

**UNIVERSITY OF JYVÄSKYLÄ**

**STAY ABROAD AND FOREIGN LANGUAGE USERS'  
IDENTITY CONSTRUCTION**

**A Pro Gradu Thesis in English**

**by**

**Tiina Virkkula**

**Department of Languages**

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Tiina Virkkula  
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Tutkimuksen tarkoituksena on selvittää miten ulkomailla oleskelu vaikuttaa suomalaisten nuorten aikuisten englannin käyttäjäidentiteettien rakentumiseen. Päätavoitteena on tutkia millaisia identiteettejä liittyen englannin kieleen rakennetaan haastatteluissa ulkomailla oleskelun alussa ja sen jälkeen. Tutkimuksessa tarkastellaan miten osallistujat puhuvat itsestään suhteessa englannin kieleen, millaisia diskursseja heidän puheensa edustaa ja mitä positioita osallistujat ottavat tunnistetuissa diskursseissa. Erityisenä tavoitteena on tutkia identiteettien rakentumista erilaisissa konteksteissa ja eri aikoina.

Tutkimukseen osallistui seitsemän 21–26 -vuotiasta suomalaista insinööriopiskelijaa, jotka suorittivat työharjoittelunsa Saksassa. Osallistujat haastateltiin puolistrukturoidulla teemahaastattelulla heidän ulkomailla oleskelunsa alussa ensimmäisen kerran ja toisen kerran joko viimeisellä oleskeluviikolla tai Suomeen paluun jälkeen. Haastattelut litteroitiin tarkempaa analyysiä varten.

Identiteettiä lähestytään diskursiivisesta näkökulmasta eli sen nähdään rakentuvan diskursseissa ja konteksteissa sekä eri tasolla: yksilötasolla, vuorovaikutuksessa sekä sosiokulttuurisella ja institutionaalisen tasolla. Identiteetin ja vieraan kielen suhdetta on tutkittu vähän konteksteissa, joissa vierasta kieltä käytetään lingua francana.

Tulokset osoittavat, että insinööriopiskelijat rakentavat moninaisia englannin kielen käyttäjäidentiteettejä ennen ulkomailla oleskelua ja sen jälkeen. Erityisesti Saksassa asumisen alussa osallistujat puhuvat itsestään Suomessa saatujen kokemusten pohjalta ja koulutusdiskurssin myötä sekä asemoivat itsensä etenkin oppimiseen ja kielitaitoon liittyvissä diskursseissa joko oppijoina tai puhujina, joilla on suppea sanavarasto ja joille puhuminen on hankalaa. Sen sijaan englannin käyttämisen diskursseissa, jotka liittyivät vahvasti oleskeluun ulkomailla, osallistujat rakentavat sellaisia englannin käyttäjäidentiteettejä, jotka korostavat arkielämässä selviytymistä ja puhumisrohkeutta. Englanti koetaan siis enemmän omaksi kieleksi, mikä näkyi itsevarmuuden lisääntymisenä. Ulkomailla oleskelun seurauksena osallistujat rakentavat myös positiivista kollektiivista suomalaista englannin käyttäjäidentiteettiä verraten itseään muihin englantia vieraana kielenä puhuviin.

Tutkimus tukee sosiokonstruktivistista käsitystä identiteetistä sekä osoittaa pitkäaikaistutkimusten rikkauden identiteettien tarkastelussa erilaisissa konteksteissa. Vieraan kielen käyttäjäidentiteettien rakentumista on hyödyllistä tutkia erilaisissa konteksteissa haastatteluiden avulla.

Asiasanat: identity, stay abroad, analysis of discourses, longitudinal study.

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## 1 INTRODUCTION

A popular topic of discussion today is globalisation. What does it mean when we talk about the effects of globalisation? Traditional borders between nations and people have become lower which has resulted in the rise of opportunities for people to move around and experience new realities. During their lives, individuals become members of various different collectivities and encounter new contexts. All of this influences how we see ourselves. Hence, our *identity* is a central question in the age of globalisation. However, we do not behave alike in all contexts in which we operate as we can be students, workers, mothers and athletes depending on the situation and context. Individuals, when moving across contexts, may thus experience and see themselves differently as individuals, social beings and members of different groups. Thus, the idea of *multiple identities* is at the core, challenging the notion of identity.

Mother tongue is a strong marker of identity as it is the primary means of expressing oneself. However, it is not the only language linked with identity because many people learn to speak more than one language. In fact, it has been debated that different languages besides the mother tongue are connected to a person's sense of self (e.g. Joseph 2004; Norton 2000; Pavlenko and Blackledge 2004). Piller (2001, as quoted by Pavlenko and Blackledge 2004: 2) suggests that relationships between language and identity are complex in different contexts as language can function as a marker of national or ethnic identities, a form of symbolic capital and a means of social control.

When asking why studies on the relationship between language and identity are meaningful, Joseph's (2004: 224) point is noteworthy. He demonstrates that any study of language needs to consider identity if it is to be full, rich and meaningful. This is because "identity is itself at the very heart of what language is about, how it operates, why and how it came into existence and

evolved as it did, how it is learnt and how it is used, every day, by every user, every time it is used". Identity and its relationship to language have been studied in various disciplines. For instance, many sociolinguists have been interested in speaker identity and particularly how variation in, for instance, register or code, marks identity (e.g. Johnstone 1996; Martin-Jones and Heller 1996). Studies on bilingualism have concentrated on bilinguals' language choices and their relations to identity (e.g. Kanno 2003). Within social constructionism, identity is conceived not only as an individual's sense of self but as one's relationship to particular beliefs and possibilities available in social contexts. Often drawing on social constructionist accounts, recent second language acquisition research has been concerned with how a language learner identifies him-/herself in target language contexts (e.g. Norton Peirce 1995, 1997, 2000). In summary, different aspects of language and identity have been approached in different research angles and various methods of analysis have been used, such as ethnography, discourse and conversation analysis and narrative studies.

Second and foreign language learning research have only recently started to pay more attention to identity and language learning. Through speaking a foreign language a person has different ways of expressing oneself when compared with the use of the native language, and it is likely that a person sees himself in different ways as a user of the two languages. Thus, one may argue that an individual engages in *identity construction*. In addition to language, the construction of identity is linked to the social world since contexts affect the ways in which different identities are put forward (e.g. Hall 1996). In fact, there are calls for studies that integrate the language speaker and the context more fully (Norton 2000; Norton and Toohey 2004). Thus far, second and foreign language learning scholars have devoted their interest on identities emerging and constructed in contexts where the target language is spoken as a native tongue. What there has been little research on is the relationship between identity and foreign language, particularly

English, in relation to contexts where the language is spoken as a foreign language, such as in multilingual contexts.

Identity construction in such multilingual contexts is worth studying particularly because, firstly, English is the most taught foreign language in the world, and it has gained in status as an international language in many domains, such as education, business and media. Secondly, English is used increasingly more by non-native speakers. In fact, the number of non-native speakers who use English with other non-natives is growing (Graddol 2006), and conversely interaction among native and non-native speakers is shrinking (Crystal 2002). The language used between non-natives is called *lingua franca*, or ELF (e.g. Graddol 1997; House 2003; Seidlhofer 2001). One can argue that particularly in the mainland of Europe people use the English often as a lingua franca to signal divergence from native-like English and with the view of ELF being a variety of its own (McArthur 2003: 2). Finland is a good example of a country where the role of English has grown in many domains (Leppänen and Nikula, forthcoming) and where it is often used as a lingua franca. Finns through their use of English engage in identity construction in media, educational and business contexts (*ibid.*). The construction of Finns' language user identities in ELF contexts, though, has not been extensively addressed in research so far.

However, considering identity and ELF, House (2003) argues that no relationship exists between them since ELF is not a 'language for identification'. This may be true if language is viewed as always tied to a particular culture. However, in ELF situations the English language is not so much connected to the native speakers' culture but rather non-native speakers of English use it as a 'tool' with other equals to achieve communicative and other goals. The present study thus sees that identity can be a matter in ELF situations, too, and, therefore, is worth studying. It is yet unexplored how users of English a lingua franca construct their identities in different contexts, for instance, at home and abroad. As Shannon (1995)

suggests, during an overseas stay one often develops new identities, as it can be viewed as any kind of new situation in which a person has to figure out what kind of new identity to develop in order to feel comfortable in the new environment. Similarly, Thesen (1997) points out that investigating identity in movement gives a different picture compared with exploring identity at a certain point in time and place, which previous studies have focused on.

The purpose of this thesis is thus to study the construction of identities by Finnish young adults as users of English in different, particularly ELF, contexts. I draw on different scholars' views on identity and mainly the social constructionist accounts. This study takes a discursive approach in investigating identity negotiation in interview data at the beginning and after a stay abroad period, thus viewing identities as constructed in *discourses*. The interest is in seeing whether a few months' stay abroad period affects the participants' views of themselves as language users. Finland and Germany are the larger socio-cultural contexts in this study since, firstly, Finland is the context where the participants, a group of Finnish people in their early thirties, have previously learnt and used English and, secondly, it is in Germany that the participants work for a few months. The present research is thus longitudinal and qualitative. To begin with, it is of interest to investigate how the participants identify themselves as users of English with individual histories of learning English at school for ten years. The present study thus touches upon the power of institutions in shaping foreign language users' identities. Hence, this study has a critical perspective when seeing identities as affected by the discourses and social practices in which people participate (Ivanić 1998: 10). After this, as the participants encounter stay abroad situations and contexts where English is used as a lingua franca, it is interesting to find out whether the language user identities get reshaped and reconstructed. In analysing identity construction, I will make use of the concepts of discourses and *subject positions* as well as Pomerantz's (2001)

three-level perspective of identity construction and Fairclough's (1992) three-dimensional approach to analysing discourse.

The participants of the present study are enrolled at a polytechnic, and in this thesis they are treated as learners from the starting point of theory since second and foreign language learning research are the most useful frameworks for this study. I thus acknowledge, following Piller (2002: 180), that people after being learners eventually turn into users of a foreign language. Thus, the participants are referred to as 'participants', 'students' or 'foreign language users' who construct different language user identities. The word 'using' is chosen as the main concept when referring to different ways of using a language.

The findings of this study give implications to foreign language learning and teaching by giving insights on how foreign language users see themselves in different contexts. A person's sense of oneself as a foreign language user is significant for educators and curriculum planners who constantly work with individuals with multiple identities. Furthermore, there are implications to the ongoing research on English in Finnish society since this study investigates Finns' identities as English language users and hereby can give information on the role and meaning of English in Finnish people's lives.

Considering the organisation of the thesis, I will firstly present the theoretical framework of the study and introduce the main concepts. Secondly, I will discuss the relationship between identity and foreign language. In addition, as stay abroad and lingua franca contexts are at special foci in this study, their relationship to identity are presented. Next, I will concentrate on interviews as data and how they can be used to investigate identities. After this, the analytical framework and the data analysis are discussed. In the following section, the findings are discussed. Finally, implications are given, the study is evaluated and conclusions are drawn.

## 2 WAYS TO APPROACH AND CHARACTERISE IDENTITY

*Identity* has been a focus of studies in a range of disciplines, and it has drawn a great deal of attention in popular and scholarly discussion. There are various ways to picture and explore identity, and one can investigate aspects of identity on different levels. As a starting point, this study takes a *discursive approach* to identity and acknowledges the different levels of identity construction. In doing this, it draws from different theoretical frameworks: *post-structuralism*, *social constructionism*, *feminist theories*, *social psychology* and *critical theories*. Some of them have more significance for this research than others. Identity is a complex phenomenon, and, thus, approaching identity from different angles allows one to understand the different dimensions and the building blocks of it. In addition, it is important to be aware of different approaches which have influenced contemporary discussion on identity.

In the following sections, I will discuss the versatile nature of the concept of identity and introduce different ways to approach and characterise it, particularly those that are relevant to this study. The focus will be on the discursive construction of identity, that is, on the features particularly significant in the investigation of how identities are constructed in *discourses* and shaped within different *contexts* which are influenced by *power relations*. Furthermore, in the last section individual and social aspects of identity are discussed.

### 2.1 Multiple terms for identity

The concept of identity is a contemporary one, and it is used by laymen and researchers alike. In the age of globalisation and as people move around more, experience new realities and inhabit different contexts and communities, scholars have become more intrigued to investigate identity.

However, there are debates concerning the nature of identity as people conceive it differently. For ordinary people, identity means a kind of sense of oneself, and, thus, it is often connected to psychology. As regards scholarly views, the concept is more controversial and manifold, and, in fact, there are numerous terms and definitions used alongside identity, such as *self*, *person*, *role*, *ethos*, *persona*, *position*, *positioning*, *subject position*, *subject*, *subjectivity*. Scholars have distinctive views concerning the meaning and differences between these concepts, and often there may be only slight dissimilarities between them. The most prevailing variation is due to differences in the ways identity is approached in different disciplines. Psychology is more interested in individual aspects of identity whereas social scientists focus on issues at societal and institutional levels.

Ivanić (1998: 10-11) aims at making distinctions between the different terms that are used to refer to identity. According to her, the concept 'self' entails individual's feelings, and 'person' means a socially defined role as associated to aspects of identity. Thus, self seems to emphasise the individual level whereas person a societal one. Ivanić (*ibid.*) argues that the term 'role' has often been seen as simplistic, implying stereotyped behaviour. 'Ethos' (see Fairclough 1992) refers to a person's identity in terms of world view and social practices. This definition entails the view of subjectivity (or social identity, 'self') as drawing on different genre models and discourse types (Fairclough 1992: 166). By discourse types Fairclough (1992: 232) refers to genre, activity type and style, for instance. This seems to mean that a person's identity derives from a multiplicity of discourses and, thus, is a combination of positionings within different discourses. Ivanić (1998) herself talks about *possibilities for selfhood*, which, following the lines of critical discourse analytic tradition, concentrates on the macro layer of identity construction. As Ivanić (1998: 27) puts it, there are several socially available possibilities for selfhood in different communities and contexts. This view is discussed below.

Weedon (1997), coming from the background of feminist post-structuralism, talks about *subjectivity* when referring to the multiple and non-unified nature of the subject which is a site of struggle over power and which changes constantly. Subjectivity can be produced in many different social contexts which are influenced and shaped by relations of power. Depending on the context and power relations, a person takes up different *subject positions* such as a teacher, a child, a feminist, a manager, and a critic. In doing so, the subject is active and, thus, has human agency. In particular sites, communities and societies a person is subject of and subject to power relations. (Norton 1997: 411, 2000; Weedon 1997.) This means that individuals are not seen as passive and influenced by the surrounding worlds and different power relations within them. Rather, by having agency people are able to contest power and make decisions as regards the different positions they take up within different contexts.

Norton (Peirce 1995, 1997, 2000), who has investigated the relationship between identity and language learning, draws on Weedon (1997) in her definition of identity, which is termed as follows: "how a person understands his or her relationship to the world, how that relationship is constructed across time and space, and how the person understands possibilities for the future" (Norton 2000: 5). On the basis of Weedon's and Norton's views, it would appear that the term subjectivity entails a rather dynamic and multiple view of the individual, and identity construction is seen as occurring at both individual and social level.

The present study sees subjectivity and identity as synonymous although it uses identity as the main term. In short, by drawing on Norton (1997, 2000), I see identity entailing an individual's feelings and the relationship to contexts in which he or she inhabits. This study also makes use of Ivanić's (1998) and Weedon's (1997) views by stressing the changing nature of identity and the influence of context and power relations to identity. What is more, their

conceptions of an individual as having possibilities for selfhood and taking different subject positions across contexts are significant for this study<sup>1</sup>.

## **2.2 On ways to understand identity**

Identity has been studied from several points of view, for instance, social cultural, psychoanalytical, biological, symbolic, and constructivist, each focusing on different aspects of identity (see for instance Woodward 1997). Basically, Hall (1996) states that there are two ways to conceptualise identity, namely the *essentialist* and the *non-essentialist*. Within modernity, identity was closely linked to self-identity and a singular identity, that is, to a rather stable identity. This is called the essentialist approach. By contrast, non-essentialist definitions of identity are centred on the perspective of change. This means that identity is unfinished, fluid, fragmented, multiple, constantly changing and transforming and constructed across times, places, positions, practices and discourses. Differences between identities, multiple identities, and fragmentation of identities are related to post-modernism (Hall 1996: 3-4; Jenkins 1996: 7; Woodward 1997: 3, 11).

Language relates closely to the understanding of identity (Weedon 1997: 21). Academics from a range of disciplines, psychology, sociolinguistics, educational theory and feminist studies, to name a few, have adopted the social constructionist view of language as the primary means by which we understand ourselves and our relationship to others (Pomerantz 2001: 59). Social constructivism (e.g. Gergen 1999) views language as mediating thought, and it is through language and its concepts and categories that people come to know themselves. This knowledge is constructed through everyday language use or interaction. Accordingly, language is a form of social action and part of social, cultural and historical patterns and practices

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<sup>1</sup> For closer discussion, see 2.3.

(Blommaert 2005: 3; Pomerantz 2001: 3). Most importantly, language, to quote Weedon (1997: 21), is "the place where actual and possible forms of social organisation and their likely social and political consequences are defined and contested. Yet it is also the place where our sense of ourselves, our subjectivity is *constructed*" (emphasis in original). Judging by these accounts, it is essential to look at how people use language to construct and negotiate their sense of themselves and, thus, their identities.

Blommaert (2005: 204) sees the construction of identity as a situating process by characterising it as an *act of identity*. The process of situating an individual can occur in relation to several layers of categories, such as age, race, class, ethnicity, gender, generation, nationality, sexual orientation, geopolitical locale, institutional affiliation and social status (e.g. Pavlenko and Blackledge 2004; Woodward 1997). These categories function on several different levels: global, national, local and personal, and the construction and negotiation of identities take place on all of these levels (Woodward 1997: 1). People hold simultaneously different positions in the world, as members of certain communities, ethnic groups and social classes, as parents, workers or unemployed. This results in people constructing multiple identities at the same time. As the sources are varied, the different identities may be in conflict, and, as a result, people may experience some struggles between them. Consequently, this can lead to contradictory and fragmented identities (e.g. Hall 1996). However, as Woodward (1997) notes, identity is more than struggle; it is also essential for the way people see themselves, as it is through identity that we are located in the world. It thus gives us an idea of who we are, how we relate to others and to the world where we live. Blommaert (2005: 205) makes a valuable point by saying that identity is identification, an outcome of socially conditioned semiotic work.

In summary, language, the social world and the interplay between the two are essential in the construction of identities, and this view suits for the present purposes. Language gives us the means and provides the semiotic

tools with which to negotiate identity whereas the social is the site in which identity is constructed. Furthermore, as there are different contexts which people encounter, individuals constantly shape their sense of themselves when moving across these contexts. In the following, these issues and particularly identity as a discursive construct are discussed in more depth.

### **2.3 Discursive approach to identity**

The present study takes a discursive approach to the study of identity according to which identity is constructed within discourses. People are thus shaped by language and discourses, and they are also the shapers of them. According to social constructivists (e.g. Gergen 1999), people constantly construct, build, and negotiate the sense of themselves and their identities in interaction with others. Different identity options can be constructed, validated, and offered through discourses available to individuals at a particular point in time and place. (Davies and Harré 1990; Pavlenko and Blackledge 2004.)

The present study builds on different theorists' and scholars' views of discourse, such as Hall (1996), Gee (2005), Ivanić (1998), Pietikäinen (2000) and Woodward (1997), many of them influenced by a French sociologist Michel Foucault (1972, 1982). This study thus combines various researchers' views. In the following, the term discourse is dealt with and different scholars' definitions are introduced. In addition, I will also discuss an individual's role in discourses. Finally, the influence of power and context, and particularly transition, on discourses and identities, are dealt with.

### 2.3.1 Social view of discourse

Discourse was mentioned earlier as a site in which identity becomes constructed and a site of identity change and transformation. Similar to identity, discourse is a difficult concept as there exist many distinctive and overlapping definitions (e.g. Fairclough 1992: 3).

According to Fairclough (1992: 3), within linguistics the term discourse usually refers to spoken or written texts and particularly to larger units of language use in their context, where meaning is extended beyond sentence level, for instance, in texts, conversations and interviews. Discourse can also be viewed as a certain way of using language in different social situations. Social theorists, Foucault (1972, 1982) being one of the most influential, conceive discourse in a broader manner as different ways of structuring areas of knowledge and social practice. In this sense, Foucault uses the plural *discourses*<sup>2</sup> (see also Fairclough 1992: 37, 2001), in addition to Gee (2005).

As Hall (1999: 47) puts it, discourse means ways of constructing meanings that guide and shape our behaviour and our conceptions of ourselves, and it can be seen as a certain way of representing a particular thing. Ivanić (1998: 17) defines discourse as “producing and receiving culturally recognised, ideologically shaped *representations of reality*” (emphasis in original), and Pietikäinen (2000: 143) sees discourse as “use of language in representing experience and/or knowledge from a particular point of view”. This is similar to Fairclough (2001: 235, 2003: 124), who conceptualises discourses as diverse representations of social life which are inherently positioned - differently positioned social actors ‘see’ and represent social life in different ways, as different discourses. Weedon (1997: 34) believes that our understanding of ourselves and our relations to others is mediated by the discourses or “competing ways of giving meaning to the world and of organising social institutions and processes” available at particular times and

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<sup>2</sup> Hereafter, the term *discourse* is used in its broadest sense, unless stated otherwise.

places. In summary, scholars discussed here have a rather dynamic and multiple views of discourse.

To summarise these scholarly views to suit this study, discourse is seen as a way of representing ideas and knowledge. Discourses are ideologically laden as they represent issues from a particular point of view. In addition, discourses shape people and their conception of themselves and the world. When people talk, they draw from discourses to represent what they want to say. In order to represent knowledge, we need a semiotic system, such as language, where, according to Pomerantz (2001: 71), discourse is realised. Discourse is thus about producing knowledge through language.

According to Hall (1999: 99) and Pietikäinen (2000: 69), discourse is an influential part of all social practices; discourse itself is the product of certain practices. Furthermore, Hall and Pietikäinen see the social and language as interrelated, since the use of language constructs the social and all social practices constitute meanings, with every practice, therefore, entailing discursive dimensions. Discourses both reflect and represent social entities and relations as well as construct or constitute them in different ways. As pointed out by Blommaert (2005: 4), discourse, in fact, is “what transforms our environment into a socially and culturally meaningful one”.

One might thus say, following Fairclough (2001: 233), that discourses are partly ways of using language, but partly other things, for instance, ways of designing schools. When thinking about an individual's role in discourse, Gee's (2005) views are helpful. For him, discourses mean “ways of combining and integrating language, actions, interactions, ways of thinking, believing, valuing, and using various symbols, tools, and objects” (Gee 2005: 21) in a certain way that other people identify a person as a particular type of who (identity) occupied in a particular type of what (activity), here-and-now (Gee 2005: 27). This way, one has drawn upon (cf. Gee 'pulled off') a Discourse. Gee sees discourses as kits made of words, things, values and attitudes from

which one could build the meaning of each discourse (2005: 33, 95). Hence, one might argue that 'being a Finn' and 'being a student' are both discourses. If a person gets recognised as such, then his or her performance is in the discourse, such as studying (e.g. Gee 2005: 11, 21, 26-27, 30). Throughout their talk people draw from different discourses or see themselves *through* different discourses. Moreover, within discourse people position and are positioned in different ways. This is the topic of the following section.

### **2.3.2 Subject positions in discourses**

Within discourses, people are positioned in different ways as social subjects (Foucault 1972, 1982). In the present study, Foucault's (1972) view of the role of discourse in the constitution of social subjects is central. According to him, subjectivity is an effect of discourse, a subject of it. Thus, "the positioning of social subjects is achieved in discourse" (Fairclough 1992: 3-4). Davies and Harré (1990) put it shortly: a subject position is made available within a discourse. The present study thus sees subject positions as existing within discourses as possibilities for selfhood or socially recognisable ways of being (see also Pomerantz 2001). Judging by these views, there are multiple terms used by different researchers when talking about positionings in discourses. Subject position and positioning are used synonymously in this study.

Edley's (2001: 202) argument against Foucault's (1972) view of discourse is worthwhile. He argues that it subjectifies people with a focus on the operation of power. Also Fairclough (1992: 45) criticises that Foucault's view of the role of discourse as positioning individuals ignores human agency. Fairclough (*ibid.*) argues that rather than seeing humans solely as shaped by discourses, they are also capable of reshaping and reconstructing them. Thus, the relationship between discourse and subjectivity should be seen as *dialectical* (Fairclough 1992: 45, 2003: 159). Similarly, Davies and Harré (1990) propose that people are both receivers and producers of discourse, thus advocating agency as well.

The present study follows Davies and Harré (1990) in seeing subject position as a possibility in known forms of talk. After having taken up a particular subject position, an individual sees the world through that position and the features that “are made relevant within the particular discursive practice in which they are positioned” (*ibid.*). In each discursive practice, people actively take up particular subject positions. As Davies and Harré (1990) note, after taking up a position, the position defines the ways a person sees the world.

Ivanić (1998), by drawing on Bakhtin (1989), states that each subject position has characteristics which can be marked by a certain socially recognisable style of language use or ‘voice’. Voice can be seen as “the way in which people manage to make themselves understood or fail to do so” (Blommaert 2005: 4). Within discourses, people choose from the range of available linguistic and social resources offered in those discourses, and, thus, individuals speak through different *voices*. As Pomerantz (2001: 104) puts it, this view is critical as “all instances of language use align speakers with ideologically saturated and historically situated subject positions and hence function as acts of identity”. In addition, as individuals move among different subject positions which are invested with different amounts of power and authority, they either accept or resist the ways of seeing the world from within a particular discourse (*ibid.*).

### **2.3.3 Discourse, subject position and identity**

At this point, after the nature of identity, discourse and subject position have been discussed, their relationship to one another is worth addressing. To quote Hall (1996: 5-6), identity is the meeting point of discourses and practices which attempt to locate us into place as social subject, and it is the meeting point of the processes, which produce subjectivities, which construct us as subjects. Thus, identities are “points of temporary attachment to the subject positions, which discursive practices construct for us. They are the result of a successful articulation or chaining of the subject into the flow of

discourse" (ibid.). Accordingly, discourses are sites within which identities are constructed (Hall 1996; Ivanić 1998: 18). Furthermore, subjects are subjected to discourse and must themselves take it up as individuals who so position themselves. The positions that we take up and identify with constitute our identities. (Woodward 1997: 39.)

Hence, Hall's (1996) view is adopted in the understanding of the relationship between the three concepts. To summarise this for the purposes of this study, positionings and subject positions are taken *within* discourses. Identity is the broader concept which can be seen as constructed *across* discourses. Subject positions within certain discourses are the markers of identity.

### **2.3.4 Power**

Identity is closely linked to context and power. Relations of power shape social world in which our identities are constructed. Various power relations in society influence the status of identities, thereby making them unequal (e.g. Foucault 1982; Weedon 1997). Unequal power relations may develop conflicts between subjects. In spite of this, individuals do not simply accept undesirable identities that are handed down to them but aim at finding a way of negotiating these competing identities in different contexts in order to find balance and empowerment. In certain situations, individuals may choose to resist being positioned negatively. In such occasions, they may declare a more powerful position by developing a counterdiscourse. Individuals thus act as agents by resisting, negotiating, changing and transforming themselves and others. (Pavlenko and Blackledge 2004: 20; Norton Peirce 1995: 18, 2000: 126.) For instance in multilingual contexts, as new social and linguistic resources are available, individuals as agentive beings continuously seek out them. Getting access to new social and linguistic resources gives people the possibility to resist those identities which position them in unfavourable ways, construct new identities and give

new meanings to the links between identities and linguistic varieties. (Pavlenko and Blackledge 2004: 27.)

Power can be seen as jointly generated in interpersonal and inter-group relations, namely created with others. Cummins (1996: 15) makes noteworthy points by saying that in each situation, classroom and community, power is determined by the people involved. Once the power relations have been created, they determine the identities that people can negotiate in their contexts and communities. Power either enables or constraints the range of identities available for negotiation. One of the sites of production and reproduction of relations of power is education (Bourdieu and Passeron 1990; Martin-Jones and Heller 1996: 5). Martin-Jones and Heller (*ibid.*) argue that through choosing ways of learning languages people may believe to gain access to power.

As power relations within society influence individuals, the possibilities to negotiate and construct identities vary among different contexts. We can also talk about different *identity options* that exist within discourses, across situations and contexts. Pavlenko and Blackledge (2004: 21-22) distinguish three types of identity options: *imposed identities*, *assumed identities* and *negotiable identities*. Imposed identities refer to identities which are often forced upon people by those in power within particular contexts. Imposed identities are non-negotiable, and individuals cannot resist or contest them. For instance, in Nazi Germany, individuals may have disagreed with being identified as Jews, but those in power impose that identity on Jewish for their own benefit and interests. Assumed identities are non-negotiated, and these are identities which many individuals are comfortable with and not interested in contesting. By implication, people are expected to take these identities for granted, and they assumed by many others. One example of assumed identities could be monolingual speakers of a majority language. Negotiable identities are all identity options that can be contested and resisted by particular individuals and groups. This is what agency means

(see also page 12). Negotiable identities can be negotiated in a variety of sites and in different ways. For instance, these can range from national educational policies to individual decisions regarding the use of a certain language. Pavlenko and Blackledge's (2004: 22) point of view is important for the present study according to which identity options can also be negotiated in the area of linguistic competence and ability to claim a 'voice' in a second or foreign language. This implies that through competence in a language new identities can emerge and be negotiated (Pavlenko and Blackledge 2004: 3). An example of a negotiable identity could be a language user identity influenced by the opportunities to practice the language in different contexts.

### **2.3.5 Context and transition**

Social world is also an important factor in identity construction. In certain situations, some identities are more relevant than others because of the difference between social contexts and their associated meanings for us. Across situations we may feel like the same person, but we are positioned differently by the social expectations related to each situation, for instance, in a job interview or at a party, and, thus, we represent ourselves differently in each of these contexts. Hence, context is the arena in which we experience our sense of self, our subjectivity. (e.g. Gergen 1999; Woodward 1997: 22, 39.)

People go through changes, encounter new situations and contexts throughout their lives, and move from one place to another, thereby experiencing *transition* (Morgan 1997). Transition is particularly relevant in the construction of identity especially in this study as the participants move from the home contexts to those of abroad. Ivanić (1998: 12) illustrates transition with an example of a person entering higher education where one may experience 'identity crisis' (parentheses in original) which is caused by the difference between the contexts where identities have been constructed in the past and the new social contexts.

McKay and Wong (1996) believe that people's multiple identities become sites of contestation and renegotiation during transition. As new discourses can be produced from old ones (Foucault 1972: 151), transition can result in the acquisition of new discourses. A result of transition and new discourses may be new identity categories (Thesen 1997) or the transformation of social identity (McNamara 1997). Thesen (1997: 490) gives an example of how black students entering historically white institutions encountered a new identity category: disadvantaged. Referring to her findings, Thesen (1997: 504) demonstrates that through transition people can acquire new discourses and, thus, can negotiate new identities. In the present study, the participants encounter new contexts, characterised as multilingual or lingua franca contexts. It is thus of interest to explore what kinds of identities become available for them in those contexts.

## **2.4 Individual and social aspects of identity**

Identity in its general sense refers to something that people *are*. Thus, it is also about what people *are not*. As Hall (1996: 5-6) and Woodward (1997: 2) maintain, identity is the marker of the ways in which we are similar to others who share the same position, and at the same time it is the marker of the ways in which we are different from those who do not. Constructing identity means inevitably constructing difference. Therefore, identity is about sameness and difference, and defining one means defining the other as well. Blommaert (2005: 205) emphasises it as well that others must recognise someone's identity for it to be established. Acknowledging different identity categories is a dialogical process, and other people are significant in an individual's identity work. Through the process called *othering* (Blommaert 2005), individuals are sometimes socially categorised or grouped regardless of whether they wish it or not. According to Blommaert (2005: 251), *ascriptive identity* is attributed by someone, and it is a socially defined category.

Defining others as non-members of a group would be an example of ascribing identity. However, *inhabitable identity* is constructed and performed by individuals themselves, and through it people can claim group membership, such as defining oneself as a member of a nation.

Social aspects of identity have been studied in social psychology by Tajfel (1981, 1982) and Turner (1982, 1987), for instance. Turner (1982: 18) discusses individual and social aspects of identity by arguing that we can distinguish *personal identity* to refer to, for instance, an individual's feelings of competence and ways of relating to others, and *social identity* to denote an individual's memberships in certain social groups. According to Tajfel's (1981: 255, 258, 1982) social identity theory, social identity is "the part of an individual's self-concept which derives from his knowledge of his membership of a social group (or groups) together with the value and emotional significance attached to that membership". In addition, Fairclough (2003: 160) distinguishes between personal and social aspects of identity, that is, personality and social identity. Tajfel (1982) notes that although it is difficult to determine the ways in which an individual views his or her relation to the world, looking at their membership in certain social groups helps since they mark some of those ways and aspects. In fact, in-group memberships can be considered one of the building blocks of individual's identities. Actually, Turner (1982: 19) states that sometimes personal identity gives way to social identity, and in certain situations people may see themselves solely on the basis of their group membership. Memberships in different groups can have either a positive or a negative effect on an individual's view of him or herself (Tajfel 1981: 256).

Jenkins (1996: 4-5) discusses identity and social identity in an interchangeable manner. He defines social identity as having two aspects: individual and collective. To illustrate, individuals and collectivities differ from another in terms of social relations with other individuals and collectivities. Social

identity refers to the ways in which people understand themselves, who they are and, furthermore, who others are. In an equal way, social identity is about how other people understand themselves and others, including *us*. Furthermore, Jenkins (1996: 80-81) notes that in order to define 'us', a range of 'thems' need to be defined. According to Jenkins (1996: 19), individual identity puts more emphasis on difference whereas collective identity on similarity. They are still closely linked to one another since individual identity cannot be meaningful outside social world and other people, meaning that one's selfhood is socially constructed. Thus, individual identity is a social product (Jenkins 1996: 20, 80).

In this section, different ways to approach and characterise identity have been introduced with a focus on those features that are relevant in the present study. Following these views, this study sees identity from a non-essentialist, post-modernist perspective, and argues that a person can construct and negotiate multiple identities in society, in different situations, contexts and discourses, which are influenced by power relations. In addition, the notion of difference is important as well since it influences a person's identity. The present study views identity as including both personal and collective aspects and they are constructed through language, in interaction and within discourses. Accordingly, discourses provide the subject positions through which identities are produced.

### **3 IDENTITY AND FOREIGN LANGUAGE**

The focal point of this section is the relationship between language and identity, in particular identity and foreign language. The issues dealt with here derive from second and foreign language learning research and particularly social constructionist and poststructuralist theories. I draw on the social constructionist approach to individual and language learning, which second and foreign language learning scholars have recently utilised in their research (e.g. Norton 1997, 2000; Pomerantz 2001). In addition, the question of identity in connection with English as a lingua franca is briefly touched upon, and, finally, some selected studies related to study and stay abroad contexts are discussed.

#### **3.1 On the relationship between language and identity**

The relationship between identity and language has been approached in various ways in different research disciplines. For instance, sociolinguistics has investigated how the use of language marks a person's identity, such as the use of a specific variant or a register of a language (e.g. Johnstone 1996; Martin-Jones and Heller 1996). In the field of bilingualism, bilinguals' language choices have been investigated in terms of how they give reference to identity (Kanno 2003; Pavlenko 2003). Furthermore, scholars have been interested in how language functions as a marker of ethnic (Heller 1987, as quoted by Ricento 2005: 901) or gender identity (Shardakova and Pavlenko 2004), and how second language learners' identity is constructed in target language contexts (Norton 1997, 2000; Pavlenko and Blackledge 2004). Studies have shown that identity in relation to language is complex, and it is influenced by interaction, social contexts and power relations.

Identity and language are closely linked together as identity is constituted through and by language. Along the lines of Pavlenko and Blackledge's (2004: 14) discursive approach, the relationship between identity and language is viewed in two ways. Firstly, language and discourses embedded within them enable a person to construct and negotiate identity. Secondly, ideologies of language and identity influence how individuals choose from different linguistic resources to mark their own identity and assess that of others. (Pavlenko and Blackledge 2004: 14.)

Mother tongue is one of the building blocks of an individual's *linguistic identity* (Joseph 2004: 185). People learn to express themselves through the native language(s). At the same time, as one learns to speak a language or languages, one's linguistic identity develops. Joseph (2004: 185), following Hecht (1993), adds to this with the notion of linguistic identity consisting of many layers, and, thus, second<sup>3</sup> languages also have an impact on a person's linguistic identity. Therefore, as Joseph (ibid.) notes, although mother tongue has a special role in one's linguistic identity, we have a particular attachment and commitment to all the languages in which we think, classify, interpret, imagine and dream. Benson (2004: 19) remarks that learning a foreign language can result in breaking through the identities constructed through one's first language. According to Benson (ibid.), the acquisition of additional languages contributes to the process by which individuals construct new linguistic identities for themselves. To conclude, one of the significant non-linguistic effects of language learning can be complex multiple identities (Benson 2004: 19). Following these views, the starting point in the present study is the idea of foreign language functioning as a unique component of one's linguistic identity. In addition, this study sees that a person can construct different identities in relation to all the languages he or she speaks.

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<sup>3</sup> Author's note: *additional*.

Group membership was discussed in the previous section as an important aspect of identity. Considering the relation between language and identity, Giles and Johnson (1987), drawing on Tajfel (1982), demonstrate that *ethnolinguistic identity theory* sees languages as prominent markers of group and social identity. As Blommaert (2005: 214) notes, ethnolinguistic identity is a combination of a sense of belonging to a language community and an ethnic community. Native speakers are an example of an ethnolinguistically-defined community. In addition, there is reason to believe that also non-native speakers construct different ethnolinguistic identities. Furthermore, it is interesting to investigate how people who speak English as a foreign language compare themselves with other groups in terms of language. As Kanno (2003: 11) puts it, group membership is relevant to our linguistic and cultural identities, and it is an essential part of how people position themselves among multiple cultures and languages. Tajfel (1981: 256) points out that finding positive characteristics in one's in-group individuals can lead to a positive social identity. One might also argue that identifying with groups is also a matter of agency. As an individual has the power to choose whether to adopt a particular position within a discourse or not, likewise, language speakers have the power to choose the linguistic group they want to identify with. The present study takes the stance that a person has agency with respect to memberships in different groups. It looks at what kinds of positions the language users adopt in relation to different people and groups.

Thus, speaking a language and particularly speaking it in a certain way can function as a marker of belonging to a particular group or community. This study considers the issue of foreign language users' identification as both individuals and as members of different groups. This is an interesting point considering the investigation of foreign language users' identification in the globalised world where they reside in multiple contexts and communities. It is thus worth asking whether foreign language users in the present study position themselves as Finns, non-native speakers, ELF users, all of these, or

something else. What is more, it is significant to see the *ways* in which different individuals construct multiple memberships, since there is likely to be variation among people.

### **3.2 Identity and foreign language learning**

Second language acquisition (SLA) and foreign language (FL) research have witnessed a shift from conceiving language learners as autonomous and individual language producers to seeing them as complex and multidimensional individual social beings and members of different collectivities and communities (Kanno 2003: 3; Norton and Toohey 2002: 119). Recently, researchers of identity and language learning have adopted a social constructionist or poststructuralist understanding of the individual (Norton and Toohey 2002: 116; Pomerantz 2001: 2).

Bonny Norton (Peirce 1995, 1997, 2000) has had a major influence in SLA research on identity. Seeing learners from a social constructionist perspective, Norton (Peirce 1995, 1997, 2000) has tried to integrate identity and second language learning. Norton (2000: 8) illustrates that a learner through asking questions such as 'Who am I? How do I relate to the social world? Under what conditions can I speak?' is attempting to come to an understanding of the complex relationship among identity, language and learning. Thus, given that language speaker and the social world are intertwined, language speakers, as they speak, constantly shape and reshape a sense of themselves and their relation to the social world. That is to say, they are engaged in identity construction and negotiation. (Norton 2000.)

Ricento (2005: 896) notes that Tajfel's (1982) social identity theory influenced the earliest work within SLA concerning the relationship between language and identity. Recently, social constructionist accounts of second language learning have emphasised the role of ideologies (i.e. dominant discourses),

identities, and agency in shaping how people come to learn and use additional languages (McKay and Wong 1996; Norton 2000; Polanyi 1995, as quoted by Pomerantz 2001: 112.) What is more, scholars advocating social constructionist views have focused their attention on the institutional and sociocultural environments in which languages are learnt and used. As Ricento (2005: 895) notes, there is a dialectic relationship between the learner and the learning contexts and the experiences learners have and which act upon them. Thus, it is significant to consider the different ways that learners position themselves and are positioned in different contexts and discourses because they both enable and constrain language learning and use (Pomerantz 2001: 30).

In addition, sociocultural theories have gained ground within SLA. Similar to social constructionism, they also emphasise the significance of contexts in which learning takes place. According to the sociocultural theory, learners are conceived of as individuals “whose formation as thinking and learning beings depends crucially on the concrete circumstances of their specific histories as language learners and as members of the communities of practice to which they belong and to which they aspire” (Lantolf and Pavlenko 2001: 155). This study draws some insights on sociocultural theory, namely that human actions, including using a foreign language, must be understood with respect to the particular cultural, historical, and institutional contexts in which they take place (Pomerantz 2001: 23-24). Social constructionist and sociocultural theories thus focus on people in contexts and, thus, are significant for the present study.

### **3.3 On ownership of and investment in foreign language**

Norton and Toohey (2002: 115; 2004) emphasise that language learning is related to power. To illustrate, they draw on Bourdieu (1991) by claiming that language itself is “not only a linguistic system of signs and symbols; it is

also a complex social practice in which the value and meaning ascribed to an utterance are determined in part by the value and meaning ascribed to the person who speaks". The latter form of language, and also language learning, relate closely to power and learners' possibilities to position themselves in different contexts. In addition to acquiring linguistics systems, language learners learn to practice in sociocultural contexts, and, thus, their identities become significant. Hence, it is through the target language that learners develop and negotiate their identity, and social contexts and structures are significant for learners' possibilities to use the language.

The possibilities for foreign language use may vary across contexts, and then symbolic power becomes an issue. Bourdieu and Passeron (1990) maintain that the value of speech is inseparable from the person who speaks and the person cannot be understood inseparable from larger networks of power relations. Norton (1997: 411), drawing on Bourdieu (1977: 75), notes that 'the right to speak' should be included in the concept of competence (see also Bourdieu and Passeron 1990), and, as Norton (*ibid.*) argues, this notion is linked to language learner's identity. In more detail, SLA scholars agree that "identity construction must be understood with reference to relations of power between language learners and target language speakers" (Norton 2000: 6). Firstly, these ideas seemingly refer to learners' ways of seeing themselves as language users, whether they feel the right to speak it and see themselves as *legitimate speakers* (Bourdieu 1991), a concept discussed in more detail below.

Norton (1997: 422, 2000) demonstrates that the *ownership* of English<sup>4</sup> is significant in the relationship between language and identity as a language learners either can or cannot claim ownership of a target language. If unable to do so, they might not consider themselves legitimate speakers (Bourdieu 1991; 1977, as quoted by Norton 1997: 422, 2000: 69) of it. Norton (2000: 8)

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<sup>4</sup> Author's note: ownership of *any* target language.

expands Bourdieu's views by calling for an interest in how learners develop identities as legitimate speakers, that is, how they come to be accepted as fully functioning members of different lifestyle sectors (Giddens 1991, cited in Norton 2000) and communities of practice (Lave and Wenger 1991, cited in Norton 2000) which they inhabit and engage with. As there are calls for studies on the variety of positionings available for learners to occupy in different communities, the present study aims at contributing to this by investigating what kinds of identity options are available in different lingua franca communities and encounters. Considering legitimacy, which has focused on contexts where most people use the language as a native language, it is also worth considering to what extent it is relevant in contexts where only non-native speakers are present, and when a non-native speakers interact with other non-native speakers. Possibly, in such contexts the notion of legitimate speaker manifests itself in a different way. In the present study, it of interest to find out how the language that dominates the language learning sphere (English) on the one hand, and the expanding use of English as a lingua franca on the other hand, play a role in the Finns' identity construction as foreign language users before and after a stay abroad.

As discussed above, Norton emphasises the relationship between the learner and the learning context and in order to understand this relationship better, Norton (2000) has introduced the concept of investment, which refers to the learner's socially and historically constructed relationship to the target language (Norton 2000: 10-11). Norton (2000) argues, by drawing on Bourdieu (1977, see also Bourdieu and Passeron 1990), that when investing in a language learners understand that they will acquire symbolic and material resources, which will enhance their value in the social world. This means that individuals have their own motivations and desires to learn and practice the target language. Kanno (2003: 4), following Norton (2000), says that instead of having a fixed amount of motivation to learn a particular language, the learner assesses opportunities to practice the language in a given context and

the potential symbolic (e.g. recognition, friendship) and material (e.g. jobs, money) returns for his or her investment of time and effort. Furthermore, Norton (*ibid.*) argues that in addition to investing in the target language, learners expect or hope to have good returns which give them access to those privileges that target language speakers enjoy. Learners may then want to invest in a language for different reasons. When people use a language and assess their opportunities for using it, they continuously shape themselves and their relation to the social world. Furthermore, Norton's (2000: 140-141) notes that investment in the language can be seen as an investment in a learner's own identity. These views relate to the present study which looks at the participants' relationship to the English language and is interested in finding out if different contexts and experiences influence the students' investment in English; whether they want to invest in it or not, and why.

Related to investment, Norton (1997: 410, 2000: 8), by drawing on West (1992), claims that identity should be seen as connected to desires, such as desire for recognition, desire for affiliation, and the desire for security and safety, which relate to the circulation of material resources in society. If having access to resources, people have access to power and privilege, and through these accesses people comprehend their relationship to the world and their possibilities for the future. By implication, through assessing their possibilities to use the language, foreign language users construct their sense of themselves. West's (*ibid.*, cited in Norton 2000) views on resources imply that the English language can function as a 'resource' and through feeling legitimate and as having the right to speak it, one has access to that resource. Following these views, this study touches upon the value language and looks whether some skills are resources and more relevant to the participants and their identities than others.

### 3.4 Previous studies on identity and foreign language

The purpose of this section is to introduce some of the studies with a focus on the relationship between identity and second or foreign language. Particularly, findings of studies that have relevance to the present study are addressed. Most of these studies have been qualitative and the data have comprised diaries (Norton 2000), narratives (Polanyi 1995), autobiographies (Pavlenko 2003) as well as interviews and questionnaires (Pomerantz 2001). Ethnographic approaches (McKay and Wong 1996; Lam 2000) have also been popular, and multilinguals and their language choices have been studied as interconnected with issues of power (Pavlenko and Blackledge 2004).

Norton's (Peirce 1995, 1997, 2000) contribution to the study of language and identity in SLA has already been mentioned. As regards her own research, she studied immigrant language learners in Canada. Through the use of questionnaires, interviews and diaries, she aimed at exploring the complex relationship between identity, language learning and social context. In particular, highlighting the importance of context, Norton focused on language learning practices in different contexts: home, workplace and school. Norton's findings complement feminist poststructuralist theory (Weedon 1997) in that identity is multiple, site of struggle, and it changes over time. Within certain discourses, such as in immigrant discourse, the women took up certain subject positions which were open to contestation. Norton (Peirce 1995: 21) discovered a number of sites of identity formation: immigrant, mother, language learner, worker and wife. Her (2000: 127) study thus indicates that people not only are subjected to power of discourses, but they have human agency and, thus, the possibility to resist the positions that discourses make available for them. In light of the present study, Norton's observations are significant as they suggest that people take different positions within different discourses. Hence, it is of interest in this thesis to see how the participants' positions vary between discourses.

In their longitudinal ethnographic study, McKay and Wong (1996) investigated four adolescent Chinese immigrants in a Californian high school. The analysis was based on the researchers' own observations, students' interviews and language development in order to find out how the students' identities were constructed in the same environment. According to the findings, the students were situated in a number of identifiable discourses (the concept used in a broad Foucaultian sense, see McKay and Wong 1996: 579, 583), such as colonialist/racialised discourses, social and academic school discourses, Chinese cultural nationalist discourses and gender discourses, all of which were manifested in various ways. The students were positioned as different because of their learning histories, socioeconomic backgrounds and discourses of power that surrounded them. Within the school discourses the researchers focused on the subject position of 'immigrant ESL learner' instead of the general 'student'. Interestingly, within the social school discourse oral skills were valued whereas in the academic school discourse writing skills counted more (McKay and Wong 1996: 595).

Murphy et al. (2004) investigated Japanese and Taiwanese ESL students' language learning histories and particularly their constructed identities and imagined communities. Their study shows that within different contexts the students negotiate different identities. For instance, the constructed identities vary between educational and non-educational contexts. Likewise, with an interest in educational contexts, Canagarajah (2004: 116) notes that in classrooms students often negotiate and take up quite unitary identities with characteristics such as deficiency, inferiority, and disadvantage, and which are conferred on them by the dominant discourses. As for the present study, these are interesting findings since I also concentrate on different contexts, one of which is Finland and school contexts there.

Lam's (2000) research is particularly interesting for the present study. In her discourse analytic ethnographic case study, Lam investigated an immigrant Chinese teenager's writings on the Internet over a six-month period of time. She found out that within classroom context, the learner could only negotiate negative identities because his use of English was considered 'against the rules'. However, outside the classroom, on the Internet, the learner was engaged in new discourses, such as pop culture and religion, in which he was able to construct alternative identities which made him feel more proficient. Lam's (2000) findings show that in the classroom the learner felt excluded and marginalised because of his inability to speak native-like, which "paradoxically contradicts the school's mandate to prepare students for the workplace and civic involvement" (Lam 2000: 476). However, through the Internet and the learner's own control over his use of English, it was possible for him to feel belongingness to a global English-speaking community. Hence, the identity the student constructed on the Internet was not available at school (Lam 2000: 475). Lam's study is relevant to this one as it focuses on identity construction in educational and everyday life contexts.

In addition, Pomerantz's (2001) research on identities of people learning Spanish as a foreign language has relevance for the present study. She approaches identity from a three-level perspective by seeing identity construction as having an individual, interactional and institutional dimension<sup>5</sup>. The findings of her study show that within the institutional and sociocultural level, students construct different identities by drawing on seven dominant discourses, such as 'bilingualism is a positive and possible outcome of studying a foreign language', 'language learning involves grammar, but grammar is not necessary for communication and there is a difference between language as a communicative system and language as a grammatical system' and 'foreign language learning offers access to new

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<sup>5</sup> These will be discussed in 4.2.

communities of practice'. Many of the students in Pomerantz's (2001) study were willing to invest in good language learner identity.

Kanno (2003) has been interested in how bilingual individuals position themselves between two languages and two (or more) cultures, and how they incorporate these languages and cultures into their sense of themselves. By using narratives, Kanno investigated Japanese students who have once left Japan but have come back after a period of absence in Canada. As a result, Kanno (2003: 14) views bilingual and bicultural identities as multiple, hybrid and changing. According to Kanno (*ibid.*), bilinguals are not only subject to ideologies and power which determine the identities available, but they also have agency to choose the place and ways of positionings among cultures and languages.

Pavlenko (2003), with the framework of discursive positioning developed by Davies and Harré (1990) and Harré and van Langenhove (1999, cited in Pavlenko 2003), has analysed pre- and inservice English as a second language and English as a foreign language teachers' linguistic autobiographies. Interestingly, her findings imply that the traditional discourse of linguistic competence positions the teachers as members of either native speaker or non-native speaker/L2 learner communities.

Much of the research described above has touched upon discourses related to education and language proficiency. In addition, on the basis of many studies, there are various implications to non-native speaker identity. Nayar (2002: 463) points out that native and non-native speakers of English are the most distinguished identity labels within Applied Linguistics. Also Ricento (2005: 903) has noted this. Nayar (2002: 465) examined postings on an electronic media network called TESL-L (Teachers of English as a Second or Foreign Language), the discussion of which concerns the teaching and learning of English as a second, foreign or other language. Nayar discovered that two assumptions exist among, mostly, native speakers of English.

Firstly, the practice of learning and teaching English in the world follows the perspective of native speakers that learning English is part of the process of equipping *Them* (most likely non-natives, emphasis in original) for the chance of joining *Us* (most likely natives, emphasis in original). This suggests that the model of teaching is the native speaker, and through knowing English one has access to success in life. Secondly, it implies that not knowing English perfectly is characterised as deprivation of some kind.

Judging from the studies addressed here, one may ask whether foreign language users usually negotiate non-native speaker identities, particularly in relation to the native speakers. Would it be possible, given the fact that contexts shape the ways identities get constructed and negotiated, that there are other identity options available for foreign language users than the non-native speaker? One should note, following Nayar (2002), that most non-native speakers of English do not necessarily want to be part of the native speaker communities but, instead, have a different motivation for learning the language and, thus, invest (Norton 2000) in it. Many people who have learnt a foreign language use it not with native speakers but with other non-native speakers, as lingua franca (e.g. House 2003; Kachru and Nelson 1996). It is of interest of the present study to investigate what kinds of identity options these situations make available.

### **3.5 Identity and English as a lingua franca**

Users of English as a foreign language, such as the participants in the present study, have usually learnt the language at school. As pointed out earlier, they often come to use the language with other non-natives (Graddol 1997, 2006). Thus, the language can be defined as a lingua franca (House 2003; Pölzl 2003; Seidlhofer 2001) which refers to language used by speakers of different linguistic and cultural backgrounds. The people using English as a lingua franca (ELF) can be defined either as *lingua franca speakers*, or *ELF users*. Pölzl

(2003: 4) prefers the term *lingua franca* speaker to non-native speaker because for her it does not imply deficiency but variety (see also McArthur 2003). Considering the definition ELF user, it is introduced by Seidlhofer (2001) with an aim to shift the focus from *learners* of English to *users* of English. One can argue, following Pözl (2003: 4), that often the definition language learner has connotations to deficiencies whereas language user implies independence from native speakers. Mauranen (2006), who has been interested in the nature of ELF in the Finnish context, discusses similar issues as Pözl (2003) and Seidlhofer (2001) and argues that within the framework of English education, people are usually divided into two distinctive categories. Firstly, there are speakers who use English as their native language, and, secondly, learners who make every effort to become as native-like as possible. Mauranen (2006) suggests that this division is old since English today is mostly used by people with different first languages who use the language for professional or recreational communication with similar others. Most importantly, they hardly see themselves as 'learners' of English, but simply use the language for their own purposes. Mauranen states that for these people English functions as a *lingua franca*, and they should be acknowledged as such in the field of Applied Linguistics (*ibid.*).

In addition, House (2003: 557) suggests that ELF speakers' competence cannot be measured against the competence of native speakers because *lingua franca* English in itself is different from the English spoken by natives. By implication, ELF should be seen as a variety of its own, independent from native-like English. The present study sees the participants from an ELF perspective particularly because in the stay abroad contexts they use English with people who come from different cultural and linguistic backgrounds. Their shared English can be characterised as *lingua franca* according to the terms and conditions introduced above. This study accepts the possibility that ELF can be viewed as a language variety.

Lingua franca speakers can be viewed as having certain characteristics. To illustrate, when speaking English, they create what Meierkord (2002, as quoted by Pölzl 2003: 4) terms a *linguistic masala* in displaying their individual culture or group membership, both being distinct from that of native English speakers. Also Pölzl (2003: 4-5) proposes that English in lingua franca contact situations is used as a *native-culture-free code*. This means that ELF users have the freedom to either create their own shared, temporary culture, to partly 'export' their own individual primary culture into ELF, or to reinvent their cultural identities by blending into other lingua-cultural groups. Rampton (1995, as quoted by Pölzl 2003) defines this as *language crossing*.

As any people's identities, also ELF speakers' identities are never static but constructed within interaction (e.g. Cummins 1996) and can involve membership in various groups, such as the ELF group or primary culture group (Pölzl 2003: 7.) Pölzl (2003) suggests that ELF settings in particular enable the speakers to appropriate or re-invent their cultural identities by exporting their cultural background to construct new identities and new inter-cultures. This can result in the engagement of various different memberships, including or excluding the enhancement of one's own group membership. These issues are relevant in the present study as it deals with identity construction at both individual and collective level in ELF situations.

### **3.6 Identity and stay abroad contexts**

The relevance of stay abroad contexts in foreign language learning has been acknowledged in second and foreign language learning research, but it has not gained a very wide interest. Most studies with an interest in overseas contexts have focused on study abroad in the target culture. In fact, many studies have been conducted on immigrants and ESL students who study languages in the target language contexts (e.g. Kanno 2003; Norton 1997,

2000). Furthermore, in much earlier research the focus has been on the foreign language skills developed in study abroad contexts (e.g. Freed ed. 1995; Pellegrino 1998). In general, Freed (1995) notes that few studies have focused on students' actual experiences in the context of their stay abroad. Some of those studies are nevertheless worth mentioning because of their findings of how stay abroad affects individual language learners and users.

Polanyi (1995) investigated American university students in a study abroad period in Russia. Considering the context, the opportunities to practice the target language varied, which resulted in the students seeing themselves differently. Polanyi stresses that individuals situated in contexts should be studied with an in-depth perspective. Jackson (2005a, 2005b) has aimed at bridging this gap by using an ethnographic method in her study of individuals located in different contexts. She studied English majors in Hong Kong similarly as in the present study: before and after the sojourn. Jackson's (2005a, 2005b) goal was to explore perceptions of language, culture and identity with a particular focus thus on the students' experiences. Her findings suggest that before the overseas period the students experience a lack of confidence in their oral skills and see themselves as having insufficient vocabulary, whereas after the sojourn English has become a more significant part of their lives. As Jackson's (*ibid.*) research setting is similar to my study, it is interesting to compare how the participants see themselves before and after the stay abroad relative to Jackson's findings.

As little interest has been devoted to the foreign language users' identity construction within stay abroad contexts and particularly within such contexts where the target language is also spoken as a foreign language, the present study aims at bridging the gap of research on identity work in lingua franca settings. It is argued that the investigation of identities in relation to these contexts is highly relevant today, as people move around, travel, work and live abroad and encounter others in contexts where the shared language is foreign for all parties.

## 4 ANALYSING IDENTITY CONSTRUCTION IN INTERVIEWS

In studying the construction of identities, this study uses interviews as data. Therefore, it is essential to discuss their positive and negative aspects in more detail. In addition, it is worth exploring in more depth the suitability of interviews in the investigation of identities on different levels.

### 4.1 Interviews as data

Interviews are a useful source for the investigation of identity, allowing a dynamic approach to studying it (Hansen and Liu 1997: 573). In fact, they have been fruitful in investigating how identities are constructed in discourse (e.g. Widdicombe and Wooffitt 1995). As data, interviews are unique in form and function. Firstly, interviews should be seen as social interaction conducted primarily through language. Secondly, interviews cannot be characterised as ‘talk occurring naturally’, but instead they are more formal in nature as it is the interviewer who usually has the power to decide on the topics discussed. Thesen (1997: 504) characterises interviews as both coherent and tentative accounts where people behave as agents regarding their choices of either connecting to or resisting certain identities across contexts.

All language use can be seen as ‘acts of identity’ (Pomerantz 2001: 104), and talk is one medium through which we can engage in ‘meta’ discussion *about* aspects of identity (Cameron 2001: 170-171, emphasis in original). Cameron (2001: 172) claims that talk in interviews is not only mere ‘data’ but also ‘discourse’, and people not only talk about identity but also *do* identity, in other words, reflect on their identity. This study agrees with Cameron by seeing interviews on the one hand as discourse similar to Fairclough (1992: 3, see page 16), and on the other hand as sites where the participants talk about and do identity. However, it is a different matter to argue that talking and

doing identity equal *reflecting on identity*. This study lacks access to the participants' reflections, or inner feelings, but instead it is possible in this study to look at what they are *doing* in the interviews, in particular *how* they talk. Therefore, the researcher should pay attention to both what the participants are saying and what they are doing because through investigating these processes one can begin to analyse how the participants construct their identities on different levels. Thus, one can ask not only how people talk about certain issues, but also "from what range of culturally intelligible possibilities are they drawing their way of doing/talking about X" (Cameron 2001: 174). As discourse is seen as ways of presenting an issue from a particular perspective, Cameron's notions of culturally intelligible possibilities imply that one can investigate how people draw from discourses in interviews.

Pomerantz (2000: 23), interested in the relationship between language use and social identity in the context of interviews, suggests that "interviews are sites of struggle where individuals strive to construct representations of themselves". Hence, by their choices of presenting their ideas in interviews, individuals identify with certain subject positions. Depending on the historically shaped possibilities of presenting oneself that exist in the world and in different discourses, individuals choose to show certain characteristics of themselves (*ibid.*). One should also add that as power relations operate in discourses, individuals may be *bound* to show certain features of themselves when drawing from a particular discourse.

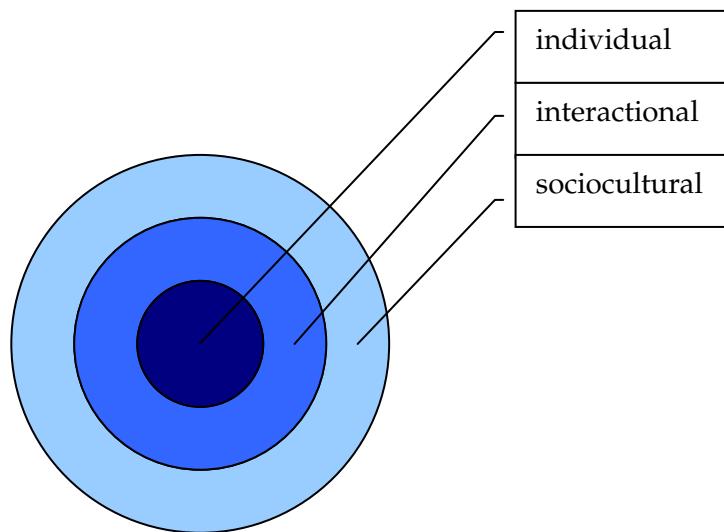
Critically oriented discourse analysts assume that there are limitations in interviews with regard to the available linguistic and social resources that individual can use (e.g. Pomerantz 2000: 27). Furthermore, as Pomerantz (2000: 28) points out, individuals participating in interviews are not only constrained by the limitations of the nature of interview, but they are also enabled to position themselves in certain ways, having certain beliefs, values and perspectives, by utilising their knowledge of discourses. In fact, people

"take up and manipulate different voices in order to construct multiple, complex, dynamic, historically situated, and ideologically saturated self representations" (Pomerantz 2000: 28). In summary, it is acknowledged in the present study that interviews are a unique form of interaction and influenced by the surrounding social environment, power and discourses.

#### **4.2 Levels of identity construction**

The section 2 addressed identity as a phenomenon and as a discursive construct. In order to obtain a multifaceted view of identity in a given research setting, it is essential to investigate how identity can be constructed on different levels in the context of interviews. This is the focus of the present section. By drawing on Pomerantz (2001), the present study views identity work as produced and maintained on the following three levels: the individual, the interactional, and the institutional/sociocultural. Figure 1, designed by the author, demonstrates how this study sees these levels. The inner circle illustrates the individual level, the middle interactional and the outer circle signals the institutional/sociocultural level. In the construction of identities, the levels operate simultaneously. The nature of the levels is discussed in more detail as I see them applying to interviews in particular. In the following, the individual level is presented. After this, the interactional and sociocultural levels are discussed.

Figure 1. Levels of identity construction.



#### 4.2.1 Individual level

The individual level captures the notion of identity as an individual production (Pomerantz 2001: 103). Particularly in the present study this is an important factor since the main focus is on individuals and their ways of using language and linguistic resources in negotiating their identities as users of English. The emphasis is on the notion of agency which is helpful in investigating the different processes of identity construction. To illustrate, individuals have agency as regards the positionings they take within different discourses and contexts; they thus have agency in accessing, negotiating and resisting different identities (see section 2).

An example of a study investigating identity construction in interviews is that of Widdicombe and Wooffitt's (1995) who are engaged in conversation analysis. They view interviews as a way of eliciting speakers' accounting practices by arguing that interviews include many similar elements as any communicative practice does, and, thus, they resemble normal talk. In spite of this, however, interviews should be treated as a special form of interaction and talk. Even though they are more or less structured, they are a rich

method in the analysis of individuals' *accounts*, and hence analysis of identity work at an individual level. According to Wooffitt (2005: 79), accounts can have two meanings. Firstly, they can refer to specific discursive acts excusing or justifying some course of action. Secondly, accounts can point to passage of text or talk in which a speaker or a writer expresses opinions, formulates versions of events and so forth. The present study adopts the latter definition, more often used by discourse analysts, in the analysis of participants' talk in interviews.

In their study of interviews, Widdicombe and Wooffitt (1995: 66) investigated accounts produced by members of youth subcultures. Their interest was in the ways language is used to produce and construct social identities and in which people talk about different topics. Widdicombe and Wooffitt's focus on the interaction aimed at finding those communicative practices that make identities negotiable, applicable, modifiable and usable in interaction. According to them (1995: 131), it is in and through the organisation of everyday discursive practices that identities are produced. Consequently, they consider identities *achieved* (emphasis in original), as negotiated products of interaction, characterised by features which people make relevant in their interaction. In interviews, this may, for instance, show in the participants' ways of addressing issues related to themselves as language users. By making certain features more relevant than others in their talk, one is able to draw some conclusions about the identities the participants put forward.

Therefore, a concrete issue at the level of individual identity construction is to look at individuals' use of language and the ways in which people make social identities, their memberships in particular groups, relevant in interaction. In conversation analytic terms, there are different *membership categories*, such as daughter, business people, speaker and so on, which make it possible to identify and describe people because they are culturally available resources in our language and, thus, give us the ability to refer to

other people and to ourselves. (Widdicombe and Wooffitt 1995: 69.) Blommaert (2005: 209), a discourse analyst, discusses *speaker positions*, which speakers adopt in talk. Speakers' positions are characterised as shifts in style as well as in epistemic and stylistic stance. In the empirical analysis, one can interpret these as cues for identity. Blommaert (*ibid.*) notes that "by speaking from different positions and as different subjects, speakers' talk shows how identity work can be thematically organised and where shifts between themes can be interpreted as shifts in identity". Membership categorisations and speaker positions function as concrete tools for the present study in looking at the individual level of identity construction in the interviews.

In addition, Widdicombe (1998) notes that there are different features of identity work that a researcher can search for in interview talk. People can use different strategies in making certain identities salient and occasioned<sup>6</sup>. For instance, a person by warranting and rejecting a membership may recast a certain identity. This can be accomplished by denial of what the interviewer says, followed by the interviewee's introduction of a different identification. As many scholars (e.g. Pavlenko and Blackledge 2004) maintain, individuals may construct different and often incompatible identities. In interaction, speakers may have different ways of either accepting or resisting the attribution of a certain category (Widdicombe 1998). For instance, in the present study, a participant may explicitly say that he does not consider himself a good speaker of English and, hence, reject to affiliate himself to a category of good speakers. He may even give an explanation to this, for instance, by evaluating his language use. Evaluative word choices may reveal how the participants position themselves language users. If looked at on individual level, it thus seems that identities are often negotiable, an identity option discussed in chapter 2.3.3. Accordingly, negotiable identities emphasise human's agency and individual power to do the actual negotiation of different identities in a piece of talk.

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<sup>6</sup> These terms are used by conversation analysts. This study uses *become manifest*, *get constructed* and *put forward*.

#### **4.2.2 Interactional and sociocultural levels**

The interactional level of identity construction means that identity is constructed within and through interaction whereas the sociocultural level refers to identity as produced within and through sociocultural and institutional discourses (Pomerantz 2001: 102-103). The present study draws insights on Davies and Harré's (1990) *positioning theory* in conceptualising both the interactional and the sociocultural level of identity work. My definitions differ slightly from Pomerantz's (2001), who sees Davies' and Harré's (1990) positioning as principally a part of the sociocultural level of identity construction. In this study, the term is understood in the following ways. Firstly, it captures the multiple processes of positioning in interaction, that is, those by and between the interviewer and the interviewee. Secondly, the term positioning is seen as positions in interactional situations that the interviewees have experienced in encounters with others and which they reflect upon in the interview talk. In addition, for the purposes of the present study the positioning theory is useful when conceiving how people in interaction through the processes of positioning draw from different discourses and take up different subject positions.

To take the interactional level in the focus first, the present study has adopted the notion of interviews as interactional in nature from conversation analysis (e.g. Antaki and Widdicombe 1998; Widdicombe and Wooffitt 1995). People co-construct identity in interaction. In addition to conversation analysis, discourse analysis is also concerned with, according to Cameron (2001), analysing how one's performance is influenced by what other people do and how they behave. Furthermore, discourse analysis is interested in how identities come forward through they way others position us in what they say about us in addition to what we do ourselves (Cameron 2001: 176). To quote Davies and Harré (1990), positioning is a "discursive process whereby selves are located in conversation as observably and subjectively coherent participants in jointly produced story lines", and which is

determined by particular discourses. Thus, for them positioning is a conversational phenomenon and by conversation they mean a form of social interaction the products of which are social, too, meaning that within one's as well as other's discursive practices different positions are made available (Davies and Harré 1990). *Interactive positioning* assumes one individual positioning the other (i.e. what one person says positions the other), while *reflexive positioning* is the process of positioning oneself, hence what one says positions oneself (e.g. Pavlenko and Blackledge 2004: 20). Davies and Harré (1990) point out that positioning can also be unintentional. Within discourse, such as interviews<sup>7</sup>, individuals not only position themselves but also others. Furthermore, one can position oneself in different ways within a single interview. For instance, a person may see himself in a more positive light through one discourse rather than the other.

What the points discussed above mean from the perspective of the present study is that the interviewer, by asking questions, positions the interviewee in a certain way. The interviewee either accepts or rejects the way he is positioned by the interviewer's questions. This is a matter of agency, and also of positioning. According to the positioning theory (Davies and Harré 1990), rejection may happen if an individual does not understand what the issue is about through which the interlocutor positions him or her, and individual wishes to pursue one's own ideas (thus invoking an alternative positioning), or desires to refuse that positioning. In the present study, individual variation will likely occur as regards the answers the participants give to the same interview questions. Both the interviewee's as well as the interviewer's talk constitute the data, and, hence, both of their talk is considered and analysed. The interviewer's utterances are important as well, since the respondent often draws his or her identification upon them (Widdicombe and Wooffitt 1995: 82). If considered from the perspective of identity construction, the interviewer by introducing different features related to self

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<sup>7</sup> For Fairclough's discussion on discourse as a concept, see 2.3.1.

and identity, he or she offers the respondent options to focus on (Widdicombe and Wooffitt 1995: 99).

Considering the institutional/sociocultural level of identity construction in interviews, it entails the identification of discourses and the positionings available within them as well as different features attached to discourses and subject positions. Much of the issues related to this dimension have already been discussed in section 2. For this reason I will not go into details here but summarise the main points briefly as they apply to identity work in interviews in particular.

Discourse can be seen as an institutionalised use of language, and knowing something means knowing in terms of one or more discourses. Thus, depending on the categories available in particular discourses a person can express and understand his or her personal and social identity (Davies and Harré 1990). As Ivanić (1998: 71) notes, different discourses produce certain versions of the world by making certain perspectives, or subject positions, more available than others. Considering interview interaction, depending on the way the interviewer positions the interviewee, or offers a positioning, will show as a certain discourse. Hence, this affects the way the interviewee positions himself. As for Davies and Harré (1990), an individual after having taken up a position, sees the world through that position. Thus certain features are more relevant than others within a particular discourse which can be seen to include a domain of experience or knowledge and a perspective from which this domain is looked at (Pietikäinen 2000: 143). Edley (2001: 190), by drawing on Wetherell (1998), emphasises the notion of historical context embedded in sequences of talk. This means that when people talk, they do so using a lexicon or repertoire of terms which has been provided for them by history. There may be a number of ways of talking about or constructing a certain issue within a language of a culture. Hence, people are bound to make choices and the options are not always equal. Some constructions or formulations will be more 'available' than others,

thereby being easier to say. Therefore, in the context of interviews and particularly when topics are often introduced by the interviewer, the interviewees may have a limited set of options to choose from when positioning themselves. For instance, if asked about language skills, the participant is bound to talk about that topic. As regards discourses, one is likely to find a variety of them related to using English in different settings. Judging from the themes discussed and the experiences the participants encounter, these could be, for instance, speaking English and learning English. Although the topics can be thought of as given by the interviewer, it is illuminating to explore in what range of ways the participants react to the issues talked about, such as skills, as they may highlight different skills by drawing from different discourses and hereby positioning themselves in various ways.

In summary of the levels of identity construction, it is thus important to note that they operate simultaneously. The present study aims at considering all the levels and at the same time acknowledges that interview is a special form of interaction and often structured beforehand, such as semi-structured in this study, and having a certain objective. The interaction between the interviewer and the interviewee is of particular nature, and much what the interviewee says is influenced by the interviewer's questions and issues previously talked about. In order to investigate identity work at a more empirical level, one needs concrete tools. This is where I will turn next when presenting the research design of the present study.

## 5 RESEARCH DESIGN OF THE PRESENT STUDY

### 5.1 The data

The data for the present study comprise semi-structured interviews of seven people, all of whom are male from 21 to 26 of age. The theme interviews were conducted before and after the participants worked at a paper-converting factory in Germany in 2003 as part of their engineering studies at the Polytechnic of Jyväskylä in Finland. All of the interviewees participated in the trainee programme abroad voluntarily and decided the length of their stay, which ranged from four to six months. I as a researcher also worked at the same location and thus got an insider's perspective on the participants' stay abroad. Before the stay abroad the participants had studied English approximately ten years.

The gathering of the data started in May 2003 in Germany as the participants were interviewed after one to three weeks of their arrival. The interview questions were formulated on the basis of Konivuori's (2002) theme interview designed to study Finnish expatriates in Britain. The initial purpose of the interviews was to explore the participants' views on language proficiency in general, their own language proficiency in particular, and expectations concerning the coming stay abroad (see Appendix 1 for interview questions). After each participant's stay, they were interviewed again either in Germany or in Finland. In the second interviews, the focus was on the interviewees' experiences during the stay and particularly their reflections and perceptions about using English abroad (see Appendix 2 for interview questions). Although semi-structured, both the first and the second interviews developed into casual conversations, in which I as a researcher and the respondent spoke about general matters concerning their stay abroad. The focus was on the views and feelings as well as perceptions and experiences related to using foreign languages, particularly English and

German, the latter of which they knew only little before the stay. The interviews lasted 30 to 45 minutes each, and they were transcribed for the purpose of analysis. The transcription includes the interviewees' and the interviewer's utterances, pauses and hesitations as well as word stress and changes in sound (see Appendix 3 for transcription conventions). In the transcript, capital letters of the participants' pseudonyms<sup>8</sup> are used in order to ensure anonymity.

The purpose of this study is to investigate how the speakers construct their identities as users of English before and after the stay abroad and through the comparison of the first and second interviews the participants' experienced changes during the stay can be investigated. Kanno (2003: 7), having worked with four students during a period of three years, speaks for the advantages and the value of longitudinal perspective as it has allowed her to document gradual changes in the students' identities as they moved from one sociocultural context to another. This may be impossible in short-term studies. The longitudinal perspective is also advocated in the present study, as the attempt is investigate transition that Finns as users of English experience when going abroad since it is relevant to identity negotiation and construction. It is thus possible to investigate which identity options are available for them before and after the stay and, thus, to become more aware of the ways in which different settings shape people's identities. The present interviews follow the participants from one situation to another, from the contexts where they have experienced using the English language at school to those in which they experience using English on a daily basis. Longitudinal studies thus allow us to understand the multiplicity of identity and different phases of the construction of identity and Hansen and Liu (1997: 572-573), for instance, state that onetime research is inadequate considering context-boundedness and complexity of identity.

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<sup>8</sup> These are: *Jaakko, Joel, Lauri, Oskari, Tero, Pete and Risto*.

There are similar characteristics in the present data to those of Kanno (2003) as the participants are temporary sojourners in the host country as opposed to permanent residents, which has characterised much research data studied in the fields of second language learning and bilingualism. The participants in this study knew from the beginning that they were going to leave the host country. Our identity is not just about our past and present; our future trajectories, too, influence our current relationship with the world (Norton 1999, as quoted by Kanno 2003: 126). A person who knows that he or she is going home in a few months will likely construct different identities than a person who knows that he or she is going to stay in a foreign country. Thus, the pattern of leaving home, living abroad, and coming home is bound to differentiate young sojourners' identities from youths who immigrate to another country for good (Kanno 2003: 126).

## **5.2 Research questions**

The purpose of this thesis is to study the identities of Finnish foreign language users before and after their stay abroad. The aim is to answer the following main research question:

- I. What kinds of identities related to the English language the participants construct in the interviews at the beginning and after a stay abroad?

In order to answer the main research question, three subquestions are set:

- 1) How do the interviewees talk about themselves in relation to the English language?

The first aim is to find out what kinds linguistic elements (e.g. words and expressions) the speakers use when they talk about themselves and the English language. In addition, the aim is to find out what kinds of themes they bring up when talking about themselves as users of foreign languages in general and as users of English in particular.

- 2) What kinds of discourses related to the English language become manifest in the interview talk and what kinds of positions the participants take within different discourses?

The second objective is, firstly, to identify discourses related to the English language and, secondly, to investigate the subject positions that the interviewees take within each discourse as well as the different subject positions that the interviewee and the interviewer jointly construct in their talk.

- 3) How does the stay abroad affect the ways in which the interviewees' talk about themselves related to the English language (question 1), as well as the discourses and subject positions related to the English language (question 2)?

The third aim is to analyse whether and to what extent the stay abroad shows in the participants' talk. The objective is in particular to investigate if and how the stay abroad affects ways of talking, in particular the nature of discourses that become manifest and the participants' positionings within the identified discourses.

The purpose is to study the interviews conducted at the beginning and after the residence abroad and to look at how the respondents talk about themselves in relation to the English language. The interest is to investigate the two interviews conducted at different times and compare the participants talk about themselves differently between the two sets of interviews. The interviews are analysed by using different methods which enable identifying which discourses connected to English the participants draw from. Finally, subject positions that the interviewees take within the identified discourse are recognised and analysed. In the investigation of subject positions, the aim is to find out how and through which 'lenses' (i.e. discourses) the speakers talk about themselves. The analysis is thus carried out on different levels and by using different methods. Furthermore, the interactional nature of the interviews is recognised and both the interviewer's and the

interviewees talk are considered. In order to implement analysis of this kind, certain methods are useful. These will be the focus of the last subsection.

### **5.3 Methodology**

The present study takes a multi-method approach to analysing the interview data as the tools for analysis derive from *content analysis*, *discourse analysis* and *the analysis of discourses*, as well as conversation analysis, already discussed in section 4. The three main methods will be discussed separately in the following sections. In addition, Fairclough's (1992: 72-100; Blommaert 2005: 29) three-dimensional framework in the conception and analysis of discourse is relevant since it helps defining the different levels at which to look at the data. Firstly, there is discourse-as-text dimension, which includes the linguistic features within discourse. Textual dimension can be investigated, for instance, at the level of vocabulary, grammar and text structure. Thus, this means identifying discourses at the linguistic level. Secondly, discourse-as-discursive-practice dimension conceives discourse as produced, maintained and distributed in society. In the analysis, one can analyse aspects which function as a link to wider social contexts (for Fairclough these are speech acts, coherence and intertextuality), such as word connotations. Thirdly, discourse-as-social-practice dimension includes the ideological and hegemonic processes in which discourse is seen to operate. (Blommaert 2005: 29.). This means analysis on a macro layer. Alongside with Fairclough's (1992) framework, Pomerantz's (2001) three-level perspective on identity construction (discussed in section 4) is applied in the analysis in order to better capture the varied nature of identity work in interviews. Thus, identity work is conceptualised as occurring on three levels at the same time: individual, interactional and sociocultural/institutional.

### 5.3.1 Content analysis

Firstly, content analysis is used for investigating the content of the talk, that is, in order to find out what the speakers say about themselves in relation to English. Analysis of this kind reveals the main themes talked about in the interviews. The content of data as such can often be the focus of research. Pietilä (1976: 31) introduces steps that one can follow in analysing the content of data. In order to become acquainted with the content, one should first go through the whole data. After this, the data can be arranged into content categories, such as the topics discussed in the present data, for instance, language skills and using English with others. These classes can further be grouped into smaller ones. As Pietilä (*ibid.*) notes, it may often be impossible to categorise data systematically especially if the content of each topic is unique and differences exist between instances where the same theme is discussed. However, in the case of large sets of data, it may be wise to arrange the content into categories because unless done so, the researcher can end up having too many details to handle, which can result in a failure to see larger phenomena.

According to Pietilä (1976: 52-53), studies which can be characterised as using content analysis<sup>9</sup> are all those which either statistically or verbally aim at illustrating either the content of data as a phenomenon in itself or those phenomena outside it, which the content reflects upon. The latter type of analysis on the relationships between the phenomena in the content and phenomena outside it may reveal more interesting and meaningful results than studies which only concentrate on the content (Pietilä 1976: 55).

In the present study, the content is first analysed and then arranged into categories on the basis of the topics discussed. As Kanno (2003) points out, sorting the data into themes is significant as over time one person speaks about the same topics repeatedly. That is the nature of our identities: some

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<sup>9</sup> In Finnish *sisällön erittely*.

things matter to each of us more than others (Taylor 1989, as quoted by Kanno 2003: 126). Now that we are familiar with how content analysis is carried out in the present study, we can proceed in discussing how the data are studied in discourse analytic methods.

### **5.3.2 Discourse analysis**

Considering discourse analysis, one should start with the notion that it is a very broad and heterogeneous method of analysis, as there are different ways to conduct discourse analytic research. Wooffitt (2005: 39) lists two main strands. Firstly, components of spoken discourse and written language can be analysed the same way in order to identify the formal rules of language used in different situations. Secondly, discourse analysis can also be associated with the work of Foucault (e.g. 1972), who aimed at investigating the ways of talking and writing, which serve political and ideological functions in that they restrict or limit people's ways of thinking and acting as social beings (Wooffitt 2005: 39). Discourse analysis of this type has been referred to as *Foucauldian*<sup>10</sup> discourse analysis or the *analysis of discourses* (Wooffitt 2005: 146). In the present study, discourse analysis, closer to the first strand of discourse analysis presented by Wooffitt, is implemented in order to explore how people formulate their talk. In addition, analysis of discourses is used to explore the talk as representing the social world, as discourses.

In general, discourse analytic research is interested in how talk and texts are organised to construct interpersonal and social functions (Wooffitt 2005: 80). For instance, discourse analysis offers insights for analysing the ways in which identities are constructed in discourse. In principle, discourse analysis takes the context of written or spoken data into account. According to Jokinen (2002: 45), discourse analysis investigates the construction of meaning in interaction and is interested how meaning is accomplished.

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<sup>10</sup> The term *Foucauldian* is also used by scholars.

Furthermore, the interpretations are mirrored with larger social structures and, thus, the results can be regarded as the researcher's context-bound interpretations (*ibid.*). In the present study, this means looking at the participants' talk with reference to the context of the talk and the contexts talked about. In the following, I will discuss the analysis of discourses and how they as representing larger social phenomena can be studied.

### **5.3.3 Analysis of discourses**

As touched upon earlier in sections 2.3 and 4.2.2, discourses are different in the way they represent the social – its processes, people, objects, means, times and places (Fairclough 2003: 133). Hall (1999: 105) notes that in practice, any discourse constitutes of a set of statements, which offer us ways of talking about knowledge connected to certain things, namely, to represent that knowledge. If we want to search for particular statements within certain discourse, the discourse enables us to see the topic in a certain way. However, it also restricts other ways of presenting the topic. In the analysis of discourses, one should bear a few important notions in mind. Pietikäinen (2000: 143) and Wooffitt (2005: 183) note that researchers are inconsistent about how to identify discourses. Sometimes a word or a sentence, or even a longer stretch of talk or a narrative can bear an imprint of a discourse (Wooffitt 2005: 183). As Pietikäinen (*ibid.*) puts it, within a text many discourses can be drawn on. Thus, Pietikäinen (2000: 143) advocates a multi-method approach in the analysis of discourses by concurrently looking at the content and linguistic features of a text by using one's theoretical and background knowledge of the issues looked at. Therefore, the data should be investigated in detail at the level of language use.

Fairclough (2001: 241-242, 2003: 129-133) provides a number of empirical tools with which to analyse discourses. He proposes that as a discourse represents particular parts of the world from a particular perspective, in the actual analysis one can start with identifying the main parts of the world

which are represented, that is, themes. In the frames of the present study, this means studying the content and arranging it into themes. The next step is to analyse the point of view from which these themes are represented. Through the analysis of linguistic features we can get closer to what discourse they realise. According to Fairclough (2003: 129), features of vocabulary often reveal characteristics of a discourse in the most obvious ways since “discourse ‘word’ or ‘lexicalise’ the world in particular ways”.

After more linguistically oriented analysis, Fairclough (2003) advises that one should look at the ways in which aspects of the world are represented in different discourses. This means concentrating on the semantic relationships between words. Fairclough (2003: 130-133) notes that in order to identify how different discourses use the same words differently, one should concentrate on semantic relations by identifying collocations, co-occurrences, and look which words go together. Furthermore, words within different discourses may vary a great deal, but they may also overlap equally much since the same words may relate to several discourses (Fairclough 2003: 130). Metaphors can also function as markers of particular discourses (Fairclough 2003: 132). In addition, this study draws on methods used by Pomerantz (2001) in her analysis of discourses by looking at the use of pronouns in order to find out individual and social aspects of identity.

After identifying discourses that the participants draw from, the subject positions taken are analysed. Subject positions are locations in conversation (Edley 2001: 210), established through processes of positioning (Davies and Harré 1990, see also section 4.2). Following and modifying Harré’s (2004: 10) views, different features can be looked at in talk when considering these processes. For instance, words used contain certain images and metaphors, which assume and invoke particular ways of being. However, participants are not necessarily aware of these connotations. The positioning theory stresses that people may interpret the same words, in the present case the interviewer’s questions, in different ways, which results in individuals taking

different positions. Thus, through specific ways of talking, people make identities relevant. In the analysis, one should thus investigate how people talk about themselves within certain discourses and, furthermore, how the talk changes when different discourses are employed. According to Edley (2001: 210), one must ask what does a given statement or set of statements say about the person who utters them. As pointed out in section 2.3.2, each subject position is characterised by voice which is a certain socially recognisable style of using language (Bakhtin 1989, cited in Ivanić 1998). For instance, in the present data, within a discourse of using English the participants choose to speak through linguistic resources offered in that discourse and, thus, speak through different *voices*. I aim at identifying these.

In summary, the analytical terms discourse and subject position are multiple and abstract in nature and, thus, problematic to define, and analysing them in the actual language use is not easy or straightforward. Hence, moving these categories into the level of language use is not without difficulties. When analysing discourses and subject positions, the two methods of content and discourse analysis are combined. Analytically I distinguish two interrelated dimensions in the interview talk. These are, firstly, topics and themes discussed in the interviews which are related to using the English language. Secondly, I differentiate linguistic means and forms of talking about oneself as a user of the English language. In the data, this can show, for instance, in the ways the participants characterise themselves with respect to language skills by using evaluative words. In addition to content and discourse analysis, some features in the analysis are informed by conversation analysis, which sees language use as action. The present study acknowledges the fact that the talk is originally produced in interaction, which influences the outcome of the interview talk (see section 4.2.2) and, thus, the form, content and design of discourses. As Wooffitt (2005: 56) notes, the respondents' utterances which are identified as manifesting a particular discourse, have been interactionally generated, and, thus, it is acknowledged

that the features of a participant's talk that are interpreted as evidence of a discourse may be more closely tied to the sequential and interactional context in which the talk was produced. Hence, I pay attention to the interaction between the interviewer and the interviewee.

Fairclough's (1992) and Pomerantz's (2001) three separate levels are considered when answering the research questions. In order to answer the main research question, the subquestions are addressed. Firstly, at the individual level (Pomerantz 2001; see section 4.2.1), I will look at what the participants' say, which, according to Fairclough's (1992) textual level, means looking at their word choices. Secondly, by following Fairclough's (*ibid.*) discursive practice dimension, I will look at the interviews in more general sense and the context in which issues are talked about. As regards the interactional level (Pomerantz 2001; see section 4.2.2), the focus is on how the design and interactional nature of the talk as well as the processes of positioning affect the outcome of the talk. Thirdly, these issues are interpreted at the level of social practice (Fairclough 1992) and sociocultural level (Pomerantz 2001; see section 4.2.2) as they become manifested as discourses and give implications about wider issues of society. Finally, I will interpret the results from the perspective of identity which is the main object of interest in this study. As Fairclough (1989: 26, as quoted by Blommaert 2005: 30) advises, the present study proceeds from description (discourse-as-text) to interpretation (discourse-as-discursive-practice) and explanation (discourse-as-social-practice). Next, I will move on to analysing the data.

## 6 DISCOURSES OF EDUCATION AND EVERYDAY LIFE

This section concentrates on discussing the analysis of the data, and it consists of three main sections, each of which includes subsections. They are arranged according to the temporal continuum of conducting the interviews and analysing the data as it is the most logical way of presenting the analysis. Therefore, issues connected to period before the stay abroad are discussed first in section 6.1. Secondly, themes that relate to the stay abroad period are dealt with in section 6.2 in order to illustrate the changes that the participants encountered and particularly to answer the third secondary research question (see page 54). As it seems logical, the first section (6.1) focuses on the first interviews only whereas the second section (6.2) deals with both the first and the second interviews since they illustrate the changes in the participants' talk in the most prominent ways. One should note, though, that the division between the sections 6.1 and 6.2 as regards the titles should be seen as suggestive as talk related to stay abroad shows in section 6.1, too.

When addressing each phenomenon, I will present illustrative examples from the data. The examples include, if possible, both the interviewer's question and the interviewee's answer. Each of the examples are dealt with and analysed in more detail. Within each section and subsection, arranged according to themes, discourses and subject positions (question 2) are analysed. The main research question on identities will be discussed separately after the closer analysis in section 7 where pieces from the earlier discussion are put together. This last section is more theoretically oriented concentrating on the findings in light of other studies as well.

In answering the first secondary research question, I have identified in the data two main ways of talking about oneself in relation to using English in the data. In many ways, these themes differ from each another. Within the first theme there is talk connected to schooling and education, and within the second one the talk is related to everyday life. These ways of talking are

discussed as *discourses*. Moreover, both of these discourses feature different themes, which are referred to as *subdiscourses*. Within the discourses of schooling and education, for example, there is talk centred on themes such as learning English, language proficiency and language skills whereas discourses of everyday life include themes related to using English in daily life, particularly with other people. Although the main discourses are separated this way, plenty of overlap exists between them, and it is not always clear whether the participants' talk reflects one discourse or the other. In addition, each discourse may feature multiple issues. Therefore, the present study does not aim at making exact claims about the boundaries between discourses but instead attempts to show the versatile ways in which the participants of this study position themselves in different discourses.

### **6.1 Discourses before the stay abroad**

In this section, I will concentrate on discourses in which the influence of the stay abroad does not show explicitly. Hence, the focus is on the ways in which the participants with a relatively long history of learning English at school in Finland and with no earlier experience outside those contexts view themselves as users of English. In the following, I will firstly discuss the participants' views about their language skills and language proficiency in English. Particularly in the first interviews, the participants assess their language skills rather eagerly, partly because they are asked to and partly on their own initiative. Secondly, expectations about surviving with English are dealt with in this section. Through analysing participants' views of themselves before spending time abroad, one gets closer to their constructed identities as language speakers in their home contexts. The third theme concentrates on the participants' own perceived similarities and differences of themselves when speaking their mother language, Finnish, and the foreign language, English. This sheds some light on the speakers' linguistic

identities, a concept touched upon in section 3.1. Lastly, the discussion moves towards the aspect of transition that the participants experience when moving from their home contexts to those of abroad.

### **6.1.1 Talk about language skills**

The initial aim of the first interviews was to gain insights on the students' views on their language skills. The purpose of this section is to discuss how participants talk about their language skills. Therefore, as the interviewer asks questions such as 'Do you think you have good language proficiency?' and 'Do you think you have deficiencies in your language skills?' there clearly is a great deal of talk about language proficiency. Although the fact that the talk centres on the theme of language proficiency can be thought of as given, it is worth examining in more detail *how* the interviewees describe and talk about their own language proficiency and what words and expressions they use in their talk. This gives one a more detailed picture of their views of themselves as users of English.

Among the most prominent themes discussed in the interviews are language proficiency, language skills and language learning. The participants are keen on evaluating their English language proficiency particularly in the first interviews. Most importantly, it arises from the data that the students frequently base the assessment on their experiences of using English at school and in Finland, thereby referring to their own histories as language learners as well as users at home. Contexts of learning and using the language have an impact on the ways people see themselves as users of that language (e.g. Lantolf and Pavlenko 2001: 155; Pomerantz 2001). Analysis of the interviews suggests that almost without exception, the interviewees say that they do not have a good language proficiency and mention vocabulary and grammar as areas of difficulty several times. They choose to evaluate their performance in using English in specific areas of language either when

asked or on their own initiative, especially in the first interviews. The following extracts show this.

Extract 1, 1<sup>st</sup> interview <sup>11 12</sup>

- |    |   |  |
|----|---|--|
| 1  | T | no onko sulla omasta mielestä hyvä kielitaito  |
| 2  | P | <b>ei</b>  |
| 3  | T | perustele  |
| 4  | P | no koulussa en oo koskaan ollu mikää tähti. joka kerta ku alottaa englantia                        |
| 5  |   | opiskelemaan niin siinä tulee aina se tietty <b>raja</b> vastaan. minkä muistaa että missä se      |
| 6  |   | viimeksi tökkäsi. tuntuu että ei ei siitä niinku vaan päässy niinku. pitemmälle.                   |
| 7  | T | onko se joku tietty asia vai   |
| 8  | P | noo <b>näitä</b> kielioppihommia   |
| 9  | T | kieliopissa  |
| 10 | P | mm   |
| 11 | T | joo. no onko se sitten estäny sua käyttämästä kieltä   |
| 12 | P | <b>ei</b> (2.0) se vaan (3.0) no se hankaloittaa joittenki asioiden esittämistä kun joutuu         |
| 13 |   | jankkaamaan moneen kertaan. no onhan se nyt <b>ihan selvää</b> et jos et sää. jos ei <b>puhu</b> . |
| 14 |   | puhu heh niinkö. käytä just aikamuotoja oikein. kyllä se on hankala se tilanne                     |
| 15 | T | joo  |
| 16 | P | ja sanavarasto tietysti vois muutenki olla laajempi.   |

In this extract (1), the themes focused on are skills and learning. To exemplify, in line 4 Pete talks about his performance at school ('never been a star', *ei mikään tähti*) and, thus, evaluates his skills, perhaps in relation to others if he sees that there are both successful and unsuccessful pupils in classrooms, or alternatively relative to native speakers of English. In lines 4-5, Pete explicitly talks about studying English and how he has faced a certain kind of 'barrier' (*raja*) which he was not able to overcome and, thus, could not proceed in his language proficiency in the school context. One may wonder whether Pete thinks that he *should have* developed further and *should have* become more skillful in English. On the basis of talk such as this, the interviewee seemingly feels that there are certain goals that one must achieve, goals that are undoubtedly determined by education.

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<sup>11</sup> For a translated version in English, see Appendix 4.

<sup>12</sup> The capital letter *T* in transcript refers to the interviewer (*Tiina*) and *P* (as well as *S*, *Te*, *L*, *O*, *J* and *R*) the interviewee.

The way Pete talks about issues such as vocabulary and grammar implies that he talks about himself through *voice of schooling* and, thus, a kind of *discourse of schooling* becomes manifest here. Furthermore, one should pay attention to his topic choices: grammar, vocabulary and tenses. By implication, Pete brings them up because they are defined important and valuable by education. Moreover, there are references to the power relations operating within education. Pete's view of his language proficiency actually seems to reflect a discourse of those in power in education, rather than his own individual view. Judging from Pete's evaluation of his skills, he seems to attach negative feelings to learning of English by saying how he has not become as good as he should have and he has deficiencies in English. To sum up, he says in lines 5-8 that he has faced a barrier in grammar, does not use tenses right (line 14), and his vocabulary should be larger (line 16). Consequently, in the powerful discourses of schooling Pete's position is clearly that of a *language learner*. Moreover, this position seems to be put forward rather strongly if looked at lines 13-14 where Pete says that it is pretty obvious that if one fails to use tenses correctly, the situation is difficult. The use of 'pretty obvious' (*ihan selvää*, line 13) thus implies that, according to Pete, one definitely fails when not using grammatically correct language. Thus, the power of skills in this discourse of schooling is great. Example (2) from Lauri's interview presents similar issues.

### Extract 2, 1<sup>st</sup> interview

- 1 T no mikä on sinusta niinku hyvä kielitaito. millainen se on. kellä on hyvä kielitaito.  
 2 L n:o (hhh) **mulla** ei ainakaan oo hyvä kielitaito hhhhh  
 3 T (hhhhh)  
 4 L no. kyllä sais olla vähä parempi tuo kielitaito (2.0) että  
 5 T no mitä toivoisit että sulla ois sitte. niinku  
 6 L n:o ehkä toi (3.0)  
 7 ehkä ehkä toi sanavarasto vois tietysti aina olla parempi yleensäki (2.0)  
 8 ja ehkä sitte tota (2.0)  
 9 välillä on kyllä niinku sanat aika sekasi (2.0)  
 10 ehkä on se kaks tärkeintä ehkä (2.0) mihin vois kiinnittää huomiota  
 11 T joo. ilmeneekö se sitten jotenki sun tavassa käyttää englantia.  
 12 että sulla ei omasta mielestä oo hyvä kielitaito. tai tuntuuko susta sillä tavalla  
 13 L no välillä ehkä sitä vähä niinku turhaa. ehkä liikaa ehkä miettii sitä (2.0)  
 14 mitenkä mä nyt sanon sitte ja (2.0) ja mitenkä ne on ne sanat siinä oikein ja

It is worth noting that here the interviewer offers a different position for Lauri than for Pete in extract (1) by asking two general questions 'What is good language proficiency like?' and 'Who has good language proficiency?' whereas in example (1) the question focuses on the interviewee's own language proficiency. Hence, in extract (2), Lauri has more positions to choose from as the interviewer does not direct the question to concern his own skills. Despite this more general orientation, Lauri answers the questions by evaluating his own skills in line 2 by saying 'I at least don't have good language proficiency' (*mulla ei ainakaan oo hyvä kielitaito*) and in line 4 that his 'skills should be a bit better' (*sais olla vähän parempi*). He, similar to Pete, introduces vocabulary skills and grammar, and also word order (line 9) as areas of improvement in his language proficiency.

In example (2), based on evaluation of one's own skills, Lauri takes a language learner position in a discourse of schooling. Interestingly, in the last two lines (13-14) Lauri positions himself as a *user of English* as the theme of *using the language* is introduced by the interviewer in lines 11-12: 'does it show in your way of using English'. Lauri says that perhaps unnecessarily he thinks too much about how to talk and the word order of his talk. The use of the two phrases 'unnecessary' (*turhaa*) and 'too much' (*liikaa*) in line 13 could be interpreted as the interviewee's slight dissatisfaction with the kind of learner position that he had described earlier and a desire to distance himself from the proficiency discourse and its associated subject position. Issues of power also seem to manifest here as Lauri engages in power struggle by critisising his own, perhaps for him quite usual, position as a learner who thinks too much about what to say in English. The two positions are obviously in contrast to one another.

In addition to talking about and assessing one's vocabulary skills, most of the interviewees talk about speaking when they are asked to evaluate their language skills. Also when talking about oral skills, vocabulary is mentioned often by most of the interviewees as an important part of speaking. In extract

(3) below, Oskari says that his speaking is not good (*en sitä hyväksi sanois*, line 2), and especially in unfamiliar situations he has to ‘search for words’ (in lines 7-8 *hakemista sanojen kans*). Similar to Pete and Lauri and their language skills discussed earlier, Oskari also emphasises the role of vocabulary when talking about his language skills.

### Extract 3, 1<sup>st</sup> interview

1 T no onko sulla omasta mielestä hyvä kielitaito. englannissa  
 2 O no emmää sitä hyväks sanois koska se puhuminen ei oo kuitenkaan niin (2.0)  
 3 T mm  
 4 O että. varsinkin just joku **uus** outo tilanne (2.0)  
 5 esimerkiksi jos vaikka tuo puhelinliittymän hommaaminen niin  
 6 T mm  
 7 O vieras tilanne. koskaan ollu aikasemmin.  
 8 niin se on ihan hakemista niitten sanojen kans ja näin (2.0)  
 9 että en en väitä että ois hyvä  
 ...  
 10 T mm. no sitten ihan englannilla puhumista ihan. se minkälaisia lauseita sä tuotat ja  
 11 sanoja. niin miten se puhuminen omasta mielestä sujuu  
 12 O (3.0). no (2.0) puhuminen **ei** suju hyvin. mun mielestä että.  
 13 (3.0). varsinkin jos pitää niinkö.  
 14 (3.0). just jotain asiaa selittää niin. en tiiä. tuoko se tilanne semmosen paineen vai  
 15 mikä. että sitte niinkö tietää tai sittekö jälkeenpäin mietti sitä tilannetta ja ois **tienny**  
 16 sen **sanan**. mutta siinä selitystilanteessa tulee siis semmosia (2.0)  
 17 korvaavia sanoja (2.0)jotka ei tavallaan suoranaisesti tarkoita sitä.  
 18 vaan jotain sinne pään (2.0) niinkö (2.0) en nyt osaa yhtäkkiä sanoo mitään esimerkkiä.  
 19 mutta on sen vaan pistäny **merkille** että se menee semmoseksi niinku  
 20 **palikkapuhumiseksi**  
 21 T joo joo  
 22 O että **tosi** yksinkertasia sanoja  
 23 T joo. mistäköhän se johtuu. osaatko sä sitä sanoa  
 24 O no luulisin että se **puhumattomuus**.  
 25 T mm  
 26 O että ei oo ollu tilanteissa missä tarvis puhua niin  
 27 T mmm  
 28 O sitä ei tavallaan anna **aikaa itelle** miettiä niitä sanoja. vaan. että tulee vähä  
 29 semmonen (2.0)paine puhua siinä että(2.0)ja mmm. ne ne tulee ne helpoimmat ja sanat  
 30 joita on niinkö. ihan alusta asti tullu. tai pyöritlety.

Highlighting the importance of vocabulary in speaking becomes apparent above. Firstly, Oskari in line 12 says that his ‘speaking does not go well’ (*puhuminen ei suju hyvin*). To demonstrate the way in which Oskari emphasises the meaning of words, he evaluates his performance by using emphatic tone of voice (shown in bold in the examples) and wonders if situations create ‘pressure’ (*paine*, line 14) and a need to use ‘substitute words’ (*korvaavia sanoja*, line 17) and ‘really simple words’ (*tosi yksinkertaisia*

*sanoja*, line 22). Furthermore, Oskari illustrates his speaking as ‘rudimentary kind of talk’ (*palikkapuhuminen*, line 20). It is noteworthy how Oskari explains this in line 24: he has not spoken English, and, thus, he does not grant himself enough time to think about what to say, feeling pressured to talk instead (*tulee vähä semmonen paine puhua*, lines 28-29). In this proficiency discourse, Oskari also draws from a *discourse of speaking* and takes a position of a *non-proficient speaker*. Arguably, the way Oskari talks about himself has been influenced by his experiences, or in this case the lack of them, in speaking English. Evaluating one’s performance and placing a lot of emphasis on vocabulary items probably derives from the school context and, hence, a kind of school voice is prominent here. The expression ‘easiest words come out’ indicates that Oskari aims at being more proficient, thus, by implication, aims at being like native speakers. Evaluating and assessing one’s skills, particularly in the size of lexis and the mastery of grammar (most likely compared with natives), reappears in the interviewees’ talk.

Evidently, vocabulary is an emerging theme in the data. It is worth stressing that the more specific foci of such assessment talk which concentrates on vocabulary and grammar are introduced by the interviewees themselves and not by the interviewer. The extracts above exemplified this as the talk centres on different skills areas. In addition, vocabulary is often discussed with the use of negative expressions when talking about mastering it and when talking about oneself related to using English – the interviewees without an exception say that their vocabulary should be larger. This might suggest that the participants perceive language as ‘a collection of words’, and for them knowing words and having a large vocabulary seems to be a key to success in speaking. Stressing the inadequacy of one’s vocabulary and grammar skills shows particularly in the first interviews. This might imply that the young adults have got accustomed to constant assessment of their skills, a practice carried out repeatedly in education. Perhaps this reflects a *discourse of education* where vocabulary skills are valued and more fundamentally,

where language is seen as consisting of words. Firstly, there is talk about skills and, secondly, about succeeding in using the language, in this case succeeding in speaking. In school contexts, pupils are evaluated on the basis of their success and this is where the talk about succeeding comes from.

To continue with the talk about speaking skills in particular, the participants' descriptions of their speaking vary notably. For instance, in extract (4) below, Pete evaluates his speaking by saying how it does not include 'versatile' use of language (*ei monipuolista kielenkäyttöä*, line 4) and explains that once he has talked more, for example an hour, he eventually remembers things (lines 5-8). However, in shorter conversations he thinks he has to search (most probably for words) and think (lines 10-11).

#### Extract 4, 1<sup>st</sup> interview

- 1 T aivan. no sitten englannilla *puhuminen*. ihan. mitä sanoja ja lauseita tuottaa.  
 2 niin miten se omasta mielestäs sujuu  
 3 P (2.0) no riippuu vähä tietysti tilanteesta. jos on (2.0) tota. 4.0  
 4 eihän sitä kauheen monipuolista kielenkäyttöä oo (2.0) mutta (2.0)  
 5 jos sitä vaan joutuu tekemään pitemmän aikaa niin. sitä koko ajan niinku.  
 6 jos saman kanssa koko ajan keskustelee. sanotaan nyt vaikka.  
 7 puhut *tunnin* sen kanssa koko ajan.  
 8 niin kyllä sitä *väkisinki* muistaa ja rupee löytyy niitää juttuja  
 9 T joo onkse-  
 10 P tuollaisiin *lyhyisiin* keskusteluihin. sillon joutuu *hakemaan* ja miettimään  
 11 kuin vakavampia asioita  
 12 T et se ei *tuu* niin  
 13 P *niin*. sitä on vähä *jäässä*.

Interestingly, Pete does not explicitly say what his non-versatile use of language means, and it does not show whether he refers to style or something else and what things he remembers, what he has to search for and think. On the basis of these explanations, it is clear that Pete has to work hard in order to speak. As he puts it, he is a bit like 'frozen' (*jäässä*, line 13). The use of this metaphor captures the participants' situation before the stay rather well: as a result of not having spoken with people, one has to work hard in order to be able to speak, and Pete obviously evaluates his speaking in terms of his experiences in situations. Furthermore, he discusses how he feels when speaking. As Pete evaluates his speaking, he seems to draw from

a kind of *discourse of proficiency*, and he actually sees himself through the lenses of schooling and education. Significantly, Pete talks about himself with negative terms (when saying his speaking is not versatile, he has to search and think and he feels frozen), quite likely positioning himself as a learner. Also Simo discusses his speaking in the following example (5), describing it as distinguishable.

#### Extract 5, 1<sup>st</sup> interview

- |    |   |   |
|----|---|---|
| 1  | T | no miten sitte jos ajatellaan englannilla <i>puhumista</i> niin miten sun           |
| 2  |   | omasta mielestä sun oma puhuminen <i>sujuu</i> . et se kun alat englanniksi         |
| 3  | S | ää se on semmosta (hhh) perussuomalaisista (hhh)                                    |
| 4  | T | minkälainen on perussuomalainen. (hhh)  |
| 5  | S | no miten se Häkkinenki puhuu ei. <b>ei hän se ääntäminen</b> oo.varmaan.            |
| 6  |   | ei hän se.kaunista kuunneltavaa oo.niinkö. jos englantilaiset kuuntellee tai (2.0)  |
| 7  |   | ihan mitkä maalaiset tahansa.ni.kyllähän se nyt varmasti <b>erotaa</b>              |
| 8  |   | jos on ennen suomalaisen kuullu puhuvan englantia (2.0)                             |
| 9  | T | mm  |
| 10 | S | en tiiä. onko se suomalaisista niin lapsellista ruveta <b>vääntämään</b> sitä niin. |
| 11 |   | hienon kuulosesti tai jotaki vastaavaa mutta  |
| 12 | T | mm  |
| 13 | S | kyllähän sitä tietenki <i>yrittää</i> mahollisimman <i>selvästi</i> puhua että.     |
| 14 |   | ei sitä nyt viihti ihan miten sattuu ruveta lausumaan niitä                         |

Several things in this example are worth looking at in more detail. First of all, in lines 3-8 Simo talks about his speaking by describing it as 'basic Finnish' (*perussuomalaisista*), like 'Häkkinen's talk' (*miten Häkkinenkin puhuu*), who is a famous Finnish race driver, 'not pretty to hear' (*ei kaunista kuunneltavaa*) and 'distinguishable' (*varmasti erottaa*), thus referring to his pronunciation. All this shows that, according to Simo, Finns have a certain way of speaking English, which is not good. One may ask what kind of discourse talk such as this represents. For instance, it can manifest a way of dividing English speakers into two distinguishable categories: those who speak correctly (the English, i.e. the natives) and those who do not (the Finns, i.e. non-natives). At school, the correct way of speaking and the model that pupils are encouraged to try to imitate is that used by the natives. Therefore, it could be argued that Simo assesses his way of speaking in relation to what the discourse of schooling deems relevant and important. At the same time he is

granting a powerful position to native speakers by characterising non-native speakers as non-powerful with deprivations of some kind.

To continue with extract (5), one should note how Simo in line 10 wonders whether it is childish for Finns to talk in a fancy way, i.e. like a native speaker (*onko se suomalaisista niin lapsellista ruveta väätämään niin hienon kuulosesti*). This seems to be quite opposite to what he talked about earlier (by characterising the Finnish way of speaking). If speaking in a fancy way is encouraged at school, then resisting that kind of speaking would mean resisting the school models and norms. To put it simply, one could argue that by questioning the school norms Simo implicitly resists them. Interestingly, Simo does not say that he as *an individual* feels childish to speak in fancy way but talks about Finns *collectively*. Talking about others' opinions can, in fact, function as a window to one's own language ideologies. Often it may be safer to speak issues neutrally or collectively to save one's own face. This collectively characterised talk can also reflect group identity issues<sup>13</sup>.

There are thus traces of different discourses and positionings in this example. On the one hand, within this discourse of speaking Simo seems to take a position of a *lingua franca speaker* who prefers speaking like Finns. On the other hand, the position can also be that of a *non-native speaker* on the basis of his answers introduced at the beginning of his account (lines 3-8) where he talks about Finns' way of speaking as distinguishable and not pretty. Trying to speak as clearly as possible and not daring to pronounce in whatever way one wishes illustrates a desire to invest in clearer pronunciation and, hence, reflects investment in the attempt to sound clearer. However, Simo seems to make a distinction between what is fancy and what is clear. Therefore, it would appear that his talk reflects resistance of native speaker norms, namely, the fancy way of speaking. Speaking clearly may indicate the position of lingua franca speaker where clear or understandable speech has

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<sup>13</sup> Discussion on 'us versus others' will be presented in 6.2.4 more extensively.

more value than native-like speech. This suggests that resistance of norms to sound like a native are related to issues of identity and English as a lingua franca. As Pözl (2003) puts it, freedom of native-speakers' norms characterises the definition of language user. This resembles Lehtonen's (2004) findings on Finnish employees' views of their language skills who do not consider it essential to speak correctly as long as the message is conveyed.

As shown in extracts above, the interviewees evaluate their performance in speaking in different ways. The following extract (6) serves as one more example of this, where Joel talks about his speaking in an interesting way. On the one hand, he says that he can produce (speaking and/or sentences) fairly well and does not think about it much (lines 4-9). Furthermore, he says how he can 'get his things done' (*asian saa selville*, line 11) and knows enough words. This indicates that he draws from a *discourse of coping*, issues that will be discussed in the following section. On the other hand, he talks about his speaking as 'probably not always grammatically correct' (*ei varmaan aina kielipillisesti oikein*, line 6), 'exactly right' (*justiinsa ihan oikein*, line 10), and his talk 'may sound funny for an English person' (*voi kuulostaa hassulta englantilaiselle*, lines 13-14). His modifications such as 'probably not' and 'may sound' are enlightening, possibly indicating that Joel is not sure about his position.

#### Extract 6, 1<sup>st</sup> interview

- |    |   |   |
|----|---|---|
| 1  | T | no tota. sitten englannilla puhuminen. se mitä lauseita tuottaa                       |
| 2  | J | niin  |
| 3  | T | ni miten se omasta mielestä sujuu   |
| 4  | J | (4.0) no kyllä ite pystyy pystyy ihan hyvin tuottaa. emmää tiä että meneekö ne oikein |
| 5  |   | (hhh) <i>omasta mielestä ne aina menee hyvin</i>                                      |
| 6  |   | mut ei nyt varmaan aina niin kielipillisesti mee oikein                               |
| 7  | T | mm  |
| 8  | J | kyllähän sillai et (2.0) tulee sillai aina. tulee totanoi tuolta jostai               |
| 9  |   | (hhhh) sen heittää et eistä tuu mietittyä että (2.0)                                  |
| 10 |   | mietittyä että onko se sit. meneekö se justiinsa ihan oikein.                         |
| 11 |   | kumminkin et kyllä nyt <i>asian saa selville tai selväks</i> että                     |
| 12 | T | joo   |
| 13 | J | ja riittää sanat. voi se olla et se kuulostaa hassulta sitte jollekki (2.0)           |
| 14 |   | (hh) <i>englantilaiselle</i>  |

To continue with Joel, two co-occurring and contesting discourses seem to mix in the talk, that is, those of *everyday life* and *schooling*. According to the discourse of everyday life, the emphasis is on getting one's opinions out, whereas in the discourse of schooling it is important to use the language in a grammatically correct way, to sound right and not funny. The proficiency discourse reflects the way of thinking and values that are prominent in education and schools, whereas in the discourse of everyday life surviving is more important a value than correctness. By implication, Joel's position is an independent language user who is a bit hesitant, shown by the presence of proficiency discourse. Thus, the two discourses are in contrast to one another. In Joel's opinion, his speaking is good whereas in the opinion of others, whom Joel does not mention, his speaking may not be as good.

In summary, the examples in this section have shown that the participants stress vocabulary, speaking and grammar skills and evaluate their own skills in those areas. Furthermore, they talk about their skills in rather negative ways, more frequently in the first interviews. As mentioned earlier, it is possible to see *discourses of education* related to learning in the accounts. In those discourses, language learner is a typical position, a one who may often have difficulties in finding the right words and remembering what to say. Learners are customarily thought of as not having perfect skills and, thus, having deficiencies. Seemingly, the interviewees think that a good speaker needs good vocabulary. The reason behind the prominence of these issues may lie in the fact that the participants have had little experience of using English outside school before the stay abroad. As these extracts are taken from the first interviews at the time of which the participants had spent approximately two weeks abroad, the longest period ever since, one might argue that the home, Finnish and educational contexts in which they have used English enhance the position of a learner. Within these contexts discourses of schooling and education seem to be understandably dominant. Konivuori (2002) and Lehtonen (2004) have also found that Finnish business

employees, before having more experiences of using English, evaluated their vocabulary as insufficient and their talk as not that fluent. McKay and Wong (1996) have made similar observations in their study of immigrant ESL students who seemed to accommodate themselves to the demands that school discourse had made on the ESL students. In addition, Murphey et al. (2004: 94), through investigating Japanese and Taiwanese language learners' histories, note that "for many students success in the classroom would appear *as rare as a riot in a nunnery*" (emphasis added). The same phenomenon seemingly shows in the present study as within discourses of schooling and education inadequacy and the lack of skills are prominent whereas moments of success do not occur as often.

### **6.1.2 Surviving abroad with one's language skills**

The previous section demonstrated that the availability of certain positions in particular discourses and contexts may be limited. Discourses of schooling have been discussed as they reflect in the participants' talk. Now that experiences of using English in educational contexts show in the accounts, it is interesting to explore what kind of expectations the participants have about new, overseas, contexts. Hence, it is of interest in this section which discourses the participants draw from when discussing their expectations.

As the participants were going to spend the longest period abroad ever, they were asked to assess how they thought, or imagined, they would cope with their language skills abroad, particularly in Germany. This is one of the prominent themes in the first interviews. Based on the students' talk, they seem to draw from three identifiable strategies for surviving with one's skills abroad, the first of them exemplified in the following two extracts.

### 1) I'll do fine

#### Extract 7, 1<sup>st</sup> interview

- 1 T no uskotko sitten selviytyväsi englannin kielen taidoillasi täällä Saksassa  
 2 R kyllä mää uskon  
 3 T oliko sulla mitenkää muuttunu käsitys ennen lähtöä ja nyt kun on täällä vähän aikaa  
 4 ollut et onko se aina niinku ollu  
 5 R ei kyllä se aina ollu silleen että ajatellu että kyllä sitä pärjää  
 6 T mm  
 7 R jos ei niin sitten viittomakielellä

Risto's talk here seems to imply that he is confident with his skills as he says in line 2 'I do' (believe I survive, *kyllä mää uskon*), 'I have always thought that I will cope' (*aina ollu [...] ajatellu että kyllä sitä pärjää*, line 5) and if not, he will use sign language (*jos ei niin sitten viittomakielellä*, line 7). Likewise in example (8) below, Tero says that he has no other option than to survive in using English (*pakko selviytyä ku ei muuta kieltä osaa*, line 2) as he does not know any other languages. However, some insecurity seems to reflect in his talk, perhaps because of the lack of experiences of using English abroad, since he says that he *has to* survive as Finnish, English and Swedish are the only languages he knows. The choice of words 'don't have other' (line 3) than the three languages may indicate that, as Tero has no previous experience abroad, he does not know whether those languages are enough for him to survive.

#### Extract 8, 1<sup>st</sup> interview

- 1 T no sitte täällä Saksassa. uskotko selviytyväsi  
 2 englannin kielen taidoillasi täällä  
 3 Te (2.0) no **pakko** selviytyä ku ei muuta kieltä osaa. muutaku suomea ja englantia.  
 4 ja ruotsia. kyllä mää uskon että selviytyy

Considering these extracts, it seems that discourses reflecting the use of English emerge here rather than its learning. In these accounts, Tero and Risto seemingly take kind of *language user positions* and do not focus on issues related to learning and proficiency, such as vocabulary and grammar. Possibly talk of this kind is due to the difference in context of using English

compared with what Tero and Risto are accustomed to. Alternatively, they may have developed confidence with respect to surviving with English already in Finland and their home contexts.

## **2) I know English but the others don't**

It is interesting how differently the participants position themselves in terms of surviving. Through looking at the second type of talk about coping with English language skills one can notice the difference. In extract (9) below, Joel answers that he had thought or thinks he will cope in English (*luulin tai luulen ainaki et sillä selviää*, line 3). However, he has come to an understanding of the fact that he should also know some German because there are not many people who speak English in Germany (*pitäs saksaa osata [...] ei oo niin paljo semmosia jotka englantia puhuu*, lines 4-5). The position Joel takes is different compared with those of Risto and Tero discussed above as he mentions the lack of skills of *others* in English as a reason for problems considering his surviving abroad. By implication, Joel appears to position himself more favourably than he positions other speakers of English.

### Extract 9, 1<sup>st</sup> interview

- |   |   |  |
|---|---|--|
| 1 | T | no miltä tuntu ennen lähtöä että uskoitko selviytyväsi englannin kielen taidoillasi        |
| 2 |   | täällä Saksassa  |
| 3 | J | (3.0) no mä ainaki luu- luulin tai luulen ainaki et sillä selviää mutta totanoi(2.0) mutta |
| 4 |   | mutta.nyt tässä on näyttäny vähä siltä et(2.0)totanoinni pitäs sitä saksaa vähä osata.     |
| 5 |   | että aika vähissä. täällä on. tai ei oo niin <b>paljo</b> semmosia jotka englantia puhuu   |

Oskari in extract (10) below talks about similar issues as Joel by saying how he believes in his surviving and points out that the people among whom he lives do not speak English (*väestö täällä ei puhu englantia*, line 4), speak poorly or decline to speak it (*puhuu todella huonosti tai ei suostu puhumaan*, line 6). Most significantly, Oskari explicitly says that he does not see his own proficiency as a 'threshold' (*kynnys*, line 8) and as 'any kind of hindrance' to his surviving (*että se estäis mitään varsinaisesti*, line 10). Oskari's position resembles that of Joel in that it is more positive than others he has encountered abroad.

### Extract 10, 1<sup>st</sup> interview

- 1 T no uskotko kuitenki sitte selviytyvä englannin kielen taidoilla täällä. tai mitä odotit  
 2 ennen lähtöä ja sitte ku nyt  
 3 O no (3.0) **uskoin** pärjääväni ennenkö lähin tänne (2.0) ja uskon et pärjäänytka (2.0)  
 4 mutta. tämä. että. väestö täällä ei puhu englantia  
 5 T mm  
 6 O tai puhuu todella huonosti.tai ei suostu puhumaan en tiiä mistä se johtuu mutta (2.0)  
 7 niin se tavallaan vaikeuttaa sitä (2.0)  
 8 mutta emmää nyt koe että mun oma osaaminen ois kynnys tavallaan  
 9 T mm  
 10 O että se estäis mitään varsinaisesti

Hence, it seems that the two interviewees discussed above have noticed already during the first weeks abroad that they have sufficient skills for surviving, similar to Risto (example 7) and Tero (example 8), but difficulties would arise because the people in Germany do not speak English to the same degree. Although Joel's and Oskari's talk seem to represent *discourses of using English*, their positioning is slightly different from those of Risto and Tero, who only talked about *themselves* and their own English skills whereas Joel and Oskari position *others* as not good speakers of English, making themselves look better <sup>14</sup>.

### 3) *I am not so good but in real life I'll do fine*

The third kind of strategy in the talk about coping is exemplified by Lauri in example (11) and Pete example (12) who draw from different discourses and position themselves in multiple ways, compared with the students discussed above. The talk discussed earlier has reflected rather consistent discourses, although some of them are co-existing. Conversely, in the following it shows how the participants simultaneously draw from different discourses when talking about their surviving abroad.

At first, in example (11), Lauri's answers are similar to those of Risto (example 7) and Tero (example 8), and they thus reveal the same kind of strategy for surviving abroad, namely, the belief in one's coping. To

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<sup>14</sup> Evaluating one's performance in using English against that of others will be discussed in more detail in 6.2.4.

illustrate, in line 3, Lauri says that he believes he will cope with his skills in Germany (*kyllä uskon*). When the interviewee asks for clarification, Lauri explains that there is a lack in his language proficiency by using a Finnish metaphor *kielipää* ('a good head for languages' in line 5), which refers to someone being exceptionally proficient by nature, and by saying that he is not like that. By implication, Lauri's talk reflects discourses of schooling, or in more detail discourses of learning and proficiency in which he positions himself as *non-proficient language user*. However, Lauri continues by saying that he will cope (*kyllä tuun toimeen*, line 7), again using a metaphor of 'having arms and legs' to help his coping (*käsiä ja jalkoja käyttää apuna*, line 6). This implies how he views his ability to survive: one does not have to be fully proficient in a language to survive abroad. It is worth noting how the discourse changes here as a kind of *discourse of surviving* becomes manifest where it does not matter whether one is proficient or not but where surviving and coping are relevant. Furthermore, it is reasonable to argue that the survival discourse relates to discourses of everyday life. As a result, the interviewee's position seems to change to that of a user of English.

#### Extract 11, 1<sup>st</sup> interview

1	T	päästään tänne Saksaan taas niin uskotko selviytyväsi englannin kielen taidoillasi
2		täällä Saksassa
3	L	<b>kyllä uskon</b>
4	T	joo. osatko perustella
5	L	no (3.0) tuota tuota. kyllä <i>sen</i> verran vaikka kielipää niin hyvä ookaan niin
6		kyllä (2.0) <i>sen</i> verran löytyy sitte aina (2.0) käsiä ja jalkoja käyttää apuna että kyllä.
7		kyllä tuun toimeen

To continue with Lauri, one could argue that he is rather resistant to position himself as 'not good' as he says that although he is not proficient in nature, he will survive. This gives evidence of Lauri setting up a counterdiscourse (Norton 2000; Weedon 1997) in which he is able to position himself more favourably compared with in the discourse of language proficiency. The discourse of learning and that of surviving seem to be somewhat contesting or at least co-existing as Lauri uses them within a single account. Likewise, contesting discourses show in extract (12) below.

Extract 12, 1<sup>st</sup> interview

- 1 T jännittikö sitte mitenkään tuon **englannin** kielen kannalta  
 2 P no *eiii* oikeestaan sen suhteen että. emmä sitä *hirveen* hyvin osaa en oo koskaan siinä  
 3 mikään tähti ollu mutta. kyllä mä nyt *käytännössä* tiiän sen verran että kyllä mää nyt  
 4 asiani saan hoidettua ja  
 5 T mm  
 6 P nälkään en kuole (hhh)

Firstly, Pete says that he ‘does not know English very well’ (*emmä sitä hirveen hyvin osaa*, line 2), and he has ‘never been any star’ in English (*en oo koskaan mikään tähti ollu* in lines 2-3). Rather obviously, Pete evaluates his skills and refers to his performance at school (he talked about not being a star at school elsewhere in the interview). Discourse of schooling thus appears to show here indicating that Pete takes a learner position. Secondly, Pete says that in real life he knows enough to get his things done (*käytännössä tiiän sen verran [...] että asiani saan hoidettua*, lines 3-4), and he will not starve to death (*nälkään en kuole*, line 6). It is noteworthy that the talk is different here (from line 3 onwards) than earlier in the extract (from line 1 until the middle of line 3): Pete talks about reality or *everyday life* and knowing the language enough. Discourses of everyday life and particularly that of using English seem to become manifest here, and, therefore, the speaker’s position is that of a user who is relatively skilled in real life. Setting up a counterdiscourse and positioning oneself in different ways thus shows in this extract.

In summary, the participants’ expectations regarding surviving abroad with their English skills differ from one another. Interestingly, although the participants are rather consistent when drawing from discourses of education and schooling in the previous section, here individual differences are more evident. This is in line with Pellegrino’s (1998) point that in overseas contexts individual experiences may vary.

### 6.1.3 Speaking English versus speaking Finnish

Scholars (e.g. Benson 2004; Norton 2000) in the fields of second and foreign language learning stress that through language learning people can negotiate new identities. Studies on multilinguals suggest that people construct multiple identities in relation to the languages they speak (e.g. Pavlenko and Blackledge 2004; Pavlenko 2003). Bearing this in mind, in this section I am interested in seeing how and what kind of positions the participants take within discourses related to their mother tongue, Finnish, on the one hand and the foreign language, English, on the other hand.

Among the most prominent themes that either the interviewer or the interviewees bring up in the talk is the comparison of speaking English with speaking the participants' native language, Finnish. Within this topic, as in the previous ones, the ways in which the interviewees begin to compare themselves differ between the interviewees. For instance, they were asked if they found themselves different kind of speakers in English than in Finnish. In fact, some of them say that they are different whereas others say that they are not. The following discusses the differences that the participants report.

Simo and Tero in extracts (13) and (14) presented below explicitly say that they are different when speaking English compared with speaking Finnish. It is noteworthy that they are positioned by the interviewer to compare themselves. In extract (13), Simo says that he always has to think about a little what to say when using English (*vähän pitää aina miettiä mitä sanoo*, line 2) and he cannot necessarily express himself the way he wants in every situation (*ei välttämättä aina joka tilanteessa saa irti sitä mitä haluais ihtestäään*, line 7). Seemingly, Simo draws from discourses of speaking where he positions himself negatively as a speaker of English with deficiencies.

### Extract 13, 1<sup>st</sup> interview

- 1 T      etä ootko samanlainen kova puhuja englanniksi  
 2 S      no **ei ei mitenkään** että (2.0) vähän pittää aina miettiä mitä sanoo ja.  
 3       riippuu tietenki taas asiasta että.  
 4 T      mm  
 5 S      mistä puhutaan (2.0)  
 6 T      mm  
 7 S      mutta tota (2.0) ei välttämättä aina joka tilanteessa saa **irti** sitä mitä haluais ihtestäään.  
 8       se riippuu mitä asiaa hoitaa

Tero's answers in extract (14) are quite similar to those of Simo. In lines 4-6, Tero says that he may not be able to express that much humour in English (*huumori jää vähemmälle*, line 6). That is to say, he cannot perform in a similar way if he were speaking Finnish. Furthermore, Tero says how he uses hand gestures more when speaking English. These two examples show that the participants have to give up something of themselves as language speakers when speaking English. Adjusting one's language use according to the target language results in difference in the actual language use compared with one's native language and, hence, in the way the participants see themselves as language speakers. This shows clearly in Tero's account further down as he says in lines 12-13 that he 'settles for' (*tyytyä*) staying out of situations by being an observer rather than an active participant.

### Extract 14, 1<sup>st</sup> interview

- 1 T      ootko sä samanlainen puhuja kun puhut suomeksi.  
 2       että tämmöissä tilanteissa puhutko sä samalla lailla  
 3 Te      no. emmääh tiää. ehkä. kova oon puhumaan suomeksi ja englanniksi mutta ehkä (2.0)  
 4       jää tommonen huulenheitto sitten vähemmälle englanniksi  
 5       ku sitä ei pysty samalla tavalla (hh) puhumaan.  
 6       huumori jää vähän vähemmälle  
 ...  
 7 T      joo niin just. no osallistutko sitten omasta mielestä aktiivisesti keskusteluun kun  
 8       puhutaan englanniksi  
 9 Te      no (2.0) **en** ehkä niin aktiivisesti kun jos puhutaan suomeksi. mutta niin niin kyllä. kyllä  
 10      **yritän** aina osallistua aktiivisesti. en en kumminkaan niin aktiivisesti  
 11 T      haluaisitko sitte olla aktiivisempi siinä tai haluatko jotenki muuttaa sitä  
 12 Te      no en kyllä vois tietenki olla aktiivisempi että niin (2.0) joskus sitä vaan tyytystä  
 13      seuraamaan sivusta sitä tilannetta

When looking at Tero's account in lines 5 and 9-10, he would appear to introduce a positioning of being a different speaker of English than of Finnish, illustrated by the expression 'shortage of humour' in his talk in

English. Firstly, he thus seems not to be able to speak English in a similar way as to speak Finnish. Secondly, he also says that he is not as active a speaker in English as in Finnish by explicitly saying that he is ‘not as active perhaps as if I talked in Finnish’ (*en ehkä niin aktiivisesti kuin jos puhutaan suomeksi*, line 9). It is noteworthy that the interviewer introduces the discourse of speaking and positions the interviewee to think about himself as a speaker of the two languages (*ootko sä samanlainen puhuja kun puhut suomeksi*, line 1) whereas further down (lines 7-13), taken from a different position in the interview, Tero himself begins to compare himself within the *discourses of speaking English and speaking Finnish*, thereby positioning himself to compare. By implication, the latter lines of Tero’s talk indicate that he is more aware of the difference. Thus, his positions are on one hand an active speaker of Finnish, and on the other hand a rather passive speaker of English.

Oskari’s talk below (example 15) shows similar characteristics in that he positions himself differently as a speaker of English than a speaker of Finnish. To exemplify, in line 11 he argues that he ‘cannot lead the conversation as naturally as in Finnish (*eikä pystykään yhtä luontevasti ku niinku suomen kielellä johdattelemaan keskustelua*). This illustrates how Oskari probably sees himself: he cannot behave as naturally when speaking English as when speaking Finnish.

#### Extract 15, 1<sup>st</sup> interview

- |    |   |  |
|----|---|--|
| 1  | T | kuinka hyvin sitten koet pystyväsi hallitsemaan tämmösiä                               |
| 2  |   | kommunikaatiotilanteita englannin kielellä   |
| 3  | O | (3.0). nn. millä tavalla hallitsemaan  |
| 4  | T | että niinku pystyt siinä niinku samalla tasolla puhumaan toisen kanssa niinku          |
| 5  | O | johdattelemaan keskustelua   |
| 6  | T | niin. vähän sillä tavalla  |
| 7  | O | no. (3.0). no välttäävästi (2.0) et kyllähän siinäki niinku parantamisen. parantamisen |
| 8  |   | varaa on että. oon sen pistäny merkille että jos on jutellu.                           |
| 9  |   | (3.0) jonka kanssa joka on englanninkielentaitoinen jonka kansa pystyy hyvin           |
| 10 |   | keskustelemaan. ni. siinä ei <b>välttämättä</b> pysty siis sillai (2.0)                |
| 11 |   | <b>eikä pystykään</b> yhtä luontevasti ku niinku suomen kielellä johdattelemaan        |
| 12 |   | keskustelua  |
| 13 | T | mmm  |
| 14 | O | että (2.0) se on vaan semmosta tökkivää  |

Above Oskari assesses himself as a speaker of English by using an evaluative piece of language 'moderately well' (*välittävästi*, line 7). This implies a discourse of proficiency and a position of a learner with room for improvement. However, the issues talked about are closely related to using language and particularly comparing the use of English to the use of Finnish, topics that Oskari brings up. By giving an example of a communication situation with someone proficient in English in line 11, Oskari says that he is not able to lead the conversation as 'naturally' (*luontevasti*) as in Finnish. Oskari seemingly positions himself as a different kind of speaker in English than in Finnish, illustrated by the word choice 'naturally' with which Oskari exemplifies the difference. One should note that Tero and Oskari in the last two examples (14 and 15) introduce the aspect of comparison themselves without the interviewer referring to it. This might imply that they have become more aware of their different identities as speakers of English and speakers of Finnish.

Unlike Tero and Oskari, Joel and Risto (extracts 16 and 17) below talk about their speaking English being rather similar to speaking Finnish. Joel, for instance, introduces the theme of similarity himself without the interviewer bringing it up. He answers the interviewer's questions 'how well do you think you can control conversations in English' and 'are you more like a listener in those situations' by saying that he 'does not control them' (*emmä mitenkään hallitse*, line 5), and, furthermore, he is 'not that eager to talk in Finnish either' (*en niin kova puhumaan oo suomen kielelläkään*, lines 5-6). Furthermore, Joel says that he usually adopts the role of a 'listener' (*kuuntelijana*, line 7) and agrees with the interviewer in that he is a similar kind of speaker in English as in Finnish, which is illustrated by the adjective 'quiet' (*hiljanen*, line 12). Therefore, Joel arguably positions himself as a passive participant in both discourses of speaking English and Finnish, preferring listening to speaking.

### Extract 16, 1<sup>st</sup> interview

1 T no kuinka hyvin koet pystyväsi hallitsemaan kommunikaatiotilanteita  
 2 englannin kielessä vai ootko enemmänki sitte kuuntelemassa siinä tilanteessa  
 3 osaatko silleen  
 4 J no. no jos nyt *kahestaan* jonku kanssa juttelee. tota noinni (2.0) kyllähän siinä nyt  
 5 tasapuolisesti (2.0) emmä nyt mitenkää hallitse. emmä nyt muutenkaa niin kova  
 6 puuhumaan oo suomen kielelläkään. että (hh) että tota noi. että että (2.0) että tota  
 7 enemmän enemmän sellasena kuuntelijana. vastaan vastailen siinä mitä kysytään.  
 8 etten hirveesti mitää omia omia juttuja tuu heitettyä että  
 9 T mm niin just. et oot aikalalla samanlainen puhuja ku suomen kielelläki  
 10 J *niin niin nimenomaan* semmonen  
 11 T mm  
 12 J vähä semmonen hiljanen

In extract (17) below, Risto takes a similar kind of position to Joel above. At first, Risto says that there is of course a little difference between his speaking Finnish and speaking English (*onhan siinä tietenkin pikku ero*, line 4), but in line 8 he says that he is the ‘same persona’ (*oma persoona*) in whatever language he speaks. Manifestly, there is some contradiction in Risto’s talk. This might imply that it is not at all clear to him what it means to be a speaker of a foreign language.

### Extract 17, 1<sup>st</sup> interview

1 T että ootko huomannu tai omasta mielestäs sitten erilainen *suomen* kielessä  
 2 kuin sitten englannin kielessä. onko siinä sitten. näissä tilanteissa.  
 3 tuntuuko sulla että niissä on jotain eroja tai  
 4 R no **onhan** siinä tietenki pikku ero että.  
 5 pystyy ilmaseen ittiään omalla äidinkielessä mutta tuota.  
 6 en mä usko että siinä hirveen suuri merkitystä sitä  
 7 T mm  
 8 R kyllä sitä oma persoona on kuitenki millä kielessä tahansa puhuu

Interestingly, Risto talked about himself as a user of English rather differently earlier in the first interview. To illustrate (see extract 18 below), the interviewer asks what kind of situations he can routinely handle in English. Risto answers that there always is a kind of ‘excitement’ (*jännitysjuttu*, line 4) as regards using English, and he does not necessarily ‘feel like the language being his own’ (*ei tunne omakseen kielää*, line 4). He uses the metaphor ‘charm of novelty’ (*uutuuden viehätys*, line 5) when answering

the question what kinds of situations feel routine for him. The use of the metaphor thus reveals how Risto seems to feel when using English: nervous.

Extract 18, 1<sup>st</sup> interview

- |   |   |  |
|---|---|--|
| 1 | T | vastaavasti minkälaiset tilanteet on enemmänki rutiinia. englannin kielen kannalta   |
| 2 | R | englannin kielen (2.0) en nyt. kyllä se on kuitenki aina semmonen. pieni sanoisko.   |
| 3 |   | jännitys juttu että ei se nyt välttämättä tunne niinkö <i>omakseen</i> sitä kieltyä. |
| 4 |   | siinä on aina semmonen. uutuuden viehätys.   |
| 5 |   | ei ehkä sitä rutiiniksi voi sanoa  |
| 6 | T | mm   |
| 7 | R | kyllähän se tuommonen niinkö jokapäiväinen keskustelu.                               |
| 8 |   | rupee vähän niinkö meneen.   |

Hence, this example seems to reflect a discourse of everyday life and particularly using English in a different way than discussed earlier in example (17) where Risto says that he is the same persona whatever language he speaks. It seems that the kind of using English talked about here more specifically reflects a *discourse of using English as a foreign language*, in which Risto takes a position of a foreign language speaker, who does not feel like owning the language, who feels nervous and whose language use cannot be characterised as routine. Not being able to claim ownership of English implies that the speaker fails to consider himself a legitimate speaker (Bourdieu 1977, as cited in Norton 2000). It is worth asking why this is the case. The legitimacy and ownership are customarily discussed in connection to relations of power between language learners and target language speakers (Norton 2000: 6). Although it does not show in extract (18) explicitly, Risto possibly draws on a *discourse of English as a non-native language*, and he positions himself as a non-native speaker particularly in relation to more powerful native speakers who own the language and to whom language use is routine.

Similar to the theme of expectations about surviving, within this section individual variation has become manifest rather clearly. Speaking and using the mother tongue and the English language seem to mean different things for the participants. Their bilingual identities have been thus addressed and

some participants seem to be more aware of their linguistic identities than others.

#### **6.1.4 Positioning oneself in discourses across contexts**

As touched upon earlier, most interviewees explain the reason behind their difficulties in speaking as follows: they have not used English before the stay abroad. The fact that before the stay they have had little experiences of using English outside Finland and educational contexts and that abroad they gain in those experiences makes them position themselves differently in discourses across different contexts. Judging from this, one gets closer to the effects of transition that the participants experience, which is one of the most interesting aspects in the present study – how does the stay abroad affect the ways the interviewees draw from discourses and position themselves. This brief section here enlightens the issue of how most participants see themselves in relation to English particularly in the Finnish contexts in the first interviews. Rather explicitly, they talk about Finland and opportunities to practice English there.

In the three extracts below, the participants discuss their experiences of using English in Finland. They seem to emphasise the rarity of situations in the Finnish contexts where they would have needed English. In extract (19), Simo says that he has never had an access to speaking in real situations (*ei koskaan [...] päässy oikeisiin tilanteisiin puhumaan*, lines 6-7), and this has made him feel terrified before the stay about getting along (*vähän hirvitti varmaan aluksi että tulleeko toimeen*, line 3). Firstly, the choice of words ‘not having access to’ (*ei päässy*) implies that it is because of the context that he has no had the opportunity to use English, even if he had possibly wanted to. Secondly, feeling ‘terrified’ (*hirvitti*) is an emphatic word choice, which denotes that Simo has strong feelings about using English. It is also noteworthy that even when the interviewer positions Simo to think about expectations and feelings in general, it is Simo himself who makes the

initiative to position himself with strong feelings considering using English. By implication, he draws on a *discourse of speaking English in Finland* in particular. His position is characterised by insecurity and unpreparedness.

Extract 19, 1<sup>st</sup> interview

- |   |   |  |
|---|---|--|
| 1 | T | no tota miten sää niinku odotat tältä elämältä ja sitte asumiselta Saksassa.     |
| 2 |   | et muistatko miltä susta tuntu ennenku lähtöö tai miltä nyt sitte tuntuu         |
| 3 | S | no (2.0) ennen lähtö se (2.0) vähä hirvitti varmaan aluksi. et tulleeko toimeen. |
| 4 |   | saksaa en ossaa <b>yhtäään</b>   |
| 5 | T | mm   |
| 6 | S | et englantiki ku että ku <b>eii</b> koskaan niinku oikeen oo niinku.             |
| 7 |   | päässy niinku <b>oikeisiin</b> tilanteisiin puhumaan                             |

Joel in example (20) explains how one has to speak ‘without preparation’ abroad (*täällä on sanottava ihan kylmiltään*, line 9) whereas in Finland he could always ask someone (*pystyy aina kysymään*, line 8) about a word. Firstly, he introduces the Finnish context himself which implies that the context has a major impact on the way Joel views himself as a user of English. Secondly, the choice of words ‘without preparation’ (*kylmiltään*) is interesting. This clearly refers to similar issues to what Simo in example (19) discusses: one has little chances to use English in Finland. Furthermore, as such situation comes up, one feels nervous and insecure. By implication, for Simo and Joel the educational contexts have not provided them with tools for encountering situations in real life and tools for feeling self-confident when using a foreign language. Hence, in discourses of using English particularly in Finnish contexts the speakers seemingly position themselves as insecure or unprepared speakers of English. One should take this seriously and ask why the participants feel this way even though they have learnt English for over ten years at school.

### Extract 20, 1<sup>st</sup> interview

1 T no miltä tuntuu kun on pitäny alkaa puhumaan englantia sitte enemmän  
 2 kun et oo sitä käyttänyt  
 3 J **ei** sehn tuntuu tuntuu ihan *hyvältä*. ei se.  
 4 mun mielestä hieno homma että sitä pääsee **puhumaan**.  
 5 tota noin ni. ja se tuo varmuutta vaan lisää  
 6 ku huomaa että kaveri ymmärtää mitä puhuu ja sillai.  
 7 **Suomessa** jos sää juttelet jonku suomalaisen kanssa ja sitte.  
 8 sitte sitä pystyy aina kysymään et mikäs se *mikäs* se sana nytte olikaan.  
 9 mites se sanotaan. mut täällä on sanottava sitte vaan ihan kylmiltään siinä.

Lastly, Lauri (in extract 21) discusses the rarity of situations in Finland where one needs English (*Suomessa [...] niin vähissä ne tilanteet missä sitä tarvii*, line 4). It is worth noting that, according to Lauri, it is partly due to this that his language proficiency is not what he wants it to be (*osittain senki takia kielitaito ei oo ehkä sitä mitä haluais*, lines 5-6). Lauri appears to draw from a *discourse of using English in Finland* himself without the interviewer bringing it up.

### Extract 21, 1<sup>st</sup> interview

1 T tuntuuko susta siltä että niitä tilanteita ollu liian vähän  
 2 ettei oo ehkä tottunu tai-  
 3 L ilman ilman muuta tullu liian vähän käytettyä englantia että (2.0)  
 4 kun Suomessa ei sitä. niin vähissä ne tilanteet missä sitä tarvii (2.0)  
 5 ehkä osittain senki takia tämä kielitaito ei oo ehkä sitä.  
 6 °mitä haluais°

The contexts in which the participants have used English, albeit very little, seem to have an enormous effect on how they talk about their language use, particularly speaking as one feels nervous, has to start talking without preparation, and one's language proficiency is not what one wishes. Therefore, in certain contexts one necessarily is not able to negotiate one's desired position (and, thus, identity). Hence, this implies that the power of Finnish contexts in shaping the speakers' positionings is great. These findings complement to Norton's (2000) notion of the importance of context in shaping the speakers' sense of themselves as language speakers. Next, I will turn to discussing overseas contexts and discourses related to them.

## 6.2 Discourses related to stay abroad

In this second section, the focus is on the discourses that have been influenced by the stay abroad, that is, on the issues that the participants connect to the overseas contexts and their experiences there. This section pays particular attention to changes in the talk from the first interviews to the second ones. Firstly, I will discuss changes occurring in the talk about language skills and compare the issues with those discussed in section 6.1.1. Often the participants themselves introduce the aspect of change. The second themes dealt with are courage and confidence that seem to emerge in the talk during the stay abroad. Many of the changes that the participants' talk appears to reflect are somehow due to their experiences of using the English language with other people abroad. The third theme thus deals with the participants' own, Finns' and others' language proficiency and language use. Finally, the rise of investment in languages is discussed. It is noteworthy that although most of the issues emerge after the stay, some of them show already in the first interviews.

### 6.2.1 Changes in the talk about language skills

The talk around language skills was discussed in section 6.1.1, and the analysis revealed the participants' versatile ways of evaluating their language skills. Vocabulary and grammar were the two most prominently emerging issues in the talk, suggesting that those areas of language skills are specifically important for the participants. In addition, the interviewees appear to value speaking skills a great deal. Differences can be found between the first and the second interviews considering the ways in which the participants talk about their language use and their language proficiency, and the objective of this section is to focus on this difference. After the stay abroad, the participants discuss their skills in a different light by drawing from different discourses. Moreover, they seem to see their proficiency in a more positive light than before the stay. The following discussion is based on

extracts in which the interviewees are asked to consider whether they think their language skills have improved during the stay and what areas in their skills they think of as helpful in their adjustment in Germany. The following extract (22), in which Simo talks about speaking, is taken from the second interview.

### Extract 22, 2<sup>nd</sup> interview in Finland

- |    |   |  |
|----|---|--|
| 1  | T | joo no omasta puhumisestasi. miten se sujui ja huomasitko mitään muutosta                  |
| 2  | S | (hh) (3.0) ääntäminen on vaikeaa (hh). minä.   |
| 3  |   | jotkut vaikeat sanat niin ei kieli taivu sen verran  |
| 4  |   | että saa. saa kuulostamaan. <b>kuulostamaan</b> niin töksähtelevältä                       |
| 5  | T | niin sää mainitsitkin ton. sanoit sillon alussakin että ääntäminen on semmosta             |
| 6  |   | suomalaista  |
| 7  | S | nii:in. emmää tiiä muuttuko se <i>hirveesti</i> . kyllähän sitä nyt tietysti aina välillä. |
| 8  |   | pyrki että. sanomaan sanat vähän puhtaammin että   |
| 9  | T | mm   |
| 10 | S | että ei sitä. ei sitä siinä lopussa enää kiinnittäny niinku <i>huomiota</i>                |

After the stay, Simo still seems to talk about himself with a voice of schooling, thereby drawing from educational discourses, but its power seems to have diminished, as he says how he at the end did not pay attention to his Finnish way of talking, to his 'clumsy' pronunciation (*töksähtelevä*, line 3), which he discussed in extract (5) earlier, characterising it as distinguishable. Before the stay, Simo seems to have been more concerned with his distinctive, 'not pretty' -kind of pronunciation, thereby positioning himself as a non-native with deficiencies. By contrast, after the stay he does not bother himself about his pronunciation. This may imply that the power he granted for native speakers and the discourse of schooling have diminished, and Simo has begun to see himself as an individual language user, granting more power to himself. Kachru and Nelson (1996: 89) note that "if a typical American has no wish to speak like as a British user of English, why should a Nigerian, an Indian, or a Singaporean user feel any different?" One could add to this why a Finnish user should wish to speak like a native. Simo seems to position himself independent from native-like proficiency, thus by simultaneously drawing from a *discourse of English as a lingua franca*. In terms of identity, people's language affiliations are a significant part of themselves,

and of their image of themselves (Kachru and Nelson 1996: 89) and one might thus argue that Simo is more acceptable towards his Finnishness than he was before.

To continue with how the stay abroad influences the participants' talk about their skills, in extract (23) below, Pete says that during the stay abroad the 'rustiness' (in his skills) has disappeared (*ruoste on rapissu*, line 2) and he has noticed how he remembers tenses (*aikamuotoja on muistunu mieleen*, line 7). Most significant is Pete's last line (12). To exemplify, he has noticed while speaking English that 'oh gosh it came out correct' (*hitsi sehän tuli oikein*). The emotional choice of words 'oh gosh' here suggests that success in the performance arouses strong, and positive, feelings in the speaker. In addition, Pete's talk reflects a sense of surprise, exemplified as 'oh gosh it came out' (*hitsi sehän tuli*). This might imply that Pete 'accidentally' and against his own expectations has spoken correctly. Feelings of success may have not been a part of his position as a language user before and, in other words, Pete arguably interprets the effect of stay abroad as beneficial for his language proficiency.

#### Extract 23, 2<sup>nd</sup> interview in Finland

- |    |   |   |
|----|---|---|
| 1  | T | no entä onko kielitaitosi sitten kehittynyt   |
| 2  | P | (5.0) no <b>ehkä aavistuksen</b> verran. ja ehkä se on sitä että se ruoste on rapissu kun sitä on |
| 3  |   | joutunu käyttämään.   |
| 4  |   | sitä huomaa muistavansa asiaita   |
| 5  |   | mitä aikasemmin ei oo huomannu muistavansakaan  |
| 6  | T | voitko eritellä mikä osa-alue on kehittynyt   |
| 7  | P | no ehkä.aika <b>aikamuotoja</b> on muistunu mieleen semmosia                                      |
| 8  |   | mitä ei aikasemmin tullu ajateltua (hh) silleen ehkä  |
| 9  |   | mm  |
| 10 | P | paitsi ku kirjotettua tekstiä.  |
| 11 |   | ku kirjottaa niin sillonhan tietenki mutta puhuessaki niin huomas loppua kohden                   |
| 12 |   | ei hitsi sehän tuli <i>oikein</i>   |

The discourses drawn from in this example seem to be those of schooling, and particularly language proficiency and learning based on the themes Pete talks about, such as tenses and using the language correctly. The use of the expression 'correctness' (*oikein*, line 12) obviously comes from discourses of schooling, where students are being evaluated on the basis of their

performance, their errors are corrected, and they are taught to use language correctly. Although the proficiency discourse is prominent here, it is clear that a change shows in the way Pete talks about his language skills – the talk is more positively loaded. Similar issues show in example (24) below in which Oskari says that he has come to an understanding of how well he can speak and what kinds of situations he could think of encountering (in lines 5-6). Similar to Pete in example (23), positive features as well as evaluation and proficiency discourses recur here, too.

#### Extract 24, 2<sup>nd</sup> interview in Germany

- |    |   |  |
|----|---|--|
| 1  | T | no entä sitten käsitys omasta kielitaidosta. onko se muuttunu                            |
| 2  | O | 3.0. no.2.0 ku tänné <i>tulin</i> niin ei varsinaisesti ollu.                            |
| 3  |   | ei ollu juuri joutunu <i>käyttämään</i> sitä kielitaitoo ettei ollu semmosta             |
| 4  |   | niin <i>vahvaa</i> mielipidettä mutta (2.0)  |
| 5  |   | mutta kyllä se nyt on niinkö jossain määrin. selvillä että                               |
| 6  |   | kuinka hyvin sitä pystyy puhumaan ja minkälaisiin tilanteisiin kannattais niinkö         |
| 7  |   | minkälaisia tilanteita kannattaa lähteä tai <i>yrittää</i> selvittää tai sillai (2.0)    |
| 8  |   | mutta niin en osaa sillai arvioda että onko se hyvä vai huono                            |
| 9  |   | se kielitaito verrattuna esimerkiks muihin   |
| 10 | T | joo  |
| 11 | O | mutta mutta <i>parempi</i> se vois ollaki  |
| 12 | T | onko se sitten tää reissu jotenkin (2.0)   |
| 13 |   | niinku ootko saanu niinkö <i>käsityksen</i> siitä että missä asioissa <i>pärjääät</i>    |
| 14 |   | ja valaissu asiaa sun kielitaidon suhteen  |
| 15 | O | no. <b>on</b> se <b>joo</b> siis se on niinkö. suurin piirtein saanu <i>käsityksen</i> . |
| 16 |   | niinkö. omasta sanavarastosta. ja näin.  |
| 17 |   | että se on niinkö. tavallaan <i>rajat löytyny</i> siinä että                             |

Oskari evaluates his language skills throughout this extract. First of all he says that he is aware of how well he can speak, he has come to an understanding of what his vocabulary skills are like (*suurin piirtein saanu käsityksen omasta sanavarastosta*, lines 15-16), and moreover, he has discovered its 'boundaries' (*rajat löytyny*, line 17). It is rather clear that Oskari engages in positioning himself in a language learning discourse. For instance, talking about aspects such as 'it could be better' (*parempi se vois ollakin*, line 11) is rather typical for learners. One can also notice the presence of a speaking discourse. To illustrate, the interviewer asks about language proficiency and Oskari begins to talk about speaking and situations, thus drawing from discourses of speaking and using English in real situations where language skills are put into practice. In this extract, it thus appears that the interviewee

takes both the position of a learner and a speaker, although the learner position seems to be somewhat stronger on the basis of constant implications towards assessment. Awareness of one's language skills has emerged during the stay. However, Oskari continues to emphasise words, which thus has not changed from the first interview. However, the awareness of his lexis can be seen as a positive change.

Lauri also discusses changes that have occurred during his stay abroad in the following example (25). For instance, Lauri says that perhaps he has discussed a bit more until at the end of the stay (*ehkä loppua kohden vähän enemmän tuli keskusteltua*, line 5) and particularly has noted that it is not that difficult (*ei tää niin vaikeeta oo*, line 6) and that his language proficiency has improved a little (*kielitaito menny jonkun verran eteenpäin*, line 6). He seems to draw on a discourse of language proficiency by explicitly making reference to his own skills. Lauri's talk shows positive features, too. Moreover, Lauri seemingly positions himself as a learner who sees himself more positively and feels that conversing in a foreign language is not difficult, which he may have felt before the stay. Thus, he introduces the aspect of change.

#### Extract 25, 2<sup>nd</sup> interview in Finland

- |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | T | entä sitten muuttuko sun rooli siinä kuuden kuukauden aikana                                |
| 2 |   | huomasitko siinä mitenkään  |
| 3 | L | (3.0) een. ei hirveen. ehkä jonku verran tuli sitte(2.0) tavallaan niinku verrattuna siihen |
| 4 |   | alkuaikaan ja sitte loppuaikaan.  |
| 5 |   | ehkä sitten loppua kohden <b>vähän</b> enemmän tuli keskusteltua ja huomasi iteki.          |
| 6 |   | ei tää niin vaikeeta oo ja kielitaito on menny jonkun verran eteenpäin                      |

Judging by the accounts discussed in this section, different language skills have varying functions for the participants. Furthermore, some skills seem to have symbolic value in the participants' view of themselves and one could argue that particularly through oral skills one feels as having access to power (Bourdieu 1991) and legitimacy in the language. In addition, one seems to have access to power in the discourses of education and language use, too. The findings resemble those of McKay and Wong's (1996) where the ESL

students also put value on speaking. As they considered themselves successful in speaking, they had a more positive image of themselves as users and speakers of English. Considering the present study, speaking seems more prominent in the talk about skills after the stay abroad, which may be due to the gained experiences in speaking. In addition, the participants talk about themselves more positively when they discuss their speaking skills than when talking about their vocabulary and grammar skills, and particularly in the second interviews. One should also note that in the talk about skills there are more positive features in the second interviews compared with the first ones discussed in 6.1.1. This suggests that most students, after having gained experiences in the overseas contexts, present themselves in a more positive light, particularly with respect to their skills.

### **6.2.2 Changes in courage and self-confidence**

In the previous section, I discussed how the participants' talk about their language skills changed during the stay abroad and how it became more positive. In addition to these changes, the participants rather explicitly report changes in their feelings about speaking and using English. In particular, all of them said that they gained in confidence and courage during the overseas period. These issues will be discussed in this section.

Considering feelings related to language, speaking and using English seem to be strongly connected to courage and self-confidence as shown in Pete's talk below in example (26), taken from the first interview. Here Pete explicitly discusses changes that he has experienced already during the two weeks' stay.

### Extract 26, 1<sup>st</sup> interview

1 T ootko sitten niinkun huomaatko eroja itsestäsi *puhujana suoma suomen kielellä*  
 2 tai sitte niinku englannin kielellä  
 3 P no kyllä sitä (2.0) englannin kielellä puhumista sitä nyt *jännittää* (2.0)  
 4 no ei *täällä* enää (2.0) kun sitä joutuu *käyttää* joka päivä  
 5 T mm  
 6 P mutta Suomessa ollessa niin kun piti joitain esitelmää ruveta englanniks väsämään  
 7 ja pitämään niin kyllä sitä (2.0)  
 8 ja ihan erilainen *kynnys* sitä on nyt ruveta tekemään  
 9 T niin just et sit kuitenki täällä on alkanu tuntua ettei ehkä niinkää  
 10 P no ei se kyllä se kynnys madaltuu kun sitä joutuu kuitenki  
 11 T aivan  
 12 P päivittään käyttämään

Pete says that he feels nervous about speaking English (*englannin puhumista jännittää*, line 3). Furthermore, line 8 implies that that he has experienced a kind of ‘threshold’ (*kynnys*) as regards speaking because now, according to him, the threshold to start making a presentation in English would be totally different and lower (*ihan erilainen kynnys*, line 8 and *kyllä se kynnys madaltuu*, line 10). The choice of expression ‘totally different’ implies that the change Pete has experienced is significant for him. In addition, he keeps on repeating and stressing the word ‘here’, thus by highlighting that the changes have actually occurred abroad and in line 4 by making a contrast to what was before in Finland. Pete thus explicitly refers to the two contexts of using English.

Pete’s talk seems to reflect discourses of speaking English and using it in everyday life. The discourses seem to be related to Finland on the one hand where Pete has felt nervous about speaking English and to abroad on the other hand where he no longer feels that way as he has used the language every day. Hence, there is a contrast between the positions within different contexts. Similar issues are dealt with in extract (27) below where Oskari in line 3 also talks about there being a threshold hindering his speaking. Similar to Pete, this extract is taken from the first interview conducted two weeks after Oskari’s arrival in Germany.

Extract 27, 1<sup>st</sup> interview

- 1 T no miltä susta tuntu nyt alussa alkaa puhumaan englantia enemmän kun sitä et nyt  
 2 kuitenkaa oo käyttäny kovin paljoo Suomessa  
 3 O no (2.0) kyllähän se aika (2.0) kyllä siinä niinkö kynnys oli alussa mutta  
 4 kyllä se on laskenu koko ajan ja varmaan laskee  
 5 T mm joo  
 6 O että että. enää se ei sillai niinkö (2.0) **harmita**  
 7 vaikka se ei mee niin justiin niinkö pitäs että

It is noteworthy that already after two weeks' stay Pete and Oskari have started to adopt a different perspective to their speaking. The change shows in the talk. For instance, Oskari says that making mistakes no longer make him feel annoyed (*enää se ei [...] harmita*, in line 6). 'No longer' (*enää*) is a telling word choice as it suggests that this used to be the case earlier on. In addition, he contrasts between 'at the beginning' – 'no longer', explicitly indicating to the change he has experienced. As pointed out earlier, feelings of success and feeling legitimate to speak are linked with experiences of language learning. Therefore, as a result of experiences abroad, discourses of using English in everyday life where one feels legitimate to speak has gained more ground and affords Pete and Oskari corresponding subject positions, namely, those of legitimate users of English. Oskari obviously has distanced himself from the discourse of proficiency and its associated subject position as it no longer bothers him to make mistakes, something that learners often do and thus feel nervous. Anxiety seems to be usual for learners whereas success and confidence are more typical when talking from a user's perspective. In addition, Pomerantz (2001) notes how anxious learners may experience bursts of confidence such that their "anxiety is not necessarily a constant state but an ephemeral production", which implies that as soon as learners have the possibility to use the language, anxiety disappears.

Threshold was thus mentioned in the first as well as in the second interviews. After the stay, the talk centres upon the 'lowering' or the 'disappearance' of the threshold. In the second interviews, all the speakers say that it is easier for them to talk in English, and they have more courage to do so. In extract (28) below, Tero discusses this.

### Extract 28, 2<sup>nd</sup> interview in Germany

- 1 T no miten oot sitte yleisesti osallistunu keskusteluihin. ootko aktiivinen  
 2 vai passiivinen kuuntelija  
 3 Te no riippuu kenen kans keskustelee ett jos justin vaikka tota kavereitten kans ketä  
 4 on tullu täällä näitä ulkomaalaisia niin kyllä sitä aktiivinen on  
 5 T mm joo  
 6 Te aina oon kova ollu puhumaan ja nytkö uskaltaa ehkä käyttää enempi vielä  
 7 englantia ku mitä sillon aluksi (2.0) ehkä *aktiivisemmin* nyt osallistunu keskusteluun

In this example, Tero talks about participating in conversations, which shows that he has experienced a change considering speaking. To exemplify, he says in line 6 that he has always been ‘very eager to talk’ (*aina oon ollu kova puhumaan*). Furthermore, in his opinion he has now more courage to use English than at the beginning (*uskaltaa ehkä käyttää enempi vielä englantia mitä sillon aluksi*, lines 6-7) and, thus, is now a bit more active a participant in conversations (*ehkä aktiivisemmin nyt osallistunu keskusteluihin*). Tero also uses the two telling words ‘now’ and ‘at the beginning’, thereby making it explicit that during the stay he has experienced changes. If compared with the first interview, one notes the change: he said in example (14) that he is not that active and stays out of situations. Furthermore, Tero seems to speak from the vantage point of a *discourse of speaking English with non-native speakers* and takes a position of a legitimate speaker who dares to speak.

Feeling encouraged to speak is clearly a theme that emerges as a result of the stay abroad. Examples (29) and (30) serve as two more examples of this. Joel in extract (29) says that he has now gained in confidence with respect to speaking and using English (*nytte ainaki [...] tullu varmuutta että pystyy puhumaan ja käyttämään*, lines 5-6). It is rather clear that he has not felt this way before because he explicitly says that he has not needed to speak English in Finland (in line 7: *ku ei Suomessa nyt kenenkään kanssa oo tarvinu englantia puhua*). Joel also makes a contrast between now (in Germany) and then (in Finland), drawing from both discourses of using English abroad and in Finland and positioning himself as a legitimate user of English who is confident of being able to speak and use English. Likewise, Risto discusses the feelings of anxiety and confidence in extract (30).

Extract 29, 2<sup>nd</sup> interview in Germany

1 T no miltäs englannin **englannilla** puhuminen nyt tuntuu ja onko muuttunu jotenki  
 2 tässä että  
 3 J englannin puhuminen niin  
 4 T ja yleensä käyttäminen  
 5 J käyttäminen niin(2.0)mm(2.0)ei oo ei oo muuttunu muuta ku et nytte ainaki on vaan.  
 6 tullu varmuutta sitä että sitä **pystyy** puhumaan ja käyttämään  
 7 että ku ei Suomessa nyt kenenkään kanssa oo tarvinnu englantia puhua (2.0) niin sillai

Extract 30, 2<sup>nd</sup> interview in Finland

1 T no huomasitko mitenkään muulla tavalla muutosta siinä puhumisessa  
 2 kuin se että saksa saattoi tulla mieleen  
 3 R no **ei. ehkä** se nytte että sulla sitä itekki tulee varmemmaksi puhujaksi  
 4 ku sitä käyttää vaan sitä kielit  
 ...  
 5 onko onko kielitaitosi sitten kehittynyt tuolla ulkomailta olon aikana  
 6 R kyllä se **mun mielestä on** kehittynyt. ainaki  
 7 T oisko joitaki osa-alueita  
 8 R vähän semmosta **itsevarmuutta** tullu siihen.  
 9 ei tarvi jännittää sitä tilannetta puhua vieraalla kielellä  
 10 eri ihmisten kans

Interestingly, in line 5 the interviewer positions Risto within a discourse of language proficiency. By implication, however, Risto draws from a *discourse of speaking with others* positioning himself as a legitimate speaker. Maybe this discourse is embedded in the discourse of language proficiency. To continue with Risto, he says that he may have become more confident a speaker (line 3), has gained in confidence (line 8) and says that he need not feel nervous (line 9). Several points indicate a change during the stay: becoming more confident, now proficiency includes self-confidence, noticing that one does not have to feel nervous about speaking in a foreign language with different people. It is noteworthy, though, that at first the interviewer introduces the aspect of change in speaking.

In the examples (26-30) in this section, discourses of speaking and using English are represented in which the interviewees position themselves as more confident speakers of English and legitimate users rather than anxious and nervous learners. Furthermore, it appears that within those discourses their positionings are very context-specific and that in different contexts

different positions open up and become available for the students. It is interesting that the participants talk about the increasing courage to use English, which is a clear indicator of stay abroad influence: as the participants use English on a daily basis, they gain in confidence. Significantly, they had little confidence before coming abroad, which suggests that in their earlier contexts of using English they had little opportunities to position themselves as confident speakers, but instead as those who feel nervous. One might ask whether educational discourses offer only the position of 'an anxious language user'.

Based on the discussion so far, courage and confidence are important factors for the participants' use of English as they stress them in their talk. In particular, the way they talk about courage and confidence has obviously changed during the stay abroad, often illustrated by word choices such as 'earlier' and 'now'. It shows that issues of courage and confidence are strongly related to experiences of using and speaking English with others, a prominent theme not yet extensively addressed in this study. Having encountered situations with other non-native speakers and having noticed that they cannot use the language that well either seems to have influenced the participants' views of themselves as more courageous and confident users of English. This feature is illustrated in extract (31) below, where Oskari speaks about coping with his skills abroad.

#### Extract 31, 2<sup>nd</sup> interview in Germany

- 1 T joo. olkse sitte yllättävää että sillä sun kielitaidolla täällä pärjää *hyvin*  
 2 vai odotitko sitten jotain muuta  
 3 O mmmm. (3.0) no ihan. aluks *epäilin* että siinä *saattas* olla puutteita  
 4 tai siis sillai ettei selviäis oikein *hyvin* mutta niinkö  
 5 *yllättävään* *hyvin* *oon* *selvinny* että.  
 6 sitte tavallaan itseluoottamuskin vähän kasvo sitte.  
 7 ajan mittaan ku huomasi siinä niinkö ettei se kumppanikaan osaa sen  
 8 kummemmin tai ainakaan niinkö *paremmin*.  
 9 että että. ihan *hyvin*

In this extract, Oskari discusses his surprise at his successful surviving with English abroad (*yllättävän hyvin oon selvinny*, line 5), and says that his self-confidence has grown a little (*itseluottamuski vähän kasvo*, line 6). Most importantly, in Oskari's view, the reason for this is the fact that others do not know English that well either, or at least not better than him (*huomas ettei se kumppanikaan osaa sen kummemmin tai ainakaan paremmin*, lines 7-8). Oskari clearly compares himself with other speakers of English that he has come across abroad, hence positioning himself as a legitimate speaker within a discourse of proficiency. Interestingly, power manifests itself rather differently here than in discourses of schooling where learners often position themselves as having insufficient skills, often compared with native speakers. Growth in self-confidence has been due to noticing others' skills in English. It is noteworthy that the topic of skills is brought up by the interviewer but the aspect of others by Oskari himself. In the following, I will continue with the topic of comparing oneself to others.

### **6.2.3 My, our and others' proficiency and use of English**

The participants in this study encounter new contexts and experiences with other non-native and lingua franca speakers of English during their stay abroad. As mentioned above, issues of power seem to operate in situations with lingua franca speakers present. It is of interest in this section to find out how issues of power become manifest in the participants' talk when they refer to interactional situations with others. As Cummins (1996: 15) notes, power is determined by the people involved in each situation, and, thus, it is worth looking at in the present data since power is an important aspect of identity. Kachru and Nelson (1996: 88) argue that people need to know English to be members of the 'world community'. If thought this way, a person knowing English automatically has power (see also Bourdieu and Passeron 1990). Considering these arguments, it is worth discussing what kind of positionings the participants take within discourses related using English with others non-native speakers.

When the participants talk about different themes in the interviews, particularly in the second ones they talk about language skills and proficiency as well as using and speaking English, they compare themselves with other non-native speakers of English either when asked to do so or on their own initiative. Interestingly, there are many similarities in all the participants' talk around this topic. The interviewees were asked to assess their own skills in relation to both other Finns and Europeans. In many occasions, the students seem to be more eager to evaluate themselves collectively as Finns relative to other Europeans than individually compared with other Finns. It thus appears that they are more willing to construct a Finnish group identity as speakers of English, illustrated in extract (32) below, which is taken from the first interview.

### Extract 32, 1<sup>st</sup> interview

- 1 T osaatko sitten arvioda omaa englantia muihin suomalaisiin nähdien  
 2 R no sitä on kyllä vaikea sanoa. mut mikä **mun oma mielipide** on että yleensä  
 3 suomalaiset osaa aika hyvin englantia  
 4 T mm  
 5 R että kyllä mää veikkaan että aika samalla tasolla sitä ollaan  
 6 T että ihan hyvin  
 7 R hyvin se on hallussa. tai kohtalaisesti  
 ...  
 8 T no entä sitten kun arvioit itseäs eurooppalaisena niinku isommassa mittakaavassa  
 9 R no sitä on hankala sanoa näin *yleisesti* mutta semmonen käsitys mulla ainaki on  
 10 että. ei kuitenkaan *niin* hirviän hyvin sitä englantia puhuta varsinkaa tämmösisissä  
 11 maissa missä se ei oo äidinkieli (2.0) kyllä mää luulen että.  
 12 jos suomalaisia itteään ehkä vertaa niin voi olla että on vähän *parempi*  
 13 T mm  
 14 R semmonen yleistaso  
 15 T joo. onkse kehittyny tässä reissun aikana vai onkse ollu mitä oot ajatellu niinku  
 16 aina  
 17 R no **kyllä mulla on aikasemminkin ollu se kuva.** ja kyllä sen on täälläki huomannu  
 18 että. ei sitä niin hirveän hyvin muutkaan osaa

At first, Risto is asked to evaluate his own use of English compared with other Finns. Here Risto says that 'Finns know English quite well' (*suomalaiset osaa aika hyvin englantia*, line 3). He does not, however, mention any particular area of language proficiency but talks about skills in general. Based on the word choice 'knowing' (*osata*), a discourse of proficiency seems to show here, albeit the interviewer introduces the aspect of assessment

(illustrated by the word choice *arvioda*, line 1), which also denotes to the discourse of proficiency. When asked to evaluate his skills as a European in a larger frameset (line 8), Risto notably characterises Finns' skills with positive features, particularly as he makes a comparison in line 12 by saying that 'if compared with Finns themselves maybe it is a bit better' (*jos suomalaisia itteään vertaa niin voi olla että on vähän parempi*). Moreover, he says that 'others do not know English that well either' (*ei sitä niin hirveän hyvin muutkaan osaa*, line 18), which might represent a discourse of language learning in which the speaker positions himself and other non-natives as learners with deficiencies in mastering the language, thus making a contrast to native speakers. Furthermore, one should pay attention to Risto's way of talking throughout the extract: he switches the level of talking about proficiency from an individual to collective level and discusses Finns in general. To illustrate, he is asked to consider his own proficiency (*osaatko arvioda omaa englantia*). Instead of answering this, Risto adopts a more general perspective by saying that Finns know English quite well. This reappears in line 12, where Risto, instead of evaluating himself as a European, evaluates Finns as Europeans. Similar issues show in extract (33) below, taken from the second interview.

### Extract 33, 2<sup>nd</sup> interview in Finland

1	T	no mitkä asiat sitten <i>englannin</i> kielitaidossasi auttoi sitten siellä toimimista ja
2		mitkä vaikeutti. Saksassa
3	P	(4.0) <i>ylipäätäään</i> se että Suomessa on.
4		en nyt sano että pakko mutta jokainen lukee englantia tänä päivänä. melkein.
5	T	mm
6	P	niin ja.
7		mitä täällä nyt englannin kielen käyttö.
8		niin se ei oo se puhuminen oo <i>silleen</i>
9		helpompaa ja sitä ei jännitä saman lailla ehkä ku saksalaiset.
10	T	mm
11	P	koska on huomannu sielläki nyt loppua kohti varsinkin että ihmiset jotka
12		ensimmäiset viis kuukautta sillee sanovat ettei puhu englantia ollenkaan
13		niin muutamalla ainaki viimesen kuukauden aikana rupee sitä
14		lontooita irtoomaan että.
15		ehkä se on se <i>kynnys puhua</i> suomalaisilla matalampi tuolla.

At the beginning of this extract, Pete is asked to consider how his language proficiency has helped his living in Germany. Interestingly, when answering the question, Pete immediately begins to talk about how everyone studies

English in Finland (*Suomessa [...] jokainen lukee englantia tänä päivänä*, lines 3-4). He continues to talk about using and speaking English, illustrated by his word choices ‘use’ (*käyttö*, line 7) and ‘speaking’ (*puhuminen*, line 8), instead of his own language proficiency, a topic initially addressed to. He thus draws from discourses of using and speaking English. Moreover, it is significant how Pete talks about himself collectively as a Finn rather than individually. Perhaps it is safer to talk about oneself in a collective manner than individually. This shows throughout the extract and in particular in line 15 as he says that ‘perhaps the threshold is lower for Finns there’ (*ehkä se kynnys on matalampi suomalaisilla tuolla*, line 15). It might be the case that it is safer to praise a group of people than a single individual, and particularly oneself. Pete thus seems to draw on discourses of using and speaking English, positioning himself with other Finns as rather courageous speakers.

As the interviewees compare themselves to others, the proficiency theme repeatedly occurs in their accounts, partly on the interviewer’s initiative but also on the students’ own initiative. Besides this, speaking shows as another theme introduced by the participants themselves rather than the interviewer. The previous examples, where Risto and Pete went on to discuss speaking, illustrated this. By implication, the participants often equate language proficiency with speaking. Vocabulary is dealt with also in the second interviews, but, interestingly, having an inadequate vocabulary no longer seems that big a problem for the participants as they have noticed how others are not that proficient in English either. Hence, encountering other non-natives appears to have had a significant impact on the participants’ views of their own language skills. This issue shows in Tero’s and Oskari’s accounts in the following extracts (34 and 35).

Extract 34, 2<sup>nd</sup> interview in Germany

1 T niin just. no tota. entä sitten omassa kielitaidossasi, voitko sitte sillä tavalla. yksilöidä  
 2 jotaki asiaa mikä on vaikuttanu siihen sopeutumiseen että esimerkiks. niinkun joku  
 3 sanastoasia tai joku puhuminen tai kuuntelu tai joku vastaava. onko pystytkö silleen  
 4 Te no ähh. ehkä sanavarasto on edelleenki niin suppia että se ehkä vähän sitä esti sitä  
 5 mutta toisaalta sitte täällä kenen kans on puhunu englantia  
 6 niin ei niilläkään se sanavarasto oo älyttömän. laaja ollu että.  
 7 tavallaan sekkäään silti loppujen lopuks kumminkaan estäny sitä.  
 8 ei kyllä tuu mieleen muuta

Extract 35, 2<sup>nd</sup> interview in Germany

1 T millä tavalla sitten oma kielitaitosi on vaikuttanut sopeutumiseesi  
 2 lähinnä englannin kielen taito  
 3 O (3.0). no onhan se nyt tietysti jossain määrin *auttanu* ku ei se oo ainakaan huonompi  
 4 mitä näillä paikallisilla (2.0) sinäsä on jossain määrin on *auttanu*  
 5 esimerkiksi nämä Münsterissä asuvat muutamat tyypit  
 6 kenen kans ollaan oltu tekemisissä (2.0)  
 7 siinä auttanu et en nyt usko jos ois ollu kuinka paljon *parempi* että se ois kuitenkaan  
 8 helpottanu täällä. sitä niinkö.  
 9 sopeutumista koska ei täällä oo ketään niinkö  
 10 kenen kans ois pystyny juttelemaan sen kummemin muuta ku näitä perusjuttuja

In extract (34), Tero evaluates his vocabulary as ‘limited’ (*suppea*, line 4), thus seemingly drawing on a *discourse of language skills*. The subject of evaluating one’s proficiency is, however, taken up by the interviewer in her initial question (when addressing language proficiency related to surviving). Although the discourse of skills can be thought of as given, Tero’s way of responding to this is worthy to note. He first evaluates his vocabulary, but then turns the focus of talk to other people’s vocabulary, thus switching the level of talking from himself to others and begins to evaluate others’ vocabulary (*ei niilläkään se sanavarasto älyttömän laaja ollu*, line 6). This suggests that through comparing himself to others, Tero takes a more favourable position than he grants for others.

Oskari in extract (35) discusses similar issues as Tero by saying that his language proficiency in English is at least no worse than that of the locals (*ei se oo ainakaan huonompi ku näillä paikallisilla* in lines 3-4). Oskari’s word choices are telling. ‘No worse’ has connotations that the focus is on the negative sides of skills. Hence, it implies that Oskari highlights his and

others' position as non-native speakers who do not have good language proficiency. Furthermore, not being able to discuss anything else except 'basic stuff' in line 10 indicates the same: learners and non-native speakers usually are able to at least talk about basic things which are taught at school. From Oskari's talk one can interpret a slight disappointment as he says that he has not been able to talk with people anything else except basic things (*ei täällä oo ketään kenen kans ois pystyny juttelemaan sen kummemin muuta kun näitä perusjuttuja*, lines 9-10). It seems as if he had wanted to discuss more. Nevertheless, Oskari positions himself rather negatively in a discourse of proficiency, albeit there are positive connotations on the basis of his line 'it is not worse than the locals' skills'. To summarise, the discourses drawn from in extracts (34) and (35) relate to proficiency as the issues discussed are connected with knowing English and language skills.

In the following example (36), Simo also compares himself with other people in quite a detailed manner. One should pay attention to the fact that this piece of talk is taken from the first interview, indicating that already during a two weeks' stay Simo has noticed some important things about himself as a speaker of English.

#### Extract 36, 1<sup>st</sup> interview

1	S	no. mutta kahenkeskeisiä asioita mitä nyt on tullu vaan noissa kaupassa ku on
2		käynyt tai jotaki vastaavaa(2.0)että.täällä Saksan puolella nii (2.0)jos voi sanoa ni.että
3		ite ollu vähä niinku paremmassa etulyöntiasemassa. <i>tavallaan</i> jos englannilla on
4		puhuttu (2.0) että ite varmaanki tietää. <b>omasta</b> mielestä ainaki tiiän niinkö enempi ku
5		mitä näitten kaa täällä puhunu
6	T	joo
7	S	paitsi että Hollannin puolella ni. sitte tuntu siltä että nyt on ainaki semmonen että
8		joka niinku <b>tietää</b> mitä puhuu
9	T	joo niin just. niin että sää tunnet olevasi vähä niinku parempi
10	S	no-
11	T	niinku tääl-
12	S	no <b>täällä</b> .kyllä se nyt vähä siltä vaikuttaa vaikka
13	T	niin
14	S	ihtee ei nyt kovin hirveen hyvänä puhujana piä. et ei koulussakaan oo kovin hyvin
15		menny mutta
16	T	mm
17	S	mutta tänne ku tulin niin sen sitte huomas että (2.0) kyllä täällä pärjää
18	T	no oliske yllätys sitte
19	S	no oli oli se oli mulle <b>tosi</b> suuri yllätys että
20	T	joo. miltä se sitte tuntu
21	S	(hh) kyllähän siinä tuli vähän semmonen voittajafiilis (hhh)

A number of things are worth noting in this particular example. Firstly, Simo talks about himself as a speaker of English compared with Germans and Dutch. In fact, his talk has positive connotations since Simo opposes his speaking to that of Germans by saying that he perhaps has had an 'advantage over Germans and knows what he's talking about' (*ite ollu [...] paremmassa etulyöntiasemassa*, line 3 and *omasta mielestä niinkö tiiän enempi*, lines 4), whereas when he talks about Holland he uses a phrase 'people know what they talk about' (*Hollannin puolella [...] joka niinku tietää mitä puhuu*, lines 7-8). In spite of this, Simo evaluates his performance in speaking based on a lack of success at school (*en itteä kovin hyvänä puhujana pidä, et ei koulussakaan oo kovin hyvin mennyt*, lines 14-15). There is thus rather negative tone in the evaluation of his speaking and a contrast from what he says before when assessing himself to what he says about himself being a better speaker than Germans.

Furthermore, Simo talks about himself in a more positive light when referring to life in Germany: 'I will survive' (*kyllä täällä pärjää*, line 17), 'it was a really big surprise' (*tosi suuri yllätys*, line 19) and 'I felt like a winner' (*voittajafiilis*, line 21) than when talking about his performance at school. These examples illustrate two contesting discourses: that of schooling and proficiency (in lines 14-15) and that of using English (abroad) (from line 17 onwards). Most significantly, Simo's position in these two distinctive discourses is very different. In the first one, it is an unsuccessful learner and in the latter one a user, a winner and as well as a survivor, hence a kind of a legitimate speaker. In this piece of talk, Simo appears to position himself as a winner when speaking English. 'The winner' metaphor denotes to something one has achieved, or won. In addition, the fact that Simo is surprised at his coping well indicates that the position as an unsuccessful learner has been rather assumed. Furthermore, this is in line with Pete's talk in example (23) where he was surprised by saying 'oh gosh it came out correct', referring to he speaking. Thus seemingly, being successful is against their expectations.

The discussion above suggests that such tension in the talk about oneself as a user of English can be regarded as a starting point for changing views of oneself as a user of English. Simo seems to resist his position in the discourse of schooling by setting up a counterdiscourse (McKay and Wong 1996; Norton 2000) from line 17 onwards. By implication, although Simo has not been successful at school, it does not prevent him from being successful outside it. This shows when Simo makes a contrast from lines 14-15 to lines 17 exemplified by the word choice 'but'. In the contexts of education, Simo has not been successful, but after coming to Germany he has noticed that he survives. Within the counterdiscourse, Simo seems to take a more powerful position. Interestingly, when compared with the discourse of schooling, the discourse of using English abroad involves using the language with other people. By implication, discourses of schooling are about individual performance. Furthermore, it is likely that the discourses of schooling and the learner position have lost their importance – they are no longer that prominent after one has experienced using English with others. Already during the two weeks' stay abroad a counterdiscourse has emerged, resulting in tension between the discourses of schooling and using English in everyday life and their corresponding subject positions.

The examples in this part have illustrated that the participants did experience changes during the stay abroad, which clearly shows in their talk. Firstly, when talking from within discourses of proficiency, most of the participants seem to position themselves more favourably as a result of stay abroad. Secondly, discourses centred on school and learning have given way to discourses of language use and more positive views of oneself as a user of English. Particularly encounters with others appear to have made a significant contribution to this. In all the themes around which the participants compare themselves with others or talk about themselves as Finns, they do it in a more positive light. It is thus fair to say that their group identity might have been rather positive all along, and it enhances during the

stay. However, all of the participants' talk about themselves as individuals included more negative features than in the collective talk throughout the interviews, albeit the negativeness in the talk diminishes during the stay.

#### 6.2.4 Investment in language learning

The last section will continue with how the stay abroad affects the participants' talk about themselves, with a special focus on investment in English, which refers to the "learner's socially and historically constructed relationship to the target language" (Norton 2000: 10-11). Through investing in a language people hope to gain access to symbolic and material resources. Investment in a language can be seen as an investment in identity, too (ibid.). In this particular study, one of the notable effects of the stay abroad period is some of the participants' growing desire to invest in English. Lauri's talk illustrates this rather well in the following example (37). He was interviewed back in Finland and was asked to consider how it feels to use English after having spent six months abroad. At first, Lauri says that he has not needed to use English much (lines 4-5), thus contributing to what was discussed earlier in 6.1.4 there being little opportunities to use English in Finland.

#### Extract 37, 2<sup>nd</sup> interview in Finland

- 1 T no miltä se nyt tuntuu käyttää englantia kun oot ollu. kuus kuukautta ulkomailla  
 2 L niin nyt käyttää  
 3 T mm  
 4 L no nyt oikeestaan sitte. ku reissusta tullu niin ei sitä. ei paljo tainnu.  
 5 kielitaitoo oo tainnu paljo tarvita.  
 6 T mutta jos  
 7 L **mutta varmasti** nytte uskosin että on vähä parempi.  
 8 oikeestaan vähän niinku odotan jo.  
 9 tavallaan et ois mahtava päästä uudestaan reissuun. *käyttää* sitä kielitaitoa  
 10 T oliko sulla tuollaisia ajatuksia ennen kun lähdit reissuun  
 11 että pääset vaan käyttämään kielitaitoa vai onko se tullu tuolla reissussa  
 12 L **no ehkä** se on tullu. tullu tuolla reissussa ja alkuun se oli oikeestaan sitä että.  
 13 niinku et *mahtavaa* että pääsee niinku ulkomaille hommiin ja töihin että.  
 14 oleskelemaan ja asumaan. että se oli se *alkuodotus* siitä että haluu päästä ulkomaaille.  
 15 että. nyt sitte .nyt sitte tullu se kielitaitoki tässä mukaan et on  
 16 ymmärtäny sen merkityksen tuolla todellisissa. tilanteissa.

Lauri appears to draw from a discourse of proficiency which is related to everyday life in particular as he says in line 16 that he has 'come to an understanding of the meaning of language proficiency in real situations' (*ymmärtäny sen merkityksen todellisissa tilanteissa*). Furthermore, Lauri says that he is looking forward to another opportunity to go abroad where he could use his skills (*ois mahtava päästä uudestaan reissuun, käyttää sitä kielitaitoa*, line 9). At first, he says going abroad was in itself important at first whereas after the stay he has also begun to value language skills. The change in his views is illustrated by the expression 'now language proficiency has become a part' (of the waiting to go abroad, possibly) in line 15. Hence, Lauri appears to position himself as a language user with proficiency being important and most importantly, he seems to be willing to invest in that position. Becoming aware of the meaning of language skills is an obvious effect of the stay.

The interviews briefly dealt with the possibility of studying languages in the future. In extract (38) below, Tero says after the stay that he has started to consider studying English and German more, as he has noticed that mastering language it is not such a bad thing (lines 4-7). Most importantly, in the light of investment, Tero mentions that 'one needs language proficiency everywhere' (*sitä tarvii joka paikassa sitä kielitaitoo*, line 11). The word choice 'need' indicates necessity, and it suggests that one should invest in language proficiency. Given the fact that Tero talks about language proficiency, his talk obviously represents a discourse of language proficiency. In addition, as Tero appears to be willing to invest in developing his language proficiency, he probably is eager to invest in his identity as a language learner. Furthermore, according to Tero, investment in language skills is beneficial in all areas of life, in hobbies and at work.

Extract 38, 2<sup>nd</sup> interview in Germany

- 1 T no onko sitten täällä Saksassa olo aika jotenki vaikuttanu.  
 2 kiinnostukseesi kielten opiskelua kohtaan  
 3 tai onko muuttunu. onkse muuttunu  
 4 Te no joo kyllä kielämättä nyt on täällä ruvennu ajattelee  
 5 että enempi vois niinkö lukia vaikka englantia.  
 6 tai (2.0) miksei ehkä kurssin pari saksaksi. ihan alkeita.  
 7 huomannu että ei se niin huono asia oo hallita noita kielii. siinä mielessä  
 8 T mm. onkse johtuuko se vapaa-ajasta työstä harrastuksista mistäasioista  
 9 vai ihan yleisesti  
 10 Te no *ihan* kaikista. kaikista että.  
 11 sitä tarvii joka paikassa sitä kielitaitoo. oli harrastamassa tai töissä. että

In addition to Tero, Oskari in example (39) discusses investment in language studies by saying that he has noticed ‘the necessity of it’ (*on huomannu sen tarpeellisuuden*, line 2). Similar to Tero, Oskari uses a telling word choice ‘necessity’. Interestingly, stay abroad seems to have influenced Oskari’s views as he says that he has begun to look at the issue of language learning from a broader perspective. Partly due to the interviewer’s introduction of the theme, the talk in this example seems to reflect a discourse of language learning in which Oskari appears to be taking the language learner position. One of the reasons for Oskari’s willingness to invest in language studies is a possibility of some day working abroad (*on olemassa pieni mahdollisuus että työskentelis joskus ehkä ulkomaille*, line 6). Therefore, his investment has a particular goal. One might even suggest that through investing in language learning Oskari aims at investing in a possible, perhaps also desired, position in the future: that of an international employee who is proficient in languages. This resembles Lehtonen’s (2004) and Määttä’s (2005) findings according to which Finnish employees view English as a necessity in business life.

Extract 39, 2<sup>nd</sup> interview in Germany

- 1 T onko kiinnostukses kielten opiskelua kohtaan on muuttunu  
 2 O joo on niinkö sen huomannu sen *tarpeellisuuden*.  
 3 et ehkä jollain tapaa kattoo asiaa laajemmasta näkökulmasta mitä *aikasemmin* (2.0)  
 4 että että (2.0)  
 5 toisaalta johtuu siitäki että nyt pitää.  
 6 on olemassa pieni mahdollisuus että työskentelis vielä joskus ehkä ulkomaille (2.0)  
 7 sen takia

Similar goals for investment in languages show in Risto's example (40) below. In addition to Oskari's (example 39) motivation for investing in language learning because of the possibility to work abroad in the future, Risto seems to want to invest in language learning because it helps coping in different countries and cultures. Interestingly, though, Risto wants to invest in 'new languages' (*tekis mieli opiskella uusia kielia*, line 4). It is noteworthy that the topic of learning new languages more is brought up by the interviewee. At the beginning of this extract the interviewer asks Risto to consider his conception of his language proficiency to which he answers that stay abroad has resulted in the rise of a sparkle to learn new languages.

#### Extract 40, 2<sup>nd</sup> interview in Finland

- |   |   |  |
|---|---|--|
| 1 | T | entä sitten käsitys omasta kielitaidosta             |
| 2 | R | omassa kielitaidossa on paljo parantamisen varaa.    |
| 3 |   | kyllä sitä <b>ehkä</b> vähän tuli semmosta           |
| 4 |   | kimmoketta että tekis mieli opiskella uusia kielia.  |
| 5 |   | pysty tuleen toimeen eri maissa ja eri kulttuureissa |
| 6 | T | et se oli sellanen muutos                            |
| 7 | R | joo kyllä mää tykkäsin tuolla. menosta               |

Investment in learning English and new languages is thus an effect of the stay abroad. Moreover, all the participants, with their own motivations, are seemingly eager to invest in language learner identities, shown as a desire to learn also other languages in addition to English, such as German. This is worth addressing a bit further. The participants have noticed that they cope with their English skills abroad if there are people who speak it too, although they have some doubts about this before the stay. After the participants note this, they begin to look for the future and see the relevance of other languages, too. The fact that the participants encountered people who did not speak English at all or spoke it poorly, may have resulted the interviewees in seeing that one will not necessarily survive in English everywhere. Thus, this implies that English is not, after all, a language of everyone, a kind of universal lingua franca nor the only language the knowledge of which the participants of this study are satisfied with.

## 7 LANGUAGE USERS' MULTIPLE IDENTITIES

The social constructionist approach to language and individual emphasises research on how people are situated in specific social, historical, and cultural contexts and how they resist and accept the positions those contexts and discourses offer them (McKay and Wong 1996; Norton 1997, 2000; Pomerantz 2001). Adopting this perspective, this study has aimed at exploring the range of identities that the Finnish young English language users negotiate in interviews before and after their residence abroad. According to the view of identities as constructed within discourses, identities are "points of temporary attachment to subject positions which discursive practices construct for us" (Hall 1996). In order to analyse the construction and negotiation of identities, I have firstly looked at how the participants talk about themselves in relation to the English language and then have identified the most prominent discourses in the interview talk. Secondly, I have analysed the discourses more closely and traced the different subject positions that the participants take up within them. Finally, at this point general conclusions can be made regarding the identities that the participants negotiate and construct in discourses and different contexts, particularly after experiencing transition from the Finnish contexts to those of abroad.

According to postmodernist and social constructionist thinking, identities are fluid, fragmented, multiple, constantly changing and transforming and constructed across times, places, positions, practices and discourses (e.g. Gergen 1999; Hall 1996; Jenkins 1996; Woodward 1997). Based on the analysis of the present data, one can agree with those views. By taking different subject positions within different discourses, the participants seem to construct multiple identities. In the following sections, I will discuss these multiple identities, how they become manifested, which contexts they relate to and what characteristics they have.

### 7.1 Different co-occurring identities

The participants draw on a multiple of discourses, such as education, language learning, using and speaking English in different contexts, depending on the topics talked about. The findings suggest that various identities become manifested in the discourses: *language learner*, *language user*, *bilingual language speaker*, *legitimate user*, *language owner* and *ELF user*. These identities feature similar as well as different components and aspects and, therefore, it is not easy to make divisions between them. In fact, identities can be seen as embedded within one another. To quote Gee (2005: 34), any given discourse can involve multiple identities.

For instance, as expected, language user identity is strongly related to contexts where the participants have actually used English. Furthermore, through actually speaking English and through the talk about speaking it, one engages in the construction of language speaker identity, often embedded in the language user identity. As mentioned in section 1, the concept of using a language includes speaking, and, thus, it has been viewed as the main concept capturing different ways of language use. In addition, language learner identity is related to issues of proficiency, skills, and often to school contexts. However, the section on investment proved that language learner identity is also related to the contexts abroad.

If some distinctions need be made between identities, the most notable difference is found between language learner identity and language user identity, which seemingly are the most distinguishable identity labels. The findings resemble to what Mauranen (2006) and Pölzl (2003) discuss: the language learner identity is related to notions of deficiency whereas language user identity appears to involve features such as independence from native speakers and using English for different purposes. In the present study, it seems that language learner identity derives from discourses of

schooling and contexts before the stay abroad whereas the user identity develops abroad in encounters with other non-native speakers of English.

## 7.2 Bilingual language speaker identities

The findings also suggest that the participants, by drawing from a discourse of speaking English and a discourse of speaking Finnish, construct *bilingual language speaker identities* in which Finnish speaker identity and English speaker identity exist side by side. Some students position themselves as similar speakers of English and Finnish whereas others position themselves as different. On the one hand, some seem to miss a part of themselves as speakers of English, such as humour, words or fluency. This is in line with Lehtonen's (2004) observations of Finnish business employees who considered themselves more active when speaking Finnish and mentioned the existence of a threshold when speaking English. On the other hand, other participants in this study position themselves as similar speakers of Finnish and English with hardly any differences when speaking the two languages. McKay and Wong (1996: 604) have also found that mother language maintenance and strong acquisition of English can co-exist.

The discussion of whether being different when speaking one's mother language and a foreign language indicates that the participants have become more aware of the characteristics of their Finnish speaker identities compared with English speaker identities. Hence, one might argue that they have also become aware of their bilingual language speaker identities. Whether the awareness is an influence of stay abroad is difficult to say because these issues were discussed in the first interviews, and the participants did not give any direct reference to the possibility that they had begun to see themselves either similarly or differently as speakers of two languages only after coming abroad.

### 7.3 The value of language skills in language user identities

Judging from the findings, vocabulary, grammar and speaking have high value in relation to all the participants' identities. McKay and Wong (1996) also note that different language skills have different value to identity. The students in this study want to develop their vocabulary, grammar and oral skills, thus, their investment focuses on those skills, showing that investment can be highly selective in any one or combination of different language skills (McKay and Wong 1996: 604). One might argue that as the participants stress vocabulary, grammar and speaking skills, they see themselves as learners and users of English through defining their skills in those areas. Thus, competence is a concept around which language users can organise their own identities and those of others (Pomerantz 2001).

As West (1992, cited in Norton 2000) notes, language can be seen as a resource, and depending on the access to using it, language users construct their sense of themselves. In the present study, the students manifestly put most value to vocabulary and speaking, seeing them as resources. As they have better access to those resources or master them better, the participants construct more positive identities. Thus, through either having or not having access to a resource, the participants construct unsuccessful, sufficient, successful or legitimate language user identities. Accordingly, certain skills seem to function as powerful tools in identity negotiation. To illustrate, through positioning themselves as better speakers than others, some participants grant more power to themselves, at the same time positioning others as non-powerful. This study has shown, as Bourdieu and Passeron (1990) demonstrate, that in certain contexts one form of cultural capital has more value than the other.

## 7.4 Group identities

The findings of this study indicate that identity gets constructed both on an individual as well as collective, or interactional, level (Pomerantz 2001) through identification with similar others compared with those that are somehow different (e.g. Tajfel 1981: 258). In fact, the results suggest that defining oneself is closely related to defining the other as well, thus, to defining similarity and difference. Therefore, identity construction strongly links to group membership. The results indicate that in order to be able to construct identity on collective as well as individual level, one often has to identify and characterises others and other groups. In these processes, the English language seems to function as a marker of an ethnolinguistic identity (Giles and Johnson 1987). For instance, the participants often construct an identity of a Finnish speaker of English or a Finnish learner of English compared with other nationalities such as Germans and Dutch. As the participants encounter new contexts and gain in experiences of using English with other people, they are able to negotiate new, often rather positive identities in contrast to others, such as *a winner* (Simo in example 37). Furthermore, they also construct a shared group identity of Finns as speakers of English as opposed to people from other, mainly European, countries. Interestingly, the participants position themselves collectively more favourably compared with the way they position Germans. Considering language user identities, all the participants construct courageous user identities, all of them as individuals and some of them also as Finns. The latter identity was illustrated by notions of Finns knowing English rather well or a bit better than other non-native speakers. This identity was also negotiated in the discourse of proficiency.

Thus, through engaging in interaction with other people and using English with them, the young Finns are able to construct both positive group identities and individual confident and courageous language user identities.

Judging from the findings, one's sense of oneself and a sense of belonging to a group becomes strongest when contrasting oneself and one's group to others and other groups. As Tajfel (1981: 258, 1982) maintains, a group and its characteristics become most prominent when there are other groups to compare oneself and one's group with. Most of the participants seem to negotiate a rather strong collective Finnish identity as users, speakers, as well as learners of English in the stay abroad context. This supports Kanno's (2003: 11) arguments about group membership being relevant to our linguistic and cultural identities.

### **7.5 Identity options in Finnish and abroad contexts**

In light of the findings, identity options within each discourse and across contexts can vary. The results suggest that sometimes a certain context produces identities that people have little power to resist (Pavlenko and Blackledge 2004). One of the most significant results of this study relate to identity options within Finnish contexts because they were put forward rather strongly by all the participants. This issue is worth discussing as it closely relates to the ongoing interests of Finnish linguists regarding the role of English in Finnish society and sheds light on the different kinds of identities that Finnish young adults construct in Finnish contexts. As discussed in section 6.2.2, the participants explicitly talk about a threshold and the lack of courage to use English, which are tightly connected to discourses before the stay abroad, that is, to Finland and its educational contexts. Furthermore, it appears that in Finland the participants have not had enough opportunities to practice English, and, thus, they have not gotten returns for their investment (Norton 2000). As investment is linked to identity and investment in language can be seen as an investment in a person's identity, their investment in English has not paid off, and, as a

result, the participants have not been able to invest in their identities as users of English in Finland.

The findings of this study contribute to the research conducted earlier on language learners considering the ways learners position themselves within educational discourses. Interestingly, there seems to be little difference in this respect between second language learners, which have been the focus of many studies (e.g. Norton 2000; Lam 2000), and foreign language users studied in this thesis. In addition, Pomerantz (2001) has observed that in educational contexts certain practices may result in the dominance of discourses which emphasise proficiency. Likewise, discourses of proficiency occur in the present study. There is reason to argue that often learner identities are enhanced within discourses of using English in Finland, whereas some identities, such as lingua franca users, are not necessarily available at all. The respondents' answers reveal the reason behind this: they have not spoken the language with other people. Therefore, they are not accustomed to see themselves outside the discourses of schooling and Finnish contexts. These findings also contribute to Nayar's (2002) arguments about non-native speaker identity in that it is the most distinguished identity label for foreign language learners. If educational discourses emphasise correctness, they also value native speaker proficiency. Therefore, as learners of English position themselves as non-proficient within discourses of education, one may argue that they at the same time quite often construct non-native speaker identities.

As shown in section 2.3.3, Pavlenko and Blackledge (2004) argue that imposed, assumed and negotiable identities are the three different identity options available in every context. Judging from the findings of this study, within discourses of schooling learner identity seems to be rather assumed. To exemplify, when talking from within educational discourses, the participants often position themselves as non-competent learners who can

only hope to reach a level of mastering the language and have good language skills, thus thinking that they constantly have to improve their proficiency, particularly with respect to their vocabulary, grammar and oral skills. Furthermore, assumed identity indicates the influence of power in the construction of identity. By implication, those in power in education are the ones to assume that learners have to learn and improve their skills and target their performance at certain goals.

The stay abroad has an enormous effect on the participants' identity construction as users of English. The results indicate that getting access to new social and linguistic resources enable people to resist undesirable identities and construct desirable ones (Pavlenko and Blackledge 2004: 27). One effect of the stay is the lowering of the threshold. The findings also imply that during the stay the participants' investment in English has been beneficial for them as they position themselves as survivors in the discourses of using English abroad, and even legitimate users and owners of English as a lingua franca. Furthermore, they have had chances to practice the language, in contrast to Finland. Furthermore, it was found that some students want to invest in other language except English, which contributes to Määttä's (2005) observations. The Finnish employees considered it important to know other languages as well since not all people know English in the international business world.

This study has revealed that transition from home to abroad results in new identity categories (Morgan 1997; Shannon 1995) and the transformation of identity (McNamara 1997). Through transition, encountering new contexts and situations as well as interacting with people who share a common foreign language, the participants are able to construct positive language user identities who successfully get along and who feel confident about using English. Access to new discourses related to stay abroad, such as those of everyday life and using English, enable the participants to discover the boundaries as well as the strengths of their language skills. This contributes

to the renegotiation of learner identity and the participants' growing investment in the English language. As a result of the stay, most participants seemingly want to invest in English and all of them in their user as well as learner identities, each in their own ways. Interestingly, engagement in discourses of everyday life related to the abroad contexts appears to result in losing the significance of the kind of learner identity constructed particularly in the first interviews. Furthermore, the learner identity with skills to be evaluated no longer appears relevant after the stay. In fact, some accounts suggest that the learner identity turns into a more positive one. Moreover, although the students want to invest in their vocabulary, grammar and speaking skills before the stay, many of them become more aware of the importance of investment in language learning and thus language learner identity during the stay. After the stay, some participants' language learning seems to have a particular goal, such as working abroad or travelling. One should note that most participants were aware of their deficiencies in their English skills already at the beginning, and they acknowledged that there is room for improvement. However, after the stay many of them appear to be more aware of the necessity of language skills by referring to them explicitly.

By implication, the identity options available within educational discourses are different from discourses outside education, which resembles Lam's (2000) observations on a language learner constructing a legitimate identity outside school whereas in discourses of education he constructed identity around proficiency. Interestingly, stay abroad seems to have similar effects on self-confidence as working in an international company in Finland. Määttä (2005) found out in her study that the employees had self-confidence in dealing with situations in English. By implication, Finnish people gain in self-confidence and experience the disappearance of the threshold (see also Lehtonen 2004) in speaking English during a four month's traineeship abroad and also during employment in an international company. Konivuori

(2002) has made similar findings on Finns working in Britain who reported having changed from passive to active, fluent and confident users of English.

### **7.6 Identity and legitimacy in English as a lingua franca**

Within the discourses of everyday life, the language user identity appears to be freer for negotiation because one has the freedom to choose whether to try to use English grammatically correct or not. In the discourses of everyday life, it does not matter if one is not proficient in a language as long as one copes. Based on the aspect of freedom of choice, one can characterise this identity as that of a legitimate language user identity or a *language owner identity* because the participants appear to feel more legitimate users of English who do not have to worry about grammatical inaccuracies. In addition, this indicates that they have more ownership of the English language they are using. This kind of language which is not related to native-like use of language can be characterised as a lingua franca. Lehtonen (2004: 91) calls this international English which does not necessarily relate to any native speaker country and which is used by non-native speakers, such Finnish business people, as a means of achieving goals as members of business communities.

Through the students' talk one gets the impression that the English language functions as a tool for them, as a material resource (Bourdieu 1991) and has instrumental value rather than functioning as a means of identification. This resembles House's (2003: 561) observations that most ELF speakers use the language for instrumental purposes, such as to achieve practical goals (see also Lehtonen 2004). Through mastering the language, or the tool, the participants gain access to new communities of practice, which enables the negotiation of new identities. However, House's (2003) notions of ELF speakers as unlikely to view the language as a means for identification contradict with the present study. In more detail, the participants identify

themselves collectively as Finns who master the English used as a lingua franca rather well when compared with other nationalities, particularly Germans. Therefore, as the students view themselves better speakers of English than Germans, ELF can be viewed as a language for identification. One can thus argue, as opposed to House (2003) but in the lines of Edwards (1985), that lingua franca languages are capable of becoming carriers and reflectors of identity. The Finns' way of learning, using and speaking English can be seen as ways of learning, using and speaking English as a lingua franca.

After the stay and in discourses of everyday life, all the participants seem to succeed in claiming ownership of English. Most importantly, they begin to see themselves as legitimate users of English rather than as incompetent non-native speakers (Nayar 2002). This relates closely to Pavlenko's (2003) findings according to which some students, as a result of becoming more aware of their multicompetence in languages saw themselves as legitimate L2 users rather than failed native speakers of the target language. The notion of legitimacy becomes foregrounded in the current study when English is seen as a means of communication between other non-native speakers, as a lingua franca. Thus, being a legitimate speaker of English as a lingua franca was characterised as surviving in ELF situations and as freedom of choice on how to speak (speaking like a Finn), how to use the language (not using grammatically correct language) and how to feel when using the language (confident and courageous).

In more detail, all the participants position themselves in lingua franca contexts as survivors when they look at themselves individually. When comparing themselves with others, many participants seem to view themselves as competent speakers. This is in line with Pomerantz's (2001: 113) observation of competence functioning as a concept around which identities can be constructed. The findings of the present study suggest that power indeed is an issue in lingua franca encounters. After the stay, most

participants rarely seem to consider themselves in relation to native speakers, but instead compare themselves with similar others, namely, lingua franca speakers. This resembles House's (2003) discussion who says that ELF users in particular often do not view the native speakers as the target to be achieved. Furthermore, they have no desire to become a part of the native speaker community. This coincides Lehtonen's (2004) and Määttä's (2005) findings according to which Finnish business employees they studied want to reach their professional goals by using English. In summary, one could argue that during the stay abroad the power of English as a lingua franca strengthens whereas the power of nativeness and through it the power of education diminishes and almost fades away. To conclude, the participants begin to see themselves as what House (2003: 573) calls 'experts in ELF use', as 'stable multilingual speakers'. Similar to Jackson's (2005a, 2005b) findings, before the overseas period the students experience a lack of confidence in their oral skills and see themselves as having insufficient vocabulary whereas after the sojourn English has become a more significant part of their lives.

## **7.7 Participants' unique identities**

In this section, the main tendencies in participants' identity construction have been discussed. It is important to keep in mind that everyone constructs unique identities and so do the young Finnish adults in this study. Although all of them live in the same environment, they still construct different identities and draw from different discourses. Now I will briefly discuss every participant in turn and their individually constructed identities.

In Lauri's case, the impact of context on his identity construction is significant. In particular, before the stay Lauri constructs a language learner identity with rather negative characteristics which is closely related to Finnish contexts. One gets the impression that sometimes Lauri even blames the context for not being able to construct a favourable language speaker

identity. In several occasions, Lauri engages in power struggle by rejecting the learner identity. After the stay, he constructs more positive English user identities. Considering Joel, he draws from discourses of schooling where the power of native speakers becomes manifested, indicating that Joel constructs a non-native speaker identity. In the discourses of using English in Finland, his language user identity is characterised by unpreparedness. However, he contests these identities by negotiating a more positive legitimate and confident language user identity, shown by the way he positions himself against others. Likewise, Pete's language user identity obviously gains in confidence during the stay abroad. Before the stay, he quite often draws from discourses of schooling, particularly proficiency and skills. The power of educational discourses seems evident before the stay but diminishes during the overseas period as Pete constructs a legitimate user identity.

Considering Oskari, before the stay the power of words reappears in his identity as a learner, and it is rather negatively put forward. During the stay Oskari experiences changes and begins to see himself better than other speakers of English, thus constructing a positive English user identity. He is also eager to invest in his language learner identity. Simo in particular is distinctive from others when characterising his pronunciation. In fact, his resistance of the native speaker norm with respect to pronunciation is similar to findings of learners in study abroad contexts (e.g. Polanyi 1995) according to which learners may resist using native-like speech patterns if they perceive the identities that they invoke to be threatening or undesirable. Simo obviously perceives native-like speech undesirable as he wonders whether it is childish to pronounce words in a fancy way, by implication, like a native. The power of ELF shows well in Simo's newly constructed winner identity. He obviously changes from an insecure speaker to a legitimate one.

When thinking about Risto, the findings generally imply that he constructs a rather positive language user identity before and after the stay. Interestingly, he also negotiates a positive language learner group identity. Furthermore,

after the stay Risto seems to be eager to invest in learning new languages and, hence, in his language learner identity which was connected to his desire to experience new realities. Judging from this, Risto seems to view language as an important resource, as symbolic capital (Bourdieu 1991). Likewise, Oskari's and Tero's talk illustrate this. After the stay, Tero apparently sees English as a necessity. Moreover, he constructs a positive survivor identity already before the stay, and, similar to many others, his identity as a speaker of Finnish compared with English speaker identity manifests itself differently. After the stay, the constructed English speaker identity is more positive, and it is characterised by growing self-confidence and a change from passive to active speaker. In general, similar to Pomerantz (2001: 113), the participants draw on the notions of *success*, *competence* and *legitimacy* to organise their identities and the identities of others as users of English.

Lastly, it is worth looking at the findings from a broader, global perspective. Identity construction and negotiation are important phenomena in a world characterised by global flows and people's increasing mobility. The results of the present study suggest that internationalism and particularly encountering new contexts has significant effects on people's identities. An outcome of transition and crossing boundaries in particular, experienced by the participants in this study, appears to be the *hybridity of identities* (see Bhabha 1990, as quoted by Blackledge 2004). In addition, this study contributes to the findings of McKay and Wong (1996) and Pomerantz (2001) according to whom individuals, by drawing from multiple discourses, construct multiple identities. In addition, the present study has revealed that in different contexts certain identity categories are more relevant than others. Blommaert (2005: 206) points out that one effect of globalisation is the emerging relevance of certain identity markers in certain contexts, such as English as a lingua franca in the present study in the construction of collective English user identities.

## 8 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

In this final section, I will give a brief overview of the findings of this study, evaluate the concepts, methods and framework used and discuss implications for different areas of practice and research as well as give suggestions for future research. Finally, I will provide conclusions.

### 8.1 Overview of findings

This study was undertaken with a purpose to investigate the construction of identities of a group of seven young Finnish adults who stayed abroad for four to six months. Through approaching identity and its relationship to language from a social constructionist perspective, the aim of the present study was to find out what kind of identities the participants construct in relation to the English language at the beginning and after a stay abroad. In order to explore such an abstract phenomenon, further aims were set. Consequently, the intention was to look at how the participants talk about themselves in relation to the English language. Furthermore, through investigating the ways of talking different discourses in the talk were identified. Regarding the main purpose of exploring the identities, different subject positions and positionings within the discourses were analysed. Moreover, the interest was to find out how the stay abroad affected the aforementioned issues: the talk about oneself related to English, the discourses drawn from and the positionings taken. In the analysis, discourse analysis and particularly the analysis of discourses were used.

This study drew from several studies in conceptualising identity (Hall 1996; Weedon 1997), discourse (Foucault 1972; Fairclough 1992, 2001, 2003; Gee 2005; Ivanić 1998; Pietikäinen 2000) and subject position (Foucault 1972; Fairclough 1992, 2003; Hall 1996; Pomerantz 2001). Norton's (1997, 2000),

Pomerantz's (2001), and McKay and Wong's (1996) frameworks for identifying discourses and subject positions in the case of second or foreign language learners were useful. Fairclough's (1992) and Pomerantz's (2001) three-dimensional approaches were implemented in the actual empirical analysis. Through analysing interview talk, this study, firstly, identified different ways of talking about oneself related to English. Secondly, discourses related to the period before the stay and discourses related to stay abroad were identified. Thirdly, discourses of using English and discourses related to different contexts were discovered. Finally, the findings were interpreted from the perspective of identity construction.

The findings indicated that the participants' ways of talking about themselves in relation to English varied, but some similar tendencies and certain themes could be found, which helped in the analysis of discourses and positionings. On the one hand, discourses related to the period before the stay in the first interviews were found and on the other hand discourses which were somehow influenced by the overseas period in both the first and the second interviews were detected. Before the stay the power of educational discourses, with sub-discourses of language learning and proficiency embedded, as well as discourses of using English in Finland became manifested, shown in the participants' evaluation of their deficiencies in the three most prominent skills areas: vocabulary, grammar and speaking and as lack of experiences of using English in Finland. Hence, the constructed identities were usually those of language learners, often unsuccessful ones, or as non-proficient speakers. As discourses of schooling emphasised competence and correctness as well as grammar and vocabulary, the participants positioned themselves in relation to those features, mainly as lacking them. This signalled the power of nativeness and seeing native like use of language as the norm. In addition, highlighting skills implied the participants' desire to become more proficient. This complements Bourdieu and Passeron's (1990) arguments about schools playing a key role in the

production and reproduction of social identities and relations of power. The participants in this study talked about their experiences in the school contexts either explicitly or implicitly. Often the educational discourses reflected in the interviewees' talk although they did not explicitly refer to or mention school or education. Although the educational discourses were the most prominent in the first interviews, one could also identify discourses of surviving abroad with one's language skills and, thus, the survivor identity.

At the beginning of their stay the participants also drew from discourses of speaking English and speaking Finnish at the same time. By doing so, they negotiated their identities as speakers of English and speakers of Finnish, thus their bilingual language speaker identities. Most students were aware of their bilingual identities whereas others negotiated rather similar identities as speakers of English and speakers of Finnish. If the participants talked about differences, they positioned themselves as lacking something when speaking English, such as humour. It did not show in the data whether the stay abroad influenced these identities.

In the discourses related to the stay abroad period, there was variation in the positionings and identities. Discourses of schooling seemed to lose their power after the stay as discourses of everyday life appeared to gain ground and within them the language user and particularly ELF user identities, both of which were rather independent from discourses of education. The discourses of proficiency and skills also appeared, but in rather different ways than before the stay. In fact, they were often embedded in the discourses of everyday life and using English with other people. In the discourses related to everyday life, issues such as experiences of speaking English with others, not worrying about grammatical correctness, getting by and surviving were prominent. Thus, identities related to these discourses featured more positive characteristics compared with discourses of schooling where the participants constructed learner and non-proficient speaker identities. Through comparing their performance in using English with other

speakers of English as a foreign language and a lingua franca, often even in a collective manner as a group of Finns, the participants evidently constructed more positive identities. Even within proficiency discourses, which before the stay seemed to relate to educational discourses, the participants after the stay saw themselves more positively and distanced themselves from educational discourses, moving towards the position of users of English. After the stay, their language user identities were often those of legitimate user and owner of ELF, characterised by emerging feelings of courage and self-confidence and independent from education and native power. Obviously, the emergence of courage and, thus, the rise of the identity of a courageous speaker were effects of the stay abroad.

It was thus found that the stay abroad influenced the participants' and their identities. Firstly, the power of educational discourses seemed to have diminished during the stay whereas the power of discourses of everyday life became stronger. Secondly, the power of English as a lingua franca and the desire to invest in language learner identities emerged or strengthened during the stay. Judging from the findings, discourses of using English were privileged across many contexts, whereas discourses of schooling were found only at specific times and in specific places. The findings of the present study resemble those of Piller (2002) according to which advanced L2 learners can become expert L2 users by distancing themselves from non-native-native speaker dichotomy. As a result of the emergence of the power of ELF, the participants seemed to move away from seeing themselves relative to native speakers by constructing legitimate ELF speaker identities.

Postmodernist accounts concerning the fragmentation of identities help understand the identities of language speakers. For instance, the individual positionings in some contexts and discourses were similar whereas in others they were quite different and sometimes contradictory if looked at on an individual level. All the participants were able to position themselves more favourably and freely in the discourse of using English abroad than in the

discourses of schooling. Collectively and particularly when comparing themselves with other European speakers of English, the participants were able to position themselves in a positive light in all the main discourses discussed in this study. Finally, Pomerantz's three-level perspective on identity construction was useful in conceptualising the complex nature of individual's identity work.

## 8.2 Evaluation

After inventing the topic of foreign language users' identity construction in interviews, I realised that studying it was an ambitious task. Firstly, it was challenging to become familiar with what identity is, what it means, how to conceptualise it and, most importantly, how to study it. Secondly, after searching for studies on identity, I soon realised that it has not been extensively addressed with reference to stay abroad and particularly lingua franca contexts. Thirdly, choosing suitable methods of analysis was challenging. However, judging from the findings, I believe studying discourses and their associated positionings was a good choice. At a more empirical level, it was useful to look at linguistic features in interviews, particularly the word choices and the connotations they invoke as it helped in identifying discourses.

Considering the data, a few points are worth covering. Firstly, the data were gathered a few years earlier for a different purpose than the study of foreign language users' identities. Therefore, the structure of the talk presented some limitations in the analysis. For instance, the interviewer's questions guided the participants' answers in many occasions. Secondly, the data were large as it consisted of two sets of interviews of seven people. However, despite the limitations mentioned here, the data were very useful in the analysis of the research questions set: the construction of identities, the ways in which the participants talked about themselves in relation to the English language, the

identification of discourses and positionings within them and the effects of stay abroad. There were hardly any problems in finding out the instances in which talk related to English occurred, rather, it was more difficult to decide which instances to analyse in more detail as the data were very fruitful. The participants were willing to discuss the issues, which resulted in richness of the data. In sum, the data were suitable for the present research.

Many concepts used in this study, such as identity, discourse and subject position, and phenomena like the construction of identities in discourses are very complex and there exist multiple definitions and ways to conceptualise them. Thus, it has been necessary to choose which definitions to use. It is noteworthy that the discussions of the terms used are far from complete. Rather, they are collections of the most relevant scholarly views suitable for this study and which I have combined into definitions of my own.

Concerning aspects of identity, one can focus on a number of issues. In addition to contexts and power, I have chosen to address social features of identity because in my view the identification with groups is an important aspect of identity. Although social identity theories (Tajfel 1981, 1982; Turner 1982, 1987) were developed two decades ago, nevertheless they have been useful for the present study in conceptualising how group membership relates to identity. Hall (1996) and Ivanić (1998), for instance, have criticised the notion of identity as group membership by saying that individuals do not define themselves entirely in terms of group membership(s). They also have a sense of themselves as defined by their difference from others they encounter. This study has given evidence on identity as composed of individual and social characteristics, both of which have turned out significant in identity construction.

The concept of discourse was chosen as a tool in order to find out the different ways of talking about oneself in relation to the English language and, hence, to study identities. In my view, it was useful to identify

discourses and subject positions in a piece of talk by focusing on word choices because it made possible to analyse the complex construction and negotiation of identities in a systematic way. In addition, the studies by Pomerantz (2001), Norton (2000) and McKay and Wong (1996) were of major use. Nevertheless, the analysis of discourses was far from easy because, for instance, making distinctions and drawing boundaries between different discourses was not straightforward.

At this point, criticism against the study of discourses is worth acknowledging. Wooffitt (2005: 182) questions the value of discourse as an analytic tool if there is not a clear method by which to identify particular discourse in any specific sequence of talk-in-interaction. Moreover, the identification of discourses is not simple as scholars do not agree on which words are crucial. For example, in cases where one might have interpreted the talk as representing discourse of proficiency, there was also talk about speaking and using English and vice versa. Particularly in the accounts where the interviewees compared their speaking with others, indicating discourses of speaking, clear instances of evaluation were found, thus denoting to discourses of proficiency. One had to ask whether the talk reflected discourse of proficiency, speaking or rather using English. In my view, aiming at clear-cut divisions between discourses was not important, as it would have suggested that the phenomena are black and white. Instead, it was more important to look at how the different discourses overlapped, how they were embedded within each other, how they co-occurred and were sometimes even contesting, always depending on the particular issue talked about. Discourses were melded together, and the students drew on in several discourses at once (Gee 2005: 29-30). Rather than identifying exact discourses, therefore, it has been more fruitful to identify these processes.

In the analysis, two most prominent discourses (before the stay and related to the stay) have been identified. This might suggest a rather simplistic view of the data and analysis. Wooffitt (2005) argues that often in the type of

discourse analysis which draws on Foucault two discourses are identified. Undeniably, if focusing on only two discourses, important points can be ignored in the data. Although having focused on the main discourses, the present study has analysed the different subdiscourses related to the main ones. Scholars (e.g. Edley 2001; Wooffitt 2005) criticising the kind of discourse analysis carried out in this study also note that the researcher often has too limited set of views with regard to identifying discourses. It is fair to say that different researchers may come up with dissimilar results by identifying different discourses. In the present study, the objective was not to identify all the possible discourses but to focus on the instances where using English is discussed and where the participants talk about their experiences and views on themselves as language users. This way it was possible to concentrate on issues of language use and gain deeper insights on them, and I expanded the analysis into looking at the identified discourses more closely. Nevertheless, it is fair to say that a more detailed identification of discourses, such as Pomerantz's (2001) study proves, would probably have given an even more versatile picture of the phenomena. One could thus continue with this in a future research project.

Wooffitt (2004: 172) criticises that often when conducting Foucauldian discourse analysis in interviews, the analytic attention is focused squarely on the respondents' turns. Although the present study has drawn some insights on Foucault (1972, 1982), it has not followed his principles of analysing discourses. Rather, it has acknowledged the interactional nature of the interviews and thus the importance of the interviewer's turns. In my opinion, this turned out to be beneficial and has also increased the validity of the study. For example, it was shown how the interviewer often offered a certain position for the interviewee to take up or introduced themes to be talked about. Although this was the case, the analysis revealed the different ways the participants responded to the interviewer's positionings, often by drawing from different discourses than those initially addressed.

Lastly, some points are worth noting about the interpretation of findings on the level of identities. The positionings and identity options within different discourses were not clear-cut and, hence, to say that one either constructs this or that identity would mean seeing the boundaries between identities as too black and white, particularly when considering the complexity of identities. Rather, one is intrigued by the richness of the ways the participants positioned themselves and the multiplicity of co-existing identities they constructed. Given this, this study has answered the research questions.

### **8.3 Implications and conclusion**

The findings of the present study provide various implications for different areas of practice and research. In general, the findings of this study help understand the individual user of a foreign language in more depth and particularly the relationship between larger social contexts and identity. Firstly, language education can benefit from the findings of how individuals as language users construct their identities across contexts and during a longer time span. Through investigating students' accounts and their locations in old and new discourses over time, educators may learn how their students see themselves relative to different identity categories available (Thesen 1997: 504). Educators should be aware of the diversity of their students' identities in all levels of schooling because identity influences the way we relate to others and the social world, and, therefore, it is also an important matter for teachers to consider. In addition, our identities affect the way we operate in different environments. According to social constructionist and sociocultural theories (see 3.2), contexts of learning and using a language affect the ways people see themselves, which influence their behaviour. For instance, if one sees his or her skills as insufficient or is afraid to talk, it affects one's foreign language use and performance. The findings suggest that there have been certain practices in the students past

experiences at school that have contributed to the dominance of discourses of proficiency, thus language requirements have been proficiency-based (see also Pomerantz 2001).

Hence, the results on the relationship between identity and foreign language give valuable information to foreign language teachers who constantly work with different individuals with multiple identities. In order to find out how language learners position themselves in the school contexts, in practice each educator could consider studying his or her students' identities by asking questions regarding how they see themselves as language users and that way learn more about the students and design curricula suitable for them. It is worth noting that the ways learners position themselves and are positioned in different contexts and discourses both enable and constrain language learning and use (Pomerantz 2001: 30).

In addition to education, this study has shed light to the role of English in Finnish society which has been studied more extensively during the past few years (Leppänen and Nikula, forthcoming). Although the findings of the present study cannot be generalised to cover all Finnish people, they have provided us with valuable insights on how Finns position themselves as users of English in Finnish and abroad contexts and within multiple discourses. In addition, the findings also indicate that Finns construct more than one linguistic identity, which can be considered one of the effects of increasing multilingualism in and globalisation of the Finnish society. Considering future research on English in Finnish society, this study has shed some light on how Finns see themselves as speakers and users of English. English obviously functions as a marker of identity work, particularly in the construction of Finnish group membership as users of English. In addition, the study has given some evidence on the powerful position of the Finnish educational system in the students' identity construction. On the one hand, influenced by educational discourses, the students construct learner identities. On the other hand, under the same

influence, they construct positive group memberships and have symbolic power over other non-native speakers of English. In the future, it would be illuminating to expand the context of study into Finnish and international working life and see how identities get constructed in those contexts and continue the work set out on the conceptions of Finnish business people (Konivuori 2002; Lehtonen 2004; Määttä 2005). The richness of the results indicates the value of longitudinal studies in the investigation of identities across contexts and discourses. Thus, it would be fruitful to continue with the same participants of the present study and investigate their identity construction in the contexts they inhabit today.

To conclude, the stay abroad has affected the discourses, positionings, and most of all the identities of the Finns in their early thirties. The constructed identities were manifold ranging from language learner and non-proficient language user identity to those of survivor, ELF user, legitimate language user and language owner identity. These identities, with individual and social aspects, existed side by side, some of them emerging or strengthening during the stay whereas others fading away or becoming less important.

This study has provided information on the relationship between identity, language learning and language use in different contexts, and it complements previous research on the topic. Most importantly, it has shown that individuals, when negotiating their identities, are active in drawing from and reproducing many discourses. Furthermore, individuals behave as agents in constructing different identities in the contexts they use English in. Nevertheless, further research is needed in order to gain an even more versatile picture on the variety of identities that foreign language users construct in different contexts and discourses in the globalised world.

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## APPENDICES

### Appendix 1 Theme interview structure before the stay abroad

#### BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- Name
- Age
- Education (years of learning English)

#### WORK

- Length of time
- Motives
- Previous experience abroad
  - where
  - why
  - how long
  - language(s) used

#### FEELINGS BEFORE LEAVING

- in general
- in terms of language and language proficiency

#### EXPECTATIONS CONCERNING LIVING AND STAYING IN GERMANY

#### LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY, CONCEPTIONS ABOUT YOUR OWN LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY AND PROFICIENCY IN PARTICULAR

- How many years have you studied it?
- How long have you stayed in an English-speaking country/in a country where you have spoken English?
- How do you use English in Finland? School/outside school
- What is the role of English in your life?

#### LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY

- What does the term mean?
- What is good language proficiency? How do you reach it? School's role?
- What does is required of good language proficiency in real life? Think about your own experiences.
- What kind of English is taught at school? How do you survive with it?

- How do you think you survive with your English skills in Germany? Expectations before leaving?
- What kind of situations do you think are most challenging? E.g.?
- What kind of situations do you think are routine? E.g.?
- How well do you master daily vocabulary?
- Do you think your English skills are sufficient in for instance free time hobbies, communicating with locals and handling daily errands?

### SPEAKING ENGLISH

- How well does your speaking go?
- Do you feel that people understand you?
- How does it feel to start speaking English?
- How well can you handle communicative situations in English?
- Are the differences in your speech when you speak to different people?
- Do you think you actively participate in conversations?

### ADDITIONALLY

- Assess your own proficiency in relation to Finns, Europeans? What do you think?
- Do you think you have deficiencies in your language skills?
- Would you like to improve in English? How?
- What are your expectations regarding the stay?
- Aims

### EXPECTATIONS

- Were you nervous before leaving?
- How does it feel not knowing any German?
- How does it feel that there are a lot of Finns here? In terms of language skills?
- Would you like to get to know other nationalities?

\* Are there any other things you would like to mention?

## **Appendix 2 Theme interview structure after the stay abroad**

### **FEELINGS ABOUT**

- work
- living
- free time, travelling

### **ADJUSTMENT TO THE CULTURE**

- How did it go?
- What helped?
- Any hindrances?
- How did language proficiency affect it?
- What was the role of English?
- Did you learn German? Are you able to communicate?
- Did you encounter language barrier?
- What features of your skills facilitate/hindered adjustment?

### **SURVIVING WITH ENGLISH**

- How did you survive with English? In Steinfurt? Germany? Europe, where
- What kind of situations were difficult/routine?

### **DISCUSSIONS IN ENGLISH**

- Did you participate in discussions?
- Whom did you discuss with?
- About what topics?
- Were you active or passive in discussions?
- Did your role in discussions change during the stay?
- Were you able to take active part, bring out your own opinions and defend them? Examples?

### **SPEAKING**

- How was it?
- Did you notice any changes?
- Did other people understand you/did you understand others?
- Did you use small talk?

### **CONCEPTIONS ABOUT LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY**

- Do you think it was sufficient?

- Situations in which it was/was not sufficient?
- Has your conception of what language proficiency is changed?
- Has your conception of your own skills changed?
- Have you encountered situations in which you have noticed that the language learnt at school is not enough?
- Has your language proficiency improved? Areas? What affected it?
- How would you assess your skills in relation to others? Finns? Germans? Europeans?

### GERMANS

- What are they like as communicators?
- What do you think they thought about the English language?
- Did you encounter any situations in which the above mentioned issues were prominent?

### AIMS AND EXPECTATIONS

- Are you satisfied with the stay? In general? In terms of language skills?
- Would you go again? Why?
- How does it feel to communicate in English? Any changes?
- Has your interest in studying languages changed during the stay? What has affected it?

\* Are there any other things you would like to mention?

### Appendix 3 Transcription conventions

.	smaller pause than a second
(2.0)	pause in seconds (brackets)
<i>italics</i>	emphasis
<b>bold</b>	heavy emphasis
CAPITAL LETTERS	names of people and places begin with a capital letter
stre:tch	stretched syllable
°whisper°	whispering
(hh)	laughter

## Appendix 4 Interview examples in English

### Extract 1, 1<sup>st</sup> interview

1 T well do you think you have good English skills  
 2 P no  
 3 T explain  
 4 P well at school I have never been a star. every time I start English  
 5 studies I always face with the certain barrier. what you remember where you  
 6 collapsed before. it feels like I just cannot like. overcome it  
 7 T is it something specific  
 8 P we:ll this grammar stuff  
 9 T in grammar  
 10 P mm  
 11 T yeah. well has it prevented you from using the language  
 12 P no(2.0)it just (2.0)well it is more difficult to present certain things when you have to  
 13 go it through over and over again. well it is *pretty obvious* if you don't. if you don't  
 14 speak speak well. like. use tenses correctly. it really is a difficult situation  
 15 T yes  
 16 P and vocabulary could of course always be larger.

### Extract 2, 1<sup>st</sup> interview

1 T well what do you think is good language proficiency. what is it like. who is proficient.  
 2 L we:ll (hhh) I at least don't have good language proficiency (hhhhh)  
 3 T (hhhhh)  
 4 L well. it really should be a bit better (2.0) I mean  
 5 T so what would you wish you would have  
 6 L we:ll maybe this. (3.0)  
 7 maybe maybe this vocabulary could always be better in general (2.0)  
 8 and maybe well (2.0)  
 9 sometimes words are really like in a mess (2.0)  
 10 maybe those are the two most important things maybe. what I could focus on  
 11 T ok. does it show somehow in your way of using English. that you think you don't  
 12 have good language proficiency. or do you feel like it  
 13 L well sometimes maybe I like unnecessarily. maybe I think too much about it (2.0)  
 14 how do I say it now and. and how those the words are correctly there and

### Extract 3, 1<sup>st</sup> interview

1 T well do you think you have good language proficiency. in English  
 2 O well I wouldn't say it's good 'cos speaking really isn't that (2.0)  
 3 T mm  
 4 O so. especially some new unfamiliar situation (2.0)  
 5 for example getting the phone extension  
 6 T mm  
 7 O an odd situation. one never encountered before  
 8 then it is totally about searching for words and like that (2.0)  
 9 so I wouldn't say it's good  
 ...  
 10 T mm. how about your speaking English then. what kind of sentences your produce and  
 11 words. so how do you think it goes  
 12 O (3.0) well (2.0) speaking does not go well. I think  
 13 (3.0) especially if I have to like  
 14 (3.0) like explain something. I don't know. if the situation creates a kind of pressure or

15 what. you like know it or if you think about it later and you would **have known**  
 16 the **word**. but in the situation where I explain it I use those  
 17 substitute words (2.0) which kind of do not exactly mean it  
 18 but something like that (2.0) like (2.0) I can't give you an example now  
 19 but I just have **noticed** it that it becomes this kind of like  
 20 **rudimentary** kind of talk  
 21 T yeah yeah  
 22 O I mean **really** simple words  
 23 T yeah. why do you think that is. can you say  
 24 O well I think it's because **I haven't talked**  
 25 T mm  
 26 O I haven't encountered situations where I would have needed to speak  
 27 T mm  
 28 O you kind of don't give yourself **enough time** to think about the words and you get  
 29 a kind of (2.0) pressure to talk there. and mm. those those easiest words come out  
 30 which we have had from the start

#### Extract 4, 1<sup>st</sup> interview

1 T how about *speaking* English. the kind of words and sentences you produce  
 2 how does it go in your opinion  
 3 P (2.0) well it of course depends on the situation. it it's. well (4.0)  
 4 it surely isn't versatile use of language. but  
 5 if you have to do it like for a longer time. you constantly like  
 6 if you talk with someone all the time. let's say.  
 7 you talk with someone for an *hour*  
 8 you cannot help remembering and you start to find things  
 9 T right. is it-  
 10 P in those kind of *shorter* conversations. then you have to search and think  
 11 than more serious stuff  
 12 T so it isn't *so*  
 13 P yes. you're kind of like a bit *frozen*

#### Extract 5, 1<sup>st</sup> interview

1 T well how about your speaking then.  
 2 how do you think it goes. when you start in English  
 3 S ee it is (hhh) basic Finnish (hh)  
 4 T what is basic Finnish like (hhh)  
 5 S well how does Häkkinen talk no. **the pronunciation is not**. that.  
 6 it is not pretty to hear. when. if an English person listens to it or (2.0)  
 7 anyone for that matter. it really is **distinguishable**.  
 8 if you have ever heard a Finn speak English before  
 9 T mm  
 10 S I don't know. is it childish for Finns to vocalise it  
 11 in a fancy way or something like that  
 12 T mm  
 13 S well of course you *try* to speak as *clearly* as possible.  
 14 you wouldn't dare pronounce them in any way you like

#### Extract 6, 1<sup>st</sup> interview

1 T how about your speaking then. what kind of sentences you produce and  
 2 J yes  
 3 T how do you think it goes  
 4 J (4.0) well. I myself can can produce them quite well. I don't know if they are correct  
 5 (hhh) in my own opinion it always go well  
 6 but probably it's not always grammatically correct

7 T mm  
 8 J of course you (2.0) always (2.0) it comes from there somewhere  
 9 (hh) you just say it without thinking about it  
 10 thinking if it's. if it's exactly right  
 11 just that you get your things done or clear that  
 12 T yes  
 13 J and you know enough words. it may be that it sounds funny for someone (2.0)  
 14 (hhh) for an English person

### Extract 7, 1<sup>st</sup> interview

1 T so do you think you'd survive with your English skills here in Germany  
 2 R yes I do  
 3 T have you changed your mind anyhow before leaving and now that we've been here  
 4 a while so has it always been like that  
 5 R **no** it has always been like that. I've thought that I'll cope  
 6 T mm  
 7 R if not then with sign language

### Extract 8, 1<sup>st</sup> interview

1 T well then here in Germany. do you think you will survive  
 2 on your English skills here  
 3 Te (2.0) well I **have to** because I don't know other languages. except Finnish and English.  
 4 and Swedish. yes I believe I will survive

### Extract 9, 1<sup>st</sup> interview

1 T well how did you feel before leaving about surviving on your English skills here  
 2 in Germany  
 3 J (3.0) well at least I thought or I think I'll survive with it but then (2.0) but but.  
 4 now it seems to appear that. well I should know some German too.  
 5 it is very scarce here it is. or there aren't **many** people who speak English

### Extract 10, 1<sup>st</sup> interview

1 T do you still think you'll survive with your English skills here. or what did you expect  
 2 before leaving and then now  
 3 O well (3.0) I **thought** I'll survive before I left (2.0) and I think I will now (2.0)but.this.that  
 4 the people here don't speak English  
 5 T mm  
 6 O or speak very badly. or decline to speak I don't know why but  
 7 it kind of makes it more difficult  
 8 but I don't see my proficiency being any kind of hindrance in a way  
 9 T mm  
 10 O that it would actually hinder anything

### Extract 11, 1<sup>st</sup> interview

1 T now here in Germany do you think you will survive with your English skills  
 2 here in Germany

3 L yes I do  
 4 T ok. can you explain  
 5 L well (3.0)well well. I've at least *some* although I don't have a good head for languages.  
 6 some things I always have (2.0) I can always use my hands and legs so that.  
 7 I will survive

### Extract 12, 1<sup>st</sup> interview

1 T were you nervous because of the **English** language  
 2 P well **noo** not really because of that. I don't know it *very* well I've never been  
 3 any star but *in reality* I know enough to get my things done and  
 4 get my things done and  
 5 T mm  
 6 P I won't starve (hhh)

### Extract 13, 1<sup>st</sup> interview

1 T so are you also eager to speak in English  
 2 S well **no no way** (2.0) I always have to think about a little what to say and  
 3 well it of course depends on the topic  
 4 T mm  
 5 S discussed (2.0)  
 6 T mm  
 7 S but (2.0) I necessarily cannot get everything **out** of myself like I wanted  
 8 it depends on the matter I try to handle

### Extract 14, 1<sup>st</sup> interview

1 T are you a similar kind of speaker when you speak Finnish  
 2 I mean do you talk in a similar way in these situations  
 3 Te well. I don't know. maybe. I'm eager to talk in Finnish and in English but maybe (2.0)  
 4 I'm not able to use that much humour in English  
 5 when you cannot (hh) speak it the same way  
 6 there is less humour  
 ...  
 7 T right. well do you think you are an active participant in conversations when  
 8 talking in English  
 9 Te well. **not** as active perhaps as if I talked in Finnish but yes yes.yes  
 10 I always **try** to participate actively. but not that actively anyway  
 11 T would you like to be more active then or would you like to change it somehow  
 12 Te well no I could of course be more active so that (2.0) sometimes I just settle for  
 13 staying out of situations

### Extract 15, 1<sup>st</sup> interview

1 T how well do you think you can control these  
 2 communication situations in English  
 3 O (3.0) mm. how do you mean control  
 4 T you can sort of speak with someone on a same level  
 5 O lead the conversation  
 6 T yes. kind of like that  
 7 O well. (3.0), well moderately well (2.0) there is surely something to improve. there is  
 8 something to improve. I have noticed how I've talked with  
 9 (3.0) with someone who is skilled in English with whom I can talk well  
 10 then. I cannot **necessarily** like (2.0)

11 and **you sure cannot** so naturally as in Finnish lead  
 12 the conversation  
 13 T mm  
 14 O so (2.0) it is just kind of like kind of clumsy

### Extract 16, 1<sup>st</sup> interview

1 T how well do you think you can control communication situations  
 2 in English or do you prefer listening in those situations  
 3 can you say  
 4 J well. if I speak with someone in *private*. then. well (2.0) it is quite equal  
 5 I'm really not in control. then again I'm not that eager  
 6 to talk in Finnish *either*. so (hh) well. well. well (2.0) well (2.0) I mean  
 7 more more like a kind of a listener. I answer when asked  
 8 so I don't really bounce in with my own things  
 9 T mm right. so you are quite a similar speaker as in Finnish  
 10 J *yes yes precisely* like that  
 11 T mm  
 12 J a bit like quiet

### Extract 17, 1<sup>st</sup> interview

1 T so have you noticed or in your own opinion are you different when speaking Finnish  
 2 than in English. are there then. in those situations  
 3 do you think that there are any differences or  
 4 R well **yes sure** there is a little difference  
 5 you are able to express yourself in your mother language. but then.  
 6 I don't think that there is a big meaning there  
 7 T mm  
 8 R you really are the same persona in whatever language you speak

### Extract 18, 1<sup>st</sup> interview

1 T well how about situations that are routine. what are they like. in English  
 2 R in *English* (2.0) I can't. it really is still a bit like. a small shall I say  
 3 *excitement* thing there that I don't necessarily feel like *owning* the language.  
 4 R there is always a kind of charm of novelty present.  
 5 I wouldn't say it's routine  
 6 T mm  
 7 T the kind of everyday talk  
 8 R has begun to go alright.

### Extract 19, 1<sup>st</sup> interview

1 T so what do you expect from the life and living in Germany  
 2 can you remember how you felt before leaving or how you feel now  
 3 S well (2.0) before leaving I was(2.0) a bit frightened at first. if I get along.  
 4 I don't know **any** German  
 5 T mm  
 6 S and English too because I **never** like really like have not had access to  
 7 speaking in like *real* situations

### Extract 20, 1<sup>st</sup> interview

1 T so how do you feel when you've had to start speaking English more  
 2 as you haven't used it

3 J no it feels it feels quite *good*. no it.  
 4 I think it is great that you have a chance to **speak** it  
 5 because well. it gives you courage even more  
 6 when you notice that someone understands what you say and like.  
 7 **in Finland** if you talk with a Finn and then.  
 8 then you can always ask *what* was the word again.  
 9 how to say it. but here you just have to say it right away without any preparation

### Extract 21, 1<sup>st</sup> interview

1 T do you think that it is because the shortage of those situations and you haven't got  
 2 used to-  
 3 L yes yes absolutely I have come to use English too little that (2.0)  
 4 because in Finland you don't. there are so few situations where you need it (2.0)  
 5 maybe partly because of that my language proficiency is perhaps not what.  
 6 °what I wanted°

### Extract 22, 2<sup>nd</sup> interview in Finland

1 T well about your own speaking. how did it go and did you notice any changes  
 2 S (hh) (3.0) pronouncing is difficult (hh). I.  
 3 with some difficult words my tongue won't just bend  
 4 so that it makes it sound. **sound** so clumsy  
 5 T yes you mentioned that. you said at the beginning that pronouncing is kind of  
 6 Finnish  
 7 S yee:es. I don't know if it changed *much*. you of course once in a while  
 8 tried to. say words more purely that  
 9 T mm  
 10 S that I didn't. I didn't at the end pay much *attention* to that

### Extract 23, 2<sup>nd</sup> interview in Finland

1 T well has your language proficiency improved  
 2 P (5.0) well *maybe a little*. and maybe it's now more about losing the rustiness when you  
 3 have had to use it  
 4 and you notice how you remember things  
 5 things you earlier didn't realise that you remember  
 6 T can you distinguish which area has improved  
 7 P well maybe. I have remembered tense tenses and those  
 8 that you hadn't really thought before maybe (hh) that way maybe  
 9 T mm  
 10 P except in written language  
 11 when you write then of course but in speech too you noticed at the end that  
 12 oh gosh it came out correct

### Extract 24, 2<sup>nd</sup> interview in Germany

1 T how about your conception of our own language proficiency. has it changed  
 2 O (3.0) well. (2.0) when I came here I didn't really have.  
 3 I hadn't really had to *use* my proficiency so I didn't really have  
 4 such a **strong** opinion but (2.0)  
 5 but now I have come to an understanding of  
 6 how well I can speak and what kind of situations I should like  
 7 what kind of situations I should go or try to solve or like that (2.0)  
 8 but well no I am not able to assess if it is good or bad  
 9 that proficiency compared with for instance others  
 10 T yes  
 11 O but but I could be *better*  
 12 T has this stay somehow (2.0)

13 like have you come to an understanding of the things you survive with  
 14 and shed a light on your language proficiency  
 15 O well. **yes yes** it has like. I have more or less come to an understanding of  
 16 like my own vocabulary and. like that.  
 17 and it's like. I have sort of discovered my *boundaries* in it

### Extract 25, 2<sup>nd</sup> interview in Finland

1 T how about your role within the six month  
 2 did you notice anything  
 3 L (3.0) no.. not really. maybe I was a bit (2.0) sort of compaed with  
 4 the beginning and then the end  
 5 maybe at the end I discussed **a bit** more and I noticed it myself.  
 6 that it isn't that difficult and my skills have improved a little

### Extract 26, 1<sup>st</sup> interview

1 T have you then noticed differences in yourself as regards speaking Finnish  
 2 and then like English  
 3 P well I do (2.0) feel *nervous* about speaking English  
 4 well not *here* anymore (2.0) when you have to *use* it every day  
 5 T mm  
 6 P but back in Finland when you had to start compiling a presentation in English  
 7 and give it so I did (2.0)  
 8 and there is a totally different *threshold* to start doing it now  
 9 T right so you have begun to feel here that maybe not anymore so  
 10 P well no the threshold does diminish when you have to  
 11 T right  
 12 P use it every day

### Extract 27, 1<sup>st</sup> interview

1 T how do you feel now about speaking English more as you haven't  
 2 used it that much in Finland  
 3 O well (2.0) it is really (2.0)there was a threshold at the beginning but  
 4 it does go down all the time and will come down  
 5 T mm yes  
 6 O so so (3.0) it doesn't like anymore (2.0) make me feel **annoyed**  
 7 if it doesn't come out exactly right

### Extract 28, 2<sup>nd</sup> interview in Germany

1 T so how have you participated in conversations now. are you active  
 2 or a passive listener  
 3 Te well it depends on whom I'm talking with so if like with friends who  
 4 I have here these foreigners I really am active  
 5 T mm yes  
 6 Te I've always been eager to talk and now that I am more encouraged to use even  
 7 more English compared with the beginning. maybe I am a *more active* participant

### Extract 29, 2<sup>nd</sup> interview in Germany

1 T well how does it feel now to speak **English** and has it changed somehow  
 2 here  
 3 J speaking English  
 4 T and using it in general  
 5 J using yes (2.0) mm (2.0) no no it hasn't it hasn't changed except that now I have just  
 6 gained in confidence in that I **can** speak and use  
 7 because in Finland I haven't had to speak English with anyone (2.0) that way

### Extract 30, 2<sup>nd</sup> interview in Finland

1 T have you noticed any other changes in your speaking  
 2 except that German came to your mind  
 3 R well **no. maybe** now you yourself become a more confident speaker  
 4 when you use only that language  
 ...  
 5 T has has your language proficiency improved during the stay abroad  
 6 R well yes **I think it has** improved. at least  
 7 T are there any specific areas  
 8 R I have a bit gained in the kind of **self-confidence**  
 9 so I don't have to feel nervous about the situation of speaking in a foreign language  
 10 with different people.

### Extract 31, 2<sup>nd</sup> interview in Germany

1 T so was it surprising that you survive with your skills *well* here  
 2 or did you expect something else  
 3 O mmmm. (3.0) well right. at first *I thought* that there *might* be deficiencies  
 4 or that I wouldn't survive very well but then  
 5 *I have coped surprisingly well*  
 6 then I sort of gained in self-confidence a bit  
 7 and as time went by I noticed that the interlocutor is not that proficient either  
 8 or at least not *better*  
 9 so so. quite well

### Extract 32, 1<sup>st</sup> interview

1 T well could you then evaluate your own English skills in relation to other Finns  
 2 R well it is difficult to say. but in **my own opinion** in general  
 3 Finns know English quite well  
 4 T mm  
 5 R that I would say that we are on the same level  
 6 T you mean well  
 7 R we know it well. or sufficiently  
 ...  
 8 T well how about evaluating yourself as a European in a larger scale  
 9 R well it is difficult to say *in general* but the conception that I have  
 10 is that. people do not speak English *that* well especially in these kinds of  
 11 countries where it is not the mother tongue (2.0) well I think that  
 12 if you compare Finns themselves then it maybe that it is a bit *better*  
 13 T mm  
 14 R the kind of average  
 15 T yes. has your opinion developed during the stay or have you thought like that  
 16 always  
 17 R well **I've had the same view earlier too.** and one really notices it here too  
 18 that. not that many know it very well either

### Extract 33, 2<sup>nd</sup> interview in Finland

1 T so what things in your *English* skills helped you to operate there and  
 2 what made it harder. in Germany  
 3 P (4.0) ***in general*** the fact that in Finland there is  
 4 I'm not going to say an obligation but everyone studies English today. almost.

5 T mm  
 6 P and.  
 7 as far as using English here is concerned  
 8 speaking is not *in a way*  
 9 easier and you're not probably so nervous about it as probably Germans are  
 10 T mm  
 11 P because I have noticed there until the end especially those people who  
 12 the first five months said that they don't speak English at all  
 13 and then at least some of them began to  
 14 talk Londonish  
 15 perhaps the *threshold to talk* is lower for Finns there

### Extract 34, 2<sup>nd</sup> interview in Germany

1 T how about your own language skills. can you sort of pick up  
 2 a certain thing that has affected your adjustment. for instance something like  
 3 vocabulary or speaking or listening or something like that. are you able to say  
 4 Te well. hmh. maybe vocabulary is still quite limited that it may have prevented it a little  
 5 but then again the people I have spoken with here  
 6 don't have a vocabulary that large either.  
 7 so it didn't sort of prevent it in any case  
 8 I cannot think of anything else.

### Extract 35, 2<sup>nd</sup> interview in Germany

1 T so how has your own language proficiency affected your adjustment  
 2 mostly English skills  
 3 O (3.0) well it has *helped* to some extent that it isn't at least worse than  
 4 the locals' proficiency (2.0) it has helped to some extent  
 5 for instance with these people in Münster  
 6 that we have hung around with (2.0)  
 7 it has helped in that way so I don't think that if it had been much better that it would  
 8 have helped here. so.  
 9 adjustment because there hasn't been anyone  
 10 that I could have spoken with anything else except this basic stuff

### Extract 36, 1<sup>st</sup> interview

1 S but face to face encounters with someone that I have experienced in those shops where  
 2 I've visited or something like that(2.0)so.here in Germany it(2.0)if I can say I myself  
 3 have had somehow advantage over others. *sort of* when talking English...  
 4 so I probably know in **my own** opinion I know more than  
 5 people I have spoken here with  
 6 T right  
 7 S except in Holland. then I felt like now there is some  
 8 who **knows** what he's talking about  
 9 T right. so you feel like you are somehow better  
 10 S well-  
 11 T I mean he-  
 12 S well **here** yes it seems that way although  
 13 T yes  
 14 S I don't consider myself a very good speaker. as it hasn't gone that well at school  
 15 but  
 16 T mm  
 17 S but when I came here I noticed that (2.0) I'll get along here  
 18 T well was it a surprise for you then  
 19 S well yes it was a **really** big surprise  
 20 T yes. how did it make you feel

21 S (hh) well yes it did make me feel like a winner (hh)

### Extract 37, 2<sup>nd</sup> interview in Germany

1 T how does it feel now to use English after you've spent six months abroad  
 2 L using it now  
 3 T mm  
 4 L well now in fact. after coming back. I haven't. I guess I haven't  
 5 needed my skills it much  
 6 T but if  
 7 L **but surely** now I believe it is a bit better.  
 8 actually I'm already looking forward to  
 9 it would sort of be great to be able to go abroad again. *use* the language skills  
 10 T did you think that way when you left  
 11 that you just want to use your language skills or have started to think there  
 12 L **well maybe** it began. began there and at first it was actually just  
 13 I mean *great* to go abroad and work there  
 14 hang around and live there. that's what I looked forward to first that I want to get there  
 15 so. now then. now the language proficiency has become a part of it  
 16 as I have come to an understanding of its meaning there in real situations.

### Extract 38, 2<sup>nd</sup> interview in Germany

1 T so has your staying here in Germany somehow influenced.  
 2 your interest in learning languages  
 3 or has it changed. has it changed  
 4 Te well yes actually here I have actually begun to think  
 5 that I could study more English for instance  
 6 or (2.0) why not a course or two German. just basics  
 7 I have noticed that it isn't such a bad thing to master those languages. that way  
 8 T mm. is it because of free time work hobbies what things  
 9 or just in general  
 10 Te well **totally** everything. everything.  
 11 you need it everywhere that language proficiency. whether in hobbies or at work

### Extract 39, 2<sup>nd</sup> interview in Germany

1 T so has your interest in language studies changed  
 2 O yes I have noticed that it is a *necessity*.  
 3 so maybe in a way I look at it from a larger perspective than *before* (2.0)  
 4 so so (2.0)  
 5 on the other hand it's due to the fact that now I have to.  
 6 there is a slight chance that I could maybe still sometimes work abroad (2.0)  
 7 that's why

### Extract 40, 2<sup>nd</sup> interview in Finland

1 T so how about your conception of your language proficiency  
 2 R there is lot to improve in my proficiency.  
 3 yes **maybe** I got a little bit of kind of  
 4 stimuli to study new languages.  
 5 to be able to get along in different countries and cultures  
 6 T so it was that kind of change  
 7 R yes I really liked it there