UNIVERSITY OF JYVÄSKYLÄ

EVERYDAY ENGLISH AT WORK –DOES IT WORK?

Evaluation of an English language course

A Pro Gradu Thesis in English

by

Riina Aapa

Department of Languages
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ABSTRACT

HUMANISTINEN TIEDEKUNTA
KIELTEN LAITOS

Riina Aapa
EVERYDAY ENGLISH AT WORK –DOES IT WORK?
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Kurssiarvioinnista on tehty paljon tutkimuksia, mutta pääosa alan kirjallisuudesta keskittyy kurssiarviointiin yleensä. Kielikurssien arviointiin keskittyvää kirjallisuutta on huomattavasti vähemmän. Julkaistut tutkimukset on yleensä tehty julkisella sektorilla, ja aiempaa tutkimusta yksityissektorilta on vaikea löytää. Tämä kurssiarviointi arvioi yksityisen koulutuskeskuksen kielikurssia.

Tutkielman tarkoituksena on tehdä kurssiarviointi, joka selvittää Itä-Suomessa sijaitsevan kansainvälisen yrityksen henkilöstölleen tarjoaman englannin kurssin tuloksellisuutta. Tutkielma keskittyy oppijoiden ja opettajien tavoitteisiin sekä niiden saavuttamiseen. Myös molempien ryhmien erityisiä tyytyväisyyden ja tyytymättömyyden kohteita tutkitaan. Lisäksi kerätään oppijoiden ja opettajien ehdotuksia kurssin kehittämiseksi. Lopuksi vertaillaan oppijoiden ja opettajien näkemyksiä, sekä annetaan ehdotuksia tutkimustulosten soveltamiseksi käytäntöön. Kurssilla oli yhteensä 42 osallistujaa. Aineisto koostuu 18 kurssilaisen täyttämistä tavoitelomakkeista kurssin alussa ja keskivaiheilla sekä seitsemän kurssilaisen ja kahden opettajan haastatteluista.

Haastatteluissa käytettiin haastattelurunkoa, jotta haastatteluaineisto olisi vertailukelpoinen, mutta haastattelutilanteessa annettiin tilaa myös haastateltavan omalle ajatuksen virralle. Aineiston analyysissa käytettiin sisältöanalyysia, jonka kategoriat nousivat enimmäkseen haastateltavien vastauksista, ja analyysi oli pääosin laadullista.

Vaikuttaa siltä, että kurssin päätavoite, suullisen kielitaidon ja puhevarmuuden lisääntyminen, saavutettiin sekä oppijoiden että opettajien mielestä. Pieni otanta kuitenkin rajoittaa tuloksen yleistettävyyttä. Ilmeni myös, että oppijoiden tavoitteet tai niiden tärkeysjärjestys muuttuivat kurssin edetessä. Näyttää siltä että oppijat olivat pääosin tyytyväisiä kurssin opettajiin ja opetustekniikoihin, mutta olisivat toivoneet selkeämpää kurssisuunnitelmaa. Oppijoilta tuli parannusehdotuksia, joista osa on toteuttamiskelpoisia.

Tutkimuksen tuloksia voidaan käyttää kyseisen kurssin kehittämisessä, mutta esimerkiksi tavoitteenasettelun osalta myös muiden aikuisten kielikurssien suunnittelussa.

Asiasanat: language education. adult education. course evaluation. content analysis.

CONTENTS

1 INTRODUCTION

> "I think I assumed that… on the course we would create situations or things where, that could be beneficial in the workplace… The need is mostly use of e-mail, to produce comprehensible text, documents, and also to discuss and negotiate with people, and I was hoping and assuming that we would train these areas."

The above translation from Finnish is from an interviewee in the present study. It shows how adult learners enter education with a set of expectations and needs. Whether they will feel that the course is successful or not depends greatly on how well or poorly the course goals and their own goals meet, and whether they feel they improve in the areas they expect to. Language courses arranged by the employer are becoming increasingly popular in today's business world with ever-growing globalisation. It is common for a company to buy the service from a third party who specialises in re-education of the adult work force. Since the company is making an investment in the education of their staff, they would like to see some results, and to find out if they are getting value for money, they can perform course evaluation.

Educational evaluation in general has been researched a lot, but the evaluation of language programs in particular has not received as much attention (Beretta 1992:5). Although there has been significant growth in studies focusing on evaluation of language education since the 1960s, there are still relatively few publications available about the evaluation of language teaching programs in general (Beretta 1992:5). Also, it is known that there have been evaluations that have been carried out for restricted audiences only, and have never been published (Beretta 1992:6). Evaluations in the private sector are especially difficult to come by and it seems that the majority of the published studies are in schools, universities and other government managed institutes.

Course evaluation can be defined as the process of making judgements about the effectiveness and value of teaching (Rogers 1989:172). Effectiveness can be tested, for example, by comparing the learner's level of skills in the beginning to their level in the end of the course. Also, with the constructivist approach to

learning, it is becoming more popular to use more qualitative and "soft" approaches to determine the value of education, such as self-assessment to evaluate learning as a process and, more importantly, to make the learner more aware of his/her own process. Learners may be asked to set their own goals for the course at the start of the course, and during the course and especially at the end of it, reflect on them, evaluating how well or poorly they have met their own goals. In addition to using course evaluation to determine the effectiveness of a course, it can be used for the purpose of curriculum development or teacher's self-development (Rea-Dickins and Germaine 1992:26).

The goal of the present study is to conduct a course evaluation of the "Everyday English at work" course using learners' self-evaluation forms as well as personal interviews where they reflect on the success of the course. There are two forms: the goal-setting form at the start of the course and the goal check-up form half-way through the course. The forms focus on how well or poorly the learners think they have reached their own goals, and the end-of-course interviews continue further from there: investigating learner goals, successful and unsuccessful aspects of the course and suggestions for improving the course. The teachers are interviewed also, and the goals and success of the course are considered from their point of view. The data are subjected to content analysis. The learners' and teachers' views are then compared to discuss the overall success of the course. Since evaluation is first and foremost a practical activity (Brown 1995:241), some practical suggestions are given for the development of the course when discussing the results. The research questions are:

1. Did the learners find the course successful?
   - Did the learners reach their goals?
   - What did the learners find good and successful / poor and unsuccessful? Motivating / unmotivating?
   - What suggestions did the learners have for improving the course?
2. Did the teachers find the course successful?
   - Did the course reach its goals?
   - What did the teachers find good and successful / poor and unsuccessful?
   - What suggestions did the teachers have for improving the course?

2 EVALUATING A COURSE WITH ADULT LEARNERS

2.1 Adults and adult education

Adult

The concept of adulthood is more complicated than one would assume. The word "adult" is used in such a variety of different connections that it is difficult to find one universal definition for it. Rogers (1989:5-8) has discussed the different aspects of *adulthood*. He explains that sometimes it is used to refer to a stage in a person's life cycle: childhood, youth, adulthood, but it can also be used socio-legally to refer to a person's status within the community, and often it is associated with a set of ideals and values that are expected of an adult. The most common association with adulthood is age, but it is impossible to define a specific age at which a person becomes fully adult, because the legal age varies from one society to another, and even within a society there can be different age-related restrictions for leaving school, voting, getting married, holding property, driving a vehicle and engaging in paid labour (Rogers 1989:5).

Rogers (1989:6-7) suggests that a more satisfactory approach would be to identify some of the characteristics that make up an adult. He divides the properties into three clusters: full development, sense of perspective and autonomy. *Full development* includes characteristics such as maturity, full personal growth and established values. *Perspective* allows an individual to make judgements about themselves and about others by drawing upon their experience. This helps them have a more balanced approach to life and society, and be more developed in their thinking in relation to others. *Autonomy* means responsibility for oneself and one's actions, responsible decision-making and far-sightedness. Rogers (1989:7) believes that in order to confirm and promote the adulthood of learners these three characteristics should be taken into consideration when planning education for adults.

Adult education vs. education of adults

Rogers (1989:17) introduces two ways of distinguishing between "adult education" and "education of adults": contents and approach. Considering *contents* to be the difference between "adult education" and "education of adults" suggests that the latter covers all educational programs for those over the age of sixteen. "Adult education", on the other hand, would be confined to subjects that require experience and that are best learned as adults, such as politics or management. However, as Rogers (1989:17) points out, this definition is very limited and excludes from "adult education" many subjects that belong to it, such as languages, which may be better learned while young, but are nonetheless a significant part of most adult education programmes.

Rogers (1989:17) prefers to distinguish between the two terms according to their *approach* to adult learning. Some programmes teach adults as adults, while others teach them in the same way that they would teach younger learners. "Education of adults", according to this definition, means education of those over the age of sixteen, taught as if they were without relevant experience, unable to take responsibility over their own learning and having little to contribute to the learning process (Rogers 1989:17). By contrast, "adult education" treats learners as experienced, responsible and mature adults, taking into consideration the three characteristics of adulthood as discussed above.

2.2 Course evaluation and its methods

In order to define evaluation one has to distinguish between testing, assessment and evaluation, terms which to the layman may seem confusing. In fact, not even researchers in the field quite agree on the definitions. Out of the three, *testing* is the most straightforward: it is commonly used to refer to the instruments that measure learning outcomes, so it can be used as a component in the evaluation process (Brown 1995:227, Rea-Dickins and Germaine 1992:3). Rogers (1989:172) defines *assessment* as the collection of data on which the evaluation is based, and *evaluation* as the process of making judgements about the

effectiveness and value of teaching. Brown's (1995:227) definition of evaluation, however, does not exclude assessment, but includes it: "all of the instruments and processes involved in gathering information to make judgements about the value of an educational program." In the present study, the term testing will be used to refer to testing of learners in order to learn about their language skills and learning outcomes. Assessment as Rogers (1989) defines it will be discarded, and Brown's (1995) broader definition of evaluation will be adopted.

The purposes for evaluation are almost as many as the number of evaluations, so it is impossible to make a perfect list of the reasons why evaluation is conducted. Many evaluations aim to justify or experiment a theory, approach or method (Alderson 1992:276). Other reasons may include deciding whether a programme has had the intended effect, identifying the effect of a programme, determining whether a programme has provided value for money, comparing approaches/ methodologies/ textbooks/ etc., identifying areas for improvement in an ongoing programme, motivating teachers, improving teachers' performance, or showing the positive achievements of teachers and pupils (Alderson 1992:276, Rogers 1989:173). Rea-Dickins and Germaine (1992:23) have divided the general evaluation purposes under three categories, which succeed in making the vast number of purposes easier to grasp: accountability, curriculum development and self-development. In addition to the three, they identify a category of specific, topic-related purposes. Evaluation for purposes of *accountability* is concerned with determining whether something has been effective and efficient, evaluation for purposes of *curriculum development* plays a role in curriculum renewal process, and evaluation for purposes of teacher *self-development* (also known as illuminative evaluation) aims to raise the consciousness of teachers about what actually happens in their classrooms (Rea-Dickins and Germaine 1992:26).

When planning evaluation one has to also decide whether to use insider or outsider evaluator(s). *External evaluation* is typically practised by the organiser or the programme or some external validating body, and *internal evaluation* by the teacher of the course or programme (Rogers 1989:173). Brown (1995:232) points out that insiders may feel threatened by outsider evaluations, but then again the

evaluation will benefit from a more objective outsider view. This leads Brown (1995:232) to recommend a *participatory model*, where the evaluation is centered on insiders, but still benefits from outsiders' advice. Involving the teacher and learners in the observation process decreases their feeling of 'being watched'. Alderson (1992:279) emphasises that the choice between insider and outsider evaluators is case-specific. He remarks that there are situations when there are sensitivities involved that cannot be revealed to outsiders, and situations when an impartial outsider view is required. Alderson (1992:279-280) maintains, however, that he does not believe that objectivity can ever be guaranteed, and in order to get closest to objectivity one should select several evaluators with known biases and require them to argue for their interpretations and recommendations. This is called the *advocacy method* of evaluation.

Evaluation can focus on different things, but the common concern is whether the learners are learning (Rogers 1989:174). It is also important that the content of the evaluation relates to its purpose and the objectives of the programme (Alderson 1992:281). Rogers (1989:175) finds three categories of 'what to evaluate': objectives and their achievement, teaching skills, and student learning, and does not try to make a more complete list. Once again, a perfect list would be impossible to make, but Alderson (1992:281-282), however, makes an attempt towards it. Some themes that can be drawn from Alderson's list include: outcomes, attitudes and opinions, influence of the programme, the process, materials, activities, teachers, resources, cost vs. benefit, etc. Quite acutely, Alderson (1992:282) observes that a complete list would be "rather long", and it is important for the evaluator to judge which areas are central to the purpose of the evaluation. Brown (1995:234) focuses his attention on whether the evaluation is for product or process. *Product evaluation* determines if the goals of the programme have been achieved, and *process evaluation* examines what in the program has helped to reach the goals.

As far as timing of evaluation goes, the main choices are: during the course, after the course, or both. Additionally, Alderson (1992:287) also discusses the importance of follow-up studies. Brown (1995:233) proposes that the best

evaluation might combine them all: some evaluation during the programme, some at the end of the programme and some in a follow-up. In connection with the timing of the evaluation, one has to bring forth the definitions of formative and summative evaluation. The purpose of the evaluation will determine what point in time the evaluation will focus on (Alderson 1992:287), which will influence the overall timing of the evaluation. *Formative evaluation* aims to help develop the programme, and is therefore usually conducted during the lifetime of the programme, whereas *summative evaluation* is interested in the achievements and success of the programme, and can focus upon the end of a project (Aldeson 1992:287, Brown 1995:228).

Methods of evaluation are numerous, as the following chapter on previous studies shows, and the choice of evaluation method depends mostly on what is to be evaluated (Alderson 1992:282). In order to find out about learning outcomes, one might choose to use language tests, but if one is to study attitudes and opinions, then questionnaires, interviews or discussions might be in order. However, the relationship between the content and the method is not always uncomplicated, and it is highly important to plan and justify the method(s) to be used, when making the evaluation plan (Alderson 1992:282). There is no one best method for evaluation, so Alderson (1992:285) recommends using a variety of methods and a number of sources to be able to confirm one's findings through triangulation, by comparing the findings achieved with different methods.

3 PREVIOUS STUDIES ON COURSE EVALUATION

Course evaluation seems to be a trend in education: ever since the early 1990s, literature on language teaching curriculum has covered a much wider range of factors that influence what goes on in the language classroom, and above all, it has emphasised the reflexive element (Block 1998:148). Students should now have a say in what the course will look like for future students. Also the student-focused constructive approach that has become popular in education emphasises end-of-course evaluation and considers it an essential tool for the teacher in developing the course. Researchers agree that evaluation of the teaching/learning process is an important part of the curriculum process (Block 1998:150, Dowling and Mitchell 1993:433).

Brown (1995) reviewed previous research on language program evaluation. He used a summary made by Beretta in 1992, that surveyed studies published between 1967 and 1985, and continued the summary with his own survey of studies made between 1986 and 1994. Brown (1995:228) wishes that future evaluators would benefit from his examination and wants to offer suggestions for them and make them aware of the kind of decisions and problems that have to be considered when planning evaluation. Based on recent literature, Brown (1995:228) lists six types of decisions that have to made before conducting evaluation: will the evaluation 1) be summative or formative, 2) use outside experts or rely on participatory model, 3) use field research or laboratory research, 4) evaluate during or after the program, 5) rely on quantitative or qualitative data, and 6) focus on the process or the product? Brown continues to categorise other problems to take note of and puts them under eight headings: 1) sampling and sample size, 2) teacher effect, 3) practice effect, 4) Hawthorne effect, 5) reliability, 6) program-fair instruments, 7) politics, and 8) other potential problems.

Brown (1995:228) defines formative evaluation as something that occurs during the development of a course and the information is used to improve the course, whereas summative evaluation takes place at the end of a course to determine

whether the course was successful. When considering the second decision of whether to use an outside expert in evaluation, it is important to note that the "insiders" may feel threatened by the "outsider", although an outside expert brings impartiality and credibility to the results. It may, therefore, be preferable to use the participatory model and involve all the participants in the process and, for example, have the teachers take part in the observation process to decrease their anxiety of 'being watched' (Brown 1995:232). Brown (1995:232) describes field research as long-term, classroom-based and focusing on the complete program, and laboratory research as short-term, in an artificial environment and focusing on some individual components of a theory. The fourth decision has to do with the length of the evaluation and whether to do it during the course, after it, or both. From previous research Brown (1995:233) concluded that the ideal evaluation is a combination of some assessment during the course, some immediately after it, and some in a follow-up study. Fifth, evaluators have to decide between quantitative and qualitative data or both. Quantitative data might comprise of test scores, student rankings and other such numbers and statistics. Qualitative data, on the other hand, might include interview transcripts, observation notes, journal entries and the like (Brown 1995:233). Brown's (1995:234) examination showed that most previous studies combine both quantitative and qualitative data to provide different views of the same phenomena. The last decision to be made is whether to evaluate the process or the product. According to Brown (1995:234), product evaluation studies whether the goals of the course have been achieved, and process evaluation looks at what in the course has helped to arrive at the goals.

Judging from Brown's examination, a great deal of course evaluation has been done in recent years. Published results, however, seem to be hard to find: especially those of the private business sector. Either it has not been studied, or there is an unwillingness to publish the results. Previous studies in the area are for the most part in the public sector: universities and colleges. In the following, seven previous studies on course evaluation are described. The studies have been divided into three groups according to the educational level at which they were conducted: under-graduate (Dowling and Mitchell 1993, Gimenéz 1996, Lee

1998), post-graduate (Jeffcoate 2000) and in-service training (Lamb 1995, Block 1998, Lavender 2002). Some summary and analysis follow these short summaries of the studies.

Studies at undergraduate level

Dowling and Mitchell (1993) conducted a project at Griffith University, Australia, in which they aimed at developing the curriculum and pedagogy of an undergraduate Japanese reading course for science students. They used the cyclical *Action Research Method* (Dowling and Mitchell, 1993:433), where they first planned some changes to the course content and technique, and then put them in action. These changes were based on their experiences and students' exam results from previous years. They then made observations in the classroom and collected feedback from the students in the form of student self-assessments, formal questionnaires and informal discussions concerning the course content, material and teaching strategies. The observations were followed by reflection, which again led back to planning and started the cycle over again. Using Brown's (1995) classification, Dowling and Mitchell's evaluation was a formative and qualitative field research evaluating the process.

The first overall evaluation of the course at the end of the first year suggested that it had achieved its general aims, but for the following year they decided to focus even further on reading and comprehension skills, leaving the use of separate aural skills aside (Dowling and Mitchell 1993:439). Of the sixteen students in the degree program, thirteen were respondents in the evaluation, and the researchers acknowledged that with such a small sample they could not make any formal statistical analysis, but they attempted to find some general trends nonetheless. The course content, materials and strategies were found generally useful and challenging, and the students seemed to prefer working together in class, rather than on their own (Dowling and Mitchell 1993:442). However, reading in pairs was not found particularly helpful. Students also expressed a desire for more personal choice of reading materials, and they especially acknowledged the importance of variety in the material. The results of the student self-assessment

were also generally encouraging: the students felt confident about their reading and translating abilities, although about half of them had experienced some difficulties producing a fluent translation, especially if the topic was outside their field of study (Dowling and Mitchell 1993:443). Dowling and Mitchell (1993:443) found their evaluation project useful in improving the course and intend to make it a structural part of the course to ensure ongoing development of the course.

Gimenéz (1996) describes a project conducted at Instituto de Estudios Superiores (= IES) in Argentina, whose aim was to improve the assessment procedures in the ESP courses organised by the institution. Students from different departments take ESP courses as required by their degree programme. In the project Giménez used *Process Assessment* and focused the assessment on input, throughput and output variables. He defines the variables as follows: "The term input --- refers to the students' and the institution's efforts and resources: efforts and resources ESP teachers count on before starting the course. Throughput variables involve the internal state and behavior of both the students and the institution; output refers to the students' mid-term and final production or outcomes" (Giménez 1996:234). His Process Assessment started with a thorough analysis of the input variables in order to gain knowledge of the human resources (students' attitudes, aptitude, experience, needs, purposes, skills, etc.) and material resources (institution's structure, equipment, purpose, goals, budget, etc.) they were faced with, and to use that information to be able to make decisions concerning teaching methodology, materials and activities. A variety of research methods were used: interviews, aptitude and attitude tests, questionnaires, placement tests and diagnostic tests (Giménez 1996:236). The monitoring of throughput variables (students' motivation and perception, institution's climate and co-operation etc.) was continued throughout the course, and the procedures that Giménez (1996:236) found most useful were: motivation graphs, observations, conferences, students' comments and diaries, achievement tests and progress charts. The assessment of throughput variables revealed how the learning process was developing and what adjustments needed to be made before the final evaluation of the output. In assessing the output variables, i.e. the end product, the

students' performance was evaluated with the help of regular meetings, interviews, observations and record keeping. The idea of Process Assessment is that the output evaluation and the feedback process lead back to reassessing the input variables, and making the appropriate changes in the process for the future, if necessary. Using Brown's (1995) classification, Giménez's product evaluation is best described as formative field research combining both quantitative and qualitative methods.

The results of Giménez's project were highly positive (1996:238-239). Co-operation between the ESP instructors and the subject-matter teachers became more frequent and regular, helping the ESP instructors with any doubts they had about the content and increasing the subject-matter teachers' knowledge of English. Student participation in the process by suggesting activities and topics proved deeply motivating for the students, making them more responsible for their learning. The first signs of positive change also activated the institution principals to take part in some of the meetings and propose ideas on how to utilize the institution's human and material resources. Further positive effects were found on the assessment of the students' performance. Output assessment now comprises of all records kept by teachers and students, so in addition to the end-of-term exam score, students now have an assessment portfolio that reflects all that they have done and still need to do. This also means that less time is needed by the next term ESP instructor for input assessment (Giménez 1996:239).

Lee (1998) implemented a self-directed learning programme for students of English at the Hong Kong Polytechnic University and evaluated the outcomes using data from the students and the teacher. Fifteen voluntary students of a first-year English Communications Skills course took part in the programme. At the start of the course the students were asked to complete an awareness-raising self-evaluation, in which they had to evaluate their strengths and weaknesses as learners of English, the language skills needed for the course, their own role and the teacher's role in improving their English. Another self-evaluation was conducted at the end of the course, along with individual interviews. The

teacher's observations were also used in evaluating the success of the programme. Brown's (1995) classification would describe Lee's study as a summative product evaluation.

Lee (1998:285) divided the students into two groups: the more enthusiastic learners who spent about 4 to 8 hours per week on the programme, and the less enthusiastic learners who spent about 2 to 3 weekly hours on the programme. The self-evaluations showed that the enthusiastic students seemed to feel more positive about themselves and learning in general than the less enthusiastic. The interview data from the students was mixed (Lee 1998:285). All of the students agreed on the teacher's importance in supporting their independent learning, but only the more enthusiastic learners felt that the programme had been successful and that they would continue learning English independently. The less enthusiastic learners, in contrast, felt the programme had been worthwhile, but had not improved their language skills, and were unlikely to continue with the programme after the course, since the teacher would no longer be encouraging and reminding them about the programme. During the course, the more enthusiastic students seemed more keen to seek some kind of help and feedback from the teacher. All in all, the self-directed learning programme was more successful with the students who already showed some degree of autonomy in learning (Lee 1998:287).

Study at post-graduate level

Jeffcoate (2000) evaluated a course in English grammar taught to 25 students specializing in English with Drama. The students were doing their post-graduate certificate in education (PGCE) at the University of Liverpool Education Department. The course evaluation consisted of an initial audit at the start and another test at the end of the course to determine how much they had learned. Additionally, the students' opinions were established through a form where they evaluated the course on a scale of 1 to 5 and were free to submit any additional comments. Brown (1995) would classify Jeffcoate's evaluation as a summative product evaluation, using mostly quantitative methods.

The initial audit showed that nine of the students had "some knowledge" of English grammar and sixteen had "no knowledge" (Jeffcoate 2000:74). In the end-of-course test the figures had reversed and sixteen students would have passed and nine failed the course in the sense that they were judged either capable or incapable of teaching A-level English grammar (Jeffcoate 2000:78). Eighteen out of the twenty-five students submitted an evaluation form. On the scale of 1 to 5 (1= very satisfied, 3= satisfied, 5= very dissatisfied), most students (n=10) gave the course a grade of 2, five students gave it the best grade 1, and three students rated it 3 (Jeffcoate 2000:79). Comments made were generally positive, and the criticism expressed was mostly about the hardness of the course. The students felt that the course level was too high, the content was too substantial and the pace was too fast (Jeffcoate 2000:80). Jeffcoate (2000:81) evaluated the course as "a partial success". On the one hand the feedback was mostly positive and all the students had learned something at least, but on the other hand the gulf between "good" and "bad" students had remained, and some of them had made very little progress. This causes Jeffcoate (2000:81) to point the finger at under-graduate studies: the National Curriculum requires that prospective English teachers are familiar with syntax, but it is neglected in under-graduate studies leaving the post-graduate educators wholly responsible for teaching it. He also finds it problematic that teacher training providers are under immense pressure to reach their target numbers, which causes them to take "a calculated risk" and admit students with known academic weaknesses (Jeffcoate 2000:82).

Studies on in-service training

Lamb (1995) conducted an evaluation of a short in-service teacher training (INSET) course in the Staff Language Centre of an Indonesian university. The course had sixteen participants, six of whom taught at the same university and the rest at other tertiary institutions. After the twenty-five-hour-long (spread over ten morning sessions) course Lamb carried out an initial evaluation. The results of the evaluation were very positive (Lamb 1995:74): all participants had enjoyed the course and found the sessions useful. Most of them said they would try to put

in practice what they had learned. Lamb was interested in the long-term effect of the course, so a year after the course he went to interview and observe the participants in order to find out to what extent they had implemented the practical ideas promoted on the course (Lamb 1995:73). Twelve participants were interviewed in an informal and non-directive manner about how their teaching had developed since the INSET course, and four of them were observed in class. Using Brown's (1995) classification, Lamb's product evaluation was summative and qualitative in nature, and the only one of these studies that included follow-up study.

Lamb (1995:73-77) discovered that many of the participants felt confused and frustrated: most of the techniques discussed on the course had been forgotten or a term picked up on the course had been applied to an activity they were already familiar with. Often the reason why a particular teaching technique had not been implemented was that it was too different from the participant's normal classroom routine, so they could not see how to make use of it.

In his article, Block (1998) contrasted two different ways of course evaluation: ongoing interviews and end-of-course evaluation forms. He held weekly semi-guided interviews with six EFL students attending six different courses at a large language school in Barcelona, and for his report decided to focus on the answers of just one of the interviewees. Using the data gathered through the interviews, Block's aim was to build a strong case against course evaluation in the form of a pen-and-paper form (Block 1998:153). He intended to do this by comparing what the informants had to say in ongoing interviews and what they were asked to respond to on the course evaluation forms (Block 1998:151). Using Brown's (1995) classification, Block's evaluation might be best described as a qualitative process evaluation.

A great number of issues emerged in the interviews (Block 1998:155-171): different types of class focus (the "classical" and the "improvised"), source of motivation, learner initiative, the pace of lessons, the teacher's personality and organisational skills, classmates, classroom atmosphere, routineness, learner

participation, midcourse crisis and fatigue. Block's (1998:173) research convinced him that a form could not grasp the delicacy and complicity of the learner's views about the course, but an ongoing, in-depth and personalized contact could. From his data, Block (1998:172-173) made the following four points. Firstly, a questionnaire form could not address the aspects of language classes that the interviewee developed by himself during the interviews, such as his own dichotomy for classifying classes and teachers, or his concept of 'tension' in the classroom. Secondly, a form could not capture the ongoing development of the interviewee's opinion of his teacher and classmates. Thirdly, the interviews could expose the ambivalence ('greyness') in the subject's answers, instead of forcing him to deal with black and white choices like the questionnaire. Lastly, Block pointed out the differences between individuals as regards to what each individual finds important in the language classes. Some interviewees had a clear affective orientation, whereas the interviewee he picked as his main subject had more of a cognitive orientation. They might therefore interpret questionnaire items differently.

Lavender (2002), like Lamb (1995), reports on an INSET course. Unlike Lamb, whose focus was on the implementation of new teaching techniques after an INSET course, Lavender discusses the role of language improvement on an INSET course. She obtained her data from Korean primary and secondary school English teachers who were attending the course in the UK. At the beginning of the course most of them were estimated to be at an intermediate level in their English language competence (Lavender 2002:238). To gather ongoing data from the participants a variety of methods were used: questionnaires, interviews, participants' session notes, visual representations and group diaries. Also the course tutors' views were included in the study via interviews, and their perceptions were compared with those of the course participants (Lavender 2002:240). Using Brown's (1995) classification, Lavender's process evaluation is summative and qualitative in nature.

Lavender found that the participants regarded language improvement as the single most important component of their course, even outshadowing new teaching

techniques (Lavender 2002:246). She also suggested that INSET courses should more greatly respond to the participants' own evolving agendas, especially those concerning language improvement. Lavender (2002:249) regards language improvement work to have the greatest post-course impact, when teachers, more confident about their language abilities, employ more English in their classrooms and thus encourage their pupils to do the same (Lavender 2002:249).

Previous studies compared

These articles had different foci to course evaluation. Dowling and Mitchell's (1993) focus was clearly formative as it was aimed at improving the course and its pedagogy, whereas Gimenéz's (1996) aim was to improve the assessment procedures of the course. Lee (1998) and Jeffcoate (2000) both had a summative approach as they were interested in the outcomes of the courses, but Lee implemented a new programme, while Jeffcoate evaluated an existing course. Lamb's (1995) interest was also in outcomes, but mostly in the long-term effect of the course. Block (1998) and Lavender (2002) differ most from the others in their focus. Although course evaluation was used in both, it was more a method than a result: Block conducted the evaluation mainly to contrast two ways of course evaluation, and gaining knowledge about the success of the course was just a by-product. Lavender used the course evaluation to study the role of language improvement on an in-service teacher training course.

Ideally, course evaluation is used to improve the structure and content of the course and develop the teaching, as in the cases of technical Japanese reading course at the Australian Griffith University (Dowling and Mitchell 1993) and ESP course at the Argentinean IES (Giménez 1996). Dowling and Mitchell's intention was to make monitoring and evaluation a structural part of the course, allowing learners' needs to be met more consistently and helping in the continuing process of improving the course (Dowling and Mitchell 1993:443). Giménez (1996:235) agrees with Dowling and Mitchell in that course evaluation should be an ongoing project and that continual assessment of the input and throughput variables helps ensure high quality in output. However, Gimenéz used

an immense number of methods to analyse the different variables, which would require lots of resources. Making process assessment continual might, therefore, prove impossible year after year, unless some extra funding was allocated to it.

A variety of methods were used for course evaluation in these studies. By far the most popular methods seemed to be interviews, questionnaires and classroom observation. Often the methods were used as a combination. If comments from students were collected in writing, it was either on the questionnaire form or in a diary. Only Dowling and Mitchell (1993) and Lee (1998) used self-assessment as a separate method, but some aspects of self-assessment were often included in the interviews by others, too. In his conclusion, also Lamb (1995:79) admits that an awareness-raising self-assessment at the start of the course would be beneficial even for the long-term effect of the course. Written tests (i.e. testing) were only used by Gimenéz (1996) and Jeffcoate (2000) to define how much students had learned.

There are two separate foci in course evaluation: evaluation of teaching and assessment of learning. Brown (1995:227) makes this distinction by using the terms evaluation and testing, respectively. Of the articles dealt with here, only Jeffcoate (2000) has a clear emphasis on the latter. Block (1998:149) notes that all too often is the former done with the help of an end-of-course questionnaire, where students grade the effectiveness of the course on a scale of 1 to 5 without any analysis of the different aspects of teaching, which is the case in Jeffcoate's (2000) study. Block (1998:150) thinks that this is problematic because each learner has their own individual concerns that they focus on, so a single grade from each tells the teacher very little.

Block (1998:153) is against the use of a pen-and-paper form in course evaluation. He sees four main reasons in favour of interviews over questionnaires. Firstly, he claims that a questionnaire is always conducted on the author's terms, whereas an interview is on the language learner's terms. Secondly, he finds that questionnaires produce static, one-off statements, while the statements brought about in an interview are more dynamic and evolving in nature. Thirdly, Block

disputes the capability of a questionnaire to reflect all of the student's views about language classes and teachers, whilst in an interview they can present their own aspects and new ideas about teaching. Lastly, he notes the importance of the ambivalence that is present in interview answers, instead of clear-cut yes/no responses of the questionnaire.

In the previous research discussed here, all others except Jeffcoate (2000) used interviews or informal discussions. They were most often informal or semi-structured, where the interviewer only offered prompts for the discussion. Only Gimenéz (1996) used interview at the start of the course in order to define individual input variables: students' attitudes, experiences, aims, etc. Block (1998) and Lavender (2002) held interviews throughout the course to obtain overall evaluation. They were the only ones to report voices of their students. Ongoing interviews seem to provide the most useful data, namely both Lee (1998) and Lamb (1995), who only interviewed at the end of the course, reported mixed results. Lee (1998:285) believes this is due to the clear division of the students in the enthusiastic and the less enthusiastic, because the students were consistent in their answers within each group. Lamb (1995:74) thinks that the students may have been trying to please him, their former teacher, in their answers, so he used observation to check that their answers corresponded to practice. Also Dowling and Mitchell (1993) interviewed at the end of the course, but they did not report separately of the interview results.

Questionnaire forms were most often used at the start of the course as an initial audit in order to define students' expectations, aims, skills, subject knowledge and background. Using Gimenéz's classification, these variables would be called individual input variables. Whenever a form was used at the end of the course, it was mostly to gather feedback on course content, materials and teaching strategies.

Observation in the classroom was usually done by the teachers, who then reported to the researchers in interviews. Observation was used to monitor student

motivation as well as their responses to the activities in the classroom. Lamb (1995:74) used observation to make sure what the interviewees said was true.

Giménez (1996:233) points out that the tradition of course assessment only at the end of the course ignores any assessment of the learning process and comes too late for proper formative feedback to take place. He explains that process assessment "gives ESP instructors as well as students the opportunity to improve outcomes when there is still time for so doing" (Giménez 1996:233). He maintains that end-product assessment is too limited in scope and comes too late for improving the final results, whereas reflection of an ongoing process assures a more reliable final product. Process assessment, as Giménez suggests, allows for students' performance to be evaluated on a continuous basis, at any stage in their learning process, giving them an opportunity to work on their areas of need before it is too late (Giménez 1996:234). He finds this of particular importance for ESP students, especially those who use English at work, since they are more likely to put into practice what they have learnt as soon as they leave the classroom, so any language errors they might have are reinforced through frequent practice.

Samples in these previous studies were fairly small, usually from fifteen to twenty-five, but this was often the number of students attending the course. Such a small sample is not enough for valid quantitative analysis to take place, so the articles took mostly a qualitative approach, and the data was used to detect some trends as well as give voice to the students. Block's (1998) case study was the most qualitative in its approach, since all the others made attempts to quantitative analysis.

The need for course analysis is a very practical one, and as Brown (1995:241) points out: "evaluators must always remember that evaluation is essentially a practical activity". However, apart from Brown (1995) these articles tend not to offer much advice for the practice. In fact, Gimenéz's (1996) study is borderline impractical. He used such a great variety of different methods for collecting his data that the study seems nearly impossible to carry out with the financial and human resources that are normally allocated for a language course.

The researchers, who were often responsible for the designing or the teaching of the course, rarely accepted any responsibility for negative feedback. Instead, they tended to point the finger at the learners and their characteristics, or at the learners' previous studies. Jeffcoate (2000:78) found that nine students in the group of twenty-five would have failed the course, if the end-of-course test had been taken seriously to define who had reached the level of knowledge needed to teach A-level English grammar. Instead of accepting that the post-graduate program needed to increase the amount and/or quality of grammar taught, Jeffcoate (2000:81) put the blame on the under-graduate studies, and the fact that the group was so heterogeneous. Also Lamb (1995:79) pointed his finger at the learners for not implementing the teaching techniques that had been taught on the INSET course. He suggests that experienced teachers had such strong mental constructs and beliefs about teaching that they were not susceptible enough to new teaching techniques. Unlike Jeffcoate (2000), however, Lamb (1995:79) had a practical proposition for improving the course outcomes: he suggested that some awareness-raising self-assessment take place at the start of the course to make learners confront, question and re-evaluate their own routines and the values they are intended to serve.

These articles seem to lack detail in reporting the study. Even though they list the methods of data gathering, not much is said about the methods of data analysis. In fact, Block (1998) is the only one who describes his study and his methods in enough detail for replicating to take place. Also, this lack of details makes it more difficult for future studies, such as the present one, to learn from their mistakes or to replicate what they did right.

4 PRESENT STUDY

4.1 Present study in relation to previous studies

The present study, much like most of the previous ones, is a summative course evaluation: the aim is to determine whether the course was successful, using end-of-course evaluation. It seems that even though studies on adult education in general emphasise learner goals and goal setting, it has not been studied in adult language learning nor its role evaluated. Most course evaluation is done to determine the success of a new program in comparison to the old. The present study also attempts to examine learner goals and to what extent they were reached. According to Brown (1995:233) the best course evaluation combines some evaluation during the course, some immediately after it, and in a follow-up. The present study conducted some written evaluation during the course and interviews at the end of it, but no follow-up evaluation was done. Partly due to the tendency of small groups in language teaching, most language course evaluation has been qualitative in nature, or has combined both quantitative and qualitative study (Brown 1995:234). Using Brown's (1995) classification, the present study is a qualitative product evaluation, attempting to determine whether the goals of the course were achieved.

As stated above, the most popular methods in previous studies had been interviews, questionnaires and classroom observation. The present study makes use of both questionnaires and interviews, but there was no need for classroom observation, since the present evaluation is not focused on what happens in the classroom. Similarly to the present study, many of the previous studies had some elements of self-assessment as part of the interview. Although interviewing solely at the end of the course has previously produced mixed results (Lee 1998, Lamb 1995), a decision was made to only interview at the end of the course, because the focus of the present study is on the success and outcomes of the course. The present study mainly differs from the previous ones in that they were all made in the public sector, whereas the present study is made in the private sector. Previous

studies in the private sector were difficult to find, which is possibly due to reluctance of private businesses to make the evaluation results public.

4.2 Research questions

The present study seeks to determine the success of the "Everyday English at work" course, which is offered to its employees by a company in Eastern Finland. The company has offered language courses for their employees for decades, but apart from some end-of-course assessment by the teacher for her benefit, no course evaluation has been done by the company so far. According to the company's personnel department, a constructivist approach to teaching and learning is supported by them as well as by the head teacher of the course. The approach emphasises learner-centeredness. This is why the teacher has a tradition of using a goal-setting form at the start of the course (see Appendix 1) and an end-of-course evaluation form to get feedback from learners. Learners' goals are considered important, but so far no comparison has been made to examine how the learners' and teachers' goals meet. The present study aims to explore these two points of view separately, and to compare them. General feedback of the course is also gathered by interviewing, even though the teacher has already done that by using a form. An "outsider" may be more likely to encourage honest answers than a form given to the "insider" teacher.

The research questions were:

1. Did the learners find the course successful?
   - Did the learners reach their goals?
   - What did the learners find good and successful / poor and unsuccessful? Motivating / unmotivating?
   - What suggestions did the learners have for improving the course?
2. Did the teachers find the course successful?
   - Did the course reach its goals?
   - What did the teachers find good and successful / poor and unsuccessful?
   - What suggestions did the teachers have for improving the course?

4.3 Data collection

4.3.1 Research design

The course, "Everyday English at work", was spread over two terms, starting in September or October and lasting until April or May 2002 (see Table 1), different groups had slightly different timetables, but all had fifty hours of lessons.

Table 1. Timetable of the course and the research

August 2002	Contact the company
September-October 2002	The course begins
	Form: goal-setting by learners
January-February 2003	Form: goal check-up
April-May 2003	The course ends
	Form: course evaluation
8th and 30th May 2003	Interviews with some students and two teachers

The learners filled in three forms: a goal-setting form at the start of the course, a goal check-up form half-way through the course, and a course evaluation form at the end of the course. The course had two teachers. The head teacher in charge of the course was Finnish, and the other teacher was an Irish native-speaker of English. The local teacher was a woman who had been teaching adults' English courses for years, whereas the Irish teacher was a young man who had no previous experience of teaching adults. Most groups were taught by both teachers in turn, but some of the more advanced groups were taught almost solely by the native-speaker teacher.

The learners were all employees of an international company that specialises in engineering and construction of power plants. They do business world-wide and communicate in English with the headquarters in the United States, which is why the company offers a variety of language courses for its employees. The company buys the language courses from an institute that specialises in adult education. The "Everyday English at Work" course is one of the most popular ones and focuses on communication skills. The learners came from different departments

within the company: engineering, sales negotiation, construction, accounting, personnel, etc.

The course was aimed at employees who wanted to improve their oral language skills in particular. The course included oral and communicative exercises, listening comprehension tasks, some reading tasks and some grammar. The learners were expected to have at least intermediate skills in English: they were expected to be able to comprehend written and oral discourse involving topics they were familiar with, manage everyday situations in English, and have a good grasp of basic vocabulary and grammar.

4.3.2 Subjects/interviewees

The course had 42 learners and they were divided into seven smaller groups according to their level of language skills. Most of the learners had taken English courses at the institute before, so the teacher had an idea of their abilities. The seventeen learners that were new to the teacher took a test and they were put in groups according to the test results. The groups were named A-G, where the learners in groups A and B had fairly intermediate skills in English, and the learners in groups F and G were quite advanced. All of the learners were asked to submit the goal-setting form and the goal check-up form. Only 18 people (including the ones who were interviewed) handed in their forms as shown in table 2. Some never filled in their forms, some had not realised they were supposed to return them and had thrown them away, and two people in group B were simply unwilling to take part in the evaluation, as they announced at the start of the course.

Table 2. Number of goal-setting and check-up forms received (N=18/42)

Group	Returned forms	Male	Female
Group A	4	1	3
Group B	2	2	0
Group C	1	1	0
Group D	2	0	2
Group E	1	1	0
Group F	5	4	1
Group G	3	3	0
	18	**12**	**6**

One volunteer per group was requested for the interview. These seven people represented a fairly heterogeneous volunteer sample: three women and four men, with different educational backgrounds, working in different departments within the company, their ages ranging from 31 to 62 years. With such a small sample there was no need for subgrouping.

4.3.3 Goal-setting forms

Each of the 42 learners on the course was asked to fill in a goal-setting form at the start of the course (see Appendix 1), where they were to list their goals and expectations for the course. They were also asked to promise to put in extra effort for some particular areas of English that they wished to improve.

Half-way through the course the learners were asked to fill in another form (see Appendix 2) where they would list the goals that they had reached so far, and the ones they had not. If they had failed to reach any of their goals, they were to analyse the possible reasons for it. They were also asked to evaluate their own effort with their chosen areas.

It was the evaluator's intention that the forms be used to get an overall idea of the goals that the learners set for themselves, and find out to what degree they had reached their goals. It was also hoped that the response would be greater, and would therefore give some further information about the goals in addition to the seven interviews. Since only eighteen out of 42 were returned, no valid conclusions can be drawn from the material. Instead, its value is in supporting the trends that emerge from the interviews.

4.3.4 Interviews with learners

At the end of the course, one volunteer from each group was interviewed. From group G there were three volunteers, so they were all interviewed, but only one of the interviews was chosen for the analysis to keep the data as heterogeneous as

possible. The volunteers agreed to the interviews being taped and transcribed. At the start of each interview it was explained once more that the volunteers would remain anonymous, and only their teaching group, gender and age would appear on the interview transcript. The interviews were semi-structured (see Appendix 3) and started with some "warm-up" questions to help the interviewees relax and feel comfortable in the situation. The warm-up questions started with the interviewee's own experiences with foreign languages and moved on to their experiences with English and language learning in general. They were then asked to think about motivating and unmotivating factors in learning English, and to list some expectations they had about the course and to analyse how accurate their expectations were. Some questions followed about the goals that they had set for themselves at the start of the course, and what they hoped to gain from the course. The interviewees were encouraged to analyse their individual reasons for their goals, whether or not they had reached their goals, what contributed to the positive results and what caused the negative results. They were also asked about the effort they put in and whether they were happy with it. Additionally, the interviewees were asked to evaluate the teaching techniques, course contents, course materials, etc. The interviewees were asked to suggest how to improve the course.

4.3.5 Interviews with teachers

Both teachers were interviewed at the end of the course, and the interviews were taped and transcribed. The interviews were semi-structured (see Appendix 4) and started with some questions about their approach to language teaching in general and what they considered important about language teaching. The interview continued with similar questions as the learners' interviews in order to get the teachers' perspective on the same issues: expectations, goals, teaching techniques, course contents, course materials, and suggestions for improving the course. The teachers were quite analytic about the course goals, so not much encouragement was needed from the interviewer.

4.4 Methods of analysis

The learners' answers were collected from the forms and analysed by counting the number of mentions under different categories, which all arose from the data. The learners had different interpretations of the questions, so the categories are not necessarily coherent.

Quite a few of the learners seemed to have misunderstood the questions on the forms, but in the interview it was possible to ensure that the interviewee had understood the question correctly. After the interviews had been taped, they were transcribed. The transcripts did not include sighs, laughter, volume of speech, length of pauses or the like. This was not considered necessary, since the data were to be subjected to content analysis, not for example discourse analysis. A simple system of punctuation was used to denote the length of a pause. A comma (,) was used when the pause was very brief, such as to inhale. A dot (.), two dots (..) or three dots (…) were used for longer pauses.

Content analysis is a method for analysing the communicative content of texts (Titscher et al. 2001:55). The texts are divided into units of analysis that are defined either syntactically (e.g. word, sentence) or semantically (e.g. person, statement). Each and every unit of analysis must then be coded, i.e. allocated to one or more categories (Titscher et al. 2001:58). In the present study the unit of analysis was a statement that expressed a thought or an idea, since it is impossible to define a syntactic unit in spoken discourse, and since the learners did not answer the forms with complete sentences either. The categories emerged mostly from the data, except for "teaching techniques", "course contents" and "course materials", which emerged from the interview questions. The categories were further divided into positive, negative and neutral mentions, and the neutral mentions were ignored in the analysis since they were irrelevant for the evaluation of the success of the course.

Since the number of subjects was relatively small: 42 people attending the course, 18 forms returned and only 7 learners and 2 teachers interviewed, the methods of analysis were mostly qualitative. The data were content analysed. Quantitative methods were used only when counting the number of mentions (=frequency of occurrence) under different categories from the interviews as well as the forms. Some clear trends arose from the analysis, which will be discussed in the next chapter.

5 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

5.1 The learners

In order to find out if the learners thought they reached their goals, two forms with open-ended questions were used. Interviews were used to find out more about learners' goals and about the aspects of the course that they found good and poor, or motivating and unmotivating. The beginning of the present chapter focuses on the goals and their achievement, and reports on the results of the forms. The body of the chapter deals with the interviews and their results, focusing mainly on the aspects of the course that were found successful and unsuccessful. The end of the chapter outlines the interviewees' motivating factors, as well as their suggestions for improving the course.

5.1.1 Learners' goals

Goals at start of course

The learners' goals at the start of the course are summed up from their goal-setting forms (Table 3).

Table 3. Goals at start of course (N=18/42)

Goal	Number of mentions
Communicative confidence	7
Grammar	5
Writing	4
Vocabulary	3
Being active in class/at home	2
Listening/reading comprehension	2
Other	2

At the start of the course, the learners seemed to have a variety of goals, and hoping to improve their communicative confidence or oral language skills received most mentions. Learners wished to become more confident and courageous, for example, and some even felt they had a barrier of some sort that was stopping them from speaking in English:

1) Saada varmuutta puhumiseen. (Am1[1]) [2]
2) Rohkeampi asenne kielen käyttöön. (Gm10)
3) Puhumiseen ryhtymisen riman madaltuminen. (Ff6)

Other areas of language skills that were mentioned were grammar, writing, vocabulary, as well as listening and reading comprehension. Taking part in class and doing one's homework were also mentioned. Other goals included making studying fun, and slowing down the deterioration of one's English skills.

The learners had to think of areas of language learning that they would do their best to improve and the results are described in Table 4.

Table 4. Promised special effort (N=18/42)

Special effort for	Number of mentions
Grammar	8
Vocabulary	6
Communicative confidence	4
Being active in class/at home	4
Listening comprehension	2
Writing	1
Alphabet	1

The learners' effort was put into improving grammar and vocabulary, although communicative confidence seemed to be the main goal in general. So there appears to be a mismatch between the learners' goals and the areas they were willing to invest their energy in. Some learners seemed to have rather a good idea of what in particular they needed to practice: they listed prepositions and word order as the goals they were willing to put effort in, but others were simply willing to revise grammar as a whole. All mentions of grammar or a particular grammatical point were coded under "grammar". Communicative confidence shared third place with being active in class and at home.

Goal check-up

Half-way through the course the learners were asked to remind themselves of their goals and analyse whether they had reached them or not and why. The

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[1] "Am1" stands for male #1 in group A, "Gm10" for male #10 in group G, "Ff6" for female #6 in group F, etc.
[2] For English translations, see Appendix 5.

learners' goals reached half-way through the course are summed up from their goal check-up forms in Table 5.

Table 5. Learners' goals reached (N=18/42)

Goal reached	Number of mentions
Communicative confidence	15
Listening/reading comprehension	4
Vocabulary	2
Being active in class/at home	1
Other	1

Communicative confidence received more mentions in the goal check-up than in the goal-setting at the start of the course, so it is safe to assume that many of the learners had reached their goal of improving communicative confidence by mid-course. Getting an opportunity to speak were mentioned as reasons for their positive results. Again, as at the start of the course, terms such as confidence, courage and threshold were mentioned in connection to speaking in English:

4) Puhevarmuus lisääntynyt hieman. (Am1)
5) Puhuminen, uskaltaa puhua paremmin kuin alkuvuodesta. (Af2)
6) Puhumisen kynnys on madaltunut. (Df5)

Listening and reading comprehension, vocabulary and taking part in class were the other goals that were mentioned as achieved.

The learners' goals that had not been achieved half-way through the course are summed up from their goal check-up forms, and shown in Table 6.

Table 6. Learners' goals not reached (N=18/42)

Goal not reached	Number of mentions
Listening comprehension	2
Vocabulary	2
Grammar	2
Writing	1
Course contents [3]	1
Being active in class/at home	1

The number of mentions of goals that had not been reached was fewer than that of goals that had been reached, which is positive. Listening comprehension, vocabulary and grammar were mentioned, as well as writing, course contents and

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[3] Someone had misunderstood the form, and expressed his disappointment with the course contents under the heading "goals that I have not reached".

being active, but each only received a few mentions. There was some frustration in the answers:

> 7) Kuullun ymmärtäminen, kun ei tajua niin ei tajua eri "äänteitä". (Af2)

Some were quick to find someone else to blame for not reaching their goals:

> 8) Kielioppiasioissa ei ole edistystä tapahtunut → ei ole käsitelty kielioppiasioita juuri lainkaan. (Fm7)
> 9) Sähköpostiin vastaaminen ja sujuva kirjoittaminen, pitäisi olla harjoituksia. (Bm2)

Comparing the goals that were set with the goal check-up makes it clear that some learners had forgotten what they had set as their goals, or misunderstood the goal check-up form to mean any improvement in any area, since many more people mentioned communicative confidence and listening comprehension in the goal check-up than in the goal-setting. Correspondingly, grammar and writing got fewer mentions in the goal check-up than in the goal-setting.

Interviews with learners

Seven[4] interviews were analysed to find out more about the learners' goals and whether they thought they had reached them. The learners were asked to think about their individual goals for the course, the areas they most wanted to improve, and whether at the end of the course they felt they had reached them. The learners' achieved and unachieved goals are shown in Table 7.

Table 7. Learners' goals (N=7)

Goal	Number of mentions	Positive (goal reached)	Negative (goal not reached)
Communicative confidence	10	9	1
Writing	2	1	1
Vocabulary	1	1	0
Grammar	1	1	0

Communicative confidence received most mentions when the learners were asked about their goals, and most of them were positive. Writing skills, vocabulary and grammar got a few mentions as well, but significantly less than communicative

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[4] The interviewees: Af= 51-year-old woman, group A; Bm= 50-year-old man, group B; Cm= 62-year-old man, group C; Df=31-year-old woman, group D; Em= 44-year-old man, group E; Ff= 37-year-old woman, group F; Gm3= 34-year-old man, group G.

confidence. The mentions were mostly positive, apart from the one interviewee who had to drop some of his goals of improving his writing skills after realising that the course is too short for them all. The main finding from the interviews seems to correspond to the findings from the forms: most learners mentioned improving their communicative confidence as their main goal:[5]

> 10) Tämmöstä puhe-englantia, puhelinkeskustelua, tämmöstä yleistä tietoa siitä että miten semmonen niinkun rakentuu, mitkä ois ne hyvät tavat. (Em)
> 11) Varmuus ja tietysti ääntäminen. (Ff)

5.1.2 Successful and unsuccessful aspects of the course

The interviewees were asked to think about different aspects of the course and analyse whether they found it good or not. Additional aspects that the learners found successful and unsuccessful were gathered from their answers to other questions. Some of the categories, such as teaching techniques, group dynamics and course material arose from the interview questions, but many others arose from the interviewees' answers, such as communicative confidence and vocabulary. The learners' positive and negative mentions regarding the course, summed up from their interviews, are shown in Table 8.

Table 8. success of the course as seen by the learners (N=7)

	Positive mentions (good/successful)	Negative mentions (poor/unsuccessful)
Improvement in communicative confidence	20	2
Teaching techniques	9	3
Teacher	7	1
Group dynamics	7	7
Vocabulary	6	0
Course material	6	3
Writing skills	3	2
Lesson time	3	4
Course content/ course syllabus	2	10
Grammar	2	1
Listening comprehension	0	3
Lesson place	0	3

The learners seemed very satisfied with the improvement in their communicative confidence. More specifically, the importance of having a native-speaker teacher

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[5] The reason why there are more mentions of communicative confidence than there were interviewees is that some of the interviewees mentioned it more than once, under different questions, so as to emphasise it.

was noted, as well as the increased courage to "just open one's mouth" (Bm). The learners had also noticed how their improved oral skills had helped them at work:

> 12) Tänä vuonna minä oikeestaan nautin ihan näistä englannin tunneista ku siellä sai tosiaan… tai sanotaan että sen ihmisen joka ei sillä tavalla ymmärtäny, ni se… tajus mitä myö puhuttiin sitten hänelle. (Af)
> 13) No sillä lailla mä huomaan sen että kun vaikka puhelin soi ja sieltä kuuluu englantia niin en saa sydänkohtausta suurinpiirtein… että jonkinnäkösiä järkeviä lauseita kuitenkin, heti. (Ff)

The teaching techniques also got generally positive mentions. More specifically, the teaching techniques were considered flexible and varied, and group work and pair work exercises useful:

> 14) semmonen aika joustava on se tunti.. ja keskustellaan jokapäiväsistä asioista kaikista ja, jotain kertoillaan, niin minusta se on hyvä tapa, koska semmosiahan ne on lähellä sitä tilannetta mihin sä joudut sen kielen kanssa tuolla muualla, että ei oo olemassa vaan että tee kotitehtävät ja käydäänpä ne läpi. Et kyllähän se siitä kommunikoinnistä lähtee. (Em)

However, there were negative mentions about being too familiar with the other members of the group, which caused the peers to be "too" helpful in the pair work exercises.

Teacher-related mentions were more positive than negative. More specifically, the role of the teacher was considered important as someone who makes sure that the class is going where it is supposed to. Both the Finnish and the Irish teacher got positive feedback, mainly about their character:

> 15) kyllä minusta se opettajakin on tosi tärkee… että ois joku joka vie sitä hommaa eteenpäin… ei liikaa mutta kuitenkin että siellä on joku joka aina vetäsöö sinne tietylle.. ettei lähe rönsyämmään. Näin se meiän opettaja tekikin**. (Bm)
> 16) Oli tää paikallinen opettaja… tosi hyvä, terhakas, innokas, oikeen tosi tomera tyttö. (Bm)
> 17) Ja T2[6] on kans, alkuun ehkä vähän jännitti että apua natiiviopettaja siinä, hän oli hirveen semmonen rento tyyppi kuitenkin, että oli tosi kiva. (Df)

Most of the interviewees did not report any problems with the native-speaker teacher's Irish accent. Just one of the interviewees seemed to have a problem with the teacher's accent:

> 18) minä en oikein T2, ehkä se minun ymmärtäminen on sen verran heikolla tasolla… T2 minusta puhu aina.. niin paksua englantia että siinä vähän kateltiin toisiamme… niin monisanasesti selitti… sitten oli ihan hyvä tunne kun pääs kärrylle takasin.. niin se nyt oli vähän… ei nyt suorastaan pettymys, mutta.. ehkä hänkään ei oo niin kokenu opettaja. (Cm)

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[6] T2 = Teacher with English as his native language

19) Olin tyytyväinen. Tosiaan hän oli panostanut siihen että hän esitti asiat selkeesti, että ei tullu mitään murretta… hän oli kyllä sen tiedostanut että ei puhunu millään murteella… tosiaankin hän pisti meidät puhumaan. (Ff)

Group and group dynamics split the interviewees' opinions. Most negative mentions about the group were due to the fact that if several people were absent, then the lessons tended to become less varied or had to be cancelled. However, the interviewees were generally happy with the composition of the groups:

20) Tosiaan kun meillä on ollu semmonen ryhmä ettei oo paljoo, siellä on muutamia ettei oo käyny paljon yhtään… aika usein meitä oli kaks tai sit jos on ollu vaan meitä yks tulossa niin on tunteja jouduttu perumaan. Tietysti intensiiviopetusta sais ku yksinään menis, mutta. (Df)

21) semmosta ryhmähenkee että tuota niinkun… siinä on niinkun helppo lähtee keskustelemaan että siinä ei niinkun ainakaan tarvinnu arastella että jos nyt ei osannu puhua kovin hyvin, jos siinä nyt on joku vieressä… sillai niinku tuntu että oman porukan kesken. (Gm3)

The teaching and learning of vocabulary got only positive mentions. More specifically, the learners mentioned the book, newspaper articles and conversation helping them acquire new vocabulary.

Course material, especially the book, was considered satisfying by the learners, but they would have liked to use the book more in class. Some found the handouts difficult to manage:

22) Materiaali kyllä se kirja, se oli kyllä tosi hyvä… se oli Business First, semmonen kirja… siinä käydään ihan sanotaanko työhön liittyviä osa-alueita ja matkustamista ja muutakin… se on tosi hyvä, harmittaa miksei sitä käyty läpi sillä tavalla järjestelmällisesti tai järjestelmällisemmin… koska siinä ois ollu tosi hyviä aiheita, ja sanoja, sanontoja. (Bm)

23) Kirja oli, mutta ei sitä kertaakaan avattu kurssin puitteissa… No sitten se muu materiaali… näitähän se oli näitä tämmösiä kopioita sieltä sun täältä joistain kirjoista ja tämmösistä missä tämmösiä harjotuksia on… yleisesti ottaen minä tämmöstä opiskelumateriaalia vierastan koska ei siitä niinkun jää oikein käteen mitään muuta kun mapissa semmonen sillisalaatti, se tavallaan… --- ei taho käteen jäähä mitään, jos haluis jälkikäteen katella joskus.. aika vaikea niinkun hahmottaa… Jos se olis semmonen vähän valmiimpi, vaikka nyt monistenippukin, mutta että se olis niinku semmonen että se on kronologisesssa järjestyksessa, mitä millonkin käyty läpi niin siitä ois helpompi muistaa että mistä sieltä löytyis jos haluais katella. (Gm3)

Writing skills got both positive and negative mentions. The negative comments had to do with the fact that the course was too short, so there was not enough time to practice writing. Some learners, however, felt that there was improvement in their writing skills.

Lesson times received positive feedback, and it was mostly about having it at certain intervals: the learners felt it was easier to anticipate and plan their timetables when it was at regular times, such as every two weeks. The learners also appreciated the use of e-mail in notifying about changes in lesson times. The negative feedback handled the difficulty of finding a time that would suit everyone in the group, and how counterproductive it was when one had to miss classes due to work projects:

> 24) nää on tosi huonoja ollu että, meillä on nyttenkin niin varmaan, yli – onkohan meillä jo kaks kuukautta tässä väliä ettei oo mitään tunteja ollu… sillon ne niinku aina – sit joutuu, sitä tulee niinku takapakkia sitte siinä.. Kyllä se lähinnä oli niinku kurssilaisten puolelta, uskon että se oli työkiireistä, en usko että kukaan ilmottautuu kurssille ja sit ei käy. (Df)

The course content got mostly negative mentions. The learners seemed unhappy about the course syllabus and would have liked it to be more defined: they did not see the point in asking the learners' opinions and preferences quite so often:

> 25) Kaiken kaikkiaan, siihen vähän kaipais tuota… tavallaan siihen tuntisuunnitelmaan tämmöstä niinkun… onko se nyt jämäkkyys oikee sana, mutta sillä lailla että.. ainakin minä koen näin että jos kovin paljon matkan varrella kysellään että mitä ens viikolla tehhään ja tehhäänkö tämmönen harjotus vai tehhäänkö tuommonen harjotus mitä työ niinkun haluaisitte niin, tahtoopi olla tää suomalainen luonteenlaatu semmonen että se on semmosta yhteistä hyminää. (Gm3)
>
> 26) Henk.kohtasesti oisin halunnu että ois jotakin suunnitelmaa käyty läpi, jotenkin ois jääny itelle semmonen… jonkunlainen kuva että minä nyt oon nämä… hallitsen. Selkeempi rakenne. (Bm)

Grammar did not get many mentions in the interviews, contrary to the goal-setting form. The comments were usually about the difficulty of learning grammar in general, not during this particular course. One interviewee referred to the way that grammar is taught in general, and how she prefers it being taught alongside discussion, rather than as a separate component.

Listening comprehension tasks were not considered useful on the whole, but outdated and unsuccessful:

> 27) No kyllä minusta niinkun nää kuunteluharjotukset nykyään on ehkä vähän ajastaan jälkeenjääneitä että… en tiedä onko niissä ihan tarkotus, varmaankin jossain myöhemmässä vaiheessa se onkin ihan hyvä asia että eri soundilla olevia ja ääntämistavoilla niitä on, mutta ehkä tässä alkuvaiheessa olis ihan perinteinen suht koht selkeä –tiedän että sillä on joku tarkotus varmaankin.. mutta, jotenkin tuntuu että se kuuntelupuoli on vielä vähän jälessä. (Em)

Lesson place got a few negative mentions. Some interviewees mentioned hoping that the lessons would be on the company premises instead of at the institute, so that the learners could save some valuable working time by not having to travel to the institute. Some felt that it would make more sense if the teacher came to them, rather than they all travelled to the teacher.

5.1.3 Learners' motivating and unmotivating factors

When asked directly about what motivates them, many interviewees found it difficult to answer, but some motivating and unmotivating factors became apparent in their answers to other questions later on. The learners' motivating and unmotivating factors are shown in Table 9.

Table 9. Motivating and unmotivating factors (N=7)

	Positive mentions (motivating)	Negative mentions (unmotivating)
Work/career	7	0
Communication	6	0
Grammar	0	2
Break from work	2	0
Travel	2	0
Practical teaching techniques	1	0
Theoretical teaching techniques	0	1
Challenging exercises	1	0
Being able to show one's own expertise	1	0
Improvement in language skills	1	0
Negative experiences in the past	0	1
No "reward"	0	1

Work and career related reasons seemed to be one important motivating factor. More specifically, the interviewees noted the fact that they were working for an international company, and they run into situations at work when language skills were needed:

28) Se vaan että kielitaitoa tässä firmassa tarvitaan, muuten ei työssä pärjää, jonkunlainen kielitaito on hyvä olla. (Cm)
29) Itse kumminkin haluaa pysyä ajan hengessä mukana ja kehittää itseään niinkun teknisesti ja myös. (Em)

Being able to communicate with people who speak a different language both at work and in the personal life seemed to be another important motivating factor. More specifically, the interviewees mentioned the independence in communication that they could achieve with improved language skills:

> 30) Minun avomiehen tyttö on naim- tai menee naimisiin englantilaisen kanssa, niin kyllä minä haluaisin heiän kanssa jonkun verran keskustella että minun ei tarviis vaan olla. (Af)
> 31) Kyllähän sitä nyt mielellään silleen kun pystyis kohtaamaan paremmin ulkomaisia ihmisiä. ois semmonen yhteinen kieli. (Df)
> 32) Meillä on täällä näitä ulkolaisia ihmisiä. (Af)

The language lesson was mentioned as a welcome break from work. More specifically, the interviewees mentioned it being nice to be able to talk to their colleagues about things that were not work-related, and that they were more motivated to do it during working hours, and get paid for it, than to do it in their leisure time.

Travelling and holidays were also mentioned by interviewees as a motivating reason to study English. They found it encouraging to be able to "survive out in the world" (Bm).

Challenging exercises and texts were considered motivating by one interviewee. The same person found it motivating to be able to show his own expertise in the classroom, for example, when discussing a text or vocabulary that had to do with his area of expertise at work.

Noticing that one has accomplished something and can use one's skills was also mentioned as motivating. The interviewee pointed out that this sort of motivation builds up little by little.

Practical teaching techniques were found more motivating than theoretical ones by one interviewee. He also associated the theoretical approach with his language lessons back in school. In connection with his past experiences he used the word "vastenmielisyys" ('repulsion, disgust').

Grammar was considered to have a negative impact on motivation by some interviewees. More specifically, they associated it with having to learn patterns and theories by heart, which they found discouraging:

> 33) Siinä vaiheessa jos meille ruvetaan niinkun hirveesti sitä kielioppia tankkaamaan että tämä pittää olla tällä tavalla ja nyt sinä sanoit väärin… sillon minusta mennee se mielenkiinto siihen opiskeluun. (Af)

5.1.4 Learners' suggestions for improving the course

Towards the end of each interview, the learners were asked to suggest how to improve the course for future learners' benefit. Some suggestions had become apparent already earlier in the interviews, such as making better use of the book, having the lessons in the company premises and sticking to the course syllabus more strictly. Particularly the men seemed tired of the teacher asking them what they wanted to do next lesson, and would have also appreciated a more detailed course syllabus so that they would know what they had missed if they were unable to come to class sometime. Another suggestion that had to do with lesson planning was to try to plan the activities so that they could be done even if the whole group was not present:

> 34) olis niinkun hyvä että jos siinä.. kuitenkin kun kurssille ilmottaudutaan, niin katotaan se lähtötaso että saahaan saman tasoset ryhmät… ja tavallaan niinkun ois se pääsuuntaviiva että mitä siellä niinkun opiskellaan siinä vaiheessa selvä kun sinne ilmottaudutaan ja, ehkä siinä aivan kurssin alussa niin vois vielä kysyä siltä ryhmältä että mitä ite kukin nyt sitten haluaa painotettavan, ja sen pohjalta tehtäis tämmönen, vaikka yksityiskohtanenkin tavallaan tuntisuunnitelma että mitä harjotuksia nyt tullaan tekemään minkäkin tunnin aikana… että sen niinku tietäis jokainen, jos joutuu esimerkiks olemaan pois niin tietää että mitä asioita siellä käsitellään, oliko tää nyt sitten kovin tärkeetä hänen kannaltaan jos joutuu olemaan pois… Muutenkin se että jos kovin paljon tosiaan kysellään niitä mielipiteitä niin jokaisella on vähän omia mielipiteitä että mitähän siellä pitäis nyt tehhä ja ei sitä oikein semmosta yhteistä linjaa saa, se on kuitenkin sen kurssin järjestäjän vetäjän tehtävä sen alkukyselyn jälkeen linjata mitä täällä nyt sitten tehdään. (Gm3)

Other suggestions included involving the foreign employees of the company, and bringing some of them into the study group to make sure the language spoken remains English, not Finnish. It was suggested that the teams in the workplace should have some foreigners as well. Some interviewees proposed making lessons longer or more frequent. More variation in the teaching techniques, lesson plans and the composition of the groups was suggested; one interviewee thought

that the conversation tasks in the classroom would become more interesting if it was not always the same group of people. A few also felt that some kind of a reward at the end of the course would be nice: a whole "intensive" day of English, an "English dinner", or an excursion abroad. The interviewees noted, however, that some of their suggestions might prove too expensive to realise.

5.2 The teachers

The two teachers were interviewed separately. Their answers were clearly different, but so were their backgrounds. They did, however, agree on some main points. What follows is a report of the teachers' answers to the questions about the course goals and whether they had been reached, and the teachers' accounts of what had been successful and unsuccessful about the course. Lastly, their suggestions for improving the course are recorded.

5.2.1 Course goals

Both teachers indicated "improving oral skills" as the main goal for the course. In line with the course description, the head teacher listed the goals as follows: "maintaining and improving one's language skills, specifically oral skills" (T1) [7]. In addition to these goals, one of the groups had an additional goal that they requested: extending their "technical" (engineering) vocabulary. The native-speaker teacher considered communication skills his primary goal, but admitted to also emphasising reading comprehension to some degree. He included some written communication in his course objectives, but mainly oral communication "so that each person was willing to say what they wanted, and capable also" (T2). Both teachers mentioned reaching the goal of improving the learners' oral communicative skills, but the local teacher was happy to give the credit to the native-speaker teacher. The native-speaker teacher also was happily surprised at his learners' enthusiasm towards the end of the course to voluntarily communicate in English:

[7] T1 = Teacher with English as her second language, T2 = Teacher with English as his native language

35) yks semmonen tärkee tavote mikä saavutettiin, niin, niin, siitä mä saan T2:a kiittää kyllä hyvin paljon, elikkä.. Tää.. puheen paraneminen ja, suullisen taidon paraneminen oli niinkun, se oli monessa ryhmässä ihan, se oli ihan huomattava, ja siihen aivan selkeesti tää syntyperänen kouluttaja niinkun vaikutti tosi paljon. Et siitä mä oon, siitä mä olen niinku ylpeä että sen-sen näki, sen eron mikä näillä henkilöillä oli syksyllä, ja mikä nyt keväällä (T1)

36) I think the most important accomplishment was, when we were doing an area about news reading.. I started it off as an example.. the idea was that each person would bring in a piece of material, from anything they wanted, in Finnish.. and they had the ability to translate that, and inform the group, not just me, but the group what it was about, without help… And that was a very big accomplishment.. reason being is that it started off with them bringing material, by the time the lessons ended, nobody brought material, yet thirty minutes at the beginning of the lesson we spent having conversations about news articles. They no longer needed the Finnish material to help them. They talked about it, and they remembered, and they spoke, willingly.. they, I think that subject they all benefited quite well, and I was happily surprised (T2)

5.2.2 Successful and unsuccessful aspects of the course

Many of the teachers' statements were simply descriptive and as such, neutral. Neutral mentions were ignored; only the mentions that took a stand on an aspect of the course, and were clearly positive or negative were listed (Table 10).

Table 10. Success of the course as seen by the teachers (N=2)

	Positive mentions (good/successful)	Negative mentions (poor/unsuccessful)
Learners/ group	4	4
Communicative confidence	3	0
Course contents/ course syllabus	2	1
Teaching techniques	2	1
Teacher	2	0
Grammar	2	0
Listening comprehension	1	0
Course material	0	1
Lesson time	0	3

The two teachers were divided when it came to adults as learners. On the one hand, the native-speaker teacher found the learners surprisingly willing and able to learn, but on the other hand he found some of them unnecessarily critical and unwilling at times:

37) one group which I had, their abilities were quite basic, but their willingness to participate was unbelievable. So I could give them the simplest task, and they would want so much to do it, that they would spend two hours working on this, and volunteering as much information as possible --- and yet the groups that had the advanced abilities, people who could speak every day in English, they were very unwilling (T2)

38) Some people just weren't willing.. I couldn't point out any specific people, I don't think it's really possible anyway… but, the reason that I couldn't point them out is because one week they would fly, and the next week they would fall. That was the difficulty.. and the nightmare was that, I would plan a lesson that was intended for each person to learn a specific thing, and if one person wasn't willing, then she would normally, or he would normally bring down another person.. their partner, or whatever the situation was. So that, the willingness was the one difficulty I had (T2)

The local teacher, who had been teaching adults for years, found adult learners wonderful to work with, whereas the native-speaker teacher, who had never taught adults before, found them very challenging and somewhat scary to teach:

39) mikä tästä tekee ihanaa niin on ehkä tää aikuisten kesken työskentely… ja kaikesta huolimatta niin aikuiset yleensä reagoi, ne sanoo jos ne haluaa jotain toisin tai… jotenkin semmonen vuorovaikutus on niinku erilaista, kun tuolla nuorten parissa että, et tuota, ehkä se on tää tämmönen kanssakäyminen mikä tästä tekee, että… siellä on niin erilaisia persoonia ja, siinä aikuisten porukassakin ja just se että saadaan niinku keskustelemalla asioita, ihan eri lailla, eteenpäin (T1)

40) They realise when you make a mistake. And I'm not perfect.. when I type up the notes and there's a mistake, they'll tell me… if you're teaching children, they don't know head from tail… that's the main difference… the other thing also is that they have the ability to, look at you and make you feel like you've done something wrong.. especially if you're dealing with a person who's much older than you (T2)

The teachers were happy with their success in improving the learners' communication skills. They found the change notable, and had nothing negative to say about the topic:

41) ihmiset jotka oli seinää pitkin hiipiny tänne että minä en sitten puhu, minä en sitten -minä vaan kuuntelen, sit kun niinkun huomas että sieltä tulikin tekstiä, aika silleen luontevasti vielä, niin sillon, sillon jäin kattomaan että vau, et kyllä tässä niinkun jotain tapahtu (T1)

Course syllabus and course contents proved to be difficult to get the teachers to take a stand on. They would mostly just neutrally describe what the course syllabus included. The native-speaker teacher had found it useful to ask the learners to fill out a form that helped him plan the rest of his lessons: "what was pointless and what was important" (T2). The negative mention had to do with the fact that it was difficult to stick to a lesson plan, when sometimes only half of the group would turn up for the lesson.

Some teaching techniques were found particularly useful and successful by the teachers: news reading exercises and asking the learners to think in English when

they did their daily grocery shopping. More specifically, the news reading exercise, where the learners had to bring in a newspaper article, explain it to the others and talk about it in English, was found useful in practice, when the learners have to make small talk:

> 42) on pyritty joka ikinen tunti alotetaan sillä että katotaan mitä maailmalla tapahtuu, Suomessa, Varkaudessa, koko mittakaavalla. Ja, jos siellä on jotain innostavia asioita niin, niin ne poimitaan ja mä oon huomannu että opiskelijat kun ne tietää et sillä alotetaan niin, ne asennoituu jo siihen et ne pystyy ottamaan kantaa, pystyy puhumaan, ilmasemaan mielipiteitä asiasta, ja samoin niin mä oon huomannu, sen että monet sanoo, monet on antanu palautetta että ihan nää päivittäiset työelämässä nää kahvitunnit, small-talkit, niin siellä puhutaan niin formuloista kuin maailmanpolitiikasta että. Et se on ollu niinku hirmu antosaa että he huomaa että, joo tää on niinku hyvää siinä sen työn lisäks, mitä he tarvii (T1)

The negative mention was about playing games in English: it was unsuccessful because the teacher found it difficult to get the learners to interact and be playful.

Reflecting on themselves as teachers, the interviewees were happy to provide a detailed, yet neutral recount of their approach to teaching and what they are like as teachers, but modestly only two statements about it were clearly positive. More specifically, the local teacher admitted to being good at teaching grammar, especially in the basics groups, and having improved in getting the learners to discuss current affairs. The native-speaker teacher found his approach helpful in teaching adults. He wanted to be as encouraging and non-threatening as possible:

> 43) My approach was that of a person who wasn't telling them what's right and wrong, but a person who is telling them that, yeah, have a go, try, attempt.. Of course if they made mistakes I would have to help them by correcting them, but I was trying to be as careful as possible, not to push a person down. So I think my approach was that of.. how would you say.. a herder, you know a person who is herding their sheep, trying to get them to move themselves. rather than telling them, you know, this is how you should do it --- the approach that I used worked (T2)

The teachers reported on some successes in grammar teaching (the local teacher) and listening comprehension using authentic audio material (the native-speaker teacher). The local teacher, who was mostly in charge of teaching grammar, pointed out the contradiction that it seems that the learners with the best grammar skills are the ones who keep asking for more of it:

> 44) mä oon huomannu että siellä jotkut, jotkut opiskelijat niin tunsi kaipaavansa sitä kielioppia. Vaikka mikä kaikessa koomisuudessaan on sinänsä jännä että, nää ihmiset jotka sanoo sitä kielioppia kaipaavansa niin on sieltä korkeemmasta päästä olevia opiskelijoita, ja esimerkiks kun mä sitten meidän

syntyperäseltä kouluttajalta kysyin että mites tän kieliopin kanssa niin hän sano että se on aivan täydellistä heillä että (T1)

Course material received mostly neutral mentions about what it included, and the negative statement was the fact that there was very little ready-made material for these groups, and almost everything had to be created or edited. More specifically, the native-speaker teacher pointed out that having to create one's own material was difficult as it was his first time teaching a course of this kind.

The lesson times got some negative mentions from the native-speaker teacher. More specifically, he thought the lessons should go for longer periods and have shorter breaks for Christmas and Easter.

5.2.3 Teachers' suggestions for improving the course

The teachers had only two suggestions for improving the course. The native-speaker teacher proposed that the course should start earlier in the autumn, and the groups be "organised and started at the latest the first week of October" (T2). He found that the long breaks for Christmas, Easter and Mayday "make a mess of things" and that the interruptions were quite counterproductive. He also suggested that every group start at an equal time.

The local teacher's suggestion had to do with the goal-setting at the start. She wanted to improve that, because she felt that the learners tended to have such vague or broad goals, and were unable to clarify why they wanted to learn some particular point, how they preferred to be taught, or what kind of commitment they were willing to put in for their own learning. She believed that the course would be more rewarding for everyone involved if the goal-setting were improved and the learners made more committed to the course goals.

5.3 Comparison and discussion of the learners' and teachers' views

Learners' goals and course goals

Hoping to improve their communicative confidence or oral language skills got most mentions from the learners at the start of the course, which seems like an obvious goal, since the course was advertised as focusing on speaking and communication. The course description also promised to touch on some grammatical issues, and improving one's English grammar received several mentions in the goal-setting. What is surprising, however, is that writing received as many mentions as it did, since there was a separate course offered that focused on written communication. When the learners' goals were checked half-way through the course, they listed different goals than at the beginning and many more mentioned oral skills or communication skills. Had they forgotten what their goals were? It is also possible that not everyone's goals were yet clear when they had to fill in the goal-setting form, and improving communicative confidence became their goal later on, as they realised that it was what the course emphasised.

The teachers' goals for the course were far more defined than the learners': maintaining the learners' language skills and improving their oral communication skills, with the emphasis on the latter. The local teacher was stronger at teaching grammar, so during her lessons the focus was on revising English grammar as well as some vocabulary exercises. The native-speaker teacher's primary responsibility was to get the learners to communicate in English. The number of lessons with each teacher depended on the level of skills in the group and what they needed to practice most.

Overall, it can be said that the course was successful in reaching its main goal of improving the learners' communicative confidence. More learners reported achieving their goals than not, and oral skills in particular received mainly positive comments. Also both of the teachers thought that the goals they had set

were reached and they were particularly happy with the change in the learners'
confidence to speak English.

Successful and unsuccessful aspects

When asked about aspects of the course that the learners thought were
worthwhile, many different categories arose, but some trends were clear. The
learners seemed to think that the course had been successful in improving their
communicative confidence, since it got twenty positive mentions and only two
negative ones. In connection with communicative confidence the interviewees
often mentioned a "barrier" (in Finnish *rima*, *kynnys*) that they had that was
stopping them from speaking in English, and how it got lower during the course.
The subjects of the present study are not the only ones to have used such a
metaphor: the subjects of Hilleson's (1996:273) study with students of an
international school also reported feeling "as if a barrier had been lifted and
suddenly their confidence had returned".

Despite receiving fewer mentions than communicative confidence, the teacher
and teaching techniques got mostly positive comments also. The learners seemed
generally happy with the group and pair activities that were used. Group
discussions have been found to lower the anxiety to speak up in the classroom,
and Tsui (1996:163) proposes that this may be because group discussions give
learners a chance to "rehearse their thoughts to each other in a low-risk, high-gain
situation" and when the learners present their answers, they feel that that they
have the support of the group behind them. Tsui (1996:163) further remarks that
support from fellow learners is just as important as support from the teacher in
helping to create an anxiety-free classroom.

The one thing that clearly got more negative than positive comments from the
learners was the course syllabus. There were two aspects of the course syllabus
that the learners were particularly unhappy with: some were disappointed about
the inflexibility of the lesson plan when several learners were absent from the
lesson, and some thought there should have been a stricter course syllabus

altogether. Interviewees felt that it was unnecessary for the teacher to ask the learners what they wanted to do along the duration of the course, but it should have been enough to do it at the start of the course and draw the course syllabus accordingly. This seems to contradict Gimenéz's (1996:239) evaluation results: he found that student participation by suggesting activities as well as topics was considered deeply motivating. His subjects were Argentinean university students, so cultural and age differences may explain the mismatch.

The trends were not as clear when it came to motivating and unmotivating factors, since there were fewer mentions on the whole. Work and career related factors received most mentions for being motivating, and communication related factors were not far behind. These factors are known as instrumental motivation and integrative motivation, respectively (Cook 1996:96). *Instrumental motivation* has to do with learning a language for a practical reason, such as your career, while *integrative motivation* makes you want to learn a language to be able to identify with the target culture and people: to read its literature and visit it on holidays, for example (Cook 1996:97). Cook (1996:97) points out that one does not rule out the other, so it is quite possible for one person to be motivated by both, or a variety of other factors, which was also shown in the present data. It is not surprising that these two motivational factors received most mentions, since the course was organised by the employer; the whole purpose of the course was to make the employees perform better at work, and be able to communicate with the foreign colleagues as well as customers.

The factors that the teachers found successful and unsuccessful partly overlapped with those of the learners'. The teachers mentioned learners' communicative confidence as an achieved course goal, but also as a successful aspect of the course. Both teachers were particularly happy with the news reading exercise and its success in getting the learners to talk in English. They both discussed the relaxed and encouraging approach that they each had in the classroom, and especially the native-speaker teacher reported on the success of the approach when dealing with the learners. He stressed that he did not want to be the one who told them what was right or wrong, and whenever correcting their mistakes,

he tried to do it as carefully as possible. His approach is also supported by Tsui (1996:163), whose study on teachers' perceptions of factors that contribute to student reticence demonstrated that activities that focused on content rather than form were effective, because the students did not need to fear having their mistakes corrected. Tsui (1996:165) also argues that a low-anxiety atmosphere in the classroom is essential in order to overcome the problem of unwillingness. This can be quite challenging to the teacher of a course that emphasises oral communication skills, since oral production in the classroom has been highlighted by several researchers as particularly anxiety inducing (Hilleson 1996:266). As the native-speaker teacher of the present study observed: "one week they would fly, and the next week they would fall", also Hilleson (1996:262) made a similar remark on the non-linear nature of anxiety: "students would feel satisfied with their progress one day, and the next they would feel that their speaking proficiency had not changed since their arrival".

The teachers noted the same as the learners: it was very counterproductive when several learners were absent from the lesson. First and foremost it was bad for the absent learner, but as the groups were so small (6-8 people) the other members of the group suffered also, since some group activities had to be skipped altogether because they would have been impossible to do with only a few learners. It was the less experienced native-speaker teacher who found this a problem, in particular. Being able to depart from the lesson plan skilfully, quickly and with confidence is a highly important skill for a teacher, and it can only develop over time and experience (Bailey 1996:37). Bailey (1996:18) explains that not all factors that influence lesson plans are controlled by the teacher, and one of them is the quality and quantity of learner participation, especially in a learner-centered curriculum. Bailey (1996:19) notes, as did one of the interviewees in the present study, that having options for altering lessons can benefit the teacher as well as learners. It is understandable, however, that not knowing how many learners will turn up for the lesson can be frustrating in the long run. The local teacher also mentioned the fact that missing language lessons because of work projects can really hinder a person's learning, or even put a stop to it if the learner misses

several consecutive lessons. Unfortunately, competing interests such as work and family are part of the very nature of adult education (Rogers 1989:32).

The native-speaker teacher also noted that he was unsuccessful in getting the learners to take part in games, and at times he found the learners, especially the more talented ones, very unwilling to participate. He is not alone with the problem of getting students to respond in the classroom; it is a problem that most ESL teachers face (Tsui 1996:145). In her study of student reticence, Tsui (1996:148-154) surveyed teachers' perceptions of student unwillingness in the classroom and found the following reasons for it: students' low English proficiency, fear of mistakes, teachers' intolerance of silence, uneven allocation of turns and incomprehensible input. In this case, the native-speaker teacher's observation in his classroom contradicts Tsui's results: he found that it was the ones with the higher proficiency that were often more unwilling than the lower proficiency groups. When it comes to taking part in games, it has been indicated that the difficulty of getting adults to join in play-like situations is because they may feel that they would learn better in conventional formal style of teaching (Cook 1996:112). Cook (1996:112) suggests that adults actually benefit more from the "childish" activities of the Total Physical Response method than children, if only they can be convinced to join in.

On the whole, it can be said that judging from the data, the course succeeded in improving the learners' communication skills and in the teaching techniques that were chosen; both learners and teachers thought so. It seems that the teachers' personalities and their approach worked hand in hand with the chosen teaching techniques to make an environment conducive to learning.

However, what seems to need some more consideration is the course syllabus. It might be worthwhile to make a course syllabus that would outline each lesson, and make it known for the learners as well. Learners could still participate by suggesting activities or choosing between a few alternatives, but they would have a clearer idea of what the course entails. It might even motivate the learners to not miss any lessons. It may well be impossible to ensure that no learner ever missed

a lesson: whenever there is a deadline at work that requires the employee's attention, the language course will be overshadowed by it. It might be easier for the teachers to make their own lesson plans so that they are prepared with alternative activities in case only two or three people show up.

Suggestions for improving the course

One of the main suggestions from the learners was to use the book more. The teachers, in contrast, reported having to create most of their material themselves. It is understandable that if there was a book, the learners expected to use it, and were disappointed if it was not. The suggestion to use the book more could easily be combined with the suggestion for a stricter course syllabus. The teachers could make a course syllabus for a few months at a time, and include some suggested exercises from the book for each lesson, so that those who wish to, could do the extra exercises at home, even if during the lesson some other material was used. This would be especially beneficial to those learners who had to miss the lesson, since they would at least know which exercises to complete at home. Communication exercises, of course, are impossible to do home alone.

There were some suggestions about having the lessons on the company premises. It is understandable why the learners would rather stay closer to work, but one must also consider the teachers. At the institute they have all the equipment and materials they need at hand, and the classrooms are suited for language learning. A conference room at work might not be such a good environment for language lessons. Also, it would be far too easy for an assistant or a colleague to come and request a learner's presence somewhere else mid-lesson.

There were also suggestions about involving the company's foreign employees in the language course. This is something the human relations department might want to consider. For example, the German employees might even benefit from the language lesson, but they would also bring in their own set of language skills and some errors typical of them, but not of Finnish language learners; the learners

could benefit from the situation by instructing each other. It would also be an opportunity for the foreign employees to make new acquaintances.

An intensive day of English or an English dinner at the end of the course to reward the learners might also be something to consider. It might be something for the learners to look forward to, and make it less likely that they start missing lessons towards the spring. Also, if it was with all the groups combined, they would get to interact with some less familiar peers, as they wished.

The teachers' suggestions were fewer than the learners'. The native-speaker teacher's suggestions about starting the course earlier in the autumn and having all the groups start at an equal time are a matter of organisation by the human relations department. It is understandable, however, that some of the employees are on summer holidays until the end of August, which only leaves a month to organise the groups before the start of October. It was also suggested that the Christmas break should be shorter than a month, but with individual Christmas holiday plans it might be difficult to arrange.

The local teacher hoped to improve goal-setting at the start of the course and make the learners more committed to those goals. If the goal-setting was to be improved, the learners should be made to think about their goals and become aware of them. They most probably have some intentions and needs when they come to the language course: some specific, some more general and others unknown even to themselves (Rogers 1989:34), but as the local teacher suggested, their goals should not be left undefined. According to Rogers (1989:78), goals play an important role in the learning process and in learner motivation, and should therefore not be left unstated, assumed or uncertain. Hilleson (1996:274) found that the students became more relaxed after they realised how to make realistic demands on themselves. He interpreted this to mean that students need guidance in terms of realistic goal setting. So it seems that researchers support the local teacher's view about the importance of learner goals. It certainly seems worth more consideration and more focus.

As Brown (1995:235) points out, a volunteer sample limits the generalizability of the results, which has to be born in mind when drawing any conclusions from the present data. Some of the other problems to consider according to Brown (1995:237-238) are the teacher effect and the Hawthorne effect. The teacher effect should not be a problem with the present sample, because every group had the same teachers. The Hawthorne effect, however, should be taken into account. It is also known as the novelty effect (Brown 1995:238), and may cause students to try harder when they know they are part of a novel experiment. Since the interviewees were volunteers, it is possible that some of them were trying harder to either be more critical than they normally would or to please the employer by giving answers that they thought were "desirable". One has to bear this in mind when drawing conclusions from the results.

6 CONCLUSION

Recent studies highlight the usefulness of course evaluation in the curriculum process, and researchers agree that it is an essential tool for the teacher in developing the course. Many have suggested that course evaluation should be a structural part of the course, and as such, ongoing. In addition to end-of-course evaluation, some initial evaluation has been found particularly useful in order to raise the learners' as well as the teacher's awareness of the learners' needs, purposes, goals, skills, strengths and weaknesses. These factors are also known as input variables, and are particularly important in adult education, since adults may have a great deal of previous knowledge and experience, as well as strong ideas about their needs, as they enter the course. The most appropriate method of course evaluation is very much case-specific and depends on the purpose of the evaluation, but generally it can be said that open-ended questionnaires have been found more useful than forms with yes/no answers, and individual interviews more useful than written evaluation in catching the complexity of the learners' views and exposing the ambivalence of their answers.

The goal of the present study was to discover if the learners and teachers of the "Everyday English at work" course found it successful and whether they reached their goals, and to report on their suggestions for improving the course. A course evaluation was conducted by using a goal-setting form at the start, a goal check-up form half-way through the course, and interviews at the end of the course. The forms were used to examine the learners' goals and whether they had achieved them. The interviews were used to get more information about the learners' and teachers' goals and the aspects of the course that they had found successful and unsuccessful, as well as to learn what suggestions they had for improving the course. Even though the head teacher of the "Everyday English at work" course has had a tradition of asking the learners to fill in an end-of-course evaluation form, it was likely that the learners felt more comfortable giving honest feedback to an outsider in an interview, than on a form handed in to the teacher. The learners seemed to have many suggestions for improving the course, and they were very keen to give them to the interviewer, so it seems that the interviews

were more successful in getting suggestions from the learners than the forms. The sample of the present evaluation was a volunteer sample and rather small, which limits the generalisability of the results.

Despite its small sample, the major finding of the present course evaluation was that the "Everyday English at work" course reached its main goal of improving the learners' communicative confidence, and succeeded in choosing the appropriate approach and methodology that helped in creating an anxiety-free atmosphere which in turn contributed to the positive results. It also seemed that the course would benefit from setting some more specific course goals, and especially from making learner goals more explicit, both for the learners themselves and for the teachers. A clear course syllabus would help the adult learners know where they are going and what they are learning during the course, which seemed important to some individuals in particular. An important lesson to learn from the present course evaluation is that learners need guidance in filling their goal-setting forms. There was some confusion as to what was meant by "goals" and it seemed that the learners' goals changed between the start of the course and mid-course, so listing one's goals for a language course is not as easy as one might think if one has never needed to think of them before.

It seems to be difficult to find published course evaluations from the private sector. Undoubtedly there have been some, but they have not been published. Beretta (1992:6) criticises evaluations of the kind that are only for restricted audiences: firstly, it is impossible to know if such evaluations are scholarly or disciplined, and secondly, by not making their methods and findings public, they can have little to say to an academic audience. Thirdly, Beretta (1992:6) sees the value of such studies as merely to please its sponsors. Hopefully, the present study will not remain the only private sector course evaluation to be made public.

Looking back, there are some things that could have been done differently about the data collection in the present study. Having a bigger sample would have made the results more generalisable, but it would have also required more human resources for the transcription and coding of the interviews. In order to make sure

more learners returned their goal-setting and goal check-up forms, the evaluator should have requested copies of them immediately after the learners filled them in, and not trust them to hand them both in at the end of the course. In the present study, the learners were asked to keep their forms safe for their own reference so they could remind themselves of their goals during the course. Further, some interviewing during the course about learner goals would have helped in monitoring how the learners' goals changed. Presently, the data from the forms imply that the goals changed, but give no details as to whose goals changed, and why. Also, a follow-up evaluation six months or a year after the course would have helped to see if the positive results remained. As far as data analysis is concerned, there was only one person coding the data in the present study. Having two people coding the data would have helped with inter-rater reliability, since there were some statements that were unclear as to which category they belonged in, and some that were quite ambiguous as to whether they were positive, neutral or negative.

The results of the present course evaluation can be used when designing a language course for adult learners, and especially when planning next year's "Everyday English at work" course. In order to improve learners' goal-setting and commitment to the course, the teacher might want to dedicate the first lesson for goal-setting alone. As a pre-course assignment the learners could fill in the goal-setting forms, but during the first lesson the teacher could have a little talk with each individual about their goals to encourage each one to truly think them over. This would not only benefit the learners themselves, but the teacher as well, as she would gain valuable information for the course syllabus.

It would be interesting to conduct a comparative study on the impact of proper goal-setting, since it is considered important by researchers, but not much empirical study has been performed. It would also be interesting to examine how different the learners' goals and motivations are on a language course that is not organised by their employer, or has a different focus or methodology.

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APPENDIX 1: Goal-setting form

OMAT TAVOITTEENI

Mitä odotuksia ja tavoitteita minulla on alkavan koulutuksen suhteen?

_____

_____

_____

Näiden asioiden oppimiseksi aion panostaa erityisesti:

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

Jos tahdon päästä jonnekin,
minun on tiedettävä minne mennä.
Sen jälkeen en suostu millään ehdolla antamaan periksi.
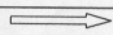_-Norman Vincent Peale-_

Allekirjoitus   _____

APPENDIX 2: Goal check-up form

II TAVOITTEIDEN TARKISTUS...

Onko koulutus tähän saakka vastannut odotuksiasi ja asettamiasi tavoitteita?

_____

Mitkä tavoitteet

... ovat hyvää vauhtia toteutumassa?	... eivät ole toteutuneet ? ⟹ Miksi ei?

Muistuta mieleesi koulutuksen alussa asettamasi erityistavoitteet. Oletko tyytyväinen omaan panostukseesi kunkin aihealueen kohdalla?

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

Allekirjoitus _____

APPENDIX 3: Interview questions for the learners

1. Mitä sinulle tulee mieleen englanninkielisestä kulttuurista? Onko sinulla omia kokemuksia? Millaisia?
2. Montako kieltä osaat? Onko siitä apua muussa kielenoppimisessa? Miten?
3. Onko kieltenoppiminen sinulle helppoa? Miksi/Miksi ei? (Onko sinulla "kielipäätä"?)
4. Mikä motivoi sinua opiskelemaan ja oppimaan englantia? Miksi haluat oppia? Miksi juuri näistä syistä?
5. Miltä tuntuu ottaa oppilaan rooli aikuisena?
6. Millaisia ennakko-odotuksia sinulla oli kurssin suhteen? Toteutuivatko ne?
7. Millaisia päämääriä asetit itsellesi kurssin alussa? Saavutitko ne? Miten/Miksi et? Muuttuivatko tavoitteesi kurssin aikana?
8. Kurssin metodologia:
    - (Millaisia menetelmiä/työtapoja kurssilla käytettiin?) Mitä tunneilla yleensä tehtiin? Millaisia harjoituksia käytettiin?
    - Olivatko kurssilla käytetyt työskentelytavat mieleisiäsi?
    - Mitkä olivat eri menetelmien vahvuudet ja heikkoudet?
    - Painottuiko jokin osa-alue selvästi? Mikä oli mielestäsi tärkein osa-alue? Saitteko vaikuttaa kurssin painopisteisiin, otettiinko toiveenne huomioon?
    - Saitko henkilökohtaista ohjausta jos sitä pyysit?
9. Tunsitko kurssin aikana oppivasi jotain? Jokin tärkeä oppimiskokemus (myönteinen tai kielteinen)?
10. Parantuiko kielitaitosi kurssin aikana? Miten? Mitkä ovat omat vahvuusalueesi, missä olet erityisen hyvä? Missä kaipaat lisäharjoitusta? Millaista hyötyä kurssista on tulevaisuuttasi ajatellen?
11. Oletko tyytyväinen kurssiin? Mikä oli hyvää? Mitä jäit kaipaamaan?
    - materiaali
    - opetus
    - kurssilaiset (oliko ryhmässä tasoeroja? Millainen ryhmähenkenne oli?)
    - järjestelyt (Sopiko tuntien ajankohta muuhun aikatauluusi?)
    - sisällöt
    Miten kurssia voisi kehittää?
12. Oletko tyytyväinen omiin oppimistuloksiisi? Mihin olet erityisen tyytyväinen? Mihin jäi parantamisen varaa?
13. Vaikuttiko oma toimintasi tuloksiisi? Miten? Miten olisit voinut parantaa tuloksiasi? Miten voisit kehittää työskentelyäsi? Miksi toimit niin kuin toimit?
14. Millainen opetustyyli sopii sinulle parhaiten?

APPENDIX 4: Interview questions for the teachers

1. Mitä mielestäsi on kieltenopettaminen? Millainen lähestymistapa sinulla on siihen? Mikä on tärkeintä? What sort of an approach do you have on language teaching? What do you think language teaching is about? What is most important about language teaching?
2. Millaisia ennakko-odotuksia sinulla oli tämän kurssin opettamisen suhteen? Toteutuivatko odotuksesi? What expectations did you have about teaching this course? How accurate were those expectations?
3. Mitä asioita kurssilla painotettiin? Oliko se tietoinen valinta? Perustelut painotuksen valinnalle? What areas of language did you emphasize on the course? Was it a conscious decision (to emphasize those areas)? Why?
4. (Kurssin metodologia/opetustekniikka) Millaisia työskentelytapoja/opetusmenetelmiä kurssilla käytettiin? Mitkä olivat eri opetusmenetelmien vahvuudet ja heikkoudet? Painottuiko jokin osa-alue selvästi? (Technique) What kind of teaching methods did you use? What were the strengths/weaknesses? Did any aspect get emphasized in the classroom?
5. Kurssimateriaali: Millä perusteella valitsitte kurssimateriaalin? Oliko mukana myös autenttista materiaalia? Course material: How did you choose the course material (books, handouts)? Did you use any authentic material?
6. Teittekö tarvekartoitusta kurssin alussa? Käytittekö sitä kurssin suunnittelussa? Did you do any needs analysis at the start of the course? Did you benefit from it? Did it influence the course plan?
7. Millaisia päämääriä asetitte kurssille? Miksi juuri nämä? Muuttuivatko tavoitteet kurssin aikana? What goals/objectives did you set for the course? Why these particular ones? Did your goals change during the course?
8. Jaoitte kurssilaiset eri ryhmiin. Millä perusteella? Oliko eri ryhmillä eri tavoitteet ja päämäärät? The students were divided into groups. In what basis? Did different groups have different goals or objectives?
9. Saavutitteko päämääränne? Mikä oli kurssin tärkein saavutus? Mitä jäi puuttumaan? Did you reach the goals you set for the course? What was the most important accomplishment of the course? Is there need for improvement? Where?
10. Parantuiko kurssilaisten kielitaito kurssin aikana? Did the students' language skills improve during the course?
11. Oletteko tyytyväinen oppilaitten tuloksiin? Miksi/Miksi ei? Are you pleased with the students' results? Why/Why not?
12. Miten kurssia voisi kehittää ottaen huomioon tämän vuoden kokemukset? Mitä voisi tehdä toisin? How could this course be improved considering this year's experiences? What would you do differently?
13. Tärkein/mieluisin opettamiskokemus tämän kurssin aikana? Entä huonoin? Mikä onnistui erityisen hyvin? Mikä ei niin hyvin? Your most pleasant teaching experience during this course? The least pleasant? What went particularly well? What not so well?
14. Millainen opetustyyli sopii sinulle parhaiten? Miksi pidät tästä opetustyylistä? What teaching style suits you best? Why do you prefer this style?
15. Miltä tuntuu opettaa aikuisia opiskelijoita? How does it feel to teach adult learners?

APPENDIX 5: Translations

Learners' quotes: English translations

1) 'To gain some confidence in speaking.' (Am1)
2) 'A more courageous attitude to the use of language.' (Gm10)
3) 'Lowering the barrier to start talking.' (Ff6)
4) 'Speaking confidence increased a little.' (Am1)
5) 'Speaking, more courage to speak than at the start of the year.' (Af2)
6) 'The threshold to speak has been lowered.' (Df5)
7) 'Listening comprehension, I just can't understand the different "sounds".' (Af2)
8) 'No improvement in grammar ↙ grammar has hardly been dealt with at all.' (Fm7)
9) 'Replying e-mails and writing fluently, we should have exercises.' (Bm2)
10) 'This kind of spoken English, telephone conversation, kind of general knowledge about how it's constructed, what would be the good manners.' (E)
11) 'Confidence and of course pronunciation.' (F)
12) 'This year I actually enjoyed these English classes, cause you really got to… or let's say that this person who didn't understand, then he… realised what we were saying to him.' (A)
13) 'Well I notice it when for example the phone rings and I hear English, my heart doesn't stop or anything… that I can make some kind of sensible sentences after all, right away.' (F)
14) 'it's pretty flexible, the lesson.. and we discuss everyday things of all sorts and, talk about things, and I think it's good, because that's what it's like it's close to the situation you find yourself in with the language out there, that it's not just doing your homework and going through it. Communication is what it boils down to.' (E)
15) 'I do consider the teacher really important… so there's someone to take the whole thing ahead… not too much but anyway so there's someone who always pulls you back to the certain.. so it doesn't start to meander. This is what our teacher did.' (B)
16) 'There was the local teacher… really good, sprightly, enthusiastic, quite an energetic girl.' (B)
17) 'And T2 is also, I might have been a little nervous at first about the native teacher, but he was awfully relaxed after all, so it was really nice.' (D)
18) 'I didn't quite T2's, maybe my comprehension is on such a low level… I thought T2 often spoke.. such thick English that we would just exchange glares… such complicated narration… then I felt quite good when I caught the drift again.. so that was a little… not exactly disappointing, but.. maybe he's not so experienced as a teacher either.' (C)
19) 'I was satisfied. Indeed he had put effort into a clear presentation of things, so there was no dialect… he must have consciously not used a dialect… he really got us talking.' (F)
20) 'Actually we've had such a group that we weren't many, there were a few who have hardly been to a single class… quite often we were just two or if there was going to be just one then we've had to cancel classes. Of course you'd get intensive teaching if you went in alone, but.' (D)

21) 'team spirit so that… it's kind of easy to start the conversation so there was no reason to be shy about not speaking so well, if there happened to be someone next to you… it felt like you were among your own gang.' (G3)

22) 'Material indeed the book, it was really good… it was Business First, that kind of book… it goes through should I say work-related areas and travelling and things… it's really good, it's annoying that we didn't go through it systematically or more systematically… because it would have had some really good topics, and vocabulary, phrases.' (B)

23) 'There was a book, but it wasn't opened once within the framework of the course… and the other material… it was these copies of all sorts from books and from wherever they have these exercises… generally I avoid this kind of study material because you're not left with much more than a mishmash in a folder, it kind of… --- you're not left with anything, if you wanted to have a look afterwards sometime.. pretty difficult to perceive… If it was more ready-made, even if it was a stack of handouts, but that it was more like in chronological order, what was discussed when, then it would be easier to remember where to find it if you wanted to have a look.' (G3)

24) 'it's been really bad that, right now we've probably had, over – has it been two months already in between of not having lessons… then they always – you have to, it's a setback.. It was mostly because of the learners, I believe it was due to being busy with work, I don't believe anyone would enrol in a course and not go.' (D)

25) 'Over all, one would like some well… in a way about the lesson plan some… is assertiveness the right word, but like that.. at least I feel that if along the way you're constantly asked about what to do next week and should we do this kind of an exercise or that kind of an exercise what would you like then, it's this Finnish character that it's just this mutual humming.' (G3)

26) 'Personally I would have liked that we had some plan, somehow one would have been left with… some sort of a picture that this is what I have now… I master. A clearer structure.' (B)

27) 'Well honestly I think these listening exercises nowadays are maybe a little outdated… I don't know if they are meant to, probably in some later stage it may be a good thing that they are with different sounds and pronunciations, but at such an early stage a traditional rather clear would be –I know it probably has some purpose.. but somehow I feel that the listening part is still a bit behind.' (E)

28) 'Just that you need language skills in this company, otherwise you can't manage at work, some kind of language skills are good to have.' (C)

29) 'Personally I like to keep up with the spirit of the time and develop myself technically also.' (E)

30) 'My partner's daughter is marr- or will marry an Englishman, so I would like to converse with them to some degree so I wouldn't have to just sit there.' (A)

31) 'Sure I would like to be able to face foreign people better. There would be a common language.' (D)

32) 'We have these foreigners here.' (A)

33) 'When they start filling us up with grammar and this has to be like this and now you said it wrong… that's when I think I lose interest in studying.' (A)

34) 'It would be good if when.. anyway when you enrol in the course, that they would see the starting level so that you get groups of equal level… and if in a

way the main direction or what you'll be studying would be clear at that stage when you enrol and, maybe right at the start of the course you could ask the group what each person wishes to emphasise, and based on that you'd make the lesson plan rather detailed even, about what exercises you'll have in which lesson… so that everyone would know if they have to be absent, which topics were discussed, whether it was important for them if they have to be absent… And overall if you keep asking for opinions, everyone will have their own opinions about what should be done and you can't find a common direction, it is after all the course leader's job to lay out the plan for what will be done here after the initial enquiry.' (G3)

Teachers' quotes: English translations

35) 'one of those really important goals that we reached, that, that, for that I can thank T2 a lot for, that is.. this.. improvement in speech and improvement in oral skills was like, it was in many groups outright, it was outright noticeable, and that was clearly due to the native teacher for the most part. So for that I am, for that I am like proud that you could see the-the difference in these people in the autumn and now in the spring' (T1)

36) –

37) –

38) –

39) 'what makes this wonderful is maybe the working with adults… and despite everything adults usually react, they tell you if they want something different or… somehow the interaction is like different, than out there with youths so, so maybe it is this interaction that makes this, that… there are such different characters and, even in the group of adults and the fact that by discussion you can get things to develop, like nowhere else' (T1)

40) –

41) 'people who had sneaked in here like I won't speak, I won't –I'll just listen, then you like notice that they are talking, rather naturally even, well then, then I just stopped and looked at them like wow, clearly something has happened' (T1)

42) 'we aim to start each lesson with a look at what's happening in the world, in Finland, in Varkaus, the whole scale. And, if there are some interesting things, then we pick them and I've noticed that when the learners know that we'll start with that, they come in with an outlook that they can take a stand, discuss, express their opinions about things, and also I've noticed, that many say, many have given feedback that these daily coffee breaks, small talk at work, they discuss Formula 1 as well as world politics so. So it's been really rewarding that they notice that, yeah this is good in addition to the work, that they need' (T1)

43) –

44) 'I've noticed that there are some, some learners who feel they need more grammar. Although what's funny is that the people who say they want more grammar are from the higher end, and for example when I asked our native teacher what about the grammar he said that their grammar is perfect' (T1)