiaan saaha pahojakin väärinkäsityksiä asioita mehtään menemään että jos joku niinku vaikka ymmärtää väärin jonkun asian sehän voi olla jopa työturvallisuusriski että tämän takia muun muassa kaikki koneiden käyttöohjeet ja tämmöset on hyvä olla suomenkielisiä jo laki vaatii ja eu:n direktiivit että että vaikka ne ois kuinka että tuosta konneen jos on punanen nappi että siinä on lukis stop nii varmaan sen kaikki tajuais mutta jo lakikii sanoo että siinä pitää olla hätäseis

Thus as the interviewee remarks in the excerpt above, there are also places and situations where English should not be used in Finnish workplaces.

It was also mentioned that English can cause inequality by functioning as a 'gate-keeper'. For example, several interviewees remarked that English is used more and more often in job advertisement and online job application forms, which means that the applicant's first test in the job application process is to understand the advertisement. The following example demonstrates how the interviewee says that also in their workplace the online job application form is in English and so all applicants must understand enough English to be able to understand the application form:

Interview extract 28:

- Interviewer: työpaikkailmotuksia selailee niin englannin kielen taito mainitaan?
 Interviewee 4: kyllähän niinku meilläkii esmes jos vaikka haetaan pelkkää koneistajaa niinku kysytään jo vaikka ei se nyt mikään pääsyvaatimuksen syy oo [...] samahan meillä kun on [...] myöskin netissähän meidänkii työhön työnhakukaavake millä ihmiset tuolla netissä hakee meille töitä niin nehän on englanninkielisiä kaikki
 Interviewer: pakko on osata jo englantia
 Interviewee 4: nii ja vaikka haetaan niin tuota niin kyllä nytkii haettiin koneistajia meille tämä ei oteta kuin nettihakemuksia vastaan nii se on englanninkielinen se hakemus pittää ymmärtää tarkkaan se vaikka suomeks sen saa täyttää mutta kaikki kysymykset on englanniksi
 Interviewer: sehän jo vähän karsii
 Interviewee 4: mmm

This extract demonstrates how the English language has affected Finnish working life. The interviewee's words *vaikka haetaan pelkkää koneistajaa* ['although they are looking only for a machinist'] imply that even for a small need English is required.

In their interview answers, several interviewees stressed that English is very important and some specified that English skills are nowadays a

practical necessity and even a prerequisite for getting a job in the field of international trade. One interviewee pointed out how inadequate English proficiency can limit a person's working possibilities and in so doing work as an obstacle. More specifically, in the following extract he refers to the fact that speaking a foreign language is essential when communicating with foreign customers or otherwise the scope of the job will remain limited:

Interview extract 29:

- Interviewer: luuletko että englannin osaaminen tai osaamattomuus voi vaikuttaa henkilön työmahdollisuuksiin tai ylenemismahdollisuuksiin suomessa?
- Interviewee 2: kyllä se varmaan vähän rajottaa sitä työnkuvaa ainakin että [xx] jos sun pitäis olla niinku asiakkaitten kanssa varsinkii ulkomaisten asiakkaitten kanssa tekemisissä nii tarvitaan vieras kieli nii ei sitä oikein pysty oikein varmaan aika suppeeks se varmaan jää ja pitäis varmaan pystyä puhumaan ihan muutakii kun sehän on varmaan vaikeempaa se puhuminen kun työasioista ihan tavallisista asioista puhuminen

This interviewee also mentions that he finds talking of everyday topics more difficult than talking of work-related topics, which was also one of the most common weaknesses found in previous studies on Finns' language skills (e.g. Huhta 1999: 100, Korhonen 2002: 26-27).

One important finding of this study is that an interviewee admitted openly that limited English proficiency has created him communication problems at work and has been an obstacle in his career advancement. In the following extract he tells about an incident where he had communication problems with German colleagues at work and had to ask another colleague for help and that his limited English proficiency has slowed down his own career advancement by saying that *se on niinku yks kynnyks se kielitaito mulla ainakii* ['language proficiency is a threshold for me']:

Interview extract 30:

- Interviewer: muistatko tilanteita joissa kohtasit englantia ja se aiheutti ahdistusta tai ärsytti että?
- Interviewee 6: no no siitä on jo pitempi aika ennen täällä kun ruvettiin opiskelemaan työstökone oli remontissa ne oli kyllä saksasta ne korjaajat mutta meillä oli yks toinen kaveri mikä sitte meiän yhdysmies mutta minäkii jouin aika paljon niitten kanssa tekemisiin ne siinä oli oli vaikeeta tulla ymmärretyks että ei ollu siitä on noin kymmenen vuotta aikaa näki sen puutteena että

- kysellä kaveria apuun
[...]
- Interviewer: ootko sitä mieltä että englannin osaaminen tai osaamattomuus voi vaikuttaa henkilön työelämään tai työmahdollisuuksiin ylenemismahdollisuuksiin
- Interviewee 6: kyllä varmasti että kansainvälinen yritys ja tiiän niinku saman koulutuksen omaavia kavereita jotka joilla on hyvä kielitaito niin on päässy sitten ihan ylenemään varmaan sen takia urallaan että ite on vähän niinku kokenu sen puutteenakin että jos ois parempi kielitaito niin sitte kyllähän täällä isossa talossa on paljo mahdollisuuksia jos sitte haluaa mutta tuota se on niinku yks kynnys se kielitaito mulla ainakii

This example shows that people with limited English skills in Finnish working life can suffer because of their limited skills. As the word *kynnys* [‘threshold’] used by the interviewee demonstrates, the interviewee seems to think that English proficiency is something that a person should have in order to exceed that threshold and to advance in their career.

So seeing English as an obstacle was one of the negative attitudes that the interviewees had towards English. Similar negative attitudes towards English having to do with the functioning of English as an obstacle have been found in previous studies as well (see e.g. Sinkkonen 1997: 164 and Tardy 2004: 261). Especially the Asian graduate students surveyed by Tardy (2004: 258) felt that that native-speaker writers have an unfair advantage over non-native speakers, that research that is not published in English can be overlooked, and that miscommunication among researchers can occur when native speakers and non-native speakers write in English.

Functions as a prestige symbol

Other negative beliefs related to the use of English in Finnish working life had to do with seeing English as a prestige symbol. Several researchers (e.g. Crystal 1997: 102, Graddol 2000: 38, Hiidenmaa et al. 2003) have suggested that the English language is nowadays connected with power and prestige in people’s minds and that one of people’s motives for using English is wanting to be associated with the power and prestige that the English language carries. When asked for the reasons why English is used in working life in Finland, half of the interviewees said that one possible motive may be a

person's need to be recognised, to show off his or her English skills or to make oneself important. The interviewees who brought up this issue seemed to be displeased with that practice. For example, in the following extract the interviewee criticises the pressure of using English in meetings where everybody understands Finnish:

Interview extract 31:

- Interviewer: no näätkö mitään huonoja puolia [in the use of English]?
 Interviewee 7: no ehkä voi olla sitte että joku vois olla että semmoset saattaa käyttää sitte englannin kieltä tämmösesä jossain palaverissa jossa on niinku esimerkiks kaikki kaikki ymmärtää suomea mutta sitte jos tehdään ittensä tärkeeks puhutaan vaan englantia tuommosta saattaa esiintyä jossain että ei sais ei tarttis englantia liian suuresti käyttää

Similarly, in the following extract the interviewee criticizes the practice of sending company-internal e-mail to Finnish-speaking people in English:

Interview extract 32:

- Interviewer: entä ootko koskaan kohdannut englantia ja on ärsyttänyt että minkä takia tässäki pitää tätä englantia olla?
 Interviewee 5: no en mä tiä onko ehkä nuo nyt on joskus nyt ei oo tullu viime aikoina mutta tässä vähän aikaa sitten oli vielä just niitä sähköpostia sisäisiä posteja lähetellään toinen toisillemme yks alkuperänen on englanniks sitä kommentoidaan englanniks ja lähetetään kaverille nii että vois kommentoida sen suomeks
 Interviewer: tästähän on käyty keskustelua englannin kielen käytöstä suomessa siitä näkökulmasta just kun ylin johto käyttää työssään englantia ja sitten sitten alkaako se käyttö levitä sitten tilanteisiin joissa se ei ole välttämätöntä just kun ylin johto käyttää englantia ja muuta alkaa jäljitellä niin matkia niitä ja olla itekkii olevinaan hirmu hyviä ja käyttävät englantia
 Interviewee 5: nii kyllä se voi meillä ollakii siinä joitain semmosia just niitä mitä tuli niitä sähköposteja että se on välillä sitä pätemisen tarvetta että näyttää että minä osaan

The interviewee's expressions: *pätemisen tarvetta* ['need for recognition'] and *vois kommentoida sen suomeks* ['those comments could be in Finnish'] indicate that he is annoyed by the people who use English as a status symbol.

Probably this annoyance was due to the fact that the interviewees themselves had a clear view of the appropriate use of English: they did not seem to like the fact that somebody uses English in situations where it would not prevent a message getting through. The following extract, where the

interviewee comments on the practice of writing company-internal e-mail messages in English because among the receivers there could be people who do not understand Finnish, demonstrates this practical view:

Interview extract 33:

- Interviewer: ootko ikinä miettiny sitä että niissä tilanteissa missä täällä sisäisesti käytetään englantia täällä jväskylässä että niissä tilanteissa vois käyttää enemmän suomea tai pitäis käyttää enemmän suomea?
- Interviewee 2: no en mä täällä yksikön sisällä oo niinku törmänny että hirveesti tarttee sitä että nyt suoraan englannilla turha sitä vaikeuttaa enää sitä työtilanetta on ollu semmosia onko ne sitte semmosia sähköposteja että ne menee sitte laajemmalle levitykselle oisko se sitte niin tai sitte jos siellä on yks [xx] se voi sitte kääntyä siihen se menee sitte englanniks heti

The interviewee's phrase: *englannilla turha vaikeuttaa enää sitä työtilanetta* ['there's no point in making the task even more difficult by using English'], crystallizes the view that English should be used in Finnish working life for practical purposes only, and not, for example, in order to imitate the management in using English at work. It may also be that the interviewee fears that all recipients would not understand the English message or that the language would draw too much attention from the content.

In connection with the prestige function of English, it has been suggested (see Hiidenmaa et al. 2003) that the increasing use of English in Finnish working life could result into the birth of a business 'elite', who use English in their work (for practical reasons and also as a prestige symbol), which would leave the 'common people' who only use Finnish at work marginalised. In their responses to this suggestion, the present interviewees expressed conflicting views. One could have assumed that the interviewees would have feared being marginalised because of their limited English skills, but that assumption was supported only partially by the interview answers.

As discussed above, some of the interview answers point to the belief that people in Finnish working life are divided into categories on the basis of their English proficiency already (e.g. into those that can be sent to business trips abroad and those who cannot). Also the statements about job advertisements being the first test of the candidate's English proficiency and

having the power to eliminate candidates point to this belief. Furthermore, the following extract, in which the interviewee tells about a ‘gap’ in their workplace, in which the people who work the machines do not take part in the English classes while other employees do, demonstrates this:

Interview extract 34:

- Interviewer: ja niinku just hesarissa oli viime syksynä kakstuhatta kolme tämmösiä mielipidekirjotuksia ihan tämmöset aika vaikutusvaltaset tai no kielen [...] eriarvosuutta ihmisten välillä
- Interviewee 5: kyllä varmaan voi sitäki ja sitte on meillä täällä se no meillä on tää pienryhmä ja täällä saa englannin kielen opetusta mutta ei täällä kaikille anneta esimerkiks ei täällä jotka koneilla työskentelee nii ei ne missään englannin tunneilla käy onko niistä katottu ettei se siellä ole

By using the passive construction: *onko niistä katottu ettei se siellä ole* [‘have they [=the management] decided that it [=learning English] is not [necessary to learn English] there [=among the people who work the machines]’], the interviewee seems to be wondering that the management has decided that it is not necessary for some of their workers – while it is possible for others – to learn English. By using the word *siellä* [‘there’], the interviewee seems to be saying that he is not part of the excluded group. It seems probable that when speaking about this situation, the interviewee counted himself as belonging to the ‘better’ side because he actively uses English at work and is also allowed to study it more. This seemed to be the case for the other interviewees as well. Most interviewees seemed to think that marginalisation can be prevented by learning more English, and that if all employees know at least some English, a gap cannot be born. To demonstrate the importance of language instruction as prevention of marginalisation, several interviewees pointed out the difference between older Finns and younger Finns. This point is illustrated by the extract below, in which the interviewee remarks that older Finns might not be able to, for example, understand the television commercials that have not been translated into Finnish:

Interview extract 35:

- Interviewer: tästähän on esitetty niinku teorioita että onko se just amerikkalainen

- massakulttuuri kulttuuriteollisuus joka kaikki on englanniksi
 Interviewee 5: nii mainokset ja muut tässä on vanhempi väki joka ei koskaan englantia
 lukenu nii puolet mainoksista menee ettei ne tiä mitä siinä myyään
 Interviewer: nii varmaan kaikkia ei ole ees käännetty
 Interviewee 5: niin ei ookaan siinä vaan joku heiluu ja hyppii vähän aikaa ja sitten jää
 niinku avoimeks että mitä ne siinä markkinoi

Several interviewees denied the prospect of a gap by pointing out that young Finns cannot become marginalised but will have good English skills because English courses are nowadays an integral part of the curriculum in basic education and in all branches of secondary education as well.

Characteristic of an employee

In addition to seeing English as an instrument, a common theme in several interviewees' answers was seeing proficiency of English as an integral part of a person's professional expertise. In other words, English skills appeared to be so important and natural that they were seen to have become a part of the person. Consider the following example, where the interviewee tells about the necessity of employees who are sent to business trips to speak English:

Interview extract 36:

- Interviewer: no luuletko että englannin osaaminen tai osaamattomuus voi vaikuttaa henkilön työmahdollisuuksiin tai ylenemismahdollisuuksiin?
 Interviewee 1: ihan varmasti
 Interviewer: nii sekin minua kiinnostaa että kuinka miten se voi käydä sitte ilmi tai?
 Interviewee 1: siis eihän jos kaveri siis eihän jos aatellaan että meidän pitäis lähettää joku kaveri tuonne maailmalle mikä se sit ikinä onkaan ja siis kaveri ois vaikka nii kätevä kuin ikinä voi olla mutta ei osaa kieltä nii eihän sitä voi sinne lähettää ei nykyään enää lähetä tulkkia mukaan työmaille niinku ennen vanhaan silloin oli eri periaatteet työmaalla oli vähän toisella lailla mutta ei niinku jos mä lähetän tästä kaverin johonkin mutta ei kukaan kysy osaatko sä sitä kieltä se on ihan oletus mä en laita jos mä tiän että se ei osaa

The fact that the interviewee says: *se on ihan oletus* ['it is assumed'] that the employee sent to a business trip can speak English shows that he considers English proficiency to be a characteristic of a good employee. This view has been expressed by researchers as well. For example, Mercer (1996 as quoted by Graddol 2000: 43) argues that using English has become a part of the

service that globally operating companies offer to their customers, and that the employees of those companies must use English to provide that service. Similarly, Louhiala-Salminen (1999b: 5) remarks that command of English is a qualification that Finnish professionals are automatically assumed to have.

All interviewees believed that proficiency in English has an influence on a person's job opportunities in Finland nowadays. It was mentioned, as discussed above, that in almost all jobs some level of English proficiency is required, and that especially if you want to advance higher in your career you must know English. One interviewee actually said that he might hire a person with good language skills even if he or she would not be good at the content of the job, because it might be easier to learn the content than to learn a language properly. This is one of the signals, in addition to the ones discussed at the end of chapter 5.1, that the interviewees sent to young Finns about the importance of language proficiency.

Also previous studies have established that English skills have an influence on a person's career both in Finland (see e.g. Määttä 2005: 67-68, Sinkkonen 1997: 164) and abroad (see Nielsen 2003: 199-201, Tardy 2004: 258, 261, Yang and Lau 2003: 112-114). It also seems that the interviewees of the present study have a more favourable attitude to the use of English than the general Finnish population, 42% of which disagreed with the statement that everyone in the European Union should be able to speak English in the Eurobarometer survey (Eurobarometer 54 Special). It seems clear that the interviewees of this study find English proficiency more important than the general Finnish population does because they have seen in practice how English is used and needed in working life nowadays.

Requirement for an employee

Some interviewees characterized the use of English as part of their job as a challenge, as demonstrated by the following extract, where the interviewee observes that it is a challenging part of his job to read texts in English:

Interview extract 37:

- Interviewer: onko ne sitten lähinnä että just joutuu lukemaan englantia?
 Interviewee 6: kyllä joskus tulee esmerkiks semmosia sähköposteja että ne tulee jostain ulkomailta jotain kyselyjä suoraan nii enemmän se on niinku lukemista pääasiassa ei juurikaan niinku ite tässä työssä semmosta tekstin kirjottamista ja no onhan tuolla näitä [name of the company] uutisia netissä nii aina koittanut niitä englanninkielisiäki sieltä lukea niinku tietoja tulee mutta ite työssä nii kyllä nää jotkut tämmöset töihin liittyvät kyselyt ne on varmaan semmosta ens[xx]
- Interviewer: pitäiskö sinun mielestä niissä tilanteissa käyttää enemmän suomea?
 Interviewee 6: no en minä tiä kun kyllä se vähä niinku onhan se haaste itellekkii tässä kun ottaa sen asian selville ja kyllä se nyt kun on vähän opiskellu nii kyllä se jotenkii ymmärtänyt mitä siinä niinku tarkotetaan tuota tietysti nyt on sanakirjat ja muut tuolla tietokoneella että tuota helposti saa sitte selville

It seems that the interviewee purposefully uses the word *haaste* ['challenge'] in its positive meaning as the opposite of *problem* because he has decided to have a positive attitude towards the use of English in his work. This finding has come up in previous studies as well: the civil servants surveyed by Sinkkonen (1997: 165) used the word *challenging* to describe the language use situations of the upcoming EU chairmanship. First the civil servants found their international tasks challenging or more laborious than the previous tasks, but Sinkkonen (1997: 165) reports that once they got experience in the international tasks, they began to feel less laborious. Similarly, the interviewee mentions in the following extract that using English makes his job motivating, and that succeeding in communication is rewarding:

Interview extract 38:

- Interviewer: miksi aloit nyt opiskella englantia täällä?
 Interviewee 8: no kyllähän se tietysti oli se että kun kun minä niinku puristinsuunnittelussa siis ihan laitossuunnittelussa olin kaheksan vuotta että siitä halusin kuitenkin päästä [xx] ja se on silloin ihan niinku edellytys varsinkin jos on myyntityön kanssa tekemisissä se on se on käytännön välttämättömyys ja motivoi kyl kans että kyllähän se loppujen lopuks on hyvin motivoinut sen kyllä huomaa sen että sitä [xx] oppii ja pystyy kommunikoiimaan nii kyllähän se jo antaa [xx]

Two points of view can be identified from this extract. The first is the positive tone with which the interviewee talks about being motivated to learn English because he can see the practical use of better English skills. The second point of view is more negative because the phrases: *ihan niinku edellytys* ['a

prerequisite'] and *käytännön välttämättömyys* ['a practical necessity'] imply that there is no other option but to know English, and so the challenging situation can also mean that English skills are a restricting requirement for the employees. Other interviewees used similar words to talk about the importance of English in the field of international trade. For example, in the following extract the interviewee defines English skills as a 'must':

Interview extract 39:

- Interviewer: voiko englannin osaaminen tai osaamattomuus vaikuttaa henkilön työmahdollisuuksiin?
- Interviewee 4: ihan varmaan ihan varmaan vaikuttaa että tuota niinku sanoin aikasemmin ei kohta ei enää semmosta työtä oikein ole että tuota nii et saa sitä ees jonkii verran tarvii osata sit työnkuvat monta kertaa laajenee koko ajan ettet sä tee koko ajan pelkästään pientä hommaa ja sit tietysti jossakii hommissa nii sehän on oltava ihan niinku must jos on työssä ulkomaalaisia asiakkaita niinku meilläkii nii pakkohan se on eihän siitä tuu siitä työnteosta vaikka sä oisit kuinka hyvä myyjä mut jos sä meet suomen kielellä myymään tuonne amerikanmarkkinoillekii nii kaupat jää kyllä saamatta

The phases at the end of this extract: *eihän siitä tuu siitä työnteosta [mitään]* ['your work will lead nowhere'] and *kaupat jää kyllä saamatta* ['you won't do any sales'] are very straightforward in their style and in so doing a good example of English skills being a requirement for employees. Also another extract from the same interview demonstrates that the interviewee finds English proficiency an integral part of his job because he uses the phrase: *se on niinku hyväksyttävää että minun toimenkuvvaan kuuluu* ['I have to accept it as part of my job'] when talking about English:

Interview extract 40:

- Interviewer: pitäiskö edellä mainituissa tilanteissa [technical specifications, operating instructions, promotional material, e-mail] käyttää enemmän suomea?
- Interviewee 4: no vähän riippuu siitä että mikä se kohderyhmä on että jos nyt puhutaan puhtaasti että jotain tietoa pittää levittää tuonne verstaalle työntekijöille mitkä nyt ei jou'u tuon työnsä takia muuten englannin kieltä käyttämään nii kyllä se nyt minusta on aika kohtuutonta että sitten jostakii kampanjasta taikka tämmösestä projektista mentäs englannin kielellä raportoimaan taikka esittelemään sitä sit taas sanotaan että niinku tälläkii viikolla viimeks on ollu pääkonttorin suomen tuotantojohtaja suomen tuotantojohtajan paperia on joutunu kahtelemaan englanniks ne tullee mutta se on niinku hyväksyttävä että minun toimenkuvvaan kuuluu sitä sen verran edes hallita mut en ois viemässä ihan tänne verstaalle asti vaikka kyllähän täällä niinku nuoremmat kaverit niin kyllähän ne jo ruppee halliitteen

In addition, the phrases *kohtuutonta* ['unreasonable'] and *on joutunut kahtelemmaan* ['I have had to read'] of this interview extract indicate that the interviewee disapproves of and feels irritated by the excessive use of English. As the previously mentioned example of the manufacturing machines having to have the *stop* button in Finnish, perhaps this interviewee's comment: *en ois viemässä ihan verstaalle asti* ['I wouldn't take it as far as the workshop'] is also an example of the fact that some interviewees thought that English should not be used in all places or situations in their workplace.

Finally, some of the interviewees' beliefs about the necessity to use English perhaps indicate that they think that English is something that has been exerted upon them from above, and that the employees did not have any control on that choice. For example, in the following extracts the interviewees use the phrases: *se on jossain sovittu* ['they have decided somewhere'], *yhtäkkiä huomataankii* ['suddenly you realise'] and *sitä vaan on opittava raportoimaan ja keskustelemaan englannin kielellä* ['you just have to learn to report and discuss in English'] when talking about the use of English in Finnish working life:

Interview extract 41:

Interviewer: pitäiskö näissä edellä mainituissa tilanteissa käyttää enemmän suomea?

Interviewee 5: kyllä minun mielestä nämä sisäiset asiat jotka minä tiän se on jossain sovittu että konsernin kieli on englanti mutta jos me kaikki puhutaan suomee täällä nii kyllä vois ne sähköpostitkii olla suomeks semmoset ainakii eihän me keskenään täällä englantia puhutakaan me puhutaan suomee

Interview extract 42:

Interviewer: ootko huomannu että englannin kielen käyttö ois lisääntyny suomessa?

Interviewee 4: kyllä se on lisääntyny tietysti se on varmaan se että sitä luetaan enemmän ja sitte tää globalisaation leviää leviää meillä on tuota nyt paljo firmoja suomessa millä on ulukomailla aina omistus ja en minä sitä nyt huonona asiana että tullee varmaan lissääntymää entisestään kyllä mullakii esmes on sellaisia kavereita töissä perinteisessä suomalaisessa firmassa yhtäkkiä huomataankii että ollaan amerikkalaisten omistuksessa ja sun lähin esimies on sitten amerikkalainen nii sitä vaan on opittava raportoimaan ja keskustelemaan sitten sähköpostilla englannin kielelläkii

In the phrases presented above, both of these interviewee use the passive voice, which implies that somebody else has made the decisions and that the

employee is the object of language policies which create new requirements for their professional expertise. It seems that the attitudes of these interviewees resemble those of the fatalist repertoire of Hyrkstedt (Hyrkstedt and Kalaja 1998: 351-352), who in their written responses take on the role of a victim and think that anonymous social powers or faceless institutions (e.g. the educational system and the media) are responsible for the language proficiency of individual Finns.

Positive and negative feelings

An important finding of this study was also the various positive and negative feelings expressed by the interviewees towards the use of English in Finnish working life. As discussed above, several interviewees said that they have sometimes felt irritated or annoyed at the English used in company-internal e-mail, information bulletins or in meetings where every participant would know Finnish. For example, the following extract demonstrates a view, in which the interviewee wishes that more of the company-internal e-mails and information bulletins would be written in Finnish so that everybody would understand more easily:

Interview extract 43:

- Interviewer: ootko sitä mieltä että näissä tilanteissa missä englantia täällä käytetään pitäis käyttää enemmän suomea
- Interviewee 3: no kyllä mun mielestä se suomi sais siinä kuitenkin olla että ku koska huomaa että täällä on tosi paljon ihmisiä jotka ei silleen englantia hallitse niin hyvin että sellasta virallista asiaa ymmärtäs että kyllä usein oon kuullu sen toiveen että ne sais olla myös suomen kielellä kai se sitte on kun ne asiakkaat enimmäkseen ovat onhan niitä toki suomessakin mutta tuota suurin osa on tuolla ulkomailla onko se sitten ihan sen myötä tullu

Half of the interviewees expressed the fear that English is taking over some space from Finnish, and they seemed to wish that and that more space would be reserved for Finnish at their workplace. This is also demonstrated by the following extract, in which the interviewee agrees with the statement that more Finnish should be used in their company-internal e-mails:

Interview extract 44:

- Interviewer: pitäiskö näissä edellä mainituissa tilanteissa [=e-mails and phone calls] käyttää enemmän suomea?
- Interviewee 5: kyllä minun mielestä nämä sisäiset asiat jotka minä tiän se on jossain sovittu että konsernin kieli on englanti mutta jos me kaikki puhutaan suomee täällä nii kyllä vois ne sähköpostitkii olla suomeks semmoset ainakii eihän me keskenään täällä englantia puhutakaan me puhutaan suomee

As discussed before, several interviewees seemed to resent the use of English as a prestige symbol (e.g. in e-mails between Finnish colleagues) and also in these interview extracts it can be noticed that the interviewees wishes that English would not be used unnecessarily (e.g. if all recipients of the e-mail would understand Finnish).

Other negative feelings that were revealed in the interview answers were nervousness, fear and shame. Some interviewees admitted feeling nervous or afraid before going abroad, ashamed to speak with native speakers of English, or distressed by situations where they do not understand something and have to ask for help, cannot converse with guests, or have to ask for someone else to come to the phone. The following interview extract, where the interviewee speaks about unexpected phone calls or meetings being exciting situations, demonstrates this:

Interview extract 45:

- Interviewer: muistatko jotain tiettyjä tilanteita joissa kohtasit englannin kieltä ja se herätti esimerkiksi ahdistusta tai ärsytti?
- Interviewee 2: no on joskus semmosia työ että ei niinku vara niinku [xx] on joku projekti mikä on tavallaan ohi eikä oo niinku etukäteen ilmotettu että mitä saattaa tulla just vaikka puhelinsoitto et pittää nii se että ei tiä yhtään mitä siellä on eessä menet semmoseen isoon huoneeseen missä vedät vähän henkeä ja sitte joku alkaa sulta kysellä jotain nii semmonen semmosia on joskus tullu että mut on niistä tullu selvittyä että ei ne niin pahoja oo koskaan ollu että kyllä se on sitte menny ihan kahen kesken [xx] vastaapas tähän aika jännää [...]
- Interviewee 2: sehän varmaan on silleen että ensin tulee mieleen että ei osaa mitään vähän aliarvioi itteensä kyllä se varmaan on hyvä olla vaan tyytyväinen ihteensä uskaltaa aukasta suunsa ei kukaan muukaan pysty sitä

The expressions *uskaltaa aukasta suunsa* ['to have courage to open one's mouth'], *vedät vähän henkeä* ['you take a deep breath'] and *aika jännää* ['quite exciting'] imply that there are occasions when the interviewee feels afraid to

use English. Furthermore, one of the most important findings of this study is illustrated in the following interview extract, where the interviewee admits that he has suffered because of his limited English skills:

Interview extract 46:

- Interviewer: muistatko tilanteita joissa kohtasit englanninkieltä ja se herätti ahdistusta tai ärsytti
- Interviewee 4: kyllä se varsinkin silloin matkalla sanotaan ensimmäisiä kertoja kun ties että tulee joku asiakas esimerkiksi johonkin palaveriin kun tuota sitä ei kovin hyvänä sitä omaa kielitaitoa niinku vielä vähemmän niillä kyllä mä sanon ihan suoraan että kyllä mä oon niinku kärsiny oon kärsiny tässä työnteossa että vaikka se nyt ei ulospäin oo näkynyt mut just tämmöstä ahdistusta siitä että kun ois se kiva kun hallitsis tuon kielen paremminkin että ei sitten tarviis niin jännittää sitä että mutta toisaalta se oon niinku huomannu että heilemmin sitä esimes tuota ruotsissa tullu aika paljo aikanaan käytyä meidän firmassa taikka sitten puolassa työmatkoilla nii tuota nii sitä heilemmin niinku uskaltaa puhua ja eikä ahdistusta kun tietää että ne toisetkii se on niillekii vieras kieli se on sitten eri asia että joku on amerikkalainen taikka englantilainen tulee nii

It should be noticed that in addition to speaking about his anxiety and suffering when encountered with situations where he has been in meetings with foreign colleagues or customers, the interviewee also mentions not being as nervous when speaking with other non-native speakers as he would be when speaking with native speakers of English, because the other non-native speakers are not perfect in English either. This feature of the interviewees' view of language proficiency has already been discussed in chapters 5.1 and 5.2.

Similar results have been found in previous studies as well. For example, the graduate students surveyed by Tardy (2004: 258) said that they had felt frustrated because of the time spent on learning and mastering a second language, and because they had had difficulties in communicating clearly in English. Also the Finnish business managers admitted that they have sometimes felt disadvantaged or insecure because they were not as good in communication as native speakers of English (Määttä 2005: 145).

As mentioned before, although the communication situations may be stressful, they may be rewarding as well. Most interviewees told about incidents from their business trips or from when they were travelling abroad

in their free time, where they had felt happy and proud to get their message across, to communicate with the local people, or to order food in a restaurant, for example. The following extract is an example of an incident where the interviewee had felt proud because he had received positive feedback from his daughter on his English skills:

Interview extract 47:

Interviewer: no entä vastaavasti muistatko tilanteita joissa kohtasit englantia ja tunsit iloisuutta tai olosi ylpeäksi?

Interviewee 6: no en tiä työympäristössä niinkää mutta tuolla vapaa-ajalla englanninopettaja se on ihan mukava kaveri ja tuota sitte mehän aina niinku tunnillakii ihan pyritään aina koko ajan puhumaan englantia ihan kaikkia näitä arkipäiväsiä asioita ja sitte se on meillä tuolla aina käsi pystyssä siellä aina joutuu jutteleen ja kerran just oli mulla oli tyttö mukana se on nyt kakskyt yks ja ylioppilas sano osaat sä noin hyvin englantia

As mentioned before, most interviewees told a similar story - only one interviewee said that he did not remember any situations where he had used English and had felt happy or proud.

This chapter has presented and discussed the interviewees' complex and sometimes even conflicting positive and negative attitudes towards English. The interviewees saw many positive aspects in the use of English in Finnish working life and in the Finnish society as well, but they also saw some threats. The complexity of the interviewees' attitudes could be a sign of the fact that the presence of English in Finnish society is not yet self-evident or stable. In the following chapter the findings of this study are summarized and discussed.

6 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The aim of this study has been to examine how Finnish people who need English at work but are not proficient in English see the use of English in Finnish working life. The purpose was to find out how decisions made at the corporate level (e.g. that English be the official language of the company) affect every day work of employees who only have limited English skills. This study examined 1) the situations in which the interviewees use English at work, and 2) the attitudes that they express towards the use of English in Finnish working life.

The data of the study consists of nine individual interviews with employees (one female, eight male) of a global engineering and technology corporation in the pulp and paper industry. The headquarters of the corporation are in Finland, but the corporate language is English. The interviewees of the study are native speakers of Finnish who work in the corporation's technology centre in Central Finland. Their ages range from 39 to 57, and they represent different educational backgrounds and different organizational positions at their workplace. The interviewees have limited English skills: they have studied English less than 10 years, most of which in adult education or evening classes, and now they are participating in English classes at the lowest proficiency level groups at their workplace. Most interviewees evaluated their own English proficiency as relatively poor.

The answers to the first research question showed that the interviewees meet and actively use English almost daily in various situations. The most commonly mentioned situations were e-mail, business trips abroad, company-internal meetings and reports, operating instructions, written documentation to customers, visitors, computer software, telephone, intranet, foreign colleagues, and trade journals. All areas of language skills (i.e. reading, writing, listening, speaking) were mentioned. The mentioned language use situations, and also the interviewees perceived strengths and weaknesses in English were similar with those that have been identified in

previous studies on Finns' language use. The role and importance of English in the interviewees' work varied depending on their current job, but a notable finding in this study was that also the employees whose work does not include direct contacts with foreign customers often need to use English at work. The results of this study indicate that a person can do his or her work in a global company also with limited English proficiency. The results of this study also show that a large part of the work done in English consists of company-internal communication (e.g. e-mail, meetings, and reports).

The interviewees seemed to understand the term *language proficiency* very rationally as the ability to get your message across and to manage everyday tasks in English. The interviewees seemed to think that in communication situations, you should choose the common language that best suits the purpose and that is the most convenient choice for most participants. The interviewees often used English with other non-native speakers, and they did not seem to be using any regional variety of English but rather a neutral variety where for example grammar rules do not need to be followed perfectly. All interviewees found English skills very important in their work and almost all of them rated the need for English as high as or higher than their English proficiency. Most interviewees said that they were studying English to make their daily work tasks easier, so they seemed to have an instrumental motivation to learn English.

The answers to the second research question showed that the interviewees' attitudes towards English are complex. Discourse analytic study of the interviewees' answers revealed three common themes in the interviewees' answers: *Global English*, *English as a working language* and *English as an instrument*. These themes consist of neutral, positive and negative beliefs and feelings towards English, which means that the interviewees saw various positive and negative aspects in the use of English in Finnish working life. Some of their attitudes were even conflicting, which perhaps indicates that the presence of English in the Finnish society and in Finnish working life is still a new phenomenon and that English has not yet

established itself firmly in Finland.

The theme *Global English* included seeing English as the biggest language and the most common language in the world, as an international language or even as a general language. Internationalization and the use of global English were found to be something positive for Finland. English was seen as being able to enrich the Finnish society, bring new people here and even to improve the Finns' language skills. The theme *English as a working language* included seeing English at the same time an official language of the company and as a very practical tool to be used in everyday tasks at work. In a positive light, the interviewees found the use of English at their workplace as something natural and automatic. However, opposing views to this were expressed as well, since some interviewees expressed the fear that English is taking over too much space from Finnish and wished that Finnish would be used more in company-internal communication in their workplace.

In the answers that belong to the theme *English as an instrument*, English was seen both as a key that can open many possibilities and that can make a person's life easier, and as an obstacle that can cause communication problems at work or slow down a person's career advancement. On the one hand, English proficiency was seen as an intrinsic part of a person's professional expertise, and, on the other hand, the use of English was felt to be a source of pressure or an obligation. Some interviewees recognized that English can be used as a symbol of prestige but the interviewees seemed to resent this because of their understanding that English is used for practical purposes only. As a result of their limited English proficiency, the interviewees admitted sometimes feeling nervous or disappointed in situations where they need to use English. The interviewees also reported feeling happy and proud when succeeding in communication in English. Similar beliefs and feelings than appeared in this study have been found in previous studies on non-natives' language attitudes as well.

The answers to the first and second research question show that globalization of economy and decisions made at the top of the corporation do

have a direct influence on the lives of individual employees: the official policy of the corporation according to which English is the official language creates language requirements for the employees: in practice it means that all employees, even those with limited English skills, need English at work. All interviewees of the present study thought that English proficiency influences a person's job opportunities in Finland nowadays. English proficiency was considered very important because limited English proficiency can restrict the jobs or tasks that a business professional can do. The results of this study indicate that how often the interviewees meet English does not depend on the length of their education or the number of years they have studied English. All interviewees say that they need English daily or weekly although they have different educational background and they do different kinds of jobs in the company.

This study showed that these Finnish professionals with limited English proficiency have had communication problems at work. Several interviewees admitted sometimes feeling irritated or annoyed by the company-internal communication that takes place in English. Some interviewees admitted having suffered or having being prevented from advancing in their career because of their limited English proficiency. It seems though, on the basis of previous studies on non-native speakers' language attitudes, that negative feelings (e.g. frustration or nervousness) are not only typical to professionals with limited English proficiency. However, the results of this study clearly indicate that using English as the corporate language in a technology centre in Central Finland causes some communication problems and feelings of frustration for the employees.

The findings of this study show that the interviewees were not in a similar situation as the 'English-have-nots' identified in the Danish study (Preisler 1999, 2003). The similarities between the Danish adults with limited English skills and the interviewees of the present study were that people in both groups sometimes feel angry or upset because of their communication problems, would like to know English better, and expressed many positive

evaluations about English. The differences between these two groups were that the present interviewees have not been 'left out' because they meet the language requirements of their company and actively use English at work. Thus it cannot be said that the interviewees were marginalised or would be marginalised in the future. The interviewees of this study seemed to have a more positive attitude towards English than the general Finnish population (see Eurobarometer 54 Special) and a probable reason for this is that the interviewees have seen in practise how needed English skills are in working life in Finland nowadays. Several interviewees told that they have stressed the importance of English skills to their own children.

The experiences of the interviewees of this study imply that if the background in English is not solid from school, English skills need to be developed as adults. The findings of this study are useful for language educators in that this study presented many authentic situations of English use in working life in Finland nowadays and also many weaknesses and problems-areas for Finnish professionals, and in language instruction, focus should be on studying the language used in these situations and on improving these weaknesses. In addition, the findings of this study imply that language educators should try to reduce the stress level of the students and create positive learning experiences. Similarly, employers in global companies should realize that the increased language requirements can make the employees feel anxiety or stress, and perhaps these feelings should be openly discussed to make sure that the atmosphere in the workplace stays good. On the basis of the findings of this study it can also be said that providing language courses as part of personnel training in workplaces is a good idea because of the increasing need for employees in all kinds of jobs to use English, and that global companies should translate more information in the national language, to make sure that everyone has equal access to it.

This study succeeded in revealing important insights into the role of English in the lives of those who do not master it well. The interviewees were a good target group because they did have limited English proficiency and

they answered the interview questions thoughtfully. Interviewing a small number of people was useful because it made it possible to study the feelings and experiences of the interviewees on a personal level. Although the group of interviewees chosen for the final analysis was small, a large variety of beliefs and feelings connected with the English language were identified. Interviewing employees of only one company also made it possible to outline what kinds of language use situations are used in that particular company and how that particular target groups sees the use of English at their workplace. This study did reveal some new information about the use of English in Finland - namely that Finns with limited English skills have various positive and negative attitudes towards this phenomenon.

In the future, a similar study could maybe be conducted to a wider target group, so that it would be possible to have more generalized findings. It would be important to find out how many Finns need English at work and at what level their English is. It would also be worthwhile to examine the attitudes of people who work in different branches and who represent different ages and educational backgrounds, and to compare those findings to the present study. Also, it could be studied whether there are people who have more limited English skills than the interviewees of the present study, and what those people think or feel about the use of English in Finland. Also the employees' feelings of stress, anxiety and nervousness could be investigated further: does the increased level of stress slow down their work and show in their productivity, for example? Does it cause depression or sick leaves? Finally, perhaps this study could be repeated in ten or twenty years' time, when the young Finns, whose language proficiency the interviewees of this study praised, will be active in working life, to see whether they have any problems in using English and whether the use of English in Finnish working life has then spread even further than today.

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Appendix 1: Interview questions

- 1) Taustatiedot:
 - Ikä?
 - Koulutus?
 - Työpaikka?
 - Mitä taitoja työssä tarvitaan?

- 2) Englannin opiskeluun liittyviä kysymyksiä:
 - Mitä vieraita kieliä osaat? / olet opiskellut?
 - Missä olet niitä opiskellut?
 - Mikä oli viimeisin kouluarvosanasi?
 - Millaista opiskelu oli?
 - Millaiset muistot jäi kouluajoilta?
 - Mitä vierasta kieltä osaat parhaiten?
 - Kuinka itse arvioisit englannin kielen taitoasi kouluarvosanalla?
 - Mikä on vahvuutesi / heikkoutesi?
 - Entä millainen olisi hyvä kielenkäyttäjä?
 - Milloin kielitaidon taso olisi riittävä?

 - Oletko kouluajan jälkeen opinut kieliä lisää?
 - Tahtoisitko osata paremmin jotain kieltä ja mikä se kieli olisi? Miksi?
 - Miksi aloit nyt opiskella juuri englantia?
 - Millaisia tavoitteita olet asettanut itsellesi?
 - Kuinka paljon panostat englannin opiskeluun?

 - Millainen kieli englannin kieli mielestäsi on? (kuvaile esim. adjektiivein)

- 3) Englannin kielen käyttö Suomessa + henkilökohtaiset kokemukset
 - Tarvitsetko nykyisessä työssäsi (käyttöohjeet, tietokoneohjelmat, tienneuvomiset, kansainväliset kontaktit jne.) / vapaa-aikanasi vieraita kieliä?
 - Tarvitseeko puhua / kirjoittaa / lukea englantia?
 - Millaisissa tilanteissa kohtaat tai käytät (=kuuntelet, luet, kirjoitat, puhut) englantia päivittäisessä elämässäsi? Anna konkreettisia esimerkkejä!
 - Luuletko, että Suomessa tarvitsee vieraan kielen taitoa?
 - Kuka englantia käyttää Suomessa (Kenelle englanti suunnattu? Millaisen vaikutelman antaa?)
 - Pitäisikö edellä mainituissa tilanteissa käyttää enemmän suomea? Ainoastaan suomea?

 - Mitä englanti sinulle merkitsee?
 - Entä äidinkieli suomi? Mitä on suomalaisuus?

- Oletko aina käyttänyt / kohdannut englantia yhtä paljon tai yhtä usein?
- Kohtaavatko muut perheesi jäsenet yhtä paljon englantia? Missä tilanteissa?
- Oletko itse ollut töissä ulkomailla?
- Onko ulkomaalaisia työkavereita?
- Onko ollut kielestä johtuvia ongelmia? Miksi?
- Mitkä ovat helpoimpia / vaikeimpia työtilanteita?
- Miten reagoit kun kohtaat englantia?
- Mitä ajattelet?
- Miltä tuntuu?
- Toimitko aina samalla tavalla?
- Muistatko tilanteita joissa kohtasit englantia ja se herätti tunteita? Esim. olit onnellinen? Sinua ärsytti? Olit ahdistunut? Olit ylpeä?
- Muistatko hassuja väärinkäsityksiä?
- Kuinka yleisinä pidät tällaisia tuntemuksia?
- Vaikuttaako englannin kielen osaaminen tai osaamattomuus jotenkin henkilön elämään Suomessa?

4) Yleinen mielipide englannin kieltä kohtaan

- Kuvaile omaa suhtautumistasi ja asennettasi englannin kieltä kohtaan!
- Miksi luulet, että englantia käytetään Suomessa?
- Oletko seurannut englannin kielen käytöstä käytävää keskustelua?
- Mitä hyvää on englannin kielen käytössä Suomessa?
- Mitä huonoa on englannin kielen käytössä Suomessa?

5) Lopuksi:

- Ovatko englannin opiskelulle asettamasi tavoitteet täyttyneet?
- Miten englannin opinnoista on ollut hyötyä?
- Millaista opiskelu on?
- Miten arvelet tarvitsevasi englannin kielen taitoa tulevaisuudessa?
- Mitä muuta haluaisit sanoa?

Appendix 2: Interview questions translated into English

- 1) Background information:
 - Age?
 - Education?
 - Current job?
 - Which skills are needed in your job?

- 2) Questions about English studies:
 - What languages can you speak? / have you studied?
 - Where have you studied them?
 - What was your latest grade at school?
 - What were the studies like?
 - What kinds of memories do you have from school?
 - Which foreign language do you know best?
 - How would you evaluate your own English skills by using the school scale?
 - What is your strength / weakness?
 - What would a good language user be like?
 - When would you have an adequate level of language skills?

 - Have you learned languages after leaving school?
 - Would you like to know some language better and which language would that be? Why?
 - Why did you start to study English now?
 - What kinds of aims have you set for yourself?
 - How much effort do you put on the English studies?

 - What is the English language like? (describe it with adjectives, for example)

- 3) The use of English in Finland + your personal experiences
 - Do you need in foreign languages in your current job (user manuals, computer software, telling the road, international contacts etc.) / in your free time?
 - Do you need to speak / write / read English?
 - In which kinds of situations do you encounter or use (=listen, read, write, speak) English in your daily life? Give concrete examples!
 - Do you think that knowledge of foreign languages is needed in Finland?
 - Who uses English in Finland (Who is the English aimed at? What kind of impression does it give?)
 - Should Finnish be used more in the above-mentioned situations? Should only Finnish be used in the above-mentioned situations?

 - What does English mean to you?

- What about your mother tongue Finnish? What is Finnishness?
 - Have you always used / encountered English as much or as often?
 - Do other members of your family encounter English as much? In which kinds of situations?
 - Have you worked abroad?
 - Do you have foreign friends at work?
 - Have you had problems caused by language? Why?
 - Which are the easiest / most difficult work situations?
 - How do you react when you encounter English?
 - What do you think about?
 - How does it feel?
 - Do you always act in the same way?
 - Do you remember situations where you encountered English and it aroused some feelings? E.g. you were happy? You were annoyed? You were anxious? You were proud?
 - Do you remember any funny misunderstandings?
 - How commonplace do you find these feelings?
 - Does the fact that you know English, or the fact that you don't know English have any influence in a person's life in Finland?
- 4) General attitude towards English:
- Describe your own approach and attitude towards the English language!
 - Why is English used in Finland, in your opinion?
 - Have you followed the discussions about the use of English in Finland?
 - What are the positive aspects in the use of English in Finland?
 - What are the negative aspects in the use of English in Finland?
- 5) Finally:
- Have you met the aims that you set for your English studies?
 - How have the English studies been useful to you?
 - What are the studies like?
 - How will you need English skills in the future?
 - What else would you like to say?

Appendix 3: Additional questions

- How old are you?
- What's your current job title in English (e.g. in your business card)?
- For how many years have you gone to school altogether?
- What languages can you speak?
- What's your educational background? (folk school, comprehensive school, secondary school, upper secondary school, vocational school, polytechnic, adult education, other?)
- How would you evaluate your English skills on a scale 1-5?
- How important are English skills in your current occupation on a scale 1-5? (1=little importance, 5=vital)