

**IDENTITY AND LANGUAGE DISCOURSES IN ELF CONTEXT: a case  
study of five Finnish university students working in an international  
student organization in Finland**

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<p>Tiivistelmä – Abstract</p> <p>Tämän tutkielman tarkoituksena oli selvittää, kuinka englantia työssään virallisena kielenä käyttävien suomalaisten korkeakouluopiskelijoiden identiteetti rakentuu englannin kielellä. Työn keskiössä ovat diskurssit ja identiteetti, jonka nähdään rakentuvan diskursiivisesti kielestä ja kaksikielisyydestä puhumisen kautta. Essentiaalisen identiteetin sijaan tutkielmassa sovelletaan käsitystä dynaamisista, päällekkäisistä ja samanaikaisista identiteeteistä. Työn taustan muodostaa toisen kielen ja lingua franca –englannin identiteettitutkimukset.</p> <p>Tutkimuskysymykset ovat: 1) Millaisia diskursseja haastateltavat tuottavat puhuessaan englannin kielestä ja kaksikielisyydestä? 2) Millaisia kielen käyttäjä identiteettejä haastateltaville rakentuu näiden diskurssien käyttöönoton sekä muiden diskursiivisten rakentumistapojen myötä?</p> <p>Tutkimusaineistona on viisi puolistrukturoitua teemahaastattelua. Haastateltavat työskentelevät kansainvälisessä AIESEC-opiskelijajärjestössä ja käyttävät työkielenään englantia. Haastattelut nauhoitettiin, litteroitiin ja haastateltavien vastauksia tutkittiin kriittisen diskurssinanalyysin menetelmin.</p> <p>Tutkielman tulokset osoittavat, että englannin kieli on merkityksellinen osa haastateltavien elämää töissä ja kotona. He tuntevat osaavansa englantia tarpeeksi hyvin työelämän tarpeisiin, mutta kokevat sen ilmaisurikkaudessaan köyhemmäksi kuin suomen kielen. Haastateltavat puhuvatkin englannin kielestä usein välineenä eli lingua francana sen sijaan, että kokisivat sen merkittävänä osana itsensä ilmaisua. Välinediskurssin lisäksi haastateltavat tuottavat normatiivista diskurssia, diskurssia kulttuurista ja kielestä, kielestä ja identiteetistä sekä kaksikielisyydestä. Englanninkielisyys koetaan sekä persoonallisuuten vapauttavasti vaikuttavana voimavarana että epävarmuutena. Haastateltavat rakentavatkin englannin kielellä moniulotteista kuvaa itsestään sekä suomalaisina että maailmankansalaisina. Englannin kieli on kytköksissä myös haastateltavien ammatti-identiteettiin. Huomattavaa on, että aihe oli haastateltaville vaikea, eivätkä kaikki olleet yhtä tietoisia englannin kielen vaikutuksesta omaan identiteettiin. Tulokset viittaavat siihen, että vastaavalle tutkimukselle olisi kysyntää englannin kasvavan aseman myötä. Tutkielma lisää tietoa identiteetin ja lingua franca -englannin suhteesta ja monikielisyydestä Suomessa.</p>	
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## Abbreviations

CDA Critical discourse analysis

EAL English as an additional language

EFL English as a Foreign Language

ESL English as a Second Language

ELF English as a *lingua franca*

ELT English language teaching

FL Foreign language

L1 First language

L2 Second language

NNS Non-native speaker

NS Native speaker

SLA Second language acquisition

SLL Second language learning

TL target language

## 1 INTRODUCTION

We know that the role of the English language has changed notably over the past 30 years, and one of the most relevant issues is that it is used more often by non-native speakers than by its native speakers. Jenks (2013: 166) has said it well: “[t]he changing landscape of English has skewed traditional notions of ownership, rules and appropriacy.” English is a global language and an international lingua franca (Graddol 2006). It varies from one geographical region to another with regard to how it is taught, learnt and used in day-to-day life, instead or alongside the native or other languages, and the social significance it has within individuals and collectives (Jenks 2013). The need to understand how English is used has been noted by many; however, the aspect that identities are particularly important to an understanding of how English is used has been researched only by few. There is relatively little research on how the use of English affects the identities of its speakers in lingua franca contexts.

In the context of globalization, scholars, such as Park (2012), have noted that language is a central issue in understanding the question of identity in the sense of what language(s) one speaks. For the reason that linguistic hybridity can open up new possibilities of identity work and a more complex space in which we come to understand our place in the world – who we are (Park 2012: 1080). Most of us no longer belong to a community that is mediated by one language only even if we considered ourselves monolinguals from birth, due to globalization, Internet-based information flow, migration and immigration. It is therefore in the interest of the present study to find out how five Finnish university students who work in English in an international student organization in Finland construct their identities. We know there is a relationship between identity and English as a lingua franca (ELF) and that this relationship is complex (Baker 2009a; Jenkins 2007; Jenks 2013; Sung 2015; Virkkula and Nikula 2010).

Identity research can have far reaching implications and at its best can empower foreign language students and teachers. Earlier research has pointed out how participants have limited and deficit categories to identify as speakers of English as an additional language (EAL), such as a non-native, learner or foreign language speaker (e.g. Jenks 2013), when there should be many other alternative identities available to them, such as a global or

intercultural citizen that researchers have started to talk about. Given the number of research conducted in ELF contexts, it is clear that more research is needed in order to understand how speakers position themselves or get positioned in social contexts through language. As Virkkula and Nikula (2010: 270) argue, “education should open up the possibility of learners adopting more favorable identities so that instead of seeing themselves as failed native speakers they began to see themselves as multicompetent speakers”. Recent attempts have shown how deeply ingrained issues of deficiency are in discourses of education (Virkkula and Nikula 2010) and not only in Finland but also elsewhere (Jenks 2013). It is an idea worth promoting that at school learners could assert their identities as competent speakers (Virkkula and Nikula 2010) and promote a more local understanding of ELF (Canagarajah 2006). Thus, questions like ‘who am I when I speak this language?’ start to matter, and this is what I asked my research participants, who had not thought of the question before.

In Finland, English has traditionally been seen as a foreign language; however, researchers have started to talk about its emergent as “a new kind of second language, with new models and goals” (Taavitsainen and Pahta 2008: 27) in respect to English as a lingua franca (ELF). English is more visible than ever in the urban environment, and its uses by Finns are well documented in different contexts (e.g. Leppänen and Nikula 2007; Leppänen, Nikula and Kääntä 2008). It is safe to say that English has become a linguistic resource for a large part of people, in particular, for young, urban and educated Finns, as illustrated for example by Leppänen et al. (2011). Finns have also widely expressed their opinions in favor and against the spread of English. On the one hand, English is regarded as the most important foreign language, a neutral language for international communication and a pragmatic one for professional growth and career advancement. On the other hand, some people perceive it as a language that threatens the status of the national languages (Swedish and Finnish) and identity (Leppänen and Pahta 2012). The use of English as a language of education, working life and international interaction is, nevertheless, generally approved of, and English skills are viewed as important to nearly all social groups in Finland (Leppänen et al. 2011).

Identity research in ELF context has also implications as an investigation of multiculturalism and multilingualism in Finland. It is worth asking, as Paunonen (2009: 7) has done, how the use of English affects perceptions of and attitudes towards Finnish identity. These ideas seem to have been taken up by some graduate students in Finland since identity and language has been studied in a number of master’s theses and dissertations. These include a qualitative

study of Finnish engineering students' foreign language user identity before and after their stay in Germany by Virkkula (2006) and her subsequent dissertation on the participants' language repertoires in the global working life (Räisänen 2013). McCambridge (2007) researched the influence of immersion education on the linguistic and cultural identities of Finnish graduates from the English School in Helsinki. Peuronen (2008), on the other hand, focused on the code-switching behavior and bilingual identity construction of Finns in an online community. Hujala (2009) studied employees' attitudes towards English as a lingua franca (ELF) and their linguistic speaker/learner identity in a Finnish workplace. Lehto (2013) researched language discourses and the identity of Finns in Japan; whereas Sirkeinen (2008) studied multilingual discourses and the identity of a Finnish-Spanish family in Finland. I have drawn a lot of inspiration, first of all, from the master's theses of Virkkula (2006), McCambridge (2007) and Hujala (2009) and I hope the present study complements these three on the topic of English in Finland. What is special about the present study is that identity research has not been conducted in a similar setting before. Whereas Virkkula (2006) studied male engineer students with a more limited working proficiency in English than the participants in the present study; McCambridge (2007) studied Finns who have been through English immersion education and had stronger bi- and multilingual identities than the participants in the present study. Hujala's (2009) study, on the other hand, addresses only the aspect of learner/speaker identity in the ELF context and focuses to a greater extent on the employees' attitudes towards ELF. I have also drawn inspiration from the master's theses of Lehto (2013) and Sirkeinen (2008), who apply ideas of multilingualism and language discourses in the study of identity. There is, however, no previous study that had drawn on the concepts of identity and language discourses in an attempt to study how English affects the identities of Finns in ELF context. Thus, the present study provides yet a fresh perspective on the topic.

The purpose of the present study is to examine the ways in which five Finnish speakers of English construct their identities, particularly linguistic identities, in the context of semi-structured interviews. I approach this from the perspective of critical discourse research and so I ask what discourses are available to them for identification. An appropriate ELF setting was found in an international student organization called AIESEC. Not only is its official working language English but its members are both Finnish and international students, making it a highly multicultural working environment. I interviewed five of AIESEC's full-time employees in an attempt to examine how they perceive the role of English in their lives

and construct identities in relation to English. How does the fact that they know English, as well as they do, shape their identities? How do they relate to English? Do they identify with any English-speaking community? In the core I have the question 'who am I when I speak this language' and I approach this question also from the angles of ownership, rules and appropriacy, as the participants talk a lot about their language proficiency.

To do this, I have drawn ideas from English as a second language and English as a lingua franca (ELF) research. In brief, ELF research focuses on the use of English in intercultural situations where speakers with different linguacultural backgrounds share English as a mutual language (Jenkins 2007). In order to conceptualize identity, I adopted the post-structuralist understandings of it as fluid, changeable, non-essentialist and multilayered. Furthermore, identity is seen as a result of interplay between individual awareness and social identity which is constructed in and through language and discourse. This is in line with the main method of research, i.e. discourse analysis. The main focus will be on the ways in which the participants talk about the English language, bi/multilingualism and their identity in relation to English. I interviewed the whole national team of AIESEC in Finland for which reason there are five interviews. It will be difficult to draw any generalizations from that to concern even Finland or the whole world. Thus, the present study will be valuable in terms of providing rich qualitative information that others can possibly relate to in Finland and elsewhere. It will be an effort to expand research and knowledge of the roles of the English language in Finland started by the VARIENG project in 2007 and an attempt to emphasize the importance of language(s) in understanding issues of identity.

The structure of the study is as follows: chapter two will focus on the most important theoretical concepts and their developments in research of language and identity. After I have outlined the appropriate theoretical framework, in chapter three I will discuss its application in second language and ELF research so far. In chapter four I will introduce the present study: I will discuss the aim and the research questions, portray the participants and describe the research setting and, last but not least, discuss the tools of analysis. Chapters 5, 6 and 7, on the other hand, will provide an analysis of the example discourses and identities, discussion on those and a conclusion and implications for future research.



## 2 IDENTITY CONSTRUCTION

The two key concepts of the present study are *identity* and *discourses*, which are described and explained in more detail in this chapter. The view of identity adopted here is based on social constructionism and post-structuralism: identity is seen as fluid and discursively and socially constructed. I will discuss how research has conceptualized identity, what its main philosophical arguments are and how identities are constructed in discourses. I will then move on to explain how identity and discourses are useful for the purposes of the present study as an analytical framework.

### 2.1 Ways in which identity is understood

The body of research on identity is vast only in the discipline of English language and linguistics, and thus it is nearly impossible to talk about it all in the scope of a master's thesis. Neither is there an all-encompassing, comprehensive or complete theoretical framework of identity that would guide our practices, although there are a few recent attempts by Bucholtz and Hall (2009), Blommaert (2005), De Fina et al. (2006) and Pavlenko and Blackledge (2004) whose ideas have been influential also in the present study. The attempt in this chapter is to discuss some relevant mainly poststructuralist and constructivist ideas of identity.

#### 2.1.1 Multiple terms for identity

The term *identity* is seen problematic as discussed, for example, by Ivanič (1998). First, it is a singular word and points to a unitary and fixed sense of self if taken out of context and misread as such. Secondly, although it “is the everyday word for people's sense of who they are”, the problem with it is that “it does not automatically carry with it the connotation of social construction and constraint” (Ivanič 1998: 10-11). What has happened in the academia is that people use different terms to mean the same thing or mean different things by the same term, and thus, as Heller (1978: 183) appropriately notes, “[the] definition of identity is [itself] negotiable and subject to change”, which is in line with post-structuralism and social constructionism. A researcher is likely to confront a jungle of linguistic jargon in searching for the definition of identity, and in no way it is a simple notion.

Some scholars have come up with alternative terms. Hall (1996), for example, prefers to talk about the processes of *identification* whereby individuals align themselves with groups, communities, or sets of interest, hobbies, values, beliefs and practices. Identification works over difference because there is “always ‘too much’ or ‘too little’ – an over-determination or a lack, but never a proper fit, a totality” (Hall 1996: 3). The word *identity* itself, in fact, signifies sameness (Bucholtz and Hall 2009: 370). Joseph (2004: 10) points out that it is also fashionable to favor the nominalization *identification* and the verb *identify* over the noun *identity* to avoid the notion of a fixed condition and to emphasize the semantic features of a process. Weedon (1997) does not even mention identity. He has replaced it with *subjectivity*, which he uses to refer to “the conscious and unconscious thoughts and emotions of the individual, her sense of herself and her ways of understanding her relation to the world” (Weedon 1997: 32). Weedon’s definition emphasizes people’s inner sense of who they are that is constructed through language and power relations.

Benwell and Stokoe (2006: 5-6) list numerous near-synonymous terms for identity such as *self*, *selfhood*, *position*, *role*, *personality*, *category*, *person formulation*, *person description*, *subjectivity*, *subject*, *agent*, *subject position* and *persona* (cf. Ivanič 1998: 10-11). They point out that many scholars use these terms interchangeably because of a lack of agreement on their differences. Role, category and person bear resemblance to sociological terminology. Self, selfhood and personality are likely to be found in the psychological discourse; whereas subject position, agent and subject are often used in a linguistically oriented analysis. Obviously different disciplines use these terms reciprocally, and things are not as black and white as they may seem here for the lack of space.

Perhaps one of the reasons why identity is so complex concept is that in practice people have many different overlapping and perhaps contradictory identities, which nevertheless are fundamental to their sense of self. Sometimes the plural word *identities* or the term *multiple identity* are preferred as opposed to the singular form to underline what Ivanič (1998: 11) has said: “it captures the idea of people identifying simultaneously with a variety of social groups.” The notion of the multiple and non-unitary nature of the subject grants the idea that our identity consists of the multiple roles we fulfill and the socially available resources that we have for the construction of our identities. These identities can be competing, contradictory as well as complementary, as Ivanič (1998) mentions, and they can be understood and undertaken in terms of “a hierarchy of identities” (Omoniyi 2006),

“hybridity” (Bhabha 1994, as quoted by Hall 1996) or “identity repertoires” (Blommaert 2005). Hybridity and multiplicity are often seen to result from the diversity of the postmodern world, as pointed out for example by Gee (2001), which has been facilitated by new technology and mobility. Erling (2007: 128) found out that a group of German students of English did not demonstrate a loss of their sense of national identity although their regular contact with English seemingly shaped their identities. Rather they were adding other layers of identity related to their affinities with local, European and global communities. Here it is of interest in the scope of the present study to find out which identities are foregrounded, made relevant and which remain hidden and in which context. The idea of multiplicity is applied from start to finish.

Finally, in particular, the terms *subject*, *subject position* and *positioning(s)* (Davies and Harré 1999) are used in order to emphasize how individuals’ sense of self is affected by the prevalent discourses and social practices. The notion of *subject position* refers to semantic processes by which people can position themselves or they are located by others within the realm of discourses. Pomerantz (2000: 26) also uses *subject positions* in order to refer to “the possibilities for social identity that are available at particular times and places”. She argues that people take up or identify themselves with certain subject positions based on the way they talk because when they talk they align themselves with certain ways of understanding the social world and “the people who have historically understood the social world from that perspective” (ibid.). Identity is thus a historical, social and cultural construction. Ivanič (1998), in addition, introduces the term *possibilities for self-hood*, which she uses to highlight the aspects of social construct, multiplicity and fluidity. The process of identifying with socially available possibilities for self-hood echoes Fairclough’s (2003) idea of the interconnectedness of individual and larger processes of social change, to which I shall return in chapter 2.2.

Inasmuch as *identity* is an elusive, problematic and complex, its popularity has not died down within the academy or public, and as Hoffman and Peeren (2010: 10) remind us, it “requires further analysis rather than facile dismissal”. Following the example set by Ivanič (1998) and Joseph (2004), identity will be used as a cover term for the present study. The term is seen useful because it “is the everyday word for people’s sense of who they are” (Ivanič 1998: 10), and furthermore it avoids linguistic jargon (Joseph 2004: 11). For now the term is used in the present study to signify fluidity, complexity and multiplicity, as discussed above. Moreover,

it refers to a process rather than a fixed product in favor of post-structuralism and social constructionism, to which I will turn next.

### 2.1.2 Essentialist vs. poststructuralist views on identity

One way is to see identity as a personal narrative of who and what we are, “how a person understands his or her relationship to the world, how that relationship is constructed across time and space, and how the person understands possibilities for future” (Norton 2000: 5). Identity is seen here as a result of one’s interaction with the social world (see also Weedon 1997). Giddens (1991: 47) speaks of ‘ontological security’ that is the possession of “answers’ to fundamental existential questions which all human life in some way addresses”. Block (2006: 35, emphasis added) describes it as follows:

This *ongoing* search for ontological security [some sort of maintenance of a sense of balance] takes place at the crossroads of the past, present and future, as in their day-to-day interactions with their environments, individuals are *constantly* reconciling their current sense of self and their accumulated past, with a view to dealing with what awaits them in the future.

The point is that an individual does not *have* just one constant identity, but identity is an ongoing project and an emerging experience which is constructed in practices that produce, enact and perform identity (Blommaert 2005: 205). Thus, identity cannot be traced back to one or two critical points in life, nor is it something that we have been given or have learnt, but rather it is an ongoing social process that involves the past, present and future as well as language. We use available semiotic resources, such as narratives, statements and symbols, to (co-) construct representations of ourselves that are also recognizable by the others or ascribed by others (Blommaert 2005). Similarly, we construct identities of others, i.e. through the social categorization of othering. Along the lines of Joseph (2004), there are as many versions of you as there are people who know you. Furthermore, identities are in a state of flux from situation to situation (Evans 2015), not least because of globalization and “the range of identities available to individuals” because of it (Pavlenko and Blackledge 2004: 2). It is by the way of narrative that people are said to be able construct a continuous sense of themselves, which “fuses past and future orientations together into one’s present identity” (Bamberg, De Fina and Shiffrin 2011: 180).

One of the widely discussed topics in the identity literature is whether to think of identity as a process as opposed to a fixed product, which evokes the tension between constructivist and

essentialist views of identity. I will introduce some of their major features for how we understand identity.

The essentialist view of identity is familiar to us via consumerism, advertisement and cultural production. In the academia few think of identity in essentialist terms today, but it still is the common-sense view. As Burr (2004: 29) points out, “[w]e think of our personality as more or less unified and stable”. It is the idea of a man or a woman with a born identity, a true self or an identity which gets lost, found, stolen, false, split, secret, forgotten, recovered, discovered or borrowed. Significant here is the notion of property (Hoffman and Peeren 2010: 10), which I already mentioned. Bucholtz (2003: 400) defines essentialism as “the position in which attributes and behavior of socially defined groups can be determined and explained by reference to cultural and/or biological characteristics”. Gee (2001) speaks of the perspective of Nature-identity which can be understood as determined by nature. N-identity is believed to be sustained by biological traits which are the result of one’s genetic make-up. To illustrate this, labels such as Finn, female and foreign are posited a priori before a proper analysis. Essentialist notion of identity is common in the contemporary mainstream psychology as

“[e]ssentialist theories locate identity ‘inside’ persons, as the product of minds, cognition, the psyche, or socialization practices. From this perspective, identity is a *taken-for-granted* category and a feature of a person that is absolute and knowable. Many contemporary scholars in linguistics have attacked against the essentialist nature of identity as a *fixed, integral* and *unified* product and as categorical properties” (Benwell and Stokoe 2006: 9, emphasis added).

The essentialist view is also characteristic of the variationist theories in sociolinguistics (Mendoza-Denton 2002) and the ideas of anthropology that forged a close ideological connection between language and identity (Bucholtz and Hall 2009). Some of this research is accused of overgeneralization of similarity and difference in their attempt to describe the membership of a given speech community and how the membership is defined by distinctive linguistic forms (Bucholtz and Hall 2009). Following the advice of Blommaert (2005: 205), “[i]t is safer to start from a performance perspective which emphasizes that identity categories have to be enacted and performed in order to be socially salient”.

This view is in contrast with the poststructuralist view of identity as fluid, hybrid and ever-changeable. If the essentialist view of identity can be thought as the view of an inner self, a poststructuralist view is the view of a public self which is constructed in social interaction (Benwell and Stokoe 2006). Post-structuralism is here defined as “moving beyond the search

for such ‘universal and invariant laws of humanity’ [prone to structuralism] to more nuanced, multileveled and ultimately, complicated framings of the world around us” (Block 2007b: 13). It challenges the ideas of Saussurean structuralism on language as a closed and stable system and meaning as “a simple symmetrical unity between a signifier and signified” (Säfström 1999: 7). As Säfström (1999: 8) points out, underneath is the idea that meaning is dispersed over “a potentially endless range of signs”, which means that words and statements can assume a different meaning when they are repeated in a different context. It seems that post-structuralism and social constructionism share some common post-modern pillars, including a critical stance toward taken-for-granted knowledge and anti-essentialism. The major difference between the two is probably that while social constructionists view identity as an interactional accomplishment, socially and discursively constructed, poststructuralists have introduced into the equation the role of power relations. “[T]he constructionist theory treats the term ‘identity’ itself as a socially constructed category: it is whatever people agree it to be in any given historical and cultural context” (Benwell and Stokoe 2006: 10). That is to say identities are depended on context and contextually negotiated. Furthermore, post-structuralism brings into the focus the ideas of hybridity, multiplicity and fragmentation of identities for example in the works of Hall (1996, 1999). Poststructuralists take the position that meaning-making practices are sites of struggle and on that account identities are also sites of struggle (e.g. Norton 2000).

The view that identities are performed, done, produced, negotiated, forged and constructed in social interaction through their language use is also adopted in the present study. For the purposes of research poststructuralists ideas work better than the essentialist notions of identity (Block 2006, 2007a), in particular, in the context of globalization (Blommaert 2010) and transcultural flows and global Englishes (Pennycook 2007). I try to avoid making essentialist notions of similarity and difference when pre-framing or drawing conclusions from the interviews. However, as Bucholtz (2003) points out, for group members essentialism often promotes a shared identity and as human beings we also need continuity. Needless to say both are needed in everyday life.

### **2.1.3 Identity as individual and collective**

It is obvious by now that identity research is full of dualisms, including, on the one hand, the idea of one constant identity as against the multiple self and, on the other hand, the

relationship of the individual to society (Riley 2007: 70). The latter is also a widely discussed dichotomy in identity literature and relates to the notion of personal agency and control. Block (2007a) brings forward the question: To what extent is identity exclusively an act of individual agency or constrained by social structure?

On one extreme we have the assumption that people are free to enact or perform any identity that they want, which regards identity as a self-governed process and an act of creativity. As Gee (2001: 114) points out, the individual and the accomplishments of the individual are foregrounded. This does not necessarily mean that scholars would deny the workings of dialogue and discourse that produce these identities, but rather that this aspect is backgrounded. To exemplify the individual view on identity scholars often refer to Mathews' (2000) metaphor of a global cultural supermarket in which individuals have the option to pick any identity from a range of possibilities that is made available to them by the international media, migration and advanced technology to name a few.

The other extreme is to say that an individual is conceptualized only as the outcome of discursive and societal structures (Burr 2004). Many scholars have criticized the illusion of a free market and pointed out that identities are affected by social structures, ideologies and practices. Ivanič (1998: 11), for example, speaks of the freedom people have to identify with particular subject positions through their selection of certain discursal resources (e.g. knowledge, modality and deixis) and of the tension caused by socially determined restrictions on those choices. We are participants of a variety of social communities and we (co-) construct and negotiate identities in relationship to these communities (Wenger 1999) and affinity groups (Gee 2001). Wenger (1999: 146-147), however, points out that social does not automatically mean restriction or limitation on an individual's identity. He criticizes the oversimplistic individual-social dichotomy and proposes that identity should rather be understood as the interplay between a community and an individual's consciousness than separate units.

Block (2006) also points out that identity is a process of both structure and agency. It is both social and individual, as articulated by Pietikäinen and Dufva (2006). Identity is seen as being constructed both through individual choice and physical and social limitations on those choices. Similarly to Virkkula and Nikula (2010), the present study will make use of the idea that language users actively draw on different discourses in order to construct their identities as users of English. Nonetheless, language users are not seen entirely governed by those

structures of discourses. They also have their own choice and voice, which is brought forth in their stories of own experiences, as described by Pietikäinen and Dufva (2006).

#### **2.1.4 Identity as an act of semiosis**

For the purposes of the present study, identity will be understood as “the active negotiation of an individual’s relationship with larger social constructs, in so far as this negotiation is signaled through language and other semiotic means” in the lines of Mendoza-Denton (2002: 475). Identity is treated as a practice of semiosis (Mendoza-Denton 2002; Blommaert 2005) and understood as a representation that relies on discourse for recognition (Gee 2001). I will focus on how identity is constructed through language rather than on other semiotic means or signs (e.g. habitus, make-up, gestures, behavior etc.), although multimodality has gained a stronger ground as a way of understanding identity (Block 2007b). Words as well as gestures and movements index different identities in a given context and language is but one semiotic mediator among many in the ongoing construction of identity; however, the most important one here. I follow Blommaert’s (2005: 203) argument that “every act of semiosis is an act of identity in which we ‘give off’ information about ourselves”. The matter then is how this will be interpreted by others – what meaning we give to it. I understand that identity is constructed through the semiotic processes of practice, indexicality, ideology and performance (Bucholtz and Hall 2009); however, I will focus more on the processes of indexicality, ideology and practice, as I will discuss and apply the framework of critical discourse analysis (CDA) in the analysis of identity.

## **2.2 Discourses and ideological workings of language and identity**

In line with the social constructionist view, identity is seen, as Pavlenko and Blackledge (2004: 14) articulate, as “constructed, validated and offered through discourses available to individuals at a particular point in time and place”. The present study will thus make use of critical discourse analysis (CDA) and the Foucauldian concept of *discourse*, the task of which is “to expose the ideological workings of language” (Benwell and Stokoe 2006: 9). The ideas of CDA also reflect the poststructuralist theories of language and identity, as discussed above. The attempt in this chapter is to define what is meant by *discourses* and to discuss briefly how CDA is useful for the purposes of the present study as an analytical framework.



### 2.2.1 CDA on language and identity

CDA offers a theoretical framework for conceptualizing language as an integral part of social life (Fairclough 2003: 2). It views language as social practice (Fairclough 1992: 63) and studies it as “language-in use” (Gee 2011: 8). Language is more than words and sentences: it is discourse. Language not only reflects and expresses ideas and identities but plays a large part in constructing them (Fairclough 1992). In Norton’s words (2000: 13), “language is constitutive of and constituted by a language learner’s identity” – thus the relationship between language and identity is mutually constitutive. There has been a recent trend in linguistics to move towards the social analysis of languages (Fairclough 2003: 2), which is also reflected in the number of the master’s theses on language and identity that make use of discourse analysis and the analysis of *discourses* (Virkkula 2006; Peuronen 2008; Sirkeinen 2008; Lehto 2013). It is no wonder, as Pomerantz (2000) and Pietikäinen and Dufva (2006) demonstrate, CDA provides useful methodological means to analyzing the relationship between language use and identity.

Halliday’s conceptualizations of “ideational” and “interpersonal” metafunctions of language are rather useful here for understanding the relationship between discourse, language and identity (e.g. Evans 2015; Ivanič 1998; Pietikäinen and Mäntynen 2009; Pomerantz 2000). Halliday observed that when people talked they were giving off information both about the content (ideational) and about their social relationships (interpersonal). In a similar vein, Pomerantz (2000) discovered that in her interviews people were not only giving information about their experiences as heritage language users, but rather were constructing multiple self-representations of themselves. Fairclough (1992: 64), on the other hand, conceives Halliday’s “interpersonal” function as two different functions. “Identity” function refers to the discursive and linguistic means with which social identities are “set up” in discourse; whereas “relation” function refers to how relationships are negotiated between participants respectively. Pavlenko and Blackledge (2004: 14) describe how discourses, in particular, are building material for identity in that “they supply the terms and other linguistic means with which identities are constructed and negotiated”. To illustrate this, educational discourse that centers on a talk about school experiences often inevitably offers its speaker linguistic means for identification as learners (e.g. Virkkula and Nikula 2010; Pienimäki 2014). Pavlenko and Blackledge (2004) add that language ideologies work in a similar way in that they also guide ways in which individuals use linguistic resources to index and to produce identities.

Consequently, if we examine speakers' discourses and ideologies related to language and identity, their comments about language and other social phenomena, we also gain information about their identities as users of English.

Furthermore, CDA aims to make visible the ideological workings of language and the inequality that is brought about by discursive practices and the reproduction of dominant discourses (Pietikäinen and Mäntynen 2009). In a sense of Foucault, discursive formation of identity is constrained by institutional and societal "orders of discourse" in which the individual has no active social agency in any meaningful sense (Fairclough 1992: 43). Fairclough (1992: 45), however, argues that the process should be seen as dialectical in nature: identity is shaped by discursive practices, and yet an individual is capable of reshaping and restructuring those practices (cf. Ivanič 1998: 11). Identity is seen also in the present study as "a discursive performance that is connected to wider systems of cultural meaning-making" (Benwell and Stokoe 2006: 9), but not limited or constrained by them completely, as discussed in chapter 2.1.3. Gee (2001: 111) points it out appropriately: "discourses are social and historical but the person's trajectory and narrativization are individual."

I share Gee's (2011: 9) view on that "all discourse analysis needs to be critical, not because discourse analysts are or need to be political, but because language itself is... political". Language is not conceived of as a neutral medium of communication, and how we position ourselves or get positioned by others in the realm of discourses is always depended on who is talking and the power relations in that situation. As Norton (2000: 5) points out:

It is through language that a person negotiates a sense of self within and across different sites at different points in time, and it is through language that a person gains access to – or is denied access to – powerful social networks that give learners the opportunity to speak.

Thus, identities are not neutral either, as Pavlenko and Blackledge (2004: 1) discuss:

Ongoing social, economic, and political changes affect these constellations, modifying different identity options offered to individuals at a given moment in history and ideologies that legitimize and value particular identities more than others.

They point out in their discussion of identity in multilingual contexts that "language choice and attitudes are inseparable from political arrangements, relations of power, language ideologies, and interlocutors' views of their own and other's identity" (ibid.). I will apply the

critical framework to a context of English as a lingua franca, which asserts speakers against the native speaker hegemony. Although I am curious of the workings of the social structure and power on the individual, I approach the analysis from the individual's perspective – how the participants perceive their identities and how they employ capital-D discourses in identity construction. I will define capital-D discourse in the next chapter in more detail.

Some CDA scholars have brought forward concepts such as 'voice' from Bahktin (Pietikäinen and Dufva 2006) and 'subject positions' from Davies and Harré (Pomerantz 2000) in order to analyze both individual and social aspects of identity. They emphasize that identity should not be seen as purely individual and psychological in nature, nor as exclusively socially constructed. Pietikäinen and Dufva (2006) exemplify how the ethnic identity of a Sámi journalist is represented through a variety of voices in a variety of discourses. Their findings demonstrate how the interviewee constructs his identity by drawing from discourses of the journalistic profession and ethnicity and take up 'voices' which bring forth his experiences as an individual and his individual life course. In the present study, I will not use 'voice' as an analytical tool, but will note that the process of identification should be seen as dialectical in nature, as Fairclough (1992) has pointed out and as discussed before. Identity is shaped by discursive practices, and yet an individual is capable of reshaping and restructuring those practices by his/her life experiences.

The present study is based on the ideas of CDA that people give off information about themselves when they talk about their experiences and their sense of themselves in English. Individuals construct identities by drawing on their knowledge of capital D-discourses and aligning themselves as having certain beliefs, values and perspectives (Pomerantz 2000; Virkkula and Nikula 2010). In the process, as Pomerantz (2000: 28) says, the interviewees are seen to take up different subject positions in order to construct multiple, complex and dynamic self representations. This is also what I wanted to do in the present study in an attempt to study the 2<sup>nd</sup> language identities five Finnish speakers of English construct. I will outline the present study in more detail in chapter 4.

### **2.2.2 Conceptualization of discourses**

I need to clarify what I mean by *discourses*. Gee (2011) uses the term *discourse* with a capital-D to distinguish it from the so-called everyday small-d discourses, i.e. a conversation

with a neighbor or an advertisement on a newspaper. Conversation analysis traditionally focuses on the micro level analysis of small-d discourses, such as turn taking; whereas critical discourse analysis (CDA) draws from the social level, the capital-D discourses (Benwell and Stokoe 2006: 11). For example, there are the capital-D discourses of essentialism and poststructuralism which represent and construct *identity* in different ways. According to Burr (2004: 65), “each discourse brings different aspects into focus, raises different issues for consideration, and has different implications for what we should do”. Furthermore, as Davies and Harrés (1999: 34) point out, discourses can create “distinct and incompatible versions of reality” if they compete with each other. Capital-D discourses could be seen as repertoires from which chosen identities stem, as proposed by Bamberg et al. (2011). Gee (2001: 110) also speaks of capital-D discourses as “the ways of being certain kinds of people” which are also recognized by other people.

There are multiple definitions for *discourses*, and it is not often so clear whether scholars refer to capital-D or small-d discourses. Norton (1997b: 209) uses the term to refer to “the complexes of signs and practices that organize social existence and social reproduction” and argues that discourses both “delimit the range of possible practices under their authority and organize how these practices are realized in time and space”. As such, discourses are seen as the different ways we can adopt to make sense of the world and to define our place in it. Discourses can also delimit the range of authentic and legitimate subject positions available for identification. It is thus in the interest of the present study to find out which kinds of discourses are available for the participants for identification when they talk about themselves as users of English.

Burr (2004: 75) further points out that discourses are not “simply abstract ideas” and ways of talking about things, but rather are “intimately connected to institutional and social practices”, which she says affect how we live our lives, what we can do and what can be done to us. In brief, different discourses have power. This means that some meaning systems have gained the status and currency of truth and dominate how we define and organize both ourselves and our social world, as discussed by Norton (2000), whilst other alternative discourses are marginalized, yet potentially offer sites where hegemonic practices can be contested, challenged and resisted (Pavlenko and Blackledge 2004). Norton (2000: 15) also points out that discourses are powerful, but not completely determined, and thus dominant discourses can be resisted. People can resist the given by questioning the ways of talking and

being. Discourses are not just a top-down form, as implied by Foucault, but rather individuals can shape discourses and these discourses used by the individuals can shape reality. It is precisely this dialogical relationship between discourse and social (Fairclough 2003) that is in play.

In the present study, I am curious of what kinds of capital-D discourses the interviewees take up in the discursive field of English as a lingua franca and how this affects their identification as users of English. Discourses are seen to provide ‘frames’ or ‘sites’ within which identities are constructed and negotiated by the individuals, and similarly made visible and analyzed by analysts. Pomerantz (2000: 27), for example, argues that discourses are different places that offer different subject positions and outlooks of the social world. According to her, subject positions can be understood as “the possibilities for self-hood or socially recognizable ways of being that exist within a discourse” (ibid.). They may be seen as characterized, for example, by certain socially recognizable styles of language use which make them detectable (Pomerantz 2000; Ivanič 1998). Pomerantz (2000: 28) further points out that the post-structuralist view of identity as multiple, complex and dynamic is critical for understanding here because of the inequality of power and authority attached to each subject position and “[a]s individuals move among these subject positions they either reproduce or challenge the ways of organizing meaning embodied in different discourses”. All instances of language use are seen as aligning speakers with “ideologically saturated and historically situated subject positions” and hence function as acts of identity (Pomerantz 2000: 27).

### **3 LANGUAGE, IDENTITY AND ELF**

Two of the areas in which the relationship between language and identity is discussed and studied are the socio-cultural field of second language acquisition (SLA) and English as a Lingua Franca (ELF) research. Since Norton (1997a) demanded that educators take this relationship seriously, identity research has made headway. She was among the first SLA researchers to stress the point that language learners are foremost social beings and users of their second language (L2) in their own right. Norton argued (1997a: 410) that “every time language learners speak, they are not only exchanging information with their interlocutors; they are also constantly organizing and reorganizing the sense of who they are and how they relate to the social world”, in line with discourse analysis. Norton has been an advocate of

poststructuralist notions of identity and takes a critical stand towards identity. Although she based her study on the experiences of L2 immigrant learners in an English-speaking country, I have drawn a lot of inspiration from her work.

English is used more often by non-native speakers (NNSs) than native speakers (NSs) and in contrast to SLA research, ELF research pays attention to informants' experiences of languages outside of the native language context. ELF research started in the 1990s with foci on the ways English is used by non-native speakers in intercultural settings. In recent years some of its advocates, such as Jenkins (2006, 2007, 2009), have recognized the importance of identity in gaining a better understanding of ELF and the central questions in the field. The key question in the chapter is: how is the relationship between 2<sup>nd</sup> language and identity studied in these fields? I will refer to previous studies on the topic from both SLA and ELF research. For the present study an appropriate ELF setting in Finland was found from an international student organization AIESEC, which I will describe in more detail later.

### **3.1 Identities in FL, study abroad and ESL contexts**

There has been much interest in language and identity in the fields of second language acquisition, sociolinguistics and applied sciences since the 2000s. The multiple roles that the self plays in society we mainly manifest through language. Traditionally, L2 identities have been studied in either FL, study abroad or ESL contexts. In the SLA theories there is, however, a tendency to make a dichotomy between second and foreign language learning. Foreign language learners are assumed to live and to study the language outside the target language communities where it is used, unless they go abroad, in which case the FL is the primary mediator of their day-to-day activity (e.g. Benson et al. 2012; Kinkinger 2004). In Kinkinger's (2004) well-known study of Alice, the study abroad experience helps a young American student to construct new subject positions in French during and after her stay in France. Similarly, in a study of Finnish engineering students, Virkkula and Nikula (2010) found out that the informants were able to take up more positive and empowering subject positions as English speakers after their stay in Germany. Without a study abroad experience FL learners are assumed to have little access to the language and to harbor instrumental motivations more closely related to school success than to changes in social identity or lived experiences that have been mediated by the target language. Identity has been studied in EFL

contexts in classrooms (Cruickshank 2012; Khodadady 2012; Vasilopoulos 2015) and the findings are important for language teaching and learning, in particular, because of the shifting range of identities available to learners depending on the teaching style. The FL tradition tends to

highlight the importance of learning about the culture and society of native speakers; it stresses the centrality of methodology in discussions of effective learning; and emphasizes the importance of emulating native speaker language behavior (Graddol 2006: 82).

It emphasizes the English language as the language of the ‘other’ (Park and Wee 2008), and inevitably an identity that is available for identification is that of a FL learner.

On the other hand, L2 learners are people who are studying the language of the communities where they live in. They are assumed to have stronger motivations and more access to the language than foreign language learners. L2 speakers can be long-term sojourners or immigrants who are expected to adapt to their new circumstances and to redefine themselves (Block 2007b). Block (2007a) speaks of the need to resolve ambivalence, which he describes as the uncertainty of feeling a part and feeling apart and the struggle to maintain some sort of balance which leads to TL mediated identities, i.e. hybrid identities (cf. Norton 2000). Block (2007b) argues that the experiences of migration often lead to the emergence of new subject positions; whereas he does not believe that the experiences in FL classrooms would do the same. Graddol (2006) argues that teaching, in particular, in migration contexts must hence address issues of identity and bilingualism. In addition, we speak of ESL countries, or the outer circle countries, where English is a local variety that is spoken alongside another language or languages in society, for example in India. This means that children usually learn some English informally before they enter school and the role of the classroom is often to extend their knowledge of the language (Graddol 2006). In contrast to EFL, Graddol (2006) points out that one of the defining features of teaching English as a second language (ESL) is that it recognizes the role of English in the society in which it is taught.

Earlier research in SLL had not taken into account how language learners position themselves or are positioned by others depending on who is talking and the power relations in that situation (Block 2007a). Differences in L2 learning were often explained by learners’ motivation and personality types. Norton (2000: 10-11) re-conceptualized the concept of motivation calling it problematic and coming up with a notion of investment parallel to

Bourdieu's (1991) notion of cultural capital. What Norton means by investment is that L2 learners expect to acquire a wider range of symbolic and material resources that will in turn increase the value of their cultural capital. Thus, what we need to understand from the concept of investment is that "an investment in target language is also an investment in a learner's own social identity" (Norton 2000: 11). Norton further argued that learners' efforts in language learning should be understood in terms of their right to speak and to be heard. Norton (2000) made her findings in a migration context and in an English-speaking culture and it is, of course, worth asking, as Vasilopoulos (2015) has done, whether identity research in TL culture will be representative for L2 learners/speakers in localized settings. One of the fields in which this has been studied is the ELF paradigm.

### **3.2 ELF and its conceptualization**

I will clarify what I mean by English as a lingua franca (ELF) and how it will be used as a concept in the present study. ELF can be defined simply as "a way of referring to communication in English between speakers with different first languages (L1)" (Seidlhofer 2005: 339). ELF is also defined as a contact language between speakers who do not share a first language. So ELF is understood to mean a second or a subsequent language of its speakers (Jenkins 2007). However, many researchers have mentioned that the definition becomes problematic if native speakers (NSs) are counted out because they are also part of the global use of English in settings such as conferences, business meetings and political gatherings where English is used as the mutual language of choice. This has resulted in a wider definition of ELF such as English as an international language (EIL) which also includes native English speakers (NESs). Jenkins (2009: 200) has also reformulated an alternative definition of ELF as communication in English between participants who have different "linguacultures" whether they are native, second or foreign language speakers.

In the interviews, I have referred to ELF as communication between non-native speakers (NNs), who do not speak English as their first language (but as a second or foreign language). I have done this to differentiate a social encounter with native speakers of English (NSs). I acknowledge that I may have stressed the view of ELF as a foreign language or interlanguage, although it has not been my purpose in the interviews. From here on I will use



ELF to refer to communication between non-native-non-native (NNS-NNS) and native-non-native speakers (NS-NNS) as implied by Seidlhofer (2011).

In a nutshell, the point in ELF research has been the emphasis on the fact that non-native English speakers outnumber the native-speakers, and thus the norms of ELF communication should not be driven by NES norms. Many scholars call for the recognition of the plurality of forms of English and the power of the majority of non-native English users. They have focused on promoting a more local understanding of ELF (e.g. Canagarajah 2006; Jenkins 2009) and much of the research has focused on the analysis of the contextual and interactional dimensions of language use in various naturalistic and institutional settings (e.g. Firth 2009; Jenkins 2007; Seidlhofer 2011). Recent attempts also include publications on the ELF target Lingua Franca Core (Jenkins 2007).

All of these studies point out the same thing that English is no longer ‘owned’ by its native speakers and rather than view ELF as “deficient” or “learner language”, ELF researchers treat the English used between its non-native speakers as a legitimate form of English that deserves to be studied and described in its own right. Neither should native speakers, or namely British and American, be viewed as the linguistic reference of excellence. Native-speaker competence has been criticized for being the ‘yardstick’ for deviations from a norm, which has meant that a few non-native speakers can call themselves or are ascribed as fully competent in the English language (House 2003). Nevertheless, earlier research has also shown that few ELF speakers in fact aspire to become ‘proper members’ of another speech community (Jenkins 2007). Consequently, ELF researchers work on describing ELF in its own terms rather than by comparison with the native language.

### **3.3 ELF and bi- and multilingualism in Finland**

English is a foreign language without an official status in Finland. Due to the well-recognized position of English as the lingua franca of international communication, English language skills are highly valued in the country, and thus it is not surprising that English is the most popular foreign language at school. To illustrate this, in 2012 nearly 90.5 % of the elementary school pupils chose English as their 1<sup>st</sup> foreign language (Sukol 2016). Most students start studying English from grade 3; however, as Graddol (2006) has pointed out, the recent global

trend is to learn English at an even earlier age. So far it seems that this change is quite moderate still in Finland: in 2012 about 6.9 % of the pupils started studying their 1<sup>st</sup> foreign language from grade 1 and 12.5 % from grade 2 (Sukol 2016). Most of the people who enter university have studied English from 8 to 10 years, 5-7 years in the comprehensive school and 3 years in the upper secondary school. In general, foreign language skills seem to be valued, which is also reflected in the number of pupils (about 26.6 %) who chose a 2<sup>nd</sup> foreign language on grade 5 in 2012, which is 500 pupils more than in 2010. Most Finns know more than two languages and at best can study up to five foreign languages at school from 1<sup>st</sup> to 13<sup>th</sup> grade.

However, English has a considerably different role in Finnish society than the definition of FL suggests. A research unit in the University of Jyväskylä conducted a sociolinguistic study on the Finns' uses of and attitudes to English in 2007 under the center of Excellence for the Study of Variation, Contacts and Change in English (VARIENG). Their findings illustrate how for many Finns both their leisure time and work activities have become more international. If in the 1960s and 1980s English was studied mainly to enable one to interact in a foreign country (Leppänen et al. 2008), at the beginning of the 21st century its role is considerably different. More than half of the Finns viewed English as at least moderately important to themselves (Leppänen et al. 2011). English is used, in particular, in education, business, media and technology, either as an international lingua franca, an intra-group language or as an additional language alternating and mixing with Finnish or Swedish (see e.g. Leppänen and Nikula 2007). When asked where and when the Finns use English only about 9 % of the Finns reported that they did not use English at all (Leppänen et al. 2011). Researchers have noted a long ago that English is needed in Finland to be able to function in the society and this view seems to be shared by the public as 97 % of the respondents expressed that young people and 80 % that people of working age should know English (Leppänen et al. 2011). In the youngest age group, the respondents felt that every Finn should know English and that Finnish society itself should function in English as well as in the domestic languages.

Furthermore, Taavitsainen and Pahta predicted in 2003 that Finland would be shifting from English as a foreign language (EFL) to English as a second language (ESL) country. At the time they pointed out that the main difference between a fluent EFL speaker and L2 speaker depended on whether English was used within the speaker's community and if it formed a

part of the speaker's identity repertoire (Taavitsainen and Pahta 2003). In other words, the social status of English depended, to a considerable degree, on the question of identity. The need to understand how English is used was noted by many Finnish researchers and it produced an explosion of research in code-switching (e.g. Leppänen et al. 2008). However, the aspect that identities are especially important to an understanding of how English is used and learnt has been researched to a lesser extent (e.g. Virkkula and Nikula 2010).

What we know so far in the light of the results of the national survey is that the majority of Finns (84 %) see themselves as monolingual. The researchers suggest that it is exceptional to think of one's foreign language studies as a process of multilingualisation (Leppänen et al. 2011), which is in contrast with the EU's aim to enhance a sense of a shared European identity and multilingualism with language education (Graddol 2006). It could be explained, as the VARIENG unit suggests, by the fact that most of the respondents had received their general basic education in their mother tongue, and moreover by the belief that partial command of foreign language is not bi- or multilingualism (Leppänen et al. 2011). When McCambridge (2007) asked English immersion school alumni whether they consider themselves bi- and multilingual, most of them said yes because they felt that they had never learnt English as a foreign language. The VARIENG unit concludes that in practice Finland still emerges as comparatively monolingual country (Leppänen et al. 2011) and homogeneous, as one could argue. It is unfortunate that bi- and multilingualism is still understood as native-like language skills, as reported by Leppänen et al. (2011), because 'balanced bilingualism' is an elusive goal. In fact, many contemporary scholars define a bi- and multilingual speaker in more general terms as "someone with the possession of two languages" (Li 2007: 7). Li (2007: 5) points out that "bilingualism is not a question of someone's cognitive capacity only but rather about his or her attitude". Noteworthy is that those who self-identified as bi- and multilinguals were among the young and well-educated citizens and their sense of bi- and multilingualism was influenced by education and work, and among the youngest age group by friends (Leppänen et al. 2011).

Jenkins (2007) points out that identity has a lot to do with language attitudes. In the light of the surveys' results, many Finns show admiration towards British English (40 %) and American English (36 %); whereas Indian English and Finnish English were the least appealing varieties (Leppänen et al. 2011).

Non-native varieties of English are viewed as problematic, including Finns' own way of using English. Finns associate good language skills with the notion of a non-native speaker who is able to sound like a native-speaker, and who does not show his/her own national origin in speech. In this sense Finns do not see English as "belonging to them" (Leppänen et al. 2011: 89).

The question Norton (1997: 409) asks in her research with the immigrant women in Canada is also applicable here: To which extent does English belong to White native speakers of standard English or to all the people who speak it, irrespective of linguistic and sociocultural history? The survey's results reveal that Finns perceive English as a foreign language, "one used with an adopted "foreign" identity" (Leppänen et al. 2011: 89). Foreign language students are often positioned or can position themselves as outsiders "who [might] struggle to attain acceptance by the target community" (Graddol 2006: 82). It is, however, noteworthy what Jenkins (2007) has shown that all people do not necessarily aspire a native English speaker identity. In this respect, as the VARIENG unit points out, "Finns differ from many speakers of established World Englishes, for whom English has become one of their own languages, and for whom their own way of using the language and their own accent is acceptable in terms of displaying their ethnic and national identity" (Leppänen et al. 2011: 89). It is in the interest of the present study to find out more about the ELF identities in Finland.

The implications of identity research can be far reaching, in particular, in the domain of education, if instead of a deficient learner we spoke of a competent speaker. This has to do with the model of a proficient language speaker. In general, Finns say that they have relatively good skills in English, in particular, if compared with other Europeans: according to the national survey, about 60 % think their proficiency is at least good (Leppänen et al. 2011). The respondents say they found understanding of spoken English and reading easier than writing and speaking. Despite this, a high proportion of the respondents felt their English language skills were inadequate, at least in some situations. Virkkula and Nikula (2010) have reported similar findings in a qualitative study of Finnish engineers, who felt that their skills in grammar and vocabulary were incomplete. It is also noteworthy that almost all of the respondents in the national survey wanted to improve their English skills (Leppänen et al. 2011; cf. Hujala 2009), which reveals, as the researchers point out, the widely common cultural belief that there is always room for improvement. This may indeed indicate that many of them aim for a bilingual proficiency in English. They may not aspire a native speaker cultural identity but perhaps wish to identify themselves linguistically with nativespeakers of English (cf. Jenkins 2007). Earlier research has also shown that language

proficiency is an important factor in how Finns see themselves as English speakers (Virkkula and Nikula 2010), which probably stems from our foreign language studies.

Researchers have asked *where are we* and *where are we heading* in terms of global English. Kachru's well-known model of the three circles of English, in which, with the increasing use of English, L2 speakers of English were seen to be drawn towards the 'inner circle' of first-language speakers and foreign-language speakers from the 'expanding circle' to the 'outer circle' of second language speakers is being criticized because "the traditional definition of 'second-language user'" no longer makes sense (Graddol 2006: 112). Graddol points out that "the 'inner circle' is now better conceived of as the group of highly proficient speakers of English – those who have 'functional nativeness' regardless of how they learned or use the language" (ibid.) instead of as the native speaker model of British or American English. Taavitsainen and Pahta (2008: 27) have now framed English as "a new kind of second language" which stems from the *lingua franca* paradigm, in which people are seen to maintain and to emphasize their national and professional identities in their speech.

If language, such as English, was earlier thought to determine one's ethnic identity and to be a salient marker of ethnic identity and group membership, this relationship has been changing due to the phenomena of globalization, consumerism, multilingualism and research paradigm changes (Pavlenko and Blackledge 2004). The view of one-to-one relationship between language, identity and culture has been criticized for monolingual and monocultural bias (e.g. Blackledge 2000; Baker 2009b), and consequently we can perhaps speak of the bi- and multilingual cultural identity as the new norm in the academia. Yet even if most Finns would not see themselves as L2 speakers, we can extend the meaning of a L2 speaker to include them in the group as well. I will no longer apply the term FL speaker unless it will be discussed in the results and analysis section.

### **3.4 ELF and identity construction**

Sung (2015) and Jenks (2013) point out that the issue of identity in ELF communication has received little attention until rather recently, although the use of ELF as a global phenomenon has been studied to a considerable degree since the 90's. Sung (2015) gives two reasons for this. First, as Virkkula and Nikula (2010: 265) mention, ELF has been seen as "serving very

practical purposes of information transfer rather than featuring strongly in identity construction". Secondly, ELF is perceived as "a form of identity neutral communication" (Sung 2015: 312). Thirdly, I would add that the idea of belonging to a community of ELF speakers still remains abstract and difficult to grasp compared to the aspiration of being a part of a native speaker community, since English has been seen as belonging to the native speakers of English. People find it more difficult to identify with an ELF community (Hujala 2009) because its values and interests are unknown, nonimaginary or undefined to its speakers. I assume that people do not talk about 'the ELF speaker ideal' yet, partly because it is still unknown to them. As Canagarajah (2007: 925) points out, "[ELF] belongs to a virtual speech community" that lacks geographical boundaries.

The belief has been, as House (2003) points out, that L2 speakers of English tend to use their own L1, rather than ELF, for the purpose of identification. House (2003) argues that ELF should be seen as a 'language for communication' instead of a 'language for identification'. Language for communication means that ELF is useful as an instrument in making oneself understood in international encounters where there is no other common language available for interaction. In these situations English is the enabler of communication. With language for identification House (2003) refers to local language(s) and, in particular, to one's 1<sup>st</sup> language which is likely to be the cornerstone of one's identity. In her view, this is because the individual's 1<sup>st</sup> language(s) holds "a stake in the collective linguistic-cultural capital that defines the L1 group and its members" (House 2003: 560). This however resonates with the essentialist view on identity.

However, as Sung (2015: 312) points out, recent studies demonstrate that ELF use is "far from being identity neutral" (e.g. Baker 2009a; Jenkins 2007; McCambridge 2007; Virkkula and Nikula 2010) and that "ELF can be appropriated by its speakers to express their identities". Jenkins's (2007) study, for example, shows evidence for ELF speakers' desire to project their local identity in their L2 English and to construct a common identity with other ELF speakers. She investigated ELF identities by interviewing 17 EAL-speaking teachers of English. Her findings further illustrate how the participants of the study wished to identify themselves linguistically but rarely in other ways with NSs of English. Some felt more at home in English as part of their own linguacultural community or even an international NNS community and wished to also signal their affiliation to these groups linguistically, i.e.

through their native accent. This and findings of many other studies exemplify how it is worthwhile to examine issues relating to identity construction in ELF communication.

Many of these studies have been conducted in the context of English major or minor university students. Similarly, Lee Su Kim et al. (2010) studied Malaysian undergraduate English students and found out how the use of L2 English empowered and positioned these students positively in the society. Baker (2009a) conducted an ethnographic study of seven undergraduate Thai students of English in a Thai university. Baker collected his data from a period of six months, which included interviews and recordings of their intercultural communication. Similarly to Jenkins (2007), his findings challenge the link between a target language and a target culture and show that Thai students used English to articulate and enact cultures and identities which are fluid, liminal and emergent in situ. In the European context, Erling (2007) demonstrates how German university students of English use the language to (re)define what it means to be an educated and urban German. These students (re)define their sense of national identity in reference to local, national, European and/or global communities they identify with, making their identities multilayered. They feel attached to their city, their country, Europe and world and do not find it contradictory. Erling (2007: 128) points out that this may give insight to how people throughout Europe are coming to (re)define themselves through their affiliations with other countries and cultures, as well as their involvement in global communities, because of the language(s) they speak and the connections and experiences they make with those languages.

Jenks (2013) addresses this issue differently by analyzing naturally occurring ELF conversations from two corpora: a large corpus of multi-party voice-based chat rooms and the Vienna–Oxford International Corpus of English (VOICE). He uses membership categorization analysis to examine how compliment sequences allow interactants to make relevant identities in ELF encounters. His findings support the notion that proficiency plays a key role in the process of identification and notes how feedback affected the interactants' self-perceptions. Similarly to Virkkula and Nikula (2010), Jenks also reports findings of inadequacy of NNSs compared to NSs.

Sung's (2015) study, on the other hand, reveals that a group of Hong Kong university students did not evaluate their non-native status negatively but embraced their identities as legitimate and empowered speakers of English in ELF interaction. These students' linguistic

identities were constructed and negotiated in relation to perceived linguistic competence of other ELF speakers of different cultural/national background, in particular, in Asia.

There are at least five studies which have been conducted with Finnish speakers of English (Hujala 2009; Lehto 2013; McCambridge 2007; Pienimäki 2014; Virkkula and Nikula 2010). For example, Virkkula and Nikula (2010) studied how Finnish engineering students constructed their English speaking identities discursively. Their study comprised of interviews with seven engineer students before and after their stay in Germany in 2003. The design of the study is similar to the present study because both make use of interviews and discourse analytic methods. Before their stay abroad experience the interactants' most prominent discourses were those of education and schooling. These discourses allowed them to identify with a language learner identity, although the researchers also say that their language user identity was evoked. There was a difference in the interactants' answers after their stay abroad experience. Before their stay abroad the interactants emphasized their lack of skills and deficient language proficiency; whereas upon their return to Finland the interactants were able to identify themselves as English users, and moreover in their interview answers they focused more on possibilities of interaction and descriptions of survival than language errors. The effect of the stay abroad was evident in the way the interactants discursively constructed their relationship to the English language. The new context gave the interactants an access to new social and linguistic resources which helped them to adopt new identity repertoires. The interactants had a complex and sometimes contradictory relationship to English which sheds light on the fluid and changing nature of identity. These observations show that proficiency and national identity are important issues for Finnish speakers of English.

Most of these studies point out the same thing that although most researchers working in ELF support the attempts to do away with ethnocentric models of English, most of the ELF interactants are still driven by native-speaking norms. I am curious if it will be the case in the present study and what kind of identity options the interviewees find available in their discourses.



## 4 RESEARCH DESIGN

The present study is based on the ideas developed, for example, by Pomerantz (2000) that people give off information about themselves when they talk about their experiences and their sense of themselves in English. As discussed earlier, she argues that individuals do this by drawing on their knowledge of discourses and aligning themselves as having certain beliefs, values and perspectives. In the process, according to Pomerantz (2000: 28), people take up different subject positions to construct multiple, complex, and dynamic self-representations (cf. Pietikäinen and Dufva 2006). This is what I wanted to do in the present study in an attempt to study the 2<sup>nd</sup> language identities five Finnish speakers of English construct. In this chapter, I will outline the present study and elaborate on the steps of analysis.

### 4.1 Research questions

The aim of the present study is to find out what kinds of 2<sup>nd</sup> language identities young Finnish professionals construct in their individual interviews by examining how they talk about English, what bi-/multilingualism means to them, which tasks and roles they assign to English and if English is, at all important, for them for identification. In other words, I wish to find answers to the question ‘who they are’ when they speak English. To do this, I have drawn on the concepts of *identity* and *discourses* earlier and I wish to find answers to the following research questions:

- 1) What kinds of different, possibly contradictory, discourses do the participants bring forth when they talk about the English language and bi/multilingualism?
- 2) Have the participants’ developed any significant subject positions in English, and what kinds of different, possibly multiple and changeable, identities emerge in these discourses and through other discursive resources?

I take the view in the present study that individuals are not completely free to identify with any subject positions, but rather these choices are socially determined by the ways of talking about language and language ideologies (Ivanič 1998: 11). So I am curious of what kinds of

discourses get manifested in the participants' talk in regards to their experiences in English and their sense of themselves in this language. How do the participants position themselves and get positioned differently in these discourses? Have they developed any significant subject positions in English, and what kind of language identities emerge as a result? In order to answer these questions, I have used semistructured interviews as data, which I will discuss next.

## **4.2 Method of data collection**

The data for this study were collected via semi-structured interviews. Semi-structured interviews were used, instead of ethnographic observation or instances of uninstitutionalized interaction (such as naturally occurring data), to be able to reflect on the participants' voices, opinions, attitudes and beliefs about the topics, and because prior research on the local and global meanings of English and code-switching had been carried out in the context of naturally occurring conversation (both web and face to face) in Finland to a greater extent (see e.g. Leppänen et al. 2008; Peuronen 2008). It is important to know what the language users think about their language(s) and identity, i.e. to get the emic view. Even if English is the main vehicle and lingua franca in global business and higher education, it is not that common that people are interviewed on what they think of themselves in relation to the English language and who they think they are when they speak that language, or any other language per se, as expressed by the participants themselves in the interviews. Furthermore, in line with Pomerantz (2000: 25), interviews are not seen only as instances of information sharing but as "sites of struggle" in which the individuals construct representations of themselves. The aim of these interviews was to conduct them in such a way that also the participants are given control over the conversation. I, for example, decided not to preframe the goals of the study prior the interviews in order not to influence the participants too much. The interviews developed gradually into casual conversations, in which the interviewees were also free to talk about whatever came to their minds. For the purposes of the present study, it was more important to get a few in-depth interviews than a large pool of quantitative data.

Interviews were conducted in Finnish with occasional use of English words. The choice of the language guarantees that the informants were able to express themselves thoroughly and without stress about the correctness of their English. Both the participants and the interviewer

speak Finnish as their first language, and thus the use of Finnish also helped to build rapport. Each interview was transcribed orthographically first in Finnish, and later relevant extracts of the conversation were translated into English. The transcriptions aim to be as detailed as possible; however, less strict criterion of transcription was used than for the purposes of conversation analysis. In the extracts, I have edited the participants' quotations occasionally in order to stick to the point. Square brackets and three dots [...] denote that something redundant to the point has been left out. However, I have carefully tried to avoid distorting the meaning of the participants' utterances. Square brackets and text [text], on the other hand, include my additions to the quote in order to make the idea clearer to the reader. The English versions are more or less in standard English; whereas the interviewees spoke in their own dialects in Finnish. This was done because of the convenience of translation (see Appendix 2 for interview examples in English).

The interview questions were formulated based on a previous master's thesis on language and identity by McCambridge (2007) designed to study Finnish immersion education graduates in Finland. Some questions were modified, added or taken out to suit better the purposes of the present study (see Appendix 1 for interview questions). Laura McCambridge was a teacher on a university course I attended called "language and identity", which inspired me to study identity in my master's thesis but in a different context to hers. A pilot interview was conducted, but as the interviewee did not belong to the team of AIESEC in Finland at the time of the interviews, the pilot interview was not included in the data. The themes of the interviews focused on the participants' history as language learners at school, their use of English both at work and free time and their experiences and perceptions of English speaking cultures. I was curious if the participants preferred English over Finnish in any context, what place English had in their language repertoire, how they talked about their language proficiency and skills, how they compared speaking English to speaking Finnish and if they identified with non-Finnish linguistic and cultural communities, such as the native English speakers. In addition, I collected some background information from the interviewees at the beginning of the interview, concerning their age, foreign languages they had studied at school, study background and time abroad. I asked again in 2015 if the interviewees would like to use their own names when I talked about the findings of the study. Some of the interviewees preferred pseudonyms and to respect their anonymity I have used the following pseudonyms to refer to the participants: Maiju (M), Kaisa (K), Saara (S), Laura (L) and Tiina (T). Everybody gave their consent to use their interview in the study. There are in total five

individual interviews, which lasted from 50 to 60 minutes. The informants were interviewed in Helsinki in different locations and on different occasions in 2010.

### **4.3 Research setting and participants**

An appropriate EFL setting in Finland was found in an international student organization AIESEC. The organization is described on their official website as follows:

AIESEC is a global platform for young people to explore and develop their leadership potential. We are a non-political, independent, not-for-profit organisation run by students and recent graduates of institutions of higher education. Its members are interested in world issues, leadership and management. AIESEC does not discriminate on the basis of ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, religion or national / social origin (AIESEC 2016).

The five informants worked in the same team at the time of the interviews in Finland. One of the team members (interviewees) had worked in the office a year longer than the others. The four other team members had worked in the office for six months before the interviews. The interviewees have been part of AIESEC from three to five years. What can be said about the organization is that it is a student organization that operates in over 100 countries. It is a platform that prepares students for the working life and connects students with possible future employers and organizations worldwide. Each AIESEC country has a head team that works full time for one year. The national team is responsible for the guidance of the local committees, which operate in the institutes of higher education of the country. The official language of the organization is English, and thus the daily tasks of its employees require a lot of English from writing emails, to strategic planning, to speaking on the phone, to education and team leading. It is also a highly multicultural working environment since its volunteers or members are from various cultural backgrounds. As an interviewer I was familiar with the team's work because I had been working in the head office before in a different team. I knew some of the interviewees better as I had worked with them on short projects in AIESEC before.

The informants were selected for the interviews based on their work experience in English and the fact that I knew they used English daily at work and their free-time in ELF contexts. It was assumed that their proficiency would let them establish their identity in English as a second language. There are five interviews because there were five people in the team of AIESEC in Finland at the time of the interviews, all of whom are female from 23 to 26 of

age. Each of the interviewees has learnt English as a foreign language at school for approximately 8 to 10 years. All of them had studied in a Finnish speaking school, which is different to the context of immersion schools alumni studied by McCambridge (2007). Four of the team members had started studying English on the 3<sup>rd</sup> grade of the elementary school, whereas one of the interviewees had chosen to study German on the 3<sup>rd</sup> grade, and consequently began learning English two years later than the others on the 5<sup>th</sup> grade. All of them had learnt more than one foreign language at school (such as Swedish, German, French, Spanish or Russian). It is noteworthy that almost of them mention that English was the easiest language to learn partly because one could hear and use it outside of school, which is different to the experiences of the engineer students studied by Virkkula (2006). All of the interviewees of the present study are university students and they studied in different universities in Finland and had different majors. Two of the informants had majored in languages (German or French); however, nobody had studied English as her major or minor. Three of the interviewees had studied one or two university English courses provided by the Language Department; whereas two of them mention that they had passed the compulsory English course by taking a compensatory exam. Almost all of them mention that some of their minor subjects had been instructed in English, and everybody had used English in their studies in one form or another. Furthermore, some of the interviewees felt that they had had more opportunities to use the English language in the elementary school than other pupils (e.g. trips abroad). However, nobody had lived abroad during the elementary school. Three of the informants had lived abroad during their university studies from four months to a year, whereas one informant had been in AIESEC's work abroad program in Malaysia. One of them had stayed in an English speaking country. One of the informants dated a non-Finnish speaker, and all of the informants had international friends at the time of the interviews.

The interviewees use English for a variety of work tasks, ranging from writing emails to public speaking. They use English also in their free time in order to communicate with their non-Finnish-speaking friends, to read blogs and web pages and to watch films and TV programs. English is also the means to study and to gain knowledge, and to communicate about their own field of expertise. All of the interviewees mention that they read mostly non-fiction texts in English. It is noteworthy that 4 out of 5 said that they do not have time to read books, or namely fiction, in Finnish or English, whereas one of the interviewees mentions that she also reads literature in English. Laura mentions that she has, for example, read the Harry Potter series in English because she wanted to get a first-hand experience of the stories

and to see how they are written in their original language. Kaisa is the only one who says explicitly that she speaks English at home with her boyfriend. Laura, Saara and Tiina mention that they do not speak English at home except if they are with their non-Finnish speaking friends, non-Finnish speaking AIESEC friends or have an English speaking guest in the house. Maiju mentions that she speaks English quite often also in her free time with her non-Finnish speaking friends outside of AIESEC networks. AIESEC is both work and a hobby for the participants and they say that they interact with the members of the network often also in their free time. In sum, the participants know English well and use it actively in their day-to-day life, which makes them a good sample for the purposes of the present study.

#### **4.4 Method of analysis**

After I had transcribed altogether almost five hours of interview data, I read and reread the interviews. My aim was to organize them in a way that would help me to understand the relationship between identity and ELF (see also Norton 2000) and to find out if the interviewees developed any significant subject positions in English. Critical discourse analysis (CDA) was applied as the main method of analysis as I was also curious of the workings of the social structure and power on the individual. I decided to approach the analysis from the individual's perspective: how the participants perceived their identities, if they developed any significant subject positions in English and how they employed capital-D discourses in constructing identities. I defined *discourses* as the numerous "sites" in which identity work is done. *Discourses* are not seen to "exist" separate from us but rather are part of our everyday practices, also in the sense of how we see and shape our selves.

Firstly, textual analysis of the interviews was carried out, grouping together findings on similar topics and themes of what the interviewees actually said – what kinds of words, verbs, adjectives, modal expressions and metaphors they used to talk about English. I went through one interview at a time marking interesting thoughts that related to the English language, the interviewees' experiences of it and their sense of who they are in English and how they relate to English. I did not want to decontextualize the words from the actual discourse, but rather my aim was to study them as part of the discourse.

Secondly, based on the textual description, I identified, interpreted and coded the transcript according to the recurrent social level discourses that emerged in the participants' talk about English and how they related to it. I organized these into main discourses and 'categorized' them in greater detail with the help of second language and identity literature. I then tried to figure out which discourses are available to participants for identification, which are not, and for what reason. I redefined the discourses again and again and simultaneously examined how the participants positioned themselves in relation to the set of beliefs, values, and language ideologies that seemed inherent in the discourses. To do this, I also tried to examine how the participants expressed degree of certainty in regard to what they said. I then focused on how the participants positioned themselves in these discourses and if they created any meaningful subject positions in English.

I have applied three levels of analysis: what has been said, how it has been said and how that links with wider social discourses. I see the process as a continuum from micro to macro level analysis (Pietikäinen and Mäntynen 2009), which hopefully enriches the findings of the study and do justice for the wide range of critical discourse analysis.

## **5 LANGUAGE USERS' DISCOURSES AND IDENTITY CONSTRUCTION**

I asked the interviewees about their experiences in English at work and in their leisure time, and this is how they answered in regards to what English is to them. In this chapter, I will discuss the analysis of the data: I have identified the ways in which the participants speak about English and bi/multilingualism in their individual interviews. Six distinct discourses were found: 'instrument' discourse, 'normative' discourse, 'variation' discourse, 'empowerment' discourse, 'bilingualism' discourse and 'culture' discourse. These discourses overlap and interact and more than one can be employed simultaneously by the participants, as illustrated by the present data. Some discourses are more abstract than others. For example, the 'instrument' discourse can itself be seen as an articulation of different discourses (Fairclough 2003), which I have identified as 'English as a tool for communication' and 'English as capital'. The aim is to illustrate how the participants draw on these different discourses in constructing their identities as English users (see also Virkkula and Nikula 2010). I will try to answer both of the research questions concurrently, however, I

have named the chapters according to the discourses. It is noteworthy that the division of discourses emerges from my own interpretation of the data, and obviously someone else might have done it differently. I have first used textual analysis to detect the discourses, and then have linked these with discourses found in second language and identity research to justify my findings (see also Pietikäinen and Dufva 2006). In no way, it is an exhaustive or complete list of all the discourses that the participants make use of; however, I consider that these are the most salient features of the study and affect the ways in which the participants relate to English and what kinds of identities they construct as users of English (see also McKay and Wong 1996). I will discuss each discourse with illustrative examples from the data.

### **5.1 Language as an instrument discourse**

When the interviewees talk about their experiences in English and situations in which they prefer to use English instead of or alongside Finnish, they often draw on a discourse that I call ‘language as an instrument’. It is an obvious topic as the focus of the interviews is on the user’s own stories of their language use. In the business community, English is often perceived as a language of international prestige, high-mobility and great instrumental value due to its position as the lingua franca of international communication. English serves practical purposes of information transfer and is not often considered a part of one’s identity (Virkkula and Nikula 2010). The interviewees also assign English a pragmatic function. It is the language they use most often next to Finnish to do and to accomplish tasks and goals. In contrast to other foreign languages, such as German or French, they have more opportunities to use English both locally and globally. English facilitates lingua franca communication in Finland and due to its high mobility *it can be used almost anywhere in the world*, as Laura mentions. English is also a tool to get to know other cultures. Saara points out that they are lucky to work in an organization in which most of the people have a good command of English. However, the ‘instrument’ discourse also implies that language does not have a deeper meaning than that (cf. ‘culture’ and ‘identity’ discourse) and that it is “simply work” as Kankaanranta and Louhiala-Salminen (2010: 207) have frankly put it. To illustrate this, three of the interviewees mention that *it does not matter which language they use, as long as their message is getting across* (see extracts 1, 2 and 5). The interviewees construct an idea of language as an autonomous system that functions as a vehicle of thought and communication.



They, in fact, find it a bit weird that English comes so naturally to them and, for example, Laura points out that she is not at all aware of why she writes in English even if she could write in Finnish at work because it is so automatic for her. I will first discuss examples of the ‘language as a tool of communication’ discourse and then move on to the examples of the ‘language as a capital’ discourse, which I see are different parts of the ‘instrument’ discourse.

### 5.1.1 English as a tool of communication

All of the interviewees mention that they use English in situations where it is the only shared language among the participants. English has instrumental value: it enables them to communicate with non-Finnish-speaking colleagues, partners and friends and to build wider social networks. English is often described as a natural, preferred and practical choice when Finnish cannot be used. At work English is used for the purpose of getting the job done and it seems it gets done the same way as it would be done in Finnish or in any other language for that matter, as pointed out by Tiina in extract 1.

- (1) T: ainakin saa sen kokemuksen periaatteessa sillä niinku työkielellä ei oo niin väliä. et periaatteessa vois oppia jonkun muun kielen vois samalle tasolle. [olisi] enemmän mahdollisuuksia

Tiina mentions that the fact that she has worked in English has shown to her that the working language does not matter so much and in principle she could learn any other language as well as English and that would give her more opportunities. In other words, to be able to work in a language other than one’s mother tongue does not mean that one needs to have a native-like competency. It seems that English has given Tiina inspiration to learn also other languages, which is something that the other interviewees share as well. Tiina points out that if she knew other languages than English she would have more opportunities, which echoes what Taavitsainen and Pahta have, for example, envisioned (2008: 27) that “the competitive advantage of which English has traditionally provided will ebb away but mastering other languages will become more important”. Based on Tiina’s comment, educators would not have to worry that English has taken over and people would not be interested in learning other languages. It seems quite the opposite based on the present study. Tiina positions herself here as a competent user of English in work related matters.

All of the interviewees say that they also speak English in their leisure time when it is the only shared language available with friends and acquaintances. English seems to be a self-

evident lingua franca. For example, Maiju describes that she rarely ever has a day when she would not speak or use English. If she is not with her colleagues or AIESEC friends, she would have some other people with whom she would speak or use English and mentions that she started to use English more often in the upper secondary school because she had many immigrant friends or acquaintances with whom she spoke and used English as the only shared language. English is seen by everyone as a valuable linguistic and social resource which the interviewees use to communicate and to maintain their social relationships in and outside of Finland.

Sometimes the interviewees prefer to use English in situations where they could equivalently speak Finnish. For example, English can function as a relief when someone else does not speak Finnish well. Tiina points out that she has felt relieved if there has been a reason to use English because it has made her feel more equal with Swedish-speaking Finns. This exemplifies that they could in theory use Finnish but for Tiina English is a more neutral choice – nobody’s territory in ELF encounters. Seidlhofer (2011) says that English is seen as a language which is nobody’s, yet everybody’s, as ELF is claimed to be. Almost all of the interviewees mention that they use English also in order to demonstrate solidarity when someone else does not speak Finnish and to involve them in the conversation.

Extracts 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6 illustrate how the interviewees talk about English as a tool of communication, which they can use to accomplish everyday tasks and to maintain social relationships. In extract 2, Kaisa describes her attitude towards languages as follows:

- (2) K: [...] en mä oikeestaan koskaan ajattelle millä kielellä mä luen. et se on niinku jos mä ymmärrän niin mä vaan luen. enkä mä silleen ajattelle mitä kieltä se on. just niinku puhuessakin niin sitä on hankala ajatella että mitä [kieltä] sitä enemmän puhuu. kun mä harvoin aattelen et mitä kieltä mä oikeesti ees puhun. mulle se on vaan kommunikaatiota. et sen jotenkin unohtaa mikä se väline on siinä

Kaisa says that it does not matter which language she uses if the language is useful in the situation, whether it is reading or speaking. Kaisa emphasizes that for her *it is only communication* and refers to different languages as different *tools*. It is noteworthy that she refers to English repeatedly as *a tool of communication* and mentions that she uses it more often at home than Finnish because of her boyfriend and friends who do not speak Finnish fluently. In the extract, Kaisa points out that she rarely thinks of what language she uses. The fact that she does not have to think about whether she uses one or two languages on a daily basis implies that she positions herself as a confident user of more than one language. English

is just one resource for her which she uses when needed, useful and appropriate, depending on the situation. Kaisa seems assertive in her comments.

In extract 3, Kaisa points out that particularly in Finland she has got the feeling that English is recognized as a tool of communication rather than a token of what accent you speak. In other words, it does not matter what accent you speak if you are understood in the L2, which resonates a lot with the ELF discourse. Kaisa has mentioned just before this extract that *of course it would be nice to know better* the English accent and pronunciation, but that it does not matter. Perhaps it does not matter because she does not feel discriminated based on her L2 accent in Finland. Kaisa points out that she has learnt a more local accent in German while she lived in the country, but as she has not lived in a native English speaking country, she speaks *quite in a Finnish way*.

- (3) K: [...] kyl mä joskus oon ajatellut että vois niinku asua jossain Englannissa tai Amerikassa vähän aikaa. niinku oppis tai Australiassa tai jossain että oppis vähän sitä niinku intonaatiota ja sellasta aksenttia muutenkin paremmin. mutta ei se sit oo ollu jotenkin niin tärkeitä. mulle tärkeempää on se että se on kommunikaation väline niinku englanti. se suhde mulla on [englantiin]. koska mä oon aatellut jotenkin. no riippuu siis millaisiin töihin menee. mutta tällä hetkellä tuntuu siltä et se on ainakin Suomessa niin enemmän kommunikaation väline kun semmonen että mitä aksenttia puhuu. et sit voi olla toinen jos menee jonnekin muualle töihin niin sillä voi olla merkitystä

Kaisa says that she has thought of living in an English-speaking country, namely UK, USA or Australia, in order to learn better the intonation and accent of English; however, she has not felt that sounding right is so important that she would have gone to great lengths to acquire the native accent. Kaisa says that she relates to English more as *a tool of communication* and implies that the communicative aspect of language is more important to her than speaking the NS accent. She points out that it feels that at least in Finland English is perceived more as a tool of communication than a token of a native speaker competence or what accent you speak. Kaisa acknowledges, however, that it can be different somewhere else, and perhaps then it would matter more. Nevertheless, the fact that she has thought about the need to improve her L2 accent and the lexical choice of *it would be nice to know better* imply that Kaisa has regarded or perhaps still regards the NS accent more prestigious than the NNS accent. In brief, the NS accent and competence may be valued and admired but not necessary relevant or needed in Finland. Interestingly, Kaisa positions herself here simultaneously as a learner and a legitimate user of English. On the one hand, against the standard NS English ideology and the ‘normative’ discourse Kaisa positions herself or is positioned as a NNS who could learn a better accent and ‘has left something to be desired’. On the other hand, when

she draws on the aspect of English as an ‘instrument’ she begins to negotiate an identity of a competent L2 communicator. I will turn to the examples of the ‘normative’ discourse later.

Saara shares similar views with Kaisa in extract 4 and draws also on the discourse of ‘language as an instrument’ as she describes language as *a tool*. In many other aspects the extract is different.

- (4) S: no siis haluisin muuttaa silleen [Englantiin] että oppisin sen kielen. ja siis ei mulla mitään niinku brittiläistä kulttuuria vastaan ole mut ei mulla [oo] semmosta suurta intohimoa [sitä] kulttuuria oppia vaan nimenomaan sit se kieli. mutta tottakai niinku siihen kyl kieli on osa kulttuuria siis sinällään. mutta että niinku mä sanoin se on vaan väline

Saara mentions that she would like to move to England to learn the language and curiously adds that she does not have anything against the British culture; however, she does not have the passion to learn it, but rather wants to learn the language. She has lived in Manchester before but felt that she communicated more with the other exchange students than with the locals. Saara implies that she certainly does not aspire to become a British and does not identify with their speech community, but rather desires to learn their language to reach a native or at least a bilingual level of proficiency. She attaches prestige to the native form of English, namely British English. To demonstrate the contradictory and overlapping nature of discourses, in addition to the ‘instrument’ discourse, Saara draws on the ‘culture’ and the ‘normative’ discourse. She points out that of course culture is part of language, but for her English is just a tool. She tends to separate culture and language, which resonates with the ELF discourse. The ‘instrument’ discourse, however, does not ‘supply’ discursal resources that would help her to negotiate a more favorable position as an English speaker. Interestingly, if English is only a tool, why would she like to learn it to ‘fullness’? Saara tends to position herself here inferior compared to NSs and takes a strong learner identity. It is noteworthy that Saara seems to take the linguistic NS norm for granted during the whole interview.

In extract 5, the interviewer has introduced the Whorfian idea of language as a window to other cultures which Saara finds an unsatisfactory explanation in the sense that language itself does not provide the means to understanding another culture, but rather it is possible if you use English as a tool to communicate with the local people. Saara points out that she does not see the world in a different way if she switched into English. In other words, the language does not matter unless you cannot express yourself.

- (5) S: [...] mun mielestä kieli on vaan niinku [väline]. ei se väliä sillä kielellä mitä sä ilmaiset itsesi. et kuhan sä pystyt sen sanomaan että miten sä näet asiat. en mä osaa sanoa niinku mitenkään hirveän selkeesti. mutta siis mun mielestä ei sillä kielellä ole väliä [...] jos mä vaihtaisin englanniksi puhumisen niin en mä näkis asioita millään eri tavalla

Similarly to Kaisa, Saara makes the point that it does not matter which language you use if you have the necessary skills to express yourself, your worldview and what you want to say. This could perhaps originate from the widely advocated belief that language is neutral, which is often associated with English as a lingua franca. The topic seems difficult to Saara and she uses the modal expression *I don't know how to say it very clearly* to signal some level of uncertainty. Saara constructs an idea of language as an autonomous system that is separate from her but also separate from other languages, the task of which is to be the vehicle of expression, to transfer messages and to make oneself understood. In Saara's words, what matters is that *you can say how you see the things*, which implies that the thoughts are the same regardless of the language. She points out that if she now switched into English nothing would change. Saara uses elsewhere the metaphor of *switching currency* from mark to euro to explain the effect of switching from Finnish into English. Tiina also mentions elsewhere that switching from Finnish into English is like *switching a second set of clothes* (see 'bi- and multilingual' discourse). English is seen here in pragmatic terms and it seems to offer an identity option of a competent bilingual – someone who is able to switch from Finnish into English without a problem.

It is noteworthy that when the interviewer asks Maiju what good language proficiency is she emphasizes communicative competence over form. In extract 6, Maiju mentions that good language skills equal to one's ability to communicate. This also resonates with what Saara has said in extract 5 and exemplifies how intelligibility overrides flawless language use in communication.

- (6) M: [...] mikä on mulle olis mulle hyvä kielitaito. niin hm niinku hyvä. ei mikään erinomainen. on sellainen et pystyy kommunikoimaan ymmärrettävästi niinku oikeestaan mistä asiasta tahansa tai ei mistä asiasta tahansa. niillä alueilla missä ite toimii ja mistä itel on tietoo niin pystyy niistä samoista asioista puhuun niinku englanniks [...] ei mun mielestä ei sen tarvi olla mitenkään niinku virheetöntä tai kieliopillisesti aina niinku se tuotettu teksti tai puhe niinku täydellistä. mut sitte niinku lähinnä se että onks se niinku ymmärrettävää ja sujuvaa. ja pystyyks se toinen niinku oikeesti tai pystyks sä kommunikoimaan jonkun kanssa

Interestingly, Maiju says that it is not necessary to master a language perfectly. In Maiju's words, spoken or written text does not always have to be *flawless* or *grammatically perfect*. What matters is that language is intelligible, fluent and that the other can understand you and

that you can communicate with someone, which resonates with the ELF research on the ELF target Lingua Franca Core (Jenkins 2007). Maiju emphasizes communication as the most important factor and adds that *you don't necessarily do anything with the language if you can't communicate with the people*. She points out that it is important that you can communicate understandably about the topics you are working with and in which you have knowledge. Maiju makes a strong link between English and professional areas of life. She speaks generally about the topic, however, it could be interpreted that she simultaneously shares her own experiences as a proficient language user of English.

The participants demonstrate a good command of English. They describe how they use it daily at work and in their leisure time and how they can communicate about everyday things. Their most readily available identity option in the instrument discourse seems to be that of a language user. To illustrate this, in extract 7, Kaisa says that she has now gained practical knowledge of English:

(7) K: [...] että oon niinku oikeesti käytännön kielitaidon nyt oon hankkinut

Kaisa mentions that she has had many opportunities to use English since she has been a part of different international groups. Now she can say that she has a good command of English, which she calls practical competency (cf. discourse on 'self-expression').

### **5.1.2 English as capital**

The discourse that I call 'English as capital' is closely linked with the 'instrument' discourse. The fact that the participants know English as well as they do has earned them, or they expect that it will earn them, social, cultural and economic capital (Norton 2000). In other words, their investment in English has materialized in one form or another, mainly due to the opportunities they have had to use it in and outside of AIESEC. It is, however, noteworthy that the interviewees do not attach prestige to being fluent in English (cf. McCambridge 2007). This could be because they have studied English for over 10 years now and they see almost everyone around them speaking the language. English is seen as a necessary skill in the job market and society whereas other languages are seen more as a plus.

All of the interviewees mention that they have understood the value of English, which they primarily attach to English as a lingua franca and a language of entertainment and education.

Language learning is seen as an investment in the future and metaphorically the profit realizes once one ‘gets to’ use the language, as Laura implies in extract 8:

- (8) L: [...] et kun tähän asti se on ollut kuitenkin eniten sitä että on sen tajunnut sen niinku arvon sikäli et pystyy niinku on tienny et pystyy jutteleen kenen kanssa vaan ja pystyy kattoo telkkarii ja kuuntelee musiikkii. ja on niinku auennut semmonen maailma. mutta ehkä se on konkretisoitunut täs nytten et huomaa et oikeesti se [englanti] ei oo menny niinku mihinkään hukkaan ja sitä pystyy tosissaan käyttämään

Laura implies that her investment in English has paid off because she can *seriously* use it. In her words, her investment of learning English for 10 years *has not gone wasted*. She uses the passive voice which suggest, however, that it is not something one has necessarily power upon (cf. Norton 2000). Laura points that she has been aware of the value of English before: she has been able to talk to *almost anyone* and has had access to popular culture, such as TV and music. She uses the metaphor *that kind of world has opened* to describe the effect it has had on her. The fact that she has now worked in English has made it more concrete that her language studies have really paid off. She mentions elsewhere that her English skills have *helped her to read other languages, given her the job and freedom to travel* as she knows she can survive almost anywhere in the world. Laura also positions herself as a multicompetent user of English.

In extract 9, Maiju mentions that learning English was different compared to Swedish and German at school, because of the usefulness and value of the former.

- (9) M: [...] mä vaan halusin oppii sitä [ruotsia ja saksaa] mut ei sitä kauheen paljon päässyt käyttään ja tiesi et se tulee oleen vaan sellanen valttikortti. et jos mä opettelen sen hyvin kaikki rakenteet ja kaikki tommoset. tulevaisuudessa hyödyn siitä jos mä haluan aktivoida sen aktiivisesti kieleks. koska enkku oli vähän orastavasti aktiivinen niin siihen ei ehkä niinku niin paljon pistänyt huomiota. mut sit tiesi näki sen tarpeen

Maiju says that it was perhaps depressing or at least different in Swedish and German. She just wanted to learn them but *did not get to use them* a lot. She knew it would be a triumph (*valttikortti*) if she learnt the grammar well and in the future she could benefit from it if she wanted to activate the language. Many of the interviewees make the same point that they have been unable to use other foreign languages, such as German or French, locally or globally. However, nobody expressed that they would have to look for opportunities to use English, quite the contrary (cf. Virkkula 2006). Maiju reconstructs here an idea of language as a commodity that can be resumed if needed. She points out that because English was already a bit active (which meant that one had opportunities to use it), she did not pay so

much attention or did not invest so much effort into learning it, but knew and saw its necessity. In other words, English was useful and one would learn it anyway. Maiju mentions that English was never her priority at school.

I was curious whether the participants felt that English had given them something or affected them somehow and I have asked about it twice in the interviews: ‘Has there been any benefits that you know English’ and ‘Do you think that the fact that you have been working in English will have an impact on your life later’. I found out that the participants gave a lot of importance to non-material things besides economic benefits, such as a job.

In general, English is seen as a provider of opportunities for growth, as emphasized by Maiju, Kaisa and Saara in extracts 10, 11 and 12. It is seen as one of the factors that has affected their take on the world. The language itself does not make them more tolerant but rather the fact that they have had the opportunities to interact with different people and to learn from them. In extract 10, Maiju says that English has had a great significance in her life, in her studies and many other things and without it she would have lost many opportunities.

(10)M: kyl mä uskon et aika moni tilaisuus ois menny [...] ohi suun ja monia ihmisiä en olis tavannut tai oppinut niin paljon monista kulttuureista tai muista jos en ois osannut englantia. eli sillä lailla [on ollut] tosi iso merkitys vielä silleen. no joo oppimisen kannalta ja kaiken muun kannalta on ollu tosi iso merkitys [...]

Maiju says that she believes that many opportunities would have failed to capitalize if she had not spoken English. She would not have met all the people she has gotten to know or would not know so much about other cultures. English has great social significance for her. It is closely related to contexts where she has either learnt something or interacted with other people. Kaisa shares similar views in extract 11:

(11)K: sellasia uusia näkökulmia ikään kuin on oppinut elämästä mitä ei oo ennen ajatellutkaan. oppinut toisella tavalla miettimään ja sitte myös erilaisia ihmisiä oppinut oikeesti tapaamaan [...] ja hyväksymään erilaisia ihmisiä sen takia kun on puhunut kieltä. ja on sitten sen kautta kohdannut erilaisia ihmisiä niin on tullut paljon suvaitsevammaksi. ja sen kautta kun on tullut suvaitsevammaksi ja oppinut kieltä paremmin ja niinku [oppinut] yleensä sellasta kulttuurista kommunikaatiota niin se avaa myös oven ihan uusiin mahdollisuuksiin ja semmosii ahaa-elämyksiin ja kokemuksiin myös

Kaisa points out that she has also begun to appreciate the opportunities that English has opened up for her in the field of *self-development*. She speaks of aha moments and new opportunities. Kaisa says that she has learnt new perspectives on life and has learnt to think in a different way. English has had a very profound effect on her and changed her as a person.



She has not only learnt about the language but also about intercultural communication. Kaisa mentions that she has learnt to meet different people and learnt to accept differences because she has spoken the language. She speaks on general level in passive, however, it could be interpreted as her own experiences. Kaisa says that when she has confronted different people, she has become more tolerant and when she has become more tolerant she has learnt the language better. Kaisa mentions that English has also brought and can bring her new job opportunities, however, for her the most significant aspect of English is that if she did not speak foreign languages or English in particular she would not have met as many people as she has met now and who are her friends. She places a lot of importance on the social connections and new experiences that she has gained. English has also offered her new subject positions as a more tolerant and intercultural person.

Similarly to Kaisa, in extract 12, Saara also mentions that she hopes that she would see the world in a bit wider perspective as a result of knowing English.

(12)S: [...] no mä ainakin siis toivoisin tavallaan. ehkä se ei oo taas siitä kielestä mutta tavallaan niihin liittyvistä tekijöistä just niistä ystävistä ja muista tavallaan. että näkee maailmaa vähän laajemmin

Saara says that she at least wishes that she would see the world in a wider perspective although she points out that it is not because of the language but other factors that relate to it, such as her international contacts and friends. English has enabled her to communicate with people outside of Finland. She mentions elsewhere that she does not have to pick her friends based on the language because everyone shares English and she does not have to be just with the Finnish-speaking people. All of the interviewees mention the number of their social contacts around the world which they have gained through access to English as a lingua franca.

I associate the talk about work with economic capital that is also convertible to money, life style and maintenance of status. Almost all of the interviewees seem to believe that English skills can bring them new job opportunities in the future. In extract 13, Saara says that her English skills will be more valuable for her on her future career as she can do business with international contacts.

(13)S: [...] et kyl mä nään et siitä on hyötyä enemmänkin jatkossa vielä työuralla. että voi tehdä businestä niiden muidenmaalaisten kanssa ja olla heidän kaa tekemisissä

Saara wants to look for international jobs and she seems to relate English to economic advantages as she can do business in ELF contexts. She also attaches prestige and power to the NS forms, as will be illustrated later. However, it is noteworthy that all of the interviewees do not benefit from English as much in their future profession, as Maiju implies in extract 14.

(14)M: [...] et sinällään urajuttuina niinku jos musta tulee luokanopettaja. ei se niinku oo mikään super plussa et mä osaan sitä [englantia] niin hyvin kuin mä osaan [...]

Maiju says that in her future profession as an elementary school teacher she would not need to know English as well as she does. She says that it would not be *a big plus*; however, in her other plans it will be valuable. She positions herself here as an expert of English, explicitly saying that she knows English well. She does this in the context of education and compares herself to other teachers and teacher students in Finland.

## 5.2 Normative discourse

In general, the participants tend to talk critically about their language skills, how they should be, and I have called this discourse as the ‘normative’ discourse. The normative discourse is prominent in the talk about native and non-native Englishes and becomes manifested either by the initiative of the interviewer or the interviewees themselves. It is noteworthy that all of the interviewees see British English as the ideal or authentic form of English, which is the variation they have been thought at school. So it is interesting to observe to what extent the participants aspire to be able to pass as natives and to conceal their history of non-nativeness and whose interests this serves. The normative discourse is also present in the talk about purism in which language mixing is seen as deficit language use. I will first discuss the ideal of linguistic purism in the context of language mixing, and will then move on to discuss examples in which the participants draw on standard NS English language ideology (Jenkins 2007).

### 5.2.1 Language mixing and linguistic purism

The linguistic purism discourse relates to talk about one variety of language that is purer or intrinsically higher quality than other varieties. In the data, the interviewees regard standard language as the purest form of language, and consequently view code-switching as deviation

from the norm. Standard language ideologies are often enforced through dictionaries and other similar works as well as through the education system. It is noteworthy that all of the interviewees regard code-switching more or less bad or counterproductive, but also use it in the interviews. This exemplifies that the actual linguistic practice may be far from the ‘imagined’ practices that the ideology of purism constructs (Bucholtz and Hall 2009), which may lead to conflicts in the speakers’ identities. It is striking how some of the participants position themselves in a more negative light in the discourse of purism, as illustrated specifically in extract 16.

In extract 15, Maiju draws from the discourse of linguistic purism and takes the position that mixing is inappropriate and unnatural. She argues that it is easier and better to use English than to mix Finnish and English.

(15) I: onko sitten joitakin tilanteita joissa suosisit nimenomaan englantia työasioissa?

M: no työasioissa joo. hm välillä se on jopa on helpompi puhua englanniksi. koska ne kaikki termit on englanniksi. tai siis monet niistä termeistä mitä käyttää on englanniksi. niin paljon silleen siis ne on mielessä. kun sitten et alat suomentaa jotain jotain functional weekendiä tai jotain muuta. koska siis niinku no okei siis sen voi sanoa funkkis. mut paljon muitakin termejä joita ei niinku suomeks tuu niin niinku automaattisesti kun et ne tulis englanniksi. niin silloin on jopa ehkä parempi puhua englanniksi kuin sitte sekoittaa niitä kahta kieltä. koska sekin on jotenkin ehkä kummallista

In the extract, Maiju explains that it is sometimes easier to use English because much of the work specific terminology that she uses is in English and words are simply most readily available in English than if she started to translate them into Finnish. All of the interviewees share similar views. It is noteworthy that Maiju code-switches from Finnish into English with ‘functional weekend’ and says that there are so many other terms *that do not come as automatically in Finnish as they would in English*. She positions herself here as a competent user and an expert of English in work specific issues – someone with bilingual proficiency in work related issues. However, she argues that *it is perhaps better to speak in English than to mix the two languages because it is somehow perhaps strange*. The use of ‘strange’ implies that code-switching is somehow “abnormal”, “unnatural” and “against the norm”. Maiju, however, uses the word ‘perhaps’ which signals her uncertainty about the issue.

When the interviewer asks Maiju why she thinks code-switching is strange she mentions in extract 16 that she is troubled by the fact that she does not speak either language but something in-between (*välimuoto*).

(16)M: no ehkä se niinku mua jotenkin häiritsee se sit ettei sitten puhu kumpaakaan kieltä. vaan puhuu jotain semmosta välimuotoo joka ei niinku. ja sit ehkä kuitenkin se et sit loppuen lopuks oon miettinyt sitä et oma ajattelu nii niinku se kääntyy tosi helposti niinku suomesta englantiin ja englannista suomeen nii sitte niinku. et jos on semmosessa välimaastossa niin niin niinku puuttu. et jotenkin saaks silloin kuitenkin niinku ilmastuu sit kuitenkin niinku kummallakaan kielellä sitä mitä koittaa sanoo

I: ahaa nii

M: [...] en mä nyt tiedä niinku onks tää mitenkään tieteellisesti todistettu. tai onks se jopa niinku se hyväkin se et sä et oo kummallakaan kielellä ikään kuin sitte niinku siinä vaiheessa niinku vahvoillas. vaan sä niinku otat sanan tuolta sanan täältä ja sit se on semmonen niinku ristiriitatilanne koko ajan. kun et sä niinku yhellä kielellä niinku puhuisit sen asian tai muuta. ei siin varmaan niinku oo mitään niinku koska jos miettii suomenruotsalaisia niin nekinhän puhuu ihan sekaisin kahta kieltä. et se on niille ihan luonnollista

Maiju hesitates here too and uses the word ‘perhaps’ a couple of times. She is concerned by the fact that she does not speak either language properly if she mixes them. Maiju points out that her own thinking switches easily from Finnish into English and from English into Finnish. However, she does not perceive it as a strength, but rather seems troubled if she is in-between the languages and lacks something. She first questions if she is able to express herself in either language the way she wants, and then considers for a moment if it is in fact good that one is not strong in either of the languages when one takes one word from there and one from elsewhere. She says that she is not aware of any academic studies and bases her opinions on her own experiences. She describes it as a conflict situation (*ristiriitatilanne*) if one switches from one language to the other instead of speaking only one language. Maiju, however, concludes that it is probably harmless because if one thinks of Finnish-Swedish speakers, they mix two languages and it is natural to them. 16 is an interesting extract because Maiju draws from discourses that compete with each other. On the one hand, she draws from the discourses of bilingualism and code-switching and positions herself as an English speaker with bilingual ability to switch between Finnish and English with no effort. She even uses the words *very easy*. Then, she draws from the discourses of purism, order and self-expression, which clearly imply that it is bad and problematic that she is not speaking either language fluently and she positions herself in this discourse as an English speaker with deficiencies. Finally, she says that code-switching is natural to Swedish-Finnish bilinguals but excludes and differentiates herself from the group.

Maiju seems insecure about her linguistic identity and views her skills in a negative light against the norms, rules and expectations of the environment. When the interviewer asks her if she has experienced any challenges in using English at work, Maiju first replies that she has not experienced anything *very challenging* and adds that it does not mean that it still did not feel challenging to communicate in English, although her skills have gotten better during

the year. The conversation continues in extract 17, in which Maiju describes how she finds it irritating that she needs to search for words in both Finnish and English and feels that she does not know either language.

(17)M: [...] sitte niinku tulee semmosii ajatuskatkoja. mitkä niinku et ku ei muista. tietää mitä on sanomassa mut ei tiedä niinku sitä välttämättä sitä sanaa sit ees niiku suomeks eikä englanniksi. sit tulee sellaisia et miten mä sanoisin tän suomeksi mut enhän mä nyt keksi. niin sitten on taas siinä välissä et puhunks mä suomee vai englantii. vai ajattelenks mä suomeks vai englanniksi. nii sit semmosii tulee ja ne on tosi inhottavaa koska ne niinku niin mitähän mä sanon tän kun en mä osaa nyt kumpaakaan kieltä tällä hetkellä. et se on mun mielestä tosi jännä huomata ja mun mielestä se on ehkä lisääntynyt siinä vaiheessa nyt kun on nyt käyttänyt molempia kieliä jotenkin aktiivisesti

Maiju starts to describe that when she is tired she experiences short blackouts of memory. She finds it frustrating because she knows what she is saying but does not necessarily know the word in Finnish or English. Then she has to think of how *I would say it in Finnish* but does not come up with an answer either. She says that this is the in-between state that she is in and wonders whether she speaks Finnish or English or thinks in Finnish or English and she feels that *I don't not know either language*. She positions herself here as a deficient speaker of both Finnish and English and views her bilingual ability in a negative light. She loses words and lacks the capacity to express herself. She refers to bilingualism as a “truncated competence” which she also dismisses as “having no language” (Blommaert, Collins and Slembrouck 2005: 197). Maiju thinks these incidents have increased since she has used both languages more actively. In brief, she tends to view language skills as individuals' property and problems of bilingualism as problems of individuals, as discussed by Blommaert et al. (2005).

All of the interviewees evaluate code-switching from English into Finnish and vice versa somewhat negatively. However, many of them code-switch in the interview and mention that it is part of the way they speak in AIESEC. Kaisa uses the word *hotchpotch* (*sekametelisoppaa*) and Laura uses the word *mishmash* (*sekamelska*) to refer to code-switching. In extract 18, Kaisa points out that they prefer to write in English to avoid code-switching.

(18)K: [...] siis tosi paljon kirjoitetaan englanniksi. just niinku kaikki raportit ja sitten semmosetkin vaikka tietää mitkä jää periaatteessa vaan tiimin kekskeiseks niin silti mä jotenkin. on helpompi kirjoittaa niitä englanniksi tai sitten ne on semmosta sekametelisoppaa

Kaisa says that they write a lot in English also reports and things which are internal and concern only their team and which could be written in Finnish. She says that she writes in

English because it is easier or otherwise her writing is ‘a hotchpotch’ of Finnish and English. Similarly to Maiju, Kaisa draws from the discourses of bilingualism and linguistic purism, but unlike Maiju she seems to regard code-switching quite harmless, although she implies that it is better to write in one language only. This could be because she says elsewhere that she uses code-switches quite often. Kaisa says that she might subconsciously code-switch from Finnish into English in discourse markers such as ‘however’, ‘and’ and ‘in any case’ and suddenly switch her sentences into English. Similarly to Maiju, Kaisa mentions elsewhere that a lot of her thinking has switched into English since she also speaks English at home. Kaisa positions herself as a speaker of English with bilingual competence that results from her extensive use of English at work and home.

### 5.2.2 Standard NS English language ideology

All of the interviewees regard the native form, namely British English, as the ideal English form, as the data illustrates. Their views are in contrast with the recent ELF research that rejects the NS model as an ideal or norm for language learners (Jenkins 2007). In general, the participants, however, seem to support the popular belief that NSs would be better speakers of English. It is unclear how the native competence is understood by the participants, however, they seem to associate it with perfect grammar, richer vocabulary, authentic accent, formal linguistic competence and ‘purer’ language. It is not surprising since the participants have been exposed to the standard NS English language ideology when learning English at school. Furthermore, it seems that some of the participants aspire to ‘fullness’ of competence which is defined by the NS norm but which is not necessarily relevant for them in ELF context. It is not surprising either that as a result the interviewees position themselves and other ELF speakers as incompetent and deficient speakers of English – because really what option do they have? Most learners never reach the near-native target (Jenkins 2007).

In extract 19, Maiju says implicitly that the native English is better than its non-native variations. She says that she has noticed the difference of how her own English skills are *on a different level* with NSs than with NNSs, for example, when she speaks English with other Finns. Her job involves education of AIESEC members and most of them are either Finnish or other ELF speakers.

- (19) I: puhutko englantia myös suomalaisten kollegojen kanssa?  
M: ehkä voisin sanoo et valitettavasti

I: miks valitettavasti?

M: no siis sen on huomannut sen eron ihan hirveesti siinä et jos puhuu suomalaisten kanssa jos siellä on semmosii ihmisii jotka ei puhu niinku englantia äidinkielenään. niin ja sitten taas sen eron siinä jos mä puhun jonkun natiivipuhujan kanssa. et kuinka mun omaki englannin kielen taitoni niin sen natiivipuhujan kanssa on ihan eri tasolla kun sitten sen et mä koitan puhua ns. suomalaiselle englantia tai selittää niinku niille englanniksi. mä luulen et se voi johtua paljon musta. koska mä hirveesti saan sit niinku vaikutteita niinku muilta. tai mun puheeseeni tarttuu kaikki murteet hirveen helposti. ja sit varmaan just se aksentti ja kaikki muu. tuntuu itellekin siltä et jotenkin ja ehkä jotenkin ja ehkä tsemppaakin enemmän jos pitää puhua puhua sellaisen kanssa joka oikeesti niinku puhuu sitä niinku äidinkielenään. ku sitten taas niinku tai onhan se välillä jopa hassua et puhuu englantia niinku suomenkielisten kanssa. varsinkin jos niinku kaikki jollakin tasolla ymmärtäis [suomea]

I: miks se on niin hassua?

M: no ehkä niinku nykyään kun nyt on aika paljon puhunut [suomea] nii hm ehkä se et joutuu ikää kuin semmosen extrafortin tekee silleen et puhuu sitä toista vierasta kieltä kun voisi puhua omaa äidinkieltä

It is striking that when the interviewer asks Maiju if she speaks English with her Finnish colleagues she replies that *perhaps unfortunately*. She draws on the discourse of the native speaker ideal and implies strongly that her skills are better with NSs than with NNSs. This is also reflected in her choice of the verb ‘to try’ when she explains that her English skills are poorer if she tries to explain things to other Finns at work. Maiju thinks it is because the way she speaks is easily influenced by others and because she easily absorbs all dialects in her own speech. This implies that she takes erroneous influences from other ELF speakers. Maiju says that perhaps she also strives more for her best with a native speaker. This is shared by other interviewees as well. Maiju further points out that it is at times even funny that she speaks English with Finns if everyone could understand Finnish on some level. When the interviewer asks her to explain herself, Maiju replies that she has spoken quite a lot of Finnish lately and feels like she needs to make an extra effort to speak *another foreign language* when she could speak her first language. Maiju first of all juxtaposes here native and non-native speakers by referring to the native English speakers as the norm of ‘correct’ English. Similarly, she juxtaposes first and foreign languages as she refers to her own skills in Finnish as her mother tongue and speaks of English as *another foreign language*. Maiju tends to position herself and other Finns as crippled English speakers on a hopeless ‘quest’ to native-like competency. It seems as if she aspires a more native-like competence.

Extract 20 is yet another example in which concerns of whether the language they speak is correct or not are foregrounded. This time the interviewer asks Maiju to compare situations in which she speaks with NSs and ELF speakers. In her reply, Maiju explicitly says that her English is better with NSs because she perhaps aims at her best more than with NNSs. In the

extract she reflects on the possible reasons for the difference and positions herself and other NNSs in a negative light.

- (20)M: [...] jollakin tavalla se voi olla mun laiskuutta siinä vaiheessa. kun mä tiedän ettei se toinenkaan ymmärrä. tai toinen ei ymmärrä mut siis toinen niinku ei ehkä niinku tiedä kaikkia virheitä. tai mä voin sanoo koittaa selittää jotenkin ihan niinku muuten [...] mut osaltaan myöskin tiedostaa sen ettei voi ehkä jotenkin jäädä ehkä jotenkin kiinni virheistä. tai ei voi tulla väärinymmärretyks tai pahemmin väärinymmärretyksi sillä että et tulee jotain virheitä tai ei selitä just oikeilla sanoilla tai muulla

Maiju refers to vocabulary and the importance of finding the right word and phrasing if one wants to be understood. However, she implies that it is not as necessary in the case of ELF communication as with the NSs. The interviewer introduces here the social category of ELF speakers instead of non-native speakers. Maiju has said earlier that she finds it easier to talk with the Ns as she pays more attention to the way she speaks. She implies that her language is better when she is more aware of it, and consequently pays more attention to her mistakes. However, it is striking how she perceives herself in a negative light. She in fact says that she is perhaps a bit lazy and that somehow it can be her *laziness* that takes over when she knows that her interlocutor does not understand or does not perhaps know all of her mistakes. She can *try to explain* things using euphemisms. The word ‘try’ signifies an effort she needs to make in order to explain herself. Maiju mentions that with an ELF speaker she cannot perhaps *get caught* from her mistakes or cannot become more misunderstood because of them. She adds that if she explained something as vaguely to a NS, they would not necessarily understand. Maiju tends to regard ELF communication as if she cheated on something and positions herself as a ‘lazy’ or ‘sloppy’ user of English compared to the NSs. Doing so she also positions other ELF users as incompetent users of English. Her choice of words, such as ‘try’, ‘mistake’ and ‘lazy’, carries a negative connotation.

In extract 21, Maiju explicitly says that at the office nobody probably uses the language correctly.

- (21)M: [...] ku haluis käyttää jotain sellasii vähän värikkäämpiä ilmauksia niin sit siihen menee joskus aikaa tai muuta et tarkistaa et hei voiks näin oikeesti sanoo. et onks tää mun päähän tuotos mitä myöskin on. koska ku just niinku työympäristössäkin niin eihän nyt välttämättä kukaan meistä käytä sitä kieltä niinku täysin oikein [...]

Maiju describes how she would like to use more colorful expressions in English but it is time consuming as she needs to check if she can really say something like this or if it is something she has made up. Maiju points out that it is possible that she has made a word up because



necessarily nobody at the office uses the language absolutely correctly. She checks the linguistic form in the dictionary or googles if someone else has used it and if it really exists. She seems sometimes uncertain if she uses the language correctly, whether she will be understood and she needs to look for external validation. Maiju regards language as something separate from herself which she uses to explain or to translate her thoughts that exist without the language. The normative discourse intertwines here with the discourse of self-expression (see chapter 5.4.3). Other interviewees also imply that they would like to use more artistic language than what is used or needed at work.

When the interviewer asks which the easy and difficult areas of language are for her Tiina replies (extract 22) that it is difficult to manage a good level of grammar. Similarly to Maiju, Tiina mentions that her English has been influenced by different variations, such as the Asian variants, which she describes as the *strange ways to use the plural*.

(22) T: [...] kielioppi on nyt musta ainakin aika haastavaa niinku silleen pitää hyvänä. tai ku koska on niin paljon siis tekemisiä. no eniten musta tuntuu et mul on nyt niinku tarttunu niinku aasialaisilta semmosia. ne tulee ehkä niiden niistä omista kielistä tavallaan semmoset niinku ihmeelliset tavat käyttää niinku monikkoja ja jotain muita. ja sitte mut mitkä kuitenkin kuulostaa semmosilt et niit niinku vähän ihailee. kuulostaa hienolta ja erilaiselta. ni tavallaan semmosii tulee helposti niinku sit käyttäneeks ite niin. et se on loistavaa.

Tiina mentions that perhaps she *should try to* practice grammar and pronunciation and keep them better with speaking more often with native speakers. She says that she has absorbed influences from the Asians who use strange ways of plural that come to English from their own languages. However, in contrast to Maiju, Tiina regards NNS forms in a more positive light. She says that they sound great and exotic and, in contrast to Maiju, she believes that the NS speech does not sound as great and nice as someone who has a more exotic accent. On the one hand, Tiina acknowledges that she does not speak grammatically correct and native-like English and seems to attach some prestige to the NS form. On the other hand, she admires the non-native Englishes. Tiina takes a position that she supposedly lacks some grammatical skills but identifies herself as a competent ELF speaker – someone who admires other forms of English and understands native and non-native speaker English.

In extract 23, Tiina however says that she would like to improve on how to correctly use words, word order, intonation and other details in English in order to give a more professional image of herself in her field. She seems to value the NS English as a more

prestigious form of English and the norms of educated NSs as the legitimate English in the business arena.

- (23) T: [...] no se mitä mä haluaisin niinku kehittää ois sit semmonen tavallaan et jos osais silleen just oikeeoppisemmin käyttää niinku sanoja ja niit järjestyksiä ja painoja ja niit yksityiskohtia. että pystyis kans silleen ei pelkästään saada alan asioita selville mutta myös antaa ammattimaisen kuvan  
 I: miten sitä ammattimaisuutta vois nimenomaan kehittää?  
 T: tietty sillä että kuuntelis enempi tommosta natiivipuhetta ja tavallaan siitä tarttuis niitä. ja sit tietty jos sais jonkun natiivipuhujan tarkkailemaan kun puhuu itte. ja siit saa nimenomaan niit. ja onhan niit tietty. ku on viel yliopistolla niin sit siel on kans kurseja siihen. et vois tavallaan viel opetella noita

Tiina implies that she cannot give as professional picture of herself in English as she would wish. She lists areas of improvement, such as vocabulary, word order and stress, as if straight from a school grammar book. She wishes not only to be able learn about things in her professional field in English but to give a more professional picture of herself in her L2. She believes that small things matter when you want to give a professional image of yourself. For her, professionalism means a more native-like competency in English. She also mentions that she would like to improve her English by listening to the NSs and to be able to absorb correct forms from them, which is also shared by other interviewees. Tiina positions herself here as a deficient user of English who needs to learn grammar to be taken more seriously in her professional field. It seems that she views professional arena as a unified market (Park and Wee 2008) where correct standard form and content are valued and native-like proficiency is seen as a plus that indexes expertise. Tiina's bilingual skills are not so valued in a normative context and she feels more inferior. She aims at full professional proficiency which for her means to be able to use the language accurately on all levels pertinent to professional needs. The most prominent identity option is that of a learner in this context.

In extract 24, Saara is the only one who explicitly says that she would like to speak British English; however, she points out that the British say that she does not and somebody else says that she in fact sounds British the most. For her, it is the authentic English.

- (24) S: mä haluaisin puhua brittienglantia ja sitte mut britit sanoo ettet sä puhu. ja sit joku muu sanoo et sä puhut niinku siis eniten. ei varmaan puhtaasti mutta eniten. mutta tota ehkä mä luulen että se on sekoitus sellasta brittiamerikanenglantia. mutta mä niinku koitan en ehkä kovin aktiivisesti mutta passiivisesti pyrkiä sinne brittienglannin suuntaan mielummin  
 I: onks siinä joku syy minkä takia se tietty variaatio?  
 S: no mun mielestä se on kauniimpaa ja must se on sitä aitoo englantia se brittienglanti  
 I: haluaisitko että ihmiset tulis sanoo sulle että sä puhut kuin natiivi ettei siinä ois mitään eroa enää. onks se sulle miten tärkeätä?  
 S: no siis ehkä se oli aikaisemmin tärkeätä. mut nyt niinku ei mua haittaa että musta huomataan et mä en ole niinku brittiläinen. että kyl ne saa sitä kuulla. mielumminkin kuulisin sellasta että puhutpa sä hyvää englantia niinku. et en mä ehkei se ole tärkeätä että pidetään natiivina välttämättä mutta

It is interesting that Saara evaluates her own accent as follows that she does not probably speak the British accent *purely* but most and she thinks out loud that it is a mixture of British and American English but she tries to sound more British. Saara argues that British English is more beautiful and in her opinion it is the legitimate or the authentic form of English. However, she mentions that she does not mind if people noticed that she is not British and she would rather hear that she speaks good English. She says that perhaps it is not important that somebody considers you native; however, she wavers and adds the words ‘necessarily’ and ‘but’, as if she is uncertain about it. Saara has implied already earlier that she wants to “pass” as native but does not aspire to become British. She positions herself as a less competent speaker of English – an aspirer of a more privileged native speaker competence. Similarly to Tiina, she associates native speaker competence with prestige which she believes is valued in the professional arena. It is also noteworthy that Saara’s self-identification as a non-native speaker is conditioned by other-attribution by the British who say that she is not speaking British English (see also Jenks 2013). She tends to give the native speakers a stance of linguistic authenticity and authority.

When the interviewer asks Saara to compare her English skills with native speakers, Saara says (extract 25) that she does not know if she has strengths if she compares with perfection.

(25) S: en mä tiedä onks mulla vahvuuksia jos vertaa niinku täydellisyyteen. niin mitä mä nyt sanoisin. no siis niin siis varmasti kaikissa huonompi kuin ne niinku natiivia tai siis englantia äidinkielenään puhuvat. mutta tota mut siis kyl mä mun mielestä. en mä tiä siis. no heikkouksia on siis varmasti just se että ei löydy niitä semmosia sanontoja tai semmosia nokkeluuksia mitä sit taas ne löytää. ja kai toisaalta myös se ääntäminen ja mitä mä äsken sanoin se niinku uusien sanojen johtaminen. ja sit nii no just ehkä sit se sanasto. että tota et jos kuulee uuden sanan niin sitten ei sitä ehkä heti hiffaa että mitä se niinku mitä se tarkoittaa. et se pitää jotenkin nähdä suomennettuna ensin. mut tottakai jossain tapauksissa voi ymmärtää. mut jos on jotenkin niinku just vähän vaikeempia sanoja niin sitä ei ymmärrä niinku [...]

For Saara native English speaker skills are perfection and she points out that she does not have strengths compared to ‘fullness’. She reflects that she is worse in every aspect of her language skills compared to the NS, including idioms, clever uses of the language that the native speakers find, pronunciation, formation of new words and perhaps vocabulary. If she hears a new word she might not realize right away what it means and she needs to see it first in Finnish, as if it is a sign of inadequate language skills. She corrects herself and says that of course in some situations she can understand, but if the words are somehow more difficult, she has hard time to understand. She tends to position herself as an English speaker with deficiencies. This example also shows the potential ‘danger’ that lies in the thinking of native

speaker English ideals that researchers have discussed in earlier publications in relation to teaching ELF (Graddol 2006; Jenkins 2007; Seidlhofer 2011).

In extract 26, Saara says that native English is a more prestigious form in the business arena and that it is perfectionism that she aims at native or bilingual proficiency.

(26) S: mä aina mietin niinku ite vaikka jos joku yritys tarvitsee englannin kieltä hallitsevan ihmisen ja jos on kaks samaa niinku opiskelutaustaa. niin kyllä mä ainakin yrityksenä ottasin mielummin sen natiivin niinku. jos tavallaan ei oo väliä niinku sillä maantieteellisellä sijainnilla tai muuta. ja sit tavallaan ehkä sit se on myös semmosta omaakin niinku täydellisyyden tavoittelua jollakin tavalla. että niinku ois kiva osata sitä kieltä niinku vielä paremmin. ja tavallaan sit ku ärsyttää se jos jotakin juttuja ei pysty sanomaan. et kun käyttää paljon englantia ja jotakin juttuja jää sanomatta sen takia ettei osaa sanoa sitä. niin tavallaan se on jotenkin turhauttavaa joskus. mutta kai jos sitä osais tarpeeks hyvin tai vielä vielä paljon paremmin niin sithän siinä tulee se ongelma et ymmärtääks ne muut [henkilöt jotka eivät puhu kieltä äidinkielenään] mitä mä tarkoitan

Saara seems to believe that there are rewards for speakers who lose their L1 features in their L2 English and sound more like NSs in the working life. She describes a hypothetical situation in which she could decide whether to hire a native or a non-native speaker and she promptly says that she would at least choose the NS if otherwise the candidates had similar profiles. She seems to value the NS English as a more prestigious form of English and the norms of educated NSs as the legitimate English. She admits cautiously that it is also her proneness to perfectionism that she would like to know English better and aims for a native-like or a bilingual competence. However, this often leads to negative consequences for L2 speakers with a non-native accent. Saara says that she has felt frustrated and irritated by the fact that she uses English everyday and if she *cannot say* some thoughts in English and *some things are left unsaid* because she does not know how to say it. The fact that she uses English a lot implies that she is at least an emergent bilingual; whereas the fact that she is always left with something to desire positions her as an incompetent and deficient user of English. Both identity options are available to her, but Saara tends to draw more often on the discourses of normativity, linguistic purity and self-expression that position her in a more negative light. Saara acknowledges the fact that if she knew English even better it might not be that useful in ELF situations, if other NNS are not able to understand her; however, she still would like to master English better.

Some of the participants regard English as their foreign language because they believe it should be yet stronger, as implied by Laura in extract 27.

- (27)L: [...] ehkä mä jotenkin koen että se on edelleen siks vieraskieli et se pitäis niinku olla vielä jotenkin vaan vielä vahvempi. mä voisin jopa ajatella että siitä vois tulla ns. toinen kieli jos mä asuisin vaikka jossain maassa mis puhutaan englantia tai jos mä asuisin jonkun kanssa joka on vaiks englantilainen. mä luulen et siitä ehkä muodostuisi semmonen toinen kieli. mut ehkä se edelleen on kuitenkin vieraskieli

Laura thinks that second language is such that one can speak it almost as well as one's mother tongue. She says *it should be still somehow stronger*. She mentions that English could become her second language if she lived in an English-speaking country or if she lived with someone who is English. She associates English with the NS countries. She implies that she does not have strong enough English to be considered as a bilingual, and thus regards English still as the language of the 'other'. The findings of the present study support those of Jenks (2013) and Virkkula and Nikula (2010) who have pointed out earlier that proficiency plays a key role in the process of identification.

### 5.3 Language as variation discourse

Interestingly, most of the interviewees also draw on the discourse that I call 'language as variation' in which mixing and change is viewed more positively, in line with recent ELF research. The participants describe how they borrow from each other freely and adopt the other's language in their interaction with that participant. Language is seen as situational, hybrid and changeable instead of a uniform system that should be followed by everyone. The language features words, grammatical patterns and discourse conventions from diverse languages and English varieties that speakers bring to the interaction. Furthermore, appreciation of variation seems to offer more favorable subject positions for the participants as legitimate users of English.

In extract 28, Maiju describes how her accent varies a lot depending on with whom she is speaking since she absorbs different influences from her interlocutors. She seems to use accents as flexible resources and playful elements in multicultural environments.

- (28)I: onks sun mielestä sulla jokin tietty variaatio [englannista]?

M: no must tuntuu et mun ainakin mun aksentit vaihtelee ihan hirveesti. et se että et sillon kun oli paljon noitten afrikkalaisten kaa niin mulle tulee heti semmonen tietynlainen [tyyli/tapa] ja käyttää tietynlailla sitä kieltä ja just niinku ääntää tietynlailla ja muuta. mut sitte esimerkiks tosi helposti jos puhuu sit niinku. siis mul mä vaan jotenkin imen niin helposti. et sit niinku sit mä yhtäkkiä puhun niinku en nyt suoraan intialaisittain. mut et kyl niinku sieltäkin tuli sellasii äänenpainoja tai jotain muita. niin ne niinku vaan tarttuu niin helposti. ja sitten Suomessa no mä ehkä tykkään esimerkiks kouluttaa ja jos on semmonen monikulttuurinen joukko niin ehkä myös vähän leikitellä välillä. et sit

niinku käyttää niitä eri variaatioita tai niinku muuta. et ihan vaan herättääkseen mielenkiinnon tai huomion tai niinku näin. mut se on tosi vaikee sit ajatella et onks mulla joku suomi-aksentti sit ku mä puhun

Maiju speaks of how she uses English differently when she speaks with her African friends. She *gets immediately* a certain way of pronouncing and using the language which is characteristic of her African friends. She absorbs these influences from other interlocutors easily and uses them in speech. Maiju describes how it also happened to her when she travelled to India. She did not speak straightaway like an Indian but absorbed some of their ways of using and pronouncing English. She concludes that *they just stick so easily*. In Finland, Maiju says that she likes to use these and other variations when she teaches multicultural audiences in order to awaken their interest and attention. In her words, she likes to *play around* like this at times. She speaks of her skills in ‘animating’ different accents as useful, and interestingly she does not feel inadequate or illegitimate as a speaker of English in a more ‘autonomous’ context (Park and Wee 2008) in comparison to extract 19. Maiju entertains herself with the idea if she has a Finnish accent when she speaks English; however, she says that it is difficult to say if she has one. She seems a bit confused about her linguistic identity and does not show a strong affiliation towards the Finnish speakers of English in this context. This is an interesting extract because it is the beginning of a long sequence of talk that ends with Maiju identifying *an international part of her* in extract 60. I will return to this example when I discuss the discourse of culture in chapter 5.6.2.

In extract 29, similarly to Maiju, Tiina mentions that she has copied quite a lot of features from ‘global Englishes’. It is noteworthy that she is the only one who speaks favorably about her Finnish accent, and thus questions the popular belief that non-native varieties of English were problematic.

(29) I: minkäläistä englantia sä puhut sitten?

T: [...] no ehkä eniten semmosta malesian suomalaista ehkä. niin tietty niinku noissa paikoissa on tietty asunut pisiteen ja silleen ollut eniten tekemisissä ihmisten kans. mut jotenkin ne on must kans niin hienoja niinku piirteitä

I: luuletko että siellä on hienoja ominaisia piirteitä mitkä siirtyy tavallaan englannin kieleen?

T: on siel musta joitain semmosia niinku jokin semmonen niinku yksinkertaisuus. jotenkin selkeesti erotellaan äänteet toisistaan. niin jotain semmosta. niin ja sitten ja on mul aika paljon must kopioinut semmossii itäeurooppalaisii [piirteitä] et kans. se on tietysti jonkin verran samanlaisia juttuja erottelua. se on jotenkin selkeetä mistä joku yks asia alkaa ja mihin loppuu

It is interesting how in this extract in contrast to the examples in the normative discourse language is valued as something that changes and varies. Unlike Kaisa, Saara and Laura,

Tiina does not mention that she would or would have pursued the British or American accent. She mentions that her English resembles the most perhaps Malaysian Finnish since she has lived in those countries for the longest time, been in contact with the local people the most, and she considers that they are great features. Tiina implies that she likes the features of simplicity and the sounds that are clearly separated from each other in the Finnish accent. She mentions that she has also copied some Eastern European features, which sound a bit the same in that they are somehow separated sounds and it is clear where one sound starts and where it ends. Tiina positions herself as a legitimate speaker of English instead of comparing herself to the NSs of English and adopting the position of a deficient communicator. Unlike many Finns studied, for example, by Leppänen et al. (2011), Tiina does not aspire to sound like a native-speaker who would hide her own national origin in L2 speech. In this sense, Tiina seems to regard English as something that “belongs to her” and other non-native speakers.

In extract 30, Laura mentions that she might have paid more attention and tried to speak the British English before; however, she implies that it is not so important anymore. This echoes a lot with what Kaisa has mentioned in extract 2 that in Finland there is no pressure to sound like a native-speaker. Kaisa also mentioned that she speaks English in a Finnish way.

(30) I: puhutko sä sun mielestä jotain tiettyä englannin variaatiota?

L: no en oikeestaan. et no mä muistan mä oon joskus oleen saattanut enemmän kiinnittää huomiota silleen yrittää puhua vaikka brittienglantia. mutta ei se oo niinku mikään semmonen. et mun täytyy tosissaan keskittyä jos mä haluisin yrittää puhuu jotain [aksenttia]. et mä uskon et se on semmonen sekoitus suomalaisella lisällä

Interestingly, when the interviewer asks if Laura speaks a specific variation of English she mentions first that she does not really. She seems to think of the NS accents. Laura points out that she has tried to speak British English before; however, she would really have to focus intensively if she wanted to speak some accent. She implies that it is not so important. Laura says that her English is a mixture with a Finnish touch and seems to position herself as a legitimate speaker of English.

## 5.4 Empowerment discourse

The participants also tend to talk about their language skills more positively when they compare their skills to other Finns, Europeans and non-native speakers. I call this discourse

the ‘empowerment’ discourse. It is noteworthy that the interviewer asks the participants to compare themselves with native speakers, Europeans and other Finns and to negotiate their linguistic identities also by positioning themselves in relation to other L2 speakers of English in ELF settings. In order to make the comparison, the interviewees tend to draw upon their experiences in AIESEC, Finnish education system and with their friends. This could be interpreted as the participants’ expression of their legitimate and empowered identities as speakers of English in ELF settings (see also Sung 2015) and the contrast to the normative discourse is significant. What emerged from the data is that the participants judged themselves to be more linguistically competent in ELF communication than other Europeans, such as French, Greek and German speakers. They tend to evaluate their language proficiency less favorably than the NSs, although some of them start to also question the belief that native English speakers would be better speakers in ELF context. All of them also mention that they have better language skills than average Finnish English speakers if compared to their friends.

In extract 31, Kaisa starts to question the popular belief that the NSs are better speakers of English in ELF contexts and concludes that the speech of the NNSs can be more intelligible, as shown in the extract below.

- (31)K: en mä oikein osaa aatella et mulla olis vahvuuksia verrattuna niinku [englantia äidinkielenään puhuviin]. ehkä se että mä osaan puhua tarpeeks hitaasti ja niinku selkeästi. että silleen ymmärtää mitä mä sanon. että ehkä äidinkielenään puhuvilla voi olla se että puhuu liian nopeasti tai käyttää just sanoja joita ei ymmärrä. että osaan ainakin puhua yksinkertaisesti

Kaisa first says that she cannot think that she would have any strengths compared to native English speakers. However, her voice changes and she adds that perhaps she can speak clearly and slowly so that everybody understands. She makes the point that NSs may have difficulties in ELF context if they speak too fast and use words that are unknown to many. She asserts that at least she can *speak plainly*. It seems that the most important aspect is intelligibility, which is also emphasized in ELF research. However, with ‘perhaps’ Kaisa also signals that she does not necessarily make a strong commitment to the statement and she hesitates a bit. She, however, takes the position of a legitimate speaker of English, which is available to her in ELF context.



Laura also finds it difficult at first to think of any strengths compared to NSs. This seems to be the case with all of the interviewees. However, she finally finds the aspect of grammar as a possible strength, as illustrated in extract 32.

(32)L: vahvuuksiin en mä tiedä. en mä oo huomannu. mut mä voisin kuvitella et siinä voi olla sama kuin ranskan kanssa. että koska meille on opetettu kuitenkin se kielioppi eri tavalla kuin niinku heille [englantia äidinkielenään puhuville] niin saattaa sitten jotkut kielioppisäännöt olla paremmin niinku hallussa. mut en tiedä

Laura says that she has not noticed but she could imagine that non-native speakers have a better awareness of grammar than native speakers because we have been taught the rules differently. She uses the pronoun ‘we’ which could refer to Finns or non-native speakers in general. It is likely that she refers to the Finnish education system which is often addressed for its focus on the teaching of grammar. As this example illustrates, the Finnish education system can also offer positive identity options to its FL learners. Laura, however, also shows signs of hesitancy in her lexical choices, such as *it might be*, and adds that she does not know for sure if this is the case. This also exemplifies that standard NS English ideology is strong in the minds of the participants.

In extracts 33 and 34, Maiju and Tiina make the point that they have more understandable English accents than most Europeans. It is noteworthy that all of the interviewees mention pronunciation as a strength compared to other Europeans. There appears to be a perceived hierarchy of different varieties of English in ELF communication, a point being made also by earlier research (e.g. Jenkins 2007; Sung 2015). The present data also suggests that the participants do not identify strongly with the European speakers of English and instead tend to construct an identity of Finnish speakers of English (Virkkula 2006). To illustrate this, Maiju makes a reference to other national/cultural groups of L2 speakers of English, namely French and Greek, in the extract 33.

(33)M: [...] niin kyllä se semmonen oma puhe niinku ja se että tulee ymmärretyksi on ihan hyvällä tasolla. ja siinä et tottakai me ei ehkä huomata omaa aksenttiamme niin helposti mutta se ei ainakaan mun mielestä hirveesti häiritse sitä ymmärretyksi tulemista kuten esimerkiksi ranskalaiset tai kreikkalaiset kun niillä sekoittuu siihen omaan ääntämykseen [...] ja sit semmonen kuullun ymmärtäminen ylipäätänsä. et kun tulee paljon tekstiä tai joku puhuu tai jotain muuta vastaavaa niin pysyy siinä mukana [...] on huomannut myöskin sen ettei kaikki välttämättä kaikki pysy mukana jos natiivi puhuu hirveesti nopeesti

Maiju says that she has noticed in AIESEC that her speech and level of understandability are good compared to other Europeans. Interestingly, she says that *we don't perhaps notice our*

*own accent so easily* but in her opinion it does not hinder intelligibility in English. She probably refers with ‘we’ to other Finnish people, and thus talks about the Finnish accent. She seems to identify here with other Finns, although in an earlier example she thought whether she has a Finnish accent at all (extract 28). Maiju says explicitly that French and Greek mix English more with their L1 pronunciation and implies that it might hinder their understandability. She adds that she has also noticed that her listening skills are good as she can follow native speakers who talk a lot and fast. In extract 34, Tiina shares similar views on Finnish accent:

- (34) T: no en tiiä niin jotenkin musta tuntuu et Euroopassa tosi moni puhuu ihan tosi hyvin tavallaan. no joo no ehkä kuitenkin tai no en mä tiiä. et itestä tuntuu et jotenkin must ainakin [aksentti kuulostaa] tosi neutraalilta tai ainakin ja tavallaan ettei ihan niin paljon sekota suomesta. tai sit se oon vaan siten ettei sitä huomaa ite. kun must tuntuu et enempi osaa puhua sellasta kuin englannin kuuluu olla eikä niin paljon semmosta että siihen sekottaa omaa kieltä. ja ehkä ja on siinä musta niinku moniin verrattuna se semmonen niinku helppous ja reippaus. et ku joillekin se on selvästi semmosta et pitää niinku miettiä sitä

Tiina mentions that many Europeans speak English well, but she has also noticed that perhaps her accent sounds more neutral as she does not mix it so much with Finnish. She adds, however, that perhaps she feels like that because one cannot notice her own accent. Tiina does not speak in first person but in passive and could refer to Finnish accent in general. Interestingly, she mentions that she can speak English more as *it is supposed to be* and implies that she does not mix her L1 accent with English as much other Europeans do. She also adds that compared to many non-native speakers she has that kind of easiness and briskness when she speaks English. She does not have to think about it and positions herself here as a competent speaker of English.

Saara and Kaisa consider their skills in English better than other Europeans and both of them mention that it is because of the Finnish education system, as illustrated by Saara in extract 35.

- (35) S: no mä luulen että yleensä niinku suomen siis koulutus on hyvin tämmöstä kielioppi suuntautunutta et uskon että kielioppi on varmasti yks vahvuuksista verrattuna muihin eurooppalaisiin [...] siis mitä mulla on käsitys niin me ollaan kauemmin luettu englantia et aina se ei oo ees ensimmäinen niinku vieraskieli [eurooppalaisille] ku suomalaisille se usein on [...] ja sen takia ehkä on just kehittynyt myös sit se sujuvuus että sit sanavarasto että myös se ääntämys. et kyl mä näitä yhdistäisin myös itseeni

Saara mentions that Finnish education system is focused on grammar and it makes it one of the strengths compared to other Europeans. She also mentions that we have studied English

longer at school and with ‘we’ Saara clearly refers to other Finns. She constructs a collective identity of Finns who are more fluent in English and have better a vocabulary and pronunciation than other Europeans, thanks to Finnish education. She identifies with the Finnish speakers of English and positions herself as a competent user of English in this context.

Compared to other Finns, all of the participants say that they have a better command of English than average Finnish speakers of English. Interestingly, many of them bring forth the theme of courage in the examples. Everybody also mentions the fact that because they use English at home and in their leisure time their skills have gotten more fluent. To illustrate this in extract 36, Kaisa mentions that she does not have a threshold to speak English as some Finns are known to have (cf. Virkkula 2006). Kaisa feels she is free to choose with whom she wants to speak and she does not have to pick the Finnish-speaking group to talk.

- (36)K: suomalaisiin verrattuna no kyl mä niinku jos omanikäsiä vertaa niin kyl mä aattelen et mulla on hyvä kielitaito niinku englannissa. ainakin jos niinku kaveripiirissä miettii niin ei kovin monet tee töitä englanniks esimerkiks tai käytä kotona englantia koko ajan. et siinä mielessä varmasti on semmosta sujuvampaa se englanti  
 I: niin puhuminen?  
 K: niin puhuminen ja ymmärtäminen ja kaikenlainen käyttäminen silleen. ja ei oo sellasta kynnystä käyttää [englantia] kun monilla voi olla se niinku kynnyys [...]

Kaisa says that compared to other Finns of her age she has a good command of English. She mentions that not many of her friends work or use English in their freetime. She also mentions as her strengths speaking, understanding and all kinds of use of English. She adds that some Finnish people have a threshold to speak even if they knew English, but she does not have it and she can speak to anyone.

In extract 37, Maiju also mentions the courage to speak and to read in English as her strengths.

- (37)M: no siis varmaan semmonen se ei oo en mä tiedä voiks sitä sanoo taidoks tai muuks mut semmonen rohkeus käyttää sitä kieltä. niin se on ainakin semmonen mitä tietää ettei oo kaikilla. ja joka just taas just sen takia niin ehkä se puhuttu kieli on parempaa tai niinku silleen ihan hyvää luokkaa. ja sitte no sit joka niinku oikeestaan uskallus tarttuu niihin enkunkielisiin tekstiin

Interestingly, Maiju mentions that she does not know if she can call it a skill or what that she dares to use the language. It is not probably something that the education system highlighted in the grading of the students’ languages skills. Maiju knows that not everybody has the

courage and that is why she thinks that perhaps her speaking is better or on a pretty good level. However, she signals a level of uncertainty and insecurity with the words “probably”, “I don’t know”, “perhaps” and “pretty”. She does not fully own what she says, which could be interpreted as a lack of confidence. Maiju, however, also mentions the courage to seize English texts. She describes elsewhere how she has had to learn to read academic books in English on her own, which helped her to overcome the panic of reading in English. Laura shares similar views in extract 38:

(38)L: mä luulen et sikäli parempi et mä uskallan käyttää sitä niinku. ja tota ja jos vertaa. no tää ehkä kuulostaa vähän kauhealta. mut jos oikeasti vertaa niinku tommoseen perus pienellä paikkakunnalta tulevaan kenen ei tarvitse ikään sitä käyttää niin tota mä voisin jopa sanoo et silleen [englannin kieli] oon niinku parempi. koska joutuu sitä käyttämään ja tykkää siitä. mun mielest se vaikuttaa tietty kans paljon et ei välttämättä edes se et joutuuko sitä käyttämään mut jos sul on kiinnostus itte lukee tai kuunnella musiikki tai kattoo leffoja just ilman tekstityksiä niin sitten. mut et ehkä [englannin kielen taito on] keskitasoa vähän parempi

Laura says that perhaps her English skills are a bit better than the average. Saara also uses the expression ‘above the average’ to describe her English. Laura mentions elsewhere that she has a strong local identity that comes from a small place in the west coast of Finland where she grew up. Interestingly, here she, however, distances herself from the so called ordinary or basic (*perus*) Finn who comes from a small place but has never needed to use English. She mentions that she dares to use English, she has to use it and she likes it. She identifies strongly with a group of English users that separates her from the people in small towns in Finland. She also identifies with a group of English users who are interested in popular culture such as reading, listening to music and watching movies. It seems that English has empowered her to adapt a global identity besides her local identity.

## 5.5 Bi- and multilingualism discourse

Bi- and multilingualism is also one of the most prominent discourses in the data. What emerges from the data is that the participants view the languages as two distinct systems, which they use parallel to one another, as if parallel monolinguals. The results show that it should not be taken for granted that the participants regard themselves bilinguals. They also employ discourse of ‘English is not part of me’ and speak about their struggles for self-expression in English. They, however, are able to redefine what bilingualism means to them, and consequently some of them renegotiate their identities as bilinguals.

### 5.5.1 Code-switching – English as a second set of clothes

The interviewees often speak of English and Finnish as two distinct language systems in contrast to a heteroglossic view, in which language use is seen as hybrid (e.g. Blommaert 2010). I call it the ‘code-switching’ discourse. Characteristic of it is that languages are regarded as having their own spheres and tasks. All of the interviewees say without hesitation that their thinking switches easily between Finnish and English, which implies that they do not have to translate things into Finnish to be able to understand English. Evidently, they have bilingual competency.

To illustrate this in extract 39, Kaisa says that a lot of her thinking has switched into English since she also speaks English at home. She draws from the discourse of code-switching and positions herself as a speaker of English with bilingual competence.

(39) K: toki jotkut asiat sitten taas on helpompi hoitaa suomeksi. se tuntuu vähän hölmöltä niinku jollekin [nimi 1] joka on siinä vieressä ja [nimi 2] on siellä kaukana niit sit ruveta supisemaan jotakin englanniksi [nimi 1]. vaa sen takia että niinku hänkin [nimi 2] ymmärtäisi mitä mä sanon vaikka mä en edes hänelle puhu. et silleen niinku joskus on vähän semmosia outoja tilanteita et miettii et kummalla kielellä tässä pitäisi puhua [...] niinku kesken lauseen saattaa yhtäkkiä vaihtaa jossain pikkusanan kohdalla niinku toiseen kieleen [...] et jotenkin se ajattelu on kääntyny niin paljon englanniksi kun mä puhun myös kotona englantia. niin sekin varmaan vaikuttaa

Kaisa has mentioned earlier that there is a Chinese girl working at the office at the time of the interviews and describes how the team speaks now more often in English even amongst themselves just to involve her in the communication. Kaisa implies that English is used in order to signal belonging to the group and even if the work matter would not concern those who do not speak Finnish, she tries to use English. The other interviewees seem to share this point of view. In the extract, Kaisa mentions that some things are easier to take care in Finnish and points out that sometimes it feels stupid to explain things for a Finnish colleague in English just to involve a non-Finnish speaker in the conversation if she is further away. All of interviewees seem to agree that if everyone understands and speaks Finnish, it is the most preferred language of verbal communication even if some work related terminology was more available to them in English. Kaisa mentions that sometimes there are strange situations where she has to think over the choice between English and Finnish. She mentions that she also uses English subconsciously and she might code-switch from Finnish into English in-between a sentence.

When I asked whether the interviewees perceive English as their mother, second or a foreign language some of them seemed puzzled by the question since they had not thought of it before. Two of the interviewees Kaisa and Tiina said that English is a second language for them. In extract 40, Tiina says that she never thought of the question before, but if she had to choose from the options given (mother, second or a foreign language), she regards English as her second language because she can switch between the languages without an effort.

(40)I: minä sä määrittelisit toisen kielen?

T: tavallaan semmoinen mihin voi niinku vaihtaa. tavallansa niinku tavallansa samalla tavalla ku et on kuin toiset vaatteet mihin voi vaihtaa. ja tavallaan voi tehdä niinku samoja asioita niin silleen samalla tavalla. niinku ajattelun ja puhumisen voi vaihtaa siihen [englantiin] ja sit se on niinku periaatteessa voi tehdä ihan samoja asioita [...]

For Tiina second language means the ability to switch between two languages, without an effort, like *a second set of clothes* she can wear. She can kind of do the same things in English as in Finnish. Tiina defines a foreign language as something one needs to think of and to make an effort to talk whereas a mother tongue is the language that is ‘the closest to oneself’ and ‘the easiest to talk about a range of things’. She concludes that English is neither of them, which leaves her the option of a second language. She knows the two languages well enough to be able to switch between them when needed, but views them as separate, like two sets of clothes.

### 5.5.2 English is not part of me

It emerges from the data that all of the interviewees identify strongly with the Finnish language, culture and identity. Many of them mention that English does not have the same significance as Finnish yet, and thus it is not part of their identity as such. To illustrate this in extract 41, the interviewer has asked Maiju whether English is a foreign language, second language or a mother tongue for her and she replies that she holds English as a foreign language because *it is not part of her*.

(41)M: [...] jos mä sit sanoisin et se ois ei se oo toinen kielikään. siis että kyl se vieraskieli on. koska vaikka mä käyttäisin sitä joka päivä. mut en mä ei se kuitenkaan niinku ei se oo osa mua siis sinällään. että et mun mielestä se olis ihan eri jos mä olisin kasvanut niinku kaksikielisessä perheessä. nii se olis ihan erilailla osa mun identiteettiä se niinku et jos sen paikka olisi toisena tai ensimmäisenä kielenä. mutta se että jos mä oon niinku oppinut sen. kyl silti mun identiteetti niin siinä on yksi kieli [äidinkieli] ja sit mulla on vieraita kieliä millä pystyn kommunikoimaan. tai et vaikka kuinka hyvin osaisin

Maiju argues that English is a foreign language for her because even if she used it every day it is not a part of her as such. She tends to speak of identity in essentialist terms and implies that English is a language of the ‘other’. Maiju points out that it would be very different if she had grown up in a bilingual family because if English had had a place of a second language or a mother tongue in her life *it would be in a very different way part of her identity*. She implies that 2<sup>nd</sup> language identity is a privilege of those who are born in bilingual families and she cannot identify with that subject position for obvious reasons. Family background and nature are hence seen as definers of one’s bilingual identity. Maiju describes that her identity consists of one language (her mother tongue), and then she has foreign languages which she uses for communication (cf. ‘instrument’ discourse). This is however contradictory to what she says later in the interview (in extract 60) that English is not her second persona but an international part of her and (in extract 49) that she considers herself bilingual in practical terms. This exemplifies how the interviewees construct complementary and opposite identities in the course of the interview (Davies and Harrés 1999). Instead of a unitary identity, they start to think in terms of multiple and layered identities.

Similarly to Maiju, Saara says in extract 42 that her mother tongue is the basis for her identity and that English does not have that role yet.

(42)S: [...] ja kaikista hauskin on ehkä omalla äidinkielellään. että ei se ainakaan tai ainakin siis persoona rakentuu ainakin mulla mun mielestä niinku sen äidinkielen ympärille. ja sit tavallaan englannilla ei ainakaan viel semmosta merkitystä

Saara points out that she feels that she is the funniest in her mother tongue and that Finnish is the basis of her identity. She says that English does not have such a significance yet. Saara mentions also elsewhere that she is funnier in Finnish and that her personality stands out stronger in Finnish. She says that she does not know funny phrases in English, and thus it is more difficult for her to be funny when she speaks English. Similarly to Maiju, Saara also seems to regard bilingual identity in essentialist terms as a unitary and fixed sense of self and a possession of fluent competency in English.

Similarly to Saara and Maiju, Kaisa says in extract 43 that Finnish is an important part of her identity and that English does not have the same significance. She adds that she has not learnt any other language at the same emotional level as Finnish.

- (43) K: [...] nään että suomi on mun äidinkieli silti. että en mä oo niinku mitään kieltä oppinut sillä tasolla mitä oikeesti suomen kieltä. niin kuin se tunnetaso oikeesti ja semmoset niinku tietyt merkitykset mitä siihen liittyy. että en mä niinku koskaan tunne et voi vitsi pääsispä puhumaan englantia. että onpa ikävä kun en oo päässy puhumaan englantia tai saksaa pitkään. niinku sillä tunnetasolla tavallaan mitä suomen kieleen liittyy [...] siinä mielessä en näkis että oon kaksikielinen. että vaikka sillä toisena kielenä voi englantia aatella. et se on niinku luonnollinen osa elämää. mut ei se oo kuitenkaan äidinkieli silleen

Kaisa has mentioned earlier that she uses English more often than Finnish during her freetime and when the interviewer asks her whether English has become more important to her Kaisa replies that she has noticed that it has not since Finnish is really important for her. In the extract, Kaisa points out the emotional relation she has towards the Finnish language. She says that she would not miss speaking English or German the same way as she misses to speak Finnish if she lived abroad. She identifies strongly with the Finnish language and its speakers and concludes that English is a natural part of her life but it is not her mother tongue. Kaisa says that she can think of English as her second language because it is a natural part of her life, but it is not her mother tongue, and thus she does not regard herself bilingual. Kaisa views bilingualism as having two native languages that one has learnt from birth.

### 5.5.3 Struggle for self-expression

It is noteworthy from the data that the interviewees tend to distinguish between communication (see the ‘instrument’ discourse) and self-expression. It seems that self-expression is more connected to identity in the interviewees’ minds. Many of them mention that Finnish is the foundation of their identities and that English does not have that role yet, perhaps because they struggle to express themselves in English as they wished.

The fact that in working life emphasis is given to the simple and direct forms of language, for the sake of just getting the message passed, seems to leave little room for self-expression and identity construction in English. In extract 44, Maiju says that she has felt that she cannot express herself as well in English as in Finnish.

- (44) M: [...] no mulla on jossain vaiheessa hirvee kriisi siitä. koska mä en osaa ilmaista itteeni sillä niinku englannin kielellä niin miten mä haluisin. koska mä en tiedä niitä sävyeroja. mä en tiedä. mulla ei [oo] niin iso [ja] hyvä sanavarasto niin kuin mä voisin käyttää niinku mä voisin käyttää suomen kieltä. niinku kaikkia niinku eri verbejä ja niinku eri sanamuotoja ja muita semmosii niinku ns. hienouksia. mitkä tuntuu et ne on enkussa hienouksia. mutta sitten taas suomen kielessä se on niinku rikkaus kun voi sanoo asian paljon kuvaannollisemmin. kun sit enkuks se on tosi heloposti silleen et sä vaan sanot sen asian mut niinku



In the extract Maiju focuses more on the content than the form, and the example may first seem confusing. Maiju says that she had at some point a terrible crisis because she felt that she could not express herself in English in the way she wanted because she does not know the nuances and she does not have so big and desirable vocabulary. The interviewees without an exception say that their vocabulary should be larger and when they talk about mastering it they often use negative expressions such as ‘I don’t have’. Maiju also compares her English skills to her Finnish skills which are better in her opinion. It seems that all of the interviewees are after balanced bilingualism in which they have equal fluency of Finnish and English. Maiju felt that she could not use English the way she could use Finnish, including all different verbs and wordings. She does not say it explicitly but implies that in the working life English is ‘poorer’ and that figurative speech is regarded as fancy expressions and perhaps unnecessary. However, she would like to be more artistic in her use of English. This exemplifies how identities can be a site of struggle for 2<sup>nd</sup> language speakers (see e.g. Norton and Toohey 2011).

In extract 45, similarly to Maiju, Saara concludes that language is more colorful when one speaks it as a first language. The interviewer has asked her whether English is her first, second or a foreign language and Saara replies that it is probably still a foreign language because she does not master it as well as Finnish.

(45) S: no on se nyt varmaan vielä vieraskieli

I: minä sä ymmärrät vieraan ja toisen kielen eron esimerkiksi?

S: [...] no muun muassa se että jos niinku pystyy luomaan omia sanoja. et ku suomessa nyt pystyy tekemään yhdyssanoja tai muita ku se on äidinkieli. ja ehkä viel toisestakin kielestä pystyy jos on esimerkiksi toinen vanhempi niin tota sitä puhunut. mut esimerkiksi englannista en mä niinku pystyis välttämättä tai siis ainakaan oikeita sanoja johtamaan tai et jotenkin niitä kielen tai jotenkin sanontoja tai muuta. tuntuu et se kieli on paljon värikkäämpää silloin kun puhuu omaa äidinkieltään [...]

Saara considers English to be her foreign language but signals her uncertainty with the words ‘probably’ (*varmaan*) and ‘still’ (*vielä*). For her the difference between L2 and FL is the ability to create own words – a skills she associates with someone whose parent has spoken English as his/her native language. To exemplify this, in Finnish Saara says that she can make compound words because it is her mother tongue, and moreover she thinks it is perhaps possible in a second language too. She points out that she could not necessarily make words or at least correct words in English, nor other idiomatic expressions. In her opinion language is much more colorful when she speaks it as her mother tongue and she thinks she is *perhaps the funniest in her mother tongue*. In her opinion her personality comes forth more strongly in

Finnish because it is based on the funny phrases and when she does not know them in English it is more difficult because of that. This example shows that Saara has to give up something of herself as a language speaker when speaking English. Saara positions herself as an English speaker with deficiencies and something to reach for – the native-like and/or bilingual fluency. She implies that English is still something foreign to her – something that is not hers yet. She bases this on the facts that she has a narrower vocabulary in English and she needs to search for words and that perhaps they do not come to her as fast. That is to say, she cannot perform in a similar way if she was speaking Finnish and she has to give up something of herself as a language speaker when speaking English. Kaisa shares similar views in extract 46.

(46)I: mikä tekis siitä [kielitaidosta] hyvän mitä sä toivoisit että?

K: no siis varmaan se aksentti ja sanavaraston laajentaminen. et mul on silleen aika yksinkertainen sanasto ehkä käytössä kuitenkin. tai ainakin itestä tuntuu siltä että vois olla niinku paljon rikkaampi sanavarasto. et se on niinku silleen työkielenä ihan ok ja arkikielenä. mutta en silleen niinku just kun mä en lue kirjallisuutta kauheesti. mä luen niinku asiatekstejä yllättävän paljon ja kuuntelen. mut en niinku kirjallisuutta lue englanniksi juurikaan. niin sitten ei oo semmosta niinku luovaa kieltä tavallaan käytössä mikä enemmän niinku just äidinkielenään puhuvilla on. et osaa ilmaista itseään paljon paremmin. niinku erilaisia verbejä ja adjektiiveja ja sellasia millä voi kuvailla niiku tunnetiloja tai joitain tapahtumia tai tällaisia paljon niinku rikkaammin. niin tuntuu että sellasia puuttuu mut

Kaisa says that her English is okay at work and in everyday use and positions herself as a competent user of English. However, she wishes that her accent and vocabulary were better which could be interpreted as the interviewee's slight dissatisfaction with her language proficiency. Kaisa further describes that she has *quite simple vocabulary in use* and mentions that she could have *a much richer vocabulary*. She points out that she reads mostly practical texts and listens to English daily but she does not read literature in English. As a result she argues that she does not have *creative language* in use comparable to NSs. She equals this to being able to express oneself better by using different verbs and adjectives to describe feelings and other situations in a richer way. She explicitly says that she lacks the creative expressions in English. The two positions are obviously in contrast to one another.

In extract 47, Laura also brings forth the theme of vocabulary to be able to express herself better.

(47)L: no mun mielestä mun pitäis saada ainakin tosi paljon enemmän vielä sanastoa. ja sitte huomaa et välillä menee niinku jotenkin silleen lukkoon. tai siis sil tavalla että ei vaan saa sanottua sitä mitä haluais kovasti niinku sanoo. ei vaan kuitenkaan pääse sinne ytimeen asti niinku siihen juttuun mitä oikeesti nyt haluu sanoo. niin sit täytyy vähän kiertää sitä niinku silleen et saa sanottua mitä haluu

Laura says that she ‘should’ expand her vocabulary since she sometimes freezes up and cannot express herself in the way that she would like. She describes that she cannot get into the core and that she has to go around a bit to be able to express herself. She mentions elsewhere that English is a foreign language for her because if it was a second language it should be ‘stronger’.

#### 5.5.4 Redefining bilingualism

The participants seem to define bilingualism based on their competency in the two languages. They think that English should be as strong as their Finnish to be able to call themselves bilinguals. However, some of the interviewees are able to redefine bilingualism on their own based on their frequent use of English, and thus are able to negotiate their identity as bilingual users of Finnish and English. It is noteworthy that none of them negotiated a multilingual identity for themselves perhaps due to their feelings of limited competency in other languages, such as German, French and Swedish. All of them mention that English is their most active language besides Finnish at the moment.

To illustrate the redefinition of bilingualism, in extract 48, Tiina first mentions that one needs to acquire two languages from childhood to be able to call oneself bilingual; however, she changes her footing and finally concludes that she has sort of grown up in two languages.

(48) T: no must kakskielisyys tarkoittaa sitä että on kaks äidinkieltä. että niinku tavallaan kaks semmost kieltä et ois puhunut ihan pienestä asti. tavallaan semmonen niinku et et maailmankuva rakentuu niinku silleen niiden mukaan. nii et en mä kyl sanois itteeni niinku semmoseks [...] niin tietty jos määrittelis kakskielisyyden taas sit silleen et jos elämän aikana tavallaan tulee toinen kieli johon on silleen helppo vaihtaa ajatukset. niin kyllä mä silloin sanoisin et on niinku kasvanut tavallaan kahella kielellä

In the extract Tiina gives two different explanations for bilingualism. On the one hand, she regards bilingualism as the possession of two mother tongues which one has spoken since one’s childhood. She mentions that one’s world view is based on two languages. Obviously, she cannot call herself bilingual within that frame. On the other hand, she re-defines bilingualism as the possession of two languages that one has gained later in life and that one can switch thoughts easily from one language to the other. Within this representation, Tiina is able to identify herself as having bilingual competence. Maiju shares similar views in extract 49:

(49)M: kyl mä jollain tavalla voisin väittää et vois jopa tuntuu siltä et on kaksikielinen. koska ainakin sen mitä en olis ehkä sanonut näin puol vuotta aikasemmin. mut nyten kun oon huomannut sen et kun on töissä tai missä tahansa jos pitää vaihtaa samantien se englanti kyl se niinku tulee. ei oo semmosta. tottakai ei aina muista sanoa ja tulee semmosta ja siitä aina selviää ja selviää paljon paremmin kuin silloin puol vuotta sitten [...] jos miettii kaksikielisyyttä silleen taas niinku isommassa mittakaavassa tai merkityksessä. et en mä toisaalta sanois olevani kaksikielinen sen takii koska ei mul se kieli lähellä suomee se englannin kielen taito niinku siinä ilmaisurikkaudessa tai niinku ylipäätänsä. et sanavarastossa tai muussa. niin sit mä en en voi sanoa et mä olisin kaksikielinen. toisaalta taas mulle se kaksikielisyys on sitä et osaa vähän enemmän kuin ne perusteet siitä kielestä. käytännöllinen kaksikielisyys joo. mut sit semmonen syvempi kaksikielisyys ei

In the extract Maiju says that she could argue that she could identify as a bilingual. She says that she would not have said this six months ago but now that she has noticed at work and elsewhere that if she needs to switch from Finnish to English right away she can do it. She does not always remember words but she always survives. If it is her own definition she could perhaps say yes that she can switch the language on the fly, she can communicate right away logically and understandably and quite right. However, if she thinks of bilingualism in a wider perspective she would not claim to be bilingual because English is not close to her Finnish skills in terms of self-expression and vocabulary. She concludes that she has *practical bilingualism* in that she knows a bit more than the basics.

In extract 50, Laura defines bilingualism in two ways, however, she does not count working in another language as bilingualism even if the interviewer offers her this option.

(50)L: mun mielestä kaksikielisyys on sitä että. siis et sun ei tarvii välttämättä syntymästä asti esimerkiksi niinku et sul on kaksi kieltä. et se on mun mielestä yksi niinku muoto kaksikielisydestä mut ei se ainut missään nimessä [...] jotenkaan mä en näe et sitä pystyy silleen vaan että nyt et mä oon suomalainen ja sit mä olen opiskellut ranskaa. ja jos mä oisin pysynyt vaiks koko ajan täällä Suomessa ja vaan niinku esimerkiks yliopistolla opiskellut sitä niin mä en nää et se olis vielä kaksikielisyyttä. mut mun mielestä sust pystyy tulla kaksikielinen jos sä vaik asut pitkään siinä toisessa maassa tai semmonen. niinku ainakin mulle näin mututuntumalta se tuntuis kaksikielisydeltä kuitenkin et sulla on niinku. koska sit mun mielest jos asuu pitkään joko jonkun toisesta maasta tulevan kanssa tai asuu itte jossain toisessa maassa. niin se aika nopeesti voisin kuvitella niin se tasapaino niitten kielten välillä voi tulla aika helposti. et jos sä oot koko ajan semmosessa maassa sä joudut käyttään vierasta kieltä niin sä väkisin opit sitä tosi hyvin ja sit taas se oma äidinkieli voi jäädä vähän vähemmälle

In the extract Laura says that she thinks that one can reach bilingualism even if one was not born with two languages. She calls it as one form of bilingualism but mentions that it is not the only one. She does not however believe that one could become bilingual just by studying, for example, French in Finland in the university if one stays in Finland all the time. She does not regard it yet bilingualism. However, she believes that one can reach bilingualism if one lives in that country a longer time or if one lives with someone who comes from the country. Laura argues that if one is in the environment where one uses the other language all the time,

one can quite quickly pick up the balance between the languages, if one learns it very well and one's mother tongue becomes more passive. She refers to equal proficiency in two languages and feels that in her own case Finnish is much stronger than her English, and thus she does not consider herself bilingual yet.

Similarly to Tiina and Maiju, Saara negotiates a bilingual identity in extract 51.

(51) S: no siis mä miellän kaksikielisyyden sinä että se on niinku kaks äidinkieltä. ikään kuin et ois jotenkin niinku lapsuudesta asti puhunut kahta kieltä. et siinä mielessä en. mutta mut siis et jos miettii et pystyy työskentelemään niinku kahdella kielellä ja niinku elämään. niin kyl must niinku siinä mielessä niinku pystyisin sekä suomeksi että englanniksi

In the extract Saara says that she understands bilingualism as having two mother tongues that one has spoken from childhood. In that sense, she obviously does not identify as a bilingual. However, she redefines bilingualism as an ability to work and live with two languages and says that in her opinion she can do it. She takes a very different position here compared to earlier examples and positions herself as someone with bilingual competency.

## **5.6 Language and culture discourse**

The interviewees often speak of language and culture as inseparable phenomena. Their talk also reflects that language is culture and culture is language. The discourse of language and culture focuses on the relation between the two phenomena, where English is seen to reflect the culture and worldview of primarily the NS societies. As a result, the participants seem to distance themselves from the NS cultures and instead highlight their Finnish identities. Interestingly, some of them are also able to construct new subject positions in English, i.e. as world citizens.

### **5.6.1 Language as an embodiment of culture**

The participants often regard language as an enactment and embodiment of culture and seem to believe that the two cannot be meaningfully separated. Four of the interviewees say implicitly or explicitly that they have not properly learnt the cultural context of English since they have not lived in an English-speaking country. In other words, they do not have a special relationship with the language and culture. Saara is an exception because she has lived in the U.K. for four months as an exchange student. However, she does not demonstrate a strong

affiliation towards the British culture and talks both positively and negatively about it. Furthermore, all of the participants seem to think that the English language is inseparably tied with the British and U.S. cultures, because, for example, in Nigeria or India people speak more than one language. The ideology of ‘one language equals to one country’ seems to live strongly in the minds of the participants. In other words, English is seen as the property of the traditional inner circle countries, which is based on a monolingual ideology (Baker 2009b). This is in contrast with what scholars, such as Baker (2009a; 2009b), have noted that the straightforward link between the English language and the traditional inner circle English-speaking countries is uncalled for, due to the increased use of English and intercultural communication in which ELF speakers use elements of their own L1 culture.

Many of the interviewees seem to think that language is an inseparable part of culture and much more than just a means of communication (cf. the ‘instrument’ discourse), as the examples in this chapter illustrate. Some of them seem to believe that language is a window to another culture, such as Laura in extract 52:

(52)L: [...] kielessä on niin paljon just niitä sanontoja ja niit semmosii niinku. se raottaa niinku ihan oikeesti sitä niitten miten ne niinkun jäsentää maailmaa [...] mun mielestä sanonnat on hyvä esimerkki esimerkiks koska ne on kuitenkin aika erilaisia kielestä riippuen. niin niitten ymmärtäminen avaa aika paljon sit sitä muuta et mitä siellä kaikkee on. milloinen se yhteiskunta on ollut. ja mimmonen se ehkä on nyt

Laura argues that language, such as English, has many features, such as idioms, that open a window, or help to understand the worldview of its speakers and culture. She believes that idioms are a good example because they vary in every language and by understanding them one is capable of understanding how the society is and has been in the past. Laura speaks of language in general and when the interviewer asks her if she believes it is true also for English, Laura says that she would rather connect the Whorfian idea of linguistic relativism to languages that she has studied less and which are more exotic. She points out that English feels more familiar now, which signals ‘ownership’ of the language.

Nevertheless, when the interviewer asks her what would she like to learn, Laura mentions in extract 53 that it would be nice to expand vocabulary, idioms and spoken language because that is what the NSs speak:

(53)L: [...] sanaston laajeneminen ja semmoset niinku sanonnat ja semmonen puhekieliisyys. se ois mun mielestä kans kiva. koska kuitenkin niinku sitten monet puhuu. ei ne välttämättä puhu sitä täydellistä

kirjakieltä vaan enemminkin sitä puhekieltä. ja mun mielestä siin vasta pääsee sisään siihen kulttuuriinkin

Laura points out that spoken language is a gateway into another culture because many locals do not necessarily speak perfect standard language. She has demonstrated also elsewhere a desire to learn from the NSs. Laura has mentioned that her English should be even stronger if she was to consider herself as a bilingual speaker and says that it could become stronger if she, for example, lived in an English-speaking country. This is something that almost all of the interviewees say, because of the link they see between the English language and the traditional inner circle English-speaking countries.

In extract 54, Kaisa also implies that English is the property of the traditional inner circle countries and points out that she has not learnt so much about its cultural context to be able to identify with it.

- (54) K: [...] kieli se ei oo niinku pelkästään mulle ainakaan niinku irallinen koodikieli enää [...] et nuin vaan voi vaihtaa. vaan se on se koko kulttuuri siinä ympärillä ja se koko niinku ajattelutapa. et siinä mielessä sitä niinku ois oppinut enemmän. et se ehkä englannin kielellä englannista mä en oo just oppinut semmosta kulttuurikontekstia niin paljon kun just taas ranskasta ja saksasta kun mä oon niinku elänyt niissä maissa jonkun aikaa myös ja  
 I: sä et koskaa oo ollu elänyt englanninkielisessä maassa mutta ootko matkustanut kummiskin englannin?  
 K: no Intiassa mutta että en niinku. no Nigeria ja Intia on sellasia jossa niinku puhutaan äidinkielenä englantia. mutta se on varmaan hyvin erilaista kuin jossain Englannissa tai Usassa. et siinä mielessä nii on vähän erilainen suhde ehkä englanttiin. et se on enemmän sitä niinku mitä on nähnyt tai kuullut jostain. mut ei oo ite kokenu sitä kulttuurikontekstia niin vahvasti. no onhan se Intia ja Nigeriaki [ne puhuvat] niinku äidinkielenään englantti mutta että siellä on paljon muitakin kieliä

In the extract Kaisa mentions that she no longer regards language as a separate code that you can switch whenever you like, but rather it is an embodiment of the whole culture and a complete way of thinking (cf. ‘instrument’ discourse). She, however, points out that she has not learnt so much about the cultural context of English as in French and German because she has lived in those countries but has not live in an English-speaking country. Kaisa mentions that she has visited India and Nigeria but considers them different from the UK or the US because they speak more than one language as a mother tongue. She seems to regard the UK and the US as monolingual countries. Kaisa says that she has *perhaps a bit different relationship to English* because she has not experienced the cultural context so strongly. Her experiences of culture come from what she has seen and heard somewhere else. Kaisa uses, however, the words ‘perhaps’ and ‘a bit’ to signal some level of uncertainty. She has mentioned earlier in extract 3 that she relates to English more as *a tool of communication*.

The extract exemplifies that Kaisa has not developed a strong affiliation with the English-speaking cultures.

In extract 55, Kaisa points out that it is not enough to learn the linguistic system of standard NS English but you need to learn the cultural context to fit in. She has referred to British English as ‘one way’ (*yksi tapa*) of communicating in a cultural context.

(55)K: [...] et esimerkiksi Nigeriassa jos menisin niinku englantilaisittan vaikka puhumaan jollekin niin en sopeutus joukkoon niinku pelkästään sillä. vaan että oikeesti pitäis muuttaa sitä käyttäytymistä ja kaikkee [...] en mä niinku sitä sano et pitäis unohtaa ne omat juuret. mutta mä arvostan sellasta että pystyy sopeutuu eri tilanteisiin ja käyttäytyy eri tilanteissa eri tavalla. et se on niinku rikkautta ja se tuo niinku uusia mahdollisuuksia monissa eri tilanteissa

Kaisa exemplifies this with an example from Africa where she has travelled. If she spoke English to locals in Nigeria in a British way she would not be able to adapt in the community with only knowing the language. Kaisa points out that she does not think that one should forget one’s roots but she says that she appreciates if one can adapt to different contexts and behave differently in different situations. She believes that it is richness and provides new opportunities in many different situations. She positions herself as an interculturally aware person – someone who seems to value multilingualism and multiculturalism. Kaisa talks quite a lot about Africa since she has visited there and has a connection to the country. However, she mentions elsewhere that she does not consider herself yet multicultural, because she still identifies more strongly with the Finnish way of living and communicating.

In extract 56, Maiju draws on the essentialist discourse of language and culture and argues that English is a foreign language for her because even if she used it every day she does not have a connection to the language and culture.

(56)M: [...] et vaikka kuinka hyvin osaisin [englantia] mut en mä uskoisi et siitä ikinä tulis mun ajatusmaailmassa toista kieltä vaikka sen osaisikin. niinku ehkä jos mä asuisin siellä maassa tosi kauan niinku jossain englannin kielisessä maassa niin silloin sen vois jollain tasolla niinku. en mä tiedä et tulisko siitä osa mun identiteettiä mut se vois olla ainakin paljon paljon vahvempi. kun sit siinä et se on mulle oikeesti vaan koulu niinku kouluopetuksen varassa. tai no siitäkin voi keskustella et onko se koulussa opittua vai itseopittua. mutta niinku periaatteessa et ei oo sellaista tarttumapintaa siihen niinku kieleen ja kulttuuriin

Maiju does not believe that English could ever become her second language even if she knew it well. She adds that perhaps it could on some level if she lived in an English speaking country (UK or USA) for a very long time. She seems uncertain whether English could even



become part of her identity. Maiju argues that English is a foreign language that she has mainly learnt at school although she points out that it is a subject to an argument if she learnt it at school or outside of school on her own. In any case, she points out that she does not have any contact with the English language and culture. For her language, culture and identity seem interrelated and cannot be meaningfully separated. Moreover, she implies that she does not have a special relationship with English as she has not lived in an English-speaking country. She accepts this representation of culture and language and positions herself in it as a foreign language user of English. It is noteworthy that Maiju negotiates a different identity in extract 49 as a bilingual speaker – someone who has acquired bilingual competency later in life.

Saara is the only one who has lived in the UK before. In extract 57, similarly to Kaisa and Maiju, she mentions that she would like to move to England again to learn the language better. She, however, questions the popular belief that language and culture cannot be meaningfully separated.

(57) S: no siis haluisin muuttaa [Englantiin] silleen että oppisin sen kielen. ja siis ei mulla mitään niinku brittiläistä kulttuuria vastaan ole mut ei mulla semmosta suurta intohimo kulttuuria oppia vaan nimenomaan sit se kieli. mutta tottakai niinku siihen kyl kieli on osa kulttuuria siis sinällään. mutta että niinku mä sanoin se on vaan väline. niin tota silleen ois ihan mielenkiintoista oppia myös tavallaan niistä perinteistä. koska kyllähän jos miettii sanoja tai muuta niin onhan nekin usein alkuperäisesti niinku jotenkin kulttuurista tulleita. et miten ne mielletään ne sanat tai. mutta mut tota mut ei mulla palavaa haluaa välttämättä siihen brittiläiseen kulttuuriin muuten ole päästä sisälle. mutta siis jos jossakin maassa asuu tottakaihan se on hyvä sitä oppia

Saara says explicitly that she does not have the passion to learn the British culture so much as the language. She adds that of course language is part of culture as such and says that it would be interesting to learn also about the traditions in order to understand the origins of words and how they are understood. It is clear that she does not aspire a British cultural identity but rather a native-like proficiency in English. She has developed an affiliation with the English language but criticizes the culture.

### **5.6.2 Speaking English compared to speaking Finnish**

Interestingly, some of the interviewees are able to negotiate new subject positions in English. To illustrate this, Tiina and Maiju in extracts 58 and 59 presented below explicitly say that they are different when speaking English in comparison to speaking Finnish. It is noteworthy that Tiina is positioned by the interviewer to compare herself; whereas Maiju makes the

comparison on her own. In extract 58, Tiina says that she is clearly ‘braver’ (*reippaampi*) and ‘more carefree’ (*huolettomampi*) in English.

(58) I: entä sitten ootko samanlainen puhuja kun puhut suomeks tai kun puhut englanniks?

T: no englanniks mä oon selkeesti semmonen niinku reippaampi ja silleen huolettomampi. mietin paljon vähemmän mitä sanon et aaks voinko mä sanoo näin. ja et vaikutanko mä nyt tyhmältä vai fiksummalta. niin paljon huolettomampi [englanniksi]

I: ok mistä sä luulet et se johtuu?

T: no ehkä siitä että tavallaan se ylipäänsä on oppinut puhuun englantii se on vaatinut et jossain vaiheessa on oppinut olla välittämättä et meneeks oikein tai fiksusta. se on jäänyt päälle tavallaan. kuitenkin englanninkielisillä maililla enempi kulttuuri on semmonen et kelle tahansa voi puhuu ja niinku mitä vaan. niin sitten ehkä siihen myös samaistuu myös siihen silloin kuin puhuu sitä kieltä

Tiina says that in English she thinks less of what she can say, if she can say so, and if she seems stupid or smarter. In Finnish she would consider those things more often. Tiina uses a metaphor that perhaps speaking English to no-one in particular is comparable to speaking Finnish with friends. The fact that she has learnt English has required at some point that she stops caring whether she speaks correctly or smartly and that attitude has stayed on. Moreover, she points out that the culture in the English-speaking countries is more of the like where one can speak to no-one in particular and whatever and she says that perhaps she also identifies with that when she speaks English. She has developed a new subject position in English which is that of a braver and more relaxed speaker.

Maiju’s extended answers in extract 59 and 60 are quite similar to those of Tiina. Maiju says that she has noticed that she speaks Finnish differently than English and that something changes in her but she is not sure what except that one needs to speak English differently than Finnish. Her uncertainty is signaled through the words ‘perhaps’, ‘I don’t know’ and ‘a bit’.

(59) M: [...] kyl mä oon sen huomannut et mä puhun erilailla suomee kun englantia. et kyl mussa joku muuttuu. etten tottakai äänenpainot ja tämmöset. mut sit välillä myöskin ehkä se. no kun englantii pitää puhuu kuitenkin eri tavalla kuin sit suomee tai

I: tuleeks jotain tarkkoja miten sä tavallaan muutut?

M: [...] mä oon miettinyt. tiedostan kun se tapahtuu. mut se et mitä siinä niinku tapahtuu. niin en mä tiedä. tulisko musta vähän positiivisempi tai silleen niinku mun semmonen valoisampi [puoli] [...] et jotenkin varmaan mä luulen et mun äänenkorkeus vähän muuttuu [...]

I: entäs onks niinku aktiivisempi kun puhuu englantia kuin puhuu suomea vai?

M: [...] no ehkä silleen jos pääsee siihen flowhun. niin selkee ero et sit mä niinkun englantilaisittain reagoin siihen miten toinen puhuu. et just niinku kaikki yeah that’s great niinku et ja sit silleen. ja just koska ehkä jotenkin se on niinku tarttunut niiltä natiiveilta. et se semmonen response siihen mitä toinen puhuu niin se on ihan eri kuin sit suomeks puhuu niinku. ja et ei se ei oo ettei välttämättä sano mitään. ja sit enkuks kun puhuu vaik se ei olis natiivi jos se on joku jonka puhuu englantii niin kyl mä ehkä enemmän silleen rohkasen ja niinku jotenkin sellasta niinku. jännää

Maiju first relates the change to intonation and the fact that English is spoken differently than Finnish. The fact that Maiju herself begins to compare herself indicates that she is aware of the difference. She says that she might be a little more positive or somehow optimistic or brighter when she speaks English. She thinks that the pitch of her voice changes a bit and perhaps it is a bit higher when she speaks English. When the interviewer asks whether she is more active in English than in Finnish Maiju replies that perhaps as she listens to somebody speaking English she shows her response to what she hears in an English way, for example, by a response *yeah that's great*. She thinks that she has perhaps adopted that from the NSs and her response to what she hears is completely different in Finnish. In Finnish she would not necessary say anything. Even if it was not a native English speaker but somebody who speaks English Maiju says that she perhaps encourages them more.

(60) I: tuntuuks se omalta jutulta?

M: [...] mä ehkä muutun silloin kun mä puhun sitä englantia. niin se ehkä niinku liittyy siihen sitten ettei se tunnu siltä et se olis toinen persona. mut sit se vaan se tapa olla vuorovaikutuksessa muuttuu koska kielikin muuttuu. koska se on sen kielen luontaista. niinku se kuuluu siihen kieleen niin sitten. mut se on ihan toisaalta se on hauskaakin. ja toisaalta mä oon siinä ihan sinutkin. jotenkin musta tuntuu et se on mun joku kansainvälinen osa itsestäni tai semmonen. et sitten niinku et reagoi paljon vahvemmin [...]

Maiju does not have to think of it anymore but it has become something automatic for her. She says that she has spoken with the NSs, listened to them, and learnt from them. She further points out that she does not feel like it is her *second persona* but rather a way to interact in the language, which changes when the language changes, because it is characteristic of the language. She points out that it can be fun and she feels like it is *an international part* of her identity when she reacts more strongly to what she hears. The fact that she speaks English in ELF context has not only given her the access to speak the language but also to learn intercultural skills. She is part of the international family so to say.

Laura's talk in extract 61 shows similar characteristics in that in some situations she positions herself differently as a speaker of English than a speaker of Finnish.

(61) L: no aa no jossain tilanteissa esimerkiksi niinku jos vaikka pitää koulutusta englanniksi ni must tuntuu välillä et mä oon paljon ammattimaisempi kuin suomex. mikä on aika hassu ajatus. mut mä oon aatellut et se saattaa johtua just siitä et näitä AIESEC juttuja on helpompi ehkä selittää englanniks. niin siit tulee semmonen se diskurssi on paljon ammattimaisempi. mut sitte jos mietti niinku mut en mä usko että sit niinku tommosessa tavallisissa tilanteissa. niin sitten mä oon aika samanlainen ehkä siin et se kielenkäyttö on aika samanlaista. et toki englannin kielessä ei kuulu mun tota murre mutta suomen kielessä välillä kuuluu aika paljonkin. että tota semmonen ero ehkä

Laura mentions that when she delivers trainings in English she sometimes feels that she is *much more professional* than in Finnish. She adds that it is *a funny thought* that causes some amusement. She argues that it might be because she finds it easier to explain AIESEC things in English, and therefore her discourse is much more professional. On the other hand, in everyday situations Laura thinks that she is quite similar and she uses the languages quite in a similar way although in English one cannot hear her Finnish dialect. She says that in Finnish one can hear her regional dialect quite a lot. It seems that Laura has developed a subject position or a sense of professionalism in English.

Unlike Tiina and Maiju, Kaisa indicates in extract 62 that her speaking of English is rather similar to speaking of Finnish although she finds it difficult to answer the question and mentions that she has not thought about it before.

(62)K: [...] enemmän mä näkisin sen just semmosena niinku joko sosiaalisena tilanteena. tai sit niinku muuten siihen asiaan liittyvinä tilanteina et kuinka mä niinkun käytän sitä kieltä. ku siihen että niinku mikä kieli se on. mut toki varmaan sekin [kieli] vaikuttaa. että myös se että puhunko mä niinku omalla murteella suomeks niinku savoksi vai puhunko tälläistä niinku yleiskieltä [...] [perheen kanssa] käyttäytyy silleen niinku enemmän savolaisittain jotenkin ja vääntää kieltä ja puhuu silleen paljon hitaammin [...] mutta en mä oikeestaan aatellut silleen vieraisissa kielissä. siis nyt jos verrattuna saksan tai ranskan kielellä pitäis puhua niin niissä olis mulla se kynnyks et puhuisin vähemmän. mut englanti on nyt jotenkin päällä se kieli et silleen niinku mä sitä ajattele oikein ollenkaan [...]

Kaisa argues that she connects the difference in her behavior more to social situations than the language itself, which affects what kind of role she takes in a conversation. However, Kaisa's answer has similar characteristics with Laura's answer in that she brings up the point of speaking differently in her local dialect in Finnish, which cannot be heard in her English. She speaks the Savonian dialect of Finnish and has noticed the difference between the Finnish language if she speaks her local dialect or standard Finnish. She alters her pronunciation (*vääntää kieltä*), speaks slower and has more breaks and silence. Kaisa has not thought about the issue when speaking foreign languages. She mentions that English is 'on' (*päällä*) and active and she does not have a similar threshold to speak it as French or German. Kaisa adds that she does not really think about English at all. She positions herself as a competent speaker of English. However, it seems that she is not aware of how English affects her identity. Kaisa has mentioned earlier in extract 2 about the fact that she is not always aware in which language she is reading or speaking and English is just another tool for her to communicate.

In extract 63, Saara's answers also show that she positions herself differently as a speaker of English than a speaker of Finnish. However, in contrast to others, Saara positions herself negatively as a speaker of English with deficiencies.

(63) I: onko eroa siinä kun puhut englantia ja suomen kieltä?

S: on

I: mikä ero?

S: no siis on suomi paljon tulee luonnollisemmin ja sit just semmonen puhuin nokkeluus ja semmonen sanavarasto. et tota kyl englannissa varmasti on kuitenkin vielä suppeampi se sanavarasto. ja sit saa hakea sanoja joskus. ehkä se liittyy yleisesti persoonaan. et kyl ne sit sielt tulee mutta tota ei tuu kaikki silleen yhtä nopeesti ehkä [...] ehkä on hauskeempi suomeksi mutta tota mutta en mä nyt muuten näe et on välttämättä eroo

Saara says that Finnish comes to her much more naturally and that she definitely still has a narrower vocabulary in English than in Finnish. She argues that she has to search for words sometimes and that perhaps they do not come to her as fast in English. Saara also argues that perhaps she is funnier in Finnish but does not necessarily see other differences. In her opinion her personality comes forth more strongly in Finnish because it is based on the funny phrases and when she does not know them in English it is more difficult because of that. That is to say, she cannot perform in a similar way if she were speaking Finnish and she has to give up something of herself as a language speaker when speaking English. This comes up in an earlier example too (extract 45). In contrast to Kaisa, Saara positions herself here as a deficient user of English.

## 6 DISCUSSION

In this chapter, I will first discuss the findings of the present study in the light of earlier research. In the analysis, I identified six discourses that the participants used when they talked about English and bi-/multilingualism in their lives and I have shown how these discourses become 'building material' for the participants' identities as users of English. In this chapter, I will discuss the identities that get constructed in these discourses (2<sup>nd</sup> research question). I will then reflect critically on the study and finally discuss its implications for teaching English particularly in the multinational workplace.

## 6.1 Discussion on the findings

The discourses I identified earlier were the ‘instrument’ discourse, ‘normative’ discourse, ‘variation’ discourse, ‘empowerment’ discourse, ‘bilingualism’ discourse and ‘culture’ discourse. Characteristic of the ‘instrument’ discourse is that English is regarded as a tool or a commodity. The participants seem to think of English simply as part of their work, and hence do not attach any deeper meaning to it. However, when they speak about where and when they use English they often position themselves as competent users of English both in professional and everyday matters (see also Majanen 2008). The ‘normative’ discourse, on the other hand, locates the language and bilingual competency under a critical examination. The participants judge their language skills less favorably against the standard NS English norms and tend to regard their bilingual competency as a shortcoming. Moreover, they tend to position themselves as deficient users of English and demonstrate a desire to learn more from NSs (see also Hujala 2009; Jenkins 2007; Pienimäki 2014; Virkkula and Nikula 2010). In contrast, when the participants draw on the ‘variation’ discourse they are likely to describe their use of English in more favorable terms – irrespective of the NS ideals. They take ownership of their English and some of the participants discuss creative ways of using the language to adapt to the situation. They tend to position themselves as skillful and legitimate users of English in ELF settings. The ‘empowerment’ discourse demonstrates this as well. The participants compare themselves more favorably to other NNSs of English and without an exception they position themselves as competent users of English. Some of the participants start to question the superiority of NSs in ELF context, which supports Sung’s (2015) findings. The ‘bi- and multilingualism’ discourse is the most interesting in terms of controversy. Almost all of the interviewees first imply that ‘English is not part of them’ and emphasize the role of the Finnish language as the basis of their identities. The discourse on bilingualism, nevertheless, offers the participants the opportunity to redefine bilingualism and their bilingual identities. Three out of five of the interviewees identify as bilingual speakers. Last but not least the ‘culture’ discourse reveals the participants’ sense of detachment from the NS cultures and demonstrate a strong affiliation with the Finnish identity. However, some of the participants are able to find new subject positions in English through this discourse as global citizens. It is noteworthy that the different and sometimes contradictory discourses offered different sites for identity work. In this chapter, I will focus my discussion on the multiple and fluid identities that the participants construct.

Firstly, despite their good English skills, all of the interviewees nevertheless feel inadequate, at least in some situations and position themselves as ‘insecure’ or ‘deficient’ users of English. Virkkula and Nikula (2010) report similar feelings of inadequacy by Finnish engineering students. Hujala (2009), Majanen (2008) and Pienimäki (2014) speak of learner identities when the informants demonstrate a desire to learn from NSs. The participants of the present study point out vocabulary and pronunciation as their weaknesses in comparison to NSs of English. It is noteworthy that feelings of inadequacy materialize in discourses about ‘correctness’ of English, linguistic purism, standard NS English ideology and self-expression. It is also noteworthy that all of the participants regard British English as the ideal form of English, which is the variation they have been taught at school. As the data demonstrates, in contrast to recent ELF literature, the participants of the present study tended to view NS English as the ideal norm and the target of proficiency, which supports the findings of Hujala (2009). I did not ask it from the participants, however, it is likely, as Hujala (2009) has reported, that they would not consider their own English as a good model in FL education. It is difficult to prove it, however, feelings of inadequacy can result from the participants’ experiences of language teaching at school and the ideology of a single variety that was taught at the time.

Furthermore, all of the participants mention that code-switching is counterproductive or bad. Many of them mention that work related vocabulary is more available to them in English and that they would prefer English in work related matters, even if everybody spoke Finnish, in order to avoid mixing of the languages. Nevertheless, almost all of them code-mix also during the interview. It is striking, however, how the talk about linguistic purism can position the speakers in a negative light. Maiju describes how she feels that she is in-between the languages and does not speak either language properly. She refers to bilingualism as a “truncated competence” which she also dismisses it as “having no language” (Blommaert et al. 2005: 197). Maiju thinks these incidents have increased since she has used both languages more actively. She tends to view language skills as individuals’ property and problems of bilingualism as problems of individuals. Maiju is the only one who explicitly talks about the problem while the other interviewees speak about it more moderately, however, they also mention how difficult it is to express oneself in two languages. Lehto (2013) reports similar feelings by two Finns living in Japan who considered their Finnish bad when they mixed it with Japanese and English words.

What also emerged from the data was the theme of struggle for self-expression in English. All of the interviewees mention that they have situations where they cannot express themselves as well as they would wish. Kaisa, for example, mentions that she does not have *creative language*; whereas Maiju talks about a personal *crisis* of not being able to express herself as she wishes. The interviewees show a desire to improve their English and almost all of them mention that they had thought of living in an English-speaking country, namely UK or the USA to learn the language better. All of them mention vocabulary and refer to a more *colorful* language. Hujala (2009) also mentions that her informants desired more artistic language skills. It seems that the fact that in working life emphasis is given to the simple and direct forms of language, for the sake of just getting the message passed, seems to leave little room for self-expression and identity construction in English. Maiju, for example, mentions that more figurative expressions in English often feel as if fine-drawn distinctions that are not used in ELF communication; whereas in Finnish she feels it is a richness to speak in figuratively. All of the interviewees imply that they try to make an effort to use more colourful language at times.

Secondly, the most available identity option for the interviewees is clearly that of a user of English. In general, if the participants draw upon standard NS English ideology or English as a foreign language, they position themselves or get positioned as learners or deficient users of English. It is, however, noteworthy that the discourse about 'inadequacy' permits only 'one side of the coin'. The interviewees also talk to a great length about their ability to use English in everyday and work related matters. I even identified one of the discourses as the 'empowerment' discourse in which the participants compare themselves to other L2 speakers in ELF contexts. The findings demonstrate that all of the interviewees judged their competency in English better than that of other Europeans based on their level of pronunciation, grammar and fluency. Saara, Kaisa and Laura even appraise the Finnish education system for their good skills. Furthermore, all of the interviewees discreetly mention that they are better than the average Finnish speakers of English. Nevertheless, none of the interviewees assign any prestige to their English skills, which might result from the fact that they are used to people speaking English around them (cf. Lee et al. 2010). In their study Lee et al. (2010) found out that the Malaysian students of English did not praise their English, but they were aware that their ability to use it was useful, pragmatic and valuable. The 'capital' discourse reveals similar findings in the present study. The participants regard English valuable academically, socially and economically. It also seems to be clear in the present data



that the participants' linguistic identities as L2 speakers of English are constructed relationally by comparison with the perceived linguistic competences of other L2 interlocutors and native speakers, as demonstrated by Virkkula (2006) and Sung (2015).

Virkkula and Nikula (2010) define a legitimate English speaker as someone who has ownership over his/her English. It is an ambiguous topic in the present study. On the one hand, the interviewees speak of their English skills with confidence, in particular, in ELF settings. They feel they are often understood and they seem to appraise the fact that they do not mix L1 excessively with L2. When the interviewer asks which variation they speak, three of the interviewees mention that they speak English with a Finnish touch. Tiina goes as far as to appraise the features of Finnish accent. Furthermore, Kaisa is able to question the popular belief of NSs being better speakers of English by asserting that she at least speaks English plainly so that others can understand her. Maiju, on the other hand, states that good English skills are those that one can communicate clearly and understandably. Furthermore, Maiju and Tiina imply that Finnish accent is more understandable than other European accents. There are plenty of examples where the interactants claim ownership over English as legitimate speakers. Kaisa, for example, mentions that she has gained a good command of practical English and all of the interviewees seem to agree that they do 'just fine' in English at work. Tiina also mentions that she has noticed that English has given her the confidence that she could learn any other language to the same level and be able to work in that language. On the other hand, the data supports the findings of previous studies in that there exists a hierarchy of accents (Jenkins 2007; Pilkinton-Pihko 2010; Sung 2015). To illustrate this, the participants of the present study seem to regard the NS accents as more admirable although they also seem to be aware that in ELF context it is not necessarily relevant at all. For example in Finland, the participants seem to believe that English is regarded more as a tool of communication than what accent you speak. Saara is the only one who explicitly says that she nevertheless aspires British accent. She attaches more economical value to British English than to other accents. Saara, for example, mentions that if she got to decide whether she would hire a NNS or NS, she would hire the latter. It is however noteworthy that she does not aspire to become a member of the British cultural community. All of the interviewees identify as Finnish speakers of English, but they nevertheless aspire a more native-like proficiency in English since they believe that there is always space for improvement (see also Leppänen et al. 2011).

Furthermore, there are instances where the participants are able to negotiate their identities as competent users of English through the discourse of ‘variation’. They demonstrate an ability to adapt to situations and to go as far as to absorb linguistic and cultural features of other English accents to create rapport with their audience, as Maiju illustrates. English is seen in this discourse as a flexible and pragmatic resource and the participants demonstrate how it does not matter if their language is flawless or not. This is in contrast with the ‘normative’ discourse. Tiina, for example, mentions how her vocabulary has improved since she has learnt different ways of using verbs and adjectives from other NNSs.

Thirdly, it is noteworthy that all of the interviewees were not able to negotiate themselves bilingual identities. Two out of five conclude that bilingualism is still a privilege of those that have been born with two languages or have acquired a mother tongue later in life by living in that country. It is noteworthy that none of the interviewees talk about English as their mother tongue. Kaisa and Laura emphasize the fact that both languages should be as strong and close to one’s heart as a mother tongue if they were to consider themselves bilinguals. They say that this could happen if they lived in an English-speaking country or lived with someone who spoke English as a mother tongue. This is, of course, a matter of definition. Yet it is contradictory because both of them mention during the interview that English comes naturally to them. Kaisa even defines English as a second language, but concludes that it is not her mother tongue and she does not have such a special relationship with English as she has not lived in an English-speaking country.

Maiju, Tiina and Saara, on the other hand, are able to redefine bilingualism, which opens up new possibilities for them for identification as bilingual speakers of English. Maiju, for example, first mentions that she does not think that English could ever become part of her as such. However, later when she draws upon the ‘culture’ discourse she comes to recognize that she changes when she uses English and she finally concludes that English is *an international part* of her. When the interviewer asks her whether she is bilingual Maiju says that she could say so based on the fact that she can switch between the languages on the fly. Maiju, Tiina and Saara conclude that if they can redefine bilingualism on their own terms as something they have gained later in life they can say that they are bilingual. Tiina also recognizes how English has empowered her to be more care-free when she speaks. This exemplifies how she is able to negotiate a new subject position in English as a more relaxed and chilled interlocutor.

Finally, some of the interviewees imply more strongly that English is a resource for communication but not for identification, which is in line with what House (2003) has noted earlier. They do not seem to be aware of the notion discussed earlier that language is not separate from them as individuals, but rather it is in and through discourse that people constitute themselves as speakers of 2<sup>nd</sup> language (Benson et al. 2012; Benwell and Stokoe 2006; Blommaert 2005; Norton 2000). I noticed that Saara, Laura and Kaisa seemed less aware of their 2<sup>nd</sup> language identities, or how English affected their identities; whereas Maiju and Tiina had thought of the issue before and were more aware of how English affected their identities. The topic itself seemed difficult to everyone, which is also signaled by the participants' wobbly answers and level of uncertainty. Nevertheless, the data demonstrates that the interviewees are able to create new subject positions in English and to construct multiple identities in different contexts ranging from foreign language users, to legitimate users of English and to interculturally aware world citizens.

## **6.1 Critical reflection of the study**

The present data was based on five individual interviews. In the scope of a master's thesis, the data provided plenty of examples to analyze – so many that it was difficult to decide which to include in the analysis. However, having the interviews as the only data I relied solely on the participants' self-reports of their experiences. It is economical in the sense of time, as Rapley (2007) points out, however, the downside of it is that I could not discuss how the participants formed, ascribed and co-constructed and thus made relevant those identity categories during naturally occurring ELF communication (cf. Jenks 2013). To gain richer data one could have recorded naturally occurring interactions, such as official and unofficial meetings, random encounters, national and international conferences, phone calls, reports or emails which are all practices that the participants engage in daily in English and Finnish. This could be valuable information in a future study because all of the interviewees were not aware of or had not thought about the influence of English on their identities. On the positive side, I got the interviewees to think out loud about topics they had not thought about before although naturally occurring data or a group interview could have validated some of the findings of the individual interviews. Alternatively, I could have also conducted a subsequent individual interview with the participants at the end of their term in AIESEC to compare how

their identities had changed and to validate some of the findings. Furthermore, it is good to remember that the interviews are contextually situated, which means that the interviewees' answers are also affected by the interviewer's questions. The participants may reproduce the often unspoken norms, rules and expectations of the specific context and it might shape their actions and interactions to fit in the context (Pomerantz 2000; Rapley 2007). Based on the five interviews one could not draw any generalizations from it to concern Finland or the whole world. Hence, the present study offers a good case study of the significance English can have within its users and illustrates what kinds of possibilities for identity work and discourse can arise with working in a multicultural and –lingual environment. Furthermore, I hope that the rich analysis on the semi-structured individual interviews will provide the reader and the research field with yet another perspective and perhaps a fuller understanding of identities in ELF context.

AIESEC turned out to be an interesting research setting for the present study since it is a highly multicultural working environment in Finland. However, it is so unique that one cannot find a similar culture elsewhere in Finland, and thus it is difficult to make any generalizations to concern other contexts. The downside of it is, indeed, that it is not comparable to other Finnish corporates because it is a non-profit organization and run by students. It cannot be compared to a study abroad context because the interviewees live in their own culture and their ethnicity is that of the mainstream population. It does not compare to university or school contexts because English is used for the purposes of work rather than studies. Furthermore, in many aspects the interviewees can be seen as privileged people: they have a good command of English, an international job and a world of possibilities open to them. Consequently, the context is not comparable to a situation of minority groups. AIESEC is a unique context which can, however, provide valuable information of the millenials and their possible linguistic identities in the working life. Furthermore, I noticed that I could have asked more about AIESEC, about its multicultural working culture and how the interviewees felt about it instead of asking about the British and American cultures that seemed irrelevant for the participants in the end. This way I could have tackled even more the influence that working in an international environment had on the participants' sense of self. The interviewees did not know much about the NS cultures and did not identify with them as strongly as I thought they might have. For most of them the NS cultures were something they had experienced through popular culture, and thus had no personal experiences of it although many of them mentioned that they had worked with NSs in AIESEC. It is definitely an

interesting topic to investigate further how the participants link language and national identity as the participants of the present study also showed strong affinity towards being Finnish.

The interview questions focused a lot on the English language only, and thus the discussion centered on bilingualism instead of multilingualism. The interviewees spoke at least two other languages and it would have been interesting to include questions about them in the conversation instead of a total dismissal. This is a possible topic for a future research, such as discussed by Sirkeinen (2008) in her study of multilingual discourses and identity construction in a multilingual Finnish-Spanish family. Furthermore, ELF was not a topic of the interviews either, but I could have asked the interviewees to provide their opinions on ELF identities which would have required them to report on what they themselves believed are the most relevant issues in ELF (see e.g. Hujala 2009). Furthermore, I could have expanded the notion of language with, for example, the notion of translanguaging (Li 2010) because I also talked about languages as separate systems, and thus emphasized the view of bilingualism as two different codes in the interviews.

Identity is a complex topic of investigation. The analysis of discourses, however, turned out to be an appropriate method of analysis to the task in hand: not only was the focus on individual agency but also on social structures. Of course, someone else could have interpreted the discourses differently, which is the nature of qualitative analysis. In order to identify which capital-D discourses the participants employed in their talk I relied on earlier language and identity research. Some of the discourses were more abstract than others and some of them I identified as language ideologies instead of discourses. It could have been interesting to analyze the data only from the perspective of language ideologies (e.g. Pilkinton-Pihko 2010). It could have been useful to narrow it down since now the analysis of discourses on language and bilingualism seems broad. A narrower perspective could be more fruitful in terms of the discussion of the findings since it inquires a proper discussion on the contradictory discourses, dominance and power relations. I chose discourse analysis as the main method of the present study because the interviewees seemed to focus more on general topics, even if they told their personal stories.

## 6.2 Implications for teaching in the multinational workplace

The present study was conducted to be able to discuss what kinds of 2<sup>nd</sup> language identities the participants discursively construct in a lingua franca context and what the possible implications are for language education and policy making in Finland. It is, of course, difficult to say based on the present study whether the participants' insecurities in English and bilingualism result from language education in Finland. However, based on the results of the present study it is suggestive that standard NS English ideology and the 'normative' discourse offer less favorable identity options for the informants to identify as users of English. Furthermore, valuing the knowledge of bilingual speakers may have a positive impact on their language development and identities also in work contexts (Kanno 2000). In the lines of Norton (2000), who also drew on poststructuralist theories of language and identity and offered new perspectives on language learning and teaching, I ask in this chapter, how the findings of the present study can inform the teaching of English.

Many ELF scholars have rejected the NS model as an ideal or norm for language learners and promote a more local understanding of ELF (Canagarajah 2006; Jenkins 2009). Taavitsainen and Pahta (2008: 27) speak of English as "a new kind of second language, with new models and goals" in respect to English as a lingua franca (ELF) in Finland. English is, in fact, often learnt informally outside of the classrooms, as also pointed out by some of the participants in the present study. The present study also demonstrates how ingrained the feelings of inadequacy can be if the target of learning is the native-like English. All of the interviewees judged themselves less favorably than NSs; whereas they evaluated their language proficiency more favorably in ELF communication. I agree with Virkkula and Nikula (2010) and Norton and Toohey (2011) that the aim of education should be to help students to appropriate more desirable identities as language users. Norton and Toohey (2011: 415) further argue that "[i]f learners are successful in their bids for more powerful identities, their language acquisition may be enhanced". The findings of the present study also illustrate that there were diverse positions from which the participants were able to understand their place in the world and one of them was a bilingual speaker.

Some of the interviewees demonstrate a good level of awareness of how English has affected their lives and their identities. Others mention that they had not thought about the questions before, however, they found it useful to think about what English is to them. What if people

were more aware and reflective about their language(s) and the world they live in (Kramsch 2012)? Could this be or is it already the future of language education besides acquiring the needed skills to communicate pragmatically and culturally? The participants of the present study demonstrate a good level of both linguistic and intercultural skills as a result of working in multicultural and lingual settings and education. These skills will be valuable to them in their future careers. Language teaching could offer this space for self-reflection as part of studies, so that learners were more aware of who they are when they speak a different language. Consequently, this might give them more confidence to use the language and to express themselves in foreign languages.

## **7 CONCLUSION**

The aim of the present study was to find out what kinds of 2<sup>nd</sup> language identities five Finnish users of English construct in ELF context. The interviewees worked in the national team of AIESEC in Finland at the time of the interviews. AIESEC is a highly multicultural working environment and the participants were chosen in the present study based on the fact that they used English both at work and at home. The data demonstrates that the participants' contact with English is so regular that they emerge as bilinguals. However, instead of taking this as a priori, I wanted to find out what kinds of identities the participants constructed for themselves in the course of the interviews. To do this, I adopted the poststructuralist view of identity as fluid and multiple and analyzed identities with the method of critical discourse analysis (CDA). I asked what discourses are available to them for identification when the interviewees talked about their experiences of English and bi/multilingualism. I was curious of what kinds of identities become constructed in these discourses and through other discursive resources. The data comprised of five individual semi-structured interviews that were conducted in Finnish and translated into English. The findings of the present study will be useful for educators and policy makers because they shed light on the role and significance of English in Finland and the relationship between ELF and identity.

The findings of the present study also demonstrate that language learning can open up new identity options for its users (eg. Menard-Warwick 2005; Park 2012) and that ELF use is not identity neutral (e.g. Virkkula and Nikula 2010; Sung 2015). Furthermore, our ways of talking about language, the discourses and ideologies that we draw on, affect the identities

that are available for us for identification (e.g. Pomerantz 2000; Pavlenko 2002; Pavlenko and Blackledge 2004; Sirkeinen 2008; Pietikäinen and Mäntynen 2009; Virkkula and Nikula 2010), which is also in line with the social constructivist view. For example, the participants of the present study were able to construct more favorable subject positions by some of the discourses (see also McKay and Wong 1996). It is thus noteworthy that the participants' identities were not only constructed and validated based on their level of competency in English (Virkkula and Nikula 2010) or by feedback that they received from others (Jenks 2013) but also on the ways they talked about language and bilingualism (Sirkeinen 2008). Furthermore, the findings demonstrate how the participants were able to deconstruct and to (re)negotiate what bilingualism means to them and some of the interviewees were able to claim new bilingual identities.

I identified six distinct discourses that the participants employed in their talk about English and bilingualism. The discourses I identified were the 'instrument' discourse, 'normative' discourse, 'variation' discourse, 'empowerment' discourse, 'bilingualism' discourse and 'culture' discourse. Through these discourses and other discursive resources the participants constructed multiple and contradictory identities from an incompetent to a legitimate speaker of English. On the one hand, the participants positioned themselves as inadequate language users in discourses of normativism, purism, order and self-expression and compared themselves less favorably against the standard NS English ideology. On the other hand, they embraced their identities as legitimate and empowered speakers of English in ELF interaction in discourses of language as an instrument and variation. These identities were also constructed and negotiated in relation to the perceived linguistic competence of other ELF speakers of different national backgrounds. Furthermore, some of the interviewees showed affinities with other places and communities abroad and were also able to construct identities as global citizens. However, it is noteworthy that all of interviewees were not so conscious about the effects of English on their identities and some of the participants seemed to think of English more as a tool of communication rather than a language of identification. All of the interviewees, nevertheless, embraced their national identities as Finnish speakers of English.

Quite many Finns use English daily at work and in their free-time. English has become an integral part of people's lives; however, most people are not aware of how it affects their lives and sense of self. One of the interviewees says it appropriately: "I have never thought of English this way and perhaps you don't think about it because it is somehow so present."



There are three reasons why it is necessary to do research on the concept of identity in ELF and FL settings. First, it can have far reaching implications on a further reconstruction or at least can increase awareness of the dynamics of the individual and social in the process of foreign language teaching and learning. Educators can adjust better the needs of their students in class and students are accompanied with skills that are valued and needed in the working life. If an understanding of ELF was promoted in ELT, it is likely that students would have more favorable positions as English users and as a result would likely be more confident communicators in ELF situations. Instead of a deficient learner, an individual could see him/herself as a global citizen and a legitimate user of English as proposed by a number of scholars in the field.

The findings of the present study also demonstrate how the participants tend to draw on the predominant discourses of normativism, linguistic purism and ideologies of standard language. However, admiration for near native-speaker competence can inhibit individuals from taking more favorable positions as speakers of English. All of the interviewees wish to have stronger and better skills in English, as Laura says “one always wants to improve [...] one always would like to have it yet better and stronger”. All of them seem to aim for a near native-like or bilingual competence in English. Most of them have confidence in their language skills in professional settings and everyday use; however, they temporarily feel insecure about their uses of English, as the data demonstrates.

Secondly, identity research can have implications in promoting multilingualism and multiculturalism in Finland. Taavitsainen and Pahta (2008) say that it is relevant for cultures to open up to foreign influences and ideas. If we think in essentialist ways of identity or in terms of monolingualism it will be harder to include immigrants in the Finnish society. Taavitsainen and Pahta (2008: 27) further add that “the more naturally a culture glocalizes, i.e. the more it absorbs foreign ideas and global best practices and moulds them with its own traditions, the greater advantage it will have in the flat world”. We need to be more open to appropriate the language of the ‘other’ in the formation of identities and one way is to raise individuals’ awareness and reflectiveness about the fit between their words and the world they live in (Kramsch 2012). Furthermore, concepts such as bi- and multilingualism should be deconstructed and challenged more often, for example, in the media.

Thirdly, identity research is valuable in terms of providing yet another perspective and perhaps a fuller understanding of identities of ELF users. Identities in the new world are changeable, dynamic and influenced by so many aspects other than one's ethnicity and mother language (e.g. Pavlenko 2002). Some of the trends today are: new forms of multilingualism, erosion of national boundaries and identities that are becoming more international. Researchers talk about identities having several different layers, such as local, regional, national and European, with different layers activated in different situations (e.g. Erling 2007). It is important to raise awareness that identities are more multiple, culturally contingent and contextual than has previously been understood. As Blommaert (2005: 75) says, "the social environment of almost any individual would by definition be *polycentric*, with a wide range of crisscrossing centres to which orientations need to be made, and evidently with multiple 'belongings' for individuals (often understood as 'mixed' or 'hybrid identities')". As an implication for further study, identity research could be carried out in a multitude of different contexts. It would be interesting to conduct a similar study at schools, as Huhtala (2009) points out. Based on the findings of the present study the participants showed affinity towards Finnish culture and were more likely to identify as Finns than Europeans. It would also be interesting to research the links between language and national identity in a wider scope.

In conclusion, the present study was an ambitious attempt to cover issues related to identity and language in a lingua franca context. However, I think I have accomplished my aim which was to examine and document the ways in which five Finnish speakers of English construct their identities in discourses, which language discourses are available to them for identification and which identities are foregrounded in this context. It was a difficult task for the interviewees as well as for the researcher, as the data demonstrates. Yet it is an important topic in regard to that individuals do not necessarily think about these issues on their own.

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## APPENDICES

### Appendix 1 Interview questions

Ikä:

Sukupuoli:

Äidinkieli:

Kuinka kauan toiminut AIESEC:ssä:

Opiskelutausta: (pääaine) (sivuaineet)

Yliopisto:

1) Kysymykset kouluajoista:

Minkä ikäisenä aloitit englannin kielen opiskelun?

Missä olet opiskellut englantia ("virallinen" kouluympäristö)?

Entä opitko englantia koulun ulkopuolella/muualla? Missä, miten?

Kuinka monta vuotta opiskelit englantia yhteensä?

Muistatko kokemuksiasi koulusta

- Miltä sinusta tuntui opiskella vierasta kieltä?

Olivatko englannin kielen opettajasi koulussa suomalaisia? Oliko koulussa äidinkielenään englantia puhuvia opettajia? Nyt asiaa ajatellessasi kumpaa olisit toivonut?

Opetettiinko teille jotain englanninkielisten maiden/ englanninkielisestä kulttuurista koulussa?

Mitä muita kieliä opiskelit koulussa? Miltä sinusta tuntui nämä kielet verrattuna englantiin?

## 2) Kysymykset englannin kielen käytöstä:

Puhutko englantia myös suomalaisten kollegojesi kanssa töissä? Miksi/miksi et?

Kommunikoitko mieluummin englanniksi vai suomeksi töissä?

Miksi ja minkälaisissa tilanteissa suosit englantia?

Onko sinusta vaikeampaa vai helpompaa käyttää englantia kuin suomea töissä? Miksi?

Mitkä kielitaidon osa-alueet ovat helppoja/haasteellisia (kuuntelu, lukeminen, puhuminen, kirjoittaminen)? Onko eroa sillä kenen kanssa kommunikoi (esim. natiivien kanssa helpompaa/vaikeampaa)?

Entä milloin käytät englannin kieltä vapaa-ajallasi? Missä ja kenen kanssa?

luetko englanniksi? Minkä tyyppisiä juttuja luet? Minkä takia valitset lukea englanniksi suomen sijaan?

kirjoitatko englanniksi?

katsotko englanninkielisiä ohjelmia tai kuunteletko englanninkielistä radiota?

luetko englanninkielisten ohjelmien käännöksiä suomeksi?

katsotko mieluummin suomen vai englanninkielisiä ohjelmia?

Etsitkö aktiivisesti mahdollisuuksia käyttää englannin kieltä? Miksi/miksi et?

Onko englanti mielestäsi vieraskieli, toinen kieli vai jopa äidinkieli?

Mitä tarkoitat vieraalla kielellä...yms.?

Miksi mielestäsi englanti on vieras/tai toinen kieli yms.?

Kuinka vertaisit omaa englannin kielen taitoasi englantia äidinkielenä puhuviin?

- Mitkä ovat vahvuutesi ja heikkoutesi englannin kielessä?

Oletko mielestäsi oppinut tietyn englannin kielen variaation?

- Esim. Puhutko tiettyä englannin aksenttia/murretta?

Kuinka vertaat omaa englannin kielen taitoasi muihin suomalaisiin englannin käyttäjiin?

Oletko mielestäsi kaksikielinen?

Mitä mielestäsi kaksikielisyys tarkoittaa?

Miksi mielestäsi olet/ tai et ole kaksikielinen?

Mitä hyötyä on kaksikielisydestä (tai englannin osaamisesta) ollut sinulle?

Luuletko että sinusta tulisi hyvä englanti/suomi tulkki? Miksi/miksi ei?

Uskotko, että tulet tarvitsemaan englantia jatkossa ja haluaisitko kehittää englannin kielen taitojasi jatkossa? Miksi/miten?

3) Kysymyksiä kulttuurista:

Matkustatko ulkomailla usein? Minne olet matkustanut?

Missä maissa olet viihtynyt parhaiten?

Oletko asunut ulkomailla (pidempään kuin 2kk)? Missä?

Oletko asunut englanninkielisessä maassa?

Tunnetko olosi kotoisaksi englanninkielisissä maissa? Missä?

Mihin mielestäsi oli/olisi vaikea sopeutua englanninkielisessä kulttuurissa? Mihin oli/olisi helppo sopeutua?

Voisitko harkita muuttavasi suomesta pois pysyvästi?

Mitä jäisit kaipaamaan suomesta?



Oletko ollut vuorovaikutuksessa englanninkieltä äidinkielenään puhuvien ryhmien kanssa?

Oletko tuntenut olosi mukavaksi näissä ryhmissä?

Onko kommunikointi ollut helppoa heidän kanssaan?

Miten määrittelet itsesi, kun olet ulkomailla? (etnisen/kansallisen/kielellisen identiteetin suhteen: eli suomalaiseksi, suomen puhujaksi?)

Onko sinua koskaan luultu natiiviksi englannin puhujaksi, kun olet ollut englantia puhuvissa maissa? Entä muualla?

Ovatko ihmiset yllättyneitä, kun kerrot, että olet suomalainen?

Miten luulet, että käyttädyt eri tavalla, kun puhut englantia tai kun puhut suomea?

Mitä mielestäsi on suomalainen kulttuuri? Entä suomalainen viestintä? Miten luulet erotutko mielestäsi itse tästä suomalaisuuden kuvasta?

Mitä sinä pidät englantilaisena/ amerikkalaisena kulttuurina?

Miten vertaisit itseäsi tähän kuvaukseen englantilaisesta kulttuurista?

Pidätkö itseäsi kaksikulttuurisena?

Voisitko selittää, mitä tarkoitat kaksikulttuurisuudella?

Miksi sinusta tuntuu, että olet / et ole kaksikulttuurinen?

"Kielen oppiminen on kuin avaisi ikkunan uuteen tapaan katsella maailmaa"

Oletko samaa mieltä ja miksi?

Miten luulet, että työskentely englannin kielellä vaikuttaa elämääsi tulevaisuudessa?

## Appendix 2 Interview examples in English

(1) T: at least you get the experience that in principle the working language does not matter. and in principle you could learn some other language to the same level. [would have] more opportunities

(2) K: [...] I don't actually ever think of which language I use for reading. so it is like if I understand I just read and I don't think of which language it is. yeah also when I talk it is difficult to think of what [language] I speak the most. because I rarely think of which language I really even speak. for me it is only communication and somehow you forget which tool is there

(3) K: [...] yeah now and then I have thought that I could live in England or America for a little while. to learn or in Australia or somewhere else so that I would learn a bit about the intonation and that kind of accent a little better. but then it has not been somehow so important. it is more important for me that English is like a tool of communication. I have that relationship [with English] because I have thought somehow. well it depends on what kind of job I will have in the future. but at the moment it feels that it is at least in Finland more a tool of communication than sort of what accent you speak. it can be different if I go somewhere else to work. then it can matter

(4) S: well I would like to move [to England] so that I would learn the language. and I don't have anything against the British culture but I don't [have] the sort of great passion to learn [that] culture but rather specifically the language. but of course language is part of culture as such. but as I said it is only a tool

(5) S: [...] in my opinion language is just like [a tool]. it does not matter which language you use to express yourself. as long as you can say how you see the world. I don't know how to say it very clearly. but in my opinion the language does not matter [...] if I switched into speaking English I would not see things in a different way

(6) M: [...] what is for me could be for me a good language proficiency yeah hm like good not excellent is sort of that you are able to communicate understandably in like almost any subject or not in any subject. in those fields where you work and where you have knowledge so you can talk about the same things in English [...] I don't think it needs to be flawless or the written or spoken texts grammatically always perfect always. but then mainly that is it understandable and fluent. and can the other really or can you communicate with someone

(7) K: [...] that I have now really acquired practical language skills

(8) L: [...] if until now it has been mostly that you have realized the value kind of that you can you have known that you can talk with anyone and you can watch TV and listen to music. and that kind of world has opened. but perhaps it has become more concrete now that you notice that really it [the English language] has not gone wasted and you can really use it

(9) M: [...] I just wanted to learn it [Swedish and German] but you couldn't use it so much and you knew that it will be just sort of a triumph. if I learnt this well all the structures and everything in the future I would benefit from it if I want to activate the language. because English was a bit active already you didn't pay perhaps so much attention to it. but you knew its usefulness

(10) M: yeah I believe that quite many opportunities would have passed and I would not have met many people or learnt so much about many cultures or others if I had not known English. so [it has had] a very great significance yet in that way. well English has had a very great significance for learning and everything else...

(11) K: as though I've learnt new perspectives on life which I've not thought of before. I've learnt to think in a different way and then also learnt to really meet different people [...] and to accept different people because you've spoken the language. and then because you've confronted different people you've

become much more tolerant. and because you've become more tolerant and you've learnt the language better and [learnt] in general about that kind of intercultural communication it opens also doors to completely new opportunities and that kind of aha moments and experiences also

(12) S: [...] and perhaps well at least I would hope that in a way perhaps it is not about the language again but in a way things that connect to them like friends and others in a way that you can see the world in a wider perspective

(13) S: [...] yeah I see that it will be more profitable in the future still in my career that you can make business with other foreigners and socialize with them

(14) M: [...] career wise if I will become an elementary school teacher it is not a big plus that I know [English] as well as I know [...]

(15) I: are there situations in which you would prefer English in work related things?

M: well in work related things yeah hm sometimes it is even easier to speak in English. because all the terms are in English. or much of the terminology that I use is in English. so it is often in mind. whereas if you start to translate some some functional weekend or something else. because well okay you can say funkki. but there are many other terms that do not come as automatically in Finnish as they would in English. then it is perhaps better to speak in English than to mix the two languages. because it is also somehow perhaps strange

(16) M: hm yeah. well perhaps I find it somehow disturbing that then you don't speak either language but you speak something in-between which is not and then perhaps after all that at the end of the day I have thought about it that my thinking switches very easily from Finnish to English and from English to Finnish and then, if you are somewhere in-between then you lack. somehow are you able to you express yourself in either of the languages what you try to say.

I: aha yeah

M: [...] I don't know now if it's anyway scientifically proven. or is it even good that you are not strong in either language at that point. but you take a word from there and here and then it is a kind of conflict situation all the time. compared to if you would speak in one language or else. perhaps there is nothing because if you think of Swedish Finns they mix two language. and it is natural for them

(17) M: [...] then short blackouts of memory come. which like when you don't remember. you know what you are saying but you don't know necessarily know the word in Finnish or English. then you get that kind of how would I say this in Finnish but I can't figure it out now. yeah then you are again in-between that do I speak Finnish or English. or do I think in Finnish or in English. yeah those come and they are very irritating because how do I say this when I don't know either language at the moment. it has been very interesting to notice and in my opinion it has perhaps increased when I have now that you have used both languages somehow actively

(18) K: [...] well we write a lot in English. including all the reports and such even if we know which will stay only with the team still I still somehow. it is easier to write them in English or then it is such hotchpotch

(19) I: do you speak English also with your Finnish colleagues?

M: perhaps I could say that unfortunately

I: why unfortunately?

M: well I have noticed the difference in that if you speak with Finns if there are people who do not speak English as their mother tongue and then again the difference if I speak with a native speaker how my own English skills are in a very different level with the native speaker. than if I try to talk English to a Finn or explain something in English for them. I think that I can be the cause of it to a great extent. because I get awfully lot of influences from others. or I absorb all dialects in my speech very easily. and then probably the accent and everything else. It feels that I perhaps somehow do my best more if I need to speak with someone who really speaks it as his/her mother tongue. whereas or it is sometimes even funny that you speak English with Finns. especially if everybody would understand [Finnish] on some level

I: why is it so funny?

M: well perhaps now when you've spoken a lot of Finnish well hm perhaps that you must do an extraeffort to peak the second foreign language when you could speak your own mother tongue

(20) M: [...] somehow it can be my laziness when I know that the other does not understand. or does not understand but does not perhaps know all the mistakes. I can say try to explain somehow in another way [...] but partly because I also acknowledge that I can't somehow get caught from my mistakes. or I can't become misunderstood or more misunderstood because some mistakes occur or I don't explain with right words or else

(21) M: [...] because I would like to use a bit more colourful expressions so then it takes sometimes time or else that I check that hey can you really say like this. is it my own invention what I also have. because at work necessarily nobody uses the language completely correctly [...]

(22) T: [...] I think that it is now at least quite challenging to keep up good grammar or because I socialize a lot, well I feel that the most I have absorbed features from the Asians which come from their own languages kind of like strange ways to use plural and something else. But they sound kind of something that I admire a bit. They sound great and exotic. Then I kind of use those easily. It is brilliant.

(23) T: [...] well what I would like to develop is to know how to use words word order and intonation and details orthodoxly. so that I could also not only to find out about the field but to also give a professional image

I: how could you develop professionalism?

T: of course that I would listen to natives speaking and kind of absorb from that. And then of course if I could get some NS to observe when I speak and then you get them. And of course there are courses at the University that you could still kind of learn them.

(24) S: [...] I would like to speak British English and then but British say that you don't and then somebody else says that you do like most, not probably purely, but most. but well perhaps I think that it is a mixture of British American English, but I like try, perhaps not very actively but passively strive for the direction of British English rather.

I: is there a reason why you prefer that certain variation?

S: well in my opinion it is more beautiful and I think that British English is authentic English

I: would you want that people would come to you and say that you speak like a native and there would not be any difference anymore, is that important to you?

S: well perhaps before it was important but like now I don't care if people notice that I'm not like British. yeah they get to hear it. I rather hear something like that you speak good English. I don't, perhaps it is not important that they consider you native necessarily, but.

(25) S: I don't know if I have strengths if compared with perfection. yeah what I would say now. well for sure I am worse in everything than natives or English native speakers. but erm but I think that. I don't know. well weaknesses are probably just that I don't find the sort of idioms or sort of cleverness what they again find. and probably also pronunciation and what I said a moment ago that sort of conduct of new words. and then just perhaps the vocabulary. and erm of I hear a new word I don't figure it out right away what it means. I must somehow see it translated first but of course in some cases I can understand but if they are somehow just a little more difficult then I don't understand [...]

(26) S: yeah well I always think to myself for example if a company needs someone who can speak English and if there are two people with the same study background. I would at least as a company prefer the native speaker. if sort of the geographical position does not make a difference or else. and perhaps it is also my own perfection somehow. that it would be nice to know the language even better. and it sort of irritates me if I cannot say some things because I use English a lot. it frustrates me sometimes that some things are left unexpressed because of I cannot say them. but perhaps if you would know it well enough or even much better then you face the problem that the others [non-native speakers] are not able to understand what I mean

(27) L: [...] perhaps I somehow feel that it is still a foreign language because it should be still somehow just stronger. I could even think of that it would become so-called second language if I lived for example

in an English-speaking country or if I lived with someone who is for example English. I think that it could become that kind of second language. but perhaps still it is nonetheless a foreign language

(28) I: do you think that you have a certain variation [in English]?

M: well I feel that my at least my accents vary a lot. when I was a lot with those Africans I get immediately a certain kind of [style] and I use the language in a certain way and just like pronounce in a certain way and else. but then for example very easily if you speak then. I just somehow absorb so easily. then I suddenly speak like not directly like an Indian. but yeah I got from there too that kind of intonation or something else. they just stick so easily. and then in Finland well I perhaps like for example to train. and if it's that kind of multicultural group then perhaps also play a little bit at times. then I use the different variations or something else. just to awaken their interest or attention or something like that. but it's very difficult to think if I 've some kind of Finnish accent when I speak

(29) I: what kind of English do you speak then?

T: [...] well perhaps the most that kind of Malesian Finnish perhaps. yeah of course in those places I've of course lived the longest and have been socializing the most with people. but somehow in my opinion they are also great features

I: do you think there are great characteristics which sort of transfer into English?

T: I think there are some such like some kind of simplicity. you somehow clearly distinguish the sounds from each other. so something like that. yeah and then and I've quite a lot in my opinion copied that kind of Eastern European [features] as well. it's of course to some extent similar things separation. it's somehow clear where one thing starst and where it ends

(30) I: in your opinion do you speak a specific variation of English?

L: well not really. well I remember that I might have paid more attention to it that I've tried to speak for example the British English. but it is not anything like. I must really focus if I wanted to try to speak some [accent]. I believe that it is that kind of mixture with a Finnish touch

(31) K: I can't really think of that I've got strengths compared to [native speakers]. perhaps that I can speak slowly enough and clearly. so that people understand what I say. perhaps native speakers can have that they speak too fast and use those words that are not understood. I can at least speak plainly

(32) L: for strengths I don't know. I haven't noticed. but I could imagine that it could be the same as with French. because we've been taught nonetheless grammar in a different way than for them [native speakers] so it might then be that some grammar rules are better known. but I don't know

(33) M: [...] yeah that kind of my own speech and that you become understood is on a good level. and in that of course we don't perhaps notice our own accent so easily but it at least does not in my opinion awfully interfere with being understood like for example French or Greek because they mix with their own pronunciation... and then that kind of listening in general. when there is a lot of text or someone speaks or something similar you can follow [...] I've also noticed that everyone cannot necessarily follow if a native speaker speaks a lot fast

(34) T: well I don't know somehow I feel that in Europe many speak really well sort of. well yeah well perhaps though or well I don't know. I feel that somehow I for one think [the accent sound] really neutral or at least and sort of that you don't mix that much Finnish. or then it's just that you don't notice it yourself. because I feel that I can speak more that kind of English as it's supposed to be and not so much that kind of that you mix your own language. and perhaps and I think that compared to many it has that kind of easiness and briskness. whereas for someone else it's clearly that kind of that they have to think about it

(35) S: well I think that in general Finnish education is very grammar orientated and I believe that grammar is for sure one of the strengths compared to other Europeans [...] what I've understood that we've studied English longer and that always it isn't the first foreign language [for other Europeans] when for Finns it often is [...] and for that reason perhaps it has developed also the fluency and vocabulary and also pronunciation. yeah I also connect these to myself

(36) K: compared to Finns well yeah I if compared to people my age yeah I think I've good language skills in English. especially if I think of my friends not so many work in English for instance or use English at home all the time. in that sense for sure my English is kind of more fluent

I: speaking you mean?

K: yeah speaking and understanding and all kinds of use. and I don't have that kind of threshold to use [English] whereas many can have that threshold [...]

(37) M: well probably that kind of it isn't I don't know if you can call it a skill or something else but that kind of courage to use the language. it's at least that kind of what you know that everybody doesn't have. and which again because of it perhaps spoken language is better or on a pretty good level. and then well which really the courage to seize English texts

(38) L: I think insofar it's better that I dare to use it. and erm and if compared to well this perhaps sounds a bit awful. but if really compared to that kind of basic someone who comes from a small place who doesn't need to use it ever yeah erm I could even say that [my English] is better. because I must use it and I like it. I think that it affects of course also a lot that not necessarily even that you must use it but if you have the interest yourself to read or to listen to music or watch movies without the subtitles. but perhaps [my English skills are] a bit better than the average

(39) K: of course some things are easier to take care in Finnish. it feels a bit stupid to [name 1] who is next to me and [name 2] who is further a way then to start whispering something in English [to name 1]. just for that she [name 2] would understand what I say even though I would not even talk to her. sometimes there are a bit strange situations that I think which language I should speak [...] I might in the middle of the sentence switch a small word into another language [...] somehow thinking has switched into English a lot because I speak also at home English. it probably affects

(40) I: how would you define second language?

T: sort of something into which you can switch in a way similar like if you had a second set of cloths which you can switch. In a way you can do same things in a similar way. You can switch thinking and speaking into it [English] and then it is principally you can do the same things [...]

(41) M: [...] if I then said that it would be no it isn't a second language. that yeah it is a foreign language. because even if I used it every day. but I don't it isn't after all it isn't part of me in that sense. I think that it would be totally different if I had grown up in a bilingual family. then it would be very differently part of my identity if its place was as a second or a first language. but the fact that if I've learnt it. yeah still my identity it has one language [mother tongue] and then I have foreign languages which I can use to communicate. or even if I knew it very well

(42) S: [...] and the funniest one is perhaps in her mother tongue. that it at least doesn't or that persona is constructed at least for me in my opinion around the mother tongue. and then kind of English does not at least yet have the same function

(43) K: [...] I see that Finnish is still my mother tongue and I haven't learnt any language on that level what Finnish really that depth of feeling really and that certain meanings what are part of it and I don't ever feel that oh if I could speak English that I miss it so much as I haven't been able to speak English or German for a long time on that depth of emotion that I associate with Finnish [...] in that sense I would't see that I'm bilingual even if I could think of English as a second language and it is a natural part of life but it isn't a mother tongue in that sense.

(44) M: [...] well I had at some point a terrible crisis about it. because I can't express myself in English as I would wish. because I don't know those nuances. I don't know I don't [have] so big [and] good vocabulary as I could use as I could use in Finnish. like all the different verbs and like different wordings and other that kind of so called subtleties. which feel like they are subtleties in English. but then again in Finnish it is richness when you can say a thing much more figuratively. whereas in English it is really easy that you just say it but

(45) S: well it is now probably still a foreign language

I: how do you understand the difference between a foreign and a second language for instance?

S: [...] well among other things that if you can create your own words. in Finnish you can do compound words or else because it is a mother tongue. and perhaps you can still do it in a second language if for example either of your parents erm has spoken it. but for example in English I could not necessarily or at least conduct authentic words or that somehow language's or somehow idioms or else. it feels like the language is more colorful when you speak it as a mother tongue [...]

(46) I: what would make it [language skills] good what would you wish that?

K: well probably the accent and expanding of the vocabulary. I have quite a simple vocabulary perhaps in use after all. or at least I feel that it could have much richer vocabulary. it is okay as work vocabulary and everyday use. but I don't just as I don't read literature a lot. I read practical texts surprisingly lot and I listen. but I don't read literature in English almost at all. so I don't have that kind of creative language kind of in use. for example different verbs and adjectives and that kind which you can use to describe feelings and some other events or that kind richer. I feel that I miss that but

(47) L: well I think that I should get at least much more vocabulary. and then I notice that sometimes I somehow freeze up. or in a way that I just can't say what I'd like to say so much. I just can't however get to the core to what I really now want to say. then I must go around a bit that I can say what I want

(48) T: well I think that bilingualism means that you have two mother tongues. sort of two languages that kind of languages that you've spoken from childhood. sort of that kind of your worldview is based on them. then I'd not say that I'm like that [...] of course if you defined bilingualism that if in your lifetime sort comes another language which you can switch your thoughts easily. yeah I'd say that I've grown up sort of with two languages

(49) M: yeah I could somehow argue that I it could feel like I'm bilingual. because at least what I would not have said perhaps six months ago. but now when I've noticed that when I am at work or wherever if I have to switch to English right away I get it I don't have that kind of. of course I don't always remember words and those things come and I always survive and I survive much better than six months ago [...] if I think of bilingualism in a bigger perspective or meaning I would not then say that I'm bilingual because my English skills are not close to Finnish in its richness of expression or overall that in vocabulary and else. then I can't say that I would be bilingual. on the other hand for me bilingualism is that you know a little bit more than the basics of the language. practical bilingualism yes but then sort of deeper bilingualism no

(50) L: I think that bilingualism is that. you don't have to necessarily have two languages from birth that it is one form of bilingualism but not the only one by no means. I believe that you can reach bilingualism. somehow I don't see that you can just say that I'm Finnish and then I have studied French. if I had stayed the whole time here in Finland. I think that you can become bilingual if you for example live long in the other country. for me my gut feeling says that it feels bilingual that you have because the in my opinion if you live long either with someone from another country or you live yourself in another country then I think quite quickly one could imagine that you can easily reach a balance between the languages quite easily. if you are all the time in that kind of country you need to use the foreign language by force you learn it really well and then your own mother tongue can stay behind

(51) S: well I conceive bilingualism as it's two mother tongues. as if you've spoken two languages from childhood somehow. in that sense I don't consider. but but you think that you can work with two languages and live. yeah I think in that sense I could both in Finnish and English

(52) L: [...] there are so many idioms and that kind in language that it really opens slightly they way they structure the world... I think that idioms are a good example for example because they are after all quite different depending on the language. understanding of them opens quite a lot of that else that there is. what kind the society has been. and what kind it is perhaps now

(53) L: [...] expanding your vocabulary and that kind of idioms and that kind of spoken language. I think it'd also be nice. because anyway many speak. they don't speak necessarily perfect standard language but rather that spoken language. and I think that's the way you only get into the culture

(54) K: [...] language it is not only for me at least a separate code language anymore [...] that you could switch just like that. but rather it is the whole culture around it and the whole way of thinking. in that sense you could have learnt more. perhaps in English from English I've not learnt that kind of cultural context so much as in French and German as I've also lived in those countries for some time also and I: you have never lived in an English-speaking country but have you nonetheless travelled in an English?  
 K: well in India but not like. well Nigeria and India are places where they speak English as a mother tongue. but it is probably very different to England or USA. in that sense I've a bit different relationship perhaps to English. it is more like what you've seen or heard from somewhere. but you haven't yourself experienced the cultural context yourself so strongly. well India and Nigeria are [the speak] English as a mother tongue but there are also many other languages

(55) K: [...] for example in Nigeria if I went to speak with someone in a British way I wouldn't adapt to the group based on that only. but rather you should really change the behavior and everything... I don't mean that you should forget your own roots. but I appreciate that kind that you can adapt in different situations and behave differently in different situations. it is richness and brings new opportunities in many situations

(56) M: [...] even if I knew [English] very well but I don't believe that it could ever become in my worldview a second language even if I knew it. Perhaps if I lived in that country for a very long, in an English speaking country, then it could on some level. I don't know if it became a part of my identity but it could at least be much much stronger than that I have really only acquired it at school or well one could argue about it if it is learnt at school or self-taught but like in principle I don't have that kind of connection to that language and culture.

(57) S: well I would like to move [to England] so that I would learn the language. and I don't have anything against the British culture but I don't have that kind of great passion to learn the culture rather precisely then the language. but of course yeah language is a part of the culture as such. but as I said it is only a tool. kind of it would be quite interesting to learn also about the traditions. because yeah if you think of words or else they are also often somehow originally from the culture. how the words are understood or. but but erm but I don't necessarily have the passion to get in the British culture otherwise. but if you live in another country of course it would be good to learn it

(58) I: what about are you a similar speaker when you speak in Finnish or when you speak in English?  
 T: well in English I'm clearly braver and more carefree. I think much less what I say and aa if I can say like this way. and do I seem now stupid or smarter. so much more carefree [in English]  
 I: ok where do you think it comes from?  
 T: well perhaps that you've sort of learnt to speak English in the first place has required that at some point that you've learnt to not to care if you get it right or smartly. that has sort of stayed on. after all in English-speaking countries the culture is more like that you can talk to anyone and whatever. then perhaps you also identify with it when you speak the language

(59) M: [...] yeah I've noticed that I speak differently Finnish than English that yeah something in me changes that I don't of course intonation and all that but then sometimes also perhaps it is because you need to speak English anyhow differently than Finnish or  
 I: can you think of some specifics how do you kind of change?  
 M: [...] I've thought about it. I'm aware when it happens. but what happens. I don't know would I become a bit more positive or like that my kind of brighter [side] [...] that somehow I think that the pitch of my voice changes a little and now that I started to think about it perhaps it is a bit higher than when I speak Finnish somehow  
 I: what about are you more active when you speak English than Finnish or?  
 M: [...] well perhaps if I get in the flow there is a clear difference that then I react in an English way to what someone else speaks such as just like all yeah that's great and that kind and just because perhaps somehow I've absorbed that from the natives that kind of response to what someone else is speaking. it is totally different if I spoke in Finnish and that it isn't that you don't necessarily say anything and in English when you speak even if it was not a native if it is someone who speaks English yeah I perhaps encourage more and somehow kind of strange



(60) I: does it feel like your own thing?

M: [...] I perhaps change when I speak English and so that perhaps relates to that then that it does not feel like it would be my second persona but then only the way to interact changes because the language changes because it is characteristic of that language it belongs to that language so then (.) but it's quite on the other hand it is also fun and on the other hand I'm okey with it. somehow I feel that it's some international part of me or that kind that then like I react much stronger [...]

(61) L: well aa well in some situations for example if I for example deliver a training in English then I sometimes feel that I'm much more professional than in Finnish which is a funny thought. but I've thought that it might result from the fact that these AIESEC things are easier perhaps to explain in English so it will become kind of the discourse is much more professional. but then if I think I don't believe that then is kind of normal situations then I'm quite similar perhaps in the way that I use the language quite similarly that of course in English one cannot hear my erm dialect but in Finnish one can hear it sometimes quite a lot that erm that kind of difference perhaps

(62) K: [...] I would see it more as a social situation. or then otherwise as situations that connect to the matter that how I use the language than what language it is. but of course probably it [language] also affects. as well as if I speak in my own dialect in Finnish in Savo Finnish or if I speak this kind of standard language [...] [with family] one behaves more like in a Savonian way somehow and alters the language and speaks much slower [...] but I haven't really thought about it in foreign languages. well if compared to if I needed to speak German and French in them I would have the threshold. and I would speak less. but English is now somehow on that language so that I don't think about it at all [...]

(63) I: is there a difference when you speak English and Finnish?

S: yes

I: what difference?

S: well Finnish comes much more naturally and then that kind of I spoke about cleverness and that kind of vocabulary. yeah in English I have for sure still more narrow vocabulary and then I get to search words sometimes. perhaps that connects to personally in general. yeah they come but all of them do not come as fast perhaps [...] perhaps I'm funnier in Finnish but well but I don't see that it necessarily differs