

GLOBAL TO LOCAL:

English in the lives of five Helsinki-based immigrant
entrepreneurs

Master's thesis
Ilkka Saarinen

University of Jyväskylä
Department of languages
English
May 2014

JYVÄSKYLÄN YLIOPISTO

Tiedekunta – Faculty Humanistinen tiedekunta	Laitos – Department Kielten laitos
Tekijä – Author Ilkka Saarinen	
Työn nimi – Title Global to local: English in the lives of five Helsinki-based immigrant entrepreneurs	
Oppiaine – Subject Englanti	Työn laji – Level Pro gradu - tutkielma
Aika – Month and year Toukokuu 2014	Sivumäärä – Number of pages 96 sivua + 2 liitettä
Tiivistelmä – Abstract <p>Tämä tutkimus käsittelee Helsingissä liiketoimintaansa harjoittavien maahanmuuttajayrittäjien englannin kielen käyttöä liiketoiminnassaan ja sen ulkopuolella. Tutkimus peilaa myös englannin kielen yleistä roolia Suomessa sekä etenkin Helsingin alueella. Maahanmuuttajien ja maahanmuuttajayrittäjien kielenkäyttöä on tutkittu Suomessa aiemmin lähinnä suomen kielen kannalta ja hyvin laajalla tasolla. Englannin kielen roolista maahanmuuttajayrittäjien piirissä on tehty lähinnä vain sivuhuomautuksia.</p> <p>Tutkimuksen empiirinen osa on toteutettu puolistrukturoidulla teemahaastattelulla. Empiirinen aineisto on nauhoitettu ja litteroitu. Haastattelu- ja tutkimusteemojen valinta pohjaa niin teoreettiseen viitekehykseen, tutkijan intuitioon kuin haastateltavien omiin näkemyksiin, sekä teoreettisen viitekehyksen ulkopuolelta esiin nouseviin ilmiöihin, kuten kielen ja syrjinnän väliseen suhteeseen. Myös tutkimuksen johtopäätökset ovat muodostettu vuoropuhelussa edellä mainittujen seikkojen kanssa.</p> <p>Tutkimustulosten pohjalta voidaan esittää, että englannilla on ratkaiseva merkitys haastateltujen maahanmuuttajayrittäjien elämässä. Englantia käytetään tutkimuskontekstissa yleisimpänä kielenä, sekä suurimman asiakaskunnan muodostavien maahanmuuttajien välillä, joille englanninkieli saattaa olla eräänlainen yhdistävä tekijä suomenkielen taitojen ollessa puutteelliset, että myös suomea taitavien henkilöiden välisessä kommunikaatiossa. Osalla haastatelluista henkilöistä näkemykset suomen kielen tärkeydestä pohjautuvat enemmänkin ideologisiin syihin. Tutkimuksessa nousee esiin myös kielen ja työllistymisen välinen suhde, ja ilmenee että puutteellinen suomen kielen taito saattaa olla yrittäjyyteen johtava tekijä.</p> <p>Tutkimuksessa pohditaan lisäksi terminologian kautta esiin nousevia maahanmuuttaja- ja yrittäjä käsitteisiin liittyviä luokitteluongelmia.</p>	
Asiasanat – Keywords: English Lingua Franca, Immigrant studies, Globalization, Entrepreneurship	
Säilytyspaikka – Depository: Kielten laitos	
Muita tietoja – Additional information	

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1 INTRODUCTION

People have always had the need to communicate. Whether it is by means of a written letter or an utterance, the need has been there since the dawn of time. But times change, as do people. Gone are the days when people interacted only with those who were physically close to them, was it the kinsman within the same village or community, or the countryman within the borders of a nation-state. Foreign countries were accessible, but few had the means or the demanded status to endeavor across long distances to locations that could have been hostile. In addition, once the new surroundings had been reached, communication could be difficult if one was not versed in the languages of the higher classes, since one's own language did not necessarily have an audience outside a defined geographical location.

These things still hold in many parts of the world. However, in Western societies, such as contemporary Finland, people travel to and fro, not just within the country of nationality, but between nations that might be located on the opposite sides of the world. This movement of people is bidirectional: the places whereto Finns travel see perhaps an equal or even greater flow of people away from that location, and some of these people might in return travel or relocate to Finland.

The flow of people, resources and cultural artefacts is taking place at an increasing rate and through a growing number of channels (Blommaert 2010:1). Language, especially, is able to reach an audience that in historical terms is unprecedented in size. This together with the need to communicate, to hear and be heard, within the communities of our day an age, not anymore restricted to geographical realities, speeds up the rate in which English, the globally chosen language to perform all these functions, is gaining ground.

As people move and relocate globally, coming in contact with languages they perhaps are not familiar with at all, they still have the primal need to communicate. If not for pleasure, at least for in order to survive. For many, the language that allows them to do so, at least in the beginning of a prolonged or permanent stay, is English. This is made possible by the global reach and global user-base that English has, especially in the case of countries such as Finland, where the national proficiency in English is high.

The present study takes an interest in these mechanisms of globalization, with a specific focus on immigrants as a manifestation of the flow of people and English as an instance

of the flow of language. Together these two form a research context in which academic research has already been executed to some extent in Finland, and observations have been made about the important role that English fulfills in the lives of immigrants residing in Finland (see for instance Nieminen 2009, Lappalainen 2010 and Jalava 2011). But when we turn into what could be called a subcontext within general immigrant studies, the study of immigrant entrepreneurship, the findings and observations about language use are mainly restricted to the role of Finnish. Still, scattered observations about the importance of English have been made within this research context as well, but they have thus far remained as peculiar side-notes and anomalies that have not yet merited academic interest in their own right.

Building on all this, the present study combines the knowledge about the use of English by immigrants in Finland with the scarce observations about the same phenomenon within immigrant entrepreneurship research and explores the way in which English portrays itself in the lives and business activities of five Helsinki-based immigrant entrepreneurs. The study is carried out by utilizing qualitative methods, i.e. a theme interview, and the core of the study is built around the insights shared by the participants about the way they employ English in their daily activities.

As said, the role of English in the context of immigrant entrepreneurs has not yet been academically explored, and thus the present study has the possibility not only to do this, but also mirror the surrounding society, shedding light on the use of English in Finland on a larger scale, if it is found that the use of English is commonplace in the research context. Moreover, if the immigrant entrepreneurs are observed to use English to a great extent, it could be seen as a sort of a nexus of global and local; global individuals using a global language locally.

The chosen tools for this endeavor are adopted from various academic disciplines, such as sociology, linguistic ethnography, sociolinguistics, business studies and immigrant entrepreneurship research. Such an interdisciplinary approach is explained by the multifaceted nature of the research topic. From linguistics, ideas such as sociolinguistics of globalization and lingua franca communication are chosen as the theoretical underpinnings.

The research report begins with an overview of the theoretical framework on which the study has been constructed, followed by a discussion over the terminology relevant for the interpretation of the main themes of the study. After the key terminology has been

introduced, the situation of immigrants in Finland is looked into more carefully. From there the reader is guided through the methodological and empirical dimensions of the study, building towards the presentation of the data and main observations. After the groundwork has been done, the penultimate section brings forth the research conclusions drawn through the interplay of the theoretical framework and the research data. The main findings and limitations of the study, together with suggestions for further study bring the research report to a close.

2 SOCIOLINGUISTICS AND GLOBALIZATION - SOCIOLINGUISTICS IN CHANGING TIMES

The world is everywhere. The unprecedented advances in the way people and things travel across the globe have brought the global into local, resulting in a world where even the remotest place on Earth can be accessed in one way or another, where people travel and relocate from near and far and where a specific language is developing into a globally shared resource. In some level, all this is part of globalization, a phenomenon that everyone is a part of and is familiar with as a concept. Still, it is a phenomenon that is also very difficult to define and measure. What is certain, however, is that by reorganizing the world we live in, globalization changes the theories and ideas of the human sciences, many of which have been developed in a different time to explain societal constructs and order that no longer exist as such.

According to the Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary (2008:610:2), globalization is a process "(in which) available goods and services, or social and cultural influences, gradually become similar in all parts of the world". Although there are numerous definitions for the phenomenon, of which the one above sounds admittedly concise and accurate, many researchers, Omoniyi and Saxena (2010:1) for instance, have noted that globalization is among the most complex concepts in the social sciences, to which different disciplines have produced definitions that fit their own chosen frameworks. Consequently, Dewey and Jenkins (2010:77-78) see the theories behind globalization as highly interdisciplinary, and characterize globalization as a process of increased interconnectedness in every level of contemporary social life. However, this interconnectedness is not anything new, as Blommaert (2010:1) notes;

only the rate and depth of it are something that is idiomatic to the current era of globalization.

As globalization takes place in all layers of society, it therefore functions through communication and language as well. Clyne (2009:1) notes that globalization has a significant effect on language contact in particular, since the very basis of language contact is the interaction between people from different linguistic backgrounds, something that is a given in the processes of globalization. On the basis of this, Clyne (*ibid.*) and Hasselblatt et al. (2011:3) call for multidisciplinary research and varied approaches in order to grasp the parameters behind language contact and globalization. In the same vein, Collins et al. (2009:2) note that globalization overall challenges linguistics by bringing the global into local and by forcing linguistics to shift focus from linguistic-structural features to socially embedded communication. Furthermore, Collins and Slembrouck (2009:19) emphasize that in contemporary linguistics, communicative activity in the local level is best assessed by linking it to global phenomena, such as the flow of people. Or in other words, linguistic phenomena that can be identified on a global scale (i.e. the growing use of English and globalized multilingualism) are best assessed by tying them to local phenomena (i.e. the use of English by a specific group in a local context).

Blommaert (2010) sees globalization and migration flows resulting in the creation of super-diverse Western urban centers, i.e. immigrant neighborhoods, where a variety of language repertoires, consisting of indigenous languages, national languages and possible lingua francas, such as English, are used to varying degrees in daily activities and encounters. Nihalani, on the other hand, (2010:23) ties globalization and global connectivity to three elements: “(1) entrepreneurial energetic individuals, (2) the internet and (3) the English language – global connectivity serves not only to exchange information and ideas but also to create wealth”. Of these three points, entrepreneurial energetic individuals and the English language are of special interest in the present study, mostly because such individuals are in the forefront of globalization and English could be used as a facilitating medium in their entrepreneurial activities.

When talking about language and globalization, the negative aspects that are associated with it should also be brought forward. There are linguists who see the rise of English in the vanguard of globalization as a threat to (all) languages (see for instance Skutnabb-Kangas 2000; Crystal 2000, 2004) and call for action to stop the overt dominance of

English. However, this notion has been challenged as belonging to an obsolete paradigm of linguistics; for example, Valentine et al. (2009:190) favor a post-modern approach to languages, seeing language, not as a threat, but as a resource that has been detached from the local nation-state, transforming into a global mobile resource used for different communicative practices.

Due to the changing linguistic landscapes, it is occasionally difficult to specify what counts as sociolinguistic research. Shuy (2003:15), for instance, points out that the scope of sociolinguistics is presently rather broad, and there is a debate about what should be regarded as sociolinguistic research. This coincides with Milroy and Gordon's (2003:xii) view, who state that sociolinguistics has recently experienced significant growth both in the number of researchers and the methods applied by them. Nevertheless, in Blommaert's (2010:2) view, globalization is truly a sociolinguistic matter, and as a result, language is in the very core of the processes of globalization. Building on the ideas put forth by Dell Hymes (1974), he further argues that a theory of sociolinguistics in a globalizing world cannot be just another linguistic theory, but a type of fundamental theory of language and society:

an approach that looks at linguistic phenomena from within the social, cultural, political and historical context of which they are a part; one that considers language as organized not just in a linguistic system but in a sociolinguistic system, the rules and dynamics of which cannot be automatically derived from considering their linguistic features; and one that so examines language in an attempt to understand society...An ethnographically formulated sociolinguistics, seen from that angle, is a critical social science of language. (Blommaert 2010:3).

Since globalization poses challenges to the old (socio)linguistic paradigms, and as becomes clear in the ideas put forth by e.g. Blommaert, there are linguists who call for a sociolinguistic theory that would incorporate the post-modern society of globalization more accurately into sociolinguistics than is possible through the use of the 'old' sociolinguistic theories that came to light in a much different time. Of course, sociolinguistics has always progressed as time has moved on, but some still call for a 'new' branch of linguistics to better answer the demands of contemporary societies and globalization. This new branch of linguistics is occasionally referred to as *linguistic ethnography*. Nb. the current diversification of sociolinguistics has been noted in the Finnish context as well, for instance by Laitinen (2013:187-189).

Ben Rampton is one of the leading proponents of linguistic ethnography. He (2007:584) sees the new wave of linguistic ethnography not as a paradigm or a set of rigid definitions and guidelines, but rather as a meeting point for various established lines of research, coming together to create an arena for the analysis of language in society. He (2007:590) refers to the linguistic ethnographer as a person whose “research is often more motivated by interests generated in practical activity than by a fascination with academic theory *per se*. Indeed, in many cases this shift into linguistics and/or ethnography is an attempt to find a way of adequately rendering quite extensive personal experience”. Incidentally, personal interest and observations made about the use of English as a lingua franca by immigrant entrepreneurs served as the initial motivation for the present study, which in return resulted in a topic that shares elements from various academic disciplines.

Rampton (2007:596) sees the connection between linguistics and ethnography as reciprocal in nature; ethnography can provide linguistics with humanizing elements, such as enriching linguistic analysis with vivid descriptions of the way the users of a given language variety accommodate their language to different situations, while linguistics may be able to give more accuracy to ethnographic descriptions of culture. Sharing Rampton’s view, Blommaert (2007:684) defines linguistic ethnography simply as a ‘general theoretical outlook’, which serves as a venue for the experimental exploration of language in society. Within research focusing on the language choices of immigrants, a framework of linguistic ethnography has already been adopted in various research papers (see for instance Blommaert 2013; Blommaert, Collins and Slembrouck 2005a; 2005b; Haque 2011). Consequently, a somewhat ethnographic approach is also adopted in the present study.

3 ENGLISH LINGUA FRANCA – THE GLOBAL SCALE

English is everywhere. As the rapid rate of the current era of globalization is what makes it different from the past, the same can be said about the pace in which English is gaining ground as the vehicle of globalization. A single language which develops into a code in which people from different linguistic backgrounds are able to interact is generally referred to as a *lingua franca*. Or as defined in the Cambridge Advanced

Learner's Dictionary (2008:834): "a language used for communication between groups of people who speak different languages but not between members of the same group". English has become a global resource, shared by speakers that might have no links whatsoever to the locations in which English is used as a national language, but who still use it as a survival kit in their daily lives. Consequently, this development has also raised concerns about the pressure that English is placing on smaller national languages, such as Finnish. There are situations where English is used as a lingua franca in the Finnish setting as well, for example in the internal communication of some Finnish firms and educational institutions. But before discussing the role of English in Finland, it is important to look into the mechanisms of the English Lingua Franca phenomenon on a larger scale.

Dewey and Jenkins (2010:72) define a lingua franca as a contact language that is used in communication between individuals who do not share a first language. Lingua francas have, therefore, traditionally been the second or subsequent languages of their users. Dewey and Jenkins (*ibid.*) note that the recent increase in the use of English in countries where it has no institutionalized status is simply the latest manifestation of the development process of a lingua franca. However, they see the most significant difference between the past lingua francas and English as a lingua franca (from here on ELF) in the existence of native speakers of English: according to Dewey and Jenkins (*ibid.*) the historical lingua francas did not, *per se*, have native speakers, while English has, e.g. the majority of citizens in North America and Great Britain. But as English has rapidly spread across the globe, the role of the native speaker in the ELF paradigm has declined. On the basis of this, Dewey and Jenkins (2010:77-78) note that the current situation of non-native speakers being the largest user group of English is without historical precedent. Even though the earlier lingua francas were also international, e.g. Latin and Greek, the all-encompassing manner in which English has spread worldwide is essentially different from the mechanisms of the earlier lingua francas.

Even a quick glance through the information available about the dominance of English echoes the statements above: for instance, according to Eurostat (2013), in the 28 member states of the European Union "in 2011, 83% of pupils at primary & lower secondary level and 94% of those in upper secondary level general programmes were studying English as a foreign language", whereas the figures for the second most commonly studied language, French, were 19 percent for primary and lower secondary level students and 23 percent for upper secondary level pupils. The dominance of

English in the education sector is only reflective of its dominance in the political sphere. According to the figures provided by the European Union Information Website (2012), “English was the source language for 77.04% of all texts submitted to the European Commission's in-house translation services, up from 74.6% in 2009”, the figures for French in 2011 being 7.13 percent and for German 2.74 percent respectively. The figures for German can be seen in a different light when put into perspective; German is the single most spoken language in the European Union, with almost a 100 million native speakers. This linguistic development has also been noted by the powers that be: the president of Germany recently proposed that English was made the official language of the European Union (The Guardian 2013), and the Flemish minister for education has called for English to be appointed as the official language of Brussels, the de facto capital of the European Union (The European Union Information Website 2013).

When engaging in discussions about the global use of English in the 21st century, it is necessary to bring up a linguist whose name and theories have become a near prerequisite, or even more, in the discussions over global English. Braj Kachru is occasionally credited as the first spokesperson of global English, and his theories are still used as a reference point when the phenomenon of global English is under discussion (Hujala 2009). For ELF, Kachru's ‘expanding circles’ model (1985) is perhaps the most important. As can be seen in Figure 1, the model consists of three layers.

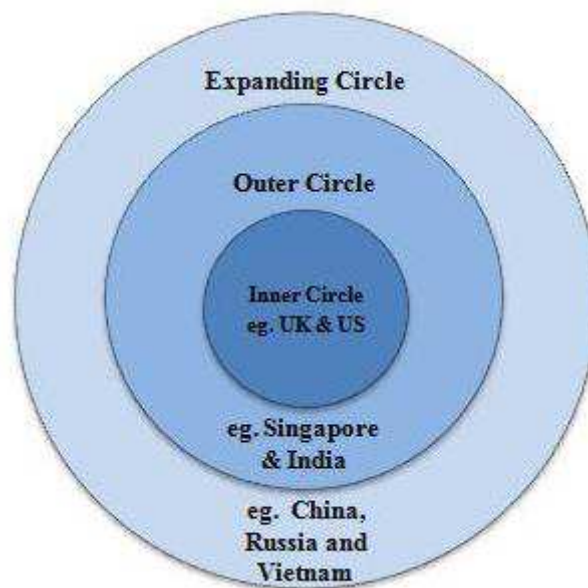


Figure 1. Circles of English by Kachru (Crystal 1995:107)

The inner circle is seen as *norm-providing*, consisting of locations where English is a native language, the outer circle is *norm-developing* where English serves as a second language and the expanding circle, furthest from the center, is *norm-dependent* and there English is used as a foreign language.

Kachru's model has had an essential role in the study of global Englishes, but his ideas have also faced growing criticism in recent times (Chew 2010:45). For instance, Seidlhofer (2010:150) argues that the boundaries between the circles are difficult to determine, since as a part of globalization, users of English from all three layers are involved in the development of the language, which is not reserved (anymore) to the members of the inner circle. Similarly to Seidlhofer (2010), Saxena and Omoniyi (2010:216) describe Kachru's ideas as modernist in essence, and claim that in a postmodern world, where global flows of people and ideas expand the contexts and functions of communication, ideas of static circles are bound to be rendered obsolete. On the basis of this, there are linguists who have coined new terms to replace the old lexis of global English, e.g. 'evolving lingua francas' (Chew 2010:46) or simply 'Englishes' (Dewey and Jenkins 2010:77-78). Concepts such as World English, International English and Global English are all used commonly to refer to the phenomenon of English as a global means of communication, and thus within the frame of the present study, they are used interchangeably.

As pointed out by Sharifian (2010:137), the actual users of global English have 'glocalized' English by adapting it in various manners and in varying degrees to local functions. Dewey and Jenkins (2010:79) continue on the same notion and see the increased use of English between and within communities as an equal increase in heterogeneity, since the Englishes used in these interactions are not the English of the inner circle, but somewhat hybridized versions of the language. These hybridized versions of English have also been noticed by Blommaert (2010:8), who has studied the use of English in immigrant neighborhoods and goes on to say that the English found in these contexts is far from a standard version, and instead, is more a collection of different idiosyncratic forms of English.

On the basis of his observations about the use of English in immigrant neighborhoods in Belgium, Blommaert (2010) sees the language resources of new immigrants consisting of what he terms as 'truncated repertoires' (see also Haque 2011), meaning bits of different codes and language varieties which are used in super-diverse environments,

i.e. immigrant neighborhoods. He also notes that the English used in the transactions within such a neighborhood reflects unorthodox ways of language acquisition and possible hesitation in use, and is highly non-native and vernacular in form. Blommaert (ibid.) also illustrates how these types of truncated repertoires are difficult to systematically categorize, since they are far from being established varieties of a language. The truncated repertoire is, therefore, seen as a result of the high mobility of languages and people in times of globalization. Furthermore, Blommaert (2010:4) sees the idea of languages being categorized as ‘English’ or ‘German’ as belonging to the old modernist paradigm of structural linguistics, and claims that languages cannot be categorized on the basis of vocabulary or grammatical structures in a time when, for instance, English is used through countless varieties and by people who ‘know’ the language to very different extents. En masse, Blommaert sees the concept of ‘truncated repertoires’ as a mobile form of multilingualism. (See Vertovec 2007 for a more detailed description about the notion of super-diversity)

The challenges that globalization poses to sociolinguistics, as illustrated in the previous section, are causing similar movement in the field of World Englishes. On the basis of this, Bhatt (2010:103-108), for instance, is urging the field on World Englishes to engage in liaison with the emerging ‘school’ of the sociolinguistics of globalization. Bhatt argues that this would help the scholars of world Englishes to grasp the connection between local and global elements more accurately. He continues that it would mean a shift away from the aspiration of categorizing global Englishes as members of the ‘communion’ of world Englishes, rendering the research more flexible by allowing researchers to liberate themselves from the rigid orthodoxies of the past. In the same vein, Seidlhofer (2010:152) argues that the traditional views of ‘language’ and notions such as ‘community’ and ‘variety’, and the way that they are still used as they were long before globalization are among the main obstacles in the way of a valid conceptualization of ELF. Consequently, Bhatt (2010:108) recognizes globalization as a critical phase for the study of world Englishes to understand the processes of linguistic globalization.

Within the study of lingua francas, one context which has been attracting an increasing amount of research (Kankaanranta and Planken 2010) is the use of English as a lingua franca in international business contexts, commonly referred to as BELF (Business English Lingua Franca). This branch of lingua franca studies focuses on the use of English as a shared communicative resource between non-native speakers of English in

the ‘business’ context. The term was originally coined by Louhiala-Salminen, Charles and Kankaanranta in 2005, to refer to the use of English as a shared communicative device between business professionals in two firms that had undergone a merger. They (2005:403-404) define it more precisely as “English used as a ‘neutral’ and shared communication code. BELF is neutral in the sense that none of the speakers can claim it as her/his mother tongue; it is shared in the sense that it is used for conducting business within the global business discourse community, whose members are BELF users and communicators in their own right – not ‘non-native speakers’ or ‘learners’”. Finland is in the forefront of BELF research; The Aalto University in Helsinki has a BELF group that “focuses on the role and use of English as a shared language in global business” (BELF Group. Aalto University, School of Business), and there is a plethora of studies located in the Finnish context utilizing different approaches to the topic (see for instance Kankaanranta 2006; Kankaanranta and Louhiala-Salminen 2010; Louhiala-Salminen and Kankaanranta 2011).

Although the concept of BELF appears to be credible, it is at the same time highly ambiguous and vague by definition, and it would seem that the principles of BELF apply to a variety of contexts. Think of the definition given by Ehrenreich (2010:408) for instance, “English as a business lingua franca, which—as an international contact language—brings together nonnative as well as native Englishes from various linguacultural backgrounds spoken with varying degrees of proficiency”. Is this not a shared feature in all lingua franca communication? In addition, the ambiguous role of the ‘business’ dimension of BELF leaves one with the question of what type and level of businesses can be included in the *Business* English lingua franca spectrum; Kankaanranta and Planken (2010:381) define the context of the “B” in BELF as the domain of internationally operating companies and individuals who enter these domains through different cultural backgrounds. As the goals of the BELF communicators they state the following “(BELF) can be characterized by its goaloriented (inter)actions, drive for efficient use of such resources as time and money, and an overall aspiration for win-win scenarios among business partners “. (Kankaanranta and Planken 2010:381). All this raises a question about the stated context of BELF communication, in that BELF seems to cover nearly all types of international businesses and the fundamental principles of BELF could be seen to explain the majority of all EFL communication.

The concept of BELF has a somewhat ambiguous role in the present study, since the possible English use of immigrant entrepreneurs could function as a lingua franca (ELF)

within their communication, many of which are located in the business context (B), which in return could be seen as resulting in a business English Lingua Franca (BELF). Admittedly, the subjects of the focus group are not ‘captains of industry’ in the helm of internationally operating companies, but they too have entered their domains through different cultural backgrounds, which is one of the definitions used to refer to the communicators within BELF. All this might seem nitpicky, and a cul-de-sac debate over terminology, but the study of BELF could also benefit in the acknowledgment, if not inclusion, of business professionals who are active in the grass-root level of business and globalization, and do not use English because of a corporate mandate, but because their livelihood depends on it. Furthermore, the reason for the attractiveness of BELF could also be explained by the lucrative opportunities it entails; observations about the internal communication of a global conglomerate probably results in communication consulting or changes in a company’s language policy, whereas findings about the use of ELF in the activities of an immigrant entrepreneur might result in mere societal improvements of little monetary value.

4 ENGLISH IN FINLAND – THE LOCAL SCALE

English can be seen and heard in every level of our society; whether it is British or American programs on the television, music on the radio, an advertisement in a magazine, a random encounter on the street, a lecture at the university or a language class in an elementary school. The high visibility of English is a fact that can be based both on anecdotal and academic evidence. But how has this come about? How has a non-Anglophone nation geographically far from the influence of Anglophone cultures reached such a linguistic outcome? Globalization undisputedly has had a part to play in this development by functioning as a vehicle that eases the manner in which cultural, linguistic and physical artefacts flow across different platforms. In addition, some reasons for the spread of English can be also found within Finnish society itself, especially within the field of education, in the linguistic beliefs and opinions of the general population and in the aspirations of a relatively small country to be seen and heard in the global arenas.

When looking at the previous research within the 'English in Finland' paradigm, it becomes clear that it is comprised of numerous topics, but there are still some contexts that have been largely left untouched. In many instances, research conducted in the field has focused on somewhat passive outlets of English, such as the use of English in advertising, in the media or alongside Finnish. These are all important research topics, but they are not situated in contexts where English might be used as a lingua franca in the daily life of individuals residing in Finland. I see research contexts such as the one of the present study highly useful in understanding the larger role of English in Finland, in that they allow the researcher to look into the use of English in contexts where it might be used to perform a variety of actions, and not used only because of a deliberate choice, but also because of necessity. Furthermore, the use of English in e.g. the printed media does not evoke interaction on the same level as communication between individuals does, and, overall, such a medium is a relatively passive outlet of language use. In sum, the exploration of a context where English might be used as the only shared language between individuals could reveal relevant information about the way in which English navigates within our society.

As reported by Saarinen (2012:158), Finland is traditionally regarded as a linguistically homogenous or nearly a monolingual nation, even though constitutionally Finland is a bilingual nation with two national languages, Finnish and Swedish. Latomaa and Nuolijärvi (2005:12) point out that, overall, internationalization and globalization, as well as events such as Finland joining the European Union in 1995, has hastened the rate in which English is becoming part of Finnish society.

Louhiala-Salminen et al. (2005:401), see the ongoing development of English being adopted in a number of social spheres as a phenomenon that is occurring simultaneously in the whole Nordic region. They also remind that there the use of English as a means of communication is absent from the direct influence of English speaking countries. The traditional lingua franca of the Nordic region has, therefore, typically been Swedish. As researchers in the area of Business English Lingua Franca, they argue (2005:402) that the change of lingua franca from Swedish to English can be seen especially in English being increasingly chosen as the official language of pan-Nordic corporations. This statement is reinforced by the Confederation of Finnish Industries, whose report (2010) about the human resources and education in the field of business in Finland revealed that 88 percent of the respondents emphasized English language proficiency as an employment selection criteria, which shows an 8 percent increase from 2005. The report

(2010:6) concludes that English language proficiency has developed into a rudimentary skill that is expected from all employees in Finland.

When discussing the role of English in Finland, there are some who claim that the language has transformed into more than just a 'foreign' language: Taavitsainen and Pahta (2003:10) suggest that English has changed from a foreign language to a second and first language, similarly to Phillipson (1992:25), who already in 1992 demanded that English must be considered a second language in the Scandinavian countries, because English is becoming indispensable in a number of domains. However, although Leppänen and Nikula (2007:336) argue, similarly to the argument made by Taavitsainen and Pahta, that the current role of English is rather that of a second language than a mere foreign language, they point out that this might not reflect the general situation of Finnish society as a whole. They, therefore, call for additional research to explain the overall sociolinguistic situation in Finland. Nonetheless, the dogma of English needing to be recognized as an official language has been extended from the world of business to the national level as well: Risto Siilasmaa, the chairman of Nokia, recently advocated the idea that English was made an official language in Finland (Iltalehti 2014).

Finns also use English alongside their native language. Louhiala-Salminen (2002:224) reports, in her study about discourse practices in a Finnish business setting, that codeswitching between English and Finnish occasionally results in a 'Finglish jargon'. Subsequently, Taavitsainen and Pahta (2008:29) note that English elements and code-switched English segments in communication are abundant in all age groups except the oldest. On the other hand, Leppänen and Nikula (2007:334) point out that phenomena such as codeswitching and language mixing can lead to hybrid forms of language, resembling Blommaert's (2010) ideas of the truncated repertoire found in immigrant neighborhoods. Crystal (2010:19) sees this type of 'localisation' leading to varieties of English that are bound to incorporate local elements into the language. He (2010:21) argues that these national Englishes are different from one another, and can be used to express solidarity and group-membership. Hence, Poppi (2010:95) warns against labels such as a 'European variety of English', since national varieties, and even local forms, can have vast differences in many aspects of use and form. Furthermore, Blommaert et al. (2005:201) remind that the creation of these local varieties and the overall linguistic landscape in an urban environment develops in a congruous relationship between immigrants and the autochthonous population.

It seems that the significant role of English in Finland is unquestionable, but when assessing the factors and variables that have led to the current situation, some researchers have brought up interesting insights tying the role of English to the general linguistic development taking place in Finland. The Research Unit for the Study of Variation, Contacts and Change in English (henceforth VARIENG), a Finnish research group studying the versatile uses and manifestations of English in Finland, propose (2009:15) in their report on a large-scale survey about the role of English in Finland that the change in the role of English is a manifestation of the overall increase in multilingualism that is occurring in Finland. They highlight the steady increase in the number of immigrant residents with no knowledge of Finnish during the last twenty years, but they also make an astute observation by pointing out that the number of English speaking residents is still relatively low, as can be seen in Figure 2. Hence, the increasing use of English cannot be explained by a growth in the number of individuals who use it as an official mother tongue.

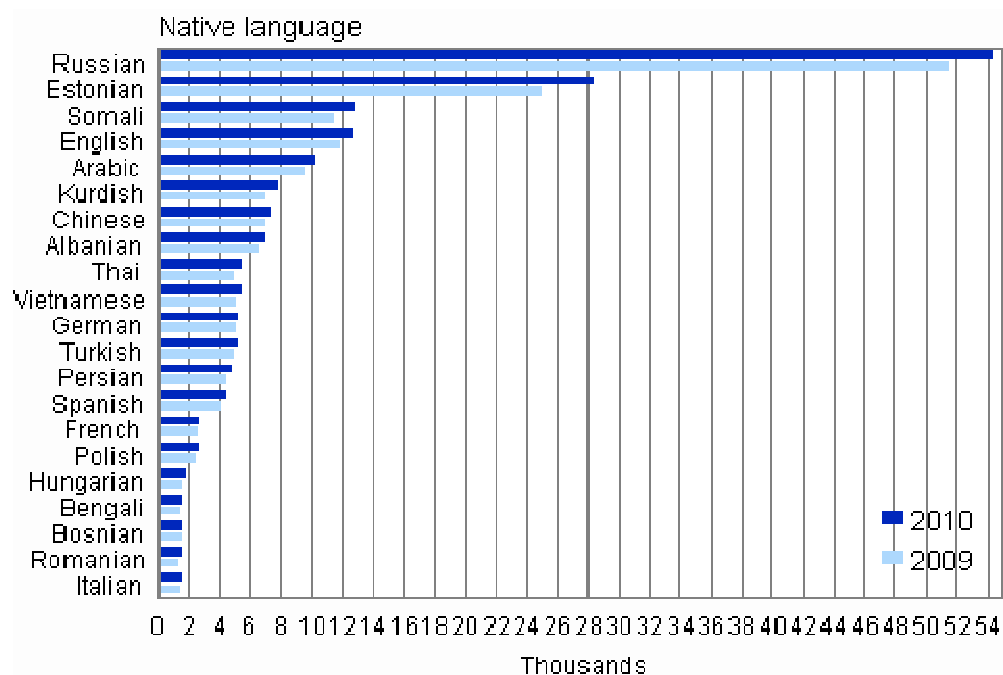


Figure 2. Statistics Finland Review of the population structure of Finland 2010: Largest groups of foreign-language speakers in 2009 and 2010.

As can be seen in Figure 2, The number of English speaking residents in Finland was a little over 12 thousand in 2010, compared with the top two foreign-language groups, Russian (over 54 thousand) and Estonian (over 28 thousand). This could be seen as an indication about the native-speaker-free mechanism in which English is working through in Finland. But as will be illustrated in the following sections, the criteria for

the categorization of different languages and nationality groups in Finland is quite a task, and figures as the one above can only be seen as suggestive. However, as stated by The Institute for the Languages of Finland (2009:73), there is a common consensus that English is not a minority language in Finland, *per se*, but a prestige language, a *lingua franca*. This observation has also been made by Nieminen (2009), who points out that there are immigrants who have successfully adapted to Finland, even if they do not speak any Finnish, but cope by using English as a *lingua franca*

When tracing the reasons for the triumph of English in Finland, it is vital to remember that there are always two sides to the same coin. Some explanations can also be found in the opinions and beliefs that Finns themselves appoint to their mother-tongue. Sirkku Latomaa has studied the language use of Americans living in Finland, and reports (1998) on interesting findings she came across in her study. Latomaa (1998:57) argues that while Finns see English as a high-value language, they, at the same time, have an ambivalent attitude towards their own language. She claims that Finns value the effort that foreigners put into learning Finnish, but repeatedly wonder why would foreigners want to learn Finnish in the first place. She goes on to note that many Finns prefer to speak English with foreigners instead of Finnish, regardless of a foreigner's skill level in the latter. It could be that this type of linguistic conduct is an indication of aspirations to be seen and heard in the global world, or then it simply demonstrates the willingness of Finns to converse in a 'neutral' code. Nevertheless, observations similar to Latomaa's have been made by other linguists as well, whose input is discussed further in the following chapters.

In light of the observations made by Latomaa (1998), it is useful to take a look at a more recent and larger survey on the topic of value appointed to languages in Finland. According to the aforementioned VARIENG report (2009), over 95 percent of their study respondents stated that the whole Finnish population should know Finnish in twenty years' time. The number allotted to immigrants was 85 respectively. In the case of English, 90 percent of the respondents thought that the role of English would increase in the next 20 years and 78.5 percent of the respondents saw English skills as necessary for immigrants in 20 years' time. The results are somewhat mixed, and they could be interpreted so that both Finnish and English are seen as vital skills in the span of the next 20 years: an observation that could also be seen as reinforcing the demand for English being recognized as an official language. However, qualitative studies aiming to explore the role of Finnish and English have yielded mixed results. Sjöholm (2010:65),

for instance, argues that the excessive use of English can hinder the learning process of Finnish in the case of immigrants; whereas Jalava (2011:35) considers immigrants' English language skills an asset that should be utilized more effectively in education and employment.

It is important to remember that Finns have traditionally scored high in the international evaluations of English language proficiency. For example, according to the EF English Proficiency Index 2013, the world's largest ranking of English skills (the data is based on the global results of 750,000 individuals who took the EF English language test in 2012), Finland ranks 7th with an index score of 62.63, Sweden taking the pole position with a score of 66.60. A high national English proficiency could be seen as one of the reasons for individuals surviving in their daily activities solely in English, and why Finns are eager to use it in communication, especially when the groundwork for this proficiency is laid early on through education, as explained in the next chapter.

English is the most common foreign language in the Finnish educational system bar none. The growing role of English in higher education has been a steady trend in recent years (Saarinen 2012), and in the lower levels of education, English is nearing the status of the only foreign language subject. According to the Finnish National Board of Education (2011), in 2009, 90 percent of the students in the third grade of basic education chose English as their A1-syllabus language (an A1 language is a common (compulsory) language and an A2 an optional language, both started in grades 1 to 6), compared with the respective figures for the two follow-up languages, German and French, both totaling at about 1 percent each. The same figures for grades 7-9 are 99 percent for English, 6.5 for German and ca. 3 percent for French. In general upper secondary school nearly all of the students (99.6 percent) studied English as an A-syllabus language, while the figures for German and French remain the same as in grades 7-9.

Whereas English is taught as a foreign language in comprehensive school and general upper secondary school, in Finnish higher education, English is chosen as the main or sole language of instruction by a growing number of institutions: there are over 350 national English language degree programs (Majakulma 2011: 46–47) and when comparing the ratio of English language programs to all other programs, Finland is behind the Netherlands with the second highest ratio in Europe. But when calculating the same ratio for institutions offering English language programs, Finland ranks as the

first in Europe (Wächter and Maiworm 2008 as quoted by Saarinen 2012:164). The trend of 'Englishization' reached its culmination when the largest and most esteemed Finnish business school, Helsinki School of Economics, announced that they would be offering courses only in English (YLE 2013a), but had to reassess their position after the government told that they would begin to investigate the constitutional standing of such a policy (YLE 2013b), underscoring the unestablished official status of English in Finland.

The national emphasis on English speaks for aspirations to be involved in the global world, but it also bears the signs of a Pyrrhic victory on the national level. Tuononen (2013:65), for instance, questions the viability of the English language degree programs in Finland, as her study on immigrant nurses revealed that they can actually create an obstacle in the employment of immigrants, since in many fields, such as Finnish health care, the official languages are Finnish and Swedish by law, which renders the English education near useless. Tuononen's stance on the rationality of the English language programs is echoed by Sjöholm (2010): the subjects of her study, also immigrant nurses working in Finland, expressed bewilderment over the division between English and Finnish, as the former is the language of education and the latter the sole language of occupation, again raising questions about the logic behind using English in education. However, Blommaert (2010:174) criticizes the language policies of most European countries which have a heavy emphasis on the role that a national language plays in integration to the host society, admittedly allowing local access, while English, as a global prestige language, and as the main resource of globalization could allow global access.

There are scholars who go even further and argue that the pressure that English is inflicting on Finnish can result in a situation akin of diglossia, in which Finnish would become a vernacular and English a high variety (The Institute for the Languages of Finland 2009:45). Then again, the same scholars also state (2009:97) that due to the undisputable role of English as, e.g. the language of science, the scientific community of Finland has to adopt the English language as the main language of research in order to be included in the international arenas of science.

As stated in the opening chapter of this section, the study of English in Finland has traditionally focused on the English use of native Finns in arenas where English is not used as a *lingua franca*, but, for instance, as a stylistic choice, as a mandatory language

of a corporation or as an element that supplements Finnish. Previous studies into the use of English in Finland have looked into such phenomena as Anglicisms in the Finnish language (see for instance Sajavaara and Lehtonen 1981; Lahti 1998), English-Finnish code-switching and language mixing (see for instance Halmari and Smith 1994; Hujala 1997; Ollila 2013), the use of English in Finnish advertising (Viitamäki 2003; Hietanen 2004; Kankkunen 2005) and the increasing use of English as a shared resource in the communication of Finnish business professionals situated in international business settings, i.e. BELF (see for instance Louhiala-Salminen, Charles and Kankaanranta 2005; Virkkula-Räisänen 2010). The work of, for instance, Taavitsainen and Pahta (2003) and Moore and Varantola (2005) give a more general picture of the role of English in Finland, not to forget the large-scale contribution made by VARIENG (2009).

There are also numerous studies with a more narrow scope. For instance, Peuronen (2008) analyzed English-Finnish code-switching and language mixing in an online Christian extreme sport forum, Kääntä et al. (2006) chose a reality television show to study the learning of English through social interaction, while Westinen (2007) looked at the use of English in Finnish rap music. A shared feature in all of the aforementioned studies is that they utilize a number of different approaches in researching equally versatile phenomena, all originating from the use of English, by combining frameworks, theories and insights from such fields as ethnography, business communication, applied linguistics, sociolinguistics and discourse analysis. This can be explained by the multifaceted nature of the phenomena itself; English is working through a number of different platforms and contexts, and thus there is a need for equally multifaceted work in order to explain the variety of functions it serves in Finnish society.

As becomes evident in the brief summary of previous studies, the scope of 'English in Finland' research appears to be rather broad, as are the frameworks applied by the researchers. However, regardless of the overt versatility, there are still rather important research topics and phenomena that would merit more research: the research subjects of the previous studies conducted in the field have mostly been native speakers of Finnish, native speakers of English or foreigners i.e. exchange students, who necessarily have no intention to become part of Finnish society. Moreover, studies which have touched upon the English use of immigrants in Finland are few in number. However, before over-viewing previous research on the use of English by immigrants in Finland, it is vital to look into the complex terminology surrounding the concept of *immigrant*.

5 CONCEPTS AND TERMINOLOGY

5.1 Who is an immigrant?

Immigrant is a highly ambiguous term. It is questionable and ethically dubious to place an extremely heterogeneous group of people under a single label, when it is expected to encompass all the people in the world in case they one day decide to leave their country of origin. This predicament has been brought up time and again in immigrant research, and, therefore, it is vital to discuss what *immigrant* denotes in this particular study before any empirical work has been carried out. Still, regardless of the terminology that will be used, such a heterogeneous group of people from various linguistic backgrounds is bound to cause challenges, but in return, such versatility can also serve as a manifestation about the power of a single language to unite and enable transaction between individuals who might have very little in common otherwise.

In sociology, an immigrant is defined as an individual “who changes his or her place of residence from one geographically delimited area to another; in circumstances that generate a social, political or administrative reorganisation shift for the immigrant.” (Irastorza 2010:18). The law of Finland holds a similar view, and defines the term *immigrant* as a general concept that is used to refer to all the persons who have moved to Finland on a permanent basis (Finlex Data Bank). It is important to note that the Finnish terms used to refer to immigrants might not have a direct equivalent in English, which poses an additional problem within a study that is conducted in English but in the Finnish context. To clarify possible misunderstandings related to this, the correct English equivalent for the Finnish term *maahanmuuttaja* is the English term *immigrant* (Finnish Immigration Service). The Finnish Immigration Service defines an immigrant as “a person moving from one country to another. A general concept which applies to all migrants with different reasons for moving”.

Overall, the criteria for the term *immigrant* seem consistent throughout different sources, albeit highly inclusive. On the usage of the term, Hakkarainen (2012:7), argues that there has been a ‘gradual shift’ in replacing the term immigrant with *migrant*, although these terms are still used interchangeably. Since she does not name any sources for her claim, and there appears to be no elaborate discussion over the two

terms, the term *migrant* will not be used in the present study as it might unnecessarily confuse the reader.

The obscure criteria for the categorization of immigrants have been challenged by various researchers, for example Sirkku Latomaa (2010) and the statisticians at Statistics Finland (2011). In her 2012 analysis on the categorization criteria of immigrants, Latomaa (2012:525) points out the peculiarities in the Finnish terminology used to refer to immigrants: she notes how terms such as *immigrant population*, *immigrants and their descendants* and *foreign-born population* are in general use elsewhere in the Nordic region, but in Finland, the term *foreigner* is still widely used. Overall, the terminology and concepts around the topic of immigration in Finland differ vastly from the rest of the Scandinavian countries (Latomaa 2012).

Latomaa (2012:530-533) also explains how the criteria related to language are used in various degrees in the categorization of immigrants in countries with extended histories with immigration. For instance in Canada, immigrants are allowed to declare competence and membership in more than just one language, whereas in Finland, the selection of just one language is allowed in the bureaucratic process that immigrants are put through. Furthermore, since Finland does not employ a register or categorization based on ethnicity, as is the case for instance in Great-Britain, the language that an immigrant decides to declare as their first language might be interpreted simultaneously as an indication of ethnicity (Latomaa *ibid.*).

The usefulness of language in the categorization of immigrants has also been noted by Statistics Finland. Its statisticians (2011) argue that the use of such criteria as place of birth or nationality might skew the estimates about the number of immigrants residing in Finland. For instance, a person living in Finland might have been born in Sweden and be a Swedish citizen, have Finnish as their first language and identify as being Finnish, but due to their place of birth and nationality, still categorized as an immigrant in Finland. They conclude (*ibid.*) that language should be taken into consideration when categorizing immigrants in Finland. Then again, Latomaa (2012:533) herself questions the ultimate usefulness of this criterion, pointing out the rigidity of *a language* as a concept, since such a fixed approach undermines the existence of hybrid varieties of language and the ideas of language repertoires.

Although the term *immigrant* is widely used and recognized as the least problematic of the available terms, it too bears the burden of placing people that necessarily have

nothing in common under a shared label, as remarked by Heinonen (2010:22). Furthermore, Tuononen (2013:36) makes a valid point in questioning the transition from immigrant to citizen: when is someone *completely* integrated into a host society, so that their status as an immigrant comes to an end? The problems associated with labeling people who migrate are in a way an indication of the pressure that globalization is placing on the concepts of the nation-state, language and citizenship; they are all perhaps too robust and rigid as concepts to answer to the mobility and flexibility of our time. For is an immigrant not part of the environment they live in, regardless of their ‘otherness’ or level of integration? Is society not made up of *all* of its components, however similar or different? At times it appears that integration might be just another word for homogenization.

Nonetheless, in order to accurately create a focus group within the boundaries of the present study, an *immigrant* is defined according to the aforementioned definition found in the glossary of the Finnish Immigration Service: “**A person moving from one country to another. A general concept which applies to all immigrants with different reasons for moving**”. This clear and simple definition also serves as the starting point for the present study, in which the term immigrant is used in its simplest form unless there are aspects that demand further clarification.

5.2 Who is an entrepreneur?

Because the focus group of the present study is made up of immigrant entrepreneurs, it is necessary to look not only at the concept of immigrant, but at the notion of *entrepreneur* as well. The concept of entrepreneurship is occasionally stated as being among the most complex and ambiguous in the field of business studies (Irastorza 2010:19). In the field of immigrant entrepreneurship, there have been numerous propositions for an accurate definition of immigrant entrepreneurship, and terms such as *ethnic businesses* and *businesses run by immigrants* are occasionally used (Irastorza 2010). Nevertheless, as noted by the Uusimaa Regional Council (2011:12) and Melin and Melin (2010:14), the most common term is *immigrant entrepreneurship*. Irastorza (2010:20), on the other hand, uses both *entrepreneur* and *self-employed* to refer to people who make a living by working on their own. These two terms are used synonymously also by, for instance, Kloosterman and Rath (2004:1).

Extremely relevant for the Finnish context, Hyrsky (2004:34) brings up the problems stemming from the use of the term *entrepreneur* as a translation to the Finnish term *yrittäjä*¹. As Hyrsky pertinently illustrates, the term *yrittäjä*, in Finnish, is usually “used just to refer to an individual who runs a small- or medium-sized business independently” (Hyrsky 2001:34), which necessarily has nothing to do with the characteristics and traits that are occasionally associated with the concept of *entrepreneur* in other cultures. Hyrsky (ibid.) argues that, therefore, a more suitable equivalent for *yrittäjä* would be the English term *small business owner-manager*. However, Hyrsky settles upon using *entrepreneur* as a translation to *yrittäjä* himself, citing the use of the two as a synonymous pair in public discussion.

Even after the denotative complexity around the terms *immigrant* and *entrepreneur* has been brought under discussion, the question about the *type* of businesses to include in the study still remains open. Here, the framework provided by the Melins (2012:39) is followed: they point out how administrative criteria, such as ownership could be used to assess the ‘immigrant level’ of a business, but if the focus of a study is in the operation of the business, i.e. customer service, it is the actual day-to-day operation that counts, and administrative labels can be set aside. On the basis of this, the present study defines an *immigrant entrepreneur* as **someone who has moved to Finland from another country and is in charge of the daily operation of a business, preferably customer service that requires human interaction.**

6 IMMIGRANTS IN THE FINNISH CONTEXT – GLOBALIZATION AND THE FLOW OF PEOPLE

6.1 Immigrants in Finland

Finland is heavily intertwined in the processes of globalization. There are elements in our daily life that would have been deemed excessively outlandish or exotic just a couple of decades ago. We have ample selections of exotic commodities in our disposal

¹ *yrittäjä* is used virtually in all immigrant studies in Finland to refer to immigrant entrepreneurs

on a to-go basis, we see manifestations of distant cultures in the way people dress and go about their daily lives, and we hear news in various languages from all over the world. Many of us speak English every now and then, without paying that much attention to it, with people to whom it might be the only language that allows them to communicate with us. Many of these individuals have started their journey from near and far places where English is an alien language, only to end up using it in a relatively remote country where it has no official standing.

Migration into Finland at its current rate is a relatively new process (Vilkama 2011:18). Its major actuation was the collapse of the Soviet Union during the 1990's, as stated by Arajärvi (2009:6). However, According to Statistics Finland (2012), the number of Finnish residents with a 'foreign' background is still somewhat low, especially when compared with the rest of the Nordic countries: at the end of 2012, the number of residents categorized as 'foreign-language' speakers was 266,949, which represent a 4.9 percent share of the total population of Finland (Statistics Finland 2013), compared with for instance Sweden, where the share of this group totals at about 15 percent (Statistics Finland 2012). Still, when looking at the total population growth of Finland in 2012, 87 percent of it can be attributed to the growth in the number of foreign-language speakers (ibid.).

As noted by the Uusimaa Regional Council (2011:8), in order to give an accurate estimate about the total number of immigrants or foreign-language speakers in Finland, the tens of thousands of Finnish citizens who have been born abroad would have to be included in the aforementioned statistics. Statistics Finland admits (2012) this too, but notes that regardless of the criteria, Finland is still home to relatively few immigrants.

Although the number of immigrants in Finland might be low on the state-level, there are great differences in the areal distribution of immigrants. As reported by the Uusimaa Regional Council (2011:3), the number of immigrants in the municipality of Uusimaa is higher than in other municipalities on average. According to Statistics Finland (2013:2), the share of immigrants in the population of Uusimaa was 9.3 percent in the end of 2012, which is double the national quota. Of the immigrants residing in Uusimaa, over 50 percent are located in Helsinki, the capital of Finland (Uusimaa Regional Council 2011:3), which constitutes a 12.2 percent share of the residents of Helsinki (Statistics Finland 2013:2). If the same growth-rate continues,

the percentage of immigrants in the population of Helsinki could rise to over 20 percent in the course of the next ten to fifteen years (Uusimaa Regional Council 2011:3). Another aspect that is distinctive to Helsinki is the clustering of African-born immigrants in the area: as stated by Vilkama (2006:14), in 2005, 44 percent of Finland's African-born immigrants resided in Helsinki.

Immigrant research in Finland has traditionally concentrated on the problems that immigrants face during the integration process into Finnish society, and the focus groups under study have been culturally distant from each other (Koskela 2010:57). Martikainen (2009:2) states, in his overview of immigrant research in Finland, that whereas the previous topics of immigrant research have focused on areas such as the national minorities and historical immigrancy, the new wave of immigrant research is much more multifaceted and versatile, belonging to the multicultural Finland of late-modernity. Furthermore, Partanen (2012:3) notes that research topics related especially to language have been attracting increasing interest during the last few years. There has also been a significant rise in the number of researchers situated in the field during the 21st century (Martikainen 2009:2). Overall, Martikainen (2009:4) reminds that the duty of immigrant research is to create a holistic view of immigrants in Finland, bringing up both the negative and positive aspects related to it.

6.2 Immigrant entrepreneurs in Finland

If general immigrant research is presently a somewhat well-established field of study in Finland, the same cannot be said about the status of research focusing on immigrant entrepreneurs. Although immigrants are more prone to become entrepreneurs and the number of immigrant entrepreneurs has increased, as noted by Heinonen (2010:5), immigrant entrepreneurship is still a largely untouched topic in Finland (*ibid.*). This statement has been reiterated by numerous parties, for instance the Ministry of Trade and Industry of Finland (2007:46) and Tuula Joronen (2012:14), who is often referred to as the leading researcher of immigrant entrepreneurship in Finland, along with the researchers at the City of Helsinki Urban Facts department (see for instance Melin and Melin 2012:24 and the Ministry of Trade and Industry of Finland 2007:46). Joronen asserts (2012:14) that immigrant entrepreneurs in the restaurant industry have been the main focus of research thus far,

and due to the multidimensional nature of the phenomenon, previous empirical research into the matter has been conducted through a variety of theoretical frameworks.

Regardless of the scarcity of research into immigrant entrepreneurship in Finland, Melin and Melin (2012:12) point out that the rising global awareness of immigrant entrepreneurship has increased the amount of research that the topic garners to an extent. Still, as mentioned by the Ministry of Trade and Industry of Finland (2007:70), the amount of national research literature about the topic is limited, as is the funding it receives. Individual researchers can, therefore, bring new and alternative ideas into the discussion around the topic (*ibid.*). Concise summaries and overviews on the development of immigrant entrepreneurship research in Finland can be found in the studies by Melin and Melin (2012:24) and the Ministry of Trade and Industry of Finland (2007:46).

Among the most significant defects in previous immigrant entrepreneur research, according to Joronen (2010:15), is the unanswered question about the potential characteristics that separate Finnish entrepreneurs from immigrant entrepreneurs. Overall, Joronen calls for versatile research into the topic in order to gain knowledge about a relatively new societal phenomenon. Statements like these give additional motivation to designate research into the use of English in the activities of immigrant entrepreneurs in Finland, since it is a feature that has been observed by previous research, yet it has not been studied in its own right.

The problematic categorization of 'immigrant' businesses has been noted as one of the most considerable obstacles in immigrant entrepreneurship research. As illustrated by Melin and Melin (2012:24-25), there is no single register or database that would yield an accurate estimate about the number of immigrant businesses in Finland, and the only resources suitable for the task, i.e. The Finnish Patent and Registration Office's trade register and the databases of the Tax Administration, usually give out conflicting results even within the same database. This view is echoed by the Uusimaa Regional Council (2011:14) and Joronen (2012:184), who state that it is impossible to find out the precise number of entrepreneurs with a 'foreign-background'.

The total number of immigrants as well as the number of immigrant entrepreneurs residing in Finland might both be a mystery, but they have one thing in common: the high percentage of immigrants residing in Helsinki is reflected in the equally high

number of immigrant entrepreneurs located in the area. The Uusimaa Regional Council (2011:3) estimates that in 2009, there were approximately 3900 immigrant businesses in operation in the municipality of Uusimaa, which in return, according to Melin and Melin (2012:24), translates into half of all the immigrant businesses in Finland. Within Uusimaa, the businesses are heavily condensed to the large cities in Greater Helsinki Region. Melin and Melin also point out (*ibid.*) that the majority of the businesses owned by immigrants originating from Africa, Asia and Estonia are located in the capital region. Furthermore, the Uusimaa Regional Council (2011:3) argues that immigrant entrepreneurs are starting businesses at an ever increasing rate, a statement which appears convincing especially when a representative of Nordea Bank recently said that approximately 25 to 30 percent of the new businesses in Helsinki are founded by individuals of ‘foreign-background’ (Taloussanomat 2012).

6.3 Language and immigrant employment

According to previous research in the Finnish context, language plays a significant role in the employment of immigrants. Reporting on aspects surrounding language education and immigration, Pöyhönen et al. (2009:9) note that both previous research and conventions from working life support the argument that the ability to communicate in Finnish is one of the most important factors affecting the successful integration and employment of immigrants. However, they also bring up some of the conflicting views that are related to the interdependency between Finnish language and employment by questioning the criteria of what constitutes sufficient knowledge of Finnish, and whose criteria should be used: those of the government, the employer or the immigrant. Furthermore, Pöyhönen et al. (*ibid.*) note that the situation and context in which the language is used should be taken into account as well.

The scattered state of studies and research, conducted in isolation and without coordination between different projects, is seen as one of the main reasons for the need for Finnish competence being exaggerated as an employment criteria (Pöyhönen et al. 2009:9). Similar observations are brought up by, for instance, the Uusimaa Regional Council (2011:11), who states that language requirements may be occasionally overblown, and by Tuononen (2013:41), who claims that Finnish language proficiency is occasionally required even though there is no justifiable need for it. Furthermore, Arajärvi (2009:2) advocates the occasional inclusion of English in the assessment of the

language skills of immigrants. However, he also claims that English alone is not sufficient, except in professions requiring higher education. In light of Arajärvi's statement, it is interesting to see if the present study is able to locate immigrant entrepreneurs who are able to conduct their business chiefly in English.

Problems relating to language have been also named as one of the top issues complicating the entrepreneurship of immigrants, both in Finland and internationally, as reported by the Ministry of Trade and Industry of Finland (2007:64). However, they also (ibid.) remark that insufficient language skills do not necessarily stand in the way of successful immigrant entrepreneurship (the notion of 'insufficient' is not further explained in the report). Melin and Melin (2012:13) propose a contrary consideration, and see weak skills in the Finnish language as a reason in itself for immigrants choosing to become entrepreneurs, because to some that might be the only job-option due to not meeting the demands for competence in the Finnish language.

Joronen (2012) made an intriguing observation about immigrant entrepreneurs and their Finnish language skills in her prominent 2012 study about immigrant entrepreneurship in Finland. Her original expectation (2012:135) was to find immigrant entrepreneurs to be skilled in Finnish, due to the demands that bureaucracy and legislation place on anyone who is founding a business in Finland, but in the end, Joronen (ibid.) learnt that of those immigrants who were employed, immigrant entrepreneurs were reported to have the **lowest** of Finnish language skills among the participants. The results were statistically significant. Consequently, Joronen's observation is among the main motivations for the present study, since such a significant observation has to be examined in more detail. Nevertheless, Joronen (2012:135) herself explains this observation with the possibility of immigrants occasionally being 'forced' to found a business, as do Melin and Melin (2012:13), since they do not necessarily possess the level of Finnish language skills required for employment.

The Ministry of Trade and Industry of Finland (2007:34) sees the demand for the Finnish skills of an immigrant entrepreneur decreasing after the business has been founded, basing it on the view that immigrant businesses usually operate in working environments that are culturally and linguistically more familiar to the immigrant entrepreneur. This could be interpreted as a sign of an environment that is occasionally referred to as an *ethnic enclave*, which a cluster of people who are of a particular type of ethnicity and share a cultural identity. Joronen (2012:18) defines ethnic enclave

entrepreneurship as the operating of a business in a location that differs demographically from the national demographic distribution. However, Heinonen (2010:14-15) points out that although Finnish immigrant entrepreneurs utilize ethnic networks for administrative purposes, such as finance, they do not operate within an ethnic enclave, partly because there are no significant ethnic markets in Finland, at least yet, due to the relatively low number of immigrants. Joronen (2012:40) concludes that several researchers argue for the similarity between immigrant entrepreneurs and 'standard' entrepreneurs, and overt idiosyncrasies in the businesses run by immigrants can be explained by common nominators in the chosen domain of business and in the local working environment. In addition, there are virtually no differences in the models of operation between different ethnic groups (Joronen 2012:40).

Heinonen proposes (2010:30) the need for Finnish in the business venture of an immigrant entrepreneur being relative to the customer base of the business; Finnish customers can motivate the entrepreneur to learn Finnish. She continues (ibid.) that the entrepreneurs whose customers consist mainly of Finnish citizens see entrepreneurship as challenging because of insufficient skills in the Finnish language. In the same vein, Melin and Melin (2012:17), note that if a business strives to serve Finnish customers, the business owner has to possess a relatively good command of Finnish.

By far the most thought-provoking observations about the role of *English* in the operations of immigrant entrepreneurs have been made by Melin and Melin in their 2012 paper on the role of entrepreneurship in the employment of immigrants in the Ostrobothnia region in Finland. Although language was not among the pivotal elements of their study, especially not English, some of the study participants, all immigrant entrepreneurs, pointed out that they were able to conduct and operate their business chiefly in English, and some even reported that it was difficult for them to learn Finnish due to the high willingness of Finns to use English. Melin and Melin summarize the role of English in the activities of immigrant entrepreneurs by stating that English can occasionally suffice in Finnish businesses. The observations made by the Melins raise questions about the role of English in immigrant owned businesses in the Helsinki region, especially when the number of immigrants, immigrant businesses and the role of English can be said to be higher and more visible in Helsinki than in the Ostrobothnia region.

6.4 Previous studies on immigrant English in Finland

The previous findings about the use of English by immigrants in the Finnish context are somewhat scattered, mainly due to the number of academic disciplines involved in research of the phenomenon. Since the main focus of the present study is the English use of immigrant entrepreneurs, it is relevant to take a look at previous studies conducted in the field of linguistics in which information about the English use of immigrants has been gained. Many of these studies are situated in such contexts as immigrant employment and working life, and focus on such linguistic phenomena as second language acquisition, language attitudes and the role of Finnish and English in integration.

In addition to studies investigating immigrants as users of English, there are studies that have looked into the English use of foreigners who have come to Finland to study as exchange students or to work as university staff. English used in communication by such groups is indisputably an instance of ELF use, but such focus groups do not necessarily give an accurate image of the ELF use occurring in Finnish society on a larger scale, because foreign exchange students and university staff might dwell in environments that are akin to English enclaves where English is used on the basis of a language policy. Studies conducted in such settings might not, therefore, represent ELF that is free of an administrative presupposition or the role of an institution.

The master's theses of Partanen (2012) and Sjöholm (2012) center around immigrants as users of Finnish: Partanen focuses on immigrants in entry-level jobs and Sjöholm on immigrant-background individuals employed in the fields of nursing and medical care. Regardless of the focus on Finnish, both studies make interesting observations about the role of English in the working life of immigrants, and conclude that English plays a significant role in certain work environments. The studies by Malessa (2011) and Luoto (2009) also point out the high visibility of English in the life of 'foreigners' in Finland, but because the former focuses on international university students and the latter on African degree students, both focus groups situated in an English enclave, their observations are not necessarily that relevant in regard to the present study. Hakkarainen (2011) and Hague (2011), on the other hand, focus on immigrant language use that is free of an institutional context, such as a university or place-of-work. Hakkarainen's interest lies in the language learning experiences of immigrants, which is not among the pivotal topics of the present study, whereas Haque has a more general

approach to the language choices on immigrants, not focusing on any language in particular. Similarly to the studies mentioned earlier, Hakkarainen and Haque also comment on the indisputable role of English in the lives of immigrants in Finland.

Relevant observations about the high functionality of English in the lives of immigrants in Finland have also been made by Jalava (2011), Lappalainen (2010) and Nieminen (2009). Jalava's (2011) focus is on the role that English plays in the integration of immigrants into Finnish society, Lappalainen (2010) investigates the manner in which different languages portray themselves in the daily activities of immigrants while Nieminen (2009) looks into the language learning and societal integration of immigrants who conduct their daily lives mainly in English. When listing the prospects for future studies, Nieminen (2009:120), advises research around the same topic to have a more defined focus group than just 'immigrants', which can be too heterogeneous as a context to yield accurate findings. This has been taken into consideration in the present study by focusing on immigrants who share the context of entrepreneurship. Nonetheless, all of the three studies conclude that English has a significant role in the lives of immigrants, a role that in specific contexts and activities is occasionally larger than that of Finnish.

In sum, considering the previous observations made by linguists about the high visibility and use of English in the daily lives of immigrants in Finland, combined with similar findings within immigrant entrepreneurship research, the role of English in the activities of Helsinki-based immigrant entrepreneurs can be expected to be notable. There is also an apparent need for research to bring a linguistic emphasis into the study of immigrant entrepreneurship, so that the role of English can be approached, not just as a side product, but as a starting point for academic research in the context of immigrant entrepreneurs in its own right.

7 THE PRESENT STUDY

7.1 Aim and motivation

The aim of the present study is to bring forth and explore the role of English in the lives of immigrant entrepreneurs who reside and conduct their business in Helsinki, the capital of Finland. It is in the best interest of the study to give a voice to a somewhat disenfranchised group of people, whose views are not necessarily heard in the public and academic discussion over the role and functions that English occupies in Finnish society. I also believe that immigrants and immigrant entrepreneurs as a sub-group are in the very core of the English lingua franca use in Finland. As said, the reason why such a specified sub-group as immigrant entrepreneurs is chosen is that the significance of English in their linguistic repertoires has already been noted in previous studies with other than linguistic aims, but research focusing on the English use of immigrant entrepreneurs has not yet been carried out.

Additional motivation for this research topic comes from the changing scenery of sociolinguistics. Globalization calls for multifaceted sociolinguistic research, as has been advocated by the likes of Blommaert and Rampton (see section 2); globalization challenges the notions of the nation-state and national language, resulting in a situation where individuals from 'elsewhere' perhaps resort to foreign languages, foreign to a specific nation-state, to fulfil their role in the host society. Overall, I see research topics such as the one chosen for the present study as the key in matching the rapid changes that are taking place in all levels of contemporary Western societies. The research context is highly multifaceted, comprising of global elements that have been brought to a local setting in a way that could be difficult to grasp by holding on to the rigid boundaries of academic disciplines and modern views of society as static entities. This is also where I see the ideas of linguistic ethnography coming into action; the researched phenomenon is approached from a practical perspective as a freely occurring element within society, and it is explored from a viewpoint that does not have a fixed approach, but rather an outlook that tries to 'trace' a connection between global phenomena in a local setting.

Among the motivations for the present study is also the author's personal interest in the study of Business English Lingua Franca. In fact, the original research topic of was to

be situated in the field of business English, but as the research literature of BELF was reviewed, it became clear that grass-root level business activity, such as small-time immigrant businesses, is not among the topics of traditional Business English. This is a somewhat discouraging observation, since I see it as the duty of a researcher to give a voice also to those who are not situated in contexts that are easily accessible and measurable.

Traditional research topics associated with immigrant language use, e.g. acculturation and second language acquisition are not among the scope of this study. Firstly, these phenomena have been explored by previous studies in the context of immigrants, and secondly, the main focus of the present study is simply to illustrate the role that English has within the context of immigrant entrepreneurs.

In order to create a clear empirical starting point for the study, a research question has to be formulated. The main research question of the study is:

1. What type of a role does English have in the lives of immigrant entrepreneurs, both in the business spectrum and their life in general?

The purpose of the research question is simply to facilitate the elicitation of whatever aspects the participants see as important in regard to their use of English, since there is little prior knowledge available about the topic.

Although I have a premonition that immigrant entrepreneurs use English as a tool in their daily lives and business operations, this presumption is not used as a research hypothesis in the traditional sense. Not only because this observation has already been made by other researchers, even if only as a side-note, but also due to academic considerations about the use of a research hypothesis in a qualitative inquiry. Hirsjärvi and Tuomi (2000:66), for instance, state that a hypothesis can be incorporated into a qualitative study, but at the same time, they (2000:66) argue that the use of the word *hypothesis* in itself is questionable in qualitative research, because the sole purpose of a qualitative study is to explore the essence of a given phenomenon, to describe it extensively and possibly give birth to new hypotheses. They conclude (ibid.) that a research hypothesis can be a part of a qualitative study, but advice against using one. In addition, a fixed hypothesis could limit the depth and openness in which a researcher is able to look at the data of their study.

In addition to the conceptual incongruence that the inclusion of a research hypothesis in a qualitative study would cause, linguists such as Kalaja et al. (2011:13), point out that when a hypothesis is used, it has to be also validated, and this is quite difficult with the means of a qualitative study (also noted by Tuula Hirvonen, personal communication). Pitkänen-Huhta (2011:94), on the other hand, discusses the use of a hypothesis within an ethnographically geared study, and notes that an ethnographer does not hypothesize or list specific questions about the research topic before the study is carried out.

7.2 Research approach

Society, due to its stratified and emergent character and due to the action of social agents, is characterised by qualitative changes, complexity and relationality. Those features either cannot be fully grasped by ‘measuring’ them or are impossible to be ‘measured’. (Losifides 2011:131)

Previous academic research in the field of immigrant entrepreneurship has been conducted through both quantitative and qualitative frameworks, utilizing data collection methods ranging from statistical measures about business distribution to personal interviews focusing on the effectiveness of entrepreneurial training. The present study adopts a qualitative approach with an ethnographic nuance, because phenomena that are largely uncharted can be best assessed with an approach that yields detailed information based on the knowledge that the study participants possess, without aiming for a generalizable overview.

‘Qualitative research’ is a type of an umbrella term that covers a plethora of research approaches, and it is occasionally used as a label for studies that are not necessarily qualitative in academic terms, as pointed out by Tuomi and Sarajärvi (2009:9-17) in their overview about the fundamental principles of qualitative research. They (2009:17-22) see the presence of a theoretical framework and the utilization of empirical methods as the basic prerequisites for a qualitative study. They also (2009:28) state that qualitative research should be appreciative to the participants, striving for cohesion with their attitudes, beliefs and motives.

Due to the proliferation of terms used in studies identifying as qualitative, it is necessary to remember that in the Finnish context, only studies that are labeled as *laadullinen* can

be seen as terminologically synonymous to studies labeled as *qualitative* (Tuomi and Sarajärvi 2009:23-24). This is an important aspect in regard to the present study, since the majority of immigrant entrepreneurship research carried out in Finland has been conducted in Finnish, and, therefore, attention should be paid to terminology so that there is little risk for methodological and conceptual incongruence.

Whereas Tuomi and Sarajärvi approach qualitative research from a discipline-free viewpoint, Dörnyei (2007) discusses it from the perspective of linguistics. He (2007:24) states that typical qualitative research in linguistics involves open-ended and non-numerical data that is assessed by using non-statistical methods. Of these methods, he mentions the research interview as especially popular. Dörnyei (2007:36) sees the widespread popularity of qualitative methods in linguistics as an outcome of the fact that both language acquisition and language use are highly dependent on social and cultural contexts, which are most accurately grasped by the methods provided by qualitative inquiry.

Losifides (2011:144) sees qualitative methods as able to bring the researcher closer to the social context in which the investigated phenomenon occurs than is possible with the tools provided by quantitative inquiry. Dörnyei (2007:39) further argues that qualitative methods are particularly suitable for the exploration of linguistic phenomena that have not yet been extensively studied, of which the English use of immigrant entrepreneurs is a case in point. Moreover, qualitative research is also especially suitable for the study of marginalized groups of people, as argued by Hirsjärvi and Hurme (2000:27). Naturally, it would be a gross overstatement to say that all immigrants are marginalized, especially if they have succeeded in operating a business in a new host society, but immigrant entrepreneurs in Finland could be seen as marginalized in the sense that their language use has not yet been studied extensively, at least from the perspective of English.

As globalization is a recurring theme in the present study, its influence on the chosen scientific approach has to be discussed as well. Similarly to Blommaert (2007) and Rampton (2007), whose ideas on the sociolinguistics of globalization and linguistic ethnography were presented in section 2, Tuomi and Sarajärvi (2009:54-55) argue that in post-modern qualitative research, the boundaries between different disciplines become blurred and thus it is common for post-modern research to be highly interdisciplinary and to serve as a meeting place for all types of research. Alasuutari (1995)

too reminds that interdisciplinary research is advisable in any case, because sociological phenomena rarely limit themselves to the boundaries of an academic discipline, as is the case with the topic of the present study.

Although the present study bears some elements of linguistic ethnography, e.g. the multifaceted research topic and the focus on language as a social element within society, the study is not ethnographic in the traditional sense of the word. While linguistic research that is comprehensively ethnographic, with its participant observations and field studies, might be excessively arduous for a master's thesis, a researcher can still adopt an ethnographic approach and utilize methods that originate from ethnographic research (Pitkänen-Huhta 2011:88). Pitkänen-Huhta (*ibid.*) continues that in connection with linguistics, ethnography is more concerned about the phenomena that surround language than it is with the scrutiny of language as a system. She notes (2011:90-92) that ethnographic approaches are presently common in many scientific disciplines, since one of the overall benefits of ethnographical approaches is that they can trace large scale phenomena by looking into small scale activity. For a master's thesis with an ethnographic approach, see Partanen's 2012 study on immigrant language learning, and for a large-scale study into immigrant language utilizing ethnographic fieldwork, see Collins et al. 2009.

7.3 Empirical method – the semi-structured theme interview

As Tuomi and Sarajärvi (2009:71) state, the most common methods of data collection in qualitative research are the interview, survey, (participant) observation and data collection that is based on the investigation of documents. All these can be used separately, in combination or in a mixed manner depending on the type of study. Tuomi and Sarajärvi (*ibid.*) recommend the use of less structured methods, such as observation and interview, for studies with an open-ended research setting. They (2009:72) point out that when the aim of a research is to find out how an individual acts and thinks it is useful to ask this directly from the individual, by the means of the research interview. This logic is followed in the present study as well. Furthermore, in the context of immigrant studies, Martikainen (2009:5) sees the limited statistical information available regarding immigrants as one of the reasons for the popularity of the research

interview, since no comprehensive or reliable data about immigrants in Finland can be obtained through administrative registers, rendering large-scale quantitative research difficult.

Hirsjärvi and Hurme (2000:11) explain the popularity of the research interview as a data solicitation method with its versatility and ability to provide in-depth information. Talmy (2010:128) notes that the popularity of research interviews has grown significantly in recent years in the field of applied linguistics, especially in studies that have an ethnographic or related qualitative framework. Hirsjärvi and Hurme (2000:73) further posit the popularity of the research interview with its layperson like mechanics that allow high flexibility: a question can be reiterated, clarified and discussed with the subject. Furthermore, the subjects can be purposefully selected, ensuring high levels of knowledge about the researched phenomena among the study group. However, Tuomi and Sarajärvi warn (2009:72) seeing the research interview as omnipotent, since it is only viable if it is carried out correctly, administered to relevant subjects, it asks the right questions, is suitable for the research setting and if the results of the interview are discussed thoroughly (Hirsjärvi and Hurme 2000:12).

The questionnaire, the theme interview and the in-depth interview all yield different types of information and are apt for specific research topics, the greatest difference being in the level in which they are structured and fixed (Tuomi and Sarajärvi 2009:74). Dörnyei (2007:136) argues that the majority of research interviews in applied linguistics belong to the 'semi-structured' interview category, which serves as a meeting point between two extremes: it is partly structured in that it has certain preplanned 'themes' around which the interview is constructed, but it is also open-ended in that it allows the interviewee to elaborate on what they see as relevant from their own perspective. Dörnyei (2007:136) states that the semi-structured interview is especially suitable for topics about which the researcher has a general overview and is able to list broad themes relating to it, but does not want to limit the range of possible insights into the topic that the interviewees might disclose. As Hirsjärvi and Hurme (2000:47) note, this type of an interview method has many names, and it is referred to, for example, as the theme interview, semi-structured theme interview, semi standardized interview et cetera. What is shared by all is that they have some fixed elements and some elements that allow elaboration (Hirsjärvi and Hurme 2000:47). In the present study, the type of research interview that is used is perhaps most accurately described by the term *semi-structured theme interview*.

Dörnyei (2007:136-137) uses the term ‘interview guide’ to refer to the list of themes that constitute the semi-structured interview. He points out (ibid.) that the interview guide ensures that the topic is gone through comprehensively, provides appropriate wordings to the questions and can include ‘reserve’ questions that are used if need be. The interview guide of a semi-structured interview should be highly open-ended and unstructured to ensure that the interviewer does not force the interviewees to answer prefabricated questions in a structured manner. The interview guide simply functions as a platform that directs the interview into the right direction and guides the interviewees to discuss topics that concern the theoretical framework of the study.

Similarly to Dörnyei, Hirsjärvi and Hurme (2000:66) remind that the themes of the theme interview have to be not only theoretically suitable and valid, but they must also allow the emergence of all possible aspects that are related to the topic. This can prove to be an important aspect in the present study, since the research topic is still relatively unexplored. Thus, the themes are based on the chosen theoretical framework and are not too detailed, but instead encourage the participants to share versatile and unrestricted information about the researched phenomenon, in order to enable the creation of a comprehensive picture about the research topic (see Appendix 1 for the interview guide and the interview themes).

Hirsjärvi and Hurme (2000:103-104) emphasize that the order of the themes and questions that are discussed during the theme interview can vary with each interviewee. They also (ibid.) remind that the same questions do not have to be asked from all the interviewees and the wording of the questions can also be altered. Hirsjärvi and Hurme conclude that the demand for consistency varies significantly among studies that utilize the semi-structured interview, but ultimately, all decisions relating to the methods should serve the purpose of the research topic. Nevertheless, the themes guarantee at least some level of consistency between separate interviews (Hirsjärvi and Tuomi 2000:66).

As the strengths of the semi-structured interview, Hirsjärvi and Hurme (2000:34) mention its ability to not only create new and relevant information about the research topic but also the way in which it brings forth the motives behind the answers. In addition, they see the semi-structured interview as a method that empowers the interviewee by making their role meaningful and active. This could be a significant

factor in the present study, especially if the respondents, as immigrants, appear to be marginalized in one way or another.

To conclude, Kalaja et al (2011:21) state that one way to increase the reliability of a qualitative study is to utilize methods that have been previously proven to be valid, of which the semi-structured theme interview is a case in point: see Hirvonen's 2010 study on immigrant as learners of English for a master's thesis utilizing the semi-structured theme interview, and Melin and Melin 2012 for a larger-scale immigrant entrepreneur study conducted using the same method.

8 THE DATA OF THE PRESENT STUDY

8.1 Data collection

The participants of the present study were chosen on the basis of fieldwork carried out by the researcher. It somehow seemed suitable in respect to the ethnographic method to venture out and make the first contact with the interviewees through a face-to-face encounter. As a result, the immigrant entrepreneurs were met in the premises of their businesses. They all work in the business location that they run by themselves or with business partners. It is a vital aspect that the participants are involved in the grass-root level of the business operation, since one of the main goals of the present study was to reach immigrant entrepreneurs who come to frequent contact with customers, so that their possible use of English would not be limited to the administrative aspects of the business operation.

Then, how was the researcher able to tell which businesses were 'immigrant' businesses? Firstly, the selection of the geographical location in which the immigrant entrepreneurs were contacted was based on anecdotal information and personal knowledge about the existence of an immigrant business cluster in a specific location near the Helsinki center. Secondly, at the street level, the decision whether or not a business could be immigrant owned and operated was based on visual cues, such as the high use of other languages than Finnish and the advertising of ethnic products. Such

cues have necessarily nothing to do with the ownership of a business, but I had an intuition that the ethnic shops and stores in that particular area are mostly run by immigrant entrepreneurs, which was more or less based on what would have to be referred to as the academically inappropriate term 'gut feeling'. Nevertheless, this intuition turned out to be valid, and nearly all of the stores that were visited in the area were in fact immigrant owned and operated. It would be more than useful to illustrate the high use of English in the area with the help of pictures, but this idea has to be discarded since it could compromise the anonymity of the participants.

As said earlier, the first contact with each interviewee was made through a face-to-face encounter within the business location. At first, it seemed nearly impossible to get an entrepreneur to volunteer for the interview, since running and operating a business is a rather time-consuming activity. Hence, the first five or so entrepreneurs that were contacted indicated that they had no time to partake in the study. In addition, especially in the larger shops the personnel said that the owner could not be reached. However, eventually a total of five immigrant entrepreneurs found the time to participate in the study and were interviewed on a time and date suitable to them.

All of the study participants fit the definition of *immigrant* and *immigrant entrepreneur* presented in sections 5.1 and 5.2.

8.2 The size and type of data

The size of the data set is an important aspect in quantitative research (Dörnyei 2007; Tuomi and Sarajärvi 2009, Alasuutari 1995), but its role in qualitative research usually draws less attention. Regardless of this, problems concerning sample size are among the most common problems in both quantitative and qualitative research (Tuomi and Sarajärvi 2009:85). However, as Hirsjärvi and Hurme (2000) note, there are no clear norms regarding the parameters of sample size in qualitative research. Dörnyei (2007:127), on the other hand, points out that if a qualitative study is properly designed and conducted, it requires a relatively low number of respondents to yield saturated and versatile data.

Tuomi and Sarajärvi (2009:85) state that although questions concerning the size of research data are not among the focal points of a thesis on the bachelor's or master's level, the decisions leading to the forming of the data set should still be discussed. In the

present study, five respondents were deemed a sufficient number of interviewees, especially since the respondents are all originally of different nationalities, they are situated in more or less different fields of businesses and there is an equal representation of men and women. In addition, as data collection progressed, the data began to appear somewhat saturated, although both Hirsjärvi and Hurme (2000) and Tuomi and Sarajärvi (2009) argue that the criteria of data saturation should not be used in qualitative research, at least in its traditional sense, since what is seen as new and unsaturated information in qualitative terms is a highly subjective notion. On the basis of these insights, the size of the dataset should not be among the key elements of the present study, especially when the aim is not on the generalization or the statistical representation of data.

If sample size is not seen as crucial to the reliability of a qualitative study, the selection of informants is. The participants should possess comprehensive and insightful knowledge about the phenomenon under study, since shortcomings in the breadth (the information that a single informant holds) of data cannot be compensated by the width (the number of informants) of data (Tuomi and Sarajärvi 2009). Consequently, Tuomi and Sarajärvi (*ibid.*) emphasize the importance of selecting participants who possess rich insights about the research topic, and recommend the use of what they call ‘elite sampling’ or *eliittiotanta*, a technique that Dörnyei (2007:126) refers to as ‘purposeful’ or ‘purposive’ sampling: only informants who are very familiar with the sought-after phenomenon and possess vast knowledge about it are chosen as respondents. This is not an unproblematic aspect in the present study, since the English use of immigrant entrepreneurs has not been studied before, neither has it been identified as being idiosyncratic to a specific subgroup within immigrant entrepreneurs. Thus the criteria for the selection of informants was merely that they meet the definitions laid out in sections 5.1 and 5.2.

Tuomi and Sarajärvi (2009:87) advise against using terms such as ‘purposeful sampling’, because they see qualitative research and data solicitation as purposeful by definition, and add that these types of terms originate from quantitative research and can therefore confuse the reader. In the light of this, Dörnyei’s (2007:126) ‘homogenous sampling’ might be the most suitable term to describe the type of participant selection utilized in present study: “The researcher selects participants from a particular subgroup who share some important experience relevant to our study... In this way, this strategy allows us to conduct an in-depth analysis to identify common patterns in a group with

similar characteristics.” (Dörnyei 2007:126). The aforementioned types of sample formation (elite sampling/homogenous sampling) have been previously utilized in immigrant entrepreneur research in Finland, for instance, by Melin and Melin (2012) and Lähdesmäki and Savela (2006).

8.3 The interviews

All of the five interviews were conducted within a three week period between February and March 2014. Four of the interviews were carried out in the business location, and one at the home of the entrepreneur. The interviews were constructed around the interview guide, which turned out to be very useful in guiding the interviews into the right direction whenever there were deviations from the selected themes and in ensuring that all of the themes would be discussed with each interviewee.

Although the interview guide ensures some level of consistency between the interviews, the wording, order and depth in which the themes were discussed varied with each respondent, as is expected and typical of a semi-structured theme interview. The interviews also included talk about other topics than the selected themes in order to facilitate the solicitation of desirable insights about the use of English, and to create a positive atmosphere so that the interviewee did not get the feeling that they were simply used as a resource for information.

All of the interviews were recorded and later transcribed to assist data analysis. The lengths of the interviews range from 25 to 60 minutes. The need for a pilot was deemed unnecessary after the first interview, since the interview guide and the themes proved to be suitable and nothing that would have resulted in significant moderations occurred. The participants were informed about the broad lines on the study and the major themes of the theme interview. No information that could be used to identify the participants (e.g. name and age) was asked during the recorded part of the interview, so that in case the recordings were lost or stolen, the anonymity of the interviewees would not be compromised.

The first immigrant entrepreneur who was interviewed for the study is a Somali woman in her twenties, running an 'ethnic' store with her parents (*ethnic* refers here to a variety of products targeted at immigrants, not found generally in Finnish stores, products such as Islamic clothing, African furniture, exotic foodstuff et cetera). The first participant is

hereon referred to as **Sari**. She has lived nearly all her life in Finland, and speaks fluent Finnish. Sari differs from the other four participants in that she asked to be interviewed in Finnish, citing poor English skills. Sari was interviewed right after the initial contact in the back of her shop.

The second participant is a native speaker of English, originally from England with Jamaican origins. She runs a restaurant and has extensive experience from being self-employed during the 14 years she has lived in Finland, working both as a massage therapist and a dance instructor under a sole proprietorship. She is hereon referred to as **Heidi**. The interview was carried out at her restaurant a few hours after initial contact. Heidi's status as a native speaker of English resulted in some considerations about her linguistic repertoire with respect to the other participants. However, as the present study is highly qualitative, there is no need for a homogenous group of informants, but instead the more idiosyncratic and heterogeneous the group the better. In addition, since the linguistic focus of the study is simply on the functionality and role of English among immigrant entrepreneurs, both L1 and L2 speakers of the language can be included in the data. Still, in respect to the credibility and reliability of the present study, variances in the linguistic profiles of the informants need to be mentioned to ensure that further research on the topic can be carried out with as much knowledge about the parameters of the present study as possible.

The third interviewee, henceforth **Sami**, is a Nepalese man in his late thirties who runs an 'Indian' grocery store that specializes in foodstuff from India and Nepal. The store caters to consumers on the street level and as a supplier to Indian and Nepalese restaurants in Finland. Sami is the chairman of the business which he runs with two countrymen. Sami first came to Finland as an engineer student, then worked for Nokia, was fired, became a co-owner in a restaurant in Southwest Finland and now runs the current business in Helsinki. The interview was carried out in the store and it was interrupted a few times when Sami had to serve a customer. The date and time for the interview was agreed on the day before the interview.

The fourth participant, from this point forward referred to as **Pekka**, differs from the other interviewees in that he is the only one whom with I have had a personal relationship prior to the interview. This was not deemed to be a serious anomaly, since the interview was conducted in the same manner as the four other interviews: it followed the outline and themes listed in the interview guide and the level of personal

closeness did not, in my opinion, have an overt effect on the interview situation. The interview was naturally accompanied by friendly talk about random subjects, but the recording itself is quite formal and informative in regard to the interview themes. Pekka himself is a Ghanaian man who runs a barbershop/clothing store that has been in operation for over ten years at the same location. Although he is the manager, he is also heavily involved in the daily operation of the business and also works there as a barber. The interview was conducted at Pekka's home.

The fifth and the last participant, **Zenja**, an Indonesian woman in her twenties, is an entrepreneur in a mutually owned business and also works as a waitperson in a restaurant. Zenja's business is a grocery store, similar to that of Sami's. Although the purpose of this study is not to draw comparisons between the English use of immigrant entrepreneurs and immigrants employed as workers, comparing the linguistic reality of the two occupations in which Zenja is involved could help to create a better understanding of the English use of immigrant entrepreneurs. The interview was conducted at the cafeteria of the Helsinki University Library in Kaisaniemi.

8.4 Data analysis

Qualitative analysis is a highly inclusive term. As noted by Dörnyei (2007:242), occasionally, what is the common nominator in qualitative data analysis is not the method that is used, but instead, the method that is not used. By this, he refers to the general rejection of the mechanical and statistical techniques of quantitative data analysis. Hirsjärvi and Hurme (2000:35) claim that data analysis in qualitative research can be especially challenging if the data is based on free or semi-structured interviews, because it can be difficult to find applicable models or techniques to assess the data. Tuomi and Sarajärvi (2009:94), on the other hand, state that overall, the data in qualitative research can turn out to be extremely vast, which renders the tracing of salient features quite challenging. Still, the theme interview could be seen as partially mitigating this vastness of data, since the themes guide the researcher throughout the analysis, and they can be used as a starting point for the observations that will be highlighted within the data, naturally not disregarding additional notions that might arise from outside the theoretical framework.

Similarly to the aforementioned arguments regarding the challenges involved in qualitative data analysis presented by Tuomi and Sarajärvi, Dörnyei (2007:244) points out that the raw qualitative dataset of a qualitative study can at first appear to be excessively large. He states (ibid) that the greatest obstacle for the researcher is to “bring some insightful order to the multiple accounts of human stories and practices collected or observed”. As the key to this, Dörnyei (ibid.) posits two roads for the researcher to choose from: the one of ‘subjective intuition’ and the other of a ‘formalized analytical procedure’. The former is based on creativity and flexibility, while the latter on a systematical and tested framework of analysis. Dörnyei reminds that both are accepted and used in qualitative data analysis, but they have clear differences: the intuitive approach, he states (ibid.), is supported by the fact that qualitative data and inquiry are highly idiosyncratic and subjective in nature, and thus the rigidity of a fixed procedural data analysis method can undermine the flexibility and responsiveness that is demanded from the analysis of qualitative data. Still, Dörnyei questions whether it is wise to begin all qualitative data analysis from a starting point that does not utilize established methodological knowledge.

As a questionable aspect of the fully intuitive approach into data analysis, Dörnyei (2007:245) brings up the low level of credibility and reliability present in a framework-free analysis: how is the reader convinced to take the data analysis at face value in academic terms, if there is no guarantee about the scientific integrity of the analysis. Dörnyei (ibid.) continues that the only way to do this is to utilize formalized procedures that give the analysis some level of transparency. He (ibid.) admits that all this pose a challenge to the researcher, who has to both maintain the intuitive essence of qualitative analysis and at the same time guarantee that the data is analyzed with the help of tested and systematic analytical procedures.

In the present study, a theoretically-oriented manner of data analysis (Tuomi and Sarajärvi 2004:98-99) is adopted to some extent. This type of analysis refers to the role that the theoretical framework is appointed in the analysis: the data can be analyzed quite freely, but the analysis is ultimately guided by the chosen theoretical framework. In other words, the mode of analysis is somewhat *abductive*. However, since the phenomenon of English use by immigrant entrepreneurs has not been studied previously in Finland, the researcher should also keep his mind open to alternative ideas, and not deliberately restrict the analysis only to the themes originating from the theoretical framework.

On the practical level, the data analysis of the present study would probably be best described as *classifying* (Tuomi and Sarajärvi 2004), in that the observations within the transcribed data were classified according to the themes present in the theoretical framework. The transcripts were reviewed repeatedly in search of recurring themes, so that the most frequent and interesting observations could be elicited from the raw data. The classification process followed a top-down approach; the observations were first categorized into vast entities, such as *English* and *Finnish*, but as the process developed, these categories evolved into categories such as *English and employment* and *Finnish in the research context*. Naturally, a different categorization technique could have been followed, but this is probably a point where researcher intuition comes into play. Nevertheless, the categorization of the main findings found in section 9 is a result of the aforementioned thematical classification process.

I also see the principles of qualitative data analysis presented by Alasuutari (1995) as describing the analytical process adopted in the present study quite accurately. Alasuutari (1995:147) recommends that the raw observations that form the original dataset are combined into meta-observations, by which he means that “several different versions of the same theme can be looked at as a whole instead of isolated cases”. Alasuutari (1995:147). Alasuutari (1995:19) refers to this ‘combining’ of observations as *purification*, followed by a phase he calls *unriddling*, during which the researcher presents the interplay between the theoretical framework and data, resulting in new information and conclusions. The present study adopts a similar structure: an overlook of the main points elicited from the data (section 9) is followed by an interpretation of these findings (section 10).

Alasuutari (1995:39) also reminds that the purpose of research conclusions is to gain access to a level that underlies the surface observations, which are interpreted in one way or another. The key here is the word *interpretive*, because qualitative research is highly interpretive by definition, resulting in a research outcome that is basically a subjective interpretation of the researched phenomenon and data (Dörnyei 2007:38). In other words, even if the methodological framework behind the data analysis is sound, it still does not guarantee that a qualitative study is of value: as Tuomi and Sarajärvi (2004:102) insightfully point out, the quality of qualitative data analysis, lacking clear mechanical and systematic procedures, is ultimately always dependent on the researcher’s personal ability to grasp and bring forth the most salient and meaningful elements embedded in the data.

8.5 Data presentation

As Tuomi and Sarajärvi (2009:22) remind, it is important to give thought to whether or not verbatim examples and quotes from the data should be included in the final report. They (ibid.) remind that data extracts as such do not increase the reliability of a study; neither can they function as an analogy to the theoretical framework. However, Pitkänen-huhta (2011:101) sees the ample use of data examples as a near prerequisite in an ethnographic study: the voice of the respondents has to be heard. In the light of this, the main findings of the present study are accompanied by relevant data excerpts.

As said, the raw interview data has been transcribed, because without a transcript it would be extremely challenging to thoroughly assess the recorded data (Dörnyei 2007; Tuomi and Sarajärvi 2004; Alasuutari 1995). The data examples that are extracted from the transcript are presented verbatim, but there are some technical considerations that need to be addressed. As Dörnyei (2007:247) notes, depending on the type of (linguistic) analysis, the level of detail within the transcript can vary significantly: in fields such as Conversation Analysis, it is important to mark down as many details as possible, but if the scope of a study is not geared towards the manner in which ideas and utterances are presented, then linguistic surface phenomena can be edited out. Thus, the transcript is built around the substance of the utterances, not their form. After all, as Alasuutari (1995:44) states, if the aspects of conversation, e.g. turn-taking, pauses and hesitation, are not under study, then “a detailed notation does not pay”.

9 IMMIGRANT ENTREPRENEURS’ INSIGHTS ABOUT THE ROLE OF ENGLISH IN THEIR LIVES

Although there were some differences in the way English portrayed itself through the insights shared by the five immigrant entrepreneurs, the common consensus was still clear about the significance of English, both in the range of the business operation and outside it. English was seen as a language that the respondents could not do without.

As four of the five interviewees chose to use English during the interview, their answers are presented in the form they appear in the transcript. Sari’s answers have been translated from Finnish into English, and remain as true to the original message as

possible (see Appendix 2 for the original Finnish excerpts). The interview excerpts have been numbered, and if deemed necessary for better readability, the accompanying question has been included and marked with a **Q**. As explained earlier, the respondents are referred to as **Sari, Heidi, Sami, Pekka** and **Zenja**. A longer account for all of the respondents can be found in section 8.3.

9.1 English in the business, in society and in the future

The role of English in the business spectrum was seen as essential. Sami, for instance, did not hesitate when asked if he could run his business and serve the customers without any English:

(1) *No. It's difficult.*

Continued with a more straightforward question about which had been more important for Sami's business, Finnish or English, his answer again left little room for doubt:

(2) *English.*

The amount of importance that was ascribed to English by Sami was also shared by Pekka, who stated that in his shop, English was more *effective* than Finnish, and explained this by the high number of *foreigner* customers, an aspect about customer base that is looked into more carefully in the following chapters:

(3) *In my shop, at this age now, these decade now, English yea is more **effective** yeah. And time go, the majority of customers I have to are **foreigners** so we basically use English.*

When the frequency of English use was brought under discussion, Sari explained how the use of English was almost an automated process:

(4) *Yeah daily, it comes like automatically it comes like, yeah I use it daily.*

When asked whether a conversation in her shop was usually initiated in English or Finnish, Sari saw English as something that came *automatically*. She also stated that English was the *easiest language*, known by, more or less, everybody:

(5) *It is more likely that English. Like English is the **easiest language** that is spoken with the customer like if they know English like even if the customer knows Finnish occasionally, even if they know a few words of English, they try to explain with that faulty English rather than like French. Like it is that the customer is like "she can't speak French" so maybe English is better, like that*

*we try to speak the English language, English language is always the **easiest language** that comes **automatically** like you know... but in my opinion everybody knows something in English like even if they don't speak they understand.*

When Sari was asked about the balance between Finnish and English, and which of the two she saw as more important for the shop, she designated both equal value:

(6) You mean in my view? Like when I'm working here as a clerk? For me important, they are equally important, Finnish is important and then there's English that's real important. Yea for me it's real important in this specific situation, if you are looking at this situation, for me like both are real important because if I didn't speak English so then I would have a difficult time like with customers and then like to talk or serve that customer.

On the value of English for the business, both Sari (7) and Pekka (8) stated that running the shop without any English would have been quite challenging. Moreover, Pekka again cited his customer base and their general low Finnish competence as a reason for the need for English:

(7) With customers would be real difficult like so and you don't like understand each other no matter how hard u try.

(8) If I spoke no English, I think somehow it would be a bit difficult in a way because I mean not all my customers are Finnish and then the majority of them don't even understand Finnish so...

However, when the tables were turned, Sari also stressed the difficulties that would have arisen from running a business in English only:

(9) Would not be possible with English only, because after all we live in Finland and one should know some Finnish because like if u open some kind of a shop or business and u want the customer base to be like broad, u can't like say that u speak only English, like I open a business it has to be international so that u get to like serve the customer and like get that clientele, at least I wouldn't cope in Finland, maybe like in England u could...

As can be seen in Sari's statement above, both a sort of a citizen's 'duty' to learn Finnish and the entrepreneurial thinking of catering to a broad customer base were named as motives to learn Finnish. Sami shared Sari's view about the obstacles that would have arisen from running a business without any skills in Finnish, but unlike Sari, he mentioned bureaucracy and administration as something for which Finnish was needed, instead of highlighting barriers related to customer service:

(10) Actually it's difficult okay I mean you can run like I mean operative things but the like documentation and everything.

Q Do they offer administration and everything like that in English?

(11) No no no.

Q So is there a lot of bureaucracy?

(12) *Yes that part so it's a bit difficult so you pay more, you know because of your weakness you pay more, like you okay for example you get many, okay these days we are getting more English as well even Nordea banks they giving English. Our bookkeeper we do it in English so most of them we try to do it in English but let's not like you do everything in English like you don't get taxpapers and everything in English.*

Whereas others mostly emphasized necessity and practical reasons for their use of English, Pekka saw the language as an integral part of the shop. And although he repeatedly brought up the role of his 'foreign' clientele in connection with the high use of English, he also explained how English was in a way a given in his business: the business carried an English name, and people even 'showed off' by using English at his store:

(13) *No actually the concept of the shop when people come in and they see (name of the store), already they see the image of the shop has some foreigner background so I mean those who trust themselves with that kind of boldness to come in, those courageous guy they always show off using English language so it's easy for me to communicate.*

Q So English is a big part of the shop?

(14) *Somehow cuz like years back when u was coming around u know u know they have these kind of urban background shops so the idea is like noo this is not a Finnish shop so that kind of concept people no it's carried with them...*

In addition to the priority of English for their businesses, the respondents also placed high value on English on a more general level. Sari, for instance, having lived in Finland for the majority of her life, described English as important for traveling, for meeting people from different backgrounds and as something that increased mutual understanding:

(15) *As a language it's in my opinion really important, like if u want to like travel or meet people from different backgrounds, it's like a real important language and it kinda brings this understanding with others and it's really important.*

In the same vein, Sami regarded English as the most important language in his life, but noted that he did not necessarily acknowledge it explicitly because he was able to speak English even before he arrived to Finland:

Q Would you say English now that you live in Finland is the most important language for you?

(16) *For me? I think yes because I think it's more obvious because I know English already so I might not be able to understand its importance but I think yes.*

On the general importance of English, Pekka highlighted how English enabled communication between people from other countries, in addition to the general impact that English had on everything:

(17) I think it's the key language to every door because without the language it is difficult to communicate with people from different countries and especially if u don't understand the language they speak. I think English is the only.

Q So English has a big role?

(18) Very big. English have big impact on everything.

Of the five immigrant entrepreneurs, Zenja's insights yielded information on a bit different level, since she did not speak either Finnish or English when she moved to Finland, so she did not have any direct experience about the role of English in other contexts than Finland. However, at the time she claimed to speak both, but preferred English. Overall, for her English had played a more significant role than Finnish in adjusting to Finland by having enabled her to connect with Finnish people:

Q But do you see English as a must, as something every Finnish people should know?

(19) Yeah I think you should know too.

Q Why?

(20) Because when I came here if they don't speak English then how we communicate?

Q What does English as a language mean to u?

(21) Oh well at first when I came here I didn't speak English at all...so I think something really important for me cuz it start for me to connect with people.

Zenja had enrolled in an English speaking school soon after she had moved to Finland, which had, according to her, hindered her learning of Finnish, the use of which she still shunned in fear of making a mistake. However, her receptive skills in Finnish appeared to be more developed:

Q But is your English better now than your Finnish?

(22) Yeah my English is better than my Finnish because I went to English school...I prefer to speak English but I understand Finnish. It just that I'm afraid to make some mistake. Just something I think normal I think if don't want to make, I mean when they say you speak Finnish ok I'm afraid that I make some mistake so that's why I prefer to speak English but then I understand what Finnish people say.

As all of the respondents placed high value on English in their lives both as entrepreneurs and citizens, it is necessary to look at what they listed as reasons for English being used to such a high extent in their environment. Sami, for instance, conceived the widespread use of English in Finland as a demonstration of the internationalized status of the country, but he still hesitated to go as far as to dub English as an inseparable part of Finland:

Q Why are you able to get by with just English? Is it everywhere like this?

(23) *Not everywhere but like in Finland it's more possible already now because it's more international you know Finland.*

Q Is English part of Finland?

(24) *I think it's getting slowly as a part of Finland.*

Pekka concisely expressed the same idea of an international Finland:

Q Why is it possible for you to survive with English in Finland?

(25) *Well Finland is getting international.*

About the future of English in Finland, all of the respondents more or less agreed that the role of English would increase in the years to come. Heidi, for example, made no second-guessing about the future spread of English in Finland:

Q Will everyone in Finland speak English as time goes on?

(26) *Oh absolutely, absolutely.*

Sami (27), on the other hand, argued that the role of English correlated with the number of immigrants and foreigners in Finland. He also argued that the rate in which English had been spreading would increase. Similar ideas were also expressed by Sari (28):

Q English in the future in Finland, how will it develop?

(27) *It will I think as long as Finland is like welcoming foreigners or immigrants, so I think English will like slowly, not slowly, I think it will go more quickly I think than it was our years...what happens is like okay now the foreigners they speak English of course they would also learn Finnish but also then that coincides with Finns also they would start to realize that okay yeah we have to speak English so you should know English.*

(28) *I think the role of English will grow like I think the world and Europe is globalizing a lot, and there's like a lot of these countries and people from these countries coming and so English is used more.*

When 'future' was specified a bit, and the respondents asked about the role of English in Finland in 20 years' time (a similar span of time was also used in the VARIENG study, see chapter 4), the respondents all saw the role of English as increasing: Sami

(29) and Heidi (30) went as far as to state that English would become a second language by that time. Sami also expressed perplexity about the official role of Swedish:

Q In 20 years what will the languages of Finland look like?

(29) *I think Finnish and then English. Finnish will be there because the government won't let it go down so officially, but I think I don't know the reason why you still have Swedish as a second language, but I think it will change...with foreigners it's more easy to speak in English. Finnish would remain but I think that English will be like second language in any way so.*

(30) *I think English will definitely have to be a second language.*

In sum, the respondents saw English as indispensable in their lives. Some argued that it was more important than Finnish both in their business venture and personal life. In addition, the operation of a business without any English was seen as extremely challenging. Conversely, it was noted to be demanding without any Finnish as well, both for the inability to serve customers who did not speak English and also for administrative reasons. Nevertheless, all of the respondents agreed that in the future, the role of English would become even more significant in Finland.

9.2 English in Finland and Finns as users of English

As the aim of the present study was to gain a better understanding about the role of English in the life of immigrant entrepreneurs, it was necessary to also find out in what light did the respondents see Finns as users of English? This might yield important observations about the way in which Finns have contributed to the high significance of English in the respondents' lives.

All of the respondents agreed that the tendency of Finns to use English when communicating with an immigrant was rather high. When asked about the reasons for this model of behavior, Heidi, for instance, brought up both Finns' ability to speak English and their desire to practice their language skills. She also commented how the frequent use of English had reduced her use of Finnish:

(31) *They're able to converse in English and they want to practice you know, so they... if I was in a village with just Finnish, no English, then I would be speaking more Finnish.*

Similar reasons for the tendency of Finns to use English were also mentioned by Pekka. Moreover, he described how he was *forced* to speak Finnish if a customer was not able to speak English:

Q But even if the entrepreneur and the customer both speak Finnish, they still sometime speak English, have you noticed?

(32) *I notice, because I mean especially the Finns who understand well English always they try to use it so that's the opportunity for them to practice their English, so somehow they always emphasize using English, but then there come the situations whereby customers don't who don't understand a word of English so in that sense you are **forced** to use your Finnish you don't to handle the situation.*

Pekka elaborated on his views about the use of English in Finland, and tied its spread to the global role it possessed. He also explained how English was a vehicle for culture, a language with no rivals and how he felt that it should be known by everyone:

Q But why do we choose English if we could speak Finnish?

(33) *I think it's the common language just I mean and then this new trend everybody is trying to cope with what is going you know ...to this age and people are following more American style British style...people are improving in a way, like trying to go on with English yeah, cuz many people have lived to understand that even if u speak French it's not enough to cope with everybody, if you speak Spanish, those are big languages, Italian you know, those Chinese and all but it's not enough to communicate with everybody. So no matter what background u come from u have to learn a bit of English to learn to be able to communicate with other people from other continent.*

Furthermore, Pekka illustrated how this global language was a tool that could also permit Finns access to the global world:

(34) *I mean in Finland in general of course English is always necessary, because I mean I don't think Finnish people who don't want to stay here all of their lives, somehow they want to mingle with other people and then they want to travel around the world and see what is goin' on in the other world. Finnish just end up at the block so obviously if they want to crossover u must learn to speak English. English is always gonna be the key language as long as it controls everywhere now so.*

When asked whether the extensive use of English was taking place all over Finland, Sami, for instance, thought that it was a nationwide phenomenon.

(35) *Like you go anywhere in Finland you can still communicate in English.*

But not all of the respondents saw the everyday use of English as a nationwide phenomenon. Heidi, for instance, highlighted Helsinki as the key, and cited the high level of multiculturalism present in Helsinki as a reason for her having been able to go on speaking only English even after having lived and operated different businesses in Finland for over 14 years:

(36) *I think you know Helsinki you know it is a bit of a compared to other cities you know. It's very multicultural, it's become very multicultural and it's very easy to get by in Helsinki but then you go further at Oulu, Waasa and these*

smaller cities maybe it's not so easy but certainly you know being at the Helsinki region no problem at all...yea I do think in Helsinki I think Helsinki is the key...being in the city.

When asked whether the role of English was even higher in the location in which her restaurant was situated than it was elsewhere in Helsinki, Heidi answered:

(37) Yea! So many, there's so many foreigners here.

However, Heidi did state elsewhere that she still believed that the language situation would have been similar in another part of the city, but in general, Helsinki and the other big cities were different from the rest of the country. Pekka, on the other hand, displayed entrepreneurial thinking by explaining how he had deliberately chosen the current location for his clothing store/barbershop after he had noticed there were so many ethnic grocery stores in the area:

(38) Actually you see those times when I generated the idea from the grassroots I mean a I look around Helsinki and then I realize the all the oriental food and them things are being operated around area X so then I know obviously foreigners would be patrolling that area so it's good for me to operate around that same area also.

All of the respondents agreed that the number of immigrant run businesses in the location of their businesses was probably particularly high compared with other parts of Helsinki. This, according to the interviewees, helped them to draw customers into the area that had become known, at least in some circles, as a sort of a cultural melting-pot within Helsinki.

Heidi also saw the high willingness of Finns to communicate in English, noted earlier for instance by Pekka, as an obstacle on the road to fluent Finnish:

(39) Some of the Finns you know they wanna practice their English anyway so that's a curse for me cuz then I can never learn.

Q And that's something that hinders your learning of Finnish?

(40) Yea yea it does, I must admit, I must admit.

Similar observations were also made by Sami, but to him, favoring English did not make a big difference since he preferred English any way. He also noted how Finns might choose English on the basis of common courtesy:

Q Doesn't that make it difficult for you to learn Finnish?

(41) Yea that's also another thing but I don't know because I don't feel comfortable in like conversing in Finnish like so...

Q Do people start straight away in English?

(42) *Many people they ask, Finnish or English, so they ask. I always say English... they feel that okay if I speak Finnish that maybe I get offended or something.*

Whereas Pekka was earlier quoted explaining how English was an integral part of his shop, not just a lingua franca of necessity but also a cultural and stylistic feature, Sami too brought up extralinguistic factors that might influence language choice at his shop: he pointed out how the Finnish customers who used English in his shop were already in a way ‘global’ individuals who had traveled and seen the world. These customers were different from the customers Sami had had at his restaurant, where the use of English was not expected:

(43) *But like in our shop the case is even different like most they speak English; it's only few that don't. Like because when we had restaurant and those things so there they're idea lies in that most people they don't speak English, but here like even very old people they're speak English because their travel you know, they've traveled so that's how they know like Indian spices and those things you know so they have traveled to India. Some have lived 20 years.*

Sari's opinions about the tendency of Finns' to converse in English had also more to do with extralinguistic features. As reasons for her being addressed in English so often, she listed traditional indicators of ‘otherness’, for example the color of her skin and the way she dressed. However, she also *directly* linked the use of English with the fact that she was an immigrant entrepreneur:

Q Why do Finns begin to talk English so easily?

(44) *It's maybe because we are foreigners ourselves and entrepreneurs, **foreign entrepreneurs so it becomes maybe better that English is spoken**, like that Finnish language maybe it is not that, the mutual understanding becomes like English is then the easiest so that we get the mutual understanding. And that clothing also does it, and it also straight away looks the color of the skin and it becomes automatically English.*

Nevertheless, Sari was also able to see the situation from another perspective: she explained how her being addressed in English was perfectly understandable, and the situation would have been the same in Somalia if it had been the other way around:

Q Is it understandable (that Finns tend to speak to you in English)?

(45) *Well of course, if I was like the other way around, then in my home country, like if I like didn't speak Somali straight away, then what is the mutual understanding going to be...u are like okay what language 'em I going to speak and okay I speak English then, because maybe they will understand that because it's a common language and it's kinda like automatic.*

Sari (46) reported how Finns were genuinely surprised when she responded to their English with Finnish, a reaction that had also been observed by Heidi (47):

(46) *Yeah the English language is the most common like it comes straight away, and then I'm like yea, hey I speak Finnish...and if like a typical Finn 'supisuomalainen' comes and thinks that I don't speak Finnish, they ask like in English if I wanna speak Finnish, and I'm like yea I'd rather speak Finnish, so the English comes like automatically, it's so common.*

(47) *If they come in and I start with **moi mitta kuulu?** 'Hi, how are you?' then they get excited, they start talking in Finnish and we'll be able to talk about the weather and little things you know.*

Heidi's answer also revealed that her Finnish was restricted to talk about what she saw as 'little things', such as the weather.

To conclude, Finns might have a tendency to start conversations with immigrants in English. As reasons for this, the respondents listed such things as the high English proficiency of Finns and their eagerness to practice their English skills, which in return might hinder the rate in which immigrants learn Finnish. Some of the participants also linked the use of English in Finland to the larger phenomena of globalization. In addition, some highlighted Helsinki as the key to the high functionality of English, while others saw it as a nationwide phenomenon.

9.3 Finnish in the lives of the immigrant entrepreneurs

While the importance of English would appear unsurmountable, the participants also had insightful views to share about the role of Finnish in their lives, both as citizens and entrepreneurs. What was especially intriguing in the respondents' comments about Finnish was that although only one of them, Sari, was able to speak it, everyone still stressed its importance. Sari, who of all the participants probably possessed the deepest understanding of Finnish both on a practical and conceptual level, saw the role of Finnish in the lives of immigrants in a somewhat positive light, and explained how Finnish language training offered for immigrants had gotten better, as had the general level of the Finnish spoken by immigrants:

(48) *Well we try to speak the Finnish language here, like that we understand even with gestures cuz there are people who can't speak even English, only their mother tongue...yea the majority nowadays is learning the Finnish language, like that u get to study a lot faster than before and that way they are doing real good these days...the Finnish language of immigrants has gotten better, like u get to study the language a lot faster now, and so, there are a lot of opportunities to study it and that has made their life easier.*

Sami, on the other hand, having clearly stated earlier that English was his first language and that he preferred to use it instead of Finnish, stated that his skills in the latter were basically confined to the level of ‘doing business’:

Q Are you able to converse in Finnish?

(49) *Only like few thing maybe, running the shop is more easy because one should now the name of the products, which you know in short time I think. And I think it's easy like to be like when we worked in restaurant like we knew we could speak Finnish but we would speak only things that are in the restaurant, somebody comes and orders we know and we could even explain how the food is made and those things because those things you're doing all the time so you know it easily, but once you are like outside the restaurant then you talk about like maybe weather, something movies and then you're lost.*

Heidi's proficiency in Finnish resembled that of Sami's: she too emphasized the ability to run the business in Finnish, but again, her Finnish skills did not extend beyond that into her social life:

Q How is your Finnish?

(50) *Ihan ok 'pretty okay', but not enough to sit and have a chit-chat, not enough to have a conversation, but when customers come in you know I can describe you know the food what it is what they want, be able to on a business level I can do, just like at the school my dance studio I can take you know bookings and speak Finnish on a business level but can't on a social you know sitting down and having a chat.*

As for the use of Finnish by immigrants, Heidi said that English was usually chosen over Finnish, the use of which was very rare:

Q But do they (immigrants) prefer English?

(51) *They prefer English they prefer English, yeah they do. Of course because it's almost it's almost their mother tongue you know, were they from Africa like I say they learn English in school and everything, so yea of course when it's foreigners together, sometimes you do get some immigrants and we speak in Finnish, but it's very rare, it's very rare.*

Heidi and Sami were both aware that their skills in Finnish were quite modest, but they reacted differently to it: Heidi did not see herself in a good light (52), in contrast to Sami, who adopted a more pragmatic view (53):

(52) *No but I feel ashamed.*

(53) *But maybe it's me personally I don't like to speak maybe I'm a lazy guy so I don't really wanna go and learn.*

While Sami and Heidi made clear that their Finnish skills were pretty much confined to the spectrum of their businesses, Pekka claimed that he could manage with Finnish but he simply preferred to use English, even after having lived in Finland for over 20 years:

Q Would you be able to do everything you do in Finnish?

(54) *I think I can manage.*

Q Would you like people to speak more Finnish to you than English?

(55) *With me it's I'm able to express myself better in English, so I like to speak more English even though when it comes to the situation where by I have to speak Finnish, I try u understand but I mean it's more easier for me when customers are willing to speak English, and I mean to go on alright it's much better.*

Regardless of the fact that Sari was the only one who was able to converse fluently in Finnish, all of the respondents placed high value on Finnish. Heidi, for instance, described the role of Finnish in the lives of immigrants as something that was given, and cited both a sort of a 'sense of responsibility' and the way in which the language might bring one closer to the citizens of the host country as reasons:

Q Would you advise someone moving to Finland to learn Finnish?

(56) *Yes, because in the end of the day when in Rome kinda thing, yea why not. It kinda makes you richer kinda brings you together cuz it doesn't matter what you know you're speaking English, when your speaking that country's own language I think it brings you together, close. I think it's really important to speak cuz you're in the country, in France you would do the same.*

Pekka continued on Heidi's ideas, and although he made clear that he preferred to use English, he nonetheless did not encourage an English-only approach to Finland as society, and commented how skills in the national language could grant one access to a deeper level of society:

Q Can you survive with only English in Finland?

(57) *I think u still need Finnish u still need it, because every country you are living in if u want to really know what is going on in the country u must learn their language to be able to express yourself when is needed....but still we are living in Finland and u must learn to use their language.*

Pekka advised all immigrants to learn Finnish, and mentioned how mastering both English and Finnish could help one to *blend in*:

Q So your advice to new immigrants would be to learn Finnish?

(58) *Oh they got to. Must learn Finnish. Because if u have the two languages it make it life easier for u to **blend in** yeah.*

Pekka also told how things had changed during the 20 years he had lived in Finland, and depending on the situation, one could at that time manage without Finnish. This contradicted the answer he had given earlier when asked straightforwardly about the possibility to survive with just English in Finland, although for that he had mentioned

mainly attitudinal aspects about the *responsibility* to learn the language of the host population:

Q Is it still the same if u came to Finland now without now Finnish?

(59) *Okay maybe now u can cope without Finnish because dependent on what and how u want to do, u can manage with English without Finnish now. Yeah thing have changed so much.*

When the value that was generally placed on English in Finland was brought under discussion, Heidi argued that high English skills were not necessarily given due credit, but tied this to the dominant role of Finnish:

Q Are good English skills given enough credit?

(60) *No no no, I don't... it's still very much, learn Finnish, go in Finnish course... But to be honest I think it is important just enough Finnish to get by just to, u know I think it's an important thing that the people, you speak English fluently and people do here, I still think that's a good thing to learn some Finnish.*

When the need for Finnish was discussed with Sami, he adopted a harsher tone and expressed ideas akin to nationalism:

Q So is it always fair that you have to know Finnish?

(61) *You know actually it could be also that it's okay in a way, I think because you are in Finland so if I was a Finn, if I was the one making policies and everything, so then no I would also think that why not my language? You come to my country and you don't speak my language and you still demand for job. So I think in a way it's okay yea, as an immigrant so maybe for me it's not okay if you see it through my eyes, because in a way everybody they like of course to have like their own language that's it's more in your country, so I think it's okay unless you trust in one world without any boundaries. Then it's okay to have English all over or one single language, but I think till now you have boundaries so you feel like it's mine.*

Sami also tied good proficiency in Finnish to the business potential and monetary value it held:

(62) *If you really want to progress if I for example knew like the Finnish, okay not like u guys maybe, but if I knew almost, I could handle papers and I could talk very nice so I could do more in the business as well. Even in the same business I could do more if I know the language, it's always easy u know. Yea I could do marketing and those things. Now so if I try something and there's some paper in Finnish so I get irritated, so I don't do it at all.*

Additional aspects into the general use of Finnish by immigrants were shared by Heidi (63) and Pekka (64), who claimed that immigrants might deliberately speak English even if they in reality were able to speak Finnish, linking the English use of immigrants to ideas of language and identity:

(63) *The immigrants who come in you know they can speak Finnish they can if they want to.*

Q Well do many of the foreigners or immigrants speak Finnish?

(64) *Ok this age now become, many of them are born here and that they grow up here and that, so some of them I mean still speak Finnish, but then of course, when they come to the shop, the shop is more international, because you know we have a lot of things going on there, people from all over yeah, so I mean English is the key language yeah.*

Overall, it became clear that the respondents considered Finnish a necessary skill, although they did not necessarily possess this skill themselves. Deeper analysis of the data revealed that the need to learn Finnish, to some, was more like a duty and a sort of a moral obligation. Especially Sari and Zenja regarded Finnish as a self-evident skill that one simply had to possess if one was to live in Finland. For example, Sari first explained the importance of Finnish with its national language status, but then added that English was also important, basing this view on more practical ends:

(65) *Finnish is important because we are in Finland. It comes before anything else. And then next I think is English, that comes like mutual and to understand other people.*

English had helped Zenja to integrate to Finland and meet new people, as explained earlier, but she still placed higher importance on Finnish, and argued that it was everyone's duty to know the national language.

(66) *I think English really important for me cuz it start for me to connect with people, but then I think Finnish is more important. So cuz we live in Finland as u know if we want to live in Finland you should, at least we should know how Finnish.*

She went on to mention 'ethic' as an underlying reason to learn Finnish:

(67) *I think it's like, I think the ethic to live in Finland to learn Finnish and we to have Finnish skills.*

In sum, although the majority of the five immigrant entrepreneurs did not speak Finnish, they all, more or less, considered it an essential skill for all those who lived in Finland. However, it would appear that even if Finnish skills were possessed, English might occasionally be still preferred. Some of the respondents also felt that the obtainment of Finnish skills was a responsibility that was based mainly on ideological reasons.

9.4 Customer base and its connection with the use of English

The English use of the five immigrant entrepreneurs appeared to be dictated by such factors as necessity, a deliberate choice by the initiator of interaction or a mutual agreement between the interlocutors about the language that was to be used. However, there was another reason that partly fell under all of the aforementioned categories, but it was also mentioned explicitly as a somewhat ‘independent’ reason: the respondents saw the high number of immigrant and foreign customers as something that significantly increased their need for English in the operation of their businesses.

As illustrated in section 5.1, the terminology surrounding such terms as ‘foreigner’ and ‘immigrant’ is highly complex. Thus, if a study participant used the term ‘immigrant’ during the interview, there is no guarantee that this view was in accordance with the ‘official’ definitions. Nevertheless, I believe that a classification based on practical experience and ‘insider’ knowledge is bound to be more aligned with reality than one which is based on administrative criteria.

Nevertheless, the way in which the customer base was seen to affect the language use at the business location was pointed out, for instance, by Pekka, who explained how a more Finnish clientele would consequently have demanded him to place more emphasis on his Finnish:

(68) Always key language is always gonna be English, so with me it's easier to survive with only English because I get a lot of foreign clients. But then of course if I would be dealing with more Finnish clientele then that's when then I must improve my Finnish side.

Similarly to Pekka's view, Sami considered Finnish as something that could be useful when serving Finnish customers, but again pointed out how even the Finns who came to his shop were already prepared and expecting to speak English:

(69) You really don't need so much Finnish if you are making comparison, so you need like less Finnish, you need of course it's always nice to have like. Because Finnish people they are coming every once in a while, but even like the Finns who are coming, most Finns who come basically it's like kind of assumed that they talk English everywhere.

Pekka also commented how the growth in the number of immigrants consequently increased the number of immigrant customers, and this, in return, would also increase the use of English:

(70) U can see around now there's more foreigners coming in from all over the world, I mean in that sense it's getting more and more than years back. And

besides more foreigners are coming in now. And then so somehow the business we are running, I mean majority of our customers are foreigners and more coming in now, so it's more like, it's easy to use English with the people than years back.

While Pekka argued that the number of immigrant customers was growing, Sari claimed that there had been a somewhat opposite change in the clientele of her family's business: it was not that immigrant centered anymore and a general change in the public opinion had also taken place:

(71) Mostly there's immigrants, but there are also curious Finns who want to take a look and even dare to buy something. Nowadays there's more variety, before there were more prejudice, like then years ago, now the customers come, like this is not just an immigrant store anymore.

Even though the number of Finnish customers had apparently increased in Sari's shop, she still mentioned their product-line as one of the main reasons for a heavily immigrant concentrated clientele:

Q Why do you have so many immigrant customers?

(72) Because we are an ethnic store, we have stuff that they have in other stores, but we also have for people from different cultures and roots, we have like accessories and clothing, like Islam clothing and non-Islam clothing for people who want to dress in a bit more covering manner.

Unlike Sari, Pekka would not have described his shop as *ethnic*, but as an *urban* business, which, in addition to immigrants and foreigners, had Finnish customers as well. He continued by explaining how his shop provided something out of the ordinary even for Finnish people:

*(75) Ye it's more **urban**, because like I said earlier, the hairs I cut and of course the fades I do and that, they are more like, some Finnish people, some white guys who want to get it super fit, they can't get it elsewhere. That's why they come there.*

But, as Sari noted, the 'immigrants' at her store were not a specific group of people, but instead consisted of people from all over the world:

(73) Yea, it's from all over the world, like it's not just for a specific group of immigrants.

In addition to the immigrant centered customer base, Sami brought up additional aspects that demanded more English than Finnish:

Q English is important because of the customer base?

(74) Yes. Yes because it also has to do with the supplier thing and everything, because I can't communicate with them in Finnish. They are coming all from UK

and Holland and Sweden so English is always better you know. Even if I have to communicate in India so English is better.

Zenja differed from the other entrepreneurs in that respect that she also worked at a sushi restaurant located in another part of town. This enabled her to highlight the particularly high number of ‘foreign’ customers at the location of her business, which resulted in a larger demand for English at the shop than in the restaurant:

(76) I mostly speak Finnish in the restaurant, but then, cuz there lot more foreign people who come to the shop so I tend to speak English more than Finnish. But then I always say in Finnish, but when I see they dot understand Finnish, and then I start to change the language to English.

Q Is English the most important language at the shop?

(77) Yup.

Q And Finnish at the restaurant?

(78) Yuh.

To conclude, the customer bases of the businesses ran by the five immigrant entrepreneurs appeared to be quite immigrant centered, but the participants did point out that they also had some Finnish customers. The high number of immigrant customers was partly explained by the services and products that the businesses offered. In any case, what became clear, again, was that English was seen as indispensable. Still, some of the respondents noted that if the customer bases would have been more Finnish accentuated the use of Finnish might have been more commonplace.

9.5 Language in connection with employment and self-employment

In addition to insights about practical language use in the lives of the participants, observations about a connection between language skills and employment were also brought forth. What transpired was a reality where Finnish was to be expected from employees, but not from entrepreneurs, who were for one reason or another able to run successful businesses even with very modest Finnish skills. Some of the entrepreneurs also noted that poor Finnish skills had more or less had a part to play in their decisions to become entrepreneurs.

Heidi, for example, qualified in business and marketing, cited the language barrier, i.e. poor Finnish skills, as the main reason for not having been employed in those fields upon her arrival to Finland:

(79) *I think originally when I moved first here it was really difficult to get a job, and because of the language, and my background is business and marketing, and so it was just really difficult to get a job in that field, and so my other passion was exercise and fitness and in the food industry.*

Heidi stated that even with an academic degree, it was still cumbersome to get a job because one lacked proficiency in the national languages:

(80) *Most of the companies you know they ask for Finnish and not only that, but Swedish also at some, and flippin' H if you don't even speak Finnish, you got no chance, so that basically the language.*

Heidi also pointed out how the emphasis placed on English in the 'business' world (See section 3 for a brief overview on BELF) was somewhat deceptive, because Finnish was still demanded in the mainstream occupations:

(81) *I mean they stipulate English, but the Finnish and the Swedish is still there, so whatever the company language is, English okay you know, if it's some real specialized you know job, then I do know friends, you know, with doctorate's really specialized. They don't speak Finnish and so they get away with it, but kinda just the mainstream marketing assistant or marketing you know, no. It is the language.*

When the discussion turned to the prospect of immigrants with poor Finnish skills having succeeded in operating as successful entrepreneurs, Heidi seemed surprised and commented:

(82) *I don't... that's a really interesting... conundrum yea, yea you would expect that high Finnish proficiency is needed but no no.*

Zenja was also a bit bewildered when asked how she, for instance, was able to work at two different locations in Helsinki with little to no skills in Finnish:

(83) *It's amazing thing.*

Heidi argued that not having been employed in a specific field because of inadequate Finnish skills might have led some immigrants into becoming entrepreneurs in the same area of business:

(84) *And I don't know it's a really good question, wasn't it, but now it's easier to open and I know a lot of foreigners that have come here and cant' get a job, and what else do you do? Okay let's start your own business, whether it's a cleaning business, whether it's a you know restaurant, that's what you do isn't it, it's a lot easier. And even looking a cleaning job, they couldn't even get a cleaning job, because of the language, and they went and started their own cleaning company.*

Pekka shared Heidi's ideas about low Finnish skills having caused employment-related problems, and cited Finnish skills and a Finnish background as prerequisites for particular positions:

Q Would you have been able to get a normal job without any Finnish?

(85) *It would have been difficult. Ah even if u have all the degrees and that. I know the competition is always hard, because the national language is Finnish and you need a Finnish background before you can compete to get to certain jobs.*

Pekka considered that he had himself been influenced by language in his decision to become an entrepreneur, but by this he did not mean his poor skills in Finnish, instead, he highlighted the way in which English gave him control over things as an entrepreneur:

Q Did English have role in you becoming an entrepreneur?

(86) *Well somehow it did, because in that sense I have more authority. I mean a lot of more control over English than Finnish, so it's a lot more easy for me to use English to run my things than, u understand, to trying to pretend that I understand Finnish and force myself.*

However, Pekka admitted that the demand for Finnish was understandable:

Q Is it justified that they ask for ability to speak Finnish in all jobs?

(87) *In most of the cases yeah. In most of the cases yes, because somehow I think it's because of the competition, people so many people applies for the same jobs, and at the end of the day yeah.*

Along the same line, Sami acknowledged the logic in the employer demands for Finnish, but also explained how a lack of skills in Finnish could mean that an immigrant would be employed only in entry-level jobs. He also mentioned the role of social networks in the obtainment of a 'better' job:

Q Work without Finnish?

(88) *No I mean it depends. You don't get so skilled job like you be getting like cleaning and maybe housekeeping and you know, maybe in summertime some gardening so you know that kind of jobs. Unless you have like really close relations with some Finns. Those recommends you can find a bit better job, but not so better anyway, but without the language you can't communicate, and it's okay because you cannot be, or if you don't have Finnish so you know you cannot be a waiter or cook or so.*

Sami also explained how immigrants with specific skills had the option to become self-employed, i.e. entrepreneurs, since these skills could be turned into a business venture that targeted an immigrant audience, and this way the demand for Finnish could be avoided. In addition, he pointed out how immigrant businesses could be in direct competition with 'Finnish' businesses and some had even succeeded in doing so:

(89) *Could be easier being an entrepreneur if u have certain skills. For example if you know parturi (barber), so you could still open a shop and be an*

entrepreneur, and you can target the immigrants. You really don't have to speak so any Finnish, of course you have to know some language, English maybe. Like there are some parturi (barbers), they have been making very good business, even better than the Finns I think, because it's very cheap, twelve euros u get a haircut.

All of the participants who shared their views about the connection between language and employment considered proficiency in Finnish as something that was demanded and needed if one was to be employed in Finland. However, there appeared to be a connection between low Finnish skills and the decision to become an entrepreneur: the respondents recognized self-employment as something that could be carried out without Finnish, and that, occasionally, unemployment due to a lack of skills in Finnish had driven immigrants to become entrepreneurs.

9.6 Language and discrimination

A qualitative research interview can yield a near endless list of interesting topics and observations, and thus the findings that are adduced from the data should be either related to the theoretical framework or emerge from the data in their own right. As Martikainen (2009:7) reminds, 'negative' observations that arise during research should also be brought forward, although this is not always the case in immigrant studies. Overall, the duty of a researcher is to shed light on the aspects that the study participants see as important in the sphere of their own lives, instead of focusing only on the observations that are of value to the researcher. On the basis of this, the issue of discrimination has to be brought up. Some of the respondents expressed, spontaneously, that they had interpreted particular language policies and the overall employment situation of immigrants in Finland as bearing signs of discrimination. Heidi, for instance, hesitantly brought up discrimination in connection with the status of English in Finland:

Q Is English already a second language here?

(90) That's really difficult! I don't know. It's really difficult because, you know, if it is, then why is it so difficult to find a job? If it is you know, it's telling me that it's not at the moment, or maybe it's the big corporations just wanting to give the jobs to Finnish people. Maybe it's you know, be going to you know, I don't wanna say but, but you know, not racism, discrimination just, you know, is it that?

She continued that what she saw as discrimination in action was executed very discreetly in Finland:

(91) *But it's done so well here; it's done so well and subtly here. It's done subtly and because you got the language thing, you say yea were in Finland and you got your own language you know. And if a company says you need Finnish then how can you just, you know. It's done very, you know, you got a really good reason you know, but I think there are underlying discrimination things there.*

She went on to describe the situation in Finland as an analogy to that of England 30-40 years ago:

(92) *I don't wanna go down the a discrimination road, but you know it's pretty obvious to me that that's what. It's an ugly thing, but it's very well covered. In England, you know, you can't get away with it because it's not the language barrier. And you know, but I'm sorry, but when it comes to the jobs and everything I think the companies are using that as an excuse. Cleaning. You can't even get a job cleaning. So c'mon. Finland reminds me of how England was forty years ago, maybe thirty years ago, when it comes to job opportunities and discrimination and all that.*

Heidi viewed positive discrimination, in the manner it had been carried out in England, as a partial solution to the problems caused by employment related discrimination in Finland:

(93) *In England, the local government, the police, these kinda institutional, the banks, there were no black representatives then, so they made this thing which was a big huge thing a thirty years ago: they introduced positive raci--discrimination: they only advertise for immigrants for black workers.*

However, Heidi doubted whether the Finnish government had the audacity to implement positive discrimination, but she admitted that she herself was at that time enforcing positive discrimination in her worker selection, in order to support immigrants, to create a multicultural atmosphere at her restaurant and because of the differences in the mindset of a Finn and an immigrant:

Q So your thought on positive discrimination?

(94) *It's fantastic! It opened doors for me, working for local government, worked in the PR. And at the time you had the white English kinda getting all up in arse, but that's what they did. And the police force that what they did. And I don't know if Finland had the balls to do that here, but certainly I kinda did that with this place that I only recruited the you know foreigners.*

Q You want to help out or?

(95) *I want to help out I got Finnish applicants here, but yea I prefer a multicultural vibe and ye that too. And I don't know the mentality of the Finnish worker and foreign worker, it is kinda difficult.*

If Heidi argued that particular language demands and polices were used as tools for discrimination, to Sami, the negative connection between language and employment had portrayed itself in other sinister aspects related to the employment of immigrants

who were living in Finland, i.e. the way in which immigrants were occasionally taken advantage of as workers:

Q Now if you are applying for a job, if you weren't an entrepreneur, is Finnish expected then?

(96) *Yes, like now many Finnish companies, so they have also understood like, you know, to make some foreigners work is more easier than you make Finnish work, like Finnish work because Finns, from my point of view, like they know that foreigners they need work, so you can always manipulate, even psychologically. It's easy because you know immigrants, they need work and for example like in, I don't know in big business houses, but like in Silja, Viking Line, those like where the students are in cleaning work mostly because they don't know Finnish. So that's the only work they can they can find easy, so even there they make you work more, not that, I don't mean more, but like it's easy for them, like supervisors, they want to gain their own points, so let's just make work. But Finns there will be like more trouble. They know that okay, if they have visa, they need like for example A-permit visa, so they need the full-time work. So even the workers they need, so they'll be like doing happily you know even the more job. But anyway the thing is that the work is getting done more, and so it's easy for them to kind of manipulate. I think that how it works.*

However, eventually, Sami too brought in the discrimination aspect mentioned earlier by Heidi:

Q So in entry-level jobs like cleaning business, do they expect Finnish in those jobs?

(97) *They claim that they need Finnish but I think that's only their, like kind of pretendly, you know why, because anybody can say that you don't need Finnish to clean. Okay maybe slight but it's not that those people who are like supervisors and those things, it's not like they don't speak English.*

In sum, Heidi and Sami considered the Finnish language demands a gate-keeper to keep immigrants out of certain jobs. They also stated that the demand for Finnish was occasionally based on false pretenses and that there were employers who were taking advantage of the difficult situation that immigrants might be in.

9.7 Summary of the main findings

On the basis of the insights shared by the participants, it could be said that their linguistic environments appeared to be heavily English inclined, especially the context of the businesses, where English acted as a connecting lingua franca between people from all over the world. Still, the importance of Finnish was also acknowledged by all of the participants, if only on an attitudinal level. To some, the importance of Finnish overrode the usefulness of English for ideological reasons, while others openly pointed

out that English was their first language in all contexts, either because of a deliberate choice or because they were not able to converse in Finnish, even if some had lived in Finland for extended periods of time. The respondents also described individual Finns as quite willing to use English, although the official demand for Finnish appeared to be very clear according to the views expressed about the language policies of some employers. These types of observations could also indicate that negative phenomena, such as discrimination, might be at play.

10 ENGLISH IN THE LIVES OF FIVE HELSINKI-BASED IMMIGRANT ENTREPRENEURS

An academic research paper traditionally culminates in the presentation of statements and conclusions that are formed through the interplay of the empirical data and the chosen theoretical framework. These statements and conclusions connect the study to larger phenomena both within and outside the research report. This orientation is followed in the present study as well. However, choosing the most important elements from a plethora of interesting observations is no easy task when a research topic has not been previously explored in academia. Regardless of this, a research outcome of some sort has to be achieved and presented in order for the research report to be of any value. Still, since the topic of English use by immigrant entrepreneurs has not been previously researched, the discussion about the findings that transpired during the research has to begin on a rather broad level, so that the fundamental aspects related to the research topic can be identified before the discussion starts on a more refined level.

The main goal of the present study was to bring forth the context of immigrant entrepreneurs as users of English in order to find out the extent to which they utilize English in their business operations and life in general. Hence, now that the research has been carried out, it could be concluded that **in the lives of the five immigrant entrepreneurs that were interviewed, English has an indispensable role, both in the context of the business and outside it, a role that appears to be greater than that of Finnish.** The role of English could be further described as *enabling*, since running the businesses without English was seen as nearly impossible by all of the participants. Although previous research into the English use of immigrants in Finland has yielded

similar results, the scope has been extremely vast and ambiguous, especially on the part of the research context. Immigrants have been approached as a single, more or less, unified group, which is difficult to accept knowing the heterogeneity of which this group of people consists. In the present study, the individuals might be equally heterogenous, but they interact through the shared framework of entrepreneurship, which constitutes a more specific research context than the English use of immigrants situated in all walks of life and language use situations.

The shared context of entrepreneurship, the previous academic observations made about the high practicality of English within general immigrant research and immigrant entrepreneurship studies and the main finding of the present study all work towards the creation of a new context and user-group in the chart of 'English in Finland'. This user-group is now, for the first time, explored in its own right and brought into the attention of sociolinguistics.

The participants of the present study belong, as users of English, to a specific language use context in Finland where English is being used freely as a first language, without an administrative decision or a corporate mandate. The English use within the research context also differs from the main body of traditional 'English in Finland' research in that within this user group and research context, English is used fully, as a *language*, not as an additive or a stylistical device as can be the case with e.g. language mixing between Finnish and English in contexts such as advertising. In a way, here English is more active and is ascribed more functions than in contexts where it is used mainly to supplement Finnish.

No matter what the academic value of the present study might turn out to be, its greatest achievements are: firstly, the recognition of a group of people who conduct their businesses and lives chiefly in English as members of Finnish society, and secondly, the academic discovery of a more or less new research context in the scope of sociolinguistics. Not to forget the broadening of general knowledge about the existence of such a language use context within Finland.

10.1 English in the research context

If the present study posits that English has a significant role and functional purpose in the context of the five immigrant entrepreneurs, then what 'type' of English are we

talking about? As we do not yet possess knowledge on the level of discourse about the language variety used in the research context, statements about possible similarities with e.g. Blommaert's ideas of idiosyncratic language varieties used in super-diverse Western urban centers, i.e. immigrant neighborhoods (see sections 2 and 3) cannot be presented. However, on a grander scale, we can already assess the conceptual and theoretical dimensions of the English occurring in the research context.

Looking at the insights shared by the study participants, it would appear that the English used in their interactions belongs to the domain of *English Lingua Franca*. When we keep in mind the numerous nationalities of which the customer bases of the five businesses seem to consist of, the definition for lingua franca communication stated in the Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary (2008:834) seems to describe the English use of the research context quite accurately: "a language used for communication between groups of people who speak different languages but not between members of the same group".

The use of English as a lingua franca in the interaction between immigrants and immigrants and Finns is further supported by the numerical information available about the low number of English speaking residents in Finland: as said earlier, the number of English speaking residents in Finland was just a bit over 12 thousand in 2010 (Statistics Finland 2010), which indicates that the use of English in Finland and in the research context cannot be explained by native speakers of English communicating in English with one another. This view is also adopted by The Institute for the Languages of Finland (2009:73), who propose that English is not a minority language in Finland, *per se*, but a prestige language, a lingua franca.

The high functionality of English in the interaction of immigrants has been previously noted by e.g. Nieminen (2009), who points out that there are immigrants who have successfully adapted to living in Finland even if they are not able to speak Finnish, but cope by using English as a lingua franca. These observations clearly resemble the findings of the present study, and strengthen the view that English can suffice and be used as a lingua franca in specific contexts in Finland.

In qualitative research, it is vital that the locally researched phenomenon is linked to larger and global contexts, as stated by Alasuutari (1995:148-152). Hence, the local explanation of the English occurring in the research context can be linked to the broader spectrum of global English Lingua Franca communication, which is also the medium

through which the participants can be annexed to the English in Finland paradigm. The importance of connecting the local observations to notions of larger scales is also stressed by Collins and Slembrouck (2009:19), who see the linking of local to global as the key element in contemporary linguistics. This view is echoed by Collins et al. (2009:2) who note that globalization overall challenges linguistics by bringing the global into local and by forcing linguistics to shift focus from linguistic-structural features to socially embedded communication.

How all this is relevant in the realm of the present study is that the participants are more or less in the vanguard of globalization, having all immigrated to Finland, where they apparently survive by using a global language locally. So in other words, these immigrants are some sort of ‘global citizens’ who can, and have to, interact through English, which is in return made possible by the high general English proficiency of Finns and apparently ‘fellow’ immigrants as well. As a result, it could be speculated that as globalization progresses and the number of immigrants increases, so does the role of English in Finland. By this mechanism, the global is inevitably brought to the local.

After the local findings have been connected to concepts on a larger scale, and the English use within the research context recognized as lingua franca communication, the focus has to be turned to the explanations for the overall existence of this linguistic phenomenon: what are the main reasons behind English reaching such an important role in this specific context?

10.2 Explanations for the high use of English in the research context

When the commonplace use of English in the research context has been brought into light, the next step is to look at the factors that could explain how English has reached the status it currently holds. Going through the main observations and findings of the empirical data, it becomes apparent that the lingua franca use of English in the research context can be largely explained by the composition of the customer base.

In all of the five businesses, immigrants and foreigners apparently make up the majority of the customers. As these individuals come from various linguistic backgrounds, English is the main medium of interaction, since Finnish is necessarily known by neither interlocutor. However, here we run into the problems caused by the

categorization of immigrants that have already been brought up earlier: when does one's status as an immigrant end? If an immigrant has lived in Finland for nearly most of their lives, like Sari, does the status still remain? So even if the use of English in the research context could be partly explained by the high number of immigrant customers, is this categorization sound on a general level? Is it justifiable to refer to individuals who live and work in Finland, albeit through a different language, as immigrants, when they are fully functional members of society? This inconsistency perhaps only goes to show the rate in which globalization is changing both the linguistic and societal reality we live in: there is already a group of people, originally from elsewhere, functioning as members of Finnish society without using Finnish or Swedish as a first language.

Leaving these fundamental considerations aside and returning to the connection between customer base and the use of English, it could be said that the global spread of English enables its use between the individuals situated in the five businesses. In the case of immigrants, English might have been learnt already in the country of origin, and therefore it can be used for communication in the new host society. At least in this respect, English cannot be straightforwardly seen as a killer language, but as a connecting and enabling vehicle. Or as proposed by Lappalainen (2010:102), English could overall be treated as the shared mother tongue of Finnish immigrants in specific contexts.

The composition of the customer base could also be seen as a sign of the participants' businesses being based on ethnic entrepreneurship. Joronen (2012:18) defines ethnic enclave entrepreneurship as the operating of a business in a location that differs demographically from the national demographic distribution. Hence the reported high number of immigrant customers could indicate that the five entrepreneurs of the present study all operate, more or less, in a context akin of ethnic entrepreneurship. Regardless of this, the research outcome remains the same: English is the first language of the research context, whether we are dealing with ethnic entrepreneurship or not. So in terms of linguistics, considerations about the nature of entrepreneurship do not perhaps play as a crucial role as they would, for instance in studies focusing especially on the business spectrum of the research context.

Even if the type of entrepreneurship would not be seen as a significant factor in the present study, the immigrant clientele still influences the balance between the use of Finnish and English. Heinonen (2010:30), for instance, sees the need for Finnish in the

business of an immigrant entrepreneur depending on the customer base of the business: an immigrant audience does not demand an immigrant entrepreneur to learn Finnish as urgently as a more Finnish clientele would. In the same vein, Melin and Melin (2012:17) note that if a business strives to serve Finnish customers, the business owner has to possess a relatively good command of Finnish. This could also explain the low general skills in Finnish that the majority of the participants possess. Heinonen (ibid.) also claims that immigrant entrepreneurs whose customers are mainly Finns link low skills in Finnish to the difficulties that arise in the business operation. Again, none of the participants reported their low skills in Finnish to cause significant difficulties in the operation of their business. Thus, it could be said that there is a connection between the customer base and the need for English and Finnish: the high number of immigrant customers facilitates the use of English as a lingua franca, minimizing the role of Finnish.

The connection between clientele and the use of English would seem to come out as neat and easily explainable at first, but the equation is not that straightforward when the participants' comments about the complex balance between English and Finnish are taken into account. In addition to English being used on the basis of necessity, as the only shared language between interlocutors, it appears that at times English is also deliberately preferred over Finnish, even when an individual would be a fluent speaker of Finnish. Thus, it seems that in some occasions, English is not just a compulsory medium of communication, but perhaps also a vital part of speaker identity.

Continuing on the intentional use of English over Finnish, it should be remembered that all of the participants claimed that they would be able to conduct their business in Finnish, but the majority still preferred to use English as the first language of the business location. This could conversely link the use of English to the needs of the customer base, and their limited Finnish skills and perhaps speaker identity too, since the use of English over Finnish, at least on the part of the entrepreneur, does not appear to be dictated by necessity, as they do, reportedly, possess such Finnish skills that they would be able to operate the business by using Finnish.

One of the participants also brought up the idea of cultural artefacts, i.e. a 'style', that his customers strive to achieve and identify with, and perhaps the deliberate use of English goes hand in hand with such ambitions. This observation coincides with the ideas of Valentine et al. (2009:190), who see languages as resources that have been

detached from the local nation-state and have transformed into global mobile resources used for different communicative practices. Moreover, could it be that the use of English between individuals of different linguistic backgrounds also mitigates the power relations that different skill levels in the national languages might evoke, English creating a sort of a neutral territory, whose ownership no one can claim.

All in all, it seems that the use of English in the research context is determined to a great extent by the high number of immigrant and foreign customers. These individuals do not necessarily speak any Finnish and therefore have to resort to English. English might also be intentionally preferred over Finnish, for reasons such as speaker identity.

10.3 Finns and English

In order to achieve a broad and inclusive account of the use of English in the research context, it is important to look at in what light do Finns emerge as users of English. A point that came up repeatedly in the participants' comments was the high willingness of Finns to converse in English. Some of the participants felt that traditional indicators of otherness, such as the color of their skin, might explain why Finns tend to use English when communicating with them. Overall, Finns somehow seem to have a presupposition that immigrants are more likely to speak English than Finnish. This observation again highlights the global and local power of English: English is seen to have such a global reach that it is presumed to be known by everyone on the local and global level, even if an individual had originally relocated to the current local setting from a another country, where English might in reality have no standing whatsoever.

On the level of the business, the tendency of Finns to use English was partially explained by Finns 'being prepared' to use English in immigrant businesses, which somehow, similarly to the reasons that lead to the use of English on the level of the individual, appear to bear a presupposition of not being 'Finnish'. There were even comments about Finns wanting to 'show off' their good skills in English. This could probably be explained by the general ability of Finns to communicate in English, as well as the fact that the Finns who visit these business locations do not necessarily represent the national or even city average in terms of language skills and language attitudes, and thus might be more prone and better versed to use English in communication.

The willingness of Finns to use English over Finnish has also been explained with more fundamental reasons. Latomaa (1998:57), for instance, claims that Finns have an ambivalent attitude towards their own language, and notes that many Finns prefer English over Finnish when speaking with foreigners, regardless of the foreigner's skill level in the latter. Melin and Melin (2012:90) have made similar observations and point out how the common use of English consequently hinders the rate in which Finnish is learnt. The participants of the present study also posited that the possibility of surviving with just English can come at the price of Finnish not being learnt effectively. In other words, English might help an immigrant to get by, but the excessive use of English apparently hinders the learning of Finnish. This can prove to be counterproductive, since Finnish admittedly still serves more purposes and a broader field of functions in Finland than English.

Among the five participants, there are some whose linguistic environment is especially useful for the procurement of information about the balance between English and Finnish. It is bewildering that one of the participants, Zenja, arrived to Finland with no skills in either Finnish or English, but now, uses English as a first language and reports that it is English in particular that has enabled her to connect with people. This might be partially explained by her decision to enroll in an English speaking school, but still, it is fascinating that an immigrant feels that it is precisely English that has been the *connecting* language for her in Finland, without which it would have been almost impossible for her to socialize and adapt to society.

The significant role that English has in Finland is further highlighted by the reported low general proficiency in Finnish among the majority of the respondents: if a person is able to not just live, but also operate a business, in Finland without using Finnish, it tells an eye-opening story about the practicality of English in Finland, or at least in the Helsinki region. Consequently, if the status of English was lower and its role not that of a general lingua franca, the respondents would probably have to be fluent in Finnish even outside the context of their businesses. But it is a good question if they would have even become entrepreneurs in the first place if the role of English was not what it currently is in Finland. In addition, it is difficult to say whether the participants have been involved in the process of English reaching such a status, or are they just benefiting from progress that would have taken place in any case. This or that, it would seem understandable that the current situation does not necessarily encourage or demand immigrants to learn Finnish.

The observations about the extensive use of English are displayed in a rather complicated light, when we once again remind ourselves that English does not have an official role in Finland. It is not suggested that a language needs legal or administrative recognition in order to be acknowledged as an important tool in a given setting, but English has been left in a kind of a societal limbo in Finland: it is extremely useful and important, not just for immigrants, but increasingly for Finns and Finnish businesses as well, but still, the status of English in Finland does not seem to garner that much governmental or official discussion. Due to the moderate amount of attention, there might be clear discrepancies between the practical and administrative spectrums of language policies.

10.4 Language and employment

Since the shared feature between the participants of the present study is the context of entrepreneurship, it is necessary to look at the role that language can play in the decision to become self-employed. In the scope of the present study, it would seem that low skills in Finnish might have something to do with an immigrant's decision to become self-employed. It appears that Finnish is expected even in entry-level jobs, whether it is a demand based on necessity or not, and difficulties in obtaining a job, caused by inadequate skills in Finnish, might drive an immigrant into starting their own business. However, by doing so, immigrants can have an advantage because they might be better equipped to target an immigrant audience, and also avoid some of the language difficulties by operating within locations in which English is the first language.

Although the nature of entrepreneurship is not among the main variables of the present study as has been said earlier, it must be noted that ethnic entrepreneurship together with positive discrimination utilized in the worker selection of some immigrant businesses will probably not bring the businesses closer to the mainstream. However, if immigrants struggle to find work due to poor Finnish skills, even if such skills were not necessarily needed, it is more than understandable that they turn to contexts that might be more familiar to them and in which they can utilize their skills in English.

Although the participants argued that the need for Finnish in working life is occasionally inflated, Pöyhönen et al. (2009:9) remind us that both previous research and conventions from working life support the argument that the ability to communicate

in Finnish is one of the most important factors affecting the successful integration and employment of immigrants. However, as came clear in the opinions shared by the participants, the demands for advanced skills in Finnish might still be disproportionate in some entry-level jobs, where a near elementary proficiency could suffice. Similar views have been also brought forth by, for example, Tuononen (2013:41), who claims that Finnish language proficiency is occasionally required even though there is no justifiable need for it.

The aforementioned arguments could indicate a possible connection between discrimination and language policies, the two of which were seen by some of the participants to go hand in hand in Finland, in that the demand for Finnish is subtly being used as a tool for discrimination. These comments are to be taken seriously and should be neither confirmed nor denied until there is enough evidence to present justifiable arguments in support of either side. Nevertheless, the possibility of discrimination taking place via language policy in Finland leaves an unpleasant hue over the present study, but due to the limited data relating to the issue, I must abstain from drawing any conclusions about a possible connection between language requirements and discrimination.

If Finnish proficiency is expected in the mainstream labor market in Finland, the same could be said about the demand for English in the research context. There people interact in English, and as became clear in the interview data, operating the businesses without English appeared to be impossible. Similar results have been reported by, for instance, Nieminen (2009:112), who explains how some of the immigrant participants of her study argued that they would not have been able to find work in Finland without skills in English. In sum, it seems that the possibility of becoming employed without Finnish is nearly impossible, difficult without English, and impossible if one possesses skills in neither.

English will apparently suffice in specific contexts in Finland, as is the case with the business locations that have been brought to light in the present study. This is why comments of, e.g. Arajärvi (2009:2) seem outdated, as he argues that English is sufficient only in occupations that require higher education. Keeping in mind that among the participants of the present study is an individual who is a native speaker of English with a university degree, not having succeeded in becoming employed in the field of her studies, but has been successful in being an entrepreneur outside her

educational area of expertise and in a field that necessarily demands no education, the comments about English being sufficient only in fields that require higher education seem unintentionally ironic. Moreover, views such as the one put forward by Arajärvi together with the hegemony of the current Business English Lingua Franca approach to English (see Section 3) in the working life paint a distorted picture when the linguistic landscape in which immigrants interact is introduced as it is: the need for English seems to be stipulated on a conceptual level, as English skills are taken for granted with companies increasingly adopting English as their corporate language, but when push comes to shove, Finnish comes first.

The ‘official’ recognition of the significant role that English has in Finland would probably not change the linguistic landscape on the level of practice, but an official recognition of English might help immigrants to showcase their English skills as an asset in the way they are already treated in the world of BELF. Especially when at least in the Helsinki region immigrants are able to get by without Finnish as we speak. Similar recommendations have been put forth by Jalava (2011:35), who considers immigrants’ English language skills an asset that should be utilized in education and employment. Blommaert (2010:174) too targets his criticism towards certain European language policies, which have a heavy emphasis on the national language in immigrant integration. The national languages admittedly allow local access, but English as a global prestige language and as the main resource of globalization could allow global access. Consequently, the participants of the present study are a case in point of the global access that English enables.

Overall, the connection between English, Finnish and immigrant employment appears to be a very multifaceted issue. On one hand, English is expected in all walks of life, and it has replaced Finnish in some contexts, while on the other, Finnish is still, more or less, a prerequisite for employment. Thus, it seems that English is working through two different planes in Finland: it is the language of business on the ‘higher’ level, but it is also the key in some businesses operating in the grass root level. Hence, concerns about English transforming into a high variety and Finnish into a vernacular (The Institute for the Languages of Finland 2009:45) seem far-fetched, since it would appear that English is active at both ends of the continuum.

10.5 Participant attitudes towards Finnish

It is rather peculiar that all of the participants stated that Finnish is a must, when only one of them felt comfortable enough to use it. Furthermore, regardless of their own moderate skills in the language, they all advised immigrants to learn the national language upon arrival to Finland, because Finnish allows a deeper integration into society and it helps to understand ‘what is going on’ in the country. As has been demonstrated, Finnish truly is important, since in addition to intellectual capital, it is likely to mean the difference between employment and unemployment. Still, some of the participants have lived in Finland for over 10 to 20 years, but still prefer English and are not fluent in Finnish. But if Finnish is seen as so useful and important, then why have the respondents not seen the value in learning it? Has their environment been so heavily English inclined that they simply have not had enough opportunities to learn Finnish? Whatever the reason, some of the participants are real life examples of English alone enabling a successful life in Finland, even when the starting point of one’s life here might not have been that ideal to begin with.

The research setting might have also had an effect on the value that the respondents chose to place on Finnish. In the present study, the researcher represents the main population, as is usually the case in immigrant research, which can influence the ideas that the participants, as members of minority cultures, choose to express (Martikainen 2009:6). There could have also been phenomena such as *social desirability* and *prestige bias* (Dörnyei 2009:8) at play, which refer to a situation where a participant provides an answer that is socially desirable and acceptable, even if it does not reflect how they really feel or think. The term *normatively appropriate responses* (Conrad and Serlin 2011:174) is also used occasionally. I see the aforementioned ideas as especially applicable to the present study, since the learning of the national language appeared to be a sort of general *norm* that is to be followed.

Whatever the reason behind the discrepancy between practice and beliefs in the participants’ opinions regarding the importance Finnish, I share their views on the learning of Finnish being highly advisable to anyone relocating to Finland, because it is still the key to a deeper integration and understanding, even if English could get one by in specific contexts where English has replaced Finnish as the first language.

Now that the main findings have been presented, it is necessary to summarize the new information that has been obtained and put together an overview in order to assess both the research outcome and the academic quality of the present study.

11 ENGLISH IN THE LIVES OF HELSINKI-BASED IMMIGRANT ENTREPRENEURS – CLOSING WORDS

At this point, it seems unnecessary to highlight the significance of English in the research context. Instead, it is probably wiser to focus on the repercussions that this observation entails. The acknowledgment of the five immigrant entrepreneurs as users of lingua franca English within Finnish society is perhaps the greatest finding of the present study. This notion also connects the research context, and possibly the paradigm of ‘English in Finland’, directly to the global flow of people and cultural artefacts, or more precisely, to the local use of a global language by global individuals. The English language truly appears to be a vehicle for globalization, a language in which individuals from near and far and from here and there communicate, not just because of necessity, but also because of a deliberate choice.

The English use in the research context might be explained to a great extent by the high number of immigrant and foreign customers who are not necessarily able to speak Finnish. However, English appears to be used also by Finns and immigrants who would be perfectly competent to converse in Finnish. Many clearly seem to prefer English over Finnish, perhaps because they see it as a shared code that is somewhat neutral of distinct power relations. I personally see research contexts and individuals like the ones heard in the present study as key examples of instances that might eventually lead us to the core of the sociolinguistics of globalization. These individuals demonstrate us how the modernist notions of static national languages and the nation-state are partially unfit to explain phenomena that occur over geographical, linguistic and contextual boundaries.

As becomes clear in the present study, English has undoubtedly evolved into an integral part of Finnish society. However, taking stock of the first-hand experiences that the participants possess, it would look that at the same time that the demand and need for English is emphasized and English is regarded an official language in some contexts;

Finnish is still a prerequisite for employment. It seems that low skills in Finnish, which are to be expected upon arrival to Finland, together with the looming unemployment, might lead some immigrants into starting their own businesses.

The variance in the value that is attributed to English on different levels and contexts is likely to be just another example of the way in which globalization is posing challenges to the modernist structures of society. For instance, whereas society as an all-encompassing construct is slow in change, the acceptance of BELF in international business, in contrast, might be explained by the dynamic and flexible manner in which global businesses operate. In that context, effective communication has monetary value and English is chosen as the means of communication because it has global power and a global user-base. This global user-base can also be seen in action in the use of English by immigrants in Finland. But as soon as these individuals look to utilize the global language in more 'official' contexts within the local setting, they face a different reality. It is a reality where national languages, understandably, still override English. Nonetheless, the contemporary global and local linguistic landscapes would probably demand a more open approach to the spread of English in the governmental and official arenas, especially when English has already developed into a lingua franca of the practical level.

Since this is the first time that the English use of immigrant entrepreneurs is the subject of academic inquiry, the present study has both the advantage and burden to lead the way. Hence the present study is partially free of established concepts and theories, and can thus adopt an unrestricted approach. However, excessive academic freedom and the lack of previous research on which to build on can lead to theoretical and methodological shortcomings that will be pointed out in future studies.

The absence of direct comparison between the present and previous studies also affects the reliability and validity of the study. To downplay this, additional attention has been paid on the formulation of the theoretical and empirical frameworks, in order to create as much confluence as possible between ideas, concepts and theories from various academic disciplines involved in the research of phenomena related to immigrants. Still, the multifaceted research topic and context might reduce the academic and scientific value of the present study, because even if it was made clear from the beginning that multidisciplinary research was to be carried out, the manner in which concepts situated outside linguistics were employed might not meet the standards set by the academic

disciplines to which these concepts belong. But since globalization is a wide-ranging and multifaceted phenomenon that challenges the fundamentals of academic inquiry, it is necessary that a researcher is able to think outside the box

Among the limitations of the present study is also the difficult conceptualization of the notion of *immigrant*. The issues concerning the complexity of terminology related to immigrants have already been discussed comprehensively, but it should still be noted that the use of this type of terminology does not necessarily help to increase cohesion within society and between different groups of people. And as pointed out by Martikainen (2009:7), the whole premise of immigrant research and terminology contributes to the ‘otherness’ of immigrants, even when the researcher deliberately tries to avoid it.

Nevertheless, as a fundamental starting point for the study of English in the context of Finnish immigrant entrepreneurs has now been created, there are some very interesting paths that future endeavors could take. I see the role of discourse analysis as crucial in finding out of the idiosyncrasies and structural properties of the English used in the research context. Consequently, this type of an approach could yield information that either negates or confirms the research outcome of the present study. In addition, future studies could also employ ‘true’ ethnography. Ethnographic inquiry would allow not just detailed analysis of the English used in the interactions of immigrant entrepreneurs and their customers, but it would also allow extensive fieldwork to take place, perhaps resulting in observations and findings far beyond the reach of the present study. Relevant information could also be gained by extending the physical research context beyond Helsinki to see how significant a role does the idiosyncratic demographical composition of the research context of the present study play.

Whatever the scientific value of the present study will turn out to be in the future, I hope that it will work as an incentive that will encourage fellow linguists to look beyond the conventional situations and settings where language is studied, in order to trace new and intriguing instances of language use in contexts that do not necessarily merit the amount of interest they deserve.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: The interview guide / the interview themes

Themes

The business

- Why did you become an entrepreneur?
- How long have you been an entrepreneur?
- Do you enjoy being an entrepreneur?
- Is it challenging?

Immigrant

- How long have you lived in Finland? (How old are you?)
- What made you originally decide to move to Finland?

Languages in your life

- What languages do you speak?
- What languages are the most important to you?
- Has coming to Finland changed your languages?
- Do you use different languages in work and in free-time?

English

- What does the English language mean to you?
- Has English had a great effect on your life?
- Could you do what you do without it? (Your business)
- Did English have a role in you becoming an entrepreneur?
- Do you have immigrant customers or Finnish customers? Both or more of the other?
- How much English do you use in your business? Other languages?
- Can all your customers speak English?

- What if a customer wants to speak Finnish?
- Do you think anyone can run a business in English in Finland?
- Do you think you use more English in your work than an average Finnish person? An immigrant?
- What makes it possible, why are you able to survive with English?

English and Finnish in Finland

- Is English your language when you use it? If you speak English with a Finnish person, whose language is it?
- Can you survive with just English in Finland?
- How would you describe Finland's relation with English?
- Are Finnish people happy to speak English?
- Are immigrants given enough credit for speaking English? is it seen as a good thing?
- Is English a good thing?
- Will English have a more important role in Finland in the future?
- If someone moves to Finland, do they have to learn Finnish?
- Do you need Finnish in your life?
- Would you advise people moving to Finland to learn Finnish?

Appendix 2: The original Finnish excerpts from Sari's interview

(4) Joo päivittäin se tulee se automaattisesti se, tulee et se kyllä päivittäin käytän.

(5) On on todennäkösempää et englantia. On se helpoin kieli mikä tulee puhuttua sen asiakkaan kanssa et jos osaa englantia et jos vaik suomee asiakas välillä, vaik se osaa pari sanaa englantia ni se yrittää selittää niil viallisel englannilla, ku vaik ranskalla. Et se on sitä et se asiakas ite katto silleen et tää ei osaa ranskaa, et ehkä englantia on parempi, et yritetään puhuu se englannin kieli. Englannin kieli on aina sellanen helpoin kieli, mikä tulee se automaattisesti sit niinku... Mut mun mielestä kaikki osaa niinku englannista jotain vaik ei puhuis ollenkaan nii ymmärtää.

(6) Siis mun kannalta? Niin mä ku mä oon tääl myyjänä? Mun kannalta tärkeitä ois, ne on yhtä tärkeitä, suomi on tärkeä ja sit on se englantia tosi tärkeä... Joo mul on kyllä tosi tärkeä juur tässä tilanteessa, niinku jos kattoo ny tätä tilannetta, mul olis niinku molemmat tosi tärkeitä koska jos mäen osais englantia ni sit mul ois vaikeeta niinku asiakkaitten kanssa ja sitten niinku puhua tai sitten palvella sitä asiakasta.

(7) Asiakkaiden kans olis tosi vaikeet niin just niin te ette sitte ymmärrä toisianne vaikka yritäs kuinka.

(9) Ei olis mahdollista pelkästään englannilla, koska kuitenkin me asutaan suomessa ja pitäs osata jotain suomee koska on niinku jos avaat jonku kaupan tai yrityksen sä haluat et asiakaskunta on niinku laaja, et sä et voi niinku sanoo et sä puhut vaan englantia, et mä avaan yrityksen, sen täytyy olla kansainvälinen et sä pääset niinku palvelemaan sitä asiakasta ja saamaan niinku sitä asiakaskuntaa, et emmä pärjäis ainakaa suomes jos olisi muualla niin vaikka englannissa niin...

(15) Kielenä se must tosi tärkeä, et jos sä haluat niinku esim. matkustaa tai tavata eri taustaisia ihmisiä, se on niinku se tosi tärkeä kieli ja se on se jost tulee sellast ymmärtämist toisten kanssa ja se on tosi tärkeä.

(44) se on se ehkä et me ollaan ulkomaalaisii itte ja yrittäjii, ulkomaalaisii yrittäjiin ni sit tulee siit ehkä on parempi et puhutaan englantia, et se suomen kieli ei varmaa ei oo se, se yhteinen ymmärrys tulis siinä et englantia on sitte se helpoin et tulee se yhteinen ymmärrys. Ja se eri pukeutuminen tekee sen mun mielestä, ja se heti kattoo sen ihonvärin ja se tulee se automaattisesti englannin kieli.

(45) No totta kai, jos se jos mä oisin niinku oisi toistepäin, ni se tulisi sitte mun kotimaassa, se tulisi suoraan et mä en puhuisi niinku somaliaa heti, ni mikä se yhteinen ymmärrys tulee olemaan... Sä mietit ei mitä kieltä mä puhuisin ja okei nyt mä puhun sit englantii, ni ehkä hän ymmärtää sitä ku se on yleinen kieli, se on sellanen automaattinen.

(46) Joo se englannin kieli on sellanen yleisin kieli mikä tulee se suoraan sit niinku, ja ja jos suomessa tulee vaik supisuomalaisia ni jotka luulee et mä en osaa niinku suomen kieltä, ni heilt tulee heti englanniksi et hei puhutaanko suomee, et joo puhun mielummin suomee, ku englantii niinku et sitä niinku tulee se on sellasta automaattista, niinku yleistä tää englannin kieli.

(48) No kyl tääl yritetään puhua suomen kieltä, et silleen et me ymmärretään vaikka eleillä, on sellasia ihmisiä jotka ei osaa edes englantia, vaan oma äidinkieltään ... joo että suurin osa nykyään opiskelee suomen kieltä, että pääsee niinku opiskeleen ja paljon nopeemmin ku ennen ja sitä kautta niillä sujuu tosi hyvin nykyään... Maahanmuuttajien suomen kieli on parantunu, ja niinku silleen et pääsee nopeemmin opiskelee nykyään sitä kieltä, ja tällasta, on paljo mahdollisuuksia ja erilaista nykyään mistä voi opiskella ja se on helpottanu niillekin niitten elämää.

(65) Suomi op tärke ku me ollaan Suomessa. Se on kaikista ensimmäinen. Ja sit seuraava se must sit on englantii, jost tulis yhteinen ymmärtää muita ihmisiä.

(71) Eniten maahanmuuttajia, mut on uteliaita suomalaisia jotka haluaa katella ja uskaltaa ostaakin. Nykyään on enmmän laidasta laitaa, enen oli enemmän ennakkoluuloja, niinku kymmenen vuotta sitten, nyt asiakkaita tulee nyt silleen et ei oo pelkkä maahanmuuttajia tää kauppa.

(72) No kun tää on etninen kauppa, meil on sellasta mitä on muissakin kauppoissa mut on mitä on niinku eri kulttuureista juuriltaan tulleita ihmisiä, meil on sit vähän erilaista vaatetta ja sellasta, esim. Islam uskoisten vaatetusta ja ei-islamilaista vaatteita et ne jotka haluaa vaikka käyttää kulttuuriltaan vaikka peittävästi.

(73) Joo se on ympäri maailmaa, et se ei oo vaan niinku tietylle maahanmuuttajille.