TOWARDS INTELLIGIBILITY AND
SHARED UNDERSTANDING:
Co-construction of meaning in ELF interaction

Master's thesis
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Tiivistelmä – Abstract

Tutkielman tarkoituksena on selvittää, mitä vuorovaikutuksen keinoja puhujat käyttävät ymmärrettävyyden ja yhteisen ymmärryksen saavuttamiseksi keskusteluissa, joissa englanti toimii lingua francana (ELF) eli yhteisenä kielenä eri kieli- ja kulttuuritaustaisten puhujien kesken. Tutkielman tavoitetta lähestytään etsimällä vastauksia seuraaviin kysymyksiin: 1) Miten ELF-puhujat neuvottelevat ja luovat yhdessä merkityksiä sanoille vuorovaikutuksen aikana?, 2) Kuinka ymmärtämiseen (tai kuulemiseen) liittyvät ongelmat ratkaistaan keskustelussa? ja 3) Millä tavoin luovuutta hyödynnetään merkitysneuvotteluissa? Tutkimuksen metodina käytetään keskustelunanalyysia ja teoreettinen viitekehys muodostuu ELF-tutkimuksista.

Aineistona tutkimuksessa on kaksi noin 1½ tunnin mittaista informaalia lounas-/illalliskeskustelua, joissa kansainväliset yliopisto-opiskelijat keskustelevat käyttäen englantia lingua francana. Keskustelut nauhoitettiin ja litteroitiin, minkä jälkeen aineisto analysoitiin keskustelunanalyysin menetelmin. Yksityiskohtainen analyysi keskittyy aineistosta nousseisiin keskustelujaksoihin, joissa tapahtuu merkitysneuvottelua useamman osallistujan kesken.

Tutkielman tulokset osoittavat, että ELF-puhujat hyödyntävät korjausjäsennystä sekä luovaa kielenkäyttöä ymmärrettävyyden ja yhteisen ymmärryksen saavuttamiseksi keskustelussa. Puhujat tekevät aktiivisesti korjausaloitteen, mikäli jokin sana vaatii varmistusta tai täsmennystä. Korjausjaksojen avulla ymmärryksen (ja kuulemisen) ongelmat saadaan useimmiten ratkaistua välittömästi niiden tullessa ilmi ja sanojen merkityksistä neuvotellaan sujuvasti. Puhujat myös muodostavat yhdessä sanoille merkityksiä luovan kielenkäytön avulla eli he esimerkiksi keksivät omia ilmaisuja tai uusia merkityksiä jo olemassa oleville sanoille, hyödyntävät kiertoilmaisuja ja myös käyttävät omaperäisiä sanoja yhteisesti. Tyypillisesti sanojen merkitys rakentuu puheessa ja täsmentyy seuraavien vuorojen aikana, eikä luovaa kielenkäyttöä lähdetä korjaamaan, mikäli ymmärrettävyys säilyy. Keskustelun osallistujat eivät näytä suhtautuvan korjausjaksoihin tai luovaan kielenkäyttöön ongelmallisina, vaan jatkavat keskustelua sujuvasti eteenpäin merkitysneuvottelujen jälkeen tai jopa niiden lomassa. Tutkimuksessa nousi esille myös kontekstin merkittävyys sanojen merkitysten luomisessa ja ymmärrettävyyden saavuttamisessa.

Asiasanat – Keywords talk and interaction, English as an international language (EIL), English as a lingua franca (ELF), conversation analysis, intelligibility
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Muita tietoja – Additional information

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1 INTRODUCTION

Understanding is essential in communication. Without knowing what is going on, it is hard to share knowledge and experiences and, thus, to communicate. In general, people are good at making sense of each other as they utilize many kinds of interactional strategies in attempt to accomplish intelligibility and shared understanding in talk. In spoken face-to-face interaction participants do interactional work real time, there and then. For instance, in addition to decoding the meaning of words and utterances, they interpret implicit references, small nuances and unspoken implications of talk. At times more explicit interactional work is needed to clarify unclear situations. No doubt misunderstandings occur as well as they are a natural part of everyday conversations, including both first language conversations and conversations between second or foreign language speakers.

Intercultural encounters, where people with different linguistic and cultural backgrounds meet and communicate, are very common these days. In many such encounters English is used as a lingua franca (ELF). House (2002: 246) defines these situations as "interactions in English between members of two or more different language communities, for none of whom English is the mother tongue". In other words, ELF is not a first language (L1) for anyone but an auxiliary or a vehicular language, a useful tool for communication when people do not share the same native language or culture (House 2003: 560).

I think that combining these two – accomplishing shared understanding and using English as a lingua franca – makes a fascinating area of research. It is extremely interesting how people with varying linguistic and cultural backgrounds succeed in arriving at mutual understanding and carrying out meaningful conversations, using English as a common communicative tool. This question is at the centre of

my study that focuses on describing how intelligibility and shared understanding in interaction are accomplished between ELF speakers. In other words, I will try to clarify and discuss how talk is used interactively in lingua franca settings in attempt to understand what is said and becomes understood. More specifically, I will investigate what kinds of interactional strategies ELF speakers use to negotiate and co-construct meaning of lexical items in cooperation with each other and, in this way, work towards accomplishing intelligibility and shared understanding in the communicative situation.

These questions will be approached from the perspective of conversation analysis (CA), that is, the study of talk and interaction. Conversation analysis enables micro-level analysis of sequential turns and small details of talk, which helps to gain a better understanding of ELF interactions. However, the present study will also draw on lingua franca studies that have employed other methods. Although English as a lingua franca has recently been the topic of numerous studies, it seems that not much attention has so far been paid to sense-making practices from the conversation analytical point of view. In addition, to a considerable extent research carried out has been somewhat problem-oriented, concentrating on communication problems and misunderstandings in intercultural situations where participants communicate in English as a lingua franca. The research focus in my study is on achieving intelligibility and shared understanding rather than problems and misunderstandings. Moreover, a great number of studies on ELF interaction have focused on ELF in academic settings or business contexts, whereas I have used two naturally occurring casual lunch/dinner conversations where international students communicate using ELF as my data. The conversations were audio and video recorded, transcribed and examined using conversation analytic procedures. All in all, this study adds to earlier research on ELF communication: I hope that it will elicit fresh insights into achieving mutual understanding in ELF, specifically from a conversation analytical point of view and in informal settings among international groups of friends.

The present study is worthwhile and useful as using ELF is getting more and more common in many parts of the world, especially in the Western world. Studying the interactional work in ELF communication helps us to understand better the nature of lingua franca talk and sheds light on some of the interactional strategies used by the participants when they are negotiating words and their meanings. This study will also reveal in its part what matters in ELF talk and what kind of linguistic elements are (not) crucial for establishing intelligibility and shared understanding. My attempt is to study ELF in its own right as the speakers using ELF should not be compared to native English speakers or their norms (see, for instance, Mauranen 2003; Jenkins 2007). However, at times I will use native language norms as a point of reference.

My thesis is structured in six main chapters. Following this introduction, the theoretical framework in chapter two will give a brief overview of the development of English into a lingua franca and earlier research on ELF. More emphasis will be given to introducing features of ELF interactions; the role of culture, identity and community in ELF settings; and especially on accomplishing success in lingua franca communication. In chapter three I will present my research design by discussing the research questions and aims, the method and the data. The analysis, which includes an analytical overview of my data and two main parts, is presented in chapter four. In chapter five I will further consider my findings and discuss them in relation to earlier research. The conclusion in chapter six will sum up my study and give some suggestions for further research.

2 ENGLISH AS A LINGUA FRANCA

This chapter will give an overview into English as a lingua franca. To set the scene for studying ELF, I will begin by outlining the development of English into a lingua franca. After that, I will introduce research on ELF. I will then discuss features of ELF interactions and the role of culture, identity and community in ELF settings. Finally, I will present earlier studies relevant to my own research in greater detail.

2.1 The development of English into a lingua franca

The term *lingua franca* has a long history. In its original sense the term was used about a pidgin language spoken along the South-Eastern coast of the Mediterranean between the 15th and 19th centuries. The lingua franca of those days had elements from different languages and served as an important tool in communication among traders. (Meierkord and Knapp 2002: 9.) Over time several languages have been used as lingua francas, depending on the area, field and people's communicative needs. For instance, during the Middle Ages Latin as the language of the Catholic Church enabled communication between people from different backgrounds. Later on, specific languages were used for specific purposes. French, for example, was the language of diplomacy whereas German became the language of science (Meierkord and Knapp 2002: 11).

English can be said to have developed into a lingua franca or a common language of the world because of geographical-historical (the British Empire) and socio-cultural (the significance of the United States) reasons (Crystal 2003). The development escalated after World War II as there emerged a real need for a common language for the whole world (Meierkord and Knapp 2002: 12). Since the 1950s many international organizations, such as the United Nations and the World Bank, came into being, and multi-way translation in their meetings was seen as too

expensive and unpractical (Crystal 2003: 12). As Crystal (2003: 13) mentions, the international academic and business communities were also in need for a common global language, together with individual contacts and the Internet. Thus, it was time for the English language to step into the picture.

Today English has an undisputed role as a global language. It is the language used widely in international business, politics, science, travelling, technology, communications and so on. The number of non-native speakers (NNS) of English has overtaken the number of native speakers (NS). In the early 2000 around 1500 million people were estimated to have a reasonable competence in English and the figure is steadily growing (Crystal 2003: 6). Some estimates rate the number even higher: between 1500 and 2000 million speakers (Pahta 2004: 27-28). However, as Crystal (2003: 7) points out, it is not the sheer number of speakers that makes a global language but the power of the people who speak it. In addition to political reasons, also global trade, travelling, migration, mass media, popular culture and the Internet have increased the significance of English as a lingua franca (Meierkord and Knapp 2002: 12). Thus, the exponential developments in information and communication technologies as well as the economic developments towards globalization and internationalization have truly played their part in making English as important as it is today (House 2002: 246). Probably this development will continue as, according to Crystal (2003: 14), never before has the need for a global common language been as great as in our times. It is thus very clear that English has an important role in today's world.

English is present in many societal domains also in Finland. As Pahta (2004: 36) mentions, Finns use and often are expected to use or at least understand English, the lingua franca of our global village, in politics, business life, science, technology, travelling industry, media and communication. At the turn of the 21st century 60% of the adult population spoke English and the majority of young people studied the language at school (Pahta 2004: 32). Also the recent national survey on the

English language in Finland by Leppänen et al. (2009) shows that English is the most widely studied and also the most commonly used foreign language. Further, as much as 94% of Finns think that they have at least relatively good skills in English and 82% would like to learn even more. English appears to have become a part of Finns' everyday life, especially among the younger generations, those who live in cities, and those who are fairly highly educated and/or work at managerial or expert positions. Based on the survey, there are 'the haves', 'have-nots' and 'have-it-alls' of English in Finland, that is, those who have proficiency in English, those who do not know the language and those of whose language repertoire and lifestyle English is a significant part, respectively. Yet, the great majority of Finns see themselves as monolingual, have respect for their mother tongue and do not consider English a threat to their national language or culture. English is rather seen as a valuable resource in the more and more multicultural and globalizing society and world. (Leppänen et al. 2009.) Considering that English is a part of the everyday reality also in Finland, research on ELF is indeed worthwhile.

The emergence of English as a world-wide common language has several advantages. As Crystal (2003: 30) argues, millions have come to appreciate that there is a lingua franca available to serve global human relations and needs, that is, people from different cultural and linguistic backgrounds can communicate with each other. Pahta (2004: 38-39) notes that using English as a lingua franca in international encounters in which English is not the native language of the participants is also claimed to increase equality. Hence, as in lingua franca situations all participants are non-native speakers of English, none of the participants has a privileged status over the others. Moreover, as Pahta (2004: 39) points out, a common language is considered a positive phenomenon and an indication of a global and unified world. According to Seidlhofer (2002: 292), English as a lingua franca can help teach people about language awareness and intercultural communication. In other words, people coming from different linguistic and cultural backgrounds can more easily communicate in intercultural

encounters and learn from each other when they use English as a lingua franca. It is easy to concur in these viewpoints as ELF has become personally significant to me as well, enabling communication across linguistic, cultural and national boundaries and providing access to many groupings and domains in life which would be unattainable without a common language.

However, in addition to the positive aspects associated with a common language, English as a lingua franca is also a controversial issue. It is obvious that not everybody has an interest or an opportunity to learn English. Although English has spread to every continent and possibly to most countries in the world (Pahta 2004: 27-28), competent English speakers can be mostly found in the West. Moreover, if a quarter of the world's population can speak English at least to some extent, three quarters cannot. There are major differences in English proficiency also within a single country. In a way, knowing English might separate 'the haves' from 'the have-nots' (see, for instance, Preisler 2003) since those who do not know the lingua franca of the world can fall far behind. Furthermore, English has become the number one lingua franca used for communication on the Internet but having access to and control of this variety is limited to individuals who can participate in the Internet community, such as those who have enough financial resources and educational background (Meierkord and Knapp 2002: 11). Such a world language as English could also possibly take the dominant role and hinder other languages from having an important status. In this way, the extensive use of English might pose a threat to other languages if people opt for English rather than some other language.

As several scholars, such as Seidlhofer (2002: 272), mention, a further challenge related to English as a lingua franca is that there is no clear ELF model or standard ELF to make reference to, which is why talking about English has traditionally meant talking about English as a native language (ENL). Moreover, native speakers are still widely considered some kind of ideal users of English though

progress towards the empowerment of non-native speakers is slowly taking place. For instance, Seidlhofer (2001, 2002, 2004) has expressed a need for an empirically based description of English as a lingua franca and investigated lexicogrammatical regularities of ELF. In terms of phonology, Jenkins (2000) has aimed at defining a Lingua Franca Core, that is, finding core items that are important for intelligible pronunciation and mutual intelligibility in communication among non-native speakers. More recently, the growing number of corpora-based projects, some of which will be introduced later in this chapter, has enabled a more effective and extensive search for emerging features, patterns and consistencies in ELF. It appears difficult, and in my opinion perhaps even unnecessary, to try to codify or develop a standard variety of ELF as it is used in highly varied contexts by highly diverse speakers. In addition, ELF seems to be shaped and reconstructed in each conversation according to the participants and the context. However, in order to know more about our common global language and to be able to use it ourselves, it is important to study the role of ELF and the nature of ELF interactions. Fortunately, more and more work is being done in this field. Some of the earlier research on ELF will be outlined next.

2.2 Research on ELF

Considering that many languages have been used as lingua francas over time and that English has been growing into a common language in the world for quite some time already, it is somewhat surprising that ELF has been studied only very recently. Most empirical investigation into ELF dates from the 1990s or later (Watterson 2008: 379). Some of the pioneering work includes Firth's (1996) study on ELF business conversations over the telephone, a study in which Firth also tested the applicability of conversation analytic methodology to lingua franca talk-data. Also Meierkord's (1998) study on features of lingua franca English in small talk conversations and House's (2002) study on pragmatic competence in ELF are

well-known in the field. The same applies to corpus-based studies on the conceptualization of ELF by Seidlhofer (2001, 2004), one of the leading figures in ELF studies, and the extensive work by Jenkins (2000) on phonology and intelligibility of pronunciation. Also Mauranen (2003, 2006) and her research group have made a great contribution to the field by studying English as a lingua franca in academic settings. Some of these and other studies important for my own work will be referred to and discussed in greater detail later on in this thesis. Next, however, I will briefly explain the current situation and trends on ELF research.

Though it has taken some time to get off the ground, recently lingua franca research has started to raise great interest among scholars and the research carried out on the role and nature of English used by non-native speakers has grown extensively and very rapidly. As Mauranen (2009: 2) notes, today ELF makes "a vibrant field of study". A good indication of this is the International Conference of ELF, arranged annually since 2008, which gathers scholars to present their work and discuss interesting phenomena in the field. Naturally, also the number of publications has increased substantially, hand in hand with the increasing number of researchers interested in ELF. In addition, there now exist two large ELF corpuses, the ELFA corpus of academic ELF completed in Helsinki in 2008 and the VOICE corpus completed in Vienna in 2009, making up together a two-million-word ELF corpus that enables studying ELF in a new way and scale (Mauranen 2009: 2). All in all, at present research interests around ELF seem to range from theoretical analyses to empirical studies and from ideological questions to pedagogical issues. The actual use of ELF has also been and continues to be studied from several perspectives. The research seems to cover formal (such as lexical, grammatical and phonetic features distinguishing ELF from ENL) as well as functional features (for instance, accomplishing success in ELF communication). My study contributes to the body of qualitative ELF studies as I will conduct an in-depth analysis of spoken ELF interactions in a specific context.

Common for all ELF research is that English as a lingua franca is studied in its own right (see, for instance, Meierkord and Knapp 2002; House 2003; Mauranen 2003; Jenkins 2007). In other words, ELF talk should not be solely compared to native varieties or ELF speakers to native English speakers. Instead of considering ELF as "incomplete English" or "learner language" where ENL varieties are seen as the model, lingua franca English is defined according to its very own characteristics. Similarly, lingua franca speakers are seen as language users, who deserve objective description – not merely persons with deficient communicative competence (Firth 1996: 241). This is the principle in my study as well. Nevertheless, for instance Firth (1996) uses terms such as "linguistic incompetence" and "linguistic infelicities" to describe the talk of lingua franca speakers and Meierkord (1998, 2000) refers to ELF as "interlanguage". This clearly highlights the controversy and complexity in researching ELF talk. House's (2003) suggestion of a new research paradigm is that ELF should be studied from both individual and social perspective. House continues that, instead of referring to a speech community, the term "community of practice" could be used when defining the group of ELF speakers, and "expert in ELF use" could function as a norm for ELF speakers, not the monolingual English native speaker. However, as Hülmbauer (2009: 324) adeptly points out, there is some duality in ELF itself because it is simply impossible to define it with some specific features or locate it somewhere – although at the same time it belongs to many people's communicative routine and provides a multifaceted and functional tool for intercultural communication.

Despite the aims to study ELF on its own terms, research on ELF interactions and intelligibility has been rather problem-oriented. For instance, in the 1980s non-native speaker communication was considered highly problematic and bound to fail and, thus, research focused on communication "failures" and speakers' lack of skills (Meierkord and Knapp 2002: 16). Studies from the 1990s onwards started to demonstrate that lingua franca speakers aim at collaboration and utilize different kinds of communication strategies to overcome problems in understanding (see

Firth 1996). More recently, several studies have delved into signalling and/or preventing misunderstandings and solving problems in understanding in ELF talk (see Pitzl 2005; Mauranen 2006; Watterson 2008; Kaur 2009). Causes for problems in understanding have been sought from pronunciation, vocabulary and pragmatic features (Watterson 2008: 379). Although research focus can be said to have shifted from clear problem-solving mechanisms and trouble-managing practices to doing proactive work and preventing trouble in order to accomplish successful lingua franca communication, there still remains a certain problem-orientation. In my study I attempt to take a step further and consider the interactional work that participants do rather as sense-making practices. In other words, as the ELF participants in my data do not appear to orient themselves to settling instances of non-understanding and negotiating meaning as problems, their interactional work that helps to accomplish intelligibility and shared understanding could be seen as a characteristic of lingua franca talk. Moreover, my study contributes to the growing body of work showing that features and forms deviating from traditional NS standards do not impede communication but, rather, innovations and flexibility in language use can lead to successful and efficient ELF communication (see especially Hülmbauer 2007, 2009; but also Cogo and Dewey 2006; Pitzl, Breiteneder and Klimpfinger 2008; Seidlhofer 2004, 2009). In the following I will discuss what ELF researchers have said about ELF interactions.

2.3 Features of ELF interaction

Every day a great number of speakers use ELF as a means of international communication. According to Firth (1990: 277), lingua franca interactions can be quite different from settings where native speakers interact with each other, because the participants use a language other than their mother tongue. This is certainly true although there are many resemblances as well. Then again, it could be called into question why ELF and NS interactions even needed to be alike if

communication is still effective and successful. Defining ELF or ELF interactions is not an easy and clear-cut task, however. Obviously ELF functions as an additional (vehicular) language which can be used alongside local languages for communicative purposes in situations where people come from different linguistic backgrounds to communicate with each other. Yet, ELF interactions entail great variability, even some complexity and controversy. A good point that Hülmbauer (2009: 323) makes is that even if ELF is today widely accepted and appreciated as a means of intercultural communication, there still seems to be something unacceptable in it, for instance in terms of unconventional and somehow "incorrect" phonological and lexicogrammatical features. In this section I will outline features of ELF interactions, covering some characteristics of talk and lexicogrammar; ELF speakers' interactional work, cooperative style and communicative potential; as well as communication breakdowns.

ELF interactions have been described as robust, rough, non-smooth and non-coherent although still normal, orderly, intelligible and functional (Firth 1996; House 1999, 2002). According to Meierkord (2000), successful small-talk conversations in ELF are characterized by short and safe topics, pausing within and in-between turns, simultaneous speech and routine formulae when expressing politeness. This way, participants appear to create a variety with a maximum of intelligibility (ibid.). Such features are hardly limited to ELF interactions only, but could be applicable to native or first language speakers' talk as well. Firth (1990: 272), for his part, suggests that possible disorderliness, tactlessness and mismatch of knowledge in lingua franca interactions could be a result of participants not sharing the same knowledge of linguistic and pragmatic rules or a common cultural background. Seidlhofer (2001: 148-149) observes lexicogrammatical features deviating from the norms of standard English in her data and argues that many such linguistic deviations or "oddities" do not hinder communication and are, thus, interactionally insignificant if meaning becomes clear. In later research

characteristics of ELF lexicogrammar have been investigated in greater detail. Some of the findings will be briefly presented next.

Cogo and Dewey (2006) report on the frequent occurrence of 3rd person singular zero, that is dropping the –s in 3rd person singular verbs, in their micro-level study of naturally occurring ELF conversations. According to Cogo and Dewey (2006: 87), such lexicogrammatical innovations result from exploited redundancy and efficiency of communication and are thus tied to pragmatic motives and accommodation. Hence, there appears a link to achieving shared understanding as well. Hülmbauer (2007: 21-22), then, reports on a preference among Erasmus students communicating in ELF towards using "or?" and "no?" as invariable tags. These features are in accordance with Seidlhofer's (2004: 220) findings in the VOICE corpus. Other characteristics of ELF lexicogrammar Seidlhofer (ibid.) mentions are, for instance, omitting definite and indefinite articles, confusing relative pronouns, inserting redundant prepositions, overusing certain general verbs and overdoing explicitness. These kinds of forms are traditionally regarded as erroneous and this is what they are indeed if one aspires to NS English standards. However, studies like the ones above suggest that "incorrect" forms according to traditional grammar books are not errors or necessarily problematic but are treated as lexicogrammatical innovations that appear as emerging functional features of ELF talk. As Hülmbauer (2007, 2009) argues, lexicogrammatical correctness is not necessarily a prerequisite for communicative effectiveness in ELF contexts. My micro-level analysis will show how novel constellations at the level of individual lexical items can result in intelligibility and shared understanding in ELF interactions.

By using communication skills effectively participants can make ELF interactions work well despite different linguistic and cultural backgrounds and possible misunderstandings and problematic situations. Communication skills are needed because, as Watterson (2008: 378) notes, many aspects of language are fluid in ELF

discourse and, thus, open to negotiation. To some extent this could be argued to apply to all spoken interaction but it appears especially valid in ELF talk. Moreover, though reciprocal negotiation of meaning is typical of all spoken interaction, ELF speakers appear to do constant work for having a joint basis for the interaction, locally and intersubjectively constructing and negotiating meanings (House 2003: 559). Active interactional work seems natural as the speakers come from varying linguacultural backgrounds and cannot necessarily rely on established communicative practices in a similar way as L1 speakers. Hülmbauer (2009: 325) suggests that cooperative behaviour and flexibility in language use might be due to the fact that the majority of ELF users are non-native speakers. Also Mauranen (2006: 124) proposes that the anticipation of possible communicative difficulties in intercultural situations might prepare ELF speakers for doing active interactional work for mutual understanding and that this anticipation in itself might offset trouble.

The cooperative and collaborative nature of ELF interactions and ELF speakers' ability to communicate fluently and meaningfully have been pointed out by many researchers. For instance, Meierkord (1998) stresses the friendly and collaborative atmosphere, created, for example, by laughter and heavy use of back-channels and cajolers as well as frequent sentence completions and restatements. In contrast, House (1999) writes about "the myth of mutual intelligibility" in ELF talk, as highlighted in the title of her paper. According to House (ibid.), ELF talk is not specifically smooth interactionally and the participants do not really take collective mutual responsibility for the ongoing interaction, although they appear to work at achieving normality and consensus. House further argues that the interactants seem strongly self-oriented, and simply ignore communicative inadequacies, which again might hide misunderstandings. This is in line with Firth's (1996) findings about ELF talk being robust and interlocutors ignoring ambiguous meanings. However, in her later study House (2003: 569) notes that the participants have a need for harmony and are prepared to co-operate, which is

seen, for instance, in co-constructing utterances and indicating solidarity as non-native ELF speakers.

The increasing number of corpus studies and empirical descriptions has shed more light on cooperation and ELF speakers' communicative potential. A view shared by many ELF researchers today is that ELF speakers exploit English as a common communicative resource for their current needs and purposes to achieve fluent communication. In addition, ELF speakers appear to modify their linguistic behaviour for the sake of mutual understanding and communicative effectiveness, which highlights the common cooperative atmosphere. Such processes of accommodation and convergence appear as a valuable phenomenon in ELF talk. To illustrate, Hülmbauer (2007: 16), for instance, notes that the interlocutors tend to adapt their linguistic behaviour to the overall context and towards the interlocutors' language use and in doing so do not seem to mind bending the norms and boundaries of standard English lexicogrammar. Pitzl, Breiteneder and Klimpfinger (2008) document a number of different kinds of lexical innovations in the form of word-formation and coinages in their subcorpus of VOICE. According to Pitzl et al. (2008: 40-41), there are functional motivations underlying such innovations, namely increasing clarity, economy of expression, regularization and filling lexical gaps. This, once again, emphasizes the cooperative nature of ELF talk. Furthermore, Seidlhofer (2009) argues that ELF speakers do not need to conform to conventional NS idioms as they can co-construct pro-tem idiomatic expressions online for own locally emerging needs and purposes. By exploiting the English language to fit their purposes in this way, ELF speakers show accommodation, cooperation and belonging to here-and-now group (ibid.). Naturally, word-formations and own idioms imply also great communicative potential and flexibility with language use, which will become evident also in my study.

Yet, the commonsense assumption seems to be that when speakers from different linguacultures communicate with each other and use a lingua franca, communication breakdowns are likely to happen more often than in native speaker talk. Certainly misunderstandings happen but they are not, in fact, specifically frequent in lingua franca interactions (see, for instance, Seidlhofer 2004: 218). Moreover, misunderstandings are a common element in everyday conversations even within the same linguaculture, not only a characteristic of lingua franca interactions (House 1999: 76). Nevertheless, misunderstandings in ELF talk have raised considerable interest. For instance, House (1999) has looked at the complex phenomena of misunderstandings from a transdisciplinary approach and attempted to classify misunderstandings into different types, which are relevant also when analysing ELF interactions. According to House (ibid.), misunderstandings in ELF are caused by interactants' lack of pragmatic fluency, instead of cultural differences in norms and values between the interactants' native cultures. Moreover, House (1999: 76) argues that misunderstandings might be more critical and have greater social consequences in intercultural settings for those involved. Meierkord's (1998, 2000) ELF small-talk conversations, then, seem to be characterized by cooperation rather than misunderstandings. More recently, for example Mauranen's (2006) and Kaur's (2009) findings have indicated that misunderstandings do not happen often as speakers do interactional work and use proactive strategies to prevent problems in understanding. Instances of incomplete understanding are investigated also in my study and, thus, more in-depth discussion will follow later in this paper.

Before moving on to discussing strategies to accomplish success in ELF and the related studies, I want to take up three issues that are tightly connected to the nature of ELF talk and have more or less influence in ELF settings. These are culture, identity and community. I will finish the following section with a brief mention of pedagogical implications made by ELF researchers.

2.4 Culture, identity and community in ELF settings

Views on the role of culture in ELF interactions have varied greatly. Meierkord (2000) argues that characteristics of the lingua franca English conversations cannot be traced back to the participants' native language communicative norms. Also House (1999) claims interactants' native language and culture to be irrelevant in ELF talk, although her later publication (2003) indicates that at times interactants appear to transfer their L1 conventions into ELF, which becomes visible in culture-conditioned ways of interacting. More recent research suggests that participants' linguacultural backgrounds do play a role in ELF interactions. For instance, Berns (2008: 329) notes that ELF speakers bring their own attitudes and experiences with English as well as their cultural norms into the interaction. As Hülmbauer (2009: 326) defines, ELF could be seen as a site of language contact in which speakers' native languages and cultures are in interplay and probably influence each other as well as ELF. Furthermore, Hülmbauer (2007: 24) calls for taking into consideration the ELF speakers' diverse linguacultural backgrounds and their impact on the linguistic behaviour when studying ELF. All in all, ELF interactions appear not to simply turn off speakers' own linguacultures, a view that I agree with.

Culture is closely linked to questions of identity when using ELF. House (2003) gives ELF a solely instrumental value, implying that it enables communication with others who do not speak the same native language. Based on findings from three research projects at Hamburg University, she claims that ELF is merely a language for communication, not a language for identification. According to her, ELF does not thus pose a threat to multilingualism. However, it could easily be argued that ELF is not only used for communicative purposes but also for identificatory purposes. In other words, ELF speakers are likely to identify with, for example, certain study groups, work teams or common interest groups or subcultures through ELF. This view is shared by Mauranen (2006: 127), who argues that for many ELF speakers English functions as a language of secondary

socialization into the academic discourse community, meaning that many speakers have a domain-specific English vocabulary, which they might not even have in their L1. Jenkins (2007), for her part, considers ELF a way to express membership of the international ELF community as well as one's L1 identity, also arguing that ELF speakers do not need to identify with native English speakers. From my own experiences and observations, I favour the latter viewpoints and see language and identity inextricably linked together. Hence, ELF has a functional role but it also offers a way to identify with varied communities.

Moreover, the concept of community emerges in discussions related to ELF interactions. House (1999: 84) suggests that participants in ELF situations belong to a loose group of ELF speakers who constitute a temporary community with its own rules and practices. In other words, this "community of ELF speakers" is vague, fleeting and changeable in nature and needs to be constituted anew in each ELF event (ibid.). Also Hülmbauer (2009: 324) notes that ELF is both variable and stable, meaning that "the situationality factor" in ELF determines each and every lingua franca interaction anew. Hülmbauer (2009: 325) continues that it is rather the shared communicative activity rather than external features that makes ELF speakers members of "situational speaking communities". Due to this situationality and fleeting nature of ELF interactions, not much can be taken for granted and meanings need to be negotiated (ibid.), a point that came up in the previous section in relation to doing interactional work. As Hülmbauer (2009: 324) notes, an important feature that ELF speakers share, however, is their status as non-native users of English, as well as some communicative resources deriving from this shared non-nativeness.

Finally, based on their studies, many ELF researchers have made pedagogical implications and given suggestions for improving the teaching of English. After all, it could be argued that most learners of English are likely to use the language mainly for communication with other non-native speakers and, thus, using a

native-speaker model as the learning target might not be the best possible option (see, for example, Meierkord and Knapp 2002; Mauranen 2003; Jenkins 2007). For instance, from Meierkord's (1998) point of view, learners should be taught communicative strategies to overcome their own productive problems as well as to react to difficulties in their partners' speech. In a similar vein, House (1999) encourages improving ELF speakers' communicative competence and pragmatic fluency together with metapragmatic awareness. Further, House (2002: 262) suggests that instead of teaching a particular cultural and literary profile or aiming at a native speaker pronunciation norm, the focus should be in teaching learners to be flexibly competent in international ELF communication in varied topics and purposes. As noted above, according to Seidlhofer (2002: 292), the status of English as a lingua franca in itself offers many types of possibilities to learn about language awareness and intercultural communication. Although not pedagogically oriented or motivated, my study supports such suggestions. As pointed out already and as will be discussed later in greater detail, linguistic correctness alone is not a key to intelligibility and shared understanding in ELF talk. Instead, the interactional work that interlocutors do appears to be in a significant role, be it, for example, doing repair or employing creativity in language use. Next I will move on to studies that deal with accomplishing success in ELF talk and that are closely related to my own work.

2.5 Accomplishing success in lingua franca communication

The mutual intelligibility among ELF speakers has become one of the primary concerns for researchers studying ELF interactions. During the last two decades a significant amount of research has been carried out on successful lingua franca communication or on the strategies that participants use in order to make lingua franca conversation work. Lingua franca speakers can utilize different interactional strategies to settle unclear situations and difficulties in interaction.

The participants can also employ pre-emptive strategies to prevent problems and misunderstandings in the first place and, in this way, attempt to achieve orderliness and intelligibility in the conversation. It has also been noted that ELF speakers can exploit the English language in innovative ways to accomplish shared understanding and effective communication. In the following I will introduce six earlier studies relevant to my own thesis: Firth's (1996) pioneering work and five more recent studies. Although talk is analysed in great detail in all six studies, only Firth (1996) and Kaur (2009), and to some extent Watterson (2008), employ CA methodology.

Firth's (1996) seminal study on the discursive accomplishment of normality on lingua franca English started a new era in ELF research. Using conversation analysis methodology, Firth studied telephone calls, in which Danish employees and their international clients carried out business conversations using English as a lingua franca. He found out that, on the one hand, lingua franca talk is normal, ordinary and meaningful in nature. In other words, Firth suggests that it is the participants themselves that make lingua franca talk normal with the help of locally-managed interactional, interpretive and linguistic work. Thus, normality is an interactional accomplishment (Firth 1996: 242). On the other hand, Firth describes ELF talk as relatively robust, meaning that participants are willing to accept unsolved situations and arbitrary solutions as long as clarification is not absolutely necessary for the conversation to continue. According to Firth (1996: 243), one communication strategy that participants employ is called 'let it pass' principle. Simply put, the hearer lets the unclear utterance, such as a difficult term, pass believing that it can remain redundant or it will become clear later on as the talk progresses. Sometimes, though, it is difficult to say whether the 'let it pass' principle is used, or whether the hearer misses the problem altogether (Firth 1996: 244). Moreover, as Firth (1996: 250) points out, at times explicating mutual understanding is essential for the talk to continue, which results for instance in clarification sequences. Another important strategy suggested by Firth (1996: 245)

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is 'make it normal' principle, which implies making the other's somehow abnormal utterances look normal. Such a strategy can take place, for example, with mispronounced words and indicates that the participants focus first and foremost on the message content, not the linguistic form.

Pitzl (2005) has focused on looking at the indication, negotiation and resolution of non-understandings in ELF conversations, using naturally occurring data from business meetings. To analyse these procedures Pitzl uses a model for negotiation of meaning proposed by Varonis and Gass (1985), which in essence resembles the organization of repair in CA (see Schegloff, Jefferson and Sacks 1977). In this model negotiation of meaning is divided into two main parts: 'trigger', which is the part that causes lack of understanding, and 'resolution' consisting of indication of non-understanding, response to it and a possible reaction to response (Varonis and Gass 1985: 74-75). Further, according to this model, the discourse progresses in a linear fashion and the procedures of negotiation of meaning are 'pushdowns' from and 'pops' back to the main discourse (Varonis and Gass 1985: 72-73). In other words, negotiations are considered as vertical sequences in a horizontal line, causing a breakdown and unfavourably disrupting the conversational flow (Varonis and Gass 1985: 73). As negotiation procedures often consist of several turns, the main discourse might be put on 'hold' for quite a while before non-understanding routines help speakers take the conversation back on track (Varonis and Gass 1985: 78-81). As Pitzl (2005: 54-58) points out, the model by Varonis and Gass (1985) is well applicable for empirical research and systematic structural analysis, but has a major drawback as it is limited to analysing direct and explicit indicating procedures only. To complement her analysis Pitzl (2005) also uses a model of procedures for indicating non-understanding from a NNS perspective by Vasseur, Broeder and Roberts (1996). This model sets indication procedures on a continuum: at the other end there are implicit and indirect 'symptoms' of non-understanding, at the opposite end direct and specific 'signals'.

Pitzl's (2005) findings indicate that ELF speakers are skilful in managing and jointly negotiating non-understandings in talk. Competent ELF speakers appear even eager to engage in the negotiation of meaning and it is namely their proper use of indicating procedures and reactions to these, which makes occurrences of non-understanding undisruptive. Thus, participants could be said to possess a high level of interactional and pragmatic competence. Whereas Varonis and Gass (1985: 71) claim that NNS interlocutors "have a shared incompetence", which is used to explain why negotiation of meaning is more common and less embarrassing in NNS-NNS discourse, Pitzl (2005: 57-58) argues that negotiating meaning can, in fact, have positive influences on the interaction, such as improving the interpersonal relationships between the participants. After all, ELF speakers appear to co-operate to construct mutual understanding and share conversational responsibility for the talk.

Mauranen (2006), for her part, studies the use of ELF in academic settings. According to her empirical analysis, ELF speakers invest considerable effort in preventing misunderstandings, that is, problems of comprehension, and securing mutual intelligibility in the first place. Based on her data from university degree programs where English is used as a lingua franca (the ELFA corpus), Mauranen (2006: 147) argues that ELF speakers employ different kinds of clarification and repair strategies to accomplish mutual intelligibility and to achieve their communicative goals. As proactive strategies to prevent misunderstanding, Mauranen mentions frequent self-repairs, co-constructions of expressions, confirmation checks and signals of comprehension, as well as unsolicited clarifications and repetitions to support a speaker in need of help. As Mauranen (2006: 140) notes, co-constructed repairs as well as self-repairs have a major role in ensuring the progress of intelligible and mutually satisfactory talk. When misunderstandings occur, the participants in Mauranen's data use mostly direct questions or item repetitions to signal them, and action is taken to repair the problem. Firth's (1996) 'let it pass' principle appears not to be used by the

participants in these academic discussions. In other words, the participants do not let potentially incorrect or vague understanding pass but, instead, co-operate to achieve an adequate level of mutual understanding to continue the discourse. The participants are also ready to modify their speech to achieve this goal by offering alternative expressions and by showing continued comprehension (Mauranen 2006: 144). The misunderstandings (although infrequent) seem to be either due to gaps in the shared language, for instance not knowing the meaning of individual lexical items, or related to discourse pragmatics – as well as apparent mishearing. Interestingly, as Mauranen (2006: 144) points out, each misunderstanding gets eventually solved and "the communicative turbulence" settled.

Watterson (2008) has also looked at repair of non-understanding in ELF talk, although in informal talk. More specifically, Watterson's study focuses on the communication strategies that participants use to repair non-understanding and to ensure that mutual understanding is maintained. His data consists of informal conversations among Asian university students as well as participant interviews. What is worth noting is that the data is not truly naturally occurring, as the group was assembled specifically for research purposes and the participants were asked to communicate in English, which probably was an artificial lingua franca in this group. Methodologically Watterson's study follows partly the approaches taken by Pitzl (2005) and Mauranen (2006), who analyse data from business and academic contexts, respectively. Moreover, Watterson uses concepts and procedures from conversation analysis. Watterson's (2008) findings echo earlier research on ELF in that participants take shared responsibility for repairing problems, though confusions and mismatches are not always settled and, thus, certain topics become abandoned. As the interview part in Watterson's study brings out, Firth's (1996) 'let it pass' principle is also commonly used, meaning that participants at times let chunks of discourse pass without barely understanding them. By taking an in-depth look at the "non-understanding routines" (Varonis and Gass 1985: 73) to identify regularities and patterns in the use of

communication strategies, Watterson argues also that ELF speakers often appear to employ repetition as an indication of and a response to a problem in understanding at the level of individual lexical items.

Kaur's (2009) recent study on pre-empting problems of understanding in ELF is also important for my own research. By employing conversation analysis, Kaur has studied repetition and paraphrase as a way to pre-empt problems of understanding and has also shed light on the interactional environments in which these practices are used. In her data, consisting of naturally occurring casual and goal-oriented discussions among postgraduate students in Malaysia, communication breakdown does not happen often as participants actively co-operate and negotiate to achieve such a level of shared understanding that the talk can proceed. More specifically, the participants employ effectively and skilfully the practices of repetition and paraphrasing, for instance, after prolonged silence, minimal response and overlapped talk. Different interactional resources are, thus, utilized to prevent breakdown in communication and intersubjectivity, that is, mutual understanding. Even if such practices do disrupt the smooth flow of talk to a certain degree, as Kaur (2009: 119) points out, the primary goal for the participants is to achieve shared understanding. Moreover, although ungrammaticalities and disfluencies are to be found in the participants' utterances, the participants successfully compensate for their lack of linguistic competence in English with various interactional practices to accomplish shared understanding in talk. Altogether, mutual understanding is constantly monitored and jointly worked at on a turn-by-turn basis and ELF speakers are well able and competent to make strategic use of different interactional practices to pre-empt problems in understanding and to achieve mutual understanding.

Finally, Hülmbauer's (2009) study on the relationship between correctness and effectiveness in ELF provides a good background for my study. Hülmbauer investigates some cases of 'incorrect' language use, using naturally occurring

casual and advisory service ELF talk among international students as her data, and illustrates that sometimes unconventional forms function as an alternative and creative way to make meaning in intercultural communication. Hülmbauer does not claim that 'incorrect' forms are always effective but succeeds in showing that some 'erroneous' constructions can have a great communicative potential, at least in certain situations. For instance, the ELF speakers in her data appear to adapt their language to each other, even to 'less correct' direction, and to create new lexical items, some of which become commonly used, according to their communicative needs in that particular conversation. Also the shared non-nativeness as well as shared plurilinguality seem to help ELF speakers to understand a myriad of linguistic forms, even if they deviate from the standard norm. Hülmbauer (2009: 327) claims that the intelligibility of ELF forms is due to the situational nature of ELF interactions, as well as to the strong interconnection between speakers. This study provides an interesting insight that the use of 'incorrect' items does not necessarily mean making mistakes in ELF interaction but, instead, making meaning for the participants. Thus, Hülmbauer (2009: 342) suggests that speakers can take out the communicative potential of ELF the way that they need and can, rather than only aiming at correctness in the traditional NS sense. Based on her study, sometimes 'wrong' can be 'right' if it helps to establish effective communication and shared understanding.

All six studies above emphasize ELF speakers' orientation to intelligibility and shared understanding in talk and discuss the interactional work that interlocutors do in conversation to accomplish this. My own analysis is grounded on these studies and their findings. In other words, I borrow some concepts, methodological tools and perspectives to analyse my data and support my findings. Furthermore, in chapter five I will discuss and compare these studies to my own findings. Next, however, I will present the set-up of my study.

3 RESEARCH DESIGN

This chapter deals with my research design. First, I will present my research questions and aims. Second, I will discuss the method employed in this study. Finally, I will introduce my data.

3.1 Research questions and aims

The major research question that I am working with is: what kind of interactional work do interlocutors do in attempt to achieve intelligibility and shared understanding in situations where English is used as a lingua franca?. This question can be divided into three subquestions:

    1) how do ELF speakers co-construct and negotiate meaning in interaction?

    2) how are instances of non-understanding settled interactively real-time?

    3) how do ELF speakers employ creativity in making meaning?

In order to answer these questions, I will do qualitative in-depth analysis of instances of talk where some negotiation or co-construction of meaning takes place. These include instances where meanings are negotiated after displayed non-understanding but also instances where meanings are co-constructed in the course of turns-at-talk. Further, I will study how interlocutors use the language interactively in such situations. I am going to focus on negotiating meaning and shared understanding at the level of individual lexical items (including also some compound nouns), analysing how they are used, presented, discussed, and oriented to in interaction. However, even if my focus is on individual forms, I will analyse the whole communicative negotiation process in context (similarly to Hülmbauer 2009). After all, as Piirainen-Marsh (2004) reminds, even though words do carry meanings as such, an utterance can be understood only when studied in the context in which it occurs. In addition, although I will primarily examine verbal communication, I will also consider participants' non-verbal behaviour if it is perceived as meaningful in a specific situation.

In my study ELF research functions as its broad framework. Moreover, language is seen as a resource to 'do things' and 'get things done' (e.g. Piirainen-Marsh 2004). Thus, in this study the focus is on finding out how ELF speakers sequentially negotiate and co-construct meaning and in this way do interactional work to achieve intelligibility and shared understanding in talk. Earlier research on ELF, especially studies by Firth (1996), Pitzl (2005), Mauranen (2006), Watterson (2008), Kaur (2009) and Hülmbauer (2009), provides a good background for my own work as I will carry out my analysis and discuss my findings in relation to it.

The extracts chosen into deeper analysis illustrate some noteworthy interactional strategies that the ELF participants in my data utilize in order to achieve intelligibility and shared understanding in talk. As mentioned above, in my data meanings are sometimes co-constructed within sequential turns somewhat creatively without any signs of problems in understanding whereas in some cases non-understanding is indicated explicitly and followed by negotiation procedures. Even though my study deals with problems in understanding to some extent, I hope to move away from a mere problem-orientation. In other words, with this study and my findings I hope to show how the participants in my data co-operate to achieve an adequate level of shared understanding and how fluently and effortlessly meanings can be co-constructed in ELF interactions without orienting oneself to such instances as trouble. I attempt to study ELF in its own right and try to avoid comparing it to ENL. Nevertheless, native speaker norms serve as a point of reference as such an approach allows me to illustrate better how ELF speakers embrace creativity in negotiating and co-constructing shared understandings (a view shared also by Hülmbauer 2009) and to analyse the usage and function of repair.

Several factors motivated me to carry out my study from this perspective. To begin with, I am almost on a daily basis involved in international encounters where people communicate in ELF and I have become very interested in the nature

of ELF talk in everyday settings. Despite the participants' different linguacultural backgrounds, typically the conversations seem to flow smoothly and shared understanding becomes accomplished, in one way or another. Thus, I thought it would be interesting to study the ELF speakers' interactional work in greater detail. It was my intention to gather data from informal and everyday situations instead of studying ELF communication in academic (such as Mauranen 2006), work-related (such as Firth 1996 and Pitzl 2005) or other more formal or institutional settings. After all, a great deal of communication in ELF takes place in casual settings, which is why it is important to study and understand them as well. Mauranen (2006: 127-128) points out that in the academic community ELF is used for sophisticated professional purposes and is more than just "survival" English. In my opinion, ELF used among international students is no "survival" English, either, as for many exchange students ELF is the language through and in which they experience their daily life during the exchange. In other words, English as a shared common language often functions as a natural vehicle for the international and intercultural experience, and it is used as the working language at university, in the local society and among friends. International students also tend to spend time with other international students and, thus, form multicultural and multilingual groups of friends, who often use ELF when communicating with each other. Hence, instead of choosing participants merely based on their cultural or linguistic backgrounds or other features, I wanted to have an international group of friends as participants in my study. I hoped that the communicative events would be more natural if the participants knew each other already beforehand. Due to these grounds I chose to conduct detailed analysis of strategies to accomplish intelligibility and shared understanding in informal settings among international groups of friends communicating in ELF in this piece of research. The following section covers the method and essential terminology I have used and specifies how I have executed my study.

3.2 Method

Methodologically the analysis is carried out with the help of the conventions and concepts used in conversation analysis (CA). To define the basic principles and terms used in CA, I rely mostly on Schegloff, Jefferson and Sacks (1977), Heritage (1984), Piirainen-Marsh (2004) and Drew (2005). In CA research talk is seen as orderly, meaningful and social activity. Its practices are used to make sense of what is going on in the conversation, to achieve and maintain the flow of conversation, and to participate in social life. Conversation is studied as a joint activity, in which sequences and turns-within-sequences make the basic units of analysis. The sequential structuring of talk and interactive management of turns are used to build up 'normal' talk and 'routine' conversations. (See, for example, Firth 1996, Heritage 1984, Piirainen-Marsh 2004.) Following the principles of CA, my study explores talk in interaction and patterns of language use based on recordings and detailed transcriptions of naturally occurring talk and, hence, the analysis is heavily data-driven. By paying close attention to the small details of interaction, I attempt to uncover features of ELF talk and, more specifically, how interlocutors accomplish intelligibility and shared understanding. As Firth (1996: 238) comments, CA methodology has traditionally been applied to studying talk among native (often English) speakers and the analyst has been claimed to be capable of making observations on the transcripts partly because s/he belongs to the same linguacultural community as the participants. Since Firth's (1996) seminal study, CA's methods have to a certain extent been used also when analysing ELF interactions. However, I think a greater number of CA-oriented ELF research would be welcome in the field.

Due to its ground rules, perspectives and interests, CA methodology seemed well applicable for my ELF study. As Heritage (1984: 239) writes, "the social world is a pervasively conversational one in which an overwhelming proportion of the world's business is conducted through the medium of spoken interaction".

Bearing this in mind, it is fundamental that people are able to participate in conversations that make sense and, as Drew (2005: 94) adeptly points out, that participants construct their turns so that they become understood in the way that they hope to be understood. Hence, according to Drew (ibid.), the very focus in CA research is on studying the methods, procedures and practices that enable participants to produce their turns and understand each other's conduct. Analysing the sequential interaction between participants and the construction of turns as responses to prior turns helps me to study the joint accomplishment of intelligibility and shared understanding as displayed by the participants themselves. The emic perspective or participants' own orientations within the sequential environment of talk are, thus, important in my study. Moreover, CA methodology enables me to do qualitative micro-analysis of talk within the context in which they emerge and uncover small details in speakers' sequential turns. Altogether, CA provides good tools for analysing how meanings are negotiated and co-constructed in the course of talk. By using conversation analytical framework I also hope to highlight ELF speakers' interactional competence and ability to co-operate in interaction.

There are certain common methods that people use to build up coherent talk and mutual understanding (Heritage 1984: 241). As Drew (2005: 75) points out, such methods and procedures are a part of our communicative competencies. Following the definitions by Drew (2005), CA research relies on four basic concepts found in conversation. First, conversation is built on a **turn-by-turn basis**, meaning that one speaker takes a turn, which then is followed by another speaker's turn. Turns can include different kinds of units, such as single words, clauses and phrases, sentences or combinations of these. The important point in analysing turns and the units they consist of is looking at their role in the interaction: what they are meant to do in interaction and how they succeed in doing that work. (Drew 2005: 80.) Second, **turn design** is the action that a particular turn is designed to perform and the verbal components chosen to

accomplish that action (Drew 2005: 83). Turn design is closely linked to the accomplishment of **social action**, which is the third concept. In other words, through talk people are involved in doing things in the social world and, in order to do this, they need to understand what was said and done before and formulate their next turn according to that. Thus, CA is also interested in the accomplishment of social actions through talk and speakers' understandings of such actions, especially how they come to such understandings. (Drew 2005: 86-87.) Finally, **sequence organization** implies that turns are linked to one another as systematically organized sequences of turns. Certain turns require a particular type of next turn, such as a question is expected to prompt an answer, but even more generally the speaker typically counts on the recipient responding with an appropriate action. (Drew 2005: 89.) According to Piirainen-Marsh (2004), this kind of organization gives conversation its coherence.

Some further orientations within CA are worth defining, namely those concerning context and understanding. **Context** involves several dimensions, ranging from the physical environment to the type of event, and from relations between participants to goals in interaction, as well as the sequence of actions the utterance is a part of (Piirainen-Marsh 2004). As Heritage (1984: 241) points out, contributions to interaction are contextually oriented, implying that creating meaning and doing things in interaction are always context-dependent. Thus, in addition to its form and content, the meaning of an utterance is determined by the many things that surround it. **Understanding** is not normally topicalized but is something that comes apparent through turns building on the previous utterances and the smooth progression of talk (Heritage 1984: 259). In other words, as Heritage (1984: 255) defines, appropriate responses display some understanding of preceding turns and reflect speakers' orientation to them. Piirainen-Marsh (2004) notes that this way people traditionally signal that they are "on the same wavelength" and follow what is going on in talk. Furthermore, such linked actions are the basic building blocks of intersubjectivity or mutual understanding

(Heritage 1984: 256). A **non-understanding** occurs when at least one participant in the conversation notices the lack of shared understanding (Pitzl 2005: 53). The participant can either indicate his/her non-understanding and possibly initiate repair, thus making it visible immediately, or s/he can employ Firth's (1996) 'let it pass' principle, meaning that for the time being the non-understanding is ignored (Pitzl 2005: 53-54). A **misunderstanding**, then, is used in my study to refer to instances in which an interlocutor fails to interpret an expression the way the speaker intended it to be understood, though in some studies this term seems to be used about communication breakdown or problems in understanding more generally (see, for instance, Mauranen 2006).

As Piirainen-Marsh (2004) adeptly reminds, conversational interaction implies both the speaker's and the hearer's continuing process of managing, updating and negotiating mutual understanding of what is going on. In other words, both or all participants in ELF interaction, as in any interaction, need to take responsibility to be understood and make an effort to understand. Communication could, thus, be considered "a two-way street" (Berns 2008: 329), where interactional work is done to send and receive messages. According to Hülmbauer (2009: 325), ELF speakers face a challenge of accomplishing intelligibility and shared understanding through a language which is not their mother tongue. Thus, it might be problematic to make full use of linguistic and other resources in conversation, such as tools for making oneself understood, signalling understanding, ability to participate in conversation or take initiative (Piirainen-Marsh 2004). As findings from earlier ELF research suggest, however, miscommunication and non-understanding are more the exception than the rule and ELF speakers manage to accommodate their language to the purposes and setting in question. Even if problems in understanding occur, such instances of non-understanding are for the most part smoothly settled, which also becomes evident in my study.

The process of repair plays a fundamental role in settling instances of non-understanding in talk. **Repair** covers the processes through which conversational problems are dealt with and encompasses participants' efforts to lead conversation back on track after some (assumed) problems have occurred (Piirainen-Marsh 2004). As Drew (2005: 99) remarks, it is through initiation and management of repair how (potential) failures and problems in understanding are settled and shared understanding is remedied. Following Schegloff at al. (1977), repair can be divided into *initiation of repair* and the actual *repair*. Initiation of repair implies noticing and/or marking the utterance that triggers trouble, that is, the repairable or trouble-source turn. Repair can be initiated through *self-initiation*, which means that speaker him/herself notices trouble, or *other-initiation*, in which listener notices trouble. Further, repair can be initiated in two different ways. An option is to use a *repair initiator*, such as "what?", "huh?" or "pardon?", as an indication of trouble but not pointing out specifically where the trouble lies. Another option is to *repeat* a part of the trouble-source turn and, thus, to indicate more clearly what part of the utterance has remained unclear. Repair, then, refers to the outcome of the repair process and the changes which solve the problem. There are also two types of repair: *self-repair*, in which the speaker repairs his/her own speech; and *other-repair*, meaning that a recipient repairs another participant's speech. The phenomena analysed in my study comprise mostly of other-initiated repair sequences, which lead to joint negotiation and co-construction of meaning. In some examples also self-initiation is employed, meaning that a speaker tries to get a recipient to repair a problem and/or offer a solution. Such happens, for instance, when a speaker does not remember or know a specific name or word (Piirainen-Marsh 2004). Typically repair by other party is initiated in the next turn, which is the turn that immediately follows the one including the trouble source (Schegloff et al. 1977: 367; Drew 2005: 97). Based on these principles and concepts, together with the ELF studies presented, I will conduct my analysis. Before proceeding to the analysis, however, I will introduce my data and briefly outline the present research project.

3.3 Data

The data for my study consists of real-life spoken language interactions where participants use ELF. In other words, I use video recorded naturally occurring multi-party talk and transcripts to analyse ELF communication in detail. The data consists of complete speech events, that is lunch and dinner conversations, which are authentic in the sense that the meetings were not organized merely for collecting research material. My goal is to do qualitative analysis on the interactional work. I am going to use the theoretical framework presented above when analysing my data and making claims as it provides a way to approach the material, "the lenses" through which I can observe ELF in use.

My data comprises two video recordings. The first sample of data, 1 hour and 45 minutes in length, was video and audio recorded in an Austrian student's apartment in Jyväskylä in December 2009. This recording is a lunch conversation among four Erasmus students, who are all female, European and aged between 22 and 25 years. The nationalities represented are Polish, Lithuanian, German and Austrian. The German, the Polish and the Lithuanian students were friends of the Austrian student from the university and were invited to her place for a casual lunch meeting. At the time of the recording, all four participants had been studying at the University of Jyväskylä from 3 to 5 months in the autumn semester 2009 as exchange students. All of them had studied English at school but none of them was studying English at the university. There appeared to be no major differences in the participants' English skills. During the conversation the topics discussed kept changing freely from, for example, a trip to Lapland and the young women's experiences in Finland to university life and cultural differences. Naturally there was also a lot of talk about the food being served.

The second sample of data is a dinner conversation among three international degree students and one Erasmus student. The recording is 1 hour and 30 minutes

in length and was collected in a common room in a student residential area in Jyväskylä in February 2010. Three of the participants are female, one is male and they are all between 22 and 27 years of age. The nationalities represented are French, Italian, Hungarian and Taiwanese. The Italian student had invited some of her friends from the university for a casual dinner. The Hungarian, the Taiwanese and the Italian students were good friends with each other, whereas the French student knew only the Italian student in advance. At the time of the recording, these ELF speakers had been studying at the University of Jyväskylä from half a year to a few years. Again, all participants had studied English at school but none of them was studying the language at the university. However, the French exchange student had studied English considerably less than the others, which probably affected her less active involvement during the conversation. Her lesser participation in the discussion might also have resulted from her personality, tiredness or not knowing the Taiwanese and Hungarian participants. In addition, the Taiwanese participant had lived some years in New Zealand as a child, though her English skills were not distinctly better in comparison to the others. It might be worth noting that there was one male participant and one non-European participant present, even if this cannot be presumed to have any specific impact on the interaction. All in all, this group of speakers appeared slightly more heterogeneous than the first one. Also in this set of data the topics discussed changed freely as the participants talked about, for instance, recent and coming events in their lives, studies, cultural experiences and differences, as well as travelling – and of course the food being served. To ensure the anonymity of the participants, I will use pseudonyms to refer to the speakers. The pseudonyms used in data set 1 are Ilse (Austrian female), Anne (German female), Marta (Polish female) and Lina (Lithuanian female); and in data set 2 Eva (Italian female), Mei (Taiwanese female), Julie (French female) and Peter (Hungarian male). Table 1 shows the participants in data set 1 and Table 2 the participants in data set 2.

Table 1. The participants in data set 1

Pseudonym	Nationality	Sex
Ilse	Austrian	female
Anne	German	female
Marta	Polish	female
Lina	Lithuanian	female

Table 2. The participants in data set 2

Pseudonym	Nationality	Sex
Eva	Italian	female
Mei	Taiwanese	female
Julie	French	female
Peter	Hungarian	male

Before collecting my data, I made sure that the participants understood what they were about to be involved in (that is, the event will be recorded and their talk analysed later in my study) and obtained informed consents in writing (see Appendix 1). As I hoped the communicative events to be as natural as possible, I did not ask the participants to talk about any specific topics. I mentioned, however, that I would not be analysing what the participants talked about but, instead, would concentrate on studying some features of the communicative event and/or their language use. It is possible that the participants felt some pressure to keep the conversation going, avoided certain topics or acted less relaxed as they knew that their talk would be used as research material in my study. Yet, although the speakers were aware of the camera recording them, the participants seemed to forget its presence after a while or at least at times. As I tried not to interrupt or influence the situation in any way, I was not present in the room myself, neither in front nor behind the camera. Altogether, in my opinion the communicative events I recorded were as naturally occurring as it is possible to obtain for research purposes – commonplace lunch/dinner conversations between university friends.

At the time of the recordings the participants were seated around the kitchen table, opposite each other. An mp3-recorder was placed on the table and the camera a few meters from the table. The participants themselves hoped to be seated this way, instead of sitting in a semi-circle and facing the camera more directly, because it felt more natural for them and it was easier to ignore the camera recording. Due to the camera angle from the side, it is at times hard to observe the participants' non-verbal behaviour, such as facial expressions and gestures. However, I have transcribed such activities to the extent that it has been possible and meaningful to my analysis. Thus, although it is not the main focus in my study, I will use the participants' non-verbal behaviour to support my analytical observations.

In both samples of data the settings are somewhat similar: they meet the "frame" of an informal lunch/dinner conversation, the participants are all international students in their twenties studying at the University of Jyväskylä and they use English as a lingua franca to communicate with each other. Obviously, different participants with their very own personalities and backgrounds make the communicative events unique but I think that these two sets of data are similar enough in nature so that I can treat them as one pool of data, look at certain tendencies or communicative patterns in talk, make comparisons to previous research and draw some conclusions based on my findings in this data. What is more, my intention is not to make generalizations but to study ELF talk in these specific situations. All in all, studying casual conversations among exchange and/or degree students seemed suitable for my study as I wanted my data to be naturally occurring ELF talk from everyday settings. Thus, in my opinion, these two recordings make good data for my study.

The present research project has been an interesting one and consisted of several phases. I collected my data at quite an early stage in the research process. After all, even though I had some preliminary research interests, this study is strongly data-inspired and the research questions were formed on the basis of the collected

data. Next, I transcribed my data using the conventions traditionally applied in CA (see Appendix 2). One of the first observations that struck me when viewing the video recordings and writing the transcripts was that the participants appeared to use the language in a skilful way and to do active interactional work somewhat effortlessly and smoothly for the fluency and shared understanding. Thus, I decided to focus on studying this particular phenomenon. I analysed my data in greater detail, by picking up different ways to negotiate and co-construct meaning. I found both instances where interlocutors indicate explicitly their need to negotiate the meaning of certain lexical items before continuing the conversation further, and instances where meaning is jointly and creatively negotiated without any disruptions. I carried out the analysis primarily by relying on the transcripts but also used the video recordings as support. Throughout the way I made notes and started writing about my findings; about different interactional ways to negotiate and co-construct meaning, explaining their function and usage in conversation and illustrating them with examples from my data. The categorization that I decided to use in my analysis is based on my own observation and to some extent on earlier research on ELF, but not on any particular model. In this research report I present the main results of my research project. Next, it is time to move on to the analysis.

4 ANALYSIS

This chapter is divided into three sections. Section 4.1 gives an analytical overview of my data, including brief descriptions of the nature of the talk, direct language use, expressions in other languages and the participants' roles in the conversations. In addition, different ways to utilize the English language and treat unclear items and unconventional forms will be briefly discussed, followed by a preface to the main analysis. Section 4.2 includes the first part of my analysis, dealing with negotiating and co-constructing meaning through repair. Section 4.3 makes up the second part of my analysis, in which I analyse creative ways of making meaning.

4.1 Analytical overview of the data

The rough overall analysis of my data suggests that essentially the conversations flow smoothly and naturally. Topics come and go, and brief stories told and comments made by different participants follow each other. Every now and then there are pauses in speech, some distinctly longer than others, but this is a natural characteristic in conversation, especially as the participants are eating. At other times, the participants seem to have a lot to say and turns overlap frequently. The four participants in each data set mostly speak together as one group but there are also a few instances where the discussions split into two dialogues or where the participants keep on talking about their own topic even though the others are not following. Altogether, the speech events appear natural and successful.

The ELF speakers in my data seem to be quite direct with their language use. In other words, the speakers do not hedge or mitigate much, which might here and there sound a bit rude, even though direct comments are hardly meant to be offensive. To illustrate the directness, for example, Ilse comments Marta's behaviour with *you're always late* and gives feedback about Lina's German pronunciation with *you say it the way nobody would understand.* Moreover, opposing

other's comment or disagreement are often indicated by simple *no* or other negation, or *yeah but* followed by the speaker's own opinion. House (1999: 82) considers this "interactants' failure to preface disaffiliative action", yet I would rather see it as an illustration of the direct nature of ELF talk. Also the interrogative *what?* appears several times and is used, for instance, to indicate surprise, non-hearing, non-understanding or request for clarification and the like. The polite forms *pardon* and *sorry* are not used interrogatively at all. Nevertheless, the talk is light and good-humoured, the participants make jokes and tease each other, and there is a lot of laughter. All this suggests that the people have a good time together and, hence, directness could be considered a feature of talk in these ELF settings.

Though the participants mostly use ELF, expressions in other languages besides English occur as well. This should not come as a surprise as plurilinguality is always present in ELF interactions due to the interlocutors' (different) native languages and English as a shared common language. Naturally the number of languages increases when there are more speakers (from different backgrounds). According to Klimpfinger (2009), it is a common and effective feature of ELF talk to mix two languages together when ELF speakers want to specify an addressee, signal culture, appeal for assistance or introduce another idea, which they are used to discussing in another language. My data confirms these findings as different languages come into picture, for instance, when the participants talk about cultural things, experiences in other countries or more generally about languages and lexical differences. In addition, if the speaker does not know a word in English, this particular word is sometimes replaced with a non-English term. As there are two German speakers in data set 1 (Anne from Germany and Ilse from Austria) and as also the other two participants know at least some German, words in German occur and are discussed more often than Polish or Lithuanian. In data set 2 there are quite a few expressions in Finnish, as all of the speakers have been studying the language on several courses. There are also expressions in

Hungarian, as the Italian participant (Eva) studies Hungarian and is able to use it with the Hungarian participant (Peter). Some comments in other languages occur as well (such as Italian, Russian and Czech), although only occasionally. Certainly many of the non-English terms require definition as participants do not (and cannot even be expected to) know all the different languages present. Yet, these clarifications are mostly carried out fluently and cooperatively. Thus, instead of hindering communication, the participants seem to benefit from their shared non-nativeness as they can negotiate meaning of certain words through another language or even explicitly mention not knowing a particular word in English. To put it differently, ELF speakers have several languages at their disposal and can to some extent draw upon them in their attempt to achieve shared understanding.

The interlocutors have differing roles in the conversations and certain speakers do interactional work more actively than others, which can to some extent be seen in the following analysis. For example, Ilse in data set 1 and Eva in data set 2 take very active roles in the conversations by initiating new topics, asking questions, making a lot of comments and presenting their opinions, at times quite strongly. In a way it seems natural that these particular speakers take the lead and actively try to keep the conversation going as they are the ones who have organized the lunch/dinner gatherings for their friends and, as hostesses, likely hope that people enjoy the time together. They are also the connecting links, the ones whom all people in the group know. Also Lina in data set 1, similarly to Peter and Mei in data set 2, takes very actively part in the conversation. In data set 1, Anne and Marta appear at times quieter and perhaps speak a little less, although they are also actively involved in the communication throughout. In data set 2, then, Julie says very little compared to the others and mostly when being asked something. However, her non-verbal behaviour suggests that she is following the conversation. Differences in participation are probably due to several factors, such as the speakers' personal features, communication styles or interest in the topics discussed. As the interlocutors' roles in the conversation are not in the focus of my

study, I merely want to point out here that certain speakers are more actively involved in the conversations than others.

The participants in my data utilize different ways to use the English language. For instance, if they do not know or remember a particular word or expression, the speakers resort to alternative ways of expressing the meaning of something. They, for instance, use paraphrasing and describe a word in another way, give examples, tell a story about what they are referring to, say a word in another language (as mentioned above), use non-verbal communication (such as facial expressions and hand gestures) as support, or request help from the others. It seems quite common and handy to combine a particular word with *thing* or *stuff* and, thus, make new compound words, such as *juice thing*, *cinema thing* and *biscuit stuff* to mean the juice in student cafeterias, a course on Finnish cinema and ready-made biscuit dough, respectively. Certain words are also defined as *not* something, for example *not post* is used to refer to a type of package delivery system. Furthermore, the participants use marked and unidiomatic words and expressions that somehow deviate from standard English. Some examples include *they can save many money* and *it wasn't being in the fridge* as well as using *cow* and *scholar* instead of *beef* and *scholarship*. Marked pronunciation also occurs, as in pronouncing *sleigh* closer to *slide* or *snake* close to *snack*. All in all, even though traditional norms and conventions of English are for the most part followed, the speakers also bend the rules and use the language according to their own needs and purposes.

Furthermore, lexicogrammatical deviations or differences in pronunciation do not necessarily cause trouble for understanding. Instead of orienting themselves to marked formulations and creative language use as a problem or causing trouble in the ongoing talk, the participants mostly make the used word forms and utterances look normal – as long as they make sense. Meanings of some terms also become co-constructed in sequential turns within the course of talk. Many innovative terms and new forms thus become accepted and even commonly used in the

conversation if they are comprehensible for the other speakers. Then again, if the meaning of a particular lexical item is unclear, the listener typically addresses the unclear item right away and requests clarification. This way, the participants get involved in instant negotiation of meaning for the sake of understanding what is being talked about. Repair sequences are for the most part carried out smoothly and quickly so that the conversation can soon continue further. What is more, it seems that the participants initiate repair quite often because they want to make sure that they have heard and understood correct; that is, repair functions as a confirmation check. Interestingly, some "erroneous" forms are pointed out by another speaker by repetition accompanied with laughter, perhaps this way making them appear funny and less serious. Subtler other-correction occurs as well but very rarely. At times speakers themselves repeat their own "mistakes" and laugh at them. This demonstrates tendency towards standard language use and also quite a high level of language awareness as the participants can analyse what "goes wrong" in their own and each others' language use. In general, however, the participants seem to tolerate a great deal of deviations from standard English in talk as long as the language remains intercomprehensible and the speakers can achieve an adequate level of shared understanding.

The following analysis consists of two parts: instances where meaning of lexical items is negotiated and co-constructed through repair sequences, and instances where meanings are co-constructed in sequential turns through creative language use. Thus, the analysis will focus on the points where the participants in my data utilize different ways to use the language to secure mutual intelligibility and accomplish shared understanding. Though repair is initiated when a speaker finds a certain lexical item or utterance problematic, the participants do not seem to orient themselves to negotiation and co-construction of meaning itself as a problem. In other words, for the most part non-understandings and confusions get settled quickly and smoothly, meanings become co-constructed fluently in unfolding sequential turns, and the speakers do not hesitate to use the English

language "their own way". It is possible that some unclear lexical items are let pass without further clarification and without this becoming apparent. In general, however, the participants seem to be willing to negotiate meaning and understanding actively and in cooperation with each other (that is, they do not 'let it pass'). Naturally, extracts which emerged as illustrative examples from my data will be analysed in great detail and used to explicate my findings. Although hardly providing representative findings of ELF talk, the small selection of examples illustrates the points made in this study and highlights some potential tendencies in these data sets.

The first part of my analysis deals with using repair in negotiation and co-construction of meaning and includes instances where difficulty in understanding (or hearing) is displayed by at least one of the participants. I will analyse how a listener initiates repair and how a speaker responds to it, in their attempt to clarify the meaning of a particular lexical item and, this way, achieve intelligibility and shared understanding in talk. This first part is further divided into three sections: repetition as repair initiator, repetition as response to initiated repair and question-negotiation sequence in doing repair. I will discuss each category with some illustrative examples from my data.

4.2 Repair work

4.2.1 Repetition as repair initiator

Repetition of lexical items occurs quite frequently in my data. In other words, the participants repeat certain items that they themselves or other speakers have uttered. As Kaur (2009: 108) notes, in CA the practice of repetition is considered a repair strategy when it is used to address real and potential problems of understanding in talk. Schegloff et al. (1977: 368) define this repair initiator

technique as partial repeat of the trouble-source turn. Similar technique has been found also in ELF studies, such as, Mauranen's (2006) and Watterson's (2008) studies about signalling, solving and preventing non-understandings. Furthermore, Kaur (2009) shows in her study that repetition can appear in several interactional environments and fulfil many functions in averting breakdown in understanding. Lichtkoppler (2007), who has studied the role of repetition in transactional ELF conversations, observes also comprehension-oriented repetitions that help to achieve mutual understanding, among the categorized three macro-functions of repetition. The participants in my data use repetition frequently as a confirmation check, meaning that by repeating the lexical item the hearer can check whether s/he has heard (and possibly understood) a particular word correctly. As Lichtkoppler (2007: 56) notes, this kind of repetition is used to ensure accuracy of understanding. As a response, the first speaker can either confirm that the repeated item is what s/he has meant, as seen in example (1), or, in case mishearing or non-understanding has taken place, make a correction after the repetition, as is the case in example (2). Hence, the following two examples illustrate how repetition can function as a mere confirmation check or, if needed, lead to further negotiation of meaning.

In example (1) the participants are talking about bicycles that they have bought during their stay in Finland and what to do with them when their exchange period is over. Ilse enquires laughingly if Marta, who is staying in Finland for the whole academic year, would like to buy her bike. When also Lina offers her bike, Marta promises to buy all of them, very likely as a joke. As can be seen in the first turn of the following extract, Ilse is not entirely joking but has a reason for her suggestion. According to Ilse, the bike is such a good one that she would even take it with her to Austria if it was possible in practice.

(1)   **Data set 1: gears**
1   Ilse   but I have really a great bike and I would take (it) at- (.) with me at home but *(.)
                                              *SHAKES HER HEAD SLIGHTLY
2   °it doesn't work.°

3	Lina	how many gears do you have °on your bike°.
4	Ilse	*gears?
		*FROWNS A LITTLE
5	Lina	°hmh°*
		*MARTA STARTS TO SMILE
6	Ilse	*.hhh u:hh (.)
		*BRIEFLY GLANCES UP
7		twenty-↑one
8	Lina	oh (xx)= I mean (.)
9		seven is: (.) the *perfect number ((directs her comment to Marta))
		*ILSE SMILES
10		ye(h)ah(h) (xx)

Following Ilse's comment on the good quality of her bike (line 1), Lina asks Ilse a direct question about the number of gears she has on her bike (line 3). As a response, Ilse repeats the lexical item *gears* with a rising intonation (line 4), looking straight into Lina's eyes and frowning a little. This way Ilse indicates that this part needs confirmation or further clarification. It is essential to understand this lexical item correctly as it is the content word in Lina's question, the thing Lina wants to get more information about. Ilse does not look very puzzled when initiating repair, nor does she specifically emphasize the word 'gears', which suggest that she is requesting a mere confirmation check. This is how Lina interprets the repetition as, instead of providing any further clarification at this point, she simply confirms it by uttering silently a minimal response token *hmh* (line 5), after which Marta starts to smile. Lina's interpretation seems to have been right because Ilse does not request any further clarification. Instead, she displays her understanding of the question in her response and gives an answer. More specifically, as seen in line 6, Ilse first glances up very briefly and breaths in, and produces the sound stretch *u:hh*, which suggests that she is formulating a reply on her mind. Following this and a very short pause, Ilse mentions the number of gears on her bike (line 7). Lina comments on Ilse's answer *twenty-one* in her following turn (lines 8-10), part of which remains inaudible. However, Lina's utterance *seven is the perfect number*, her looking at Marta while uttering this and her *yeah* mixed with laughter could be interpreted to imply that Lina herself has a 7-speed-bike and Marta should consider buying it instead of Ilse's 21-speed-bike. In a way this comment, which makes Ilse smile together with Marta, gives the ongoing discussion again a

humorous character, almost as if Lina was giving a competing sales talk about her bike against Ilse's bike. As this example illustrates, repetition of a lexical item followed by confirmation is a quick way to achieve shared understanding of what is being talked about and hardly interrupts the actual discussion.

Also in example (2) repetition functions as a confirmation check but results in some further negotiation on the lexical item 'workbook'.

(2)   **Data set 2: workbook**
1   Peter   I wanna buy some prac- like ee:h (0.4) what i:- * (.)
                                               *TURNS HIS GAZE AWAY FROM EVA
2   like-ee:h*
                     *LOOKS THOUGHTFULLY SOMEWHERE TO THE RIGHT PAST MEI
3   (1.3)
4   Mei   °(xx)°
5   Peter   wor*(k)book
                     *TURNS HIS GAZE BACK TO EVA
6   Eva   ok (0.4)
7   *[VERB]
      *LEANS FORWARD AND LOOKS AT PETER
8   Peter   [(xx-)   ]
9   work
10   Eva   uh work*books.
                     *MEI STARTS NODDING
11   Peter   so to >(have new)< °exerci(ses)°.
12   Eva   I-I bought this too but I don't know >maybe the level is< too (.)
13   e-for ↑me it's (.) the right level.

The co-construction of meaning begins with Peter mentioning that he wants to buy a *workbook*. Producing this utterance takes some time and effort as Peter clearly struggles with finding a suitable term to refer to the thing he wishes to buy. As seen in line 1, he begins uttering *prac-* but does not finish the word. The beginning of the word in this context suggests that Peter starts to utter the word 'practice' but, because of a reason unknown, is not happy with the word choice. Thus, instead of producing the whole word, Peter initiates a word search, indicated by words such as *like* and *what*, hesitation sounds and pausing (lines 1-2). According to Schegloff et al. (1977: 363) 'word search' occurs when an item, such as a word, is not available to a speaker when 'due'. Also Peter's non-verbal behaviour, that is, turning his gaze away from Eva and looking somewhere to the right past Mei with

a thoughtful look on his face, supports the interpretation that Peter is performing a word search and wants to hold the turn, instead of requesting help (see Goodwin and Goodwin 1986). The other participants let Peter take his time with looking for a suitable word without getting involved by interrupting or offering him help. Only after Peter makes a 1.3-second pause (line 3) does Mei utter something very silently (line 4), which remains inaudible for the analyst. Eventually the word search turns out to be successful as Peter utters the word *workbook*, turning his gaze back to Eva (line 5).

As a reaction to Peter's *workbook*, Eva first utters an accepting *ok* (line 6). This comment implies that Eva has understood Peter's utterance and the product of the word search. Yet, as seen in line 7, Eva checks on the accuracy of understanding and does confirmation check by uttering *verb* with an emphasis and louder voice. She also leans forward and looks directly at Peter. At this point it becomes evident that a mishearing or misunderstanding has taken place and the lexical item requires more clarification after all. This confusion could be due to Peter not pronouncing the letter 'k' in *workbook* very clearly, leading to the pronunciation of the word 'work' being fairly similar to the pronunciation of 'verb'. Furthermore, in this context it would semantically make sense if Peter wanted to buy a 'verb book'. Overlapping with Eva's initiation of repair, Peter attempts to say something (line 8) but leaves it in order to react to the initiated repair. In other words, Peter repeats the word *work* (line 9), this time more clearly, and thus, makes a correction on the part of the compound that Eva did not understand or hear the first time.

Eva's following turn in line 10 suggests that she knows now what Peter has bought. More specifically, she produces the approving *uh*, followed by *workbooks*, stressing the first part of the compound and lowering intonation towards the end of the word. Eva, hence, repeats the same lexical item which Peter has used though in plural form. In a way, this repetition functions as yet another confirmation on Eva's part and does in fact provide Peter a possibility to either

confirm or correct the word. Eva's confident tone of voice and correct repetition as well as Mei's nods display understanding, which is possibly why, instead of confirming the word as such yet again, Peter comments on exercises (line 11). This utterance provides an explanation why Peter has bought such a book but it also paraphrases and further clarifies the lexical item being talked about. Meaning of the word 'workbook' has now been successfully negotiated as Eva is able to make a further comment and take the discussion forwards (lines 12-13), that is, she mentions that she has also bought such a book but appears to hesitate whether the particular level is suitable. Altogether, this example illustrates that sometimes repetition of a (presumed) lexical item, used as a confirmation check, can lead to negotiation. However, the negotiation and further elaboration do not seem to hamper the talk from moving on.

Repetition of a lexical item can also indicate problems in understanding and function as a request for further clarification. According to Mauranen (2006: 133), repeating the trouble source is an informative way to initiate repair as repetition clearly indicates which part of the utterance is unclear. In her ELF study repetition as a repair initiator is typically a minimal response, a single-word utterance, and works fairly well when clarifying the meaning of individual lexical items (ibid.). However, as Mauranen (2006: 134) notes, there is still space for alternative interpretations because a simple repetition is not always a sign of non-understanding a particular lexical item but can be used to indicate puzzlement and to request further information, for instance, about using the particular word in the context in question. In my data repetition as a repair initiator typically results in negotiation and co-construction of meaning, as is seen in example (3).

(3)   **Data set 1: rubber duck**
1   Anne   we can give them like this *(0.3) gummy:: (0.5)
                                *MOVES HER RIGHT HAND AS IF SHE WAS HOLDING A SMALL
                                IMAGINARY ITEM IN IT
2   *gummy:: [hhh   ]
                *LOOKS DOWNWARDS AND BACK UP
3   Ilse   [gummy?]
4   (1.8)

5	Anne	*this:: (0.4) ducks
		*GLANCES UPWARDS, LOOKS AT ILSE AND CONTINUES GESTURING WITH HER RIGHT HAND
6	Marta	rubb↑[er (.)]
7	Anne	[this]
8	Marta	↑ducks
9	Anne	ye(h)ah *rub(h)er(h) ducks(h) (xx)
		*GLANCES AND POINTS HER RIGHT HAND INDEX FINGER AT MARTA'S DIRECTION
10	Ilse	*(°what?°)
		*MARTA NODS
11	Anne	.hhh I [want to=]
12	Marta	[rubber duck]*
		*LOOKS AT ILSE, MAKES SQUEAKING SOUNDS AND GESTURES WITH HER RIGHT HAND AS IF TO SQUEEZE A RUBBER TOY
13	Anne	=say- (0.4) Gummiente [but]
14	Ilse	[*u:hh]
		*NODS
15	Anne	somehow in my(h) head(h) it(h) did(h)n't work(h)
16	Ilse	@the rubber duck@

Preceding this discussion, Ilse has made a comment that she is going to travel to Lapland with little children as her co-travellers are a few years younger than she is. Anne attempts to comment on this remark by suggesting that they could give the younger girls "something" but, due to lacking a word to name this particular something, she is not able to finish the sentence. Instead, as seen in line 1, she seems to look for the needed word, indicated by her uttering *like this*, making a short pause, uttering the word *gummy* with some sound stretch and gesturing with her right hand to illustrate the size of the item she is referring to. Such word search could be analysed as a request for help from the speaker's part but it also functions as a trigger for problems in understanding for the listeners as the meaning remains unclear. As Anne's gaze moves away from the other participants when she utters *gummy* the second time, thus looking downwards also when heaving the sigh in line 2, it seems that at least at this point Anne is performing a word search in her mind instead of actively requesting help from the others (see Goodwin and Goodwin 1986). Ilse indicates her difficulty in understanding what Anne means by repeating the problematic item *gummy* with a rising intonation (line 3), which clearly functions as a repair initiator. After a 1.8-second pause (line 4), Anne takes the turn (line 5): she glances upwards very quickly, looks back at Ilse, continues her attempt to clarify the lexical item by uttering *this* with some sound stretch and again gestures with her right hand as if holding a small item

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between her fingers. Following a 0.4-second pause, Anne also utters the word *ducks*. As seen in line 5, Anne does not yet manage to produce the searched lexical item in its complete form but does mention that she is referring to ducks, this word being in fact the latter part of the searched compound.

At this point Marta comes to help by uttering *rubber ducks*, that is both parts of the compound with a micropause in between and with a rise in pitch (lines 6, 8). Anne's *this* (line 7), which partly overlaps with Marta's *rubber* (line 6), suggests that Anne is still trying to explain what she is referring to, but potentially also requesting help as she is looking at Ilse (see Goodwin and Goodwin 1986). Apparently Marta succeeds to utter the very term Anne is after, indicated by Anne's confirming *yeah* and the repetition of the compound in line 9, as well as glancing and pointing her right hand index finger at Marta's direction. Anne's laughter at this point could be seen as creating humour during a potential moment of embarrassment but it also suggests that her comment is meant to be a humorous one. It looks as if Ilse still has not grasped what is being talked about as she has a puzzled expression on her face and she silently utters *what* with a rising intonation, looking at Anne (line 10). Marta, for her part, displays understanding with a nod and participates in clarifying the term to Ilse. As seen in line 12, Marta repeats the term *rubber duck*, looking directly at Ilse. Marta also uses non-verbal behaviour as support as she gestures with her right hand in the air as if she was squeezing a rubber toy and makes squeaking sounds. This repetition and clarification overlaps with the beginning of Anne's explanation about why she had trouble finding the correct term (lines 11, 13, 15), that is, she tried to derive or translate the word directly from her mother tongue German ('die Gummiente') but it did not quite work. Once again, Anne laughs at her own comment, possibly making her unsuccessful effort look less serious. As Firth (1996: 254) points out, laughing can be used as a way out of trouble as laughter, either by the speaker or the addressee, can indicate that some word is wrongly used, funny or otherwise non-fatal. Be it the non-verbal clues, repetition of the lexical item 'rubber duck' or hearing the

word in German, Ilse signals her understanding in line 14 with *u:hh* and with a deep nod. In line 16 she also repeats the term together with the definite article *the*, in a slightly animated voice, which brings the negotiation to a successful close. This co-construction of the lexical item 'rubber duck' helps to make sense of Anne's original utterance: they can give the younger girls, who Ilse has called *little children*, some rubber ducks to play with.

Repetition appears to be an efficient and easy way to make sure and/or negotiate further what is being talked about and, thus, to work towards shared understanding in conversation. The three examples above have illustrated how a hearer can utilize repetition as a repair initiator, be it a confirmation check or a request for further clarification, in order to negotiate and co-construct meaning. Repetition has an important role also in responses, that is, in reactions to initiated repair. This is what will be discussed next.

4.2.2 Repetition as response to initiated repair

The ELF speakers in my data employ repetition as a response to initiated repair. As Kaur (2009: 116) notes, even if the recipient does not indicate his/her non-understanding, by repeating prior talk the speaker gives the recipient another opportunity to hear the prior turn, which enhances the chances of it being understood. The same can be certainly argued to apply to instances where trouble in hearing or understanding is overtly displayed. As my data shows, at times repetition of a lexical item after initiated repair can be sufficient enough a response to clarify the meaning of a particular word. Sometimes repetition is accompanied by a paraphrase, a description, an example or the like, or otherwise leads to more lengthy negotiation sequences. Example (4) illustrates how a plain repetition produced by the speaker helps the hearer to understand the utterance.

(4)   Data set 1: snowmobile
1   Lina   [(xx) (last time)]
2   Ilse   [and I also   ] want to (.) [do::]   ((directs her comment to Lina))
3   Lina   [(xx)]
4   Ilse   do (.) like a:: (0.5) hus↑ky:: (0.6)
5   Lina   *ok
               *NODS
6   Ilse   ride and a snow*mobile* ride*
                                        *LINA RAISES HER EYEBROWS, LOOKING AMAZED
7   (0.8)
8   Marta   a what?   ((talks with her mouth full))
9   Ilse   *snow*mo↑*bile
               *LOOKS AT MARTA
10   Marta   u:hh.

In this extract Ilse expresses her willingness to take a husky ride and a snowmobile
ride in Lapland (lines 2, 4, 6). The comment is directed to Lina, who participates in
the speech event by uttering *ok* in line 5 and raising her eyebrows somewhat
amazed after Ilse has finished telling about her plans (line 6), which suggests that
there is something surprising in Ilse's comment. The word *snowmobile* in line 6
seems to cause trouble for Marta as, after a 0.8-second pause (line 7), she expresses
her non-understanding and requests clarification in line 8 by uttering *a what* with a
rising intonation. By combining the indefinite article 'a' with the interrogative,
Marta specifies which part of Ilse's previous utterance has remained unclear for
her.   Worth pointing out is that Ilse pronounces 'snowmobile' closer to
[snoʊmoʊbaɪl] than [snoʊmə,bil], which might have an influence on
understanding the word. Then again, Marta's initiation of repair might be due to
simply not hearing the word properly or due to lack of full understanding of the
word, no matter the pronunciation. Whatever the reason that makes Marta initiate
repair, Ilse offers clarification in line 9 by repeating *snowmobile*, raising the pitch
towards the end of the word although keeping the same pronunciation, and by
looking at Marta. Interestingly, Ilse repeats only the word that was closest to the
indefinite article in her previous utterance (line 6) and omits the latter part of the
compound. This appears to be enough of clarification for Marta, whose reaction
u:hh with a lowering intonation in line 10 suggests restored understanding. All in

all, negotiation of the lexical item 'snowmobile' is carried out very quickly and smoothly and the discussion can now continue further.

Example (5) illustrates a slightly more complex situation, in which repetition is used in response to initiated repair. In other words, the speaker elaborates and modifies her repetition and meanings become co-constructed and negotiated also in the following sequences. Contrary to the previous example, this extract also exemplifies that it is not always that clear which part of the utterance the initiation of repair concerns. In this example the participants talk about the number of clocks that Ilse has in her apartment.

(5)   **Data set 1: watches**
1   Marta   [how many watch]es do you have here   ((directs her question to Ilse))
2   Ilse   >°what?°<
3   Marta   *clocks watches (0.5) how many watches
                  *TAPS ON HER LEFT HAND WRIST WIH HER RIGHT HAND
4   Ilse   at all?
5   Anne   °yeah°
6   Marta   >yeah<
7   Anne   computer [(xx)   ]
8   Ilse   [*comp]u↑ter
                        *COUNTS WITH HER FINGERS WHILE LISTING
9   I have [then-]
10   Lina   [°(xx)°]
11   Ilse   -a no[r↑mal] (0.5)
12   Anne   [°ya°]
13   Ilse   e::h like *↑clock (1.0)
                        *MARTA NODS
14   then f-one for waking ↑up
15   and two ph↑ones
16   Marta   *hhh
                  *SMILES AT ILSE
17   Ilse   five
18   Marta   ok
…   ((talk continues))
25   Marta   and I have *just one (.) hand watch
                        *BRUSHES HER LEFT HAND WRIST WITH HER RIGHT HAND INDEX FINGER

Marta initiates the topic by asking Ilse a direct question in line 1. This question remains somehow unclear to Ilse, who requests clarification in line 2 by uttering *what*, quite quickly and silently. Though the question is direct in its form, it is unspecific and the interlocutor needs to interpret what the focus of the query

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might be. This is an example of what Drew (1997) calls 'open' class repair initiators as it does not locate specifically what and where the trouble source is. Thus, not knowing exactly what Ilse has not heard or understood, in line 3 Marta offers another term *clocks*, followed by the repetition of *watches*, at the same time tapping on her left hand wrist with her right hand. After a half-a-second pause she also repeats a slightly shortened version of the initial question with the most essential words *how many watches* (line 3). Apparently Ilse does not yet fully understand what kind of an answer to give as she requests clarification a second time in line 4 by uttering *at all* with a rising intonation. After the approving remarks *yeah* by Anne (line 5) and Marta (line 6) and Anne's suggestion *computer* (line 7), Ilse lists the clocks she has (lines 8-9, 11, 13-15). The pauses and hesitation with some word choices seem natural as Ilse is listing the clocks individually, naming them one by one, and finally giving the total number *five* (line 17). The other participants indicate that they are listening, for instance, Anne produces a silent *ya* (line 12) and Marta nods when Ilse utters *clock* (line 13), but they do not interrupt Ilse's counting. All in all, after shared understanding of the lexical item 'watches' in this context is accomplished and the content of the question understood, Ilse is able to give a reply and Marta accepts it with *ok* (line 18).

Interestingly, in this extract English words are used creatively, meaning that slightly new meanings are created and negotiated for words. For example, Marta uses first the word *watch* (lines 1, 3) to convey the meaning of a more general and applicable 'clock'. Even though she taps on her wrist to illustrate the meaning of this lexical item, Marta hardly uses the word 'watch' in its conventional meaning as it would be somehow strange to ask how many watches Ilse has in her apartment. The unfolding sequences confirm the creative usage of 'watch'. Ilse's *normal clock* (lines 11, 13), then, likely refers to a regular clock, which is not a part of any equipment nor a watch or an alarm clock, whereas her *one for waking up* (line 14) clearly paraphrases 'alarm clock' – a word that possibly does not come to her mind at the moment. It is also interesting that *computer* (lines 7, 8) and *phone* (line

15) are listed as such as both devices are known to show the time in some way. As seen at the end of the extract (line 25), some turns later in the conversation Marta talks about a wrist watch as *hand watch*, making this reference even more illustrative by brushing her left hand wrist with her right hand index finger. A new clock-related term is found also earlier in the conversation in a different speech event as Anne uses the term *an official clock* when talking about a clock outside one's own house, such as on the wall of a public building. Such innovativeness and creativity characterize my ELF data throughout but, as this example nicely illustrates, language use deviating from standard English does not hinder accomplishing intelligibility and shared understanding. "New" words and creative ways of making meaning will be discussed in greater detail in the second part of my analysis, even though ELF speakers' creativity appears also in relation to doing repair and, thus, can be found in some examples discussed here in section 4.2.

Example (6), in which the participants talk about souvenirs they are going to buy from Finland, includes fairly much routine negotiation of meaning in a short time. In other words, meanings are co-constructed in sequential turns as a normal part of the conversation and the talk moves on fluently and effortlessly. In this extract repair is initiated by employing repetition together with a direct question and reaction to repair consists of a repeat and a description. This negotiation is followed by a confirmation check concerning another lexical item.

(6)   Data set 1: liquorice
1   Lina   a few th[ings   ]
2   Ilse   [for me] everybody gets *liquorice* *so.
                                          *TURNS TO LOOK AT MARTA
3   Lina   *liquorice* *what's that
                              *ILSE LOOKS AT HER PLATE AND NODS A LITTLE
4   Ilse   *liquorice* the *black one [salmia(xx)]
                              *LOOKS DIRECLTY INTO LINA'S EYES
5   Lina   [oh*   ] salmia[(kki)]
                                      *ILSE NODS QUICKLY
6   Marta   [(xx)] going to buy glögi
7   Ilse   *glögi?
              *TURNS TO LOOK AT MARTA
8   Marta   yeah

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Ilse begins (line 2) by mentioning that she is going to buy *liquorice*, which is the particular lexical item that causes a problem, and turning to look at Marta. Possibly this is an unfamiliar term for Lina or Ilse pronouncing the word as [lækrɪʃ] instead of [lɪkrɪʃ] or [lɪkərɪʃ] might cause the non-understanding. As seen in line 3, Lina signals her lack of understanding by repeating the troublesome word and making a specific question *what's that* on the meaning of the word. In CA this repair initiator technique is defined by Schegloff et al. (1977: 368) as partial repeat of the trouble-source turn plus a question word. Mauranen (2006: 132), who has noticed a similar technique in her ELF data, argues that the most unequivocal way to signal lack of understanding is to make a direct question on an expression or its meaning. Further, repeating the source of the trouble is a clear and informative way to point out what part of the utterance is unclear (Mauranen 2006: 133). When these two strategies are combined, which is exactly what Lina does, the part of the utterance requiring clarification becomes very clear. As a response to the initiated repair (line 4), Ilse repeats the word, provides a very short description *the black one* and begins uttering the word in Finnish, possibly assuming that Lina might know the name of the candy popular in Finland in Finnish. Ilse also looks directly into Lina's eyes, not any more at her plate as when Lina initiated repair. Lina signals her understanding in line 5 with emphatic *oh* and by repeating the word in Finnish. Ilse confirms the word with a very quick nod. Altogether, repair is initiated very clearly and the following negotiation of meaning is quick and smooth. The discussion about souvenirs can, thus, continue further.

Marta takes part in the discussion on her part by commenting (line 6) that she is going to buy *glögi*. Hence, Marta introduces yet another Finnish specialty, namely that of Finnish mulled wine. Similarly to using repetition as a confirmation check in example (1), Ilse repeats the word *glögi* with a rising intonation and turns her gaze towards Marta (line 7). Marta's approving *yeah* in line 8 confirms that Ilse has heard and understood right. After this brief negotiation the discussion moves on

again. An interesting point worth noting in this example is that the participants seem to benefit from shared experiences as exchange students in Finland. In other words, they are familiar with the Finnish delicacies 'salmiakki' and 'glögi' and can use these foreign language terms when co-constructing meaning and shared understanding. For instance, 'salmiakki' is used to explain the meaning of 'liquorice', although also the opposite could be conceivable. Further, 'glögi' needs no description at all as the participants appear to know it as the spicy warm fruit juice drank traditionally around Christmas time.

As discussed in the two sections above, repetition has a significant role in negotiation and co-construction of meaning both as a repair initiator and as a response to the initiated repair. The following section also deals with repair but the examples analysed are slightly different in nature. In other words, I will move on to discussing instances, in which participants employ questions and explanations or definitions when doing repair and negotiating meaning.

4.2.3 Question-negotiation sequence in doing repair

Aside from repetition, addressing unclear lexical items as soon as they surface in talk is done with what-questions, which generally lead to negotiation sequences of some kind. Ways to clarify meaning after such repair initiators include, for instance, description, paraphrasing, giving examples and telling a brief story. At times the interlocutors also rely on non-English terms, such as in example (6) above and in the following two examples. However, as English is the only common language shared by all participants, using foreign language terms does not necessarily clarify the words but, on the contrary, can result in more non-understanding and need for repair. The three examples below illustrate how meanings are negotiated and co-constructed by defining or explaining the lexical items in own words after a what-question.

Example (7) begins by Anne telling about a documentary on a university in northern Norway she has seen and leads to discussion on polar bears.

(7)   Data set 1: polar bears
1	Anne	a::nd so the first- >the introduction ↑week (.) the orientation week is like< (0.4)
2		ehm *how to ride a snowmo↑bile (.) how to find the next (0.4) cottage with-by
		*COUNTS WITH HER FINGERS WHILE LISTING
3		a gps:: (.) system on the mobile phone (0.3) .hhh th how to use eh::m (0.3) eh a
4		↑gun (0.6) and how to:: to shoot polar bea(h)rs(h)
5	Ilse	*°what are polar bears?°
		*MOVES HER HEAD A LITTLE FORWARDS AND LOOKS DIRECTLY AT ANNE
6	Anne	[°(Eisbär)°]
7	Marta	[*bears]
		*TURNS TO LOOK AT ILSE
8		white
9	Ilse	[*Eis]bär?
		*RAISES HER EYEBROWS, LOOKING SURPRISED
10	Lina	[(xx)]
11	Anne	ye(h)ah(h)
12	Ilse	but *<there are not so many anymo[re (in the)-]
		*FROWNS AND HAS A SUSPICIOUS EXPRESSION ON HER FACE
13	Anne	[I]
14	Ilse	(-↑↓world)>
15	Anne	no:: but (.) <it is also> some year[s ago.]
16	Ilse	[ok.]
…		((talk continues))
108	Ilse	[the university with] the <ice (.) beers.> ((directs her comment at Lina))
109	Lina	ye(h)[a(h)h(h)]
110	Anne	[°no polar-*polar-°]
		*ILSE TURNS TO LOOK AT ANNE
111		°-be[ars.°]
112	Ilse	[pola]::r (.) bears.
113		*°that was-°
		*MOVES HER GAZE SLOWLY BACK AT LINA

Anne finishes her longish turn, which consists of several self-repairs in attempt to find the term *orientation week* (line 1) and a list of things you need to learn during the first week (lines 2-4), with *polar bears* accompanied with laughter. This term is unfamiliar to Ilse, as she indicates her lack of understanding and requests clarification in line 5 by making a direct, focused question on the meaning of the lexical item 'polar bears' and by moving her head a little forwards while looking directly at Anne. Interestingly, Anne utters the compound 'polar bears' already in her turn preceding the one in lines 1-4, but at this point Ilse does not initiate repair yet. It appears that Ilse misses the word then or employs the 'let it pass' strategy and possibly hopes that the lexical item will become clarified later on as the story

progresses. It is also possible that Ilse does not want to interrupt Anne telling her story at that point. Either way, in line 5 Ilse takes the chance to initiate repair. As both Anne and Marta react to this initiation of repair and their turns overlap, it is a bit hard to hear what they say. However, it appears that Anne quietly utters *Eisbär* (line 6), that is the term in German, and Marta repeats the word *bears*, turning to look at Ilse (line 7). Furthermore, Marta describes the bears by uttering the adjective *white* (line 8). Marta's mention on the colour and Anne's supposed German translation seem to be good enough hints for Ilse, who utters *Eisbär* (line 9) with an enquiring tone, heavily stressing the first part of the compound. At this point Ilse also raises her eyebrows, looking surprised. The details of talk and non-verbal behaviour indicate that Ilse produces a confirmation check on the lexical item under negotiation. Using the German word 'Eisbär' to clarify the meaning seems understandable in this situation as both Anne and Ilse have German as their mother tongue, one coming from Germany and the other from Austria. Hence, the participants apparently benefit from shared non-nativeness and own linguistic backgrounds. Anne accepts and confirms Ilse's suggestion in line 11 with *yeah* mixed with laughing sounds. Right after this Ilse makes a comment on the declining number of polar bears (lines 12, 14) and employs also facial expressions to display her view on the issue, which shows that negotiation of meaning has been completed successfully, her non-understanding has been settled, and the interlocutors can go on to discuss the issue.

A few minutes later in the conversation the Norwegian university and polar bears are mentioned anew as a response to Lina's question on how their conversation turned to politics (this part omitted in the transcript). Interestingly, instead of using the standard – and already negotiated – term 'polar bears', Ilse refers to the animals as *ice beers* (line 108). In greater detail, the word *ice* is followed by a micropause and the word *beers*, and both words are pronounced slightly more slowly than the surrounding talk. Ilse thus first replaces 'polar' with 'ice' as the first part of the compound. This could be analysed as a direct translation from

Ilse's mother tongue German into English, that is, from 'Eis' into 'ice'. As the pronunciation of these two words is very similar, it is possible that Ilse in fact uses the German word. Based on the recording it is impossible to determine for sure which word is used. In addition, Ilse mixes 'bears' with 'beers'. Such a mix-up is not an uncommon one as the two words resemble each other quite a lot in writing as well as pronunciation-wise, although the mix-up often leads to funny message contents. In this extract Lina responds to Ilse's comment in line 109 with a laughing *yeah*. With laughter Lina can indicate that there is something funny in Ilse's word choice but laughter also makes the "error" look less serious at a moment of potential embarrassment. Then again, Lina might laugh at Ilse's response, as Ilse points out that it was the university and the polar bears that slowly led the conversation to politics.

It is quite likely that the hearers do understand what Ilse means with her *ice beers* in line 108 but, instead of letting the marked term pass as such, Anne performs other-correction in lines 110 and 111, though in a somewhat quiet voice. More specifically, her *no* indicates that the term used by Ilse is not the right one and *polar bears*, of which the first part is repeated, does the actual correction. During Anne's turn Ilse turns to look at Anne and accepts her correction in line 112 by repeating the term and looking at Anne. The first part of the compound (line 112), which Ilse pronounces by stressing and lengthening the second syllable, overlaps partly Anne uttering the latter part of the compound (line 111). Such an immediate reaction implies that the speakers are actively involved in negotiation of meaning and truly build talk on a turn-by-turn basis. After a micropause Ilse utters also *bears* (line 112) with a correct pronunciation this time. This repetition and Ilse uttering quietly *that was* (line 113), during which she slowly turns her gaze back at Lina, tie up the negotiation and the conversation can proceed. It is worth noting that Anne is the one, who was active in negotiating and co-constructing the lexical item 'polar bears' earlier in the conversation. This might be one reason why she performs other-correction at this point. In addition to illustrating ELF speakers' creative

language use, this example has shown that the meaning of a lexical item can sometimes be clarified easily with a non-English term, such as using a term in one's mother tongue. Such a strategy does not always work, however, as the following example shows.

Example (8) illustrates how a speaker relies in her speech to a non-English term, more specifically to a term in her mother tongue, which is not understood by all participants. This triggers initiation of repair with a direct question and paraphrasing as response.

(8)   Data set 1: Staatsschuld
```
1      Anne   Norway's one of the really few countries which have no (0.5) ehm *(0.7)
                                                 *LIFTS HER RIGHT HAND UP, LOOKING DOWN
2             Staats*↑schuld
                        * LIFTS HER GAZE UP AT ILSE
3      Ilse   *↑really?
              *RAISES HER EYEBROWS AND MOVES HER HEAD A LITTLE FORWARDS
4      Anne   >yeah.< [because they-  ]
5      Lina           [*what's (this)?]
                        *LOOKS AT ILSE; MARTA LOOKS AT ANNE
6      Anne   *e[eh-   ]
              *LIFTS HER RIGHT HAND UP AGAIN
7      Ilse     [e::hm]
8             that they owe *somebody:: some other country's mo↑ney
                              *GESTURES WITH HER RIGHT HAND, LOOKING AT LINA
9      Marta  uh [*ok ]
                  *NODS
10     Anne      [yeah]
11     Ilse   oder [the  Euro]pean
12     Anne        [they they ]
13     Ilse    Un[ion  ]
14     Marta    *[loan]
                 *LINA NODS A LITTLE
15     Ilse   or [what]ev↑er
16     Anne      [they ]
17            yeah they have no loans the state has [ºno (loan)º ]
18     Lina                                          [but they're] not >(in) the< European
19            Union
20     Anne   no [((they are not))]
```

The extract begins with Anne making a comment on Norway (line 1). At the end of her turn Anne faces some trouble as she appears not to know or remember the very thing Norway does not have, which would make the content word in her utterance. The half-a-second pause and the hesitation sound *ehm* in line 1 suggest

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that Anne is trying to find a suitable word. After another pause, during which she lifts her right hand up and looks down, Anne utters a German word *Staatsschuld* (line 2) with a rise in pitch at the last syllable and lifting her gaze up at Ilse. By mixing the two languages together, Anne is likely appealing for assistance from Ilse, who is another speaker of German in the group (see Klimpfinger 2009). This interpretation is supported by Anne's gaze at Ilse, that is, she is actively addressing the recipient who might be able to help her (see Goodwin and Goodwin 1986). Interestingly, instead of uttering the corresponding term in English, such as 'national debt' or the like, Ilse reacts to the content of Anne's utterance (line 3). In other words, Ilse raises her eyebrows and moves her head forwards a little while uttering *really* with a rising intonation, which implies that she has understood the German word used but finds the comment somehow surprising. Anne confirms Ilse's wondering with a quick *yeah* in line 4 and moves on to developing her comment by beginning to give a reason for her statement. However, she is interrupted by Lina's overlapping initiation for repair *what's this?* (line 5). Uttering a direct question together with the pronoun 'this' shows that the repair is clearly directed to the German word used. Also, both Marta and Lina frown at this point, which further indicates non-understanding. The request for repair is not very surprising as Marta and Lina, whose mother tongues are Polish and Lithuanian, respectively, cannot be expected to understand the German word.

The meaning of the word becomes co-constructed in the following turns, although it is not altogether clear-cut who is responsible for the clarification. Both Marta and Lina appear to be in need of clarification but Marta is looking at Anne whereas Lina is looking at Ilse. After some hesitation, indicated by Anne's *eeh* (line 6), during which Anne lifts her right hand up again, and Ilse's *e::hm* (line 7), Ilse produces a paraphrase (line 8), that is, she explains the meaning of 'Staatsschuld' in her own words, and also gestures with her hands while giving the explanation, looking at Lina. Marta seems to understand the paraphrase as she accepts it with *uh ok* (line 9) accompanied with a nod. Anne confirms Ilse's explanation in line 10.

Yet, Ilse continues (lines 11, 13, 15) by adding that the country does not owe money to the European Union either. At this point, Anne attempts to participate in the negotiation of meaning more actively as becomes evident through her repetition of *they* (line 12), overlapping with Ilse's utterance (line 11). As seen in line 14, Marta manages to utter the word *loan*, which partly overlaps with Ilse mentioning the word *Union* (line 13). Lina's gentle nod at this point suggests that she now understands what is being talked about. Only after repeating *they* once again in line 16 and Ilse finishing her explanation with *or whatever* in line 15 does Anne get a chance to give her clarification. In other words, as seen in line 17, she sums up what has been negotiated thus far and utters the kind of comment she possibly attempted to say in the first place: *they have no loans*. Even though the English word '(national or public) debt' would be more idiomatic in this context, the word 'loan', together with the paraphrase provided, appears to be close enough to explain the meaning of 'Staatsschuld'. After all, no further repair is initiated and Lina makes a comment that Norway is not in the European Union (lines 18-19). All in all, after the co-construction of meaning, which all participants take part in, Anne's original utterance becomes intelligible and the discussion can proceed.

In example (9) the lexical item 'running sushi' triggers a process of negotiation and co-construction of meaning.

(9)   Data set 1: running sushi
1   Ilse   have you ever been to a *running sushi?
                                      *LOOKS DIRECTLY AT LINA
2   Marta   [*what?]
                *TURNS TO LOOK AT ILSE, LOOKING PUZZLED
3   Lina   [(no)   ]
4   Ilse   don't you know it?   ((directed to Lina))
5   Lina   (°what°)
6   Ilse   you know sushi?
7   Lina   [yeah I do]
8   Marta   [mm   ]
9   Ilse   *(0.8) and running is like (0.5) ee: not you run but the:: ↑food ↑is ↑running
                *NODS SHARPLY AND SWALLOWS
10   Lina   oh *yeah
                    *STARTS MAKING CIRCLES IN THE AIR WITH THE FORK IN HER RIGHT HAND
11   Ilse   yeh*
                    *DRAWS A CIRCLE IN THE AIR WITH HER RIGHT HAND INDEX FINGER
12   Lina   I've seen it

13	Ilse	an::d you can really sit there as long as you ↑want and we always make it like
14		for <u>hours</u>
15		£and *we are waiting in betw↑een£
		*MARTA STARTS LAUGHING SILENTLY
16		£so that we are able to eat again£
17		(thh)
18	Marta	£hhh£
19	Ilse	£so we are eating two hours then we are having like coffee for one hour and
20		then we are ea-eating in=(a)
21		and it <u>works</u>£

Ilse initiates the discussion by asking the others whether they have ever been to a running sushi (line 1). This question appears to be directed to Lina, who has made the latest comment in the conversation preceding Ilse's turn. Yet, the question makes Marta look at Ilse with a puzzled expression on her face and utter the interrogatory *what* right away (line 2). Marta might have uttered this question word out of mere amazement but it can easily be interpreted also as an initiation of repair, indicating that something in Ilse's question requires clarification in order to be understood. Marta uses 'what?', which is an 'open' form of repair initiation (see Drew 1997), to signal non-understanding. The question is somewhat unfocused as it is not directed to any specific part of Ilse's question but Ilse appears to interpret that it is the lexical item 'running sushi', which the hearers are not familiar with. In other words, using the pronoun 'it' in the question *don't you know it?* in line 4 could be understood as referring to 'running sushi'. Making such an enquiry helps Ilse to check whether further clarification is indeed needed or whether the interrogatory was only a sign of surprise. Interestingly, Ilse directs this specifying question to Lina even though it was Marta who uttered the first 'what'. Lina, in her turn, responses to the original question about running sushi (line 1) with an only just audible *no* (line 3), overlapping Marta's question word (line 2), though she also utters a very quiet *what* (line 5) as a response to Ilse's second question *don't you know it?* (line 4). Negotiation and co-construction of meaning is indeed needed in order to accomplish shared understanding.

As it seems that the hearers do not know 'running sushi', Ilse starts clarifying the term. First, Ilse requests what the hearers know already by making a question *you know sushi?* in line 6. This way she can define more specifically what part of the term causes trouble and how detailed a clarification she needs to give. As Lina mentions in line 7 that she does know sushi and also Marta replies in the affirmative with *mm* in line 8, Ilse nods sharply and swallows and, then, concentrates on explaining the lexical item 'running' (line 9). She does this by mentioning that it is the food that is running, not the customer. The word *like*, the half-a-second pause and the sound stretches in *ee* and *the* in Ilse's explanation suggest that she attempts to find a good and illustrative way to explain the meaning of 'running'. The seemingly creative explanation Ilse provides seems to be sufficient enough for Lina, who utters accepting remarks in line 10 and, after Ilse's *yeh* in line 11, also mentions her seeing it (line 12). Lina further indicates her understanding by making two circles in the air with the fork in her right hand, as if to illustrate how the food is "running" on a conveyor belt. Also Ilse makes a circle in the air with her right hand index finger, which confirms how 'running sushi' works. It is intriguing that Lina takes this enthusiastically part in the co-construction of meaning when her earlier *no* in line 3 as a response to the original question suggested her knowing what is being talked about. It could be questioned whether Lina had let the unclear lexical item pass if Marta had not initiated repair. However, it looks like this further negotiation helps also Lina to understand what Ilse means when talking about 'running sushi'. Furthermore, her repetition of the lexical item six turns later also suggests that she has grasped the meaning of the term and probably also learnt a new word.

In a way this negotiation is an example of multi-step clarification (see Mazeland and Zaman-Zadeh 2004). In other words, it includes the clarification basis (what the hearers know already), the path (the actual clarification procedure) and the target (understanding the term). As discussed above, Lina indicates her understanding of 'running sushi' both verbally and non-verbally. Neither Marta

nor Anne, however, does explicitly show that they have understood the term but they do not initiate further repair either. Thus, Ilse continues the discussion by explaining how she and her friends spend hours in sushi bars eating, talking, having coffee and eating again (lines 13-17, 19-21). Marta participates in this story by laughing silently (lines 15, 18), which gives the impression that she is following the story and finds it funny. Altogether, it could be argued that the meaning of 'running sushi' gets successfully negotiated through a step-by-step co-construction of meaning after which the participants can continue talking about the topic.

The examples above have illustrated what kind of interactional work the ELF speakers in my data do during the conversation in order to achieve intelligibility and shared understanding. More specifically, this part of the analysis has shown that the speakers are active in initiating repair if a particular lexical item requires confirmation or clarification for the sake of understanding it properly. Altogether, it seems that the participants tend to get involved in negotiation and co-construction of meaning instead of merely letting unclear words pass (cf. Firth 1996). The speakers also utilize different ways to use the language in order to initiate repair and to respond to initiated repair. Although repair is caused by some kind of trouble in hearing or understanding, the participants do not seem to orient themselves to repair sequences as problematic. What is more, even if the forward-moving progress of the conversation gets interrupted for a short while due to negotiation sequences, understanding what is being talked about appears to be the most important thing for the interlocutors. Thus, doing interactional work via repair could be seen as a sign of participants' willingness to actively co-operate and work towards shared understanding and secure mutual intelligibility in talk. It could also be argued that negotiation and co-construction of meaning add dimension to the conversation and seem to have a positive effect.

The second part of my analysis deals with negotiating and co-constructing meaning via creative language use. Similarly to Hülmbauer (2009), I attempt to

show that unconventional or "incorrect" language use in ELF can be effective and offer alternative and creative ways of making meaning in ELF contexts. In other words, I will analyse instances of talk in which the ELF speakers in my data employ creative and flexible ways of accomplishing intelligibility and shared understanding, such as give new meanings to established words, make up new words and employ paraphrasing. In the examples discussed such creativity with language use does not lead to repair although the conventional rules of standard English are not being fully followed. Instead, the participants make creative words appear normal as long as they convey meaning and remain intercomprehensible in that context. I base my observations on the participants' displayed orientations to understanding and making sense of the others' talk, instead of initiating repair and requesting clarification, in instances where creative or unconventional language use appears. The second part of my analysis is also divided into three sections that exemplify creative ways of making meaning: using "close enough" words, making the innovative term common and putting it in other words, that is, employing paraphrasing. Similarly to the first part, I will discuss each category with some illustrative examples from my data.

4.3 Creative ways of making meaning

4.3.1 Using "close enough" words

"Close enough" can be enough in ELF talk, as Hülmbauer (2009) argues and as also my data suggests. In other words, instead of the specific standard terms, more general, closely related or somehow descriptive terms are at times used to convey the intended meaning without this seeming to cause trouble for understanding. In these examples the interlocutors do not search for the standard counterpart but, rather, accept the creatively used lexical item as such as it is understandable in that specific context. Hence, the interlocutors appear to orient themselves to making

meaning and understanding instead of addressing non-standard forms as problems. The following two examples illustrate how the ELF speakers in my data accomplish intelligibility and shared understanding in talk despite unconventional language use and "imperfections" in the code.

Preceding the following stretch of talk, the participants have been talking about travelling to Taiwan and the different types of transportation available in the country. Mei and Peter have been active in this discussion, whereas Eva and Julie have partly had their own quiet talk together. When Mei mentions the high-speed rail, which takes you easily from north to south in Taiwan and is very cheap, Eva appears to start thinking something. She produces a sound stretch *eeh*, glances upwards and leans to her hands as if trying to remember something. The extract below is what follows.

(10)   Data set 2: fast train
```
1     Eva     *my parents >told me that< [there's a (.) a fast tra↑in]
                *LIFTS HER HEAD UP
2     Mei                                 *[(ticket) ↑ye(h)a(h)h      ]
                                           *GESTURES UP AND DOWN WITH HER RIGHT HAND
3     Peter   [in Finland (is not)]
4     Mei     [hhh                ]
5     Eva     [*Helsinki          ] St. Petersburg. (0.6)
                *TURNS TO LOOK AT JULIE
6             it takes *ee::
                           *JULIE NODS
7             three hours or less (0.7)
8             *there's a fast train.
                *TURNS TO LOOK AT PETER
9             °fast *train°
                     *TURNS HER GAZE AT MEI
10    Peter   is there
11    Eva     <Hel*sinki> St. Petersburg (xx)
                   *NODS GENTLY AND LOOKS AT PETER
12    Peter   [uh↑huh]
13    Eva     [it      ] takes less than three hours.
14    Peter   ok
15    Mei     yeah (half-)
16    Peter   so it's less than (.) Helsin↑ki us
17    Mei     [(ye::) (xx)    ]
18    Eva     [yeah exactly]
```

As can be seen in the transcript, Eva lifts hear head up and initiates a new topic on trains operating between Helsinki and St. Petersburg (lines 1, 5). This comment

partly overlaps with Peter and Mei still talking about the previous topic (lines 2-4). Thus, although Eva appears to direct her comment first to all participants, in line 5 she turns to look at Julie, who is clearly listening as indicated by her looking at Eva and nodding in line 6. Eva's comment on the duration of the trip in lines 6 and 7 is followed by a 0.7-second pause, after which Eva repeats her original utterance *there's a fast train*, this time looking at Peter (line 8). This comment is followed by yet another, though very silent, repetition of *fast train* (line 9) and Eva turning her gaze at Mei. The repetition itself is likely due to the overlapping comments earlier. In other words, to define what she is talking about, now when also Mei and Peter pay attention, Eva repeats the content word of her utterance. Eva's word choice is worth closer inspection as the lexical item 'fast train' does not completely conform to standard English norms, although it is here used successfully. On the one hand, it could be interpreted that Eva is merely defining the noun 'train' with the adjective attribute 'fast'. On the other hand, it could be argued that Eva has made up a new compound, which likely carries the meaning of an 'express train'. In other words, though the word 'fast train' is not an entirely idiomatic one, it is very illustrative and close enough to be understood. Interestingly, Eva does not orient herself to this term as incomplete nor to using it as somehow problematic but, instead, treats it as if it was an established term. Only the short micropause before uttering the term the first time in line 1 and changing the pronunciation from [fæːst treɪn] to [faːst treɪn] on the third (and very silent) repetition in line 9 could in a way signal small hesitation and uncertainty about using this term.

The negotiation on 'fast train' continues now when all participants are involved. Peter takes part in the discussion in line 10 by uttering *is there*, emphasizing the verb. As a response to Peter's enquiry, Eva nods gently and, looking at Peter, repeats the cities between which the train is operating (line 11). Peter's sign of comprehension *uhhuh* in line 12 overlaps with the beginning of Eva's next turn in line 13, in which she repeats the duration of the trip. This comment gives more meaning to the used noun 'fast train', especially to the somewhat relative adjective

'fast', as it provides information about the (short) duration of the train ride and, thus, gives a good reason to use such a term. Both Peter and Mei show approval of Eva's comment (lines 14-15). The discussion gets concluded by Peter commenting in line 16 that the train ride from Helsinki to St. Petersburg lasts a shorter time than the one from Helsinki to Jyväskylä, where the participants are studying, and Mei and Eva agreeing with him (lines 17-18). After this the discussion goes back to Taiwan. All in all, this example illustrates very subtle negotiations and orientation on the participants' part towards meaning-making as the term 'fast train' becomes further negotiated on a turn-by-turn basis. Furthermore, the example shows how a close enough term can easily replace a standard English term, without it causing trouble for understanding. The participants do not orient themselves to 'fast train' as problematic and they do not as much as start searching for the standard term.

A similar strategy is employed also in example (11), in which the participants use somehow related or descriptive terminology when talking about airplanes and flying. Hence, the words used in the conversation do not need to be precisely the correct ones if they are close enough to carry the intended meaning. What is more, the example illustrates that the context is in a significant role in understanding the meaning of creatively used words. To put it differently, the wider context reveals what the conversation is about and certain words can be understood only in this context, meaning that they do not carry the same meaning or might even be impossible to understand in isolation. Before the discussion below, Ilse has told a story about a friend of hers who has recently taken a flight with an airplane seating only twenty passengers. Lina has found this cool, which has made Ilse comment that it is bad if there is a storm. The differing opinions on small airplanes become evident also in the following stretch of talk.

(11)   Data set 1: small plane
```
1      Lina    yeah but (.) where- (.) whe[re was he flying] to::
2      Ilse                               [twenty        ]     ((uttered in a whispering voice))
3              >Helsinki<
4      Lina    Helsinki so not so far away.
5      Ilse    no b[ut-    ]
```

6	Lina	[(now)]
7	Ilse	-there was only this small flight
8		(1.5)
9	Anne	mh-[mh]
10	Lina	[oh] cool
11	Ilse	u↑hu (1.0)
12		I am glad when I have a proper plane
13	Lina	*ok
		*NODS GENTLY
14	Anne	[mh-mh-mh]
15	Marta	[hhhh] ((silent laughter))
16	Lina	and I fly with the * (0.5) °not propel (but) (xx)°
		*GESTURES WITH HER LEFT HAND, LOOKS DOWN AND AT ILSE IN TURNS
17	Anne	°yeah°
18	Ilse	yeah (.) me neither

As seen above, Lina enquires in line 1 where Ilse's friend was flying to. Overlapping part of Lina's question, Ilse repeats the word *twenty* in a whispering tone, in a way emphasizing the extraordinariness of the incident and the small size of the plane (line 2). Despite the little overlap, Ilse hears Lina's question and is able to give a response to it right away (line 3). After hearing the response Lina repeats the destination *Helsinki* and adds a comment that it is not that far (from Riga) (line 4). In other words, Lina supports her own point of view that small airplanes cannot be that bad, especially if one flies such a short distance. Ilse's following turn is an interesting one. Ilse starts off in line 5 with *no but*, which suggests that she does not agree with Lina and is about to make a further comment to support her original point of view. After this, in line 7 she utters *there was only this small flight*, which is followed by a 1.5-second pause (line 8). With this comment Ilse is likely referring to the small size of the plane and, yet once again, stressing her own opinion. Taking the context into account, it seems unlikely that Ilse intends to utter 'short flight' as it would change her viewpoint and support Lina's view that the flight from Riga to Helsinki truly is only a short one. Interestingly, the distinction between 'plane' or 'airplane', which are generally used about aircrafts, and 'flight', which refers to the process of an object moving through the air, appears irrelevant here. Hence, Ilse uses the words creatively and interchangeably in this specific context without this causing apparent confusion or trouble for understanding. After all, instead of initiating repair, Lina comments once again on

small airplanes being cool (line 10) and Anne reacts with silent laughter (line 9). It is not possible to say what makes Ilse choose the word 'flight' instead of 'plane' or 'airplane'. Having a lexical gap in her vocabulary is hardly the reason as she herself has used both words earlier in the discussion. Nevertheless, 'flight' appears to work as well in this context.

Discussion on airplanes and co-construction of meanings continue for a while more. In greater detail, Ilse shows that she has not changed her mind about small airplanes by concluding in line 12 that she is glad when she has *a proper plane*. Though not very specific in its meaning, in this context this utterance could be interpreted to refer to an airplane seating more than twenty passengers, an airplane of decent size. The participants appear to understand this utterance as none of them initiates repair or seems to be in need of more clarification. As seen in lines 13-15, Lina signals acceptance with *ok* and by nodding gently, whereas Marta and Anne laugh silently. This example shows very clearly that the context, in which a certain term is used, truly has a major role in giving meaning to the lexical item. For instance, the meaning of 'proper plane' and what the word is used to refer to would be hard to understand out of context.

Lina's comment that follows is also an interesting one and again exemplifies ELF speakers' ability to be creative with their language use. Lina begins in line 16 by uttering *and I fly with the* but makes an abrupt half-a-second pause, after which she finishes her sentence with silently mumbling what sounds like *not propel (but) (xx)*, rest of which remains inaudible. I base my analysis on what I as an analyst hear, that is, on the assumption that these are the words Lina uses. While making this comment, Lina gestures with her left hand and shifts her gaze from the table to Ilse and back to the table. The 0.5-second pause, dropping her voice to murmuring and non-verbal gestures suggest that Lina is not very confident with what she is saying. Nevertheless, she appears to make her point clear and intelligible as both Ilse and Anne show agreement with *yeah* (lines 17-18), Ilse even uttering *me neither*

after a micropause (line 18). Though somewhat speculative, it could be argued that with her comment in line 16 Lina is referring to bigger or, in Ilse's words, *proper* airplanes. After all, the word 'propel', which Lina uses and which in fact carries the meaning of 'actuate', closely resembles the word 'propeller', which can be found in engines. As mentioned earlier, naming or defining things as not-something functions at times as a handy way to make up new terms among the interlocutors in my data. Combining 'propel' with the negative 'not' could, thus, mean airplanes of decent size in contrast to light aircrafts. Moreover, Lina's *not propel* could be seen as a response to Ilse using the term *a proper plane* in line 12 in a sense that the former further defines and even confirms the latter. Hence, Lina's comment suggests that the speakers have accomplished shared understanding. Furthermore, this interpretation would imply that, despite some differing views on small airplanes expressed earlier, also Lina favours bigger planes. Once again, being familiar with the surrounding talk is crucial in order to make any interpretations of the uttered words. Most importantly, however, though Lina's word choice is far from idiomatic according to the conventions of standard English, the lexical item she uses is close and illustrative enough to carry the intended meaning. No repair is initiated due to non-understanding and no search for the standard term is carried out due to unconventional language use. Intelligibility and shared understanding appear to be accomplished through creative ways of making meaning in this context.

The two examples above have illustrated how the ELF speakers in my data employ creativity with their language use and how unconventional, close enough or somehow illustrative terms can successfully function in co-constructing meaning in ELF talk. Similar types of examples are discussed also in the next section. However, in the following the creatively used terms are reproduced by another speaker and, this way, become shared and common in the discussion.

4.3.2 Making the innovative term common

At times the speakers make the innovative term common and established in the specific speech event. This means that another speaker adopts the term used creatively and uses it him/herself. Hence, a word with its new meaning is accepted and understood as such and no repair or correction is done. As Hülmbauer (2009: 334) puts it, meanings emerging from ELF creativity become designed and negotiated according to the participants' needs in the conversation. Examples (12) and (13) illustrate situations in which a word close enough in its form and/or meaning fills in for the "correct" word without causing problems for understanding. Further, the innovative terms become commonly used.

Example (12) deals with co-constructing the meaning of the used lexical item 'imagination'. The participants are discussing Finnish saunas and their personal experiences and feelings about going there. Preceding the following extract, Anne has told that she had been to Finland for several months before she went to sauna the first time. This comment makes Lina curious.

(12)   Data set 1: imagination
```
1     Lina    so what was the problem you didn't want to go there naked you didn't want (.)
2             to feel (.) hot or what.
3     Anne    yeah I was one time at a sauna when I was (0.3) quite young (th-)eleven or
4             something
5     Lina    °mhm°
6     Anne    and this: *imagination this small room a lot of people really hot everyone's
                        *STARTS USING HAND GESTURES TO ILLUSTRATE HER STORY
7             naked °>this was a<° quite horrible (0.3) imagination for ↑me .hh because like (0.6)
8             small rooms and (.) many people not >s-eh-I have no problem with the small
9             ↑room but< with many people and small rooms. .hh and then (0.6) naked don't (.)
10            has to be it's not that I do[n't-]
11    Ilse                              [it  ] doesn't improve the im(h)agi(h)na(h)tion(h)
12    Anne    yeah and I it's not that (0.4) yeah ok I don't want to be naked but it's even worse
13            to see other* people na(h)ked(h) .hhh
                          *LIFTS HER HANDS UP
14            like (.) I'm real[ly          ]
15    Ilse                     [tha(h)nk(h)] you(h)       ((laughter))
16    Anne    no(h) (xx)
17            ((laughter and overlapping comments))
```

As can be seen in lines 1 and 2, Lina makes Anne a direct question and even elaborates her enquiry by listing possible reasons Anne might have had for not going to sauna. Anne begins her answer to Lina's enquiry in a story-format in line 3 by mentioning *one time at a sauna* when she was *quite young*, thus taking the listeners back in time to a specific incident in her childhood. Soon after Anne has started telling her story, Lina produces silently a minimal response *mhm* (line 5), which could be analysed to signal listening and also encouragement for Anne to keep going. After all, a memory from one's childhood proposes a multi-unit turn, meaning that Anne likely needs to hold the turn for a while to finish her story. This is what happens as Anne produces a long turn (lines 6-10) in which she specifies some reasons for not being so eager to go to sauna.

The long turn starts in line 6 with Anne uttering *and this: imagination*, followed by a list of the things that made her feel uncomfortable: a small room, a lot of people, really hot and everyone is naked. At this point Anne also starts using hand gestures to illustrate her story. Anne sums up this list in line 7 with an elaborated repetition of what she started with, that is *quite horrible imagination for me*. Worth pointing out in this part is Anne's way to use the word 'imagination'. In other words, Anne appears to use this already existing English term to refer to something else than it traditionally refers to, such as one's ability to form ideas and pictures in one's mind. After all, Anne is talking about a real thing that happened to her and is now attempting to share this experience with the hearers. It could be argued that Anne attempts to create a picture or an 'image' of the incident for the hearers to 'imagine', words that closely resemble 'imagination'. On the one hand, the beginning of hand gestures in parallel with uttering *imagination* the first time (line 6) and the 0.3-second pause just prior to uttering *imagination* the second time (line 7) could be analysed as marking the lexical items or indicating some uncertainty. On the other hand, Anne appears pleased with this word as she uses the lexical item twice and even relatively fluently. Apparently this creative word choice makes sense for the listeners as none of them initiates repair. Then again,

this is not the key word in Anne's turn so hearers could easily let it pass, even if they did not get the full meaning of it, and focus on the actual story.

Anne continues clarifying her point by mentioning that it is specifically small rooms with a lot of people that are the most troublesome for her (lines 8-9). She also mentions the fact of being naked (lines 9-10) but does not have time to fully formulate her idea into words until Ilse interrupts with saying *it doesn't improve the imagination* and producing laughing sounds (line 11). As this comment shows, Ilse also employs the word 'imagination' though once again the word 'image' would be a more suitable choice. However, instead of correcting Anne's word choice, Ilse herself uses the very same word creatively in a similar way to Anne. Thus, the new meaning of 'imagination' has become known-in-common in this context and used as such by the participants. After Ilse's comment Anne finishes her answer in lines 12-13 by concluding that she does not like to see other people naked, emphasizing the comment by lifting her hands up. Anne's utterance makes Ilse thank her and laugh (line 15) – Ilse being the one with whom Anne usually goes to sauna. All in all, this example illustrates nicely how the interlocutors use the English language creatively and co-construct meaning for words in the unfolding talk. In this case, the word 'imagination' gets its new and unconventional meaning, which becomes accepted and established as such in this context.

The following example (13) provides possibly even a better illustration of ELF speakers' creativity and making the innovative common. Similarly to the previous example, in this extract the participants give a new meaning to already existing English words without this causing trouble for understanding. The meaning becomes co-constructed in the ongoing talk without the participants actually discussing the term itself. What makes this example specifically interesting is that the words used creatively carry traditionally a whole different meaning. The matter discussed in this example is the Finnish mulled wine 'glögi'. Preceding the following discussion Ilse has told that she has bought wine-like white glögi in the

Alko (the liquor store in Finland) and that this glögi is really good. Ilse's comment is followed by a short pause, after which Marta utters her comment seen first in the extract.

(13)   **Data set 1: chemistry**
1   Marta   ºbut it's there so *much chemistry insideº
                           *GESTURES WITH HER RIGHT HAND AS IF PUTTING 'IN' SOMETHING
2   Ilse   yeah (.) I think=
3   Marta   [ºmmº]
4   Ilse   [=every] (.) where* (.) in Finland is much chemistry in↑side
                           *PICKS UP A JUICE CARTON FROM THE TABLE AND HAS A LOOK AT THE
                           LIST OF INGREDIENTS WHILE TALKING
5   Lina   mhm
6   Ilse   mh↑m   ((laughter))
7   Marta   º(but) it's so strangeº
8   like if you drink wi↑ne *(.) you know it's natural (0.8)
                           *KEEPS USING HAND GESTURES
9   Lina   [(ºyeahº)]
10   Marta   [but   ] if you drink glögi you (.) drink *jus::t (.)
                           *LINA NODS AND LOOKS AT MARTA
11   pure chemi(h)cal(h) [(things)   ]

Creativity with language use becomes apparent in Marta's first turn in line 1, during which she gestures with her hand in the air as if to illustrate putting in something. Marta hardly utters the word *chemistry* in her turn to refer to the science of matter, which is the meaning the word traditionally carries. Instead, in this context it refers to something *inside* glögi, that is, something that glögi contains. Clarification is not requested, however, and at least Ilse seems to understand precisely what Marta means. As seen in the following turn, Ilse links her comment to Marta's previous utterance and uses herself the word 'chemistry'. More specifically, with *yeah* (line 2) Ilse accepts Marta's viewpoint and confirms Marta's notion by presenting her own point of view with *I think everywhere in Finland is much chemistry inside* (lines 2, 4), making short pauses here and there. During her turn Ilse picks up the juice carton from the table and has a look at the list of ingredients. She confirms her point in line 6 with *mhm* and laughter. Marta's silent *mm* in line 3 and Lina's *mhm* in line 5 suggest involvement in the speech event but both let Ilse finish her utterance. Based on the details of the talk and non-verbal actions, it could be argued that in this context the word 'chemistry'

is in fact used to refer to 'preservatives'. Thus, Marta's first comment could be interpreted to mean that glögi contains a lot of preservatives whereas Ilse's comment expands this notion to concern many food supplies in Finland, such as the juice served at that lunch.

This creative term gets slightly modified in Marta's following comment on wine being natural and glögi full of *chemical (things)* (lines 7-8, 10-11). Again, Marta gestures with her hands. The context considered, it looks like also 'chemical (things)' is used to refer to 'preservatives'. The other participants appear to follow and understand Marta's points, indicated by Lina's silent *yeah* in line 9 and her nodding approvingly at the comment on glögi and looking at Marta. Later, also Ilse nods to accept Marta's point and even expands the discussion to ciders, which are also known to contain a lot of preservatives. In this extract the ELF speakers clearly take the freedom to use the English language creatively and appear skilful in making sense of each other's creative language use. The physical presence of the juice carton on the table also seems to play a role in establishing mutual understanding. Furthermore, it could be argued that the speakers benefit from shared non-nativeness once again, or from transfer phenomena more specifically. In other words, it would be possible to use the phrase 'viele Chemie drinnen' in German, which translates directly into 'a lot of chemistry inside', which is used in this extract to refer to 'containing a lot of preservatives'. This might have an influence on Ilse, a speaker of German, understanding Marta's utterance. Altogether, this example exemplifies well how ELF speakers can employ creative ways of making meaning. Hence, seemingly unconventional words, such as 'chemistry' and 'chemicals' instead of 'preservatives', can be intelligible and become common and established in a specific conversation and particular context.

This section has illustrated how the ELF speakers in my data use already established English words in creative meanings without it causing trouble for understanding. It has also shown that such creative terms can become common in

the conversation through another speaker adopting and using the very same lexical items. Moreover, the important role of context has been pointed out. In the final section I will discuss yet one more way of creatively making meaning in ELF talk, that of explaining terms in other words.

4.3.3 Putting it in other words

The last two examples in my analysis exemplify the role of paraphrasing in working towards intelligibility and shared understanding. Paraphrasing or explaining a lexical item in other words is a valuable linguistic resource and an efficient strategy to negotiate and co-construct meaning, for instance, when the speaker has a lexical gap in his/her vocabulary. To put it differently, the speaker can explain a lexical item in other words in case s/he does not know or remember the exact or established term s/he wants to utter. This can be seen happening in example (14), in which the participants talk about the things they need to take with them to Lapland, in this part specifically about the bed linen. As the example shows, the participants do not actually use the word 'linen' but utilize paraphrasing and examples to convey the intended meaning.

(14)   Data set 1: bed linen
1	Ilse	*and as I've writt↑en (0.6)
		*TURNS TO LOOK AT MARTA
2		u::hm you:: you have to take you::r (.) like [sheets]
3	Marta	[°pillow°]
4		*°m[m°]
		*NODS
5	Ilse	[and]
6		<u>nuh</u> *pillow they will have.
		*TURNS TO LOOK AT ANNE
7	Anne	yeah >pillow and the *inside you only have to< take [(xx)]
		*GESTURES WITH HER HANDS AS IF TO COVER OR WRAP SOMETHING
8	Ilse	[take] the sheets or
9		[(xxx)]
10	Lina	[(xxx)] they have sleeping bags
…		((talk continues))
22	Marta	↑<u>no</u> but I can take *the sheet for the pillow and then °I don't care about the other
		*GESTURES IN THE AIR WITH HER RIGHT HAND
23		[(xx)°]
24	Ilse	[yeah]

To begin with, Ilse turns to look at Marta, refers to her earlier message and makes a 0.6-second pause (line 1). As seen in line 2, Ilse seems to be memorizing what she has written and/or attempting to find the needed words to list the things that need to be packed for the trip. This search for words is signalled by the hesitation sound *uhm*, repetition of *you* as well as the word *your*, all uttered with some sound stretch (line 2). After a micropause at the end of her turn, Ilse utters the actual content words *like sheets*. Using the word 'like' before 'sheets' suggests that this might not be the actual word Ilse was after but exemplifies or defines what is needed for the trip. Marta appears to interpret Ilse's hesitation and gaze at her as a request for help as she offers the word *pillow* (line 3), which overlaps with Ilse's *sheets* (line 2). Also Marta's quiet *mm*-sound and nods in line 4 suggest that she is doing active interactional work to understand Ilse's message and co-construct meaning. The overlap in lines 2 and 3 does not hinder Ilse from hearing Marta's word offer as she is able to comment that pillows are not needed (line 6). The pronoun 'they' in this context seems to refer to the cottage, in which the participants are going to stay overnight during their trip. Although uttered with a lowering intonation, Ilse turning her gaze towards Anne suggests that with *nuh pillow they will have* she is, in fact, asking for confirmation or backup from Anne. This is indeed how Anne orients herself to Ilse's turn.

More specifically, in her turn in line 7 Anne confirms Ilse's utterance with *yeah* and provides some further information, first repeating the word *pillow* and then adding *and the inside*. The latter part of this utterance is quite ambiguous as the word 'inside' does not have a clear meaning or reference here. Though only speculative, with 'inside' Anne could mean 'duvet' or the like as the word is used together with the word 'pillow' and is the thing inside a blanket cover. However, this term passes without anyone paying special attention to it or initiating repair and Anne continues by repeating what Ilse has already said, that is *you only have to take (xx)* (line 7). Anne does not get a chance to finish her sentence as Ilse takes the turn. Then again, possibly Anne does not even have the needed words on mind as in

parallel with uttering the word *inside* in line 7 she begins to gesture vividly with her hands as if to illustrate covering or wrapping something. This non-verbal behaviour supports the interpretation that there will be pillows and blankets at the cottage but bed linen needs to be packed. In her overlapping comment in lines 8 and 9, Ilse utters the imperative *take the sheets or (xxx)*, which again informs that sheets are needed. This comment could also function as yet another word search for what else has to packed but which remains undefined, or at least inaudible for the analyst. Thus, this utterance does not really provide any further information.

This stretch of talk is followed by a short discussion on sleeping bags, which Lina introduces in line 10, and Ilse's suggestion that she could borrow Marta her sleeping bag, although it is very thin (this part omitted in the transcript). About half a minute later, the discussion goes back to bed linen. Marta's turn in line 22 is an interesting one and worth having a closer look at. Marta first mentions that she can take *the sheet for the pillow*, which is accompanied with gestures in the air with her right hand. She continues that she does not mind about the other things, possibly referring to the not so good quality of the sleeping bag or bed linen for the duvet. Hence, Marta employs the strategy of paraphrasing in order to convey the meaning of what she is going to pack with her. In this case the paraphrase can easily be interpreted to mean a 'pillow case'. After all, a pillow case is a sheet-like cover used for the pillow and generally needed together with sheets. As the participants have already been talking about sheets and pillows, in addition to sleeping bags, using such a paraphrase is very illustrative and understandable in this context. It seems that paraphrasing is a workable and familiar interactional strategy for both the speaker and the listeners. As can be seen in the transcript (line 22), paraphrasing happens very smoothly and without any hesitation from Marta's part. Moreover, the paraphrase appears to make complete sense for the listeners as no repair is initiated and Ilse indicates agreement in line 24 with *yeah*. All in all, being able to explain things differently is a valuable tool when co-constructing meaning and shared understanding.

Example (15) pulls together different ways to negotiate and co-construct meaning. Similarly to the previous example, the participants describe things in their own words and, thus, employ paraphrasing. Moreover, the interlocutors use repetition frequently as a confirmation check and as a reaction to repair, both as such and in a slightly modified form. This links the analysis back to utilizing repair, which was discussed in the first part of the analysis. I want to discuss this extract as the last example in my analysis as it illustrates nicely that there can be a lot of negotiation within a short period of time, be it in the form of repair or creative language use. Moreover, such negotiation does not disrupt the flow of the conversation but, instead, the participants manage to come to shared understanding and discuss the topic at hand. Preceding the extract below, the participants have been talking about sweet food. Eva's remark that she likes Mon Chéri, the Italian chocolate confectionary, eventually leads to the following discussion.

(15)   **Data set 2: Mon Chéri**
1	Julie	*it's not <u>good</u>
		*LOOKS DIRECTLY AT EVA
2	Eva	it's REALLY [good]
3	Peter	[Mon Chéri]
4	Eva	Mon* Chéri.
		*LOOKS AT PETER AND LEANS HER HEAD A LITTLE TO THE LEFT
5		[no?]
6	Peter	[I don't] like it either.
7	Mei	it has a *<u>cherry</u>
		*LIFTS HER RIGHT HAND UP
8	Eva	*-in-side
		*LOOKS DIRECTLY AT MEI AND NODS
9	Mei	[and (the)*]
		*POINTS THE AIR WITH HER RIGHT HAND INDEX FINGER
10	Eva	[and some] liquor
11	Mei	*[↑↓u::hh]
		*TURNS BACK TO HER PLATE, "ROCKING" A LITTLE
12	Peter	[yeah]
13		I don't like (this) chocolate with (.) some liquor °inside°.
14		(2.0) EVA LOOKS AT PETER WITH A PITIFUL SMILE ON HER FACE AND SMACKS HER LIPS
15	Peter	°do you like it° ((question directed to Julie))
16		(1.0) JULIE SHAKES HER HEAD A LITTLE
17	Julie	*mm?
		*TURNS TO LOOK AT PETER
18		(1.2)
19	Peter	do you like (this) chocolate with liquor inside.
20	Julie	no I don't like (it).
21	Eva	it depends on the chocolate I-I like the Mon Chéri >very much<

In line 1 Julie makes a comment that in her opinion it, referring to the already discussed chocolate Mon Chéri, is not good, stressing the adjective and looking directly at Eva. Eva's taste differs completely, which has become evident already in the preceding discussion but which she points out once more in line 2. At this point (line 3) Peter takes part in the conversation by uttering *Mon Chéri*, which overlaps the end of Eva's turn. Unfortunately Peter sits behind Julie so his gaze or facial expressions cannot be seen. However, as he utters *Mon Chéri* with a neutral tone of voice and with a slightly lowering intonation, this repetition could be interpreted as a confirmation check; that is, Peter wants to ascertain that he knows what is being talked about. By repeating *Mon Chéri* with a clearly lowering intonation (line 4), looking at Peter and leaning her head a little to the left, Eva approves Peter's supposed confirmation check. Through yet another repetition of the name of the chocolate, instead of approving Peter's utterance with 'yeah' or 'yes' or the like, the negotiation of meaning in a way continues. In other words, Eva confirms that it is specifically 'Mon Chéri' that they are talking about and, thus, this particular lexical item gets an even stronger and more established status in this specific context. As soon as this brief negotiation and confirmation is over, Peter is able to say his opinion of the chocolate (line 6), which overlaps Eva's interrogatory *no?* (line 5), which is probably uttered to enquire Peter's taste.

Interestingly, making meaning to 'Mon Chéri' continues still. In line 7 Mei mentions that this particular chocolate confectionary contains a cherry, emphasizing the noun and lifting her right hand up as if she was holding something. By uttering the word *inside*, nodding and looking directly at Mei (line 8), Eva offers Mei help to finish the sentence. As the following overlapping turns suggest, both Mei and Eva continue to define the chocolate: Mei utters *and the* and points the air with her right hand index finger (line 9), possibly in her attempt to define what else this chocolate contains, and Eva mentions that the chocolate contains also liquor (line 10). Eva's definition makes Mei utter *u::hh* (line 11) in the way she just realized something, that is the pitch first rising and then lowering,

and turn back to her plate in order to continue eating, "rocking" a little on her seat. Based on these small details in the talk, it could be said that Mei's descriptions of the chocolate are actually some kind of confirmation checks concerning what 'Mon Chéri' is. Eva, then, takes actively part in the co-construction of meaning by offering her definitions. After this collaborative negotiation Mei appears to be more certain of what kind of chocolate 'Mon Chéri' is. Also Peter acknowledges the negotiation in line 12 and indicates his understanding by approving *yeah*.

The negotiation of 'Mon Chéri' can be seen also in the final part of the extract. Peter elaborates his previous comment on disliking 'Mon Chéri' in line 13 by mentioning that he does not like liquor filled chocolates. To express this opinion Peter uses the paraphrase *chocolate with some liquor inside*. He utilizes the earlier mentioned words 'liquor' and 'inside', which likely makes the comment very illustrative and easy to understand. Eva appears to understand the content of Peter's utterance, but not his opinion, as she looks at him with a pitiful smile on her face and smacks her lips, as if feeling sorry for him (line 14). After the two-second pause, Peter utters quietly *do you like it* (line 15), directing her question to Julie. This utterance is apparently meant to request Julie's opinion on the matter. At this point there is a 1.0-second pause in speech during which Julie shakes her head a little (line 16). However, soon after Julie initiates repair with *mm?* and turns to look at Peter (line 17). This incomprehension signal and repair initiator is somewhat vague and unfocused because it does not clearly point out what part of Peter's question Julie has not heard or understood. In Mauranen's (2006) terms, Julie employs indirect signalling of misunderstanding, categorized as an 'open' class repair initiator by Drew (1997). Then again, Julie possibly is not oriented to answering such a question in the first place as she has earlier in the discussion already emphasized somewhat strongly that she does not like 'Mon Chéri'. Consequently, Peter's question might seem surprising for her (see Drew 1997). Nevertheless, after a 1.2-second pause (line 18), Peter repeats his previous question slightly modified in line 19: he replaces the deictic pronoun 'it' with the paraphrase

chocolate with liquor inside used in his previous turn and, thus, employs paraphrasing again. It can well be that Peter wants to know Julie's opinion on liquor filled chocolates in general, not only on 'Mon Chéri', and also involve her in the discussion. Whatever the motives are, after hearing the question again, Julie is able to reply with another negative answer (line 20). Even though not directly asked, Eva also comments on Peter's question in line 21, mentioning once again her fondness for 'Mon Chéri'. Thus, the discussion on chocolate continues. Altogether, as this example illustrates, even such a short extract of talk can include a lot of negotiation of meaning at many levels and in many forms. Negotiation is almost routine-like and the talk proceeds all the time.

In this chapter I have analysed my data in three parts. In section 4.1 I gave an analytical overview of my data by describing the nature of the speech events and the ELF speakers' language use. More detailed analysis of my data was in two parts, presented in sections 4.2 and 4.3. The former dealt with negotiating and co-constructing meaning through repair whereas the latter covered creative ways of making meaning. All in all, my analysis has exemplified how intelligibility and shared understanding are accomplished through the turn-by-turn construction of talk and what kind of interactional work the ELF speakers do. Next I will further discuss my findings and make some comparisons to earlier research.

5 DISCUSSION

As my analysis shows, the ELF speakers in my data do active interactional work and use language in a skilful way in an attempt to achieve and secure intelligibility and shared understanding. In other words, the speakers utilize repair to settle instances of non-understanding, that is, to negotiate and co-construct meaning of unclear lexical items. The speakers are also flexible language users who employ creativity in making meaning and reaching shared understanding. In this chapter I will pull together my findings and discuss them in relation to earlier research, primarily to those studies presented in section 2.5, under three main themes that have emerged in the analysis: repair as skilled interactional management, embracing creative language use and the significance of context. The discussion is mainly based on the examples analysed in sections 4.2 and 4.3 (12 from data set 1 and 3 from data set 2) although also the analytical overview of my data presented in section 4.1 will be taken into consideration.

5.1 Repair as skilled interactional management

My analysis suggests that the ELF speakers in my data employ repair as skilled interactional management. This implies that repair is used to remedy problems in hearing or understanding, but the participants do not seem to orient themselves to doing repair work as trouble. More specifically, repair sequences appear to be dealt with as a non-harmful or a normal part of the interaction, meaning that, for the most part, the interlocutors request confirmation or clarification concerning unclear lexical items somewhat fluently and effortlessly. Creative language use is not considered problematic, either, if the used lexical items are intelligible enough for a sufficient level of mutual understanding. Hence, compared to Pitzl (2005) and Watterson (2008), whose studies deal with settling non-understandings in ELF talk, or Mauranen (2006), who focuses on looking at signalling and preventing problems of understanding in ELF communication, I have attempted to have a less

problem-oriented focus in my study and to concentrate on analysing the processes of negotiating and co-constructing meaning in talk. Furthermore, whereas Kaur (2009) analyses the use of repetition and paraphrase as ways to pre-empt problems of understanding, I have looked at the same practices in relation to doing repair work and employing creative language use. Although instances of incomplete understanding are in essential role also in my study, I have looked at settling non-understandings and doing repair work as a way to accomplish intelligibility and shared understanding, that is, as skilled interactional management. Next, I will explicate my findings in greater detail.

According to Schegloff et al. (1977), the organization of repair is a mechanism for dealing with trouble in talk, be it in speaking, hearing or understanding. The basic principles of repair, its organization and initiation techniques, as presented by Schegloff et al. (1977), can be found in my ELF data. As my analysis shows, other-initiated repair appears a good strategy to confirm the meaning of a lexical item or request further clarification. Repair seems to be targeted specifically at content words in talk, that is, "key words" that need to be understood in order to participate in the conversation. Whereas in Pitzl's (2005: 67) study trigger utterances often occur in a question, the repair work in my data concerns lexical items in questions as well as in declarative sentences or comments. Then again, there is some resemblance to Mauranen's (2006) and Watterson's (2008) findings of signalling a problem in understanding and responding to it in ELF settings. In other words, similarly to Mauranen's (2006: 133) and Watterson's (2008: 393) findings, repetition or a partial repeat of the trouble-source turn is often used to indicate incomplete understanding of a lexical item. In its simplest form a hearer repeats the unclear item and the speaker either confirms it or repairs it. Such comprehension-oriented repetition that is used to ensure accuracy of understanding and help to achieve mutual understanding has been detected also by Lichtkoppler (2007). As in Watterson's (2008: 391) study, repetition is also used in responses in my data. Furthermore, in accordance with Mauranen's (2006: 132)

findings, problems in understanding and need for clarification are often signalled with a straightforward question, at times together with a partial repeat of the trouble-source turn. My analysis shows that question words typically trigger definition or explanation sequences, in which the meaning of a lexical item is clarified through describing or defining it, giving examples or utilizing the linguistic resources of the interlocutors by drawing upon other languages.

Typically the meaning of (unclear) lexical items becomes instantly negotiated in my data. As Schegloff et al. (1977) argue, the repair actions can supersede other actions in conversation, meaning that repair sequences can replace or defer whatever was due next. In a way doing repair work and carrying out negotiation sequences thus halt the smooth flow of talk for a while, a point shared also by Kaur (2009: 119). Hence, Pitzl's (2005: 69) argument that the way in which the hearers signal their need to negotiate meaning does not disrupt the ongoing interaction is perhaps a bit too ideal. Pitzl's (ibid.) further argument that the speakers responding manage to provide just enough and relevant kind of information, which solves the non-understanding without halting the interaction, sounds also somewhat ideal. However, I do agree with Pitzl's (2005: 69) claim that the ELF speakers react to non-understandings adequately and competently. As seen in the examples analysed, the participants in my data can quickly come to such a level of shared understanding that the discussion can move on. In many instances the repair work takes only a few turns to be completed, although some longer stretches of negotiation occur as well. Such quick and fluent settling of non-understandings implies, for instance, the participants' ability and willingness to utilize repair as interactional management and to do active interactional work in order to bring the conversation back on track. Moreover, it could be argued that the negotiation sequences add depth to the conversation and, in this respect, the talk proceeds all the time.

The view on ELF speakers' active interactional work is shared by many researchers. For instance, Firth (1996) argues that ELF speakers do locally-managed interactional, interpretive and linguistic work to accomplish the normal and ordinary character in talk. Pitzl (2005), then, shows that proficient ELF speakers engage actively and very effectively in the negotiation of meaning. Furthermore, Watterson (2008: 400) points out that if and when problems in understanding surface in talk, speakers utilize various communication strategies in a highly collaborative manner in order to solve them, and Kaur (2009) argues that communication breakdowns are rare due to collaboration and active negotiation. Mauranen (2006) also reports on rare instances of misunderstandings, defined as "a potential breakdown point in conversation, or at least a kind of communicative turbulence" (Mauranen 2006: 128), due to speakers' proactive interactional work. She further notes that speakers actively signal their need to remedy the problem in order to achieve a sufficient level of mutual understanding. My analysis is mostly in accordance with these findings. However, as my study is qualitative in nature and focuses on those instances of incomplete understanding that surface in talk, it is hard to comment on the frequency of non-understandings or on the participants' interactional work to prevent trouble. Nevertheless, worth pointing out is that only few misunderstandings, that is, failures to interpret the message in an intended way, surface in talk in my data, possibly as a result of active negotiation of meaning.

Consequently, Firth's (1996) 'let it pass' principle is rarely employed in my data, or at least it does not often surface in talk (example (7) about polar bears could be seen as an exception). Mauranen (2006: 147) suggests that the 'let it pass' strategy does not necessarily manifest itself in a multi-party discussion and, at least in academic settings, is not possibly even a practicable option. In contrast, Watterson's (2008) analysis of informal ELF talk and participant interviews reveals a common usage of the 'let it pass' strategy and indicates that negotiation of meaning is not automatic. This happens probably because the ELF participants in

Watterson's study do not have an authentic communicative purpose and, thus, somehow troublesome words or topics can be more easily let pass or be even abandoned. Nevertheless, it is worth bearing in mind that in my study there are four speakers in both data sets, which means that it is not necessarily compulsory that each speaker understands everything all the time if there is someone who can take the next turn. In informal speech events there is no clear task-orientation either, which might hide some non-understandings and usage of the 'let it pass' principle. Further, as my analysis is based on the participants' displayed orientations, it is possible that some unclear lexical items are let pass, especially if they are not content words that carry important meanings in the conversation, without this becoming apparent or having an effect on the overall progress of the conversation.

Instances of non-understanding do occur in my data but, as seen in the analysis, they are mostly skilfully settled with repair work. In contrast to Pitzl's (2005) and Mauranen's (2006) studies, in which all non-understandings get solved, the collaborative repair work does not always yield desired results in my data. In other words, some unclear lexical items remain unsolved despite the participants' cooperative efforts to negotiate and co-construct meaning. Yet, the interlocutors do not let such unsolved word forms hinder the talk from proceeding, nor do they drop a topic simply due to difficulties in negotiation of meaning. My analysis suggests that although a suitable lexical item cannot always be found, the interlocutors seem to accomplish a sufficient level of shared understanding of what is being referred to or talked about. In addition, sometimes co-construction of meaning remains incomplete due to an abrupt change of topic in a lively multi-party discussion. This differs from the topic abandonment caused by ongoing mismatches and confusions in Watterson's (2008: 400) study, however. It is worth mentioning that sometimes it is difficult to determine when and to what extent problems in understanding are tied to the meaning of a particular word or an interlocutor's linguistic resources (understanding a word) and when to something

else, such as not hearing a word properly. After all, my data is multi-party talk where a lot is happening in addition to talk.

It seems that sometimes features considered normal in everyday native speaker talk (such as misunderstandings, non-understandings, requests for clarification, negotiation sequences, words 'thing'/'stuff', etc.) are treated by researchers and outsiders as problems in lingua franca interactions, as if they made the talk somehow less successful or less smooth. As my analysis shows, certainly non-understandings happen and clarification is needed but doing repair work and carrying out negotiation sequences do not make the conversations flawed or unsuccessful. Thus, I agree with Pitzl (2005) in that negotiations are not faults but, instead, have important functions and can contribute positively in the interaction. Even if such negotiations might be most prevalent in talk among non-native speakers (see, for instance, Varonis and Gass 1985), covering also ELF interactions, this is likely more due to the fact that speakers of ELF do not share the same native tongue or culture – not simply due to their incompetence. As Kaur (2009) puts it, in ELF settings mutual understanding is not something given but, instead, is jointly worked at in sequential turns. Also Hülmbauer (2009: 325) points out that meanings need to be negotiated in ELF talk as not much can be taken for granted. All in all, the analysed examples from my data show skilled interactional management of non-understandings and organization of repair in negotiating and co-constructing meaning. Furthermore, the ELF speakers in my study seem to have a strong orientation toward securing mutual intelligibility and achieving communicative goals, which is in accordance with Mauranen's (2006) and Kaur's (2009) findings, and employ repair and creativity in order to accomplish it. Importantly, my analysis suggests that the speakers do not orient themselves to such interactional work as a problem. Whereas this section has mostly dealt with repair work, in the following I will take creativity under discussion.

5.2 Embracing creative language use

The above discussed orientation to repair as interactional management rather than trouble goes hand in hand with creative language use. More specifically, the ELF speakers embrace creativity in negotiating and co-constructing meaning, for example, by giving new meanings to already existing English words, making up new words and employing paraphrasing. In the examples analysed, "close enough", unconventional or somehow marked lexical items are accepted and even made common. No repair is initiated if intelligibility and an adequate level of shared understanding can be accomplished within the unfolding talk. Hence, similarly to Hülmbauer (2009), my analysis shows that sometimes "wrong" can be "right" and "incorrect" can be effective in ELF talk. In other words, unconventional and non-standard language use can result in intelligible forms and shared understanding as well as offer alternative and creative ways of making meaning. Though my focus in this study has been on individual lexical items and, even then, on a limited number of examples, the overall analysis of my data suggests that many marked forms, as well as marked pronunciations or grammatical irregularities, are interactionally irrelevant if they can be understood in that specific context. Hence, although certain characteristics of ELF might appear problematic, they are not necessarily seen as problems by the interlocutors themselves as words and norms get their local relevance in the talk.

For the most part, the ELF speakers in my data orient themselves to understanding and taking the conversation further. In relation to creativity, this means that the speakers in my data rarely display awareness of marked or unconventional forms as long as they are intelligible. As Mauranen (2006: 148) points out, orientation to the content allows minor imperfections to pass if intelligibility can be accomplished. If an unconventional form gets highlighted in my study, it seems to happen because the word is simply not intelligible or there is something funny in its usage. Firth's (1996) 'make it normal' principle is, thus, commonly used in my

data. In other words, the interlocutors make others' utterances appear normal and, despite unconventional forms, adopt the position that the talk is understandable (example (7) about polar bears is again an exception). Similar findings have been made by Kaur (2009), who shows in her study that despite disfluencies and ungrammaticalities of different kinds, communication breakdowns are rare as participants compensate their lack of linguistic competence with different kinds of interactional practices to achieve shared understanding. ELF speakers are well capable of utilizing the language in this way and have the ability and competence to arrive at mutual understanding. As Firth (1996: 256) points out, his data shows "the remarkable flexibility and robustness of natural language" and "people's often extraordinary ability to *make* sense *in situ*, as part and parcel of the local demands of talking to one another" (italics in original). The very same things are seen also in my study.

Using words creatively appears to be quite a typical and accepted strategy among the ELF speakers in my study and seems not to be limited to "special" cases only, such as a case where a speaker struggles with finding a suitable lexical item in his/her lexicon. Instead, certain words and paraphrases are used creatively without necessarily marking them in any way, that is, they are treated as if they were established terms. Moreover, in some cases another speaker incorporates the non-standard form into his/her own turn and, as Firth (1996: 246-247) notes, the innovative term becomes known-in-common and used in the talk. A similar strategy has been noticed by Hülmbauer (2009) as well. Furthermore, it could be argued that the participants employ creativity successfully also when settling non-understandings and doing repair work. After all, some of the explanations and definitions that are meant to clarify the trouble-source turn are creative in nature, such as example (9) about running sushi. Once again, creativity is accepted and employed as an effective strategy to make meaning and accomplish shared understanding. Hence, I truly agree with Mauranen's (2006: 124) view, which is shared by many ELF researchers, that even if NNS (or ELF) talk might differ from

NS standards, this does not necessarily hamper the communication. In fact, my findings suggest quite the opposite. Furthermore, being a creative language user could be argued to have a strong influence on the fluency in talk. If ELF speakers did not use or accept creative forms or paraphrasing but strove constantly for standard language use through word-searches, repair sequences and corrections, the talk would possibly be more fragmentary.

There is no one right way to speak a language, especially such a world language as English. Nonetheless, some standards and frames are certainly needed. Anything does not go if one wants to understand and make oneself understood. Moreover, here the concern is on *English* as a lingua franca. Yet, I think ELF speakers should not strive too hard for NS norms or worry about making mistakes in talk, that is, about using "incorrect" language. Thus, I agree with Hülmbauer's (2007: 30) point that neither strict prescription nor an 'anything goes' principle is a desirable option for future guidelines for ELF usage. As my analysis suggests and as Hülmbauer (2009) also argues, lexicogrammatical correctness is not always a prerequisite for communicative effectiveness. On the basis of my own and Hülmbauer's (2009: 342) findings, I argue that using "incorrect" items or language in a creative way does not necessarily imply making mistakes but rather making sense and meaning. I also agree with Mauranen's (2006: 147) view that ELF speakers are not merely language learners striving for perfection in the target language but, rather, language users who can successfully carry out meaningful and even demanding discourse in spite of imperfections in the code. How much creativity can be accepted before intersubjectivity becomes impossible seems hard to define, however. That is why it seems valuable to be also able to solve instances of non-understanding and negotiate meanings with repair work, for instance.

In accordance with many earlier ELF studies, based on my analysis it could be argued that the ability to use communication skills appropriately together with creative and adaptive language use are more important in accomplishing shared

understanding than concentration on fully correct language use. Consequently, I think that ELF speakers could be encouraged to utilize their linguistic resources more effectively and to use the English language to fit their needs, even if this meant bending conventional rules and standards. As Hülmbauer (2009: 342-343) concludes, what suits the interlocutors' purposes can be just right, regardless of traditional NS correctness criteria. This could be born in mind also in Finland, where the great majority of people study and use English at least to some extent (see Leppänen et al. 2009). A bit lesser dependency on adherence to NS normativity criteria and embracing creativity instead would possibly bring out more of the potential and linguistic capital that people possess.

To sum up, in my analysis I have explicated in great detail how the ELF speakers in my data employ creativity as a way to co-construct meaning and accomplish shared understanding. It appears that in informal conversations among friends creative language use in its many forms is utilized skilfully and embraced as a functional and effective way to make meaning and work towards intelligibility. To a great extent my findings come close to those by Hülmbauer (2009), but as the examples analysed in-depth in my study surfaced from the data, I have categorized my examples somewhat differently and not dealt with all the same categories presented by Hülmbauer. Within the scope of this study the latter would not even have been possible. There is yet one more matter that helps speakers make meaning in conversation and that surfaced in my analysis, namely context. This will be discussed next, in the final section of my discussion.

5.3 The significance of context

The context has a significant role in accomplishing intelligibility and shared understanding. This argument is hardly limited to ELF talk only but, as my analysis suggests, seems to be especially relevant in ELF settings where the

speakers do not share the same linguistic and cultural backgrounds. Hülmbauer (2009: 327) also reminds that many kinds of contextual elements have an impact on conversation and function as additional resources. After all, spoken interaction does not happen in a vacuum (ibid.). The interlocutors in my study can rely, for instance, on the surrounding talk and the physical environment, and their shared status as ELF speakers and experiences as international students. In addition, the frame of informal lunch/dinner conversation among friends appears to help when negotiating and co-constructing meaning through repair and creative language use. I will briefly discuss these in the following.

The surrounding talk, that is, the sequence of actions which a certain utterance is a part of, helps in making meaning and accomplishing intelligibility. For instance, when using lexical items with creative meanings, a lot can be inferred from the context in which the unconventional forms are used. When the topic under discussion is known for the participants, even opaque and anomalous forms can make sense – even if they might be impossible to understand out of context or in another conversation at another time. According to Hülmbauer (2009: 334), forms emerging from ELF speakers' creativity "seem to represent in-group resources not supposed to make sense to outsiders". This is possibly particularly relevant when the speakers know each other and communicate together frequently. Vice versa, in some cases introducing a new topic or concept without any prefatory marking or producing a somehow surprising or unexpected comment is followed by an initiation of repair (see also Drew 1997) as the hearers cannot deduce the meaning of used lexical items from earlier context. The surrounding physical environment and objects at hand are also of great help when negotiating and co-constructing meaning, as Hülmbauer (2009: 340) also mentions. The physical presence of the juice carton in example (13) in my analysis, for instance, illustrates what is meant with the creatively used terms *chemistry* and *chemicals* – at least from the analyst's point of view. In addition, embodiment and non-verbal behavior could be said to contribute to the physical context. Based on the transcribed non-verbal activities

and observations I have made, especially gaze, facial expressions and hand gestures appear to support attempts to accomplish shared understanding. Yet, this is quite a general comment and should be treated with caution as non-verbal behavior was not the main focus in my study and, thus, not examined systematically.

House (2002: 259) defines the group of ELF speakers as "a consortium that is always constituted anew in any ongoing talk". This implies that in ELF settings the speaker group has its own rules in that specific situation and each time the make-up of the group, setting or context change, rules need to be created or negotiated anew. House's claim sounds reasonable as ELF interactions appear somewhat extraordinary and dependent on the particular speaker constellation and setting. However, it is also worth bearing in mind that in my data at least some of the participants know each other and might not need to start everything from scratch. Furthermore, as Hülmbauer (2009: 324, 328) argues, despite the 'situationality factor', ELF speakers do share their non-native speaker status, meaning that they are both L2 users of English and plurilinguals. Due to this shared non-nativeness, as Hülmbauer (ibid.) continues, ELF speakers are likely to understand certain linguistic constructions although they deviate from the NS norms, which can be seen also in my data. Possibly the speakers also have better tolerance for unconventional forms and creative language use and patience to negotiate meaning to accomplish shared understanding. As a result of their plurilingual resources, then, the speakers in my data can use some expressions and terms in Finnish and in each others' languages with success. In addition, Ilse from Austria and Anne from Germany co-construct meaning with the help of their shared mother tongue German and, thus, L1s prove as valuable components in making meaning. Worth noting is also that the participants' shared experiences as international students in Finland help in accomplishing intelligibility, as can be seen happening, for instance, in example (6) about souvenirs. All in all, although having shared linguistic background typically makes understanding easier,

sharing the ELF speaker status and employing the current 'situational resource pool' (Hülmbauer 2009: 325) can also be of great benefit. As Mauranen (2006: 124) argues, speakers might also expect understanding problems and difficulties in intercultural situations due to different cultural and linguistic backgrounds and, thus, work harder for the mutual understanding and the prevention of potential misunderstandings later in talk.

My data consists of informal lunch/dinner gatherings among friends. In such casual settings there is no clear task-orientation, if socializing with acquaintances is not counted as such. Also, even though Ilse and Eva are acting as hostesses, there is hardly asymmetry in power relationships in the speaker groups. It could be argued that at least in these informal ELF settings there is space for creativity and time to negotiate and co-construct meaning in a friendly atmosphere. The particular context, thus, gives the ELF speakers some freedom and enables flexibility with language use. This can be quite different from, for instance, more formal, institutional or goal-oriented settings, such as business or academic interactions, where the speakers typically have different roles and statuses, for example as supervisor and subordinate or lecturer and student. Pitzl's (2005) study on business interactions and Mauranen's (2006) study from academic settings suggest that non-understandings are skilfully signaled and settled and even prevented. Skilful settlement of non-understandings and repair as interactional management can be found also in the informal lunch/dinner gatherings among friends in my study. However, it could be questioned to what extent the kind of creativity utilized in these casual meetings among international groups of friends would work when attempting to reach an agreement in a business negotiation or when completing a group work assignment at the university. Very likely the type of event, the roles of participants and the goals of interaction have a great influence on the language use.

Even if ELF talk might seem somewhat non-coherent and robust at times, for instance due to the negotiation sequences, unconventional language use or direct nature of the talk, smooth understanding and harmonious relations between ELF speakers seem to be achieved. As Mauranen (2006: 148) notes and as seen in my study, intelligibility is constantly monitored in cooperative interaction. Interlocutors' willingness to secure mutual intelligibility is displayed in the interactional work that speakers do during the conversation, such as, active negotiation of meaning and attempts to establish intersubjectivity. Furthermore, the speakers in my data frequently help and support each other. For instance, the participants offer words and sentence completions, co-author stories, collaboratively clarify unclear terms and concepts, and at times incorporate embedded repair or subtle other-corrections into their talk. Self-repair also occurs, in line with Mauranen's (2006) findings, such as in the form of rephrasing one's own speech content, word choices or grammar. All this implies that both speakers and listeners do active work in their attempt to accomplish shared understanding and communicate successfully. To summarize my findings, the ELF speakers in my data utilize repair as interactional management to negotiate and co-construct meaning when a certain lexical item needs clarification. The participants also embrace creative language use in making meaning and accomplishing shared understanding. Such interactional work appears successful and effective in casual lunch/dinner conversations among international friends and the participants do not appear to orient themselves to it as a problem.

Very recently, Kaur (2010) has studied the process of negotiating understanding following displayed trouble in understanding and the interactional procedures used to achieve mutual understanding in spoken ELF interactions among Master's degree students in Kuala Lumpur, using CA as a method. Unfortunately, I was not able to discuss this study in relation to my own work in greater detail as the paper became accessible only when I was about to finish writing my thesis. However, it appears that my findings on repair work are very much in accordance

with those presented by Kaur (2010). In other words, Kaur also observes the usage of repetition, paraphrase and various confirmation and clarification procedures in constructing shared understanding, many of which can be found also in my data. Furthermore, in a similar vein to my study, the participants appear skilful in addressing problems of understanding when needed and use interactional practices in an adept way to arrive at shared understanding. It would certainly be interesting to compare the findings more comprehensively in the future. Coming across Kaur's recent publication that even yields fairly similar findings to my own suggests that the research topic in my thesis is valid, current and definitely worth studying. The following conclusion will sum up my findings in this study.

6 CONCLUSION

The goal in my thesis has been to study what kind of interactional work interlocutors do in attempt to achieve intelligibility and shared understanding in situations where English is used as a lingua franca. I have approached this question by studying how ELF speakers negotiate and co-construct meaning of lexical items in interaction, how instances of non-understanding are settled and how ELF speakers employ creativity in making meaning. I have used a conversation analytical method to study my data, which comprises of naturally occurring informal lunch/dinner conversations where participants communicate in ELF. My findings suggest that the ELF participants negotiate and co-construct meaning of lexical items actively and skilfully, employing the practices of repair and utilizing creative language use. The speakers do not appear to orient themselves to such repair work or creative language use as trouble. Instead, they demonstrate flexibility and embrace creativity in their language use. The significance of context in making meaning, especially with unconventional or "incorrect" words, should not be forgotten, either. All in all, it appears that, due to the active interactional work, the ELF speakers for the most succeed in accomplishing intelligibility and mutual understanding in talk. My study confirms the earlier findings that instances of non-understanding are skilfully signalled and settled in ELF settings and corroborates the view that ELF speakers can successfully and effectively exploit the language to fit their current purposes and needs. What is more, my study shows that repair can be employed as interactional management to negotiate meaning and proceed in talk, and it also provides detailed analysis of employing creative language use as a way to co-construct meaning and shared understanding in casual meetings among international groups of friends.

There are certain limitations concerning my study. First, as my analysis relies on a very limited amount of ELF data and is qualitative in nature, any generalizations

should be avoided. Another data with other ELF participants might yield different kinds of results. Also the number of examples analysed from each data set is not balanced (12 from data set 1 and 3 from data set 2), which raises the question of their comparability. However, the criterion for selection was not to have an even number of examples from each data set but to analyse illustrative examples from my data as a whole. Second, CA methodology appears not to have been used in studying ELF interactions very extensively yet, which also means that CA was not applied in all of the earlier ELF studies that I have used as my background. Hence, at times I have struggled with relating my own findings to those in earlier studies applying different methods. Third, as CA focuses on explicating the participants' displayed orientations and as I could not tell what the speakers had in mind, I was able to make observations only based on what surfaces in talk. Even though I aimed at as objective observations as possible, the analysis certainly involves subjective interpretation as well. However, applying conversation analysis as my method seemed a workable choice as it offered a way to describe in detailed ways how lingua franca interactions proceed and how meanings are co-constructed and negotiated in sequential turns. Using CA helped to elicit, for instance, the fluency of negotiations at a micro level. Furthermore, the used data was suitable for my study and provided interesting viewpoints as a response to my research questions. Moreover, this type of data has not been studied very extensively yet.

Further research is needed in order to gain better understanding of accomplishing intelligibility and shared understanding in informal ELF interactions. For instance, it could be investigated whether similar findings to my study would apply if the group of ELF speakers was more heterogeneous or the interlocutors did not know each other. In addition, it would be interesting to study instances where mutual understanding is not accomplished and where negotiation and co-construction of meaning fails, and how interlocutors react and orient themselves in such situations. Moreover, my study has focused on negotiating and co-constructing meaning of individual lexical items (including some compound nouns) but also

other areas, such as sentence structures, grammar and pronunciation, are definitely worth more research, particularly from the conversation analytical point of view. The role of embodiment and non-verbal behaviour could also be analysed more systematically. Finally, a larger amount of data would allow comparisons to be made and offer more insights into the participants' interactional work.

Accomplishing intelligibility and shared understanding in a conversation is really important when people communicate with each other. The same applies to lingua franca conversations in which the participants do not share the same L1 or culture but have English as their vehicular language. As intercultural encounters and using ELF are very common these days and in the future will possibly be an even more visible part of our everyday life, it is very important to understand the nature of ELF talk. English as a lingua franca should be studied in its own right and as a useful communicative tool, instead of comparing it to native speaker varieties. Furthermore, viewing ELF speakers as language users, not merely language learners who attempt to acquire competence in English similar to that of the native English speakers, would possibly encourage ELF speakers to exploit their linguistic resources and communicative potential more comprehensively.

My study is a small contribution to the growing body of ELF research. However, hopefully the in-depth analysis of informal ELF talk has provided some light on aspects of ELF speech. I also hope that my study has offered some information about the sense-making practices and the interactional work that interlocutors do in ELF talk in attempt to accomplish intelligibility and shared understanding. In my study I took a step away from a mere problem-orientation by shifting the focus from solving and preventing instances of non-understanding to negotiating meaning and shared understanding. By indicating what kind of linguistic features are important in accomplishing intelligibility and shared understanding in ELF talk, also language teachers and learners might benefit from my study. In other words, learning more about doing interactional work could possibly help lingua

franca speakers themselves to better adapt their own communication style to the others', overcome possible problems in conversation and learn to utilize different communication strategies (that is, improve their lingua franca competence). All in all, my findings explain how speakers accomplish success in ELF communication despite not sharing the same native culture or language.

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APPENDIX 1 Informed consent

Research Participant Information and Consent Form

INTRODUCTION

I am asking you to be a subject in a research study. If you agree to participate in this study, I would like to ask you to sign this informed consent document. Informed consent is a written agreement that you sign indicating your willingness to participate in this research. Your signature on this form is voluntary and does not waive any of your legal rights or make any institutions or persons involved in this research any less responsible for your well being.

CURRENT STUDY

I am hoping that you will take part in a communicative interaction that I intend to study. The interaction will be audio- and videotaped for later transcription and analysis. These data are only available for research purposes and are gathered primarily for my Master's thesis in English. All uses for commercial or other non-research purposes are prohibited. The recordings acquired will be preserved indefinitely unless you request otherwise. My work will be presented in written and oral form without further permission from the participants.

CONFIDENTIALITY

The nature of the data being gathered (i.e. video and audio recordings) precludes concealing your identity as a participant. However, I will keep any additional information that I have about you confidential through the use of pseudonyms. These data will not be made available for any purposes outside of research activities.

BENEFITS

There are no direct benefits to you personally for participating in this study. The primary benefits from this work are for the advancement of scientific understanding of communication processes.

RIGHTS

Taking part in this study is voluntary. You may choose to not take part or subsequently cease participation at any time. Even after the interaction has been recorded, you have the right to revoke your agreement to participate in this study and to remove your data from inclusion. Leaving this study will not result in any penalty or loss of benefits to which you are entitled.

CONTACT INFORMATION
If you have any questions about this study, you should feel free to ask them now or anytime throughout the study by contacting me

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Consent to Participate

I understand the nature of this study and agree to participate.

_____   _____
PARTICIPANT SIGNATURE   DATE

Optional permission 1: I understand that the data gathered might provide interesting material for other studies on language and communication. I give my permission to use these data for later research purposes, if approved by the researcher of the present study.

_____ YES   _____ NO

Optional permission 2: I understand that the researchers may want to use segments of the recordings with accompanying transcriptions for illustrative reasons in scholarly publications or in presentation of this work in the classroom or at professional meetings. I give my permission to do so provided that my name will not appear.

_____ YES   _____ NO

I truly appreciate your participation in this study. Thank you!

Jenni Tirri

Background Information Form

Please fill in the following information about yourself. Your answers will be used as background information about you as a participant in this communicative interaction (thus, for research purposes only). The information gathered will be treated in confidentiality.

Name:

Age:

Home country:

Mother tongue:

Years of English studied:

Other languages spoken / studied:

Length and reason of stay in Finland:

Home university:

Major subject:

Minor subjects:

E-mail address:

APPENDIX 2 Transcription conventions

.	lowering intonation
?	rising intonation
<u>under</u>score	stressed sound or syllable
↑	rise in pitch
↓	drop in pitch
> <	talk said more quickly than surrounding talk
< >	talk said more slowly than surrounding talk
:	stretched sound or syllable
° °	talk that is quieter than surrounding talk
CAPITALS	talk that is louder than surrounding talk
italics	unconventional pronunciation
[	beginning of overlapping talk
]	end of overlapping talk
=	"latched" or nearly overlapping turns at talk
(.)	micropause in speech (shorter than 0.2 seconds)
(1.2)	pause in speech (measured in tenths of a second)
.hh	inhalation
hh	exhalation
-	an abruptly ended or "cut off" utterance
( )	transcription of questionable talk
(xx)	unclear speech
* SMILES	non-verbal action transcribed below the line, the beginning marked with *
(( ))	transcriber's comment
£ £	smiley voice
@ @	animated voice
wha(h)t(h)	laughing talk