

Dialogic Construction of Understanding in Cross-border Corporate Meetings

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation focuses on understanding in internal meetings of two large Finnish-Swedish cross-border corporations. Drawing on dialogical conceptions of talk-in-interaction, the study addresses two broad research questions: 1) how do the participants of cross-border corporations co-construct shared understanding of the institutional context, and 2) how do the participants achieve shared understanding of each other's talk. More specifically, it asks: 1) how do the participants construct their shared understanding of the overall structure of the meeting activity, 2) how is understanding constructed locally, as a sequential and responsive process by the participants of the meeting interactions, 3) what institutional orientations do the participants display while constructing shared understanding, and 4) how do the participants of the company internal meetings use some recurring interactional practices, collaborative completions and code-switching, as building blocks of both intersubjectivity and the institutional context. In order to answer the questions, micro-level analyses were carried out on video-recorded authentic meeting talk-in-interactions (9 h 15 min) using the methodological approach of conversation analysis (CA). The findings of the study extend and elaborate the existing knowledge of how workplace meeting interaction is socially organized by the participants themselves. The findings result in four main contributions. Firstly, they elaborate the concept of internal meetings as activity types by demonstrating that the construction of the overall meeting activity is oriented to, by the chair and the participants, as locally negotiable. Secondly, the findings contribute to the micro analytic studies on meeting interaction by displaying how shared understanding, in the sense of intersubjectivity, is locally constructed by the participants through various interactional practices. Thirdly, the findings contribute to the literature of institutional interaction by demonstrating how the institutional context is constructed through the micro level orientations. In particular, the study sheds light on the multifunctional uses of collaborative completions and code-switching in situ. Fourthly, the findings contribute to the literature on professional lingua franca interaction. They lend support to the previous results which demonstrate that the participants orient to aspects of meaning and shared understanding rather than language use. At the same time, they provide new information on the multifunctional use of some interactional practices in professional lingua franca interaction.

Keywords: meeting interaction, interactional practice, collaborative completion, multilingual code-switching, international business communication, dialogical approach, conversation analysis

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Villa Asteri, Herttoniemi, July 2009

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LIST OF ESSAYS

Nikko, T. Finsk-svenska företagsinterna möten som forum för gemensam förståelse ('Internal meetings of Finnish-Swedish corporations as forums for shared understanding'). Non-published manuscript. Earlier version of the paper published in Kangas, O. & H. Kangasharju 2007. *Ordens makt och maktens ord*. Helsinki: Svenska litteratursällskapet i Finland.

Nikko, T. Collaborative completions in lingua franca meeting interaction. Non-published manuscript. Earlier version of the paper peer-reviewed and presented at the 2006 International Conference on Conversation Analysis.

Nikko, T. Multilingual code-switching as an interactional resource in cross-border meeting talk. Non-published manuscript. Earlier version of the paper peer-reviewed and presented at the conference Mediating multilingualism, University of Jyväskylä 2008.

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I INTRODUCTION

1.1 Orientation to the study

Meetings are here, there and everywhere. Already more than three decades ago Mintzberg (1973) found that 59 percent of managers' time was spent in scheduled meetings. In the complex realities of today's organizations the percentage may well be even higher, and concerns employees at all levels. There seems to be an accelerating need for people to meet in face-to-face encounters of various types for sharing ideas and information, making decisions and solving problems. Increasingly, these encounters occur in multinational and multilingual contexts.

Despite the ubiquity of meetings in organizations, they have been a relatively unstudied communicative event. As pointed out by Schwartzman (1989: 4) in her seminal work on meetings, "whereas meetings appear to be everywhere, they are almost nowhere in the research literature". One reason why she thinks that meetings have been overlooked by "serious" research is their commonplace and taken-for-granted nature. Meetings have simply not been found as interesting as, for example, business negotiations (see Firth 1995). Another reason for the lack of deeper interest in meetings and workplace interaction in general can be found in the traditional monological approaches to language, communication and cognition (see Linell 1998). In studies based on such views, the analytic focus is directed to the individual's actions and internal processes, rather than to what is collectively accomplished through interdependent action by the participants. An additional reason why business meetings, in particular, have not been much studied has been the difficulty of access to real meeting data because of the confidentiality and sensitivity of many business meetings (Bargiela-Chiappini & Harris 1997: 45).

In contrast to the previously dominant disparaging attitude to meetings, the prevalent interactional or dialogical approaches stress the importance of talk-in-interaction, and, hence, meetings, as they assign a key role in meaning construction to situated interactions and joint practices. Increasingly in the studies of both organizational

communication and social interaction, meetings are regarded as the essence of organizational life (e.g. Asmuß & Svennevig 2009; Boden 1994; Cooren 2007).

As pointed out by Asmuß and Svennevig (2009: 5), the rising focus on investigating and understanding the details of workplace interaction is methodologically mainly based on conversation analysis (CA). Studying meeting-talk-in-interaction from the CA perspective helps to understand how orderly and meaningful communication is achieved as a joint effort by the participants. Moreover, CA argues that institutional talk is centrally and actively involved in the accomplishment of the ‘institutional’ nature of institutions themselves (Hutchby & Wooffitt 2001: 145). Meetings can thus be seen as the sites where organizations and institutions are actually made alive, locally constituted through talk-in-interaction, in brief, “talked into being” (Heritage 1984: 290) through various micro-level interactional practices. Consequently, within the interactional framework, meetings are not just seen as a prerequisite to organized activity but rather as the form that generates and maintains the organization as an entity (Weick 1995).

This emergent stance emphasizes the importance of meetings for organizations for both their conservative and transformative capacities (Boden 1994; Schwartzman 1989; see also Jarzabkowski & Seidl 2008). Hence, meetings can be understood as forums for both constituting organizational stability and reconstituting the organizational identity when necessary. Both capacities make meetings especially important for corporations in times of change, such as mergers and acquisitions.

From the early 1990s, most of the studies of institutional interaction have focused on dyadic lay-professional encounters such as medical consultations (e.g. Haakana 1999; Heath 1986; Maynard 1991; Peräkylä 1997; Ruusuvuori 2000), job interviews (e.g. Adelswärd 1988; Button 1992; Komter 1991), news interviews (e.g. Clayman 1993; Clayman & Heritage 2002), phone-calls for emergency assistance (e.g. Whalen & Zimmerman 1990; Zimmerman 1992), courtroom interrogations (e.g. Drew 1992; Goodwin 1994; Holstein 1993; Watson 1990). Only recently, obviously for reasons stated above, microanalytical studies of workplace interaction involving talk in inter-professional multiperson settings, such as organizational meetings, is gaining ground (e.g. Bargiela-Chiappini & Harris 1997; Barnes 2007; Boden 1994; Clifton 2006, 2009; Cooren 2007; Holmes & Marra 2004; Huisman 2001; Kangasharju 1998, 2002, 2007;

Kangasharju et al. 2003; Kangasharju & Nikko 2009; Koskinen 1999; Milles 2003; Nielsen 2009; Poncini 2004; Schwartzman 1989). The present study focuses on this emerging area by investigating, from a CA perspective, a less explored aspect of workplace meetings, namely shared understanding as displayed by the participants. The data bring in an extra dimension as it comprises authentic internal meetings of merged cross-border corporations, conducted in *lingua franca* English.

The data for the study come from two large Finnish-Swedish corporations. The recordings were made in 2000 and 2001, i.e. a couple of years after the merger of the Finnish and Swedish units in the late 1990s. Within inter-Nordic organizations, Swedish has by tradition been the common language of encounters between Finns and Swedes, due to the status of Swedish as the second national language of Finland. In recent years, however, the language situation has changed. As a consequence of globalization and a rapid integration of the economies of the two countries, English, the global *sine qua non* of business encounters, has increasingly gained ground in the business contacts between Finns and Swedes. English has also been widely chosen as the corporate language in the merged Finnish-Swedish companies (Björkman et al. 2003: 219; see also Louhiala-Salminen 2002). Hence, the numerous cross-border mergers and acquisitions between Finland and Sweden since the mid 1990s have not only reorganized the corporate field of the two countries but also introduced a new forum for the Finnish-Swedish contacts where the common language is *lingua franca* English.

Not surprisingly, the linguistic aspects of the Finnish-Swedish mergers have attracted the interest of researchers of both management and international business communication (e.g. Charles 2007; Kankaanranta 2005; Kuronen et al. 2005; Louhiala-Salminen et al. 2005; Fredriksson et al. 2006; Sääntti 2001; Söderberg & Vaara 2003; Tienari & Vaara 2001). The present study approaches the topic from a less investigated microanalytical angle.

1.2 Aims and scope of the study

The focus of the current study is on understanding in internal meetings of Finnish-Swedish cross-border corporations. Originally, the study on meetings was motivated by Louhiala-Salminen's (2002) survey carried out in two Finnish-Swedish corporations. Her study indicates that about 25 per cent of the daily working hours are spent on organized meetings and negotiations, as estimated by a large sample of employees at various hierarchical levels of the companies. A more detailed analysis of the practices used for achieving shared or mutual understanding (Taylor 1992) was motivated by a preliminary study on the internal meeting interactions of these corporations (Nikko 2007). One of the main findings of that study was that understanding between the participants in these meetings is basically successful in the sense that communicators act like they understand each other and treat each other as understanding participants. In two other preliminary analyses of the data (Nikko 2006a, Nikko 2006b), attention was paid to the fact that two reoccurring practices, mainly used for either displaying or managing mutual understanding, i.e. collaborative completions and code-switching, also showed some potentially institutional tendencies as their frequencies seemed to vary depending on the meeting type.

Drawing on the dialogical conceptions of talk-in-interaction (e.g. Heritage 1984; Linell 1998, 2005a; Marková 1997; Shotter 1993), and by using the methodological approach of CA (originally developed in Sacks et al. 1974; Sacks 1992; Schegloff & Sacks 1973), this study addresses two broad research questions: 1) how do the participants of cross-border corporations achieve shared understanding of each others' talk, and, 2) how do the participants co-construct shared understanding of the institutional context (i.e. understanding of what is going on). Hence, the central objective of the study is twofold. Firstly, it focuses on the joint achievement of intersubjectivity (Heritage 1984) as it emerges in the ongoing sequenced interaction. According to the assumed dialogical stance, meanings "do not occur as isolated cognitive phenomena in the heads of atomized individuals; they are constructed *interactively* and under quite pressing conditions of time and space" (Boden 1994: 18). In accordance with this assumption, the aim is to reveal, firstly, how the participants of the studied meetings display to one another (and also to

the analyst) “their ongoing understanding and sense-making of one another’s talk” (Hutchby & Wooffitt 2001: 41). Secondly, the aim is to describe the joint construction of the institutional context. This connects to how detailed ‘micro’ analysis of local interaction-in-context reveals aspects of the institutional structure, in other words, how “macrolevel forces and constraints are, in fact, observable at the interactional level” (Schwartzman 1989: 23).

In order to answer these overall questions, the following more detailed questions have been specified:

1. How do the participants of internal meetings of cross-border corporations construct shared understanding of the overall structure of the meeting activity?
2. How is understanding constructed locally, as a sequential and responsive process by the participants of internal meetings of cross-border corporations?
3. What institutional orientations do the participants display while constructing shared understanding?
4. How do the participants use some recurring interactional practices, *collaborative completions and code-switching*, as building blocks of both intersubjectivity and the institutional context?

This study builds on and aims to expand the existing knowledge of workplace meeting interactions. On the one hand, it explores the interactional and contextual premises for how understanding may be achieved in meeting interactions. On the other hand, it examines how orientation to the institutional dimensions is displayed in the interaction. These include, for example, the participants’ orientation to the purpose of the on-going interaction, their perception of the overall structure of the activity-in-progress, and their orientations to various asymmetries between the participants and the ways in which these asymmetries are negotiated (see, e.g., Arminen 2005; Drew & Heritage 1992; Hutchby & Wooffitt 2001).

Another area which the study aims to contribute to is professional lingua franca interaction. By tradition, studies into second language and lingua franca talk have interested researchers as forums for inevitable language problems or intercultural

conflicts and misunderstandings (see Firth & Wagner 1997; Kurhila 2003; McNamara 1997; Wagner 1996 for reviews of such studies). While this study does not seek to evaluate or contrast the language proficiencies or understandings of individual participants or groups of participants (i.e. Finns versus Swedes), it aims to shed light on the interactional dimensions of professional lingua franca talk (see, e.g., Firth 1996; Gardner & Wagner 2004; Kurhila 2003, 2004; Mondada 2004 for a similar approach). Drawing on its dialogical premises, the study focuses on the practices through which the participants manage to achieve successful outcomes in their joint interaction. Consequently, the participants will be considered communicators in their own right, not 'learners' or 'trouble-makers', or speakers of a deficient and subordinate form of language.

Finally, the present study aims to contribute to the increasing body of research that strives to understand how organizations work by looking at actual practices of organizational talk-in-interaction (e.g. Boden 1994; Cooren 2007; Drew & Heritage 1992). By focusing on the details of the meeting talk-in-interaction, the study aims to understand what goes on in a cross-border corporation, or, in Boden's terms, how 'talk makes the organizational world go around' (Boden 1994: 1).

1.3 Outline of the study

The current study is organized into two parts. Part I summarizes the study. Its Introductory Chapter is followed by Chapter 2 which outlines the theoretical framework of the study. Chapter 3 reviews relevant previous research. Chapter 4 describes the data and the methodological approach of the study. The summaries of the three essays are presented in Chapter 5. Finally, in Chapter 6, the main findings of the analysis are discussed and evaluated, some tentative conclusions are drawn and the implications of the study for future research are discussed. Transcription Conventions are given as Appendix to Part I.

Part II includes the three essays which form the major part of the study. It is constituted by the following three essays:

Essay 1

Nikko, Tuija: Finsk-svenska företagsinterna möten som forum för gemensam förståelse ('Internal meetings of Finnish-Swedish corporations as forums for shared understanding')

Essay 2

Nikko, Tuija: Collaborative completions in lingua franca meeting interaction

Essay 3

Nikko, Tuija: Multilingual code-switching as an interactional resource in cross-border meeting talk

2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 Dialogism as opposed to monologism

Within interpersonal communication, the dominant approach to language, communication and cognition has by tradition been 'monologicistic' rather than 'dialogistic' (see Linell 1998, 2003, 2005a; Marková 1992, 1997; Rommetveit 1992; Shotter 1993; Wold 1992). While the former views communication basically from the perspective of the individual agent, the latter stresses aspects of interaction, contexts and joint construction of meaning in situ. Hence, in the monologically oriented studies, "[a]nalytic focus is directed to the individual's actions (strategies, tactics, moves) and internal processes rather than what is collectively accomplished through interdependent action" (Firth 1995: 19). The dialogical stance, by contrast, portrays sense-making in face-to-face encounters as an intrinsically social and collective process (Linell 1998: 24), i.e. as basically an 'interactional affair'

(Jacoby & Ochs 1995: 174). Consequently, listeners are not just recipients but active co-authors of meaning. Hence, as stated by Duranti (1993: 226), “[w]ithout others to carry on our messages, to complete them, expand on them, revise them, we would not be able to communicate”.

Linell (1998, 2003, 2005a) defines ‘dialogism’ as a general epistemological framework. In contrast to some other scholars such as Mikhail Bakhtin (see Holquist 1990) who use the term ‘dialogism’ in a rather narrow sense, Linell (2005a: 4) emphasizes that it is for him a general framework which draws upon theoretical and empirical aspects of research carried out in several (more or less) mutually related dialogical approaches to language, communication and cognition (for a similar view, see also, e.g., Marková 1992, 1997; Rommetveit 1992). Hence, dialogism should not be seen as a coherent school or theory. Rather, it is an epistemological framework for how we as ordinary human beings and researchers “acquire knowledge about the world and ascribe meaning to the world” (Linell 2005a: 5).

Monologism and dialogism are conceived as paradigmatically opposite with regard to their conception of cognition and communication. While monologism posits a Cartesian dichotomy and typically construes these two processes as distinct, occurring within and between individuals, dialogism portrays talk-in-interaction as locally produced, and as a sequential and responsive process between the participants (Linell 1998: 18). Shotter (1993: 462–463) describes the distinction between the two paradigms as follows:

In our classical (monological) paradigm, we think of individual people as getting to know about objects, visually, at a distance. /.../ we tend to think of proper knowledge as being in the heads of individuals, as being representational, systematic, ahistorical, as formulated in visual (metaphorical) terms, as separate from the knower, and as being *about* objects existing over against the knower. /.../ Where, by contrast with our classical paradigm, the kind of knowledge involved [in the dialogical] form of knowing is social (i.e. ‘between’ not ‘within’ individuals), nonrepresentational, unsystematic, historical, formulated in nonvisual metaphors, embodied or incorporated in people and in their practices, and is formative *of* the relations between them.

According to Linell (1998; 2005a: 17), the constituent theories of monologism comprise 1) the information processing model of cognition (e.g. Johnson-Laird 1983), 2) the

transfer model of communication (e.g. Shannon & Weaver 1949), and 3) the code model of language (e.g. Saussure 1916). According to this stance, cognition is seen to precede communication, and ideas ('thoughts') are represented and transmitted as such through language in communication. Language is regarded as an external code, ancillary to cognition. Hence, cognition is the only fundamental phenomenon. In contrast, the foundation of the dialogical approach is comprised by dynamic, dialogical conceptions of language, cognition and communication.

There are a range of empirical approaches to interaction which Linell (1998: 50ff, 2005a: 54) considers dialogistic in orientation, and which have "provided important empirical evidence for the fruitfulness of a dialogical approach, in particular as regards spoken language and talk-in-interaction" (Linell 2005a: 54). These approaches include ethnomethodology and CA, ethnographic and context-based discourse analysis (e.g. Goodwin & Duranti 1992; M.H. Goodwin 1990), the Firth/Halliday tradition in linguistics (Halliday 1978), social pragmatics (Thomas 1995), critical discourse analysis (Fairclough 1992, 1995), interactional sociolinguistics (Gumperz 1982), symbolic interactionism (Mead 1934), framing theory (Goffman 1974), interactionist social psychology (Clark 1996), discursive psychology (Potter 1996), and interdisciplinary dialogue analysis (e.g. Rommetveit 1974, 1990, 1992; Marková et al. 1995).

All these research traditions are more or less "interactionist" in character, "and distinctly social constructionist (rather than social-realist) as far as social theory is concerned" (Linell 1998: 52). In other words, instead of considering that meanings are "out there", a key role in meaning construction is assigned to situated interactions and practices. As stated by Marková (1997: 240) "[a]n alternative to the model of interaction between entities is a model that defines interaction in terms of dyadic interdependencies". Hence, context and talk are considered to be in a mutually reflexive relationship with each other, "with talk, and the interpretative work it generates, shaping context as much as context shapes talk" (Duranti & Goodwin 1992: 31). A case in point in Linell's (1998: 60) approach is his conception that the interactions and practices are dialogically related to a (socio-cultural) 'continuity of praxis' (Giddens 1984).

The shift from monologism to dialogism can be seen to reflect the epistemological revolution in the humanities and social sciences which has shifted the focus from the

‘psychological’ to the ‘relational’, and, hence, relational work has been established as the locus of human understanding (e.g. Helkama et al. 1998). Linell (1998: 39) points out that while monologicistic approaches have clearly dominated the (Western) philosophy of mind and language ever since the Renaissance, dialogistic voices have not been entirely absent. This is also reflected in how Marková (1992, 1997) characterizes the two paradigms, i.e. Cartesian vs. Hegelian philosophical-cultural frameworks.

2.2 Four key dialogical concepts

In this chapter I will briefly discuss four concepts that are central to the dialogical approach. They are 1) linguistic meaning as a *meaning potential*, 2) *sociocultural practices* vis-à-vis situated interaction, 3) *responsivity* and *addressivity* as speaker orientations, and 4) *context* and *contextualization*. As pointed out by Marková (1997: 240), these concepts illustrate what is meant by a model of interaction that defines interaction in terms of dyadic (or polyadic) interdependencies instead of interaction between entities.

2.2.1 Meaning potentials

The dialogical conception of the meaning of a linguistic unit such as a lexical item is conceived as a ‘meaning potential’ (Linell 1998, 2005a; Lähteenmäki 1998; Rommetveit 1974). Hence the meaning of a word or an utterance is not considered to be fixed or objective but ‘indexical’ (Heritage 1984; Linell 1998: 98), i.e. flexible and negotiable, which means that it gets its meaning in the situated social context. As expressed by Wertsch (1990: 63), ”spoken and written utterances can be adequately interpreted only if their interrelationships with other utterances are taken into consideration”. This is illustrated in extract 1, which is taken from the beginning of the meeting of an editorial board of a company internal newsmagazine.

(1) “What about the production?”

01 Ch RIGHT (.) what about the production? (.)
02 If we start with er Jan (.) you are the nearest
03 (.)
04 Jan Oh oh (.) number?
05 Ch Number four
06 (.)
07 Jan Right.
08 Ch Number four
09 ((pause))
10 Jan It was some (.) personally it was no (.) real
11 problem (.) it went er (.) almost (.) e::r (.) to sch-
12 er em to my schedule (.) e::r
13 Ch Okay.

When the chair (Ch) asks “What about the production” (line 1), it seems to be obvious, based on how the interaction proceeds, that both the chair and Jan share a similar interpretation of what is referred to with “production” in this particular context (i.e. the potential problems that the members of the editorial board had faced when producing the articles of the previous issue of the magazine). The meaning potentials in language are not sufficient for determining contextual meaning but as pointed out by Linell (2005a: 38) “[they] can be thought of as a structured set of semantic resources that are used in combination with contextual factors to prompt and give rise to situated meanings”. In extract 1 an important contextual factor is the particular position of the question in the beginning of the meeting, as will be discussed in *Essay 1*.

2.2.2 Sociocultural practices vs. situated interaction

A central concept of dialogism is that of ‘double dialogicality’ (Linell 1998, 2003, 2005a). It concerns the balance between situated interaction and situation-transcending practices, i.e. between the ‘dialogue of the situation’ and the ‘dialogue of the tradition’ (Malinowski 1923). Hence, dialogue occurs on two levels. On the one hand, there is the online situated interaction, but, on the other hand, there is also the dialogue on the level

of sociocultural practices. Such practices include (the dynamic use and situational modification of) linguistic resources, various types of interactional routines but also entire activity types such as meetings. According to Marková (2000: 452), they are “relatively stable social products, embedded in their socio-historical background, but they change through communicative practices”. As stated by Linell (1998, 2005a), the practices are indeed assumed to be communicatively constructed, but the construction transcends occasions, for example, several meetings of a specific team. In extract 1, the chair’s initiative (lines 1 to 2) can be seen to initiate an interactional routine which comprises a procedure in which every member gives a short description of his or her experiences when producing the articles of the previous issue of the magazine. It is obvious in the situated interaction that this procedure is an already established interactional routine for the participants.

Dialogically oriented theories differ from each other as to how they conceive the role of sociocultural practices. CA, in particular, focuses strongly on interactive processes in situ (e.g. Schegloff 1992). However, as pointed out by Linell (1998: 58), “the CA stance appears to be a methodological, rather than an ontological assumption”. In other words, CA theoreticians would not deny that language, knowledge and interactional routines are socially constructed, but they simply tend to take these resources as shared by participants in situated activities. As will be evident in the analyses of the essays of this study, both perspectives need to be taken into account in the analyses of interactions such as company internal meetings where participants meet repeatedly (see also Linell 2005a: 14–15).

2.2.3 Responsivity and addressivity

According to the dialogical stance, all the utterances in interaction have to be understood as responses to something in the context. Other-orientation or ‘perspective of the other’ (Mead 1934), is hence a crucial component of the dialogical approach. This is crystallized in Bakhtin’s (1981: 293–294) famous statement, “the word is half someone else’s”, i.e. that “the listener is ‘present in the speaker’s mind’ as he formulates his

contributions to dialogue” (Linell 1998: 103). The conception of responsivity is further developed through such dialogical concepts as ‘reciprocity’, ‘mutuality’, and ‘commonality’ (Graumann 1995). Hence, the listener is not just a recipient but a co-author of the meaning. This may show concretely in the sequential interaction through responsive constructions such as, for example, collaboratively constructed utterances (see Essay 2).

The responsivity of an utterance, or a communicative act, comprises the idea which Bakhtin calls addressivity (Linell 2005a: 102), i.e. talk-in-interaction is always addressed to someone. Inspired by Bakhtin’s dialogistic ideas, Goffman (1974, 1981) developed the idea that the participants of interaction should portray more varied roles than simply those of speakers and listeners (see Goodwin & Duranti 1992: 25). The speaker (e.g. the chair of a meeting) may, for example, project different listener roles to the participants through the design of his utterance, or he may address his words to all the participants thus assigning them all an equal status (Goffman 1981: 144.) On the basis of Goffman’s ideas, CA analysts have further developed his dynamic concept of participation framework (Goodwin 1987; Goodwin & Goodwin 1990, 1992). This conceptual apparatus provides most influential resources for describing the participants’ changing statuses in relation to what is said in the ongoing talk-in-interaction (see Goodwin & Duranti 1992: 25; see also Ch. 2.2.4.). The central idea is that the participants create the participation framework conjointly. In an international setting, multilingual code-switching, for example, is one of the resources that may be used for the creation of the participation framework (see Essay 3).

2.2.4 Context and contextualization

Contextualism is one of the most fundamental concepts of the dialogical approach. The dialogical conception of context assumes that ”context is not given but produced” (Linell 1998: 137). Hence, instead of viewing context as invariantly “containing” the participants’ actions, it is treated as something that is constantly changing and actively created by the participants themselves (Drew & Heritage 1992; Duranti & Goodwin

1992). Drew and Heritage (1992: 19) summarize the CA perspective on context as follows:

Entailed in this view of context is the abandonment of what may be termed the "bucket" theory of context in which some preestablished social framework is viewed as "containing" the participants' actions. Instead, the CA perspective embodies a dynamic approach in which "context" is treated as both the project and product of the participants' own actions and therefore as inherently locally produced and transformable at any moment.

In CA, a key aspect of context is the sequence of talk within which a particular utterance is situated (Schegloff 1992: 191). Utterances or social actions are treated as 'doubly contextual' (Heritage 1984) as they are taken to be both 'context shaped' and 'context renewing' at the same time. The first aspect comprises the assumption that utterances and actions have to be understood as responses to the context (both the immediate co-text and the larger contextual environment) in which they occur. According to the second aspect, each current utterance forms the immediate context for the next action in a sequence, and contributes thus to how it will be understood. Hence, each successive action changes and develops the context. Moreover, each successive utterance is simultaneously assumed to renew the larger context through the participants' orientations (Drew & Heritage 1992: 18), which is an essential aspect of institutional settings in particular.

A related highly influential set of dialogical conceptions of context in interaction (and the dialogical characteristics of linguistic meanings as referred to above) have been developed on the basis of Goffman's sociological concepts of 'frame', 'framing' (1974) and 'footing' (1981), together with Gumperz' (1982) linguistic concepts of 'contextualization' and 'contextualization cue'. These seminal concepts have offered important tools for grasping the dynamic interplay between social contexts and linguistic devices invoking them (see Drew & Heritage 1992). Goffman's notion of 'frame' (Goffman 1974; Bateson 1972) refers to the participants' momentary understanding of what frame they are in. Gumperz's (1982) notions of 'contextualization' and 'contextualization cue', again, help to grasp how participants may indicate what aspects of the social context are meant to be relevant for inference making.

Contextualization cues may be seen as a tool for the speakers to reframe their talk, in other words, to mark or to signal to the interlocutors that a new context is required for the understanding of what is being said. Goffman's notion of 'footing' (Goffman 1981) is a case in point in contextualization and reframing. It provides a tool for understanding and describing how the participants may move, moment-by-moment, from one frame to another. Moreover, it makes it possible to understand how a speaker may signal his or her talk not only in terms of its content and form but also in terms of the configurations of the role relationships. The idea of the multilayeredness of the speaker and listener roles has been seen as an important interactional resource as it makes it possible for the participants to frame the activity also in terms of participation (Goodwin 1987; Goodwin & Goodwin 1990, 1992). This aspect is of particular importance in professional contexts, as has been demonstrated, for example, by Tannen and Wallat (1987) and Sarangi (2000). Through the notion of footing, participants of, for example, a meeting, may be seen as members of a dynamic participation framework where each participant has his or her own role or participation status in relation to what is said. Of particular importance is the possibility to grasp how the participants may change footing, i.e. move from one role, and hence one frame, to another by orienting to varying social identities.

2.3 Dialogical architecture of intersubjectivity

2.3.1 *Achieving shared understanding*

According to the dialogical stance, understanding in face-to-face interaction is a mutual achievement of the participants, which is accomplished and managed in situ. As many researchers (e.g. Goodwin & Duranti 1992; Hutchby & Wooffitt 2001; Linell 1998) have pointed out, the participants of the interaction are faced with the task of accomplishing understanding, and, at the same time, displaying to each other, moment by moment, their understandings of the events in progress.

Hence, whereas monologism treats understanding as a “*from-to*” process, i.e. a linear process where two “speaker-hearers” exchange information or convey messages to each other, dialogism takes it to be a “*between*” process. Linell (1998: 24) formulates it as follows:

[T]he requirement is not only that something becomes *shared* knowledge through the communicative process, but also that the parties somehow *mutually provide evidence* that they have established an intersubjectively valid, “shared” understanding of the things talked about.

How people share a common understanding of the world and of each other’s actions in that world is a basic question of intersubjectivity (Hutchby & Wooffitt 2001: 4). The phenomenological conception of intersubjectivity (Schutz 1962) shares Wittgenstein’s (1958) view that there is no technique that would guarantee understanding between two persons in face-to-face interaction, i.e. there is no “perfect match” between the speaker’s message and the recipient’s understanding. For Schutz (cited in Heritage 1984: 65–66), achievement and maintenance of intersubjectivity is, first and foremost, a practical accomplishment. It is basically guaranteed by two (phenomenological) idealizations made by the participants: firstly, the interchangeability or reciprocity of their perspectives, and, secondly, the uniformity of their relevance systems. These assumptions make it possible for the participants to establish a mutual world which surpasses the personal experiences of the participants (Heritage 1984: 65–66).

Linell (2005a: 21) points out that many dialogically oriented (discourse) theories have approached the question of intersubjectivity but usually from a wider sociohistorical perspective. CA is unique with its focus on situated construction of shared understanding in actual talk-in-interaction. Hence, how the parties provide evidence of shared understanding for each other is, from the CA perspective, a practical, interactional concern. The outcome of the process comprises the assumption of a jointly constructed shared meaning. As was stated above, the requirement is, however, not a perfect match or “fully determined or “complete” understanding” (Linell 1998: 114; Taylor 1992: 215). Rather, the requirement is to achieve a momentary understanding “for all practical purposes” (Garfinkel 1967). Moreover, as pointed out by Jacoby and Ochs (1995: 405),

the dialogically achieved “shared” understanding does not comprise a requirement of the participants to be unanimous with regard to the content or topic under discussion.

2.3.2 Three fundamental principles

Ultimately, intersubjectivity (i.e. shared understanding) in interaction is achieved through three dialogical principles: 1) talk-in-interaction is sequentially organized (*sequentiality*), 2) understanding is jointly constructed by the participants (*joint construction*), and 3) individual utterances and actions are interpreted as parts of larger ongoing activities (*act-activity interdependence*) (Linell 1998: 85ff, 2005a: 40). These principles will be briefly described next.

CA has demonstrated the strength of the so called *next-turn proof procedure* (Hutchby & Wooffitt 2001: 15) for the achievement of shared understanding in interaction. It is based on the idea that “[u]tterances are built to display speakers’ understanding” (Schegloff 1984: 38). Consequently, the sequential organization of talk-in-interaction offers the participants a mechanism through which they can display for each other their interpretation of each successive utterance or action (Sacks et al. 1974; Schegloff & Sacks 1973). This is a fundamental organizing principle for the participants of interaction as it provides them with a method for assessing each others’ interpretations. This procedure does not, as such, guarantee “congruent interpretations” (Goodwin 2000: 1492) but it provides for “relevant intersubjectivity” through the availability of such processes as repair (Schegloff et al. 1977).

As has been repeatedly pointed out in this text, the dialogical stance portrays sense-making in face-to-face encounters as an intrinsically social and collective process. Consequently, listeners are not just regarded as recipients but other-oriented co-authors of meaning. This may take shape in the joint development of a topic or an interactional episode. During such talk, speakers display their understandings through dialogical practices such as duetting (speakers saying the same thing almost simultaneously), completing each other’s utterances, appropriating words and concepts from each other, and telling stories collaboratively (Linell 1998: 75). Extract 2 illustrates such talk.

(2) **“Let’s conclude”**

01 Ch =Yeah but let's conclude [it]'s considerably
02 Kauko [mm]
03 Ch I[owe]r=
04 Kauko [yes]
05 Udo It's lower=
06 Kauko =Those both toget[her] (.)
07 Udo [yes]
08 Kauko is less than what what we are now paying=
09 Udo =Mm yeah.

In line 1, the chair (Ch) initiates a concluding summary of the previous discussion. The consequent lines (2 to 9) display that the summary is, in practice, collaboratively constructed by the chair and two other participants through dialogical practices such as reciprocal feedback giving (lines 2, 4, 7, 9), repetition of each other's words (line 5), anaphoric practices, i.e. the use of pronouns: *it* (lines 1 and 5), *those both* (line 6), *we* (line 8). To construct the summary in collaboration can be seen as a resource for the participants to demonstrate their shared understanding of the topic under discussion. As pointed out by Linell (1998: 77), such strings of talk display that "no topic is uniquely a particular individual's property". However, in institutional interaction in particular, talk may not always be as concretely co-constructed as in extract 2. For example, meeting interaction provides an environment which allows lengthy monologues by one speaker at a time. Yet, also such contributions are other-oriented in that they are designed for some particular recipients (Linell 1998: 87).

It has been stated above that talk-in-interaction is produced locally, as a sequential and responsive process between the participants. At the same time, however, according to the dialogical approach, the participants of the interaction are assumed to be accomplishing larger activities (e.g. company internal meetings) which “provide context that guides the interpretation of events lodged within them” (Duranti & Goodwin 1992: 149). The idea of such an overall activity is included in Wittgenstein’s (1958) concept of language game, Goffman’s (1974) concept of frame, and Hymes’ (1972) speech event. The concept of ‘activity type’, introduced by Levinson (1979, reprinted 1992), has been of particular importance for understanding and explaining the characteristics of the activities of institutional interaction (e.g. Gumperz 1982; Drew & Heritage 1992; Boden

1994; Linell 1998; Sarangi 2000; Arminen 2005). Activity types such as a job interview, a police interrogation or a committee meeting are assumed to be organized into a more or less conventionalized overall structure which serves the accomplishment of the particular institutional task. Knowledge of the structure offers the participants an overall key as to “what’s going on” (Goffman 1974). Eventually, as stated by Linell (1998: 236), “elementary utterances, communicative acts, cannot be fully understood without reference to this overarching concept”.

The concept of activity type is crucial for participants not only because it helps to determine “what’s going on”, but also because it constrains what will count as allowable contributions to a specific activity (Levinson 1992: 97). The concept may appear problematic from a dialogical perspective because of its seemingly static character. For, as stated by Duranti and Goodwin (1992: 149), “[w]hile using activities as interpretive resources participants are simultaneously faced with the task of building the very same activities”. A solution to this problem can be found in the seminal concepts of ‘frame’, ‘framing’ and ‘footing’ together with ‘contextualization’ and ‘contextualization cue’ (see Ch. 2.2.4). This conceptual apparatus provides most influential resources for understanding how the participants may actively co-construct (for example, through changes in footing) their shared understanding of the type of activity that they are involved in.

3 Review of previous research

3.1 An overview of research on meetings

A dominant orientation to meetings in the literature has been prescriptive. This orientation, especially powerful in management literature, is based on the assumption that meetings are ineffective and wasteful, and attempts need to be made to improve them (e.g. Firth 1995; Schwartzman 1989).

As pointed out by, for example, Bargiela-Chiappini and Harris (1997), Firth (1995) and Kangasharju (1998), much less research has historically been conducted on meetings in comparison with negotiations. One reason why meetings were overlooked for long by “serious” research, was their commonplace and taken-for-granted nature (Swartzman 1989). The work of ethnomethodologists (such as Garfinkel 1967; Cicurel 1973), in particular, was a turning point as it made everyday phenomena, for example, meetings, topics for inquiry in social sciences at large. Deirdre Boden’s (1994) study is a seminal landmark as it raises meetings to the forefront of both conversation analysis and organizational studies. She focuses on presenting workplace meetings as the principle arenas where organizations are “talked into being”. Through detailed sequential analysis of meeting talk-in-interaction she reveals, for example, new aspects of decision-making as an interactional accomplishment. Boden’s (1994) study has offered an inspiring basis which much of the evolving multidisciplinary research on meetings has been (and is increasingly) building on (see Asmuß & Svennevig 2009; Cooren 2007).

Specific sources of inspiration for Boden’s study were Schwartzman (1989) and Atkinson et al. (1978). The former is an in-depth study of a series of internal meetings of a Community Mental Health Center. In her study, both ethnomethodological microanalysis and an ethnographical orientation are combined to reveal details of meetings as social constructs. The latter study uses CA for studying a single conversational phenomenon, i.e. the reopening of a meeting (after a coffee break) as a member’s accomplishment.

In her book, Schwartzman (1989) presents an exhaustive overview of approaches to meeting studies in anthropology and social sciences. She points out two veins of studies as particularly fruitful. One of them is the field of political language, inaugurated in anthropology by e.g. Bailey (1965), Bloch (1975) and Myers and Brenneis (1984) through their studies of decision-making and of speech and persuasion in politics (Schwartzman 1989: 4). Fred A. Myers’ (1986) anthropological study “Reflections on a meeting: structure, language and the polity in a small-scale society” marks an important shift in attention as it recognizes, for the first time, meetings as an object of study. In this study, a meeting is brought to the foreground as a communicative event (Hymes 1972), and language is presented as a constitutive part of social life (Austin 1962; Wittgenstein

1958). As pointed out by Schwartzman (1989: 31), Myers moves the study of political speech toward the study of meetings as the place where relationships between a form of speaking (i.e. a meeting), language, and the larger social context are examined (see also Howe 1986).

The second fruitful vein mentioned by Schwartzman (1989) is a social constructionist approach which views meetings as opportunities for sense-making (Weick 1979), and, at the same time, also as producing, reproducing and sometimes transforming the social and cultural system. They are important as sense-making forms because they are the organization *writ small*. (Swartzman 1989: 38–39) According to this view, meetings are, in other words, seen as a major form that constitutes and reconstitutes the organization or community over time (March & Olsen 1976). In addition, meetings are an important vehicle for determining and negotiating social relationships including one's status and social ranking (Bloch 1975). In short, “[m]eetings provide the organization with a form for making itself visible and apparent to its members, whereas they also provide individuals with a place for making sense of what it is that they are doing and saying (Weick 1979: 133-134) and what their relationships are to each other in this context” (Schwartzman 1989: 9). These two veins form the basis on which much of the contemporary discourse or conversation analytic work on meeting studies in various traditions build on. Next I will briefly discuss some of these traditions.

Within the field of business communication, the largest set of research on meetings, mainly conducted by linguists, focuses on cross- and inter- or multicultural aspects of the discourse (e.g. Bargiela-Chiappini & Harris 1997; Bilbow 2002; Poncini 2004; Rogerson-Revell 2007; Yamada 1990, 1997). The focus of these studies is usually on various pragmatic aspects of the language use of the speakers as representatives of their cultures, and their major purpose usually is to predict potential areas of cross- or intercultural mismatches.

Another fruitful field of research into regular meetings of workplace teams is the sociolinguistic work led by Janet Holmes (e.g. Holmes & Marra 2002, 2004; Holmes & Meyerhoff 1999; Holmes & Stubbe 2003) that looks at meetings as ‘communities of practice’ (Wenger 1998). These studies have defined the concept for their purposes as “the way we do things around here” or the way people interact at work. Their research

involves detailed ethnographic analyses of meeting data, and they have been able to identify shared discourse repertoires of different communities of practice including greeting rituals, exchange of small talk between members, norms governing how much social talk is tolerated, different attitudes and tolerance of humor, different ways of “doing collegiality through humour”, and, aspects of both gender and power relations.

Within management studies, an increasing body of research focuses on aspects of meeting talk. A recent turn in strategy research to practice-based theorizing emphasizes the role of meetings as focal points for the strategic activities of organizational members. This approach focuses on strategy as something people accomplish through talk rather than something that companies have (Hendry & Seidl 2003; Jarzabkowski & Seidl 2008). Housley (2000) has studied the display of categories within team members’ talk in terms of ‘know-how’, ‘knowledge’, and ‘expertise’. The methodological approach adopts from both CA and membership categorization analysis (Sacks 1992). It shows that knowledge, as an emergent and occasioned product of team interaction, is realized through both category and sequence in team members’ talk. Rovio-Johansson (2007) has investigated actors’ ways of sense-making in a management team meeting in a post-acquisition integration setting. The managers’ ways of sense-making of institutional discourses and practices is captured through their use of tools like rhetorical strategies, frames, and categories.

For a review of CA oriented research on meetings, see *Essay 1*.

3.2 Research on lingua franca interaction

Studies within second language and lingua franca talk as well as intercultural communication have mostly dealt with individual psychological processes, especially with comprehension problems and misunderstandings, due to the (assumedly) deficient language proficiency of the non-native speakers in these interactions, or lack of knowledge of other cultures. Moreover, the contexts of these studies have often been limited to either pre-arranged encounters or naturally occurring data drawn from either second language classroom environment or everyday conversations of immigrants (for

reviews of these studies, see, e.g., Firth & Wagner 1997; Gardner & Wagner 2004; Kurhila 2003; Wagner 1996).

As opposed to what has traditionally been the case in Second Language Acquisition (SLA) research, the CA approach to lingua franca interaction, in general, emphasizes the normality of this talk (see especially Firth & Wagner 1997; Gardner & Wagner 2004). Hence, the participants of, for example, international workplace meetings are not assumed to have the identity of a ‘non-native speaker’ or ‘deficient language user’ nor any other a priori identity categorization. Instead, they may present themselves, through demonstrable orientations in situ, as experts, teamleaders, chairpersons, etc., and many of these can be relevant simultaneously (see Firth & Wagner 1997: 292; Mondada 2004: 18). For more detailed reviews of these studies, see Essays 1, 2 and 3.

4 DATA AND METHODOLOGY

4.1 Data for the study

The data used for the current study were collected as part of a research project on internal communication in merged Finnish-Swedish corporations carried out at the Helsinki School of Economics in 2000-2003. The project focused on internal communication of two large cross-border corporations, Nordea and StoraEnso, both of which merged at the end of the 1990s. Apart from enquiries and interviews, regular meetings of internal teams were videorecorded in these corporations. The whole database consists of about 35 hours of videotaped meeting interactions of both national teams and cross-border Finnish-Swedish teams. The majority of the recordings were made in 2000 and 2001. (For more details of the research project, see Charles 2007; Kangas & Kangasharju 2007; Louhiala-Salminen 2002.)

The data for the present study originate from four internal meetings (in total 9 h 15 min). In these, regular company-internal teams or project groups meet in scheduled face-to-face encounters. The common language used for communication is English used

as a lingua franca, i.e. native speakers of Finnish and Swedish use English as a common language (see, e.g., Charles 2007; Firth 1996; Meierkord & Knapp 2002 for the concept of lingua franca). As to the selection of the recorded meetings, there was a contact person in both companies informing the research team of suitable meetings to be recorded. The main criterion for selecting the meetings was that they should be “normal internal meetings” of the company, as defined by the company representatives. The meetings were videotaped by the researchers, and the participants were free to delete any recorded material according to their wishes. Permission was also given by the participants to use the data for research purposes.

A variety of events could be called ‘meetings’. The definition of a meeting in this study is based on Boden’s (1994: 84) definition:

“a planned gathering, whether internal or external to an organization, in which the participants have some perceived (if not guaranteed) role, have some forewarning (either longstanding or quite improvisatorial) of the event, which has itself some purpose or “reason”, a time, place, and, in some general sense, an organizational function”.

According to this definition, a meeting is a planned gathering in the sense that it occurs with some forewarning, and it has several participants. In addition, it has some perceived roles such as at least a chair, and, in addition, it has a specific purpose, a set time and place, and a wider organizational function. Hence, this definition leaves outside, for example, casual encounter in a colleague’s doorway or spontaneous meetings by a copy machine. Whereas Boden’s definition covers both external and internal meetings, the present study focuses on internal meetings. More specifically, the focus is on regular chaired workplace meetings of established teams.

An overview of the meeting data used for the study is presented in Table 1.

Table 1. The meeting data used for the study

MEETING	LENGTH	PARTICIPANTS	CHARACTERIZATION
Meeting 1	3 h	6	Regular meeting of a permanent committee
Meeting 2	4 h	9	Regular meeting of a management team
Meeting 3	1 h 15 min	10	Regular meeting of a project team
Meeting 4	1 h	8	Regular meeting of a project team

All four meetings are encounters of regular teams consisting of both Finnish and Swedish members. The length of the meetings varies from one hour to four hours, and the number of participants varies between 4 and 10. The overall purpose of the meetings is mainly sharing information (meeting 1) or solving joint problems (meetings 2 to 4). In all four meetings, English as lingua franca is used as the common language.

For more detailed ethnographic descriptions of the goals and participants of the four meetings, see *Essay 1*.

4.2 Methodology

Methodologically, the data analysis uses the approach of conversation analysis (CA). CA was developed in the late 1960s and early 1970s by Harvey Sacks, Emanuel A. Schegloff and Gail Jefferson (Sacks et al. 1974; Sacks 1992; Schegloff & Sacks 1973; for later overviews, see, e.g., Arminen 2005; Heritage & Atkinson 1984; Heritage 1984, Heritage 1989; Hutchby & Wooffitt 2001; Tainio 1997). It can be defined as “a theory and method about social actions unfolding in time through cooperation and the co-construction of the talk by the participants” (Gardner & Wagner 2004: 6). Hence, the CA approach to data is distinctively empirical. Instead of studying isolated utterances, it focuses on actions as

they emerge in the ongoing sequenced (real-life) interaction. The term ‘conversation’ has been later more or less replaced by the more suitable term ‘talk-in-interaction’ (originally suggested by Schegloff 1987).

CA builds on ethnomethodology (Garfinkel 1967), a school which was developed as a critique against the dominating theories of sociology in the 1950s. Key concepts of ethnomethodology include ‘commonsense knowledge’ and ‘practical reasoning’. Ethnomethodology is based on the idea that reality is constantly recreated and established in every day social interaction. What makes CA different from other methodological approaches to understanding is that it focuses on the participants’ own methodology for displaying their understandings for each other. According to one of CA’s most basic tools, described as ‘the next-turn proof procedure’ (Hutchby & Wooffitt 2001: 15), speakers display their understanding of the previous turn in their sequentially next turns. Hence, the participants’ specific tool for displaying understanding is built in in the next-turn proof procedure. As formulated by Heritage and Atkinson (1984: 6):

[N]o empirically occurring utterance ever occurs outside, or external to, some specific sequence. Whatever is said will be said in some sequential context, and its illocutionary force will be determined by reference to what it accomplishes in relation to some sequentially prior utterance or set of utterances.

If understanding turns out not to be what the prior speaker intended, that will, again, get displayed in the next turn in the sequence. This procedure does not, as such, guarantee “congruent interpretations” (Goodwin 2000: 1492) but it provides for “relevant intersubjectivity” through the availability of such processes as repair (Schegloff et al. 1977).

CA’s distinctive contribution focuses on the situated achievement of intersubjectivity (Hutchby & Wooffitt 2001: 4). As pointed out by Taylor (1992), this is what makes CA especially powerful as a methodology for analyzing how participants themselves in interaction achieve intersubjectivity, i.e. sharing a common understanding of the world and of one another’s actions in that world (Hutchby & Wooffitt 2001: 4) (see also Ch. 2.3.1 above).

Heritage (1989: 4) points out four fundamental principles of CA. According to the first principle, all interaction is structured and organized. This comprises what was

earlier (Ch. 2.3.2) stated about institutional activity types having a more or less conventionalized overall structure. The very basic organizational principles that constitute interaction, according to CA, comprise the turn-taking organization, the sequence organization, and the repair organization.

According to the second principle, all contributions to interaction are ‘doubly contextual’ (Heritage 1984), i.e. both ‘context shaped’ and ‘context renewing’, as was discussed above (see Ch. 2.2.4). The third fundamental principle of CA comprises the assumption that every detail of talk should be assumed potentially relevant for the analysis. Thus, instead of testing preset hypotheses, the CA analyst works on the data looking for reoccurring instances of interactional phenomena. Hence, CA can be described as an inductive method.

Finally, according to the fourth principle, CA is based on transcribed recordings of naturally occurring interactions. In reporting, extracts of detailed transcripts are used to demonstrate the interactional phenomena under investigation.

The seminal book ‘Talk at work’, edited by Drew and Heritage (1992), established institutional interaction as a specific phenomenon of enquiry within CA. In analyzing talk-in-interaction in institutional settings, the analyst’s major task is to examine the (essentially public) means through which the interactants display their orientations to the specific institution (Drew & Heritage 1992; ten Have 1999; Hutchby & Wooffitt 2001). Through analyses of different types of environments, studies of institutional interaction attempt to reveal what is distinctive about their interaction (Hutchby & Wooffitt 2001:148).

Sociologists, by tradition, make the micro vs. macro distinction. Hence, an analysis of detailed interactional sequences between individuals encompasses a micro level study, and, in contrast, an examination of large scale societal phenomenon is considered to engage macro level studies. Schwartzman (1989), however, remarks that the study of meetings requires rethinking micro versus macro level distinctions, especially as the meeting is itself “one of the important contexts for linking, theoretically and empirically, the concepts of practice, process, structure, and agency” (Schwartzman 1989: 13). In the same vein, Boden (1994) points out that while it may be tempting to

discuss various supreme consequences of modernity as “macro” and the discrete actions of individual actors as “micro”, she argues against such distinction (Boden 1994: 5):

My suggestion will be to recognize both structure and action and to explore the ways that they are *codeterminative* to each other. The tiniest local moment of human intercourse contains *within* and *through* it the essence of society, vice versa.

These studies have evidently opened up new horizons into an interdisciplinary area, where the traditional division between organizational micro and macro levels disappears. An evidence of this development is a recent book by Cooren (2007), which suggests that researchers in the field of organizational communication, on the one hand, and language and social interaction, on the other, should join forces.

5 ESSAY SUMMARIES

5.1 Summary of Essay 1

Essay 1 contributes to the research on understanding in workplace meeting interaction in an international environment. By focusing on the micro level sequential construction of shared understanding in a cross border corporate environment, the essay addresses the following research questions: 1) how do the participants construct shared understanding of the overall structure of the meeting activity, 2) how is understanding constructed locally, as a sequential and responsive process by the participants, and 3) what institutional orientations do the participants display while constructing shared understanding. The methodological approach of the study is conversation analysis (CA).

The answer to the *first research question* is twofold. On the one hand, the participants display an orientation to institutional aspects such as the overall phase structure and the agenda as general frames for understanding what is going on, and the chair as the regulator of the interaction. On the other hand, the participants co-construct,

at the same time, their shared understanding of the on-going activity, locally, in the situated sequential interaction. This is displayed through, e.g., the fact that even if shifts between the main phases and agenda topics are explicitly announced by the chair, such transitions are in practice oriented to as being negotiable between the chair and the participants.

As to the *second research question*, the study revealed three practices used for constructing shared understanding. Firstly, there is the natural practice for the participants to display their understanding to each other through sequential interaction, in the so-called 'next-turn proof procedure'. Hence, relevant recipient responses to initiative acts by the speakers can be taken to display intersubjective understanding. Secondly, especially during reporting sequences, various other types of interactional practices could be traced which can be taken to either display or control understanding. These comprise, on the one hand, the multifunctional responsive practices such as collaborative completions, increments, evaluations, comments, and laughter, and, on the other hand, the interactional practices used for controlling understanding.

With regard to the *third research question*, some specific institutional orientations could be identified as part of the use of the interactional practices. The engagement in the use of the interactional practices seems to display orientation to specific involvement in the task or topic under discussion. All in all, it is claimed that the interactional practices are an important resource for the participants for co-constructing intersubjectivity as well as for co-constructing the institutional context.

The findings of the study result in four main contributions. First, they contribute to the micro analytic studies on meeting interaction by displaying how shared understanding, in the sense of intersubjectivity, is locally constructed by the participants through various interactional practices. Second, they elaborate the concept of meetings as activity types by demonstrating how the construction of the overall meeting activity is oriented to, by the participants, as locally negotiable. Third, they contribute to the literature of institutional interaction by demonstrating how the institutional context is constructed by the participants through micro level orientations. Fourth, the findings contribute to the literature on professional lingua franca interaction by demonstrating that the meeting participants orient to shared understanding rather than language errors.

5.2 Summary of Essay 2

Essay 2 investigates how a rather basic interactional phenomenon, collaborative completion, may be an important interactional resource for the participants of internal meetings in a cross-border corporate environment. In these, participants join in by completing an interrupted turn begun by another participant. The aim of the study is to examine to what extent collaborative completions are used as interactional practices and what actions are accomplished through them in the studied meetings. The phenomenon was identified by the author as one of the recurrently occurring building blocks of intersubjectivity in a pilot study (Nikko 2007).

Previous research has shown that collaborative completions are frequent in ordinary conversations. The most frequent type is completion in word search, a three-part sequence where co-participation from other participants is actively invited. Multiple actions have been found to be accomplished through this practice, e.g. displaying understanding, helping a speaker to find a word and finish up an initiated utterance, signaling alignment between the participants or engagement and interest in other participants' talk. According to the findings of the current study, the practice is used for similar purposes in the cross-border meetings. There are, however, tendencies that also suggest some activity specific orientations. First, there is an obvious distinction in the use of collaborative completions between a 'Management meeting' and a 'Project meeting' in that the practice is by far more frequent in the latter. The findings suggest that this difference in use displays an orientation to asymmetries in statuses, and contributes to the somewhat more formal character of the Management meeting.

Second, the micro-analysis of the sequences of completions in word search in the Project meeting suggests some activity specific uses. These are connected to the participants' orientation, firstly, to their expert identities in terms of knowledge sharing, and, secondly, to on overall pace of the interaction, marking urgency. In addition, both meetings have occurrences of completions in word search format used as a practice for prompting conjointly constructed humorous sequences.

5.3 Summary of Essay 3

Essay 3 examines the multilingual appearance of the face-to-face meeting interactions of merged Finnish-Swedish corporations. The position is taken in the study that even if English has been officially stated as the working language of the merged corporations, linguistic resources may still be ultimately locally selected within the specific conversational contexts. This is possible because many of the Finnish participants are more or less fluent in Swedish. Another position is that code-switching (or alternating use of several languages) should not be regarded as an indication of deficient language proficiency as has often been the case.

This study is based on the assumption that code-switching is essentially an interactional resource related to the creation of meaning *in situ*. Hence, it deals with multilingualism as locally and orderly accomplished by the meeting participants. The aim of the study was, on the one hand, to make visible the multilingual character of a cross-border corporate environment, and, on the other hand, to demonstrate what is accomplished through code-switching in the studied encounters.

According to the findings of the study, multilingualism is a potentially available resource, first and foremost, in the pre- and post-meeting talk. Through the use of their multilingual resources the participants display their interpretation that the common language is locally negotiable in these phases. Occasional code-switching occurs in the actual meeting talk.

Code-switching is used in the pre- and postmeeting talk for various contextualizing purposes, which are basically the same that have been identified in bilingual interactions. First, it is used for the purposes of contextualizing either sequential contrast or change of participant constellation and, hence, a change of footing. It is used as a resource for displaying transition both from meeting talk to postmeeting talk and from premeeting talk to meeting talk. At the same time, it is used as a resource for specifying and restricting the audience. Moreover, it may be used as a resource for marking a change from professional role identity to that of a private person. Second, it may be used by the participants for ascribing to each other their individual preferences for one language or the other. Third, code-switching (or rather crossing) is used as a

resource for prompting collective humor. Still another use, identified in other studies of multilingual meetings as well (Mondada 2004), is the alternating use of languages in dealing with technical problems.

In the actual meeting talk, the use of other languages than lingua franca English is marked as accountable. In some occasions, code-switching is explicitly used as a resource for solving word-search problems. This is not necessarily accomplished in one's "own" language group but may also be accomplished "on-stage" (Poncini 2003) within the whole team, displaying thus the multilingual identity of the team. Evidently, language choice does not seem to be negotiated to the same extent in the data of the current study as has been shown in other data (Mondada 2004; Poncini 2003).

In sum, language alternation may not be taken as a sign of deficient language proficiency in the studied meetings, but it is, instead, used as a multifunctional resource for accomplishing various actions. It is used as a resource for constructing the structural context of the activity. Furthermore, it is used as a resource for constructing alignment between the participants and collegiality within the team, and, moreover, as a resource for controlling the progress of the interaction. All in all, also in less established multilingual settings, code-switching seems to be used, first and foremost, as a resource for displaying for the other participants the frame of the activity (Gumperz 1982), i.e. what is actually going on in the interaction, and is, hence, an important building block of intersubjectivity.

6 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

6.1 Results of the study

The current study has investigated shared understanding in internal meetings of two large Finnish-Swedish corporations. Drawing on dialogical conceptions of talk-in-interaction, the study addressed two broad research questions: 1) how do the participants of cross-border corporations co-construct shared understanding of the institutional context, and 2) how do the participants achieve shared understanding of each other's talk. More

specifically, these questions were asked: 1) how do the participants construct their shared understanding of the overall structure of the meeting activity, 2) how is understanding constructed locally as a sequential and responsive process by the participants of the meeting interactions, 3) what institutional orientations do the participants display while constructing shared understanding, and 4) how do the participants in the company's internal meetings use some recurring interactional practices, *collaborative completions* and *code-switching*, as building blocks of both intersubjectivity and the institutional context. In order to answer the questions, micro-level analyses were carried out in video-recorded authentic meeting talk-in-interactions (9 h 15 min) using the methodological approach of conversation analysis (CA).

6.1.1 *Shared understanding of the overall structure*

The study has answered the question *How do the participants construct their shared understanding of the overall structure of the meeting activity* with basically a twofold answer. On the one hand, the participants display a strong orientation to some institutional aspects such as the overall phase structure of the meeting interaction, the agenda as an overall key to understanding what is going on, and the chair as the regulator of the interaction. On the other hand, at the same time as the participants display their orientations to such overall aspects, they are involved in negotiating the shared understanding of the progression of the interaction locally, in the sequenced and situated interaction. The more detailed findings can be summarized in four points.

Firstly, shifts from one phase to another are always announced by the chair through markers such as "okay" and "right". Also shifts to new topics, i.e. following items on the agenda, are always announced by the chair, and for that he or she uses explicit markers such as "Alright, next issue on agenda", or just announces the topic, i.e. "Customer satisfaction surveys". *Secondly*, even if the shifts are performed by the chair, they are always marked as locally negotiable. This means that the various shifts in the overall progression of the interaction may always be negotiated between the chair and the

participants. This concerns both the opening and the closing of the meetings and the shifts between the items on the agenda.

Thirdly, the moments of the shifts, as referred to under the previous points, seem to be easily identified by the participants. In other words, the participants display shared understanding of the moments of shift in the proceeding interaction even if the shifts are rather vaguely marked by the chair (e.g. “right”). This seems to be explained by the fact that the shifts are usually made relevant by several aspects in the jointly constructed contextual environment. Hence, it is not the announcement as such which marks the shift but the explicit announcement in conjunction with the contextual considerations. A concrete signal of closing, for example, is when the last item of the agenda has been covered. A significant marker of an approaching topic shift to the participants seems to be the rounding evaluation by the chair of a topic under discussion.

Fourthly, important resources for shared understanding are the agenda, shared meeting routines, and shared knowledge about the topics. The agenda obviously acts as an overall frame – in conjunction with the local processes of interpretation – in the topic shifts. Orientation to the agenda is also displayed through the fact that deviations from the agenda are linguistically marked as misplacements. Shared meeting routines refer to meeting practices, evidently developed conjointly over a series of similar meetings, such as agreed upon ways of, for example, participants conducting reporting by displaying orientation to shared procedures even if these are not explicated in any way. Important shared knowledge that the participants orient to is, e.g., their shared knowledge of who is responsible for what. When the chair announces a topic, there is usually no discussion of who should be in charge of introducing the topic.

Based on the current study, there are two additional tentative findings about the participants’ orientation to the overall structure of the meetings. First, the participants display a partly institutional orientation to the talk of the pre- and post-meeting phases. This suggests that the participants do not orient to these as unimportant small talk phases, as sometimes suggested, but rather as phases connected to the overall meeting activity and to the organization at large, as has also been pointed out by Mirivel and Tracy (2005). In the pre-meeting phases, in particular, jointly constructed humorous sequences or stories, ending up in joint laughter, are taken to display orientation to collegiality and

creation of positive atmosphere. In addition, a jointly constructed story initiated by the chair seems to be used as a way of initiating the focused activity, and, hence, as a pre-opening signal of the focused meeting interaction. Second, the overall structure of the meeting interactions has potentially systematically appearing jointly constructed humorous sequences which could be defined as interim phases between the agenda topics. These phases are partly accomplishing collegiality within the team (Holmes 2000), but, in addition, they seem to offer the participants a constructive way of closing down a challenging topic by displaying shared understanding (see also Kangasharju & Nikko 2009). Hence, even if the order in which the topics are discussed is strictly following a set agenda, it does not prevent the participants from creating ad hoc phases in-between.

6.1.2 *Local construction of shared understanding*

The study has answered the question *How is understanding constructed locally, as a sequential and responsive process by the participants of the meeting interactions* by stating that shared understanding is constructed through the use of three types of interactional practices. On the one hand, it was demonstrated that the natural practice for the participants to display their understanding to each other is to do it in the *sequential interaction*, i.e. in the so-called 'next-turn proof procedure'. Hence, relevant recipient reactions to initiative acts by the speakers can be taken to display intersubjective understanding. These include answers to questions, or relevant reactions to the chairs initiatives, e.g., topic shifts. According to the CA methodology, also non-reactions by the recipients (during, for example, reporting sequences) are seen as relevant reactions, and, are, hence, taken to display understanding. On the other hand, various other types of interactional practices could be traced which can be taken to either display or control understanding during so-called reporting sequences, i.e. sequences which start with a pre-prepared report by one of the participants. Firstly, there are the multifunctional *responsive practices* such as dialogue particles, (other-initiated) increments (Lerner 2004: 159), collaborative completions, evaluations, comments and humor and laughter which

are used for accomplishing various actions, including displaying understanding, within the situated interaction. Other actions accomplished through these practices include displaying unity and support, involvement, or a general interest in the topic.

Secondly, there are the interactional *practices used for controlling understanding* through repair. These usually comprise requests for either confirming or clarifying understanding. The former practices can be initiated by either one of the team members in the audience or by the reporting speaker. It should be pointed out that controlling understanding is not necessary in multi-party talk, especially during reporting or similar sequences, in the same sense as it is in dyadic face-to-face interaction. Hence, initiating repair in such an environment may be taken to display a specific interest to the talk.

Another general point to be made about the use of the interactional practices, and the practices for controlling understanding in particular, is that in the present data, they do not seem to display orientations to aspects of language use. Instead, the speaker-recipients display through them an orientation to meaning and intersubjectivity in the first place (for a similar conclusion, see Wagner & Gardner 2004: 10). Both types of practices, i.e. the responsive practices and the practices used for controlling understanding, usually emerge as dyadic sequences between the reporting speaker and one of the team members in the audience. However, it is not rare that a reporting sequence, with a highly asymmetric turn taking structure in the beginning, develops into a discussion, i.e. a conversational turn-taking pattern where shared understanding is explicitly created in concert by the participants.

All in all, the interactional practices seem to be an important resource for the participants for co-constructing intersubjectivity, and also the institutional context, as will be discussed in the following.

6.1.3 *Institutional orientation as displayed in the local construction of understanding*

The third research question *What institutional orientations do the participants display while constructing shared understanding* connects to the previous question as it concerns

the institutional orientation as displayed as part of the use of the interactional practices. The use of the practices displays orientation to the institution. In particular, it seems to display an orientation to a professional involvement in the task or the project, or the area of expertise under current discussion, and, hence, an orientation to a specific expert role vis-à-vis the topic under discussion. At the same time, it may also be seen to mark a professional alignment with the current speaker. In a broader sense, the use of the interactional practices can be seen to display the participants' orientation to the institutional goals both in terms of the task to be achieved and in terms of the focused proceeding of the meeting interaction. This interpretation is based on the fact that, firstly, it seems that not just anybody among the recipients engages in interactional practices such as adding completions or increments to the reporting speaker's turns or presenting evaluations or comments while he or she talks. The same concerns the practices for controlling understanding. Instead, through the use of the interactional practices certain participants mark their specific role with regard to the subproject or piece of information under discussion (i.e. the chair who is in charge of the whole project, someone in charge of a specific part of the project such as the technical implementation, someone in charge of another subproject or a similar area of expertise in another country, or some other specific role such as the secretary of the meeting).

Secondly, the interpretation of the specific institutional orientation is supported by the fact that the use of the practices seems to display the recipient's orientation to meaning and intersubjectivity which have relevance to the overall institutional goals of the topic (or project). In other words, the practices display an orientation to connect the content of the speaker's talk to a larger institutional context (e.g. the overall financial situation of the corporation), rather than, for example, an orientation to some hearing problems or minor details of the report. In all, the micro analysis of the use of interactional practices displaying and controlling understanding in meeting interactions suggests that they, at the same time, are concrete building blocks of the institutional context.

6.1.4 Two specific practices as building blocks of intersubjectivity and the institutional context

The fourth question was How do the participants of company internal cross-border meetings use some recurring interactional practices, collaborative completions and code-switching, as building blocks of intersubjectivity, and as a resource for accomplishing institution specific (and potentially specialized) social actions in cross-border corporate meetings.

The main finding about collaborative completions is twofold. On the one hand, this practice is used for similar purposes in the present meeting data as it has been found to be used in everyday conversation (e.g. Bockgård 2004; Szczepek, 2000a, 2000b), i.e. displaying understanding, helping a speaker to find a word and finish up an initiated utterance, signaling alignment between the participants or engagement and interest in other participants' talk. On the other hand, however, the use of collaborative completions also reveals tendencies that suggest some activity specific orientations. First, there is an obvious distinction in the use of collaborative completions between a management meeting and a project meeting in that they are by far more frequent in the latter. My suggestion is that the difference displays, in particular, a different orientation to asymmetries in statuses in the two meetings. More precisely, the more frequent use of collaborative completions marks lower asymmetries in the project meeting.

Second, the micro-analysis of the most frequent type of completions, i.e. sequences of completions in word search, suggests various activity specific uses. It seems to be used, above all, for displaying expertise in terms of shared professional knowledge. Furthermore, it may be seen to display orientation to urgency, and, hence, to an overall pace of the interaction. Moreover, it seems to be a practice used for prompting conjointly constructed humorous sequences referred to as interim phases between the agenda topics in 6.1.1. In all, the analysis reveals that collaborative completion is a multiple interactional resource in meeting interactions.

As to code-switching, the main finding suggests that multilingualism, i.e. an alternating use of English, Finnish and Swedish, is a potentially available resource for the participants of the Finnish-Swedish cross-border corporations, first and foremost, in the pre- and postmeeting talk. Through the use of their multilingual resources the participants

display their interpretation that the common language is locally negotiable in these phases. Code-switching is, in principle, used for rather similar purposes as in bi-lingual interactions (e.g. Auer 1984, Auer 1998; Li 2002, Li 2005), adapted for the purposes of the specific meeting interactions. It is used for displaying sequential contrast, and, in particular, the contrast between meeting talk and the “surrounding” phases. At the same time it may be used as a resource for marking a change from professional role identity to that of a private person. It is also used as a resource for, e.g., specifying and restricting the audience, and, hence, marking a change of participant constellation, or a change of footing (Goffman 1981).

Moreover, code-switching seems to be used as a resource for constructing collegiality. In the actual meeting talk, the use of other languages than lingua franca English is usually marked as accountable, and it is restricted to single words. In some occasions, code-switching is explicitly used as a resource for solving word-search problems. In these cases the problem is not necessarily solved in the own language group but Finnish or Swedish may be used for solving the problem “on-stage” (Poncini 2003) within the whole team, displaying thus the multilingual identity of the team. Still in some occasions code-switching is used as a resource for referring to shared conceptual knowledge. This means, in practice, use of Swedish words such as “samarbetskommitté”. All in all, language choice does not seem to be negotiated during the actual meeting talk to the same extent in my Finnish-Swedish data as has been shown in other data (e.g. Mondada 2004; Poncini 2003).

6.1.5 Summary

In sum, the present study may be seen to portray the studied meetings of cross-border Finnish-Swedish corporations as formal and informal at the same time. The formal aspects are constructed by, first, an orientation to a rather formal structural order. The participants display an orientation to the agenda, a certain order of agenda issues, and the regulating role of the chair. The informal counterpart to this orientation is that the formal structure is oriented to as negotiable between the chair and the participants. Second, a

formal orientation is displayed by the participants through the use of specific interactional practices. Participants' orientation to involvement and expertise make the meetings appear focused and goal-oriented. The informal counterpart to this is made of sequences of jointly constructed humor and laughter. Third, formal aspects are constructed through the asymmetric turn taking order in the connection of reporting sequences. The informal counterpart to these is made of the jointly constructed sequences of talk where several participants construct the talk conjointly. This characterization of the internal meetings of Finnish-Swedish corporations is, of course, meant to be taken as tentative.

6.2 Limitations of the study

Before any conclusions of the findings can be drawn, some limitations of the study have to be pointed out. One obvious methodological limitation is that the data consist of individual meetings which are part of a series of regular meetings (see Arminen 2005: 69). A particular aspect to consider is that the meetings of internal teams may vary from occasion to occasion. For example, the interaction of a project team may be very different at various stages of the project. Also, the interaction of a management team may vary a lot according to the nature of the topics under discussion. Hence, one has to be sensitive about making any generalizing claims about the use of the practices in the meetings of the particular teams. In addition, a data set consisting of a series of meetings of a particular team would have made it possible to analyze the transsituational use and development of the interactional practices over time. This would have been a valuable additional aspect with regard to the dialogical premises of the study.

Another methodological concern of the study is connected to the CA approach as such. The next-turn proof procedure has been considered incomplete as it only reveals a part of what should be implied by understanding in interaction (see Linell 2005b). According to Linell (2005b: 4), a mechanism which is based on a sequentially constructed interaction can only guarantee two aspects of meaning. On the one hand, it can reveal the interactional meaning of an utterance as a communicative action. On the other hand, the procedure can guarantee the referents that the speaker is referring to. In

other words, one understands who and what the talk concerns, and, if not, one can initiate reparation. What is, however, problematic, according to Linell, is that the understanding of the content of the talk is usually not made explicit. He points out that this may vary between different types of interactions. Accordingly, the present study shows that meetings may have extended sequences of monological talk where one of the participants speaks and the recipients don't display their understanding in any other way than through silence (see also Green-Vänttinen 2001; Milles 2003). Even if the use of the interactional practices by the recipients may reveal more detailed aspects of their understanding, I agree that the method should be complemented with other types of evidence in order to get a complete conception of understanding. In the present study, the work of the analyst was helped by the available ethnography through, e.g., participant interviews and complementary documents such as meeting agendas.

A couple of additional methodological issues must still be pointed out. First, it is certainly a limitation that only one stable camera was used in the recordings. Consequently, it was not always possible to see the faces of the speakers, and, hence, non-verbal aspects such as gaze could not always be considered in the analysis. Some compromises, however, have to be made in order not to cause too much interference to the authentic setting. As has been pointed out by others (e.g. Bargiela-Chiappini & Harris 1997: 45), a major reason why business meetings have not been much studied has been the difficulty of access to real meeting data. Arrangements such as use of several cameras might not be helpful in this respect. Second, it has to be considered that the presence of the camera and the researcher in the meeting room may have affected the behavior of the meeting participants. Also in this respect it would have been ideal if the data had covered a series of meetings of the same team(s).

Furthermore, as the focus of this study was on how the participants construct understanding conjointly, it was not within the scope of this study to seek culture-specific patterns of understanding or interactional practices, nor to evaluate the participants' English language proficiency.

Finally, the findings of the current study must be seen as tentative, and, hence, used as a basis for generating hypothesis for future research rather than a body of evidence from which extensive conclusions can be drawn.

6.3 Contribution of the findings and directions for future research

The findings of the study extend and elaborate the existing knowledge of how workplace meeting interaction is socially organized by the participants themselves (e.g. Boden 1994; Schwartzman 1989; Milles 2003; Mirivel & Tracy 2005). They provide four main contributions. Firstly, they elaborate the concept of internal meetings as activity types (Levinson 1992; Linell 2005b) by demonstrating that the construction of the overall meeting activity is oriented to, by the chair and the participants, as locally negotiable. Participants' orientation to a rather systematic procedure of the overall structure of internal meeting interactions has been demonstrated in previous studies (e.g. Milles 2003). The locally negotiable character of the various shifts in the overall progression of the interaction (i.e. between topic shifts and shifts from one phase to another) has not been previously demonstrated at least to the same extent. This finding could be connected to how the chairperson in practice, as opposed to what is prescribed in handbooks, carries out his chairing activities. Pomerantz and Denvir (2007) demonstrate that a chairperson in an upper management meeting orients to his chairing actions as requiring input or ratification from the participants (Pomerantz & Denvir 2007: 33). A similar attentiveness to the preferences of the participants may be seen in my data. Future research might address this topic more systematically in various types of meetings.

Secondly, the findings contribute to the micro analytic studies on meeting interaction by displaying how shared understanding, in the sense of intersubjectivity, is locally constructed by the participants through various interactional practices. As far as I know, systematically conducted analysis on practices used for displaying and controlling understanding in meeting interaction has not been previously carried out. An interesting task for subsequent research would be the transsituational use of the interactional practices in a series of meetings of one particular team. Knowledge on how these practices are conjointly constructed and reconstructed over time might contribute to understanding how organizational culture or a team specific culture ('community of practice'; Wenger 1998) is locally created (see Nielsen 2009).

Thirdly, the findings contribute to the literature of institutional interaction by demonstrating how the institutional context, and hence the organization, is constructed

through the micro level orientations. In particular, the study sheds light on the multifunctional use of collaborative completions in situ. Institutional orientation displayed through the use of this practice has been demonstrated, for example, in instructional activities (Koshik 2002; Lerner 1995). The various activity specific uses of collaborative completions in the studied meeting data elaborate the understanding of the situated use of this particular practice, and, in addition, the local construction of the institutional context in general. Future research could explore the use of interactional practices, including the displayed institutional orientations, in other types of interactional contexts. Moreover, the interplay between the micro level interaction and the organizational context, suggested by the current study, will hopefully encourage researchers of organizational studies and social interaction to join their forces in joint research projects.

Fourthly, the findings contribute to the literature on professional lingua franca interaction. They lend support to the previous results which demonstrate that the participants orient to aspects of meaning and shared understanding rather than language use (e.g. Firth 1996; Gardner & Wagner 2004). In particular, they provide new information on the multifunctional use of some interactional practices in professional lingua franca interaction. A comparison of the practices appearing in two different corporate internal meeting datasets, one in (English) lingua franca and another in first language interaction, could shed light on the specific role of language for interaction in a corporate context.

6.4 Implications for business practitioners and business communication trainers

What could then be some practical implications of the current study? For business practitioners, I will name three points in particular. First, the findings concerning the interactional practices could be used as awareness raising factors in company internal communication training, especially for those acting as chairpersons in meetings. It might be eye-opening for the practitioners to observe the interactional consequences of various

micro level interactional practices on recorded meeting interactions of one's own team. The analysis of the practices could also open up the opportunity to observe how the organizational or team internal culture is actually locally constructed and reconstructed in the meetings.

Second, even if meetings seem to be a forum where professional work gets accomplished effectively, the study shows that they are also an important forum for constructing and reconstructing collegiality and a good working atmosphere. This is done during the meeting talk but especially during pre- and post-meeting phases. This is something to take into consideration when meetings are, more and more, conducted through video-conferencing. Even if some face-to-face meetings certainly can be replaced by meetings on electronic forums, there remains to be need for meetings conducted in an environment which allows informal interaction.

A third point to be made arises concretely from the observation of the interactions. A lot of meeting time seems to be used for reporting sequences, i.e. sequences where one of the participants gives a status report on a project or some other aspect of his or her work. These reports are usually rather long. It might be worth considering whether the reports could be sent to the participants before the meeting, and the reporters would only give a short summary in the meeting. Hence, the valuable time spent in a meeting could be used for solving potential problems conjointly or for sharing information, i.e. for work which benefits from face-to-face interaction.

For business communication trainers, and, in particular, for teachers of lingua franca or foreign language communication, one special area where implications can be made on the basis of this study is the assessment of communication competence. Traditionally, evaluation of communication proficiency is based on individual performance in a (usually simulated) interaction. The present study shows concretely that the performance of one participant cannot be adequately assessed without taking into account the meeting interaction on the whole. Moreover, the current study encourages international communication trainers to focus on talk as social interaction rather than on talk as language use of atomized individuals.

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APPENDIX

Transcription conventions

[the point of overlap onset
]	the point at which the overlap terminates
=	no break or gap between two adjacent utterances
(.)	a micropause
.	falling intonation
,	level intonation
?	rising intonation
::	lengthening of the sound
°yes°	especially soft sounds relative to the surrounding talk.
()	dubious hearings or speaker-identifications
(())	transcriber's comments
>yes<	faster speech
<yes>	slower speech.
£yes£	smiling voice
@yes@	animated voice
→	to be discussed in the text
YES	increased volume
/.../	talk left out from the excerpt
-	cut off
<u>yes</u>	emphasis
(1.0)	silence timed in tenths of seconds
↑	rise in pitch
(--)	indecipherable speech

Essay 1: Finsk-svenska företagsinterna möten som forum för gemensam förståelse

Tuija Nikko

Abstract:

This essay examines workplace meeting interaction in a cross border corporate environment. By focusing on sequential construction of shared understanding in authentic meeting data, it addresses the following research questions: 1) how do the participants construct shared understanding of the overall structure of the meeting activity, 2) how is understanding constructed locally, as a sequential and responsive process by the participants, and 3) what institutional orientations do the participants display while constructing shared understanding. The methodological approach of the study is conversation analysis (CA). The findings result in four main contributions. First, they contribute to the micro analytic studies on meeting interaction by displaying how shared understanding, in the sense of intersubjectivity, is locally constructed by the participants through various interactional practices. Second, they elaborate the concept of meetings as activity types by demonstrating how the construction of the overall meeting activity is oriented to as locally negotiable. Third, they contribute to the literature of institutional interaction by demonstrating how the institutional context is constructed through the micro level orientations. Fourth, the findings contribute to the literature on professional lingua franca interaction by demonstrating that the meeting participants orient to shared understanding rather than language use.

Key words: workplace meetings, shared understanding, interactional practice, professional lingua franca interaction, institutional interaction

1 Inledning

Interaktionen i internationella sammanhang har traditionellt främst intresserat forskarna som ett forum för oundvikliga språkliga och kulturella missförstånd och konflikter. Med utgångspunkt i så kallade monologiska teoretiska inriktningar (se Linell 1998) har man utgått ifrån att meningar överförs som sådana från en person till en annan med hjälp av språket som kod och att förståelse framför allt är en intern psykologisk process. Den föreliggande studien baserar sig däremot på en dialogisk eller interaktionell syn på den språkliga kommunikationen. Den utgår ifrån att gemensam förståelse uppstår i en dynamisk samverkan mellan samtalsdeltagarna och olika typer av kontextuella resurser (se Linell 1998, 2003; se dessutom Heritage 1984; Marková 1997; Shotter 1993).

Denna uppsats är tänkt som en kontribution till särskilt två områden. För det första syftar den till att öka förståelse för interna mötessamtal på arbetsplatser genom att analysera hur interaktionen i mötessammanhang socialt organiseras av deltagarna själva, närmare bestämt hur mötesdeltagarna å ena sidan konstruerar gemensam förståelse och hur de å andra sidan samtidigt orienterar sig mot den institutionella kontexten. För det andra strävar den till att öka kunskapen om förståelse i en internationell företagsomgivning där kommunikationen förs på lingua franca. Uppsatsen söker svar på följande mera specifika frågeställningar: 1) hur konstruerar mötesdeltagarna gemensam förståelse av den övergripande verksamheten, 2) hur bygger deltagarna upp gemensam förståelse lokalt i den sekventiella interaktionen och 3) vilka institutionella orienteringar uppvisar deltagarna i samband med konstruering av förståelse.

2 Tidigare forskning kring mötesinteraktionen

Traditionellt har möteslitteraturen närmast bestått av handböcker om hur mötessamtalen kunde göras effektivare (se t.ex. Schwartzman 1989; Kangasharju 2001). Särskild uppmärksamhet har fästs vid ordförandens beteende. I och med etableringen av den

samtalsanalytiska forskningen kring institutionella interaktioner har också intresset för analys av autentiska mötessamtal ökat. Med institutionell interaktion hänvisas till sådant talande (tal-i-interaktion; Schegloff 1987) som regleras av en eller flera institutions- eller organisationsspecifika uppgifter samt någon slags förutbestämd uppfattning om hur uppgiften (prototypiskt) bör genomföras (t.ex. Arminen 2005; Drew & Heritage 1992; Heritage 1997; Peräkylä 1997; Ruusuvuori m.fl. 2001). En viktig utgångspunkt för den CA-orienterade forskningstraditionen är att man inte definierar ett samtal som institutionellt enbart i och med att samtalet äger rum i en institutionell omgivning. I stället utgår man ifrån att interaktionen är institutionell i fall samtalsdeltagarnas institutionella eller professionella identiteter på något explicit sätt markeras som relevanta med tanke på de arbetsrelaterade aktiviteter som de är engagerade i.

Institutionella ”fingeravtryck” (Drew & Heritage 1992: 26) kan få uttryck i olika slags institutionsspecifika aspekter i interaktionen. Ett av de mest uppenbara institutionella fingeravtrycken i ett mötessamtal är dess övergripande strukturella organisation som deltagarna gemensamt konstruerar. Man har konstaterat att möten, i likhet med andra institutionella samtal, har en mer eller mindre etablerad helhetsstruktur där man markerar en skillnad mellan den egentliga kärnverksamheten samt inledande och avslutande verksamheter som hamnar utanför kärnverksamheten (Boden 1994; se också Clark 1996: 36; Linell 1998: 243). Tidigare undersökningar har dock sällan gått desto närmare in på mötenas övergripande struktur eller hur de olika faserna realiseras och hanteras av deltagarna i den situerade interaktionen. Milles (2003) är en av de få som fokuserat på detta i sin avhandling. Mirivel och Tracy (2005) har också undersökt ”försnacksfasen” för interna arbetsmöten mera ingående, och kommit underfund med att talet under denna fas förbereder mötet på ett sätt som antyder att fasen kan ses som en viktig del av den institutionella helhetsstrukturen av ett möte.

Ett annat viktigt institutionellt fingeravtryck i mötesinteraktionen gäller den specifika turdesignen. Det har bland annat konstaterats att möten utgör en omgivning där långa turer accepteras utan explicit annonsering (Boden 1994). Turtagningen i mötesinteraktionen för sin del uppvisar drag från både vardagligt och institutionellt samtal. Dels kan den vara fri, dvs. deltagarna kan utse sig själva till talare utan att be om ordet. Dels kan turtagningen också kontrolleras av ordföranden, dvs. deltagarna kan

uttrycka sig först när ordföranden utsett dem till talare. Både turdesignen och turtagningen kan markera deltagarnas olika – ofta asymmetriska – rollidentiteter som kan anknyta till såväl olika mötesroller som variation i expertisen om de behandlade ärendena. Dessa medverkar tillsammans till mötets dynamiska deltagarram (*participation framework*; Goffman 1981). Kangasharju (1998) har undersökt deltagarramens dynamik i möten av ett arbetsteam i samband med oenigheter. Särskilt intresse har också visats mot ordföranderollen i mötesinteraktionen för den präglas av sådana rättigheter och skyldigheter som inte anknyts till de övriga deltagarrollerna. Pomerantz och Denvir (2007) har studerat utförandet av ordföranderollen av en person i chefsposition (se också Koskinen 1999). De visar att även om vissa konventionella rollförväntningar anknyts till ordföranderollen (t.ex. att öppna och avsluta mötet, att annonsera övergångarna från ett ärende till ett annat, att utse följande talare osv.), utförs rollen ändå sist och slutligen i samverkan med de övriga deltagarna i den situerade interaktionen.

Sekventiell analys av mötesinteraktioner på *lingua franca* är föga representerad i litteraturen. Poncini (2004) har studerat interaktionen i flerkulturella affärsmöten från ett flertal metodologiska utgångspunkter och fokuserat bl.a. på den dynamiska utvecklingen av deltagarramen. Hon visar t.ex. hur gruppledaren med hjälp av språkliga val lyckas tilltala deltagarna på ett sätt som beaktar deras expertis, och hur detta inverkar på utvecklingen av delad kunskapsbasis. Mondadas (2004) samtalsanalytiska studie fokuserar på interaktionen av ett internationellt flerspråkigt expertteam. Hon visar att deltagarna i den situerade interaktionen inte markerar sig själva som språkinlärare utan framför allt som flerspråkiga sakkunniga. I traditionella (monologiskt orienterade) studier har detta inte kommit fram eftersom man gett andraspråkstalare en förhandsbestämd inläraridentitet. Firth (1996) är en av de få som fokuserat på karakteristiska drag av institutionell *lingua franca* interaktion. Hans data består av telefonsamtal mellan representanter för ett danskt företag och dess kunder i andra länder. Han kommer bl.a. fram till att deltagarna i dessa samtal följer den så kallade *let-it-pass* -praxisen, vilket innebär att åhörarna trots uppenbara svårigheter inte reparerar sin förståelse utan litar på att saken klarnar under diskussionens fortgång.

Enligt Kangasharju (2001: 205) har samtalsanalysen fört till mötesforskningen den sekventiella analysen av autentiska mötesinteraktioner. Intresset

har därmed förflyttats från enskilda mötesdeltagares språkbruk och agerande till frågor av typen hur deltagarna gemensamt konstruerar mening i den sociala interaktionen. På senare år har intresset för mikroanalytisk undersökning av mötesinteraktionen i allt högre grad börjat sprida sig till nya discipliner. I och med Bodens (1994) banbrytande undersökning har framför allt organisationsforskarna blivit intresserade av det dynamiska sambandet mellan detaljerna i mötesinteraktion och den mera övergripande organisatoriska nivån (se Cooren 2007).

3 Materialet

Materialet för den föreliggande undersökningen består av 4 interna sammanträden vid två fusionerade finsk-svenska företag (9 t 15 min). Materialet utgör en del av en större korpus av mötessamtal som beskrivs närmare i den inledande delen av denna avhandling (*Part I*). Alla möten har transkriberats enligt samtalsanalysens principer (transkriptionsnyckeln ges i slutet av *Part I*). Nästan alla deltagare är antingen finländare eller svenskar (på ett av mötena är en deltagare tysk), och det gemensamma språket på alla sammanträden är engelska. Alla namn som förekommer i utdragen är pseudonymer. De finländska deltagarna har getts en finsk och de svenska en svensk pseudonym. I det följande ges en närmare beskrivning av de fyra mötena.

Kommittémöte (3 t) gäller ett ordinarie möte av redaktionskommittén för en personaltidning. Till kommittén hör chefredaktören (Mats, som dessutom fungerar som mötets ordförande), sekreteraren (Eva) och fyra redaktörer. Chefredaktören, sekreteraren och två av redaktörerna (Jan och Ulf) är svenskar och två av redaktörerna (Ari och Arja) är finländare. Mötesdeltagarnas ordinarie arbetsplatser är belägna på företagets stationeringsorter i olika länder. Teamet har arbetat tillsammans i drygt ett år. Flera nummer av tidningen ges ut varje år och redaktionen sammanträder i regel två gånger för varje nummer. Den huvudsakliga avsikten med det föreliggande sammanträdet är att i detalj planera innehållet och uppbyggnaden av tidningens följande nummer. Mötet hålls på ett hotell inte så långt ifrån Stockholms flygfält. All deltagare har anlänt till hotellet kvällen innan.

Ledarskapsmöte (4 t) gäller ett ordinarie möte av ledningsgruppen för en av företagets centrala funktioner. I mötet deltar 9 medlemmar av vilka fem är finländare (Arja, Antti, Asko, Juha, Kauko), tre är svenskar (Jan, Sten, Lars) och en är tysk (Udo). Alla arbetar med uppgifter inom samma funktion på företagets olika stationeringsorter. De representerar i viss mån olika hierarkiska nivåer, men ordföranden (Jan) innehar en position överordnad de andra. Gruppen samlas regelbundet flera gånger om året för att behandla viktiga aktuella ärenden. Det föreliggande mötet hålls i företagsledningens mötesrum i företagets lokaler i Helsingfors.

Projektmöte 1 (1 t 15 min) är ett möte av en projektgrupp som sysslar med företagets omfattande interna utvecklingsplanering. Ändamålet med projektet är att utveckla ett gemensamt internt program, och gruppen har samarbetat under knappt ett år. Gruppmedlemmarna har alla likartade arbetsuppgifter på företagets olika stationeringsorter. Det huvudsakliga syftet med sammanträdet är att fatta beslut om vissa åtgärder som anknyter till projektets nuläge. Projektgruppen består av fem finländare (Arja, Arto, Isto, Matti, Satu) och fem svenskar (Eva, Jan, Sten, Ulf, Åke). En av de svenska deltagarna (Jan) är den ansvarige chefen för hela projektet, och han fungerar dessutom som ordförande för mötet. Det föreliggande mötet hålls i ett mötesrum i företagets lokaler i Finland, utanför Helsingfors. Åke deltar i mötet via telefonförbindelse från sin stationeringsort i Sverige.

I *Projektmöte 2* (1 t) möts en annan projektgrupp inom utvecklingsplaneringen (jfr projektmöte 1). Också denna grupp har samarbetat en längre tid, och dess medlemmar har alla likartade arbetsuppgifter på företagets olika stationeringsorter. Det huvudsakliga syftet med sammanträdet är att fatta beslut om vissa åtgärder som anknyter till projektet. Gruppen består av delvis samma personer som projektmöte 1: fem finländare (Arja, Isto, Matti, Satu, Taru) och tre svenskar (Jan, Sten, Ulf). Som ordförande fungerar den ansvarige chefen för hela projektet (Jan). Mötet hölls i samma mötesrum som Projektmöte 1.

4 De metodologiska utgångspunkterna

När man undersöker förståelse ur interaktionell synvinkel är föremålet för intresset inte enskilda talares interna upplevelser utan den stegvisa process under vilken deltagarna dels uppvisar och dels strävar till intersubjektivitet (Heritage 1984) eller gemensam förståelse. Intersubjektivitet hör till den etnometodologiska sociologins basbegrepp och har att göra med hur människor går till för att fördela gemensam förståelse dels av omvärlden och dels av andra människors handlingar i den världen (Hutchby & Wooffitt 2001: 4). Den metodologiska utgångspunkten är att det går att analytiskt uppvisa hur intersubjektivitet gemensamt uppnås i den situerade interaktionen. Särskilt följande faktorer kan ses som garantier för intersubjektiv förståelse i en samtalsituation: (1) den sekventiella uppbyggnaden av interaktionen, (2) deltagarnas samverkan för att skapa gemensam förståelse, samt (3) människornas benägenhet att tolka lösa yttranden eller handlingar som en del av en mer omfattande pågående verksamhet (se Linell 1998, 2005c).

Samtalsanalysen har visat att en av de centrala garantierna för intersubjektiv förståelse vid interaktion är att samtalet är sekventiellt uppbyggt, dvs. att på varandra följande yttranden alltid är sammanhängande (t.ex. Sacks m.fl. 1974; Schegloff & Sacks 1973). Den sekventiella utformningen av interaktionen erbjuder samtalsdeltagarna en mekanism med vars hjälp de kan uppvisa för varandra såväl förståelse som eventuella förståelseproblem. Den s.k. *next-turn proof procedure* (Hutchby & Wooffitt 2001: 15) går ut på att "[u]tterances are built to display speakers' understanding" (Schegloff 1984: 38), dvs. varje yttrande kan tolkas som en respons till föregående yttrande eller en indikation om hur talaren uppfattat det strax föregående yttrandet (samtidigt som det förstås också medför något nytt till samtalet). Denna mekanism är en av samtalsanalysens grundläggande metodologiska principer för den ger den föregående talaren en möjlighet att bedöma ifall hans eller hennes yttrande tolkats som han eller hon avsett och vid behov reparera tolkningen. En reparation är en av de viktigaste organiserande resurserna för samtalsdeltagarna för att i realtid återställa den gemensamma förståelsen (Schegloff m.fl. 1977; Schegloff 1979; se också Lindström 2008). Väsentligt från metodologiskt

perspektiv är att 'next-turn proof proceduren' dessutom erbjuder analysten en möjlighet att iaktta och avtäcka samtalsdeltagarnas organiserade mekanismer för att uppvisa och uppnå gemensam förståelse.

Enligt den interaktiva eller dialogiska uppfattningen ses talet-i-interaktion inte som överföring av färdiga meningar från person A till person B utan samtalsdeltagarna förmodas att gemensamt orientera sig mot och samverka för att uppnå ordnad och meningsfull kommunikation. Enskilda yttranden ses som delar av samordnade projekt och verksamheter i vilka alla parter deltar och orienterar sig mot. Målet för analysten är att avtäcka vilka konkreta praktiker eller resurser samtalsdeltagarna använder sig av i den situerade interaktionen för att uppnå gemensam förståelse av såväl den kontextuella situationen (dvs. vad det är som pågår) som innehållet för interaktionen (dvs. vad det är som menas).

Samtal förverkligas oftast i form av så kallade kommunikativa projekt eller verksamheter. Inom interaktionsforskningen har man börjat kalla en sådan enhet för verksamhetstyp (*activity type*; Levinson 1992). Man utgår ifrån att de språkliga yttrandena tilldelas en stor del av sin betydelse som efterföljd av att de tolkas som en del av en viss övergripande verksamhet. Linell (1998: 236) menar att "elementary utterances, communicative acts, cannot be fully understood without reference to this overarching concept". Verksamhetstyp som begrepp ses som en liknande nyckel till att förstå vad som pågår i en situation som Wittgensteins (1958) språkspel och Goffmans (1974) ram. Exempel på verksamhetstyper är bl. a. läkarsamtal, anställningsintervjuer, lektioner, terapisaamtal, domstolsförhör och mötessamtal. För att begreppet verksamhetstyp ska kunna ses som nyttigt med tanke på den dialogiska teorin krävs det att man kan förklara hur deltagarna själva aktivt deltar i konstruktionen av verksamheten i den situerade kontexten. En lösning på detta problem är uppfattningen om deltagarnas orientering (Drew & Heritage 1992; Duranti & Goodwin 1992; Goodwin & Goodwin 1992) mot institutionen.

Enligt samtalsanalysens metodologiska utgångspunkter är alltså förståelse i en kommunikationssituation något som deltagarna gemensamt uppnår. I motsats till många andra (ofta filosofiskt orienterade) inriktningar som intresserar sig för mera teoretiska förutsättningar för språklig förståelse (t.ex. om människor överhuvudtaget kan

förstå varandra eller hur kan man veta att människor faktiskt har förstått varandra), är förståelse för den etnometodologiska samtalsanalysen framför allt en praktisk och lokal angelägenhet. Man utgår ifrån den etnometodologiska grundprincipen att människor i allmänhet förstår varandra om de beter sig som om de skulle förstå varandra. En sådan praktisk inriktning kan förstås inte förutsätta någon fullständig epistemologisk korrelation utan utgår i stället ifrån att förståelse uppnås "for all practical purposes" (Garfinkel 1967), dvs. "för de aktuella praktiska syftena" (Linell 2005c: 243). Samtalsanalysen har också kritiserats för att den förbigår den begreppsliga eller innehållsliga förståelsen (se Linell 2005a: 4). Men uppfattningen om att förståelse är en företeelse som kommer i uttryck i offentlighet och är därför iakttagbar och beskrivbar för analysten är samtalsanalysens väsentliga metodologiska utgångspunkt (se Taylor 1992: 203).

5 Att bygga upp gemensam förståelse av den övergripande verksamheten

5.1 Den övergripande fasstrukturen av mötessamtalen

Avsnitt 5 gäller resultaten för hur mötesdeltagarna genom sina inlägg och orienteringar konstruerar gemensam förståelse av den övergripande verksamheten. Jag inleder med en preliminär beskrivning av den övergripande fasstrukturen för materialets möten (figur 1), som i princip följer samma struktur som uppvisats i tidigare undersökningar (se t.ex. Atkinson m.fl. 1978; Boden 1994; Green-Vänttinen 2001; Schwartzman 1989; Milles 2003; Mirivel & Tracy 2005).

Försnacksfas
Öppningsfas
Kärnfas/Dagordningsfas
Avslutningsfas
Eftersnacksfas

Figur 1. Fasstrukturen för de undersökta mötessamtalen

I möteslitteraturen kallar man oftast de inledande och avslutande verksamheterna för försnack (*premeeting talk*) och eftersnack (*postmeeting talk*) (e.g. Boden 1994; Green-Vänttinen 2002; Schwartzman 1989) eller försnacksfasen och eftersnacksfasen (Milles 2003). Kärnverksamheten för ett möte utgörs självklart av den fas under vilken deltagarna går igenom de ärenden som finns listade på dagordningen eller som på något annat sätt definierats som ändamålet för sammankomsten. Övergången från försnacksfasen till dagordningsfasen sker via öppningsfasen. På motsvarande sätt sker övergången från dagordningsfasen till eftersnacksfasen via avslutningsfasen efter det att alla mötesärenden har behandlats. Schwartzman (1989: 285) sammanfattar ett mötets övergripande struktur enligt följande:

Meetings almost invariably follow a pattern of moving from informal or everyday speech or "chatting" to whatever is culturally recognizable as proper meeting talk and action and then back to "chatting." There are, however, a variety of ways that groups mark the beginning of a meeting, ways that then serve to frame the behavior as occurring *within* the meeting frame.

Det viktiga ur samtalsanalysens synvinkel är att den övergripande strukturen är något som deltagarna själva aktivt konstruerar genom sina orienteringar i den situerade interaktionen. Det är m.a.o. inte fråga om någon yttre modell som deltagarna följer utan snarare en resurs "that may be modified, augmented, used repetitively or not at all because the contingencies to which these components are responsive are altered, unusual, recurrent, or absent" (Zimmerman 1992: 461). Faserna uppfattas närmast som

prototypiska och flexibla, och i praktiken kan det hända att deltagarna kryssar fram och tillbaka mellan de olika faserna (Peräkylä 1997: 197).

I det följande ska jag redogöra för hur deltagarna i praktiken orienterar sig mot mötenas helhetsstruktur och hur de gemensamt konstruerar den, dvs. hur de uppnår gemensam förståelse av vad det är som pågår.

5.2 För- och eftersnacksfaserna

Varje inspelning inleds med en fas som kunde kallas för försnacksfas och som omfattar den konversation som försiggår innan mötet börjar, ”from the moment the first two people arrived in the meeting room until someone uttered a phrase like “Okay let’s get started” (Mirivel & Tracy 2005: 2). I de föreliggande mötena kännetecknas särskilt de första stunderna av försnacksfasen av en allmän rörlighet. Nya människor kommer in i rummet och utropar hälsningar, några kan stå två och två och samtala lågmält med varandra, en del sitter redan vid mötesbordet och diskuterar. Några hämtar kaffe och säger kanske något i förbigående till någon annan deltagare, en del sitter för sig själva och läser på sina papper och ytterliga några kan syssla med mötesteknologin såsom apparaturen för telefonförbindelser. Flera parallella samtal pågår och samtalen kännetecknas ofta av att vara flerspråkiga (engelska, finska, svenska). Allt som allt orienterar sig deltagarna inte ännu mot ett fokuserat samtal, dvs. “they have not yet moved from the disjoint orientation to joint engagement” (Goffman 1981: 130). På motsvarande sätt kan eftersnacksfasen beskrivas som den fas då deltagarna har avslutat att delta i samma interaktion och samtalet bryts upp i flera parallella diskussioner (Atkinson m.fl. 1978: 147).

Interaktionen i utdrag 1 äger rum i en situation då fyra deltagare redan satt sig kring mötesbordet. De väntar på två kollegor som tillfälligt lämnat rummet för att hämta vattenflaskor från korridoren.

(1)

Kommittémöte

((Ulf, Mats, Eva och Arja sitter runt mötesbordet; Jan och Ari har gått ut för att hämta vattenflaskor åt alla. Mats och Eva läser på sina papper, Arja håller på att

skriva och Ulf sitter i sina tankar. Mötet äger rum på ett hotell dit deltagarna anlant kvällen innan. Klockan är ungefär 8 på morgonen.))

- 01 Ulf Did you try to wake me up (.) Mats?
02 Mats/OF No. £I was on my way but I got the message that
03 you (.) already (.) was awake.£
04 Ulf ((lyfter upp handen)) £First on stage£
05 Mats/OF £Okay.£
06 Eva £But that alarm clock you bought at the train (.)
07 (-) you use that one?£
08 Ulf Battery is out.
09 he he ((alla deltar i gemensamt skratt))

Många drag i interaktionen uppvisar orientering mot vardagligt samtal. Topikerna introduceras spontant av Ulf (rad 1) och Eva (rad 6) och de är privata till karaktären. Vidare följer topikskiftet från uppväckning till väckarklocka den för vardagsspråket typiska stegvisa progressionen. Talet har drag som Holmes (2000: 37) tillskriver typiskt småprat (e.g. "minimally informative", "social"). Förståelse i utdrag 1 uppvisas såsom i vardagligt samtal, dvs. deltagarna uppvisar sin förståelse för varandra genom sina samtalsinlägg i den sekventiellt uppbyggda interaktionen (svar på frågor, rad 2 och rad 8; kommentar, rad 5; gemensamt skratt, rad 9).

Enligt Mirivel och Tracy (2005) har småpratet i försnacksfasen av de interna arbetsmötena framför allt funktionen att förstärka relationerna mellan medarbetarna. De avvisar samtidigt uppfattningen att småpratet i försnacksfasen helt skulle sakna institutionell funktion. Tvärtom menar de att det kan vara av stor betydelse för den fortsatta interaktionen att deltagarna genom småprat byggt upp en atmosfär som får dem att känna sig bekväma och som gör det lättare för dem att arbeta tillsammans under det institutionella samtal som håller på att inledas. De menar att "it is in fleeting conversational moments like this one, that relationships at work are nurtured, preserved, and managed" (Mirivel & Tracy 2005: 9). Också Holmes (2000: 33) påpekar att

small talk cannot be dismissed as a peripheral, marginal or minor discourse mode. Small talk is one means by which we negotiate interpersonal relationships, a crucial function of talk with significant implications for on-going and future interactions.

Likasa kan man i utdrag 1 se deltagarnas orientering mot upprätthållande av positiva interpersonella relationer. Särskilt det gemensamma skrattet, som interaktionen leder till

(rad 9), kan ses som ett inslag som bygger upp samhörigheten mellan deltagarna (se Kangasharju & Nikko 2009). Det som är speciellt anmärkningsvärt i utdrag 1 är att det gemensamma skrattet görs möjligt av en särskild interaktiv praktik, nämligen språkval. Genom att använda engelska markerar (de svenskspråkiga) Ulf, Mats och Eva att de också inkluderar den finska Arja i åhörarna till deras privata angelägenheter. Utan detta val skulle Arja bli utanför skrattet och den viktiga funktionen att bygga upp samhörigheten inom hela gruppen skulle gå förlorad. Min tolkning är sålunda att detta (antingen medvetna eller omedvetna) val markerar en orientering mot teamets gruppanda och därmed institutionen (se Skårup 2004 för en liknande tolkning om språkval i ett danskt multinationellt företag). Allt som allt menar jag att även om för- och eftersnacksfaserna visserligen inte hör till själva mötessamtalet kan de med fog anses som delar av den övergripande verksamheten.

Ett annat exempel på småprat i försnacksfasen med institutionella inslag kan ses i utdrag 2 som härstammar från Ledarskapsmötet. Också här har största delen av mötesdeltagarna (inklusive ordföranden) redan satt sig vid bordet.

(2) Ledarskapsmöte

- ((Arja kommer in i rummet, sätter sig vid bordet bredvid Sten och skakar hand med denne))
- 01 Arja MORning all others (.) as well
- 02 ((Antti lyfter upp handen som hälsningssignal))
- 03 ? Morning
- 04 (2.0)
- 05 Jan/OF What it's (it) in Finnish humenta or (.) good morning in
- 06 Finnish is (.) (hu[menta])
- 07 Lars [huome]nta ((närmar sig mötesbordet med en kaffekopp i
- 08 handen))
- 09 Arja <Hyvää HUOmenta>
- 10 Antti Hyvää huomenta (.) good Lars
- 11 (2.0)
- 12 Jan/OF £Good learning after two years£
- 13 Antti He he (.) yeah
- 14 Lars Great improvement
- 15 Kauko [Mm mm]
- 16 Jan/OF [Yes] he he from zero to (.) no it's a bit
- 17 Lars From zero to good morning he he
- 18 He he ((gemensamt skratt))
- 19 (.)
- 20 OF Let's see now are we all (.) all here?

Jan (ordföranden, OF) trappar upp Arjas hälsning (rad 1) och bjuder in de andra att hjälpa honom med hur man säger ”god morgon” på finska (rad 5 till 6). Detta utvecklas till en längre gemensamt konstruerad sekvens som leder till gemensamt skratt (rad 18). Genom sina reaktioner uppvisar deltagarna förståelse av varandras yttranden. Lars, Arja och Antti samkonstruerar ett svar (rad 7 till 10) på ordförandens fråga (rad 5). När ordföranden på rad 12 fortsätter med humoristiskt samtalsmod uppvisar Antti och Lars i sina responser (rad 13 respektive 14) gemensam förståelse av såväl innehållet som modet. Humoristiskt mod tillsammans med gemensamt skratt kan också i detta fall ses ha betydelse för utvecklingen av positiv atmosfär. En trevlig historia och gemensamt skratt i initialskedet av ett samtal har dessutom påståtts vara betydelsefullt för hur hela samtalet utvecklas (Schegloff 1979: 25; se också Kangasharju 2007).

Utöver den positiva orienteringen kan man dessutom iaktta en annan gemensam orientering mot mötesinteraktionen i utdrag 2. Den samkonstruerade humoristiska sekvensen kunde nämligen dessutom ses som en orientering mot mötesöppningen eftersom ordföranden omedelbart efter det gemensamma skrattet (rad 18) inleder öppningen av mötet (rad 20). Sekvensen skulle med andra ord fungera som en praktik som ordföranden initierar för att inbjuda deltagarna till gemensamt koordinerad verksamhet eller *joint engagement* enligt Goffmans (1981) terminologi. I den funktionen skulle den kunna ses som någon slags ”pre-öppningsfas”.

Utöver humoristiskt småprat förekommer det också småpratssekvenser mellan deltagarna som kan gälla typiska småpratsteman som till exempel vädret. Men ofta förekommer också sådant arbetsrelaterat tal (*work talk*; Mirivel & Tracy 2005) som anknyter till något av mötesärendena eller någon annan gemensam arbetsuppgift. Utdrag 3 är ett kort exempel på sådant ”arbetstal” under eftersnacksfasen.

(3) Ledarskapsmöte

01 OF	Okay we are now closing the official part of the meeting now and and but we (.)
02	Juha fcan you be inofficialf
03 →	((Juha stiger upp och delar ut papper åt alla, medan de andra reser sig och inleder
04	flera parallella dyader med varandra))
05 Juha	Yeah (.) there is one copy (.) Lars (.) Lars (.)
06 Udo	Thank you
07 Juha	Some study work

Ordföranden markerar att mötet är avslutat (rad 1 till 2) och att det som följer är således utanför mötets dagordningsfas. Deltagarna markerar förståelse av avslutningen genom ändrat beteende (rad 3 till 4). Det framgår inte av kontexten vad det är för papper Juha delar ut men det är uppenbart att deltagarna är medvetna om vad det är fråga om. Det är också tydligt att det är fråga om något arbetsrelaterat och Juha hänvisar också till det som "some study work" (rad 7). Mirivel och Tracy (2005: 14) antyder att deltagarna utnyttjar tillfället eller det interaktiva utrymmet för att uträtta diverse institutionella uppdrag eller utbyte av information som inte direkt anknyter till mötessamtalet (se också Boden 1994: 102). (För ett mera utökad exempel på arbetsrelaterat tal i eftersnacksfasen, se utdrag 1 i *Essay 3* i vilket deltagarna kommer överens om diverse gemensamma planer.)

På basen av analysen av för- och eftersnacksfaserna av materialets möten instämmer jag i Mirivel och Tracys (2005) uppfattning att för- och eftersnacket utgör faser som funktionellt kan anknytas till den övergripande verksamheten, även om de inte hör till själva mötessamtalet (se också Milles 2003).

5.3 Öppningsfasen

Den tidigare möteslitteraturen uppvisar att övergången från försnacksfasen till själva mötessamtalet eller dagordningsfasen nästan uteslutande markeras av ordföranden med en (topik)skiftesmarkering ("so", "ok", "right"; Atkinson et al. 1978; Boden 1994; Milles 2003; Mirivel & Tracy 2005; Schwartzman 1989). Så är också fallet i mitt material. Såsom uppvisas i utdragen 4 till 7 initieras själva mötesöppningen oftast med "okay" (plus ofta någon ytterligare kommentar). Sådana markörer eller signaler förekommer allmänt i institutionella samtal och de kan ses som inramnings- eller kontextualiseringssignaler som ramar in övergången till själva kärnaktiviteten för samtalsdeltagarna (Linell 2005b: 14).

(4) Projektmöte1

01 OF **Okay e::r** (.) we have ehm agenda for today are there any any comments on on
 02 that
 03 Ulf Yes e::r I have one comment

(5) Ledarskapsmöte

01 OF **So okay** (.) so any questions about this part or can we go ahead
 02 Lars We can go ahead
 03 OF E:r first issue (.) who's turn is it to write the protocol the minutes from the
 04 meeting /.../

I samtliga fall i mitt material markerar de övriga deltagarna att de förstått ”okay” som markör för mötesöppning. Atkinson m.fl. (1978) påpekar att en topikskiftesmarkering är en uppmärksamhetsväckare men räcker inte ensam till att tillåta tolkningen om mötesöppning (se också Schwartzman 1989). Det är snarare så att deltagarna i en viss kontextuell situation tolkar signalen som en inledning till mötesöppning. Detta är också uppenbart i mitt material. Avgörande med tanke på mötesöppning tycks vara den stund då alla är på plats, för övergången till dagordningsfasen förbereds ofta i en form av deltagarräkning (Milles 2003: 4) (*assessment of attendance*; Boden 1994) såsom på rad 20 i utdrag 2 (”Let’s see now are we all here”).

I Projektmöte 1 (utdrag 4) och i Ledarskapsmötet (utdrag 5) är själva öppningen mycket kort. I båda fallen kan dock en orientering mot öppningen påträffas före skiftesmarkören. Ovan har redan hänvisats till användningen av en trevlig historia som orientering mot en övergång till gemensam fokus och mötesöppning (utdrag 2, rad 5 till 18). Presentation av forskaren kan också ses som ett slags förberedande orientering mot mötesöppningen. Innan ordföranden uttrycker det som återges på rad 1 i utdrag 4 har en av medlemmarna presenterat forskaren. Han inleder presentationen genom att säga explicit: ”Before we start I would like to introduce the lady in the corner”. I utdrag 5 hänvisar ordförandens ”any questions about this part” (rad 1) till presentationen av forskaren.

(6a) Kommittémöte

01 OF **Okay.** (.) to number five and ehm it's a (.) bit speci
02 special situation since we only have three hours to go
03 so we need to be very efficient and and the the aim is
04 of course to (.) .hhh as always end up with a paged
05 plan and and I hope we'll have a (.) creative meeting
06 as as always
07 Ari → Mats (.) by the way (.) do we=
08 OF =Yes=
09 Ari → =get anything to drink here like water or=
10 ((öppningen avbryts och Ari
11 och Jan lämnar rummet för att hämta vattenflaskor;
12 under tiden återgår de andra till försnacksfasen))

(6b) Komiteemöte

01 OF **Right.** (.) e::r (.) so (.) I hope that everyone (.) has got an agenda. /.../
02 → ((de övriga har tagit mötespositioner runt bordet))

(7) Projektmöte2

01 Arja °I'm not sure°
02 Jan/OF £(--) yeah (--)£
03 ((Taru och Matti fortsätter att diskutera på finska, de andra har slutat diskutera))
04 OF **OKAY.**
05 → ((all diskussion avslutar, deltagarna intar mötespositionen vid bordet; Satu och
Ulf stiger upp
06 och skakar hand över bordet))
07 Ulf Yapp
08 Taru Taru Virtanen hej
09 Ulf Jaa
10 OF **Okay.**
11 Ulf °Ulf Andersson°
12 OF I think Sten just went out of the room we can start without him e::r
13 welcome (.) to this meeting (.) (I talked with e::r Matti and Ulf about trying to to
14 to to end this meeting at one o'clock so let's at least have that that er goal)
15 er we have an agENDA standard agenda (.) which I think we can can approve of
16 and then we have the er last meeting's minutes (.) from Satu /.../

I möteslitteraturen presenteras mötesöppningen allmänt som en av ordförandens viktiga uppgifter. Mötesöppningarna i mitt material visar dock att öppningen i praktiken ofta behandlas som en förhandlingssak. I utdrag 5 frågar ordföranden "can we go ahead" och efter det att en av deltagarna har svarat "we can go ahead" inleds mötesinteraktionen.

Öppningen av såväl Kommittémötet (utdragen 6a och 6b) som Projektmöte 2 (utdrag 7) uppvisar att övergången från försnacksfasen till mötesöppningen i praktiken inte nödvändigtvis sker lineariskt utan kan innebära kryssningar fram och tillbaka (se Peräkylä 1997: 197; Zimmerman 1992 för motsavarande fenomen i andra institutionella kontexter). På raderna 1 till 6 i utdrag 6a kan man se så gott som ett paradexempel på ordförandens öppningsannonsering. Det visar sig att Ari ändå inte är färdig för öppning vid det skedet (rad 7 till 10). Att han markerar sitt yttrande som felplacerat genom ”by the way” (rad 7) uppvisar att han ändå har förstått ordförandens annonsering. Efter Aris reaktion fortsätter försnacksfasen tills ordföranden gör ett nytt försök (utdrag 6b). I utdrag 7 yttrar ordföranden ”okay” (rad 4) vilket uppenbart uppfattas som skiftesmarkering eftersom deltagarna omedelbart upptar sina positioner vid mötesbordet. Dessutom stiger två deltagare snabbt upp och presenterar sig för varandra. Denna episod avbryter öppningen, och ordföranden upprepar initiativet på rad 10. Det kan tolkas att användningen av svenska är en resurs för Taru och Ulf att markera att presentationsepisoden ännu hör till försnacksfasen.

Övergången till själva mötessamtalet efter skiftesmarkören (”okay”, ”right”) markeras av en förändrad interaktionsordning. Man övergår från flera parallella samtal till ett reglerat samtal där deltagarna har begränsade rättigheter när det gäller vem som får uttrycka vad och när (se Sacks m.fl. 1974).

5.4 Avslutningsfasen

Avslutningarna av mötessamtalen har nästan inte alls behandlats i litteraturen. Milles (2003) är en av de få som har analyserat dem, och hennes iakttagelser liknar delvis det som jag har påträffat i mitt material. Helhetsstrukturen av mötena regleras starkt av dagordningen. Avslutningen blir således inte aktuell förrän sista punkten på dagordningen har behandlats. I samtliga fall står ordföranden för den explicita annonseringen av mötesavslutningen. Såsom Milles (2003: 50) konstaterar, är det dock en förhandlingsfråga ”mellan deltagare som har ytterligare saker att säga och andra som

är otåliga att få gå från mötet” vilken som är den sista punkten och när denna är slutdiskuterad. I det följande ska jag granska avslutningarna i materialet lite närmare.

I båda projektmötena tycks behandlingen av tidpunkten för följande möte markera en avslutning på mötet för deltagarna. Detta kan ses i utdrag 8.

(8) Projektmöte 1

01 OF	Are we ready for the next (.) decide the next meeting?
02 Arto	Yeah
03 Matti	Yeah
04	/.../ ((det har avskaffats rader där man kommer överens om tidpunkten
05	för nästa möte))
06 OF	So (.) let's have it that way (.)
07	Okay thank you
08 Arto →	Tac[kar]
09 Matti →	[Thank] you (.)
10 →	((deltagarna börjar röra på sig och inleder flera parallella dyadiska samtal))

Genom sin fråga på rad 1, dvs. huruvida gruppen är färdig att besluta om tidpunkten för följande möte, föreslår ordföranden en förhandling om mötesavslutningen. Två deltagare besvarar frågan jakande (rad 2 och rad 3), och det tycks vara klart för alla att när tidpunkten har beslutats är mötet avslutat. När ordföranden efter beslutet om tidpunkten yttrar ”så let's have it that way okay thank you” visar deltagarnas reaktioner (rad 8 till 10) att de tolkat detta som en signal på avslutning. På samma sätt som i öppningen räcker det alltså också här med en rätt svagt uttryckt signal av ordföranden. Avgörande med tanke på förståelse är den kontextuella omgivningen. Att deltagarna uppfattar dagordningsfasen avslutad markeras av att samtalet bryts upp i flera mindre dyader och en del stiger upp och lämnar rummet. Samtalet följer inte längre någon dagordning och det finns ingen som kontrollerar vem som får tala och vilka teman som är acceptabla, även om arbetsrelaterat tal, dvs. tal om diverse gemensamma arbetsuppgifter dock är vanligt mellan enskilda deltagare.

I såväl Ledarskapsmötet som i Kommittémötet avslutar ordföranden mötet genom explicit annonsering. Avslutningen för Ledarskapsmötet kan ses på rad 1 i utdrag 3 (“okay we are now closing the official part of the meeting and and and but we”). Före denna annonsering har gruppen dock i praktiken gemensamt kommit överens om att

mötet är avslutat, för när alla sakärenden har behandlats och ordföranden har tagit upp en punkt under ”övriga ärenden” inträffar följande samtal (utdrag 9):

(9) Ledarskapsmöte

01 OF	Okay I (.) I have no other issues than than this
02	((pause))
03 Kauko →	I would (.) like to very shortly to (.) have your first (.) primitive primal (.)
04	reaction to one issue (.) I have been thinking that maybe in the future /.../

Ordföranden (OF) föreslår avslutning genom att konstatera att han inte har några andra ärenden (rad 1). Den efterföljande pausen ger deltagarna en sista chans att yttra sig om de har något på hjärtat och Kauko tar vara på den chansen. Han markerar sitt ärende som kort (”I would like to very shortly”) eventuellt med tanke på att temat han tar upp är rätt kontroversiellt. Det framgår av hans nonverbala beteende (röststyrkan, blicken) att han riktar initiativet till hela gruppen, dvs. ”you” på rad 3 avser hela teamet. Detta är också teamets tolkning eftersom det uppstår en längre sakbetonad diskussion om temat, i vilket största delen av deltagarna aktivt deltar. Samtalet blir så småningom alltmer vardagligt och humoristiskt men ändå fortfarande fokuserat, dvs. alla deltar i samma samtal. Innan ordföranden kommer med sin explicita avslutning berättas två trevliga historier som innehållsmässigt (åtminstone i någon mån) anknyter till Kaukos ursprungliga tema. Den första historien inleds av ordföranden och berättas gemensamt av tre svenskar och den gäller en svensk politiker som nyligen åkt fast för rattfylleri. Den andra historien berättas som en *second story* (Sacks 1992) till den första och den gäller en (rätt välkänd) vits om Churchill. Vitsen inleds av en finländare och slutförs gemensamt av denne och den svenska ordföranden. Vitsen leder till gemensamt skratt som sedan efterföljs av avslutningsannonseringen (”okay we are now closing the official part of the meeting”; utdrag 3, rad 1). Ordföranden återför ännu en sista gång samtalet till dagordningen för att få tillfälle att sätta punkt för mötet och markera för deltagarna att det är tillåtet att lämna rummet eller inleda dyadiska privata samtal.

På samma sätt som i samband med utdrag 2 tycks de trevliga historierna också i avslutningen vara multifunktionella. Dels tycks de ha en viktig funktion som diskursmarkörer och orienteringar mot en gemensam skiftesövergång. Utöver den

översiktliga fasstruktur som presenterades i inledningen till avsnitt 5 tycks deltagarna alltså vid behov också konstruera spontana ”mellanfaser” under samtalets gång som gör övergångarna smidigare (se också Kangasharju & Nikko 2009). Dels är det möjligt att de trevliga historierna har en funktion som har att göra med uppbyggande av vi-känsla och gemenskap inom gruppen – inte minst när det förekommer asymmetrier mellan de hierarkiska förhållandena inom gruppen såsom i Ledarskapsmötet.

Utdrag 9 exemplifierar ytterligare ett fenomen när det gäller avslutningen. Kaukos initiativ efter en klar avslutningssignal från ordföranden visar att också (stunden för) avslutningen kan i praktiken konstrueras som en förhandlingssak på samma sätt som öppningen.

När det gäller Kommittémötet så blir stunden för avslutningen naturligt aktuell så fort kommittén har fått tidningens sidoplan färdig (se utdrag 10). Trots att det tycks vara helt klart för deltagarna att mötet är över avslutar ordföranden ändå mötet genom ett explicit avslutningsyttrande (rad 1).

(10) Kommittémöte

01 OF	Alright but that means that we can end the ((tidningens namn)) team (.) meeting
02	and editorial meeting and thank you very much for (.) for your contribution and
03	and good vacation and let's continue with the next issue and have a nice
04	vacation /.../
05	Okay (.) thank you
05 →	(1.0)
06 →	((deltagarna börjar röra på sig och samla sina papper))

I sin avslutande tur tackar ordföranden dessutom deltagarna för deras insatser till mötet och markerar sålunda sin ledarposition inom gruppen. Genom att inte säga något och börja röra på sig kan deltagarna tänkas markera både förståelse av ordförandens yttrande och enighet om avslutningen.

5.5 Dagordningsfasen

Kärnverksamheten för ett möte utgörs i princip av att deltagarna går igenom dagordningen punkt för punkt. I samtliga av materialets möten nämns dagordningen explicit av ordföranden i öppningsfasen och deltagarna markerar också under mötets gång att dagordningen fungerar som en viktig tolkningsram för interaktionen. I samtliga möten har deltagarna haft tillgång till dagordningen i förväg och förmodas ha den med sig. Deltagarna väntas också ha bekantat sig med dagordningen i förväg eftersom dagordningarna inte presenteras eller läses upp högt i något av mötena (jfr Milles 2003).

Det karakteriserar alla möten i mitt material att ordföranden markerar övergångarna till nya dagordningsärenden genom explicit annonsering. Sådana annonseringar illustreras i utdragen 11a till 11c.

11a **Ledarskapsmöte**

01 OF Okay shall we move ahead what's on

11b **Kommittémöte**

01 OF Alright (.) next issue on agenda (.) /.../

11c **Kommittémöte**

01 OF Okay. Time is limited (.) let's take a quick look at at er the results of the /.../

Utdragen 12 till 14 visar dels att deltagarna har en delad uppfattning om när övergång till ett nytt tema blir relevant i samtalet, dels att även om lokal koherens i interaktionen saknas hålls verksamheten ändå samman med hjälp av deltagarnas orientering mot dagordningen (se Linell 1998: 252; se också Milles 2003: 79). Ett exempel på detta kan ses i utdrag 12.

(12) Ledarskapsmöte

01 Of £I mean it's in my mind quite an acceptable area of ((namnet på
02 en stad))£
03 Matti £Yeah£
04 OF → E::r customer satisfaction surveys
05 Kauko → Okay (.) Yes I took some transparencies e:r (.) that I might show /.../

Ordföranden (OF) ger på rad 1 en avrundande lekfull evaluering av placeringen av företagets nya huvudkontor, ett tema som precis innan diskuterats livligt. Matti kvitterar kort ordförandens evaluering (rad 3) och genast därefter, utan någon paus, uttrycker ordföranden det som kan ses på rad 4. Kaukos reaktion på rad 5 uppvisar att han utan att tveka gör åtminstone 3 tolkningar: att ordföranden föreslår övergång till ett nytt ärende, att ärendet hör till hans ansvarsområde, och att han väntas rapportera för de andra om saken. Det är uppenbart att på samma sätt som i samband med annonseringen av öppningen kan det inte vara annonseringen som sådan som gör övergången relevant. Det väsentliga är att ordförandens annonsering sker i en kontextuell omgivning där övergången är relevant. I utdrag 12 kan ordförandens avrundande evaluering (rad 1) ses signalera att övergången till en ny topik har blivit relevant. Att förstå ”customer satisfaction surveys” som ny topik förutsätter dessutom dagordningen som gemensam tolkningsram.

Utdrag 13 utgörs av en längre episod som visar att intersubjektivitet uppnås dels genom orientering mot dagordningen och tidigare erfarenheter av teamets möten och dels genom lokal, stegvis konstruktion. Utdraget härstammar från början av Kommittémötet, precis efter öppningsfasen.

(13) Kommittémöte

01 OF RIGHT (.) what about the production? (.)
02 If we start with er Jan (.) you are the nearest
03 (.)
04 Jan → Oh oh (.) number?
05 OF Number four
06 (.)
07 Jan Right.
08 OF Number four
09 ((paus))
10 Jan → It was some (.) personally it was no (.) real

11 problem (.) it went er (.) almost (.) e::r (.) to sch-
 12 er em to my schedule (.) e::r
 13 OF → Okay.
 14 Jan E::r I had some difficulties during this em purchasing (.)
 15 e::r bit (.) I felt em (.) e::r that e::r they wanted to
 16 (.) influence (.) e::r me ((Jan fortsätter att berätta om sina
 17 erfarenheter; ett flertal rader har utelämnats))
 18 OF Hm. hm. (.) Yeah. (.) Okay. (.) We'll continue with Ari (.) Any
 19 comments?

På rad 1 uttrycker ordföranden (OF) "what about the production", och nominerar Jan som nästa talare (rad 2). Jans reaktion ("oh oh number") på rad 4 kan ses uppvisa åtminstone två saker. För det första uppvisar Jans kontrollfråga att han vill att ordföranden ska förtydliga referenten till sin fråga. När Jan har fått numret förtydligt tycks grunderna för deras intersubjektiva förståelse ha återinförts. För det andra uppvisar Jans fråga att han litar på att han förstår referenten till ordet "produktion" i den situerade kontexten. En närmare analys av episoden uppvisar nämligen att samtliga samtalsdeltagare tycks dela uppfattningen om att den verksamhet som initieras i och med ordförandens fråga är att varje medlem i tur och ordning ska berätta för de andra om sina erfarenheter och eventuella problem under produktionen av ett föregående nummer av personaltidningen (motsvarande episoder med de andra redaktörerna följer episoden i utdrag 1 i tur och ordning). Av allt att döma är det en praktik som upprepas i teamets möten (se också Kangasharju 2007). Gemensam förståelse under episoden i utdrag 13 skulle sålunda dels basera sig på deltagarnas gemensamma erfarenheter från tidigare möten. Dels bygger ordföranden och Jan upp sin gemensamma förståelse lokalt genom reparationssekvensen (rad 4 till 8) och den gemensamt konstruerade berättelsen eller rapporten (rad 10 till 19).

Utdrag 14 är ytterligare ett exempel på hur intersubjektivitet uppnås dels genom orientering mot dagordningen och tidigare erfarenheter av teamets möten och dels genom lokal förhandling. För en utomstående förefaller sekvensen något absurd, men för deltagarna tycks det inte vålla något problem att avgöra vad som pågår.

(14) **Projektmöte 1**

01 OF Okay (.) and we'll we'll e::r approve minutes
 02 Ulf Thanks.
 03 OF → E::r Arto
 04 Arto → E::r Ulf you set yourself as four point one

05 Ulf Did I
 06 Arto £(Yes) you did indeed£ ((skrattar))
 07 Ulf → I have some sort of paper to show you ((stiger upp))/.../

Interaktionen i utdraget äger rum precis efter mötesöppningen. På rad 3 säger ordföranden "Arto", och såväl Arto som Ulf uppvisar förståelse av vilken verksamhet som hänvisas till genom sina reaktioner (rad 4 till 7). Det visar sig att projektmötet går ut på att de som är ansvariga för de olika delprojekten väntas ge en lägesrapport om var sitt delprojekt. På rad 3 tilldelar ordföranden ordet åt Arto för att denne ska inleda sin rapportering. Gemensam förståelse i utdrag 14 görs möjlig av att deltagarna har fördelade erfarenheter av hur deras möten är strukturerade. Att strukturen ändå inte är helt bestämt i förväg uppvisas av att Arto och Ulf förhandlar sig fram till en annan ordningsföljd för sina presentationer, dvs. att Ulf ska rapportera före Arto (rad 4 till 6). Också dagordningen används som resurs för gemensam förståelse i och med att Artos hänvisning till den på rad 4 ("four point one") inte tycks vålla några svårigheter.

Utdrag 15 är ytterligare ett exempel på hur ordförandens orientering mot helhetsstrukturen i praktiken behandlas som en förhandlingssak inom gruppen.

(15) Projektmöte 1

01 OF But couldn't we take a separate discussion about (.) this off the meeting or (.) I
 02 see we're running out of time
 03 Arto → Yes
 04 Matti → Yeah
 05 ((längre paus då alla sitter tysta och bläddrar i sina papper))

Ordföranden (OF) orienterar sig mot sin uppgift som reglerare av interaktionen i och med att han initierar återförandet av samtalet till dagordningen (rad 1). Återförandet behandlas dock som en förhandlingssak mellan ordföranden (OF) och deltagarna i och med att ordföranden presenterar det som ett frågeformulerat förslag och att Arto och Matti genom sina jakande svar (rad 3 och rad 4) uppvisar att de (både förstår och) accepterar förslaget. Också de övriga deltagarna kan uppfattas delta i förhandlingen eftersom diskussionen om temat avslutar.

Utdrag 16 visar att det dessutom kan uppstå förhandling om huruvida ett ärende är slutdiskuterat eller inte, dvs. huruvida man är färdig att gå över till nästa punkt.

(16) Ledarskapsmöte

- 01 OF Yes it was a good article /.../ ((OFs närmare evaluering av artikeln har utelämnats))
02 really relevant article in that sense
03 ((Antti räcker upp handen och tittar på OF))
04 OF E::r HR (.) HR Sweden (.) /.../ ((OFs precisering av temat har utelämnats))
05 you you want to say something
06 Antti → I I only wanted to to add that that when we are outsourcing this (.) then the critical
07 thing is that /.../ ((det uppstår en diskussion om temat mellan OF och Antti som
08 utelämnats))
09 OF Anyhow okay HR (.) HR Sweden

Ordföranden (OF) presenterar en evaluering av en artikel i Harvard Business Journal (rad 1 till 2) som diskuterats för en stund. Diskussionen om artikeln uppstod som en sidosekvens i anknytning till en topik om eventuell externalisering av vissa serviceverksamheter. Antti räcker upp handen (rad 3) men ordföranden märker tydligen inte detta först eftersom han annonserar övergång till följande ärende (rad 4). Det visar sig att Antti vill fortsätta diskussionen om externaliseringen och att han försöker passa på att komma med sitt inslag före följande punkt på dagordningen. När ordföranden uppmärksammar Anttis initiativ (rad 5) markerar Antti sitt yttrande som avvikande ("I only wanted to add") och visar med detta att han är medveten om dess felplacering. Det uppstår en diskussion om temat mellan ordföranden och Antti, och när diskussionen avslutas återför ordföranden samtalet till dagordningen genom att på nytt annonsera följande ärende (rad 9). Dels visar utdraget att Antti orienterar sig mot att ärendena behandlas i en viss ordning, ett efter ett. Dels visar det också att Antti känner igen den exakta tidpunkten för en potentiell övergång. Också här är det ordförandens avrundande evaluering (rad 1 till 2) som tycks markera den stundande övergången (jfr utdrag 12).

5.6 Att bygga upp gemensam förståelse av den övergripande verksamheten - sammanfattning

Avsnitt 5 har gällt frågan hur deltagarna genom sina inlägg och orienteringar konstruerar gemensam förståelse av den övergripande verksamheten, dvs. den institutionella mötesinteraktionen. Följande faser kunde identifieras i den övergripande strukturen av

mötessamtalen: försnacksfas, öppningsfas, dagordningsfas, avslutningsfas och eftersnacksfas. Det är inte sällsynt att för- och eftersnacksfaserna i litteraturen betraktas som obetydliga småpratsstunder som hamnar utanför den egentliga institutionella interaktionen. Analysen av dessa faser i den föreliggande studien visar dock att även om interaktionen som sådan hellre kan karaktäriseras som vardagligt småprat än institutionellt tal, uppvisar den institutionella drag som kan ses betydelsefulla för själva mötessamtalen. Därför kan dessa faser också med fog anses som delar av den övergripande verksamheten. Det institutionella inslaget är framför allt synligt i gemensamt konstruerad humor och gemensamt skratt, såsom också Mirivel och Tracy (2005) nyligen visat. Båda används i mitt material som praktiker för att åstadkomma positiv atmosfär och gruppanda särskilt under försnacksfaserna. Det har påståtts redan tidigare att gemensamt skratt i initialskedet av ett samtal är betydelsefullt för hur hela samtalet utvecklas (Schegloff 1979: 25; se också Kangasharju 2007). I mitt material fungerar gemensam humor dessutom som orientering mot mötesöppning och därigenom det institutionella mötessamtalet. Ytterligare är institutionella inslag direkt närvarande i arbetsrelaterat tal som förekommer under för- och eftersnacksfaserna.

En intressant hypotes som kräver fortsatt undersökning anknyter till förekomsten av gemensamt konstruerad humor och gemensamt skratt. Det tycks nämligen förekomma särskilt mycket sådan verksamhet under försnacksfaserna till de två permanenta teamen (Ledarskapsmöte och Kommittémöte). Det är möjligt att man upplever det som extra viktigt att bygga upp gruppanda inför möten för permanenta arbetsgrupper – särskilt inom företag som är under förvandling.

När det gäller mötessamtalens övergripande progression, såsom den byggs upp gemensamt av mötesdeltagarna, vill jag särskilt lyfta upp fyra iakttagelser, vilka alla uppvisar deltagarnas orientering mot uppbyggandet av den institutionella kontexten. *För det första* annonseras övergångarna mellan de olika faserna alltid explicit av ordföranden. Till exempel övergången från försnacksfasen till mötesöppningen annonseras med hjälp av markörer såsom ”okay” och ”right”. För annonsering av övergångar mellan de olika sakärendena under dagordningsfasen använder ordföranden praktiker som t.ex. ”Alright, next issue on agenda”, ”Customer satisfaction surveys”. *För det andra*, även om övergångarna är ordförandens angelägenheter tycks de alltid vara förhandlingsbara. Detta

innebär att det är en förhandlingssak mellan ordföranden och de övriga deltagarna i vilket skede övergångarna i praktiken sker. Detta gäller såväl öppning och avslutning som övergångar mellan olika sakärenden.

En *tredje* iakttagelse om den övergripande progressionen är att övergångarna är lätt igenkännbara för deltagarna. Med detta avses att deltagarna uppvisar gemensam förståelse av övergångarna även om de språkliga annonseringarna kan vara rätt svaga (såsom ”right”). Detta tycks förklaras av att övergångarna oftast gjorts högst relevanta i den kontextuella omgivningen. Det är med andra ord inte annonseringen som sådan som markerar övergång utan det finns andra aspekter i omgivningen som tillsammans med annonseringen har den effekten. En konkret markör för avslutning är att sista punkten på dagordningen har behandlats. En tydlig markör för topikövergång tycks utgöras av ordförandens avrundande evaluering av en topik under behandling. Den *fyjärde* iakttagelsen är att viktiga resurser för gemensam förståelse under mötessamtalen utgörs av dagordningen, gemensamma mötesrutiner som utvecklats under tidigare möten och gemensam kunskap om de behandlade ärenden. Att dagordningen fungerar som en övergripande tolkningsram – visserligen i samråd med den lokala interaktionsprocessen – är uppenbart särskilt vid topikövergångarna. Orientering mot dagordningen uppvisas också av att avvikelser från den markeras som felplaceringar. Med gemensamma rutiner som utvecklats i tidigare möten hänvisar jag till delade mötesrutiner såsom vissa tillvägagångssätt för rapportering. Deltagarna uppvisar orientering mot sådana rutiner då de en efter en följer vissa mötesrutiner som inte beskrivs eller förklaras explicit. Viktig gemensam kunskap som deltagarna anlitar när det gäller den övergripande progressionen är till exempel vem som svarar för vad. När ordföranden annonserar en ny topik uppstår det inte någon tvekan om vem som väntas träda fram eller ta ordet.

6 Att bygga upp gemensam förståelse i samband med behandlingen av mötesärendena

Detta avsnitt fokuserar på hur gemensam förståelse byggs upp lokalt i den sekventiella interaktionen under behandlingen av mötesärendena. Analysen syftar till att reda ut 1)

vilka praktiker mötesdeltagarna använder för att bygga upp gemensam förståelse under rapporterande eller informerande sekvenser, och 2) vilka institutionella orienteringar dessa användningar uppvisar i den situerade kontexten.

I sin analys av interna möten gör Milles (2003) en gruppering av dagordningsärendena i informerande och diskuterande ärenden utifrån skillnader i interaktionsstruktur, turtagning och inre fasstruktur. Hon menar att dessa två typer av ärenden är typiska diskurstyper (se Linell 2005b; Sarangi 2000) i interna arbetsmöten. Med informerande ärenden avser hon sådana ärenden som går ut på att en eller flera deltagare informerar de andra om något. Det kan uppstå diskussion, men oftast bara mellan två eller högst tre deltagare. Diskuterande ärenden däremot präglas av att deltagarna gemensamt diskuterar något problem, att det förekommer färre utökade turer och att samtalet överlag liknar det vardagliga talet. Milles (2003: 72) betonar dock i likhet med Sarangi (2000) att ärendenas typ inte alltid går att renodla utan ”flera typer oftast ingår i ett ärende”.

I mitt material är det typiskt att behandlingen av ett dagordningsärende inleds med en längre rapport eller redogörelse av någon av mötesdeltagarna. Oftast är det så att den som rapporterar står vid en arbetsprojektor och visar diabilder som hon eller han förberett i förväg som stöd för rapporteringen. Interaktionsstrukturen under sådana sekvenser är mycket asymmetrisk för den karakteriseras av långa, utökade turer från den som rapporterar. Det är dock inte sällsynt att dessa turer avbryts med kortare frågor och kommentarer från de övriga deltagarna (se också Green-Vänttinen 2001; Koskinen 1999; Milles 2003), och dessa kan också leda till längre dyadiska eller polyadiska samtalssekvenser. Det är framför allt genom sådana praktiker som lyssnarna kan explicitgöra sin förståelse av rapportörens tal.

Jag ville inledningsvis reda ut om förståelse överhuvud uppvisas explicit under rapporterande sekvenser eller om det är så att analysten (och rapportören) oftast får nöja sig med den svaga tolkningen att intersubjektivitet uppnåtts eftersom ingen motsätter sig tolkningen. En grov analys av mötesinteraktionerna visade att det bara finns några enstaka rapporterande sekvenser som enbart består av rapportörens tal. De flesta innehåller åtminstone något samtalsinlägg från de övriga deltagarna. Dessa inlägg kan dels ses som praktiker som mer eller mindre explicit uppvisar gemensam förståelse. Dels

kan de ses som praktiker som används av deltagarna för att på olika sätt kontrollera förståelsen. Få av utdragen är dock renodlade exempel på enbart den ena typen.

6.1 Praktiker som uppvisar förståelse

I detta avsnitt behandlas interaktiva praktiker som uppvisar gemensam förståelse i mötessamtal. Jag inleder med att behandla den naturliga praktiken som interaktörerna har till sitt förfogande, nämligen den sekventiella interaktionen. Eftersom denna praktik ofta inte är en verklig resurs för parterna i situationer såsom rapporterande sekvenser i mötessamtal, fästs uppmärksamhet särskilt vid andra interaktiva praktiker som deltagarna använder sig av.

6.1.1 Gemensam förståelse uppvisas i den sekventiellt uppbyggda interaktionen

Den naturliga praktiken för samtalsparterna för att uppvisa förståelse för varandra är 'next-turn proof proceduren' (se avsnitt 4) som bygger på att den sekventiellt uppbyggda interaktionen garanterar gemensam förståelse för deltagarna. Jag återgår först till två tidigare utdrag, 13 och 14, för att illustrera proceduren. Dessa upprepas här som 17 och 18.

(17)	Kommittémöte
01 OF	RIGHT (.) what about the production? (.)
02	If we start with er Jan (.) you are the nearest
03	(.)
04 Jan →	Oh oh (.) number?
05 OF	Number four
06	(.)
07 Jan	Right.
08 OF	Number four
09	((paus))
10 Jan →	It was some (.) personally it was no (.) real

11 problem (.) it went er (.) almost (.) e::r (.) to sch-
 12 er em to my schedule (.) e::r
 13 OF → Okay.
 14 Jan E::r I had some difficulties during this em purchasing (.)
 15 e::r bit (.) I felt em (.) e::r that e::r they wanted to
 16 (.) influence (.) e::r me ((Jan fortsätter att berätta om sina
 17 erfarenheter; ett flertal rader har utelämnats))
 18 OF Hm. hm. (.) Yeah. (.) Okay. (.) We'll continue with Ari (.) Any
 19 comments?

(18) Projektmöte 1

01 OF Okay (.) and we'll we'll e::r approve minutes
 02 Ulf Thanks.
 03 OF → E::r Arto
 04 Arto → E::r Ulf you set yourself as four point one
 05 Ulf Did I
 06 Arto £(Yes) you did indeed£ ((skrattar))
 07 Ulf → I have some sort of paper to show you ((stiger upp))/.../

Utdragen 17 och 18 illustrerar hur deltagarna uppvisar förståelse för varandra i realtid i den stegvisa sekventiella interaktionen, och hur de som en del av den sekventiella processen utnyttjar reparation som mekanism för att vid behov i realtid återställa den gemensamma förståelsen. Såsom de närmare analyserna av utdragen uppvisar (se ovan), är centrala resurser för gemensam förståelse i dessa utdrag – utöver den lokala stegvisa konstruktionsprocessen – den kontextuella omgivningen tillsammans med dagordningen och deltagarnas gemensamma erfarenheter från tidigare möten.

Utdrag 19 härstammar från en litet annorlunda omgivning än utdragen 17 och 18. Den utgör en längre delfas under Ledarskapsmötet som på dagordningen kallas för ”what’s on”. Fasen går ut på att deltagarna informerar varandra om vad som är aktuellt. I detta fall är det ordföranden som informerar teamet om vad som är aktuellt ur styrelsens och koncernledningens synvinkel, och det tema som behandlas är koncernens finansiella läge. Utdraget är avsett som ett exempel på, för det första, hur deltagarna kan sekventiellt uppvisa förståelse för varandra under rapporterande sekvenser. För det andra illustrerar utdraget hur deltagarna uppvisar förståelse för varandra dels under en rapporterande och dels under en mera diskuterande episod.

(19) **Ledarskapsmöte**

- 01 OF The negative side of that was also discussed in
02 in our board meeting yesterday (.) was that (.)
03 looking at the final outcome it is still far too
04 high (.)
05 Kauko → Mm.
06 OF Because it's three point one (.) plus that extra
07 day that doesn't cost too much it's only for day
08 time workers (.) but it's the efficiency factor
09 (.) that maybe put it up to three point six or
10 three point seven (.) and then there are the salary
11 raises outside the negotiations (.) which is what
12 per cent one and a half ↑ or (.) ((tittar på Juha))
13 Juha → Normally it has been between one and half to
14 two and half (.) per cent
15 Kauko → Mm.
16 OF So let's say one and a half and then you are at
17 five (.) and the Germans were closing a deal now
18 that was what around two or two two and a half
19 or something for=
20 Udo → =Yes yes (.) two and a half and e::r- but for er-
21 (.) I'm not sure for (.) this for (.) they made
22 a- a deal o- over two years I [think] and for
23 for the
24 Kauko → [Mm mm.]
25 Udo First twelve months two and a half and (.) and
26 again e::r (.) two point I'm not sure [now] about
27 OF → [Mm]
28 Udo the figures for for the er- [((-) months)]=
29 Kauko → [Second year]=
30 Udo → =Yes.=
31 OF =Yeah but let's conclude [it]'s considerably
32 Kauko → [mm]
33 OF I[owe]r=
34 Kauko → [yes]
35 Udo → It's lower=
36 Kauko → =Those both toget[her] (.)
37 Udo → [yes]
38 Kauko is less than what what we are now paying=
39 Udo → =Mm yeah.

Den rapporterande episoden från och med rad 1 till (mitten av) rad 20 präglas av asymmetrisk turtagning eftersom det är närmast ordföranden (OF) som talar medan de övriga är i lyssnarposition. De övriga deltagarna uppvisar sin förståelse genom dialog- eller responspartiklar (rad 5 och 15) och genom svar på rapportörens frågor (rad 13 och 20). Under sin monologformade introduktion (rad 1 till 12) hänvisar ordföranden till en

hel del företagsinterna kunskaper som han av allt att döma förmodar som delade: "our board meeting" (rad 2), "that extra day" (rad 6), "day time workers" (rad 7 till 8), "the efficiency factor" (rad 8), "salary raises outside the negotiations" (rad 10 till 11). Med "that" på rad 1 hänvisar han till de ekonomiska konsekvenserna för en strejk som hade ägt rum i Finland tidigare samma år, och som behandlats i mötet precis innan. Enligt 'next-turn proof proceduren' utgår analysten ifrån att referenterna till hänvisningarna behandlas av deltagarna som fördelade eftersom de inte ifrågasätts i interaktionen.

Från och med slutet av rad 11 ändras deltagarpositionen i och med att ordföranden inbjuder först Juha (rad 11 till 12) och sedan Udo (rad 18 till 19) att delta i interaktionen genom att rikta en kontrollfråga till båda. Juha och Udo uppvisar förståelse av frågorna genom sina svar. Från och med mitten av rad 20 ("and err but") ändras deltagarpositionen ännu mera och samtalet börjar konstrueras som gemensam diskussion. Under den diskuterande episoden uppvisar deltagarna gemensam förståelse för varandra tur för tur, och avslutningsvis konstruerar de en gemensam sammanfattning av samtalet (rad 31 till 39) (vilket går ut på att löneförhöjningen i Finland har varit högre än löneförhöjningen i Tyskland).

I den sekventiella interaktionen uppvisas förståelse t.ex. genom att frågor besvaras utan tvekan (såsom Juha och Udo i utdrag 19 genom sina svar på ordförandens frågor) och relevanta responser ges också på initiativ som för en utomstående verkar rätt kryptiska (t.ex. Arto i utdrag 18 och Jan i utdrag 17).

6.1.2 Gemensam förståelse uppvisas genom diverse interaktiva praktiker

I det följande ska jag behandla olika interaktiva praktiker som förekommer i materialet under s.k. rapporterande sekvenser, och som kan ses uppvisa förståelse av rapportörens tal. Oftast är det fråga om praktiker som någon av de övriga deltagarna använder som respons till rapportörens tal. Till dessa hör praktiker som *dialogpartiklar*, *tillägg*, *ifyllnader*, *evalueringar*, *kommentarer* samt *humor och skrott*. Praktikerna är multifunktionella vilket innebär att de kan ses utträta flera olika handlingar samtidigt. De

kan alla dessutom tillskrivas diverse institutionella funktioner i den situerade interaktionen. Sådana praktiker förekommer i alla samtal men är mest frekventa i projektmöten.

Jag börjar med att återgå till användningen av *dialog- eller responspartiklar* i utdrag 19 (t.ex. rad 5, 15, 24). Green-Vänttinen (2001) konstaterar i sin avhandling att återkoppling från mottagarna i mötessamtal i samband med (det som här kallas för) rapporterade episoder är sällsynta. Man kan därför fråga sig om användningen av dialogpartiklar som mottagarrespons i utdrag 19 har någon särskild funktion som kanske inte kommer fram i alla mötessituationer. Enligt min tolkning finns det anledning att förmoda att användningen har en särskild funktion. Kaukos responser (rad 5, 15, 24) kan för det första uppfattas som uppmaningar till talaren att fortsätta sin redogörelse, men dessutom kan han förmodas markera sin roll som en särskilt delaktig eller ”involverad” deltagare, dvs. en som temat under behandling särskilt berör. Det dialogiskt konstruerade talet uppvisar att det inte bara är fråga om förmedlande av aktuell information från ordföranden till deltagarna i utdrag 19. Snarare strävar deltagarna till att konstruera en gemensam förståelse av det tema som ordföranden redogör för (dvs. de ekonomiska konsekvenserna för den finska strejken). I en sådan omgivning är dialogpartikeln en viktig resurs för (de involverade) deltagarna att markera sin delaktighet.

I utdrag 20 används *tillägg* som interaktiv praktik.

(20) Projektmöte 1

- | | |
|---------|---|
| 01 Arto | Now (.) when we get the study material that's the first time when we have a |
| 02 | chance to start with the e::r pilot |
| 03 Isto | In the intranet yes. |
| 04 Arto | Allowing for two weeks roughly /.../ |

Arto håller på att rapportera om läget för sitt delprojekt. När han påpekar (rad 1) att så fort projektgruppen har tillgång till studiematerialet har de möjlighet att för första gången starta med piloten tillägger Isto ”in the intranet yes” (rad 3). Istos kontribution uppvisar förståelse av Artos tal. Samtidigt kan den också ses som ett annan-initierat tillägg (*other-initiated increment*; Lerner 2004: 159) riktat mot samma publik som Artos tal. Fallande intonation och ”yes” i slutet uppvisar att Istos inlägg inte är avsett som kontrollfråga utan

tillägg. Tillägget kan här tolkas som ett inslag av samberättande. Isto som är ansvarig för det tekniska genomförandet av Artos projekt orienterar sig mot sin expertroll genom att delta i Artos rapportering som samberättare, dvs. genom att specificera den information som Arto ger.

I utdrag 21 förekommer *evaluering* som respons till rapportörens tal.

(21) Projektmöte 1

01 Arto This is a realistic prognosis and this requires that all goes well (.)
02 Ulf → Reasonable
03 ((Arto fortsätter rapporteringen))

Arto har rapporterat om sitt projekt för ett tag och kommer med en självevaluering av den tidtabell som han presenterat i sin rapport (rad 1). Ulf reagerar på Artos inlägg med evaluering på rad 2 ("reasonable"). Ulfs evaluering kan för det första ses som en praktik som uppvisar förståelse av Artos inlägg. Dessutom kan den ses som en positiv evaluering av själva handlingen, dvs. Artos självevaluering. Självevaluering kan i och för sig vara en handling i rapportörens tal som inviterar en lyssnarreaktion. Närmast torde Ulfs evaluering fungera som ett stödande inlägg som markerar enighet med den föregående talaren.

Utdrag 22 skiljer sig från de flesta andra i och med att det här är rapportören som först inviterar *dialogpartiklar*. Dessutom förekommer en *ifyllnad*.

(22) Projektmöte 1

01 Matti And er I'm very glad that we have a common concept now ((tittar på OF
02 och Ulf))
03 OF → [°hmm.°]
04 Ulf → [°hmm.°]
05 Matti which allows er (.)
06 Arto → comPARATIVE reporting
07 Matti yeah (.)

Matti är i färd med att redogöra för sitt projekt. På rad 1 ger han en positiv evaluering av ett gemensamt tidigare beslut och tittar samtidigt på ordföranden och Ulf. Dessa uppvisar samtidigt såväl förståelse som enighet genom dialogpartiklar (rad 3 och rad 4). Matti

fortsätter sin rapportering men avbryter genast (rad 5) för att initiera en typ av ordsökning. Arto fyller i turen (rad 6) och uppvisar därigenom förutom förståelse också orientering mot samberättande och därmed sin expertroll som delansvarig för projektet (jfr utdrag 20).

I utdrag 23 håller Kauko på att rapportera om vad som är på gång inom hans speciella ansvarsområde. Också här är det rapportören som inviterar den interaktiva praktiken, dvs. *ifyllnaden*.

(23) Ledarskapsmöte

01 Kauko	But one (.) one rather important reason of course is er is the self assessment (.)
02	according to ((name of a company internal program)) (.) which (.) requires that
03	you just don't think or suppose but you you pro- must (.) should have er- ((gör
04	cirklar i luften med ena handen och tittar på Arja)) (.) <concrete>=
05 Arja →	=dAta
06 Kauko	Con[crete] DATA
07 Matti	[facts]
08 Arja	Mm

Kauko nämner en företagsintern självvärdering (rad 1) som enligt honom kräver att man inte bara tror och antar utan kommer med ”konkreta fakta” (rad 1 till 5). Det sista ordet uttrycker han ändå inte själv utan inviterar Arja att göra det genom en handrörelse och ögonkontakt (rad 3 till 4). Genom sin ifyllnad uppvisar Arja förståelse av Kaukos tal. Min tolkning är att det inte är fråga om ordsökning här utan det är en mötesspecifik praktik som Kauko tillämpar för att invitera Arja att samkonstruera uttrycket med honom. Därmed kan han markera Arjas expertroll när det gäller självvärderingsprojektet: det framgår av ett annat sammanhang under mötets gång att självvärderingen hör till Arjas ansvarsområde. (För en mera detaljerad analys av utdrag 23, se *Essay 2* i denna avhandling.)

I utdrag 24 presenteras ett mera utökat exempel på hur deltagarna dels markerar förståelse av varandras inlägg och dels konstruerar gemensam förståelse av den pågående verksamheten. Utdraget innehåller flera exempel på praktiker som uppvisar förståelse, men här hänvisas till två, nämligen *kommentar* som respons till rapportering och *skratt* och *humor* som responser till ett humoristiskt inlägg. En av deltagarna (Matti) har precis avslutat en lägesrapport om sitt delprojekt. Projektet innebär bl.a. att hela personalen

tilldelas ett dataprogram på CD och Matti har nämnt i sin rapport hur det hela skall genomföras.

(24) Projektmöte1

01 Isto → EsPECIALlY I would like to (.) have this cede to
 02 go through the (.) acceptance TEST for virus check
 03 [and]= ((tittar på Matti))
 04 Arto [Yeah]
 05 Matti =°Yes of course.°
 06 Isto and other [other] proc[edures]
 07 Matti [°Yeah°] [°Yeah°]
 08 Isto Because otherwise we create a ((flyttar blicken
 09 från Matti till ordföranden))
 10 (0.5)
 11 OF → (h^{ih}) hah hah ((flyttar blicken från Isto till Matti))
 12 Matti → HAH HAH [HAH
 13 Jan → [hah hah hah ((tittar på ordföranden))
 14 OF → £(Wooden mouse.)£ hah hah
 15 Isto £Yes.£
 16 Matti £Yeah£ ((nickar))
 17 (0.5)((alla deltagare skrattar))
 18 Jan → £Surprise£ ((tittar på ordföranden))
 19 Arto °It wouldn't be the first time°
 20 Isto £°Surprise yeah°£
 21 Arto → @Happy <NEW> year@
 22 → HAH HAH HAH ((högljutt gemensamt skratt))

Isto, som svarar för det tekniska genomförandet av projektet, kommer med en anmärkning om att han vill ha CD-skivorna virustestade (rad 1 till 3). Genom sin kommentar uppvisar Isto förståelse av det som Matti presenterat i sin rapport samtidigt som han markerar sin egen expertroll inom området. Matti för sin del uppvisar förståelse och accepterande av Istos inlägg (rad 5 och 7). Från och med rad 8 omformulerar Isto kontexten. Med hjälp av ett ofullständigt yttrande (rad 8) bjuder han in de andra till att samkonstruera samtalet i en kollektiv positionering (Goffman 1981). Fokuserad institutionell rapportering byts ut mot humoristiskt konverserande, vilket innebär att talet efter omformuleringen på rad 8 konstrueras gemensamt av flera deltagare. Från och med rad 11 används humor och skratt som interaktiva praktiker för att uppvisa både gemensam förståelse och enighet. Utdraget har analyserats mera ingående av Kangasharju och Nikko (2009). De kommer till den slutsatsen att det här är dels fråga

om *doing collegiality* (Holmes 2000), dvs. att man genom den humoristiska mellanfasen i den situerade kontexten bygger upp gemenskap och gruppanda. Dels är det fråga om ett konstruktivt sätt att avsluta behandlingen av en seriös topik, vilket för sin del garanterar en smidig övergång till en ny topik. Här tas utdraget närmast upp som exempel på att skrätt och humor också kan ses uppvisa förståelse (se dessutom analysen av utdrag 29).

Utdrag 25 är ett annat exempel på uppbyggande av gemensam förståelse i Ledarskapsmötet under fasen ”What’s on” (jfr utdrag 19). Denna gång informerar ordföranden de övriga i teamet om sitt aktuella rekryteringsinitiativ. Utdraget är avsett som ett exempel på att deltagarna ibland kan delta mycket aktivt i uppbyggandet av rapporterande sekvenser. Praktiker som används i utdraget är *dialog- och responspartiklar, evalueringar och kommentarer*.

(25) Ledarskapsmöte

01 OF One thing is that Monday next week I will have an (.) let’s say (.)
02 call it an informal discussion with NN ((namn på en person))
03 middle manager at X ((en ort i Sverige)) (.) e::r who retires now
04 from ((namn på koncernen)) (.) last of June I think it is /.../
05 I will have in in discussion with him about his interest and possibilities
06 to work about half-time for us (.)
07 Antti → Mm
08 OF With management audit issues=
09 Udo =Mm=
10 OF =[Id]en[tifying]
11 Antti [Mm]
12 Kauko → [Oh good]
13 OF Young potentials and (.)
14 Udo Mm
15 OF And working with the /.../ when it comes to (.) a bit of [longterm] (.)
16 Kauko → [GOOD idea]
17 OF longterm e::r supply or sourcing of of potentials (.)
18 Antti Mm
19 OF And I mean (.) and he is willing to have the meeting and and honestly
20 I think he is very interested (.)
21 Udo Mm
22 Antti → He is very interested I I heard
23 OF This is this is the
24 Kauko Mm
25 OF thing he
26 Antti → Motivated man=
27 OF =He has enjoyed most doing during
28 Udo Yes
29 Of the last years

På rad 1 annonserar ordföranden övergång till ett nytt tema ("one thing is that") och ny information som han är i färd med att delge. Ordföranden är i berättarrollen men också de övriga deltagarna deltar aktivt i konstruerande av episoden och medverkar till att den inte konstrueras som rapportering utan närmast som en konverserande sekvens. Deltagarna markerar sitt intresse och sin delaktighet i det behandlade temat genom användning av diverse praktiker som samtidigt uppvisar förståelse. Både Antti och Udo markerar sina roller som särskilt "involverade deltagare" genom upprepade responspartiklar (rad 7, 9, 11, 14, 18, 21). Kaukos responser är evalueringar ("oh good", rad 12 och "good idea", rad 16) vilka likaså kan ses markera såväl delaktighet i det behandlade temat som enighet och stöd. Utdrag 25 visar konkret hur deltagarna tillsammans konstruerar en gemensam förståelse av ordförandens ursprungliga information om den nya rekryteringen (dvs. att det är en utmärkt idé att rekrytera mannen i fråga).

6.2 Praktiker som används för att kontrollera förståelse

I detta avsnitt diskuteras fall där någon av de övriga deltagarna tar sig till olika praktiker för att kontrollera förståelse i samband med att en av deltagarna rapporterar eller redogör för de andra om något. Oftast är det fråga om fall där den gemensamma förståelsen kontrolleras genom initiering av reparation, dvs. någon av de övriga deltagarna initierar reparation för att kontrollerar sin förståelse av rapportörens tal. Utdrag 26 illustrerar ett sådant fall. Ulf står vid en overheadprojektor och rapporterar för de andra om läget för det delprojekt som han svarar för.

(26) Projektmöte 2

01 Ulf	I have some pictures (.) this time this green it's for this
02	project and it was also /.../ ((en längre bit av rapporterande har utelämnats))
03	the problems is one thousand two hundred
04	thirty-three hours e:r but we have two thousand nine hundred so
05	there are lot of hours to be served it's not worse
06	(--)
07 OF →	Did you make a fresh start of this when you entered as a

08 project manager or does this include the the er work schedule
 09 Ulf This is the er the budget but I've made some er thinking about
 10 how much is still there (--)
 11 OF → Yeah but this is included in the twelve hundred and thirty
 12 three hours is included the work which was spent during before
 13 you entered
 14 Ulf Yes.
 15 OF As project manager
 16 Ulf Yes.
 17 ((Ulf fortsätter sin rapportering.))

Ulfs rapportering fokuserar på problemet att de resurser som tilldelats hans delprojekt inte kommer att räcka till på grund av vissa oväntade problem. Han markerar en hel del kunskap delad i sin rapportering, framför allt gäller detta hänvisningar till färger och timantal: "this time this green it's for this project" (rad 1 till 2), "one thousand two hundred thirty-three hours" (rad 3 till 4), "we have two thousand nine hundred" (rad 4). Det tycks höra till teamets gemensamma kunskaper att färger används för att hänvisa till projektets status och att arbetsmängden beskrivs i timmar för detta kommer fram också i andra sammanhang under mötets gång och vållar inte förståelseproblem. Ulf har rapporterat för en längre stund innan ordföranden (OF) kommer med ett reparationsinitiativ (rad 7). Hans kontrollfråga anknyter till hur Ulf räknat timmarna. Att ordföranden ställer en fortsättningsfråga på rad 11 efter Ulfs svar (rad 9 till 10) uppvisar att han inte är nöjd med Ulfs första respons, dvs. att Ulf inte förstått hans fråga såsom han hade menat den. Fortsättningsfrågan går ut på att ordföranden ber Ulf bekräfta hans tolkning om hur kalkyleringen gjorts (rad 11 till 13). Ulf bekräftar tolkningen som korrekt (rad 14 och 16) och därefter fortsätter Ulf med rapporteringen.

Genom sin fråga (rad 7 till 8) uppvisar ordföranden att han har förstått innehållet i Ulfs tal men ber honom om ytterligare bakgrundsinformation om saken. Denna angelägenhet kan ses markera ett särskilt intresse för Ulfs rapport. Denna tolkning bekräftas ytterligare av att ordföranden inte ger upp utan fortsätter kontrolleringen efter Ulfs svar. Genom sitt beteende (inklusive det faktum att frågan anknyter till projektets övergripande ekonomiska situation) uppvisar ordföranden framför allt en orientering mot sin roll som den ansvarige projektledaren. De övriga deltagarna uppvisar inte explicit sin begreppsliga förståelse utan håller sig till sina mottagarroller och medverkar på så sätt till

att verksamheten fortsätter som rapportering. Enligt den tillämpade metodologin bör tystnaden tolkas som tecken på (tillräcklig) förståelse.

Utdrag 27 är ett annat exempel på reparationsinitiativ som praktik för att kontrollera förståelse. Utdraget härstammar från ett annat möte där Ulf rapporterar för de andra om läget för ett delprojekt.

(27) Projektmöte 1

01 Ulf	Err new technical resources are needed from data security and /.../ ((några rader
02	har utelämnats där Ulf redogör för behovet av extra resurser))
03 Arto →	Ulf is this err when you say new resources is that a replacement or additional
04	resources
05 Ulf	I need some more first
06 Arto →	More
07 Ulf	Yes
08 Arto →	It's additional then
09 Ulf	Yes (.)
10 Arto	Okay
11 Ulf	I need special persons to make some
12 Arto	Right
13 Ulf	to solve the technique (.)
14	((Ulf fortsätter sin rapportering))

På rad 3 initierar Arto en reparation för att kontrollera sin förståelse av en detalj i Ulfs tal. Ulfs respons (rad 5) inleder en längre reparationssekvens under vilken Arto ber honom bekräfta sin förståelse två gånger (rad 6 och 8). Med sina positiva evalueringar av Ulfs svar (rad 10 och 12) uppvisar Arto sin tillfredsställelse med svaren och rapporteringen fortsätter. Artos formulering på rad 3 ("when you say new resources") uppvisar att han förstått innehållet i Ulfs tal men ber honom förtydliga referenten till uttrycket "new resources". På samma sätt som ordföranden i utdrag 26 uppvisar Arto ett särskilt intresse för innehållet i Ulfs tal. Man kan tänka sig att Arto genom sin fråga uppvisar en orientering mot sin roll som den ansvarige ledaren för ett annat delprojekt. Det kan nämligen vara relevant för honom att i den rollen få det bekräftat att det andra delprojektet är i behov av mera resurser. Också denna gång uppstår en dyad mellan två personer medan de övriga håller sig tysta. Det är anmärkningsvärt att turtagningen här följer vardagsspråkets regler, dvs. Antti ber inte om ordet av ordföranden utan ställer sin

fråga direkt till Ulf, dvs. utser sig själv som nästa talare. Samma gäller överlag när mottagarna kontrollerar sin förståelse.

Utdrag 28 är ett ytterligare exempel på reparation för att kontrollera förståelse. Ulf har precis avslutat sin rapportering om resultaten för en opinionsförmätning som han har stått för.

(28) Kommittémöte

01 OF	But e::r=
02 Eva →	=Short question (.) ((tittar på Ulf)) You you compare the
03	figures with the ((tidningens namn)) 2.99=
04 Ulf	=Yeah=
05 Eva	=I mean not (.) (number two) this year 2000
06 OF	The change of e:r (.) century
07 Ulf	@Yeah yeah yeah.@ But e::r one one year ago
08 Eva	(You mean) one year ago
09 OF →	Aha:: (.) You <u>mean</u> one year ago.
10 Eva	You really do he he ((skrattar))
11 OF	Aha. Okay.
12	((pause))
13 OF	Mm.
14 Ulf	Two years ago is impossible (.) I think
15 Eva	No but I mean (--) I thought you meant the previous number
16 Ulf	No
17 OF	Aha. Okay.
18 Eva	Okay

När Ulf avslutat sin rapportering försöker ordföranden (OF) ta ordet men avbryts av Eva som markerar sitt inlägg som en kort fråga till Ulf (rad 2). Eva initierar en reparation som fokuserar på något som Ulf har sagt i sin rapportering. Evas kontrollfråga inleder en längre sekvens som samkonstrueras av Eva, Ulf och ordföranden och leder avslutningsvis till gemensam förståelse. Evas reparationsinitiativ går ut på att hon vill kontrollera sin förståelse av en detalj i Ulfs tal, dvs. vilka nummer av tidningen som ingått i Ulfs jämförelse av läsarreaktioner. Att en sådan detalj är viktig särskilt för Eva kan förstås mot bakgrunden av att hon fungerar som sekreterare i mötet och till hennes uppgifter hör att föra protokoll. Initiativet kan alltså uppfattas markera hennes orientering mot sin rollidentitet. Det visar sig att Evas initiativ är betydelsefull för intersubjektiviteten inom gruppen för ordförandens reaktion på rad 9 uppvisar att han hade missförstått vilka nummer av tidningen som hade ingått i jämförelsen.

Också i utdrag 29 används reparationsinitiativ för att garantera förståelse. Dessutom används här humor och gemensamt skratt som praktiker för att uppvisa förståelse (också dessa analyseras av praktiska skäl här även om analysens rätta plats egentligen hade varit avsnitt 6.1.2). I utdraget rapporterar Antti om förberedelserna för förflyttningen av huvudkontoret. Han är medlem i den arbetsgrupp som förbereder saken och det har blivit klart under mötets gång att detta är en sak som väcker stort intresse bland gruppmedlemmarna. Stämningen är ytterst koncentrerad när Antti ställer sig vid overheadprojektorn. Många har dragit ut stolen för att se bättre.

(29) Ledarskapsmöte

- 01 Antti It is ((namn på stadsdel)) area and ((namn på gata och stad))
 02 ((pause))
 03 There is a new office building (.) of e::r it was (.) five floors (.)
 04 of which we have now (.) three (.) upper floors (.) upmost floors (.)
 05 and the contract has been made that way that /.../
 06 the contract is made for next ((ett visst antal)) years (.) and in no industry
 07 you don't e::r you know
 08 what kind of situation you are in (.) in ((ett visst antal)) years from now
 09 OF → £((ett visst antal)) MONTHS£
 10 → ((gemensamt skratt))
 11 Kauko £((ett visst antal)) [DAYS]£
 12 Antti [DON't] don't don't don't see (.) don't be so pessimistic
 13 or optimistic whatever that was
 14 Kauko Mm
 15 OF Optimistic
 16 ((gemensamt skratt))
 17 Sten → At ↑three floors Antti?
 18 Antti Yeah

När Antti inleder sin rapport sitter alla helt tysta. En tydlig responspunkt finns på rad 2 efter annonseringen av detaljerna angående var det nya huvudkontoret befinner sig men deltagarna sitter fortfarande helt tysta. Det är först ordföranden som kommer med en lekfull kommentar på rad 9, vilket leder till en humoristisk sekvens och gemensamt skrattande. (Eftersom kontraktets längd kunde anses som strategisk information för företaget antyds den exakta siffran inte i transkriptionen.) Den lekfulla kommentaren såväl som det gemensamma skrattet och dessutom Kaukos humoristiska respons till ordföranden kan alla ses som praktiker som uppvisar gemensam förståelse av Anttis tal. Det har dessutom vistats att humor och gemensamt skrattande används som interaktiva

praktiker i emotionellt laddade omgivningar i interna möten för att lätta upp stämningen (se Kangasharju & Nikko 2009). Den tolkningen passar också här.

På rad 17 initierar Sten reparation av Anttis tidigare tal för att kontrollera att han förstått (eller hört) rätt. Sten gör detta genom att upprepa Anttis tidigare ord med frågeintonation ("at three floors Antti"). Efter det att Antti bekräftat Stens tolkning (rad 18) fortsätter Antti sin rapportering. Stens fråga markerar framför allt ett stort intresse för det behandlade temat (denna tolkning bekräftas av att det ställs ytterligare några frågor om detaljerna till förflyttningsplanerna till Antti innan han tilläts fortsätta med redovisningen).

Nästa utdrag (30) härstammar från behandlingen av samma tema som utdrag 29, dvs. förflyttningen av huvudbyggnaden, från ett något senare skede. Här exemplifieras igen reparationsinitiativ som praktik för att garantera förståelse.

(30) Ledarskapsmöte

- 01 Antti Then we have a list of (.) transferees movers assignees whatever (.) and there is
02 now seventeen names on it (.) in=
03 Arja → =Seventeen
04 Antti Seventeen (.) and /.../ ((Antti fortsätter rapporteringen))

Det är fortfarande Antti som rapporterar om förflyttningsplanerna (jfr utdrag 29). Genom att upprepa "seventeen" (med emfas på första stavelsen) initierar Arja reparation för att kontrollera att hon uppfattat (eller hört) antalet rätt. Efter det att Antti bekräftat Arjas tolkning fortsätter han sin rapportering. På samma sätt som Sten i utdrag 20 uppvisar Arja framför allt intresse för den information som Anttis redogörelse handlar om.

I utdrag 31 är det den som rapporterar som ber om bekräftelse för sin förståelse.

(31) Projektmöte 1

- 01 Ulf And we also have a common decision between Finland and Sweden that the
02 statistics was based on Finland's that was the decision we made when we
03 met December third ((tittar på Matti och Arto))
04 Matti → Yes Yeah
05 Arto → Yep (--)
06 Ulf And the server installation /.../ ((Ulf fortsätter sin rapportering))

Ulf rapportera och hänvisar till ett gemensamt beslut mellan det finska och det svenska teamet som fattats den 3 december (rad 1 till 3). Medan han talar tittar han på Matti och Arto. Ulfs explicita hänvisning till det finska teamet tillsammans med att han samtidigt tittar på de två personer som är ansvariga för projektet för Finlands del gör en respons från Matti och Arto mycket relevant. Hänvisningen och blicken kan med andra ord ses som interaktionella praktiker som Ulf använder för att bjuda in en bekräftelse till det som han sagt från Matti och Arto. Genom jakande dialogpartiklar ”yes, yeah” (rad 4) och ”yep” (rad 5) bekräftar dessa att det som Ulf säger håller streck. Samtidigt uppvisar de förstås att de förstått innehållet i Ulfs tal.

6.3 Att bygga upp gemensam förståelse i samband med behandlingen av mötesärenden - sammanfattning

Avsnitt 6 har fokuserat på hur gemensam förståelse byggs upp lokalt i den sekventiella interaktionen i samband med behandlingen av mötesärendena. Syftet var att dels reda ut vilka praktiker mötesdeltagarna använder för att bygga upp gemensam förståelse särskilt under rapporterande eller informerande sekvenser, och dels för att reda ut vilka institutionella orienteringar dessa användningar uppvisar i den situerade kontexten. De rapporterande sekvenserna valdes eftersom det visade sig att behandlingen av de flesta sakärenden i materialets möten inleds med en längre eller kortare rapport eller redogörelse. Men de valdes också för att se om förståelse överhuvud uppvisas explicit i sådana sammanhang. Det framgick att praktikerna kan grovt indelas i två typer, dels sådana som uppvisar förståelse och dels sådana som används för att kontrollera förståelse. Jag inleder med att redogöra för de förstnämnda praktikerna.

Inledningsvis kunde det konstateras att den naturliga och vanliga praktiken för att uppvisa förståelse i materialets mötesinteraktioner är den sekventiella interaktionen. Man uppvisar förståelse framför allt genom relevanta responser på de andras initiativ. Det visade sig att de praktiker som de övriga deltagarna använder för att uppvisa förståelse under s.k. rapporterande sekvenser utgörs av interaktiva praktiker

såsom dialogpartiklar, tillägg, ifyllnader, evalueringar, kommentarer samt humor och skratt. Det demonstreras genom analys av utdrag ur mötessamtal att deltagarna genom dessa praktiker kan uppvisa förutom förståelse också till exempel enighet med rapportören, delaktighet eller ett allmänt intresse mot det behandlade temat. Användningen av praktikerna kan dessutom tillskrivas diverse institutionella funktioner i den situerade interaktionen, som jag strax återkommer till. Interaktiva praktiker som uppvisar förståelse påträffas i kontextuella omgivningar som präglas av tre olika typer av turtagningsmönster. För det första förekommer den interaktiva praktiken oftast mitt under rapportörens långa monologformade tur, dvs. under en episod med högst asymmetrisk turtagning. En annan kontextuell omgivning utgörs av att en av de övriga deltagarna initierar en sidosekvens under rapporteringen med hjälp av en humoristisk kommentar. Kommentaren utvecklas av de andra med antingen utökade humoristiska kommentarer eller gemensamt skratt. Ytterligare en kontextuell omgivning utgörs av s.k. dialogiska episoder under vilka flera deltagare sätter igång att konstruera gemensam förståelse av en rapporterad information. Sådana episoder präglas av upprepade interaktiva praktiker och dessutom uppvisas ju förståelse i den sekventiella interaktionen.

Praktiker som används för att kontrollera förståelse gäller oftast fall där någon av de övriga deltagarna initierar en reparation för att kontrollera sin förståelse av rapportörens tal. Sådana praktiker uppvisar – förutom problem eller åtminstone osäkerhet med förståelse – delaktighet eller ett allmänt intresse till det behandlade temat. I vardagligt dyadiskt samtal är reparation nödvändigt för att interaktionen ska kunna fortsätta när intersubjektivitet saknas. I flerpartssamtal – särskilt under rapporterande sekvenser – är reparation inte nödvändigt och kan därför ses uppvisa särskild orientering mot gemensam förståelse.

Användningen av båda typerna av praktiker, dvs. både de som uppvisar och de som kontrollerar förståelse tycks användas på liknande sätt och kan också tillskrivas liknande institutionella funktioner i den situerade interaktionen. Det visar sig för det första att det inte är vem som helst av de övriga deltagarna som tar sig till praktiker som tillägg, ifyllnad, evaluering osv. eller som initierar reparation utan det är någon som är särskilt delaktig i det behandlade delprojektet (t.ex. ordföranden som är ansvarig för alla delprojekt, någon som svarar för någon speciell del av projektet såsom det tekniska

genomförandet, någon som svarar för ett annat motsvarande delprojekt eller expertisområde eller som fungerar i någon annan särskild roll (t.ex. mötets sekreterare). Genom användningen av interaktiva praktiker kan dessa deltagare med andra ord ses markera en speciell orientering mot projektets mål och därigenom mot sin egen expertroll under interaktionen. Såväl reparationsinitiativ som t.ex. tillägg och kommentarer markerar oftast mottagarens strävan att anknyta innehållet i rapportörens tal till ett större sammanhang. Dessutom kan användningen av interaktiva praktiker i mötessamtalen ses uppvisa att deltagarna är starkt fokuserade i sina lyssnarroller. Ytterligare en iakttagelse är att användningen av interaktiva praktiker inte visar någon särskild orientering mot problem i språkbruket, dvs. i användningen av engelska som lingua franca. Det förekommer t.ex. inga sådana fall där reparation skulle fokusera på något språkligt inslag. Med andra ord, deltagarna uppvisar orientering mot mening och intersubjektivitet i samband med reparation, inte till språkliga aspekter (för ett liknande resultat, se Wagner & Gardner 2004: 10).

Allt som allt visar det sig att interaktiva praktiker är en viktig resurs för deltagarna för att samkonstruera dels intersubjektivitet på lokal nivå men dels också för att bygga upp den institutionella kontexten.

7 Diskussion och slutsatser

Den föreliggande studien har besvarat den första forskningsfrågan *hur mötesdeltagarna konstruerar gemensam förståelse av den övergripande verksamheten* med ett tvådelat svar. Å ena sidan uppvisar mötesdeltagarna en stark orientering mot institutionella aspekter såsom en viss överordnad fasstruktur, dagordningen som tolkningsram och ordföranden som reglerare av interaktionen. Å andra sidan, samtidigt som deltagarna uppvisar orientering mot den övergripande verksamheten, konstrueras den gemensamma förståelsen av mötesinteraktionens progression lokalt i den sekventiella och situerade interaktionen. Detta får uttryck till exempel i att även om det är ordföranden som i princip kontrollerar topikprogressionen och övergångarna mellan olika faser, behandlas alla övergångar i praktiken som förhandlingsbara. Den andra forskningsfrågan *hur deltagarna*

bygger upp gemensam förståelse lokalt i den sekventiella interaktionen har besvarats med att deltagarna för det första uppvisar förståelse för varandra i och med den s.k. 'next-turn proof proceduren' som bygger på att den sekventiellt uppbyggda interaktionen garanterar gemensam förståelse för deltagarna. För det andra förekommer det andra interaktiva praktiker, särskilt under rapporterande sekvenser, som antingen mer eller mindre explicit uppvisar gemensam förståelse eller som kontrollerar förståelse. Till de förstnämnda hör multifunktionella praktiker såsom dialogpartiklar, tillägg, ifyllnader, evalueringar, kommentarer samt humor och skratt. Till de senare hör framför allt kontrollering av förståelse genom reparation. Den tredje forskningsfrågan *vilka institutionella orienteringar deltagarna uppvisar i samband med konstruering av förståelse med hjälp av de interaktiva praktikerna* har besvarats med att deltagarna i samband med de interaktiva praktikerna framför allt uppvisar särskild delaktighet av den rapporterade informationen eller det rapporterade delprojektet och en orientering mot sina specifika expertroller.

Resultaten fördjupar och ökar den kunskap som kommit fram i tidigare mikroanalytiska studier av hur interaktionen i mötessammanhang socialt organiseras av deltagarna själva (t.ex. Boden 1994; Schwartzman 1989; Milles 2003; Pomeranz & Denvir 2007). De medför ny kunskap i synnerhet när det gäller hur deltagarna på realtid under behandlingen av mötesärendena 1) konstruerar gemensam förståelse av den överordnade verksamheten, 2) konstruerar gemensam förståelse eller intersubjektivitet lokalt med hjälp av interaktiva praktiker, och 3) orienterar sig mot den institutionella kontexten.

Analysen av gemensamt konstruerad förståelse i mötessamtalen medför fördjupad kunskap om företagsinterna möten som verksamhetstyper (Levinson 1992; Linell 2005a). Det som framför allt kännetecknar de undersökta mötessamtalen är att de av deltagarna konstrueras som såväl formella som informella. De formella inslagen konstrueras av, för det första, orientering mot en rätt formell strukturell ordning som utgörs av dagordningen, en viss behandlingsordning av sakärendena samt ordförandens reglerande roll. Den informella motparten till denna orientering utgörs av att den formella ordningen hela tiden konstrueras som förhandlingsbar av deltagarna. För det andra konstruerar deltagarna formella inslag genom de institutionella orienteringar som de

uppvisar i samband med användningen av interaktiva praktiker. Genom att uppvisa orientering mot delaktighet och expertis konstrueras möten som högst fokuserade och målorienterade. Den informella motparten till denna fokuserade verksamhet utgörs av sekvenserna av gemensamt konstruerad humor och gemensamt skratt. För det tredje konstrueras formella inslag genom den asymmetriska turtagningsordningen i samband med rapporterande sekvenser. Den som rapporterar står oftast bredvid en arbetsprojektor och håller en presentation som han eller hon i förväg förberett. Den informella motparten till dessa sekvenser utgörs av de dialogiskt konstruerade diskuterande episoderna under vilka deltagarna mera explicit konstruerar gemensam förståelse.

Resultaten av denna studie bidrar dessutom till forskningslitteraturen om professionell interaktion på *lingua franca* (t.ex. Firth 1996; Gardner & Wagner 2004). Utgångspunkten för studierna inom detta område är att interaktionen på *lingua franca* (eller på ett andraspråk) är normal interaktion. Man utgår med andra ord inte ifrån att språket nödvändigtvis utgör ett problem när kommunikationen inte förs på talarnas första språk. Däremot fokuserar det centrala intresset på hur *lingua franca* talare i verkliga sammanhang använder sina språkliga och andra kommunikativa och interaktiva resurser i det situerade talet (Wagner & Gardner 2004). Det som den föreliggande studien framför allt medför är kunskapen om att deltagarna i samband med såväl reparation som andra interaktiva praktiker alltid uppvisar orientering mot mening och intersubjektivitet i stället för den språkliga formen. Reparationer i materialets möten anknyter med andra ord inte till språkliga problem eller misstag. Man uppvisar överhuvud ingen orientering mot inlärr roller i samband med användningen av de interaktiva praktikerna (jfr Kurhila 2003).

När det gäller tillämpningen av CA-metodologin kan man förstås fråga sig hur väl man verkligen kommer åt förståelse och intersubjektivitet med dess hjälp. 'Next-turn proof proceduren' har kritiserats för att den bara kan visa en del av samtalsdeltagarnas förståelser. Till exempel Linell (2005a: 4) påpekar att en mekanism som baserar sig på den sekventiella uppbyggnaden av interaktionen kan garantera främst två aspekter av "att mena". Å ena sidan kan den uppvisa den interaktionella meningen hos utsagan som kommunikativ handling (t.ex. en mottagare kan förstå att han ställts en fråga). Å andra sidan menar Linell att proceduren kan garantera de referenter som talaren

åsyftar. Man förstår m.a.o. vem och vad det talas om och gör man inte det kan man initiera reparation. Däremot betonar Linell (2005a: 4) att förståelse av det innehållsliga explicitgörs i mycket mindre utsträckning i interaktionen. Han nämner dessutom att explicitgörande av deltagarnas förståelser varierar mellan olika typer av samtal, och detta syns ju också i den föreliggande studien. Under s.k. diskuterande episoder explicitgörs förståelse av det innehållsliga på ett annat sätt än under rapporterande episoder. Under de senare explicitgörs förståelse enbart i samband med olika interaktiva praktiker. Men såsom analysen visar är det oftast bara fråga om gemensam förståelse mellan två personer. Jag menar att man måste medge att metodologin kan vara problematisk i vissa sammanhang, och då kan en lösning vara att man kombinerar olika metoder. Däremot anser jag att man kan komma åt aspekter på förståelse av det innehållsliga till exempel genom analys av sådana responsiva praktiker som ifyllnad, tillägg, kommentarer, evalueringar och skratt som uppvisar förståelse i den situerade interaktionen. Och såsom den föreliggande studien visar – eller låter ana – kan man samtidigt komma åt de konkreta byggstenarna av den institutionella kontexten.

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Essay 2: Collaborative completions in lingua franca meeting interaction

Tuija Nikko

Abstract:

This study investigates, through micro-analysis, the occurrences and functions of one particular interactional phenomenon, collaborative completion, in two meetings of company internal teams, conducted in English used as lingua franca. The institutional orientation displayed in the use of this phenomenon was of specific interest. The main results of the study can be summarized into five points. First, both the formal and the functional aspects of collaborative completions were found to be much alike to those in other data sets. Second, while accomplishing various social actions through collaborative completions, the participants clearly display an orientation to the institutional goals of the interaction, and orient to the practices from their professional positions. Third, in contrast to findings in some other types of institutional second language data or data in which communication is conducted in lingua franca, the participants did not demonstrate any orientation to learner identities through the use of the collaborative completions. Fourth, some particular environments were identified where sequences including collaborative completions seemed to be specifically adapted for the purposes of internal meetings of cross-border corporations. Fifth, there was an obvious discrepancy in the use and design of the collaborative completions between the two meetings of my data set – one meeting of a management team and another one of a project team – contributing to the fact that two rather different institutional contexts were “talked into being”. On the whole, the study demonstrates, on the one hand, how a rather basic interactional phenomenon may be an important resource for the interactants in constructing the institutional context, and, on the other hand, how detailed analysis of interaction on the micro level can reveal orders of a macro level social structure.

Key words: collaborative completion, meeting interaction, lingua franca interaction, international business communication, cross-border communication

1 Introduction

It may be no exaggeration to claim that meetings are the essence of the internal communication of organizations. The importance of meetings is also emphasized by prevalent theoretical approaches, both in the field of organizational communication and in social interaction, which see talk-in-interaction as the site where organizations are made alive, “talked into being” (Heritage 1984: 290), through interactional practices (see, e.g., Boden 1994; Cooren 2007; Drew & Heritage 1992). This emergent stance can be seen as an alternative to the traditional prescriptive stance, which views meetings merely as imperfect encounters (see, e.g., Bargiela-Chiappini & Harris 1997: 29). The study reported in this essay investigates how a rather basic interactional phenomenon may turn out be an important interactional resource for the participants of internal meetings in a cross-border corporate environment.

The phenomenon in focus, *collaborative completion* (e.g. Sacks 1992; Lerner 1991, 1996a), was found to be recurrently used by the participants of cross-border corporate meetings in a previous study (Nikko 2007). In these, an incoming speaker, through his or her talk, brings a not-yet-completed turn-in-progress, begun by another speaker, to a possible completion point. This article investigates, in more detail, what exactly is accomplished through collaborative completions in situ. Methodologically, the study belongs to the realm of conversation analysis (CA). Hence, actions are studied, through micro-analysis, as they emerge in the ongoing sequenced (real-life) interaction. The data consist of two video-taped meetings of merged Finnish-Swedish corporations; one meeting of a management team (4 h) and another one of a project team (1 h 15 min). In both meetings, permanent internal Finnish-Swedish teams, meeting on a regular basis, meet in face-to-face encounters. (For more details about the data, see *Part I* of this study and *Essay 1*.)

The phenomenon in focus is illustrated in excerpts 1 and 2.

(1) “Level” (Project meeting)

(A = Chair, B = Participant)

01 A Do we ↑agree on these quality problems? (.) do we

02 share the same same notion about the er the er
 03 (1.0)
 04 B→ the level.
 05 A Level °of(--).°

(2) “Very good” (Management meeting)

(A = Chair; B, C = Participants)

01 A And er- (.) STILL looking at at the (.) GROup results we are almost on budget we had
 02 about it one FORty >one thirty eight actually< (.) it came out at one thirty five (.) which
 03 is very close (.) er- >I believe it was of course worse than than march I don’t remember
 04 march but ma- march was< incredibly (.)[(good)] (.)
 05 B → [VERY good.]
 06 A Estimated is that we e- e- exactly as as been said in (.) in public that we lost about [--] euros
 07 C mm,

In excerpt 1, the collaborative completion is made of a completion in word search (Goodwin & Goodwin 1986; Lerner 1996a; Sacks 1992). Speaker A¹, the chair of a project meeting, indicates obvious proceeding problems by repetitions, hesitation tokens and pausing (line 2) before reaching the projected ending of his request addressed to the whole team. Speaker B suggests a candidate completion (“the level”), at the arrowed² line 4, helping thus A in his search and contributing to the further progress of the halted turn. Excerpt 2 illustrates a slightly different type of collaborative completion, which Lerner (2002) calls a *choral co-production*. The chair of a management meeting (A) is reporting on the financial performance of the company. Speaker B voices the final part of the turn-in-progress simultaneously with A (line 5), displaying thus, first of all, agreement with A (Lerner 1996b, 2002).

Previous research has emphasized the multifunctional character of collaborative completions in talk-in-interaction (e.g. Sacks 1992; Bockgård 2004; Lerner 1996a; Szczepek 2000b). More specifically, it has been shown that this phenomenon is used as a building block of mutual understanding and a resource for accomplishing collectivity and alignment between the participants. Some additional findings indicate that collaborative

¹ In the examples of this article, A refers to the current speaker, i.e. to the one who has begun the turn-in-progress and B to the one who steps in, i.e. to the speaker who takes the turn to completion.

² An arrow is used in the examples to indicate the turn-constructural unit under special focus, i.e. the completion by speaker B.

completions may also be used as a resource for displaying activity specific institutional orientation (e.g. Kangasharju 1998, 2002; Koshik 2002; Lerner 1995). Moreover, there is some evidence that collaborative completions may display an orientation to learner identities in second language interactions (e.g. Firth 1996; Kurhila 2004).

The aim of this study is to investigate the occurrences and functions of collaborative completions in the meeting interaction of internal teams in a cross-border corporate environment. The institutional orientation (e.g. Arminen 2005; Drew & Heritage 1992) displayed in the use of this phenomenon will be of specific interest. Hence, I am especially interested in finding out to what extent and how collaborative completions are used as a resource for talking the institutional or organizational context into being (Heritage 1984: 290). An additional question of interest is whether any specific orientation to learner identities is displayed through the use of collaborative completions. This is of particular interest as communication in these encounters is conducted in English used as a *lingua franca*, i.e. as a common language for communication between non-native speakers (Firth 1996). The article starts with a review of previous research on collaborative completions as an interactional resource in authentic conversational data. This is followed by a presentation of the theoretical and methodological basis of the study. Next, the frequency and the formal characteristics of the phenomenon will be discussed. Finally, I will discuss what is accomplished through collaborative completions in the data.

2 Previous research on collaboratively produced utterances

The phenomenon of speakers constructing utterances conjointly has been of interest to CA researchers right from the time when it was first mentioned by Harvey Sacks (1992 [1967-1968]) in his lectures. In conversation, the next speakers ordinarily begin speaking at or near a place where the current speaker could finish. In CA terms, talk is organized into turn-constructual units (henceforth TCU-units) that project points where turn transition between speakers becomes relevant (Sacks et al. 1974). Sacks observed that

occasionally, however, participants don't wait for the current speakers to finish up their units but complete each others' utterances as in excerpt 3.

(3) [taken from Sacks 1992: 321]

- 01 Ken: We were in an automobile discussion
02 Roger: discussing the psychological motives for
03 (): h h h h h h h h
04 Al: drag racing on the street

Here, Ken, Roger and Al are obviously not treating each other's contributions as interruptions to the turn-in-progress but as a co-production forwarding a conjoint action. In Sacks's terms "one obvious thing that such a production might be seen to do /.../ is showing [the new guy joining the team] that this is a group" (Sacks 1992: 321). Hence, it was observed that the possibility of constructing an utterance together gives the speakers an opportunity to use syntax as a resource for social aims.

Gene Lerner's (e.g. 1991, 1996a, 1996b, 2002, 2004a, 2004b) contribution to the research on collaboratively produced utterances has been ground-breaking. His major interest focuses on describing the specific syntactic and interactional features that provide possibility for co-participant completion, and how these are interactionally used. In accordance with Sacks, Lerner emphasizes the importance of such grammatical structures not as features of language as such but as practices used for accomplishing multifaceted social actions (Lerner 1996a: 268).

Inspired by Lerner's extensive body of research, collaboratively produced utterances have been studied from a variety of perspectives (e.g. Antaki et al. 1996; Bockgård 2004; Ferrara 1992; Green-Väntinen 1998; Hayashi 2003; Helasvuo 2004; Local 2004; Ono & Thompson 1995; Skovholt 1999; Szczepek 2000a, 2000b).³ Szczepek's and Bockgård's studies are of particular interest with regard to the present study as they are based on extensive data, and as they systematically describe both formal and functional characteristics of the different types of collaboratively produced utterances found in their respective data. Szczepek (2000a, 2000b) has studied *collaborative productions*, as she calls the phenomenon, in British and American English

³ For a more detailed overview of previous research, see, e.g., Bockgård 2004; Helasvuo 2004; Szczepek, 2000a.

conversations,⁴ whereas Bockgård (2004) has studied *co-constructions*, in his terms, in Swedish conversational data.⁵ Both Szczepek (2000b: 32) and Bockgård (2004: 285) conclude that collaboratively produced utterances are frequent in conversation, and that they are multifunctional to their character. They are used, in particular, for establishing coherence and intersubjectivity in talk-in-interaction, as well as affiliation and alignment between the participants.

In previous research of institutional or work-related encounters, collaborative completions have been only a minor focus of attention. Next, I will briefly discuss some of these studies. Koshik (2002) has identified a practice used by teachers for eliciting self-correction of students' written language errors (see also Lerner 1995). This practice of *designedly incomplete utterances* (DIUs) reminds of a word search practice but has been specifically adopted for a pedagogical purpose. Linell (2005b), when describing syntactically incomplete utterances as a resource in interaction, refers to a specific use of collaborative completions in mother-care interaction. He demonstrates how the patient uses pausing as a resource for avoiding the naming of a delicate matter and lets the professional express that, instead, through utterance completion.

A specific focus of this study is whether similar activity specific functions can be identified in the internal meetings of cross-border corporations. Kangasharju (1998) is one of the very few studies where collaborative completions have been touched upon in the context of workplace meetings. In her study on alignment in disagreement in workplace meetings, she concludes, in general terms, that completing the turns of the other team members is one way of indicating the institutionalized status of a team. Furthermore, completing a prior speaker's utterance is a common way of displaying alignment with this speaker, and, more specifically, an explicit way of demonstrating the alignment of two participants to the other participants in meeting interaction (Kangasharju 1998: 81).

⁴ Szczepek's data consist of 40 h of spoken American and British English. Of her data, 16 h are recordings from ordinary conversations between friends and family members; 24 h are from informal radio phone-in programs. Of the 200 examples of collaborative productions in her data, roughly three fourths were produced during the ordinary conversations. (Szczepek 2000a: 6)

⁵ Bockgård's data of approx 32 h originate from different corpora of naturally occurring Swedish, collected for the purposes of various research projects mainly at the University of Uppsala. Approx 18 h are from ordinary conversations; the rest are from various types of institutional and TV-mediated interactions. (Bockgård 2004: 56)

Some research indicates that collaborative completions may, in addition, have a specific function in institutional second language data (Kurhila 2004; Sundberg 2004). Asymmetric identities usually are a major concern in institutional interaction (e.g. Drew & Heritage 1992). In second language data, the asymmetries in language proficiency seem to bring in an extra aspect to consider. In these studies the professional partner, i.e. the partner representing the institution, usually is a native speaker of the language used for communication. The lay partner, in contrast, is a non-native speaker of the language. Both Kurhila (2004) and Sundberg (2004) have noted an orientation to learner identities of the second language speakers in the talk constructed in these encounters. Collaborative completions – completions in word search in particular – are used as one of the resources for displaying this orientation (Kurhila 2004; Sundberg 2004).

Firth (1996) is one of the few studies paying attention to collaborative completions in lingua franca data in a business context. His data comprise telephone conversations involving export managers of Danish international trading companies and their clients. He has observed that some interactional resources such as other-repair and other-completion appear to be less prevalent in this data than in many other data types. Firth shows that the recipients resist offering a candidate completion even when these seem to be feasible, and even when the current speaker displays obvious signals for word search (as in excerpt 1). According to Firth (1996: 256), the strikingly few candidate completions typify the corpus as a whole. He suggests that such devices might have the potential for focusing attention on the form of the other's talk and that would explain why the interactants avoid engaging in the practice all together. The present study will, hopefully, shed more light on the use of collaborative completions in lingua franca data, as the phenomenon will be studied in a different contextual environment.

The above review shows that collaborative completion is an important building block of intersubjectivity in talk-in-interaction. Moreover, it seems to be used as a conjoint resource in the construction of various types of institutional contexts. Some additional aspects to its use seem to be occasioned by the use of a second language for communication. The review also shows that the phenomenon has been widely studied in ordinary conversation. There is, however, only sporadic research on collaborative completions in professional interaction, and even less in such professional encounters

where the interaction is conducted in a lingua franca. The present study attempts to fill this gap.

3 Data

The data used for the current study come from two meetings of internal cross-border teams of merged Finnish-Swedish corporations (see *Part I* of this study). One of them is a regular meeting of a management team (Management meeting), and the other one is a regular meeting of a project team (Project meeting). The Management meeting has 9, whereas the Project meeting has 10 participants.⁶ The length of the Management meeting is 4 h, the Project meeting lasts 1 h 15 min.

Based on Boden's (1994) rough division of meetings into formal and informal, the two meetings could be characterized as semi-formal. External characteristics such as a large number of participants, the use of a chairperson and a fixed agenda mark them as formal, whereas a rather casual conversation style (demonstrated, for instance, by joint laughter) and free turn-taking mark them as informal. A difference in the overall purpose of the meetings suggests that the Management meeting could, however, be taken as somewhat more formal than the Project meeting (see *Essay 1* for a more detailed ethnographic description of the two meetings). The former focuses primarily on sharing information, whereas the latter focuses on solving joint problems.

⁶ The Management meeting has 3 Swedish and 5 Finnish participants, and one participant of a third nationality; only one of the participants is female. The Project meeting has 5 Swedish and 5 Finnish participants; 3 participants are female and 7 are male.

4 Theoretical and methodological basis

This study assumes a dialogical approach to language, communication, and cognition (Linell 1998)⁷. It is based on the assumption that “sense making is an interactional affair” (Jacoby & Ochs 1995: 174). Talk is seen to be jointly constructed by the participants, and it is through talk that the participants carry out actions conjointly. According to such an approach, recipients are active co-participants who engage in the construction of the actions together with the speakers. And, as formulated by Goodwin (2000: 1492), while doing this, the participants are “attending to the larger activities” (for example meetings) “that their current actions are embedded within, and relevant phenomena in the surround” (for example linguistic devices or gestures).

Jacoby and Ochs (1995: 171) refer to the phenomenon of co-construction “as the joint creation of a form, interpretation, stance, action, activity, identity, institution, skill, ideology, emotion, or other culturally meaningful reality”. In this article, collaborative completions are referred to as such co-constructions. It is noteworthy that the co-prefix here does not entail affiliative or supportive interactions. As specified by Local (2004: 25), collaborative only refers to the co-produced design of the turn, and “not to the interactional status of the activity the collaborative producer is doing”. So, for example, disagreements can nonetheless be constructed in collaboration.

In the current study, collaborative completions are defined as *interactional practices* (Schegloff 1997), *used in situ by two or more participants, for accomplishing various social actions conjointly*. In the course of a not-yet-completed turn-in-progress, an incoming speaker, through his or her talk, brings the turn, begun by another speaker, to a possible (syntactic, pragmatic and prosodic) completion point (Local 2004: 5). The completed turn, thus, forms one *syntactic gestalt* (Auer 1996), in other words, speaker B’s contribution is fitted to speaker A’s prior talk as a continuation of that talk.

⁷ Linell (1998, 2005a) uses the term ‘dialogue theory’ or ‘dialogical approach’ of a general theoretical framework for language, communication and cognition as opposed to a ‘monological approach’ that is based on assumptions that see language as an external code, cognition as information processing, and communication as information transfer.

This study belongs, methodologically, to “the well established tradition for the study of institutional interaction in conversation analysis” (Arminen 2005: xii). CA⁸ has been defined as “a theory and method about social actions unfolding in time through cooperation and the co-construction of the talk by the participants” (Gardner & Wagner 2004: 6). Hence, instead of studying isolated utterances, CA analyzes actions as they emerge in the ongoing sequenced (real-life) interaction. According to one of its most basic tools, described as ‘the next-turn proof procedure’ (Hutchby & Wooffitt 2001: 15), speakers display their understanding of the previous turn in their sequentially next turns.⁹ If the understanding turns out not to be what the prior speaker intended, that will, again, get displayed in the next turn in the sequence. This procedure does not, as such, guarantee “congruent interpretations” (Goodwin 2000: 1492) but it provides for “relevant intersubjectivity” through the availability of such processes as repair (Schegloff 1992; Schegloff et al. 1977).

As to the analysis of talk-in-interaction in institutional settings, the analyst’s task is to examine the (essentially public) means through which the interactants display their orientations to the specific institution (ten Have 1999; see also Hutchby & Wooffitt 2001). Through analyses of different types of environments, studies of institutional interaction attempt to reveal what is distinctive about their interaction (Hutchby & Wooffitt 2001: 148). The present study attempts to reveal what is distinctive about internal meetings of cross-border corporations as compared to other types of encounters.

5 Collaborative completions in figures

In total, 46 occurrences of constructions that fulfill the above criteria of collaborative completions were found in the data, 21 in the Project meeting and 25 in the Management meeting. As to the formal characteristics, there were occurrences of, roughly, three different types of collaborative completions. In addition to the two types presented in the

⁸ Originally presented in Sacks 1992; Sacks et al. 1974; Schegloff and Sacks 1973.

⁹ “Whatever is said will be said in some sequential context, and its illocutionary force will be determined by reference to what it accomplishes in relation to some sequentially prior utterance or set of utterances” (Heritage & Atkinson 1984: 6).

introduction, i.e. the completion in word search and the co-choral production, there is a third type, which Bockgård (2004) calls a *gap fill-in answer*.¹⁰ This will be illustrated in excerpt 4 in section 6.2.

When comparing the formal characteristics of the collaborative completions found in my data with the ones found in both Bockgård's (2004) and Szczepek's (2000a) data, an initial finding is that basically the same types are found in all data sets.¹¹ It is, of course, crucial when comparisons are made, that the compared phenomena are the same. As Bockgård is both systematic and explicit in his descriptions of the characteristics and numbers of the various types of co-constructions, I will shortly compare my findings with his in these respects. The figures are presented in tables 1 and 2. To facilitate the reading of the tables, I have chosen to use Bockgård's labels here. Hence, induced completions refer to the word search type (excerpt 1) and non-induced to the choral type (excerpt 2).

	Gap fill-in answers	Induced completions	Non-induced completions	Total
Project meeting (1 h 15 min)	3	13	5	21
Management meeting (4 h)	5	11	9	25
Total	8	24	14	46

Table 1. The occurrences of collaborative completions in the my data (5 h 15 min)

Ordinary conversations (18 h), institutional encounters (14 h)	Gap fill-in answers	Induced completions	Non-induced completions	Total
Total	11	121	60	182

Table 2. The occurrences of collaborative completions in Bockgård's (2004) data (32 h)

¹⁰ Bockgård (2004:92) states that the term is inspired by the term *gap fill-in question* introduced by Linell (e.g. 2003).

¹¹ It is somewhat unclear, though, as also pointed out by Bockgård (2004:75), whether Szczepek (2000a, 2000b) includes gap fill-in answers into her definition of collaborative productions.

Bockgård's data of 32 hours have, all in all, 270 occurrences of what he calls co-constructions. Of these, 182 are of the types that I call collaborative completions. Their distribution is indicated in table 2. One general observation is that the number of occurrences per hour is somewhat bigger in my data (9 as opposed to 6). Another general observation is that the distribution of the occurrences between the different types is very similar in our data sets. In both data, the single biggest category is that of the induced completions and the smallest is that of the gap fill-in answers. The frequencies of the induced and the non-induced completions are rather similar, respectively. A single most noticeable difference concerns the numbers of the gap fill-in answers, as it seems to be more frequent in my data.

When comparing the figures of my two meetings separately with Bockgård's results, there is, however, a clear-cut difference. An evident conclusion is that the figures for the Project meeting are more similar to Bockgård's overall figures, in all respects, than those for the Management meeting. The most obvious difference concerns the frequency of the induced completions. Both in Bockgård's data and in the Project meeting, induced completions are clearly the most frequent type of co-constructions. In the Management meeting, however, there is no obvious difference in the amounts of induced and non-induced completions. The reasons for this will be discussed later.

Bockgård has not compared the frequencies of the different types of co-constructions between his different data sets. He states (2004: 56), however, in general terms, that the variety of his data gives him good grounds to assume that the figures reflect some general patterns irrespective of the context. The above comparison of the overall figures between our data points toward the same direction. The similarity of the general pattern is indicated by the fact that the types of occurrences of collaborative completions are basically the same in both our data. Also the overall proportions of the different types are rather similar. When discussing the results, Bockgård (2004: 56) states that separate analysis might, however, show activity specific differences in the numbers of occurrences. My results confirm this assumption. As shown by tables 1 and 2, the figures concerning the Management meeting are clearly different from the "general

pattern” in the two data sets. I expect that the micro-analysis will shed some more light on this finding.

6 Types of collaborative completions

As mentioned in the previous section, there were basically three types of collaborative completions in my data: completions in word search, gap fill-in answers and induced completions. I will next discuss some general characteristics of these types.

6.1 Completions in word search

The first type is what Bockgård (2004) calls induced completions. The great majority of these, in both his and my data, are occurrences of *completions in word search*, as exemplified in excerpt 1 in section 1. These practices are basically constructed similarly in our data. More examples from my data are presented in excerpts 8 – 12.

In excerpt 1, participants of the Project meeting are discussing the technical problems of a new computer program which the company has been piloting and is about to purchase. Speaker A, orienting to his role as the chair of the meeting, initiates a concluding question about the topic. Before anybody sets about to answer, he starts reformulating his question but runs into obvious proceeding problems, as indicated by repetitions (“same same”), hesitation tokens (“the er the er”) and pausing before reaching the projected ending of the question. Speaker B interprets this behavior as an invitation to assist in word search as she steps in and suggests a candidate completion (“the level”) (line 4). When the completion is addressed to the first speaker, as in excerpt 1, the acceptability of the completion can be implicated as the next action (see Lerner, 2004b:225). Consequently, A confirms the completion (line 5).

Bockgård (2004: 128) describes the completions in word search as *assisting completions*, and Ferrara (1992), accordingly, calls them *helpful utterance completions*. This type of completion is interactionally constructed as part of a three-part repair

sequence (Schegloff et al. 1977), A's hesitation signals being the first part, B's completion the second part and A's confirmation the third part. Furthermore, the search is designed in a way to show that it only provides conditional access for others to help the current turn holder in his/her attempt to finish up the halted turn-in-progress (see Lerner 1996a: 261). Hence, speaker A is usually, again, in possession of the floor when the search has been completed. Importantly, the design is such that speaker A maintains the authority over the turn's construction (Lerner 2004b: 225). As emphasized especially by Antaki et al. (1996) and Díaz et al. (1996), the completion is uttered from the perspective of speaker A, i.e., on A's *footing* (Goffman 1981; Levinson 1988). Consequently, in Goffman's terminology, even if the *animator* changes, the *author* of the turn does not change.

It has been observed that a word search rarely becomes competitive, i.e., the incoming participant is usually not treated as an interrupter but is, on the contrary, warmly welcomed by A (Szczeppek 2000a: 29; 2000b: 15; Goodwin & Goodwin 1986: 53). Furthermore, the candidate completion is usually accepted by A. Szczeppek (2000b: 12) points out that in her study, in 99.5 % of the cases, the incoming speaker "gets it right". This is true also according to Bockgård (2004: 115) "in an overwhelming majority of the cases", and the same characterizes my data. It is noteworthy that the dialogical assumption of understanding in interaction does not assume a "perfect match". Thus, it is not assumed that the suggested completion corresponds to some predefined word that A was looking for. In contrast, meanings are understood as open potentials (Linell 1998: 113), which means that they are an outcome of a process where the interlocutors are struggling to construct a context and understanding that they can find communicatively relevant enough "for all practical purposes" (Garfinkel 1967). In many cases, as for example in excerpt 1, when accepting the word "level", the interlocutors are happy with momentary understandings that may be far from being "perfect" in terms of what A may have had in mind.

Szczeppek (2000a: 11) describes the word search format as a *missing syntactic head*. The incoming speaker usually finishes up the turn by filling in a noun at the end of a first speaker's projected turn, as is also the case in excerpt 1 (see also Lerner 1996a: 262; Bockgård 2004: 108). This is not surprising since it is, of course, easier for the

others to complete an interrupted utterance when there is little left to say. Another characteristic concerning the placement of the candidate completion in a word search sequence is that it is usually held off or delayed (e.g., Lerner 1996a: 262). This means that speaker B usually allows speaker A some time to produce the searched for word on his or her own before offering a candidate completion. This is supposed to be connected to interactants' preference for self- over other-repair in the organization of repair-work (Schegloff et al. 1977: 53).

6.2 Gap fill-in answers

The second type of collaborative completions, illustrated in excerpt 4, is the one which Bockgård calls *gap fill-in answer*, and to which Lerner (2002: 36) refers as *fill in the blank turn format*.

(4) “Starting” (Management meeting)

(A = Participant; B = Chair)

01 A Ok (.) so that is now? (.) ((gazes at B and makes a circular gesture with his hand))

02 B → starting (.) actually got off

03 A Okay. yeah

The chair of the Management meeting (B) has been reporting on new plans concerning the employer strategies in the board work. Speaker A acknowledges the reception of this information (“ok”, line 1) but initiates, in addition, a repair-sequence by asking “so that is now?” Rather than posing a question in question format, A chooses to produce a statement which he leaves incomplete (line 1) and marks as a question addressed to B through question intonation accompanied by a hand gesture and gazing at B. As pointed out by Lerner (2002: 37), this type actually has the format of a word search sequence. There is, however, a difference in how strongly the completion is elicited by speaker A. In word search sequences, the halting and hesitation of the current speaker (A) provides a recipient (B) with an opportunity to complete the turn-in progress but the completion is

not structurally required. In contrast, a gap fill-in question, as indicated by its label, is the first pair of an adjacency pair for which an answer is a relevant second pair in CA terms (Schegloff & Sacks 1973: 295), and is hence structurally required. Bockgård describes this format as the most induced type of co-construction, and Ferrara (1992) characterizes it as *invited utterance completion*.

Similar to the word search sequences, the design of the sequence with a gap fill-in answer is such that the first speaker maintains his authority over the turn's construction, as displayed in excerpt 4 through speaker A's acknowledgement, in line 3. As to other specific characteristics of this format, Bockgård (2004: 117) emphasizes the fragmentary nature of not only the completion but also the gap fill-in question (see also line 1 in excerpt 4). This is due to the fact that the question is usually highly responsive with regard to the preceding talk, i.e. closely integrated to it. In addition, Bockgård (2004: 93) has observed that A's question not only projects an answer but also its elliptic syntactic form. The fact that B, in line 2, first says "starting" and only after a self-repair clarifies that it actually already got off may be seen as an illustration of this. More examples of this format are presented below, in excerpts 5–7.

6.3 Non-induced completions

The third type of collaborative completions is what Bockgård calls *non-induced completions*. These refer to such completions where B, spontaneously, i.e. without explicit elicitation from A, completes an incomplete utterance initiated by A. B can do this by either finishing the turn before A, i.e. by co-opting the completion, or by co-producing it more or less simultaneously with A (see Lerner 2002, 2004b). Excerpt 2 illustrates the latter case. The chair of the Management meeting is reporting on the monthly performance of the company. B, in line 5, joins A by co-producing the closing ("very good") of A's turn (almost) simultaneously or in unison with him.

Green-Väntinen (1998, 2001) calls the non-induced completions *spontaneous completion* and compares them with other types of back-channeling devices of an active recipient (see also Bockgård 2004: 125f). Ferrara (1992) calls these *predictable utterance*

completions. Hence, this type differs from the two other types in that it is not interactionally constructed as part of a repair sequence.

The majority of the non-induced completions in my data are instances of choral co-production, i.e. “voicing the same words in the same way at the same time” as another speaker” (Lerner 2002: 227). These are formally similar to the completions in word search in that they are short (often only one word), they occur towards the end of the turn, and they are not treated by the participants as a violation or as being in need of repair (see, e.g., Bockgård 2004: 113; Green-Vänttinen 1998: 76; Lerner 2002). Lerner (2002) states that the co-produced part is overwhelmingly the terminal item of a TCU. He also notes that even if the recipients join in the talk without elicitation, an opportunity for co-production is furnished by the strong projectability of the possible completions. This is also the case in excerpt 2. Furthermore, Lerner (2002) emphasizes that B’s utterance is an attempt to project what is possibly being said, and that is why it does not necessarily match A’s utterance word for word.¹² More examples of choral co-productions are presented in excerpts 16 and 17.

7 Actions accomplished through collaborative completions

Researchers are unanimous in emphasizing that a single co-construction is not used for accomplishing any fixed actions but is rather used as a practice for accomplishing a variety of context specific actions at the same time (e.g. Bockgård 2004: 137). One action that may be claimed to be part of the functional potential of all the actions accomplished through the different types of collaborative completions is displaying understanding (see Szczepek 2000b: 14). Hence, by suggesting “level” (excerpt 1), “very good” (excerpt 2) and “starting” (excerpt 4), speaker B indicates that he has understood A’s previous contribution. Evidently, as was pointed out in section 4, the sequential construction of talk-in-interaction, as such, makes it possible for the participants to display to one another (and also to the analyst) their ongoing understanding and sense-making of one another’s

¹² Lerner (2002:13) points out that the simultaneity and imprecision support the view that co-production is different from such phenomena as *shadowing* or *repetition*.

talk (Hutchby & Wooffitt 2001: 41). But, as stated by Szczeppek (2000b), producing an utterance conjointly may be a particularly effective way of showing understanding because understanding is “displayed before the current speaker has reached completion” (p. 20) or it is done in a highly fragmentary interactional context. What else is accomplished through the collaborative completions in my data will be the topic of the next part of this article.

7.1 Actions accomplished through gap fill-in answers

Previous research has shown that the gap fill-in turn format is systematically used as a resource in institutional interaction. They are used, in particular, in different types of enquiring activities, usually dyadic interactions, characterized by questions of a professional party and answers of a lay party, e.g. police interrogations, doctor-patient conversations, therapeutic interviews, and instructional talk (e.g. Lerner 1995, 2004; Koshik 2002; Linell 2003, 2005b; Bockgård 2004). The gap fill-in turn format is, however, less common in ordinary conversation. In my data, this format seems to furnish the participants with a resource for prompting a previous speaker to either elaborate on a topic under discussion (excerpts 5 and 6) or to clarify a local problem of hearing or understanding (excerpt 7) (for a similar conclusions about its function, see Bockgård 2004: 139; Ferrara 1992; Lerner 2004; Skovholt 1999).

(5) “Seventeen hours” (Management meeting)

(A = Participant, B = Chair)

- 01 A And the meeting will go on on the er fifteenth until?
02 B → <seventeen> hours
03 A Mm

(6) “The move” (Management meeting)

(A, B = Participants)

- 01 B So that [the (--)
02 A [Now the] MOVE will be?
03 B → Th- the (.) TWENTy first of May.
04 A Mm.

(7) “Buyers’ change” (Project meeting)

(A = Participant, B = Chair)

- 01 B Wha ((first name of B)) what about the buyers change (.) discussed (.) (in the previous
02 meeting)
03 A the?
04 B → the buyers (.) change
05 A Ah (.) >I’ll come to that<
05 B Okay.

The elaboration in all the above excerpts concerns some specific detail about the topic under discussion that is strongly activated by the context, and something that another speaker can be expected to know better. In excerpt 5, the chair is informing the participants about the schedules of some future meetings. In excerpt 6, B is reporting on the plans concerning the approaching move of the headquarters of the company. In excerpt 7, it is noteworthy that through the partial repetition, produced with upward intonation (“the”, line 3), A manages not only to display that he has a problem but also to elicit a repetition of the problematic part, i.e. to display where the problem is.

Especially because of the lingua franca character of the talk, it is important to point out that there are no cases in my data where B would hesitate in filling the gap, or where A would indicate problems in accepting the gap fill-in element suggested by B, despite the highly fragmentary structure of the construction on the whole. Hence, as stated above, displaying understanding apparently is part of the functional potential of this practice.

As emphasized by Hutchby and Wooffitt (2001), an important action accomplished through such repair sequences as elaborating on a topic or clarifying understanding is the maintenance of mutual orientation to common topics and fields of reference in talk-in-interaction. Consequently, they argue by referring to Schegloff (1992) that “the organization of repair is closely bound up with the question of interpersonal alignment, or intersubjectivity, in social life” (Hutchby & Wooffitt 2001: 66). Through the elaboration on the topics under discussion, as in the context of excerpts 4, 5 and 6, the interactants also display an orientation to the institutional goals (Drew & Heritage 1992), both those of the meeting and those of the company. As pointed out by Arminen (2005: 46), “an orientation to the problems of maintaining intersubjectivity may always momentarily replace an orientation to the institutional goals”. This is what happens in

excerpt 7 where A clearly addresses his momentary problem as a hearing problem (see Svennevig 2008). This excerpt has the only occurrence of a gap fill-in sequence in my data where the participants do not display a direct orientation to the institutional goals. Arminen mentions that such problems could be especially occasioned by language problems in second language data. There is, however, no such indication in my data.

So far it seems that the collaboratively produced sequences consisting of a gap fill-in question by speaker A, and a completing answer to this question by speaker B, are rather similarly constructed in my meeting data as in other data sets, and that they are also used for basically the same purposes. Apparently it seems, however, as indicated by the figures presented in section 5, that these constructions are more frequent in my meeting data than in for example Bockgård's data. Next I will suggest that the more frequent use displays, at least in part, an activity specific orientation.

7.1.1 The gap fill-in turn format in activity specific use

A question to be asked is why the speakers choose a gap fill-in format instead of an ordinary question. Instead of asking, for example, "Has it started already", in excerpt 4, which would give B more flexibility in his response, A designs his question in such a way that it only elicits a minimal gap fill-in answer focusing on an exact piece of information ("so that is now").

I suggest that the preference for a gap fill-in format here is primarily motivated by concerns of progressivity (Stivers & Robinson 2006; see also Svennevig 2008). As pointed out by Boden (1994: 87), "[i]nterruptions come as invasions of meeting space /.../ and are discouraged". As the format only requires a conditional entry into the current turn, it offers a possibility for a quick accomplishment of a necessary repair sequence, as in by-passing. In other words, it offers A an opportunity to mark the sequence as dispreferred. This character is further strengthened by A's very brief ratification ("okay yeah") and by the fact that the topic is not developed any further. Hence, the format seems to be constructing an overall orientation of the participants to an efficient progression of the activity.

In sum, the previous analysis suggests that the gap fill-in turn format is used for the same purposes in my data as in other data sets, i.e. as a practice for elaborating on a topic or clarifying understanding for accomplishing, above all, maintenance of mutual orientation to common topics and fields of reference in talk-in-interaction, hence, interpersonal alignment. When doing this, the interactants display, at the same time, an orientation to the institutional goals. In addition, the analysis suggests that the tendency to use a gap fill-in turn format instead of a question format may be an activity-specific way of displaying concerns of progressivity.

7.2 Actions accomplished through completions in word search

Helping speaker A in his attempt to finish up his uncompleted utterance evidently belongs to the functional potential of speaker B's completions in word search in excerpts 8 and 9 (see also excerpt 1).

(8) "Second year" (Management meeting)

(A, B = Participants, C = Chair)

- 01 A /.../ I'm not sure for (.) this for (.) they made
 02 a- a deal o- over two years I [think] and for for
 03 B [mm mm]
 04 A the first twelve months two and a half and (.)
 05 and again e:r (.) two point I'm not sure [now]
 06 C [mm]
 07 A about the figures for for the er- (last)
 08 [(last)]
 09 B → [>seco]nd year.<
 10 A Yes

(9) "Workload" (Project meeting)

(A, B = Participants)

- 01 A And to go those through so that we also check all the time that it's it is correct (.) it takes a
 02 lot of time and er I'm now also (.) a little bit er afraid that er the other (.) activities those
 03 people which mainly belong to my (.) department er (.) have to take care er are harmed
 04 by by this er (.)

05 B → workload.
06 A >Workload< yes.

Throughout excerpt 8, A is answering a question, addressed to him by the chair (C), concerning the salary raises in his country. He expresses hesitation about the content from the beginning of his turn (“I’m not sure for this”, line 1) and gets supportive feedback from both B and C (lines 3 and 6). In line 7, A starts displaying obvious word search signals (“for for the er” and a couple of false starts). By suggesting a candidate completion (“second year”, line 9), B displays that he understands that A is requesting help, and by ratifying the help (“yes”, line 10), speaker A confirms this interpretation. In excerpt 10, speaker A is in the process of presenting a state report on a subproject when he interrupts, mid-turn, obviously to search a word (line 4). Speaker B suggests a candidate completion (“workload”, line 5) which A strongly confirms (line 6).

Apparently, in both excerpts, the candidate completions offered by speaker B are strongly projected in the co-text and could therefore be suggested by any of the recipients. To suggest “second year” and “workload” in these contexts is, however, not possible without attentive engagement to A’s talk (see also Skovholt 1999: 67). Hence, what was said in section 7.1. about the repair work being bound up with interpersonal alignment and orientation to intersubjectivity (Hutchby & Wooffitt 2001: 66), evidently also concerns word search sequences. When one participant in a group interaction helps out another in word search, it obviously marks and strengthens a specific alignment between those participants (see also Bockgård 2004: 130).

It is noteworthy that a halt of a TCU not only interrupts the proceeding of the ongoing TCU but the whole interaction (for a similar remark, see also Bockgård 2004: 129; Skovholt 1999: 63). As formulated by Goodwin and Goodwin (1986: 55) “it makes visible not just the unavailability of a word, but a *relevant* unavailability – one that impedes the ongoing development of the talk in progress, and which is no longer moving toward its projected completion”. So, concerns of progressivity (Stivers & Robinson 2006), i.e. the continuous development of the interaction-in-progress, is also part of the functional potential of a completion in word search.

Analysis of extended conversational data has shown that participants may initiate word search when striving for pragmatic precision (Bockgård 2004: 117), or when

searching for a specific or a delicate word (Lerner 1996a: 260). The same seems to be the case also in my data. What is specific about the searches in my data, however, is that they are usually focused on finding a word or expression that captures a professional content (e.g. “level” and “work load”), so the participants clearly orient to the word searches from their institutional positions and display, hence, an orientation to the institutional goals of the interaction. At times, however, another type of orientation is displayed through a word search sequence. In these, A initiates a search which is focused on coming up with an appropriate word in English, as in excerpt 10.

(10) “Later on” (Management meeting)

(A, B = Participants)

- 01 A /.../ and now we also must make a decision now or (.)
 02 ((gazes at B and makes a circular gesture with his hand))
 03 B→ later on
 04 A or later on how we do it with our management (.)

On previous occasions, illustrated in excerpts 1, 8 and 9, speaker A marks the search as self-directed (for the term, see Kurhila 2003: 145) by signaling hesitation, gazing away and by producing a *thinking face* (Goodwin & Goodwin 1986: 56–57). In excerpt 13, however, such signals are not produced by A. Instead, A directs his gaze at B (line 2) and makes circular gestures with his hand, as if to emphasize an invitation for B to step in. Here the participants display an orientation to intersubjectivity by striving to solve the problem of the missing word as quickly as possible with their interlocutors. At the same time, a strong interpersonal alignment between the two participants is, of course, marked.

Kurhila (2003, 2004) has studied word searches as a conversational resource in institutional second language interaction between first and second language speakers (FL- vs. SL-speakers) of Finnish. She concludes that both groups orient to their institutional roles in the use of this practice (Kurhila 2003: 212). At times, however, the SL-speakers portray themselves as not-yet-competent users of the language. They mark their learner identities by announcing or flagging the search through what Kurhila (2003: 151) calls a *general word search marker* (“what is it?”), followed by attempts to resolve the search by uttering some candidate solutions or initial syllables of some target word, on the basis of which the FL-speaker can try to resolve the search. It is noteworthy that one third of the

searches in her data are grammatical searches, i.e. the participants orient to the correct form of the word. No similar orientation to learner identity is portrayed in the initiation of the word search in excerpt 10 or in any of the other similarly constructed word searches in my data¹³. Instead, the participants seem to orient to concerns of progressivity when one of the participants faces a problem of finding an English word.

Still another aspect is that completing other participants' utterances may be a tendency that some individuals are more likely to make use of than others. For this interpretation speaks the fact that there is one participant, in both meetings, who is more active in producing completions to others' interrupted TCUs than the others. Apart from helpfulness or alignment, the functional potential of completions might also be seen to indicate an individual tendency to portray oneself as more knowledgeable or competent than the others (see Skovholt 1999: 74). Moreover, the tendency to be the first one to offer a candidate completion when another speaker interrupts, mid-turn, may be a way of portraying oneself as busy.

7.2.1 Activity specific orientation

The majority of the word search sequences in my data are similarly constructed and used for similar purposes as in ordinary conversations. As pointed out by Koshik (2002: 300), they could be described as "practices of ordinary conversation that happen to occur in an institutional setting but do not reflect specifically institutional practices of talk designed to accomplish institutional tasks". There are, however, some tendencies that may display an activity specific orientation. One interesting formal difference between my data and Bockgård's data is that proper names in the latter form a central category of words that are sought for, whereas they are nonexistent in my data. In his data, names are almost as frequent as nouns (Bockgård 2004: 108). Names as frequently sought for words are also mentioned by Green-Vänttinen (1998: 74), Szczepek (2000a: 12) and Kurhila (2003: 149). The lack of names in my data may be a coincidence but it may also reflect a

¹³ Other resources, especially code switching, are more frequently used than word search for the purpose of prompting assistance when trying to find an appropriate English equivalent in the data of this study (see *Essay 3*).

difference in the nature of references made to people in institutional meeting interaction as compared to ordinary conversations.

7.2.1.1 Orienting to knowledge entitlement

A major difference concerns the prosody of the candidate completions. It has been remarked in previous research that the candidate completion is often "try-marked" (Sacks & Schegloff 1979: 18), i.e. its dispreferred character is prosodically marked as a guess (Lerner 1996a: 262; Szczepek 2000b: 17; Bockgård 2004: 131; Skovholt 1999: 66). Interestingly, my data does not include occurrences of try-marked candidate completions. Straightforwardly performed completions, as such, are not rare in ordinary conversations, but what is different in my data is the lack of prosodically try-marked completions.

The format of the completion seems to be connected to the participants' orientation to the entitlement to the knowledge that is referred to. Drew (1991: 41) makes a distinction between "speakers' actual states of knowledge", and "their orientations to the normative distributions of rights and entitlements to certain kinds of knowledge". I suggest that both aspects play a role when considering the "certain" or "assertedly correct" (Lerner 1996a: 262) format of the candidate completions in my data.

Bockgård (2004: 160) points out that *uncertain other parts*, as he calls the try-marked completions, usually refer to so called A-events (Labov & Fanshel 1977), i.e. events or phenomena in which A is the *knowing participant* (Goodwin 1987). In *certain other parts*, in contrast, the phenomenon is known (at least partly) to B, and they are referred to without try-marking. A certain or straightforwardly produced other part is characterized by the fact that B is not guessing when he is completing or continuing a TCU initiated by A. The search seems to be initiated in such an environment where the knowledge referred to is shared, and, consequently, accessible to all the participants. As was pointed out in section 7.2., the search is often initiated by A for the purpose of finding a word or expression which captures a professional content as precisely as possible. Hence, the word (or expression) sought for is strongly projected in the previous co-text, and, in addition, the event or topic under discussion is often part of some

previously shared knowledge of the team. For example in excerpt 1, the word “level” is accessible to all as it can be seen to summarize a longer episode approaching its conclusion, and, similarly in excerpt 9, the idea of extra work, and, hence, “workload” is well projected in A’s preceding talk (lines 1– 4). A mitigated candidate completion in this context would, in contrast, mark the contextual knowledge not shared, and would therefore be, as I claim, dispreferred in such contextual environment.

Through the “certain” candidates speaker B displays, as I argue for above, his or her shared understanding of what is meant by A. In addition, however, I suggest, following Drew, that the participants display a shared entitlement to the knowledge or experience through the use (and acceptance) of this format, displaying thus an overall orientation to the institutional goals of the activity-in-progress.

7.2.1.2 *Orienting to expert identity*

I have identified two environments, in my data, in which mid-turn interruptions could be seen as instances of *designedly incomplete utterances* (DIUs) (Koshik 2002), i.e. word searches adapted for activity specific purposes. The one is used as a practice for marking the expert identity of another participant, and the other one is used as a practice for inviting collective humor. The first case is illustrated in excerpt 11.

(11) “Concrete data” (Management meeting)

(A, B, C = Participants)

- 01 A But one (.) one rather important reason of course is er is the self assessment (.)
 02 according to ((name of a company internal program)) (.) which (.) requires that you just
 03 don’t think or suppose but you you pro- must (.) should have er- ((makes a lifting gesture
 04 with his hand and gazes at B)) (.) <concrete>=
 05 B → =dAta
 06 A Con[crete] DATA
 07 C [facts]
 08 B Mm

Speaker A is standing in front, giving a pre-prepared report on HR-issues. Beginning in line 1, he makes a reference to a company internal self-assessment program. Speaker A designs his utterance so that it invites one of the other participants (B) to co-produce the

completion of the utterance-in-process (line 5). Speaker A emphasizes the invitation by pausing, making a lifting gesture with his hand, and by gazing at B. As to the content, the completion describes one of the central requirements of the self-assessment program. My argument is that rather than initiating a word search, A adopts the practice for marking B's expert role, i.e. her role as the knowing participant concerning the program he is referring to. That A is not eliciting assistance in word search is evidenced by the fact that he starts providing the expression himself ("concrete", line 4), making it clear that he could also complete the turn himself (Lerner 1995: 122). It was stated above that in a word search, the animator of the turn's talk changes whereas A still remains to be the author. Here, in contrast, A displays that B is the author. Speaker B displays her acceptance of this footing offered to her by A by acknowledging an additional candidate completion, in line 8, suggested by speaker C.

Koshik (2002) has described the use of a similar type of word search format in a pedagogical environment (see also Lerner 1995). The DIUs, as she calls them, are designed from the outset to be completed by the student. In her data, the DIUs are used for initiating self-repair, whereas the DIU in my meeting data is used, as I suggest, for marking the expert identity of B. There are two examples of a similar use in my data, and both occur in the Management meeting. Evidently, this may be a practice systematically used by the managers, in a meeting context, for orienting to and strengthening each others' expert identities. Koshik (2002) describes the DIUs as *pedagogical practices for eliciting knowledge display in error correction sequences*. Following her, the DIU described above could be called *a practice for eliciting knowledge display for strengthening expert identity in managerial meeting interaction*.

7.2.1.3 Prompting collective humor

The other instance of an activity specific use of the word search format, in my data, is illustrated in excerpt 12. In this, the format is used as a practice for prompting collective humor in a distinct sequential environment. The participants of the Project meeting have been discussing a new instruction program which needs to be installed in the personal

computers of all the staff members. The topic has been discussed already for a while when speaker A, who is in charge of the technical implementation of the project, says what is presented in lines 1 to 5.

(12) “Surprise” (Project meeting)

(B=Chair, A, C, D, E = Participants)

- 01 A Especially I would like to (.) have this cd to go
 02 through the (.) acceptance TEST for virus check [and] ((eyegaze at E))
 03 C [Yeah]
 04 E °Yes of course.°=
 05 A =and other [other] proc[edures]
 06 E [°Yeah°] [°Yeah°]
 07 A Because otherwise ((turns the gaze from E to B)) we create a
 08 (0.5)
 09 B (hih) hih hih ((looks at E))
 10 E HAH HAH [HAH]
 11 D [hah hah hah ((eyegaze at B))]
 12 B → £(Wooden mouse.)£ hah hah
 13 A £Yes.£
 14 E £Yeah£ ((nodding))
 15 (0.5)
 16 D → £Surprise£ ((eyegaze at B))
 17 C (It wouldn't be the first time)
 18 A £°Surprise yeah°£
 19 C @Happy NEW year@
 20 ((joint laughter))

Starting in line 1 and up to line 5, A displays an orientation to his own responsibility and expert identity by speaking in the first person and by specifying what needs to be done. The other participants support his orientation through their agreement tokens (lines 3, 4, and 6). In line 7, A reshapes the context (Duranti & Goodwin 1992) by a change of footing (Goffman 1981). He does this by suggesting a shift to a new *collective footing* (Díaz et al. 1996; Antaki et al. 1996) which is marked by a change of the previous first person singular pronoun *I* into plural *we*. The shift to a collective footing is also marked by the use of an incomplete utterance which offers the others a slot for co-participation. The others display their understanding and acceptance of the shift(s) by taking an active role in the co-construction of the sequence. A candidate completion is suggested by both B (line 12) and D (line 16).

Another change of footing is combined with the shift to a collective footing, i.e. a shift from a serious, matter-of-fact talk into a humorous mode. This shift is combined with the interrupted utterance and seems to be invited by A's gaze in line 7. The chair's

responding laughter obviously displays that A's invitation recontextualizes something that belongs to the shared experience of the team and that carries humorous potential. The chair's candidate completion, "wooden mouse" (line 12), further strengthens this interpretation.

As in mother-care interaction (Linell 2005b), mid-turn interruption seems to be used here as a resource for inviting somebody else to name a delicate matter, i.e. to say what could follow if the cd was not tested. But more than that, it is also used as an invitation to co-construct a humorous sequence in a particular contextual environment. Lerner (1995) describes a similar use of word search in an instructional environment, in a context where students are working on joint tasks. He states that "the elements of a word-search sequence (Sacks 1992) are preserved, but the opportunities for participation are transformed by the ongoing relevance of the task as a collaboratively completable project" (Lerner 1995: 122).

In the overall structure of the meeting activity, the conjointly constructed humorous sequence evidently relaxes the atmosphere and fosters collegiality between the participants (see Holmes 2000, 2006). In addition, the humorous sequence offers the participants a way to close the treatment of a challenging topic through collective relaxation, and at the same time makes it easier for the participants to shift to a new topic.

As there is a very similar occurrence in the Management meeting, I suggest that this specific adaptation of word search is another example of a DIU in my data, and that it is potentially systematically used as *a practice for eliciting collaborative humor in sensitive sequential environments in company-internal meeting interaction*.

Apparently, intersubjective understanding in excerpt 12 is based on the recontextualization of shared knowledge gained through previous meetings. That is why I suggest that the practice of prompting collective humor may be especially characteristic of recurring institutional events such as meetings of permanent teams in a corporate environment.

7.2.2 Differences between the two meetings

It was indicated in section 5, that the dominant type of induced completions in the Project meeting was completions in word search (11 out of 13), whereas only 4 of the 9 occurrences in the Management meeting were of that type. I suggest that this discrepancy could, at least partly, be explained by the difference in the overall purpose of the two meetings. As the participants of the Management meeting have come together with the purpose of sharing information about what is going on in their particular areas of responsibility, the recipients can be assumed to be less inclined towards, e.g., displaying shared entitlement to co-authorship and ownership of experience (Lerner 2002: 29) than towards, e.g., asking for additional information on a topic from a knowledgeable participant. In the Project meeting, in contrast, the team members have gathered together in order to decide, together, how to get the on-going project completed. In such contextual environment, an orientation to shared entitlement to knowledge is prevalent. Of course, other orientations may also be displayed through this discrepancy in frequency, for example an orientation to asymmetries in participation. This will next be briefly discussed.

7.2.2.1 Asymmetries in participation

An important aspect of institutional interaction is that it is characteristically asymmetrical while ordinary conversation “is premised on a standard of “equal participation” between speakers” (Drew & Heritage 1992: 47). In a meeting activity, for example, there is the obvious asymmetry in the discursive rights between the chair and the participants. Furthermore, the two meetings analyzed in this study are different in the sense that the chair of the Management meeting, as opposed to that of the Project meeting, has a higher hierarchical status than the other participants. An orientation to the asymmetric relationships is displayed, e.g., through fewer opportunities offered for co-participation in

the Management meeting, as will be demonstrated through the comparison of extracts 13 and 14.

(13) “Comparative reporting” (Project meeting)

(A, B, C, D = Participants)

- 01 A /.../ and er I'm very glad that we have a common concept now ((eyegaze at C and D))
02 C [°hmm.°]
03 D [°hmm.°]
04 A which allows er (.)
05 B → comPARATIVE reporting
06 A yeah (.)

(14) “Stocks” (Management meeting)

(A = Chair; B = Participant)

- 01 A so we have been able to (--) almost everything
02 B mm
03 A and looking at at it might even be so (--) that this is not bad for the industry
04 because it took away a bit of of [capa]city of the
05 B → [>stocks<]
06 A market and lessened the risk for (.) e::r-
07 too much stock building at at the customers (.)
08 B mm

Both excerpts contain what Lerner (1996a: 262) calls an *early opportunistic completion of a word search*. In excerpt 13, A has been reporting on a topic for a while. In line 4, he is about to produce the missing syntactic (and pragmatic) head of his turn when B steps in to produce it for him, evidently induced by some vague signals of hesitation by A ('er' and a short pausing). As was pointed out above, the candidate completion is usually delayed as the early phase of the search is left for the speaker (or owner of the current turn). Lerner (1996a: 262) suggests that an early opportunistic completion may, however, be allowed to a co-participant who “can assert some special access to the trouble source”, or has equal right to the knowledge (Drew 1991: 41). So, the early opportunistic completion is used to initiate or sustain a special alignment with a speaker, “one of story consociateship or association co-membership rather than recipientship” (Lerner 1996a: 263.) In excerpt 14, A acknowledges B's candidate without any hesitation, and accepts, thus, B's co-author role and equal right to the knowledge.

In excerpt 14, however, an early completion turns out to be problematic. The chair (A) is reporting on the impacts of a recent strike on the company under the overall topic

“what’s on”. One of the participants has posed a question concerning eventual lost orders as a consequence of the strike, and the chair is answering this question in lines 1 to 7. In line 4, he produces twice the word “of”, and one of the participants (B) takes this opportunity to utter “stocks” as a candidate completion. Without attending B’s production directly, A provides his own completion, and displays, as I argue, that B’s candidate is not uttered on his footing. Speaker B, who has the second highest hierarchical position, after the chair, may well be displaying an orientation to a specific co-membership with the chair through the early completion. In addition, he may also use the early opportunistic completion as a means of lowering the hierarchical asymmetry between the chair and the participants (see Skovholt 1999: 74). Such attempts are, however, not accepted by A. When ignoring B’s candidate completion, A can be seen to display an orientation to his authoritative right to the corporate knowledge and to the hierarchical asymmetry of the activity.

An early opportunistic completion may well become problematic also in ordinary conversation. Goodwin and Goodwin (1986: 53) point out that the fact that B does not allow A to produce the word may show either that “she does not consider A to be capable of finding it” or that B’s candidate completion may be correct in a sense but fails to capture precisely what A was searching for. The problematic outcome in excerpt 14 may display similar aspects, but, I argue that it also displays an orientation to the asymmetric statuses between the chair and the other participants.

7.2.3 Summary of actions accomplished through completions in word search

As in ordinary conversations, also in my data the completions in word search are multifunctional. One action evidently accomplished in the majority of cases is that A gets help in word search. Showing understanding of what A has been previously saying and strengthening alignment with A are other obvious actions accomplished through B’s completion. A further aspect of the functional potential in many cases is controlling the

continuous development of the interaction-in-progress. The occurrences in my data also suggest that completing others' utterances may, at least partly, be an individual tendency.

The majority of the completions in word search in my data could be described as practices of ordinary conversation that happen to occur in an institutional setting. There are, however, some tendencies that do display an institutional orientation. One of these is that the search is usually focused on finding a word or expression that captures a professional content. So, the participants orient to the word searches from their institutional positions and display, hence, an orientation to the institutional goals of the interaction through the use of this format. Another tendency is displayed through straightforwardly presented completions, and has to do with the participants' entitlement to knowledge. By not try-marking or mitigating the candidate completion, speaker B displays his or her shared understanding of what is meant by A, and also a shared entitlement to the knowledge or experience, displaying thus an overall orientation to the institutional goals of the activity-in-progress. Furthermore, there turned out to be a significant discrepancy between the two meetings as to the frequency of the phenomenon. The overall frequency of completions in word search in the Project meeting is akin to that of ordinary conversations whereas the Management meeting had much fewer occurrences. This is partly explained by the difference in the overall purpose of the meetings, but, I argue that the discrepancy also displays an orientation to hierarchical asymmetries in participation in the Management meeting.

Occasionally, the search was found to be about coming up with an appropriate word in English. No orientation to learner identity is, however, displayed in these sequences. Instead, participants seem to orient conjointly to the fluent development of the interaction-in-progress when one of the participants faces a problem of finding an English word.

I have identified two environments in which the word search seems to be adapted for activity specific purposes, and I suggest that these could be seen as instances of *designedly incomplete utterances* (DIUs) as described by Koshik (2002). In the first type, rather than initiating a word search, A adopts the practice for marking B's expert role. So, the word search format is used as a practice for eliciting knowledge display for strengthening the expert identity of another participant. In the second type, a DIU is used

as a practice for inviting collaborative humor in a sensitive sequential environment. I suggest that in both occasions the DIU is especially adopted for the purposes of the in-company meeting.

7.3 Actions accomplished through co-produced completions

Excerpts 2 and 15 – 16 illustrate the third type of collaborative completions in my data, i.e. the co-produced completions or choral co-productions (Lerner 2002).

(15) “To get the line” (Project meeting)

(A, B, C, D = Participants)

- 01 C and we need the null
 02 D yeah=
 03 A =to get [the (.) line]
 04 B → [>to get the number<]
 05 C YES. (.) this one ((tapping with her finger on the paper))
 06 A >yeah<
 07 B °zero (there).°

(16) “Compensation” (Management meeting)

(A = Chair; B, C, D = Participants)

- 01 B one things (.) we have not discussed the PENsions
 02 (.) for example when it starts
 03 A that’s a part of management com[pensation]]
 04 B → [>compensation<]=
 05 C =compensation
 06 A I would say
 07 D mm

According to Lerner (2002: 2), choral co-production is designed in a fashion that shows that it is not aimed as a distinct utterance but to simultaneously co-produce part of a TCU. This is marked by, e.g., B’s tendency to employ a fast tempo until he or she catches up with A’s utterance (see line 4 in excerpts 15 and 16), so that A and B come to complete their utterances in unison.

Previous literature emphasizes the use of co-produced completions for affiliative purposes. Displaying understanding and active listenership on the one hand, and, support and alignment on the other hand, have usually been seen to belong to their functional

potential (Bockgård 2004; Szczepek 2000b; Skovholt 1999; Green-Vänttinen 1998; Lerner 1996b, 2002). Green-Vänttinen (1998: 76) sees *spontaneous completions*, as she calls them, as similar to other supporting responses such as back-channeling and shadowing (Tannen 1989) which furnish the recipient with resources for expressing engagement and active listening. It is noteworthy that an obvious difference between a completion in word search and a co-produced completion is that the latter is not addressed to A but to A's original recipient (see Lerner 2004b). In other words, in the former, the original speaker maintains the authority over the turn whereas A and B, in the latter, have shared authority. So, "very good" in excerpt 2 is not addressed to A in the first place but rather to the rest of the team. Lerner (2004b: 225) points out that in this circumstance the TCU completion will ordinarily not be treated as confirmable, and thus will not launch a similar collaborative sequence as in word search occasions.

Lerner (2002: 23-24) specifies two actions, in particular, that choral co-production is used to accomplish. First, it is used for conjoint action for a third part (for example to co-produce an element of an explanation or a complaint), and second, for demonstration of agreement with the current speaker. Both these actions can be seen as part of the functional potential of the completions produced in excerpts 2 and 15 – 16. These will be discussed next.

7.3.1 Activity specific orientation

Excerpt 2 originates from a context where the chair (A) is reporting on "what's on" from the corporate perspective. B's choral co-production is obviously used as a practice for displaying strong agreement with regard to the content, i.e. the March results of the company. He can thus be seen to display an orientation both to the institutional goals and to interpersonal alignment. In addition, however, the completion marks his specific role as a co-author of the turn. Through the co-production, B is marking a similar type of entitlement to knowledge as was suggested above in the connection of straightforwardly produced candidate completions and early opportunistic completions. Hence, I suggest that the practice of co-producing the completion is also used for marking B's hierarchical

status vis-à-vis the chair B and, consequently, for flattening the hierarchical distance between the chair and the other team members. It is noteworthy that the participant in the role of speaker B is the same participant who in excerpt 14 produces the early opportunistic completion (“stocks”).

Both Szczepek (2000b: 18) and Bockgård (2004: 141) point out that non-induced completions may be used, in ordinary conversation, for showing support in the sense of “I understand your motives for doing such-and-such a thing” or in the sense of showing empathy. In such cases, however, the completion usually refers to A-events (i.e. events that concern A, see above), and is produced at low volume. Evidently, excerpt 2 is not of that type. Overall, my meeting data does not have such cases.

All in all, the sequential environment characterized by one participant being in the speaker role and the others in the roles of addressees, typical for both meetings under investigation, shows very few instances of non-induced completions or choral co-productions. Back-channeling in such an environment is common but it is accomplished in ways that display an orientation to the role of an addressee (e.g. “ok”, “yeah”, mm).

Lerner (2002) has identified some systematically describable environments for “conjoint action for a third part” through choral co-productions. On the one hand, he names the beginnings and endings of social gatherings which may be marked by chorally co-produced greeting and leave-taking utterances. On the other hand, he points out some special environments, such as mutual reminiscence or commiseration that can accommodate mutual or reciprocal action (Lerner 2002: 28). Also Antaki et al. (1996) have identified sequential environments in conversations which are entitled to offer opportunities for co-participation, and in which participants are involved in co-producing talk on a collective footing. Such sequences involve joint tasks such as joint story telling, joint reasoning, and joint problem solving.

The sequential environments that seem to make choral co-production especially relevant in my data are those of joint problem solving and joint reasoning. In excerpt 15, the participants are engaged in solving the technical problem of how to establish telephone connection to Sweden in order to join one of the team members to the meeting. Several attempts have already been made to solve the problem. Starting in line 1, the participants are about to come up with a joint solution. A and B support C’s argument by

co-producing an extension to in lines 3 and 4. Even if the words are not exactly the same (“to get the line” vs. “to get the number”), A and B are obviously acting on a collective footing in order to achieve a joint goal in collaboration. The collaborative action is marked by, e.g., short turns and fast speaker shifts, and through the use of “we”.

Excerpt 16 occurs in a contextual environment where the participants of the Management meeting go through a list of critical areas to be covered by the team members, and define, through a process of joint reasoning, who is responsible for each one of these. Speaker B introduces a new topic (“pensions”, line 1) to be included in the list of critical areas. The chair points out, however, that “pensions” will be covered under the topic of “management compensation” (line 3). Through the choral co-production, B (line 4) displays, in the first place, that he agrees with A. The talk produced in unison and on a collective footing may also display low hierarchical distance between by the chair and the participants in this sequence.

In sum, as in ordinary conversations, co-produced completions are used for showing listener support also in meeting interaction. What seems to be activity specific, however, is that the practice is used, in particular, in environments of joint reasoning or problem solving characterized by collective authorship. Evidently, it displays an orientation to both institutional goals and to flattening the hierarchical distance.

8 Discussion and conclusions

The study reported in this article shows how a rather basic interactional phenomenon, collaborative completion of another speaker’s turn (e.g. Sacks 1992 [1967-1968]); Lerner 1991, 1996a), may be an important resource for the participants of meeting interaction.

Originally, the phenomenon was identified in a preliminary study on meaning construction in the internal meeting interaction of Finnish-Swedish merged corporations (Nikko 2007). My initial assumption then was that the frequent occurrences of especially word search sequences in the data were connected to the lingua franca character of the talk. The micro-analytic investigation of the phenomenon in situ revealed, however, that

much more seems to be accomplished through this interactional practice than coherence in occasions of lacking language skills.

The main results of the study can be summarized into five points. First, my findings about the formal as well as the functional aspects of collaborative completions were much alike to those in other data sets (e.g. Bockgård 2004; Szczepek 2000a, 2000b). Their overall number, design and distribution between various types were rather similar in the two data sets. As to the actions accomplished through the collaborative completions in their sequential environments, the main finding was their overtly multifunctional character (see also Bockgård 2004; Szczepek 2000b). In other words, they were used as practices for accomplishing a variety of simultaneous actions such as coherence and intersubjectivity, strengthening interpersonal alignment, and/or controlling the overall progress of the talk-in-interaction. The similarity of the data sets is in accordance with Gardner and Wagner's (2004: 3) conclusion that second language conversations are not conducted in a different way from those in a first language.

Second, while accomplishing the above actions through collaborative completions, the participants clearly displayed an orientation to the institutional goals of the interaction, and oriented to the practices from their professional positions. And third, in contrast to findings in some other types of institutional second language data (e.g. Kurhila 2003) or data in which communication is conducted in *lingua franca* in a business context (e.g. Firth 1996), the participants did not demonstrate an orientation to learner identities through the use of the collaborative completions. The finding is, however, in accordance with what has been concluded about communication in multinational corporate environments (Charles 2007; Louhiala-Salminen et al. 2005).

Forth, while the majority of the collaborative completions in my data are used as practices of ordinary conversation, I identified some particular environments where sequences including collaborative completions seemed to be specifically adapted for the purposes of internal meetings of international corporations. Fifth, there was an obvious discrepancy in the use and design of the collaborative completions between the two meetings of my data set, contributing to the fact that two rather different institutional contexts were talked into being. This suggests that meetings may share less activity specific characteristics than some other, more conventionalized, institutional activities.

On the whole, the study demonstrates, on the one hand, how a rather basic interactional phenomenon may be an important resource for the interactants in constructing the institutional context, and, on the other hand, how detailed analysis of interaction on the micro level can reveal orders of a macro level social structure.

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Essay 3: Multilingual code-switching as an interactional resource in cross-border meeting talk

Tuija Nikko

Abstract:

This study examines the multilingual appearance of the face-to-face meeting interactions of merged Finnish-Swedish corporations. It deals with multilingualism as locally and orderly accomplished by the participants of the internal meetings of the merged Finnish-Swedish corporations. The analytic framework of the study is that of Conversation Analysis (CA). The aim of this article is, on the one hand, to make visible the multilingual character of a European cross-border corporate environment, and, on the other hand, to demonstrate what is accomplished through code-switching in the studied encounters. According to the findings of the study, multilingualism is a potentially available resource especially in the pre- and postmeeting talk. It provides the participants with an extra resource for accomplishing alignment and co-membership with each other. In the actual meeting talk, the use of other languages than lingua franca English is marked as accountable. In some occasions, code-switching is explicitly used as a resource for solving word-search problems. In sum, language alternation may not be taken as a sign of deficient language proficiency in the studied meetings but it is, instead, used as a multifunctional resource for accomplishing various actions. It is used as a resource for constructing the structural context of the activity. Furthermore, it is used as a resource for constructing alignment between the participants and collegiality within the team, and, moreover, as a resource for controlling the progress of the interaction. All in all, also in less established multilingual settings, code-switching seems to be used, first and foremost, as a resource for displaying for the other participants the frame of the activity, i.e. what is actually going on in the interaction, and is, hence, an important building block of intersubjectivity.

Key words: multilingual code-switching, meeting interaction, lingua franca interaction, international business communication, cross-border communication

1 Introduction

During the last 60 years, economic integration, along with the far-reaching changes in political, social and cultural conditions in Europe, has affected the language situation of workplaces and societies at large. The role of English as the lingua franca for business and trade is a case in point (e.g. Firth 1996; Meierkord & Knapp 2002; Louhiala-Salminen et al. 2005; Charles 2007). Globalization of the economy and the explosion of mergers and acquisitions since the 1990' have raised the issue of English being used not only for the purposes of company external communication but also as the common language for internal communication, to the front pages of major European newspapers (Vollstedt 2002: 87; Louhiala-Salminen 2002: 6). Daily work in companies is increasingly conducted in teams where the closest colleagues use English as a lingua franca also in such cross-border environments where communication has historically been conducted in, e.g., German, French or Scandinavian languages (e.g. Louhiala-Salminen 2002; Vollstedt 2002; Kankaanranta 2005).

This essay focuses on multilingual code-switching in meeting interactions of merged Finnish-Swedish corporations. The rationale behind the study is that although English has been announced to be the common corporate language of these corporations, Finnish and Swedish, i.e. the native languages of most of the employees, may also be used in the internal meeting interactions. This rationale originates from some preliminary findings in a previous study on the same meeting data (Nikko 2007). How and for what purposes multilingual code-switching is used in these meetings will be investigated in more detail in this study. The aim is, on the one hand, to make visible the potentially multilingual character of a cross-border corporate environment, and, on the other hand, to demonstrate what is accomplished through code-switching in the studied encounters.

2 Review of previous research

Research on bi- or multilingual code-switching, i.e. the alternating use of two or more languages in the same interactional episode, has been carried out from various

disciplinary backgrounds representing different approaches and perspectives (for definitions and overviews, see Auer 1984; Li 2005). Traditionally, language alternation has been investigated from either a grammatical or a sociolinguistic perspective. The grammatical perspective has dealt with research on syntactic and morphological constraints on switching from one language to another. Sociolinguistic and socio-pragmatic studies have focused on questions concerning the occurrence (or non-occurrence) of code-switching. With the help of concepts such as *power*, *age*, *authority*, *prestige*, and *gender*, researchers have tried to explain why bilingual speakers switch from one language to another. During the last two decades a third perspective, which Auer (1984: 1) calls interactional and Li (2002, 2005) the conversation analysis (CA) approach, has become important. This approach was first developed in Gumperz (1982), where the concept of *conversational code-switching* was introduced. The approach has been further developed for the purposes of bilingual conversation by Auer (1984; 1998) and many others (e.g. Sebba 1993; Sebba & Wootton 1998; Stroud 1992, 1998; Li 2005). As pointed out by Li (2002: 166), the CA approach to code-switching was mainly developed against the dominant tendency to explain code-switching behavior by attributing intended meanings to the switches. (For more comprehensive overviews of studies on bilingual conversation, see Auer 1998 and Li 2002.)

While admitting the value of the grammatical and sociolinguistic research, both Auer (1984) and Li (2005) emphasize that the phenomenon of language alternation cannot be exhaustively explained without reference to its local function, i.e. to the conversational context in which code-switching takes place. The starting point of the CA approach to code-switching is that the language choice is embedded in the sequential organization of the interaction (Auer 1984: 5), i.e. “the meaning of code-switching must be interpreted with reference to the language choices in the preceding and following turns by the participants themselves, rather than by correlating language choice with some externally determined values” (Li 2002: 164). An advantage of CA is that it focuses on “members’ procedures to arrive at local interpretations of language alternation” (Auer (1984: 3). In other words, CA gives primacy to interpretations that are demonstrably oriented to participant actions rather than to some external characteristics. Consequently, language alternation is not considered to be another situational parameter, but, it is, in

contrast, seen as deeply interactional. One of the central ideas of conversational code-switching, as originally introduced by Gumperz (1982: 130ff), is to see code-switching as a way of signaling to the other participants the frame (Goffman 1974) of the activity, i.e. what is actually currently happening in the interaction.

As pointed out by Li (2002: 160), the CA approach requires a radical change in focus basically because it sees language not simply as a medium for the expression of intentions, motives, or interests but also as a site for uncovering the method through which ordered activity is generated (see also Stroud 1992).

Especially in the early days, code-switching used to be evaluated from a monolingual perspective, and was therefore looked down upon and seen as an incompetent way of expressing oneself by both the speakers themselves and by linguists (see, e.g., Auer 1984; Romaine 1989). As pointed out, for example, by Kallioikoski (1995) and Söderberg and Jørgensen (2003), this conception has continued to prevail in second language acquisition (SLA) research, where code-switching has been merely seen as a way of compensating for deficient language skills. These researchers show, however, that not even in the interaction between speakers with highly unbalanced language backgrounds can code-switching be seen as a compensatory strategy only, but rather as a conversational resource with various functions (see also Firth & Wagner 1997: 288; Rampton 1997).

As opposed to what has traditionally been the case in SLA research, the CA approach to lingua franca interaction, in general, emphasizes the normality of this talk (e.g. Firth & Wagner 1997; Gardner & Wagner 2004). Hence, the participants of, for example, international workplace meetings are not assumed to have the identity of a non-native speaker or deficient language user nor any other a priori identity categorization. Instead, they may present themselves – through demonstrable orientations in situ – as experts, team-leaders, chairpersons, etc., and many of these can be relevant simultaneously (Firth & Wagner 1997: 292; Mondada 2004: 18).

A further distinction in previous research can be made on the basis of the specific types of multilingualism referred to. As was mentioned above, research on bilingual code-switching has traditionally been conducted in established bi- or multilingual communities where the local linguistic repertoires, for geographical or historical reasons,

comprise two or more languages (e.g. Labov 1972; Blom & Gumperz 1972; Poplak 1980; Gumperz 1982; Auer 1984; Saari 1989). In contrast to *primary plurilingualism*, as O'Driscoll (2001, cited in Skårup 2004) calls the linguistic situation of such established communities, the changing patterns in language use have shifted attention also to what O'Driscoll calls *secondary plurilingualism*. This term refers to interactions of more transient character, such as business meetings or interactions with tourists. These two concepts illustrate concretely that the plurilingualism of less established settings may get accomplished in ways that are radically different from those of established bilingual communities.

Recently, some micro-analytic investigations have been conducted into the plurilingualism of some less established settings, namely workplace meetings. For example Poncini (2003) has studied the role of other languages than English in an Italian company's meetings of its international distributors from 12 to 14 countries. Mondada (2004) has studied the local accomplishment of the plurilingualism of a European professional network, consisting of five local teams of surgeons, meeting repeatedly through video-conferences. Skårup (2004) has examined how a team of an electronic company in Copenhagen, acquired by an American corporation, uses its multilingual resources in internal meeting interaction. The results of these studies will be referred to in the subsequent sections of this study.

3 Data and methodology

Data

The authentic meeting data used for this study were collected as part of a research project on internal communication in two recently merged Finnish-Swedish corporations, carried out at the Helsinki School of Economics in 2000 – 2003. The majority of the recordings were made soon after the merger of the Finnish and Swedish units in 2000 and 2001. (For further details about the project, see Charles 2007; Louhiala-Salminen 2002; Kangas &

Kangasharju 2007; see also *Part I* of this dissertation). The data for the current study originate from 4 cross-border meetings (in total 9 h 15 min). In these, regular company internal teams or project groups meet in scheduled face-to-face encounters. (For more detailed descriptions of the meetings, see *Essay 1*.) The common language used for communication is English used as a lingua franca, i.e. native speakers of Finnish and Swedish use English as a common language (For the concept of *lingua franca*, see, e.g., Charles 2007; Firth 1996; Knapp & Meierkord 2002).

To understand the complexity of the language choice in Finnish-Swedish mergers and acquisitions, some extra information about the language situation in Finland and Sweden is required. Finland is officially bilingual with both Finnish and Swedish as national languages. There is a minority of approximately 6 % of the population, concentrated in the costal areas of the southern and western parts of the country, for whom Swedish is the first language. Especially in the south, around the Helsinki area, the majority of the Swedish speaking Finns are, in practice, bilingual. The official status of the two languages is guaranteed through legislation. Both languages are studied as second languages at school and there is a requirement of a minimum level of proficiency in the second language, for example, in all university degrees. Many Finnish speaking Finns are rather comfortable in speaking Swedish. The vast majority, however, are not. The position of Swedish in the educational system is a topic of continuous debate especially in the non-bilingual areas of the country. In Sweden, in contrast, Finnish language does not have similar status as Swedish in Finland. Outside some areas in the Northern part of the country, Finnish is rarely spoken by others than those with Finnish family ties. English, however, is the foreign or rather second language most vastly mastered in both Finland and Sweden, and has become an ‘indispensable part of the linguistic repertoire’ (Hoffmann 2000) of especially the younger generations.

Methodology

The current study is based on the CA approach to code-switching (e.g. Auer 1984, 1998; Li 2002, 2005) which was introduced above, in Ch. 2. Hence, it deals with

multilingualism as locally and orderly accomplished by the participants of the interactional encounter. According to the CA approach, code-switching is above all a means of contextualization. Thus, crucial concepts in the analysis are Goffman's (1974; 1981) sociological concepts of *frame*, *framing* and *footing* together with Gumperz' (1982) linguistic concepts of *contextualization* and *contextualization cue*. Following Goffman (1981: 128), it is assumed that footing is very commonly language-linked and, consequently, a change of footing – hence a change of frame – is often cued through code-switching. For a more detailed description of both CA and the concept of contextualization, see *Part I* of this dissertation.

Research questions

The current study examines the ways in which participants of a particular professional context, i.e. internal teams of cross-border corporations, use the different languages in their more or less multilingual repertoires as an interactional resource in order to accomplish various actions conjointly. The research questions can be defined as follows:

- 1) in which occasions do members of internal teams of cross-border corporations use other languages than English
- 2) what is accomplished through the use of other languages than English in the meeting interactions

4 Findings

An initial finding of the study is that there are instances of code-switching in all the studied meetings. Code-switching occur in the premeeting talk, in particular, but also in the postmeeting talk. The actual meeting talk is conducted in English, and the occasional use of other languages than English is usually marked as accountable.

4.1 Code-switching marking transition to postmeeting talk

As pointed out by Levinson (1992: 73), it is usually the interactants task to decide when an activity actually begins and ends as the activities are normally surrounded by talk instead of silence (see also Goffman 1981: 125). So, the overall structure of an activity type usually comprises a core activity which is surrounded by opening and closing phases (e.g. Linell 1998: 243), or, in Clark's (1996: 36) terms, *entr'*, *body* and *exit*. As pointed out by Boden (1994: 87), meetings – whether formal or informal – tend to have noticeable openings and closings. She calls the talk before the opening of the meeting activity *premeeting talk*, and, correspondingly, the talk after the closing of the activity *postmeeting talk*.

Extract 1 illustrates the coordinated closing of a meeting activity and the multifunctional use of code-switching in the postmeeting talk of that meeting. The extract occurs towards the end of the meeting of a company internal project group, assembling on a regular basis. The meeting is held in Finland, and it has in all 10 participants, five from Finland and five from Sweden.

Extract 1 (Project meeting/1)

(F1, F2, F3 = Finnish participants; SC= Swedish Chair, S1, S2 = Swedish participants)

- 01 SC Are we ready for the next (.) decide the next meeting?
02 F1 Yeah
03 F2 Yeah
04 /.../
05 SC So (.) let's have it that way (.)
06 Okay thank you
07 F1 **Tac[kar]**
thanks
08 F2 [thank] you (.)
09 F1 Okay (.) change of staff ((gets up and starts putting on his coat))
10 S1 **Ja,**
well=
11 F2 **=När ska vi=**
=when shall we=
12 S1 **=Jaa när [ska vi (.)]**
=yeah when [shall we=
13 F2 [((first name of S1)) **träffas**
[meet
14 S1 **Hur ska vi göra nu då?**
what are we going to do now then?

15 F2 **Vi ska stanna här**
 we shall stay here

16 F1 I try to (save the) dinner to you on Thursday (--) ((standing and looking at S1))

17 S1 good. thank you (.)

18 S1 **Ja er klockan är** (.)((looks at her watch))
 well er it is (.)

19 F2 **Går du ut** ((looks at F1)) **lunchar du här** (--)?
 are you going out ((looks at F1)) are you having lunch here (--)

20 F1 I must lunch now then I have a medical check-up

21 forty past one and then I have another meeting at two

22 ((F1 leaves the room, F2 and S1 continue their discussion in Swedish; SC and F3

23 are standing aside and discussing in English))

In line 1, the chair introduces a new topic (“next meeting”). He marks it as the last item on the agenda which initiates a pre-closing sequence, i.e. an opportunity for the participants to reopen or take up any other items for discussion before closing the meeting (“are we ready for the next decide the next meeting”) (see Boden 1994: 102). When an agreement has been reached regarding these arrangements, the chair confirms the decision (“so let’s have it that way”, line 5) and closes the topic by saying “okay thank you”. As can be seen in the subsequent talk from line 7 onwards, his words are taken as the closing of the meeting and as a transition to postmeeting talk.

According to Boden (1994: 102), postmeeting talk is often characterized by “two-party interdepartmental and interim exchanges and updates about specific tasks, recent gossip, and overall organizational mood”. Similar aspects can be traced in extract 1. F2 and S1 are trying to find a suitable time space for some joint task. Parallel to their discussion, F1 and S1 confirm a joint dinner (lines 16 – 17), and F2 finds out about F1’s lunch plans (19 – 21). At the same time, SC and F3 are standing aside and updating the follow-up tasks concerning some of the decisions made in the meeting. People move around, some people leave the room. The participants are obviously no longer in the process of constructing an activity where turn-taking is controlled and managed by one person, where topics are limited to those presented on a set agenda, or where long turns by individual speakers are acceptable. The closing of a meeting displays, above all, movement from a single interactional stream to multiple conversations (see Boden 1994: 100), i.e. movement from joint engagement to the disjoint orientation (Goffman 1981). Little by little the group breaks up all together.

Code-switching as an interactional resource in extract 1

Extract 1 is characterized by multilingualism. Through the use of their multilingual resources (starting in line 7) the participants display, first of all, their interpretation that the common language is locally negotiable in the postmeeting talk. This is clearly a difference with regard to the meeting talk, where the use of other languages than English obviously is an accountable matter in CA terms (Heritage 1984), as will be shown later in this article. Auer's (1984) distinction between discourse-related and participant-related code-switching is useful in examining what else is accomplished through the language shifts in extract 1. The first type refers to code-switching for the purposes of contextualizing either sequential contrast or change of participant constellation (Auer 1984: 32), and, hence, a change of footing (Goffman 1981). The second type refers to code-switching used by participants for ascribing to each other individual preferences for one language or the other (Auer 1984: 47). According to my interpretation, extract 1 illustrates both aspects.

By confirming the chair's closing "thank you" (line 6) in Swedish, F1 obviously marks his orientation to a non-professional identity, and, consequently, to the shift of the frame, i.e. an exit from the institutional meeting talk. As his following remark, however, is done in English (line 9), it is evident that there is also something else going on. I take it that the code-switching here displays, in particular, a change in participant constellation. By saying "tackar" ('thank you') F1 manages to emphasize that he addresses his acknowledgement to (the Swedish speaking) SC in particular, showing thus a specific alignment with SC. By shifting back to English for the following comment ("okay change of staff") he displays another change of audience, i.e. the fact that he now addresses the whole team, also those not at ease with Swedish (or Finnish). Previous research has shown that excluding audience or, in general, reorganizing the participation framework, is one of the purposes for which code-switching is used (e.g. Skårup 2004; Kalliokoski 1995).

Through their conversation in Swedish, starting in line 10, S1 and F2 mark their orientation to the postmeeting talk. In addition, the choice of language signals their

personal preference for using Swedish as their joint language outside their institutional roles. It was evident already in the premeeting talk of the meeting where extract 1 occurred that the preferred private language for S1 and F2 is Swedish, so this shift is not surprising once it is allowed. Furthermore, through the use of their preferred language which is not the preferred common language for the whole group, code-switching can also be seen as a means of signaling a reduction of the addressed audience. In other words, it seems to be an extra resource for S1 and F2 to mark their conversation as private and not addressed to the others.

A case in point in extract 1 is the code-switching behavior of F1, F2 and S1 from line 16 onwards. In line 16, F1 addresses S1 in English, in the middle of S1's Swedish conversation with F2, by making a comment about some dinner arrangements which have obviously been previously agreed upon. It is noteworthy that F1 in the premeeting talk always addresses S1 in Swedish. Why is he now using English? I see, again, at least a twofold answer. On the one hand, the use of another language is a way for F1 to signal the beginning of a side-sequence and a change of footing in the middle of an ongoing private conversation between S1 and F2. It is noteworthy that he only addresses S1, not S1 and F2. His non-verbal behavior also signals that what he says is going to be said in by-passing as he is about to leave the room. As pointed out by Auer (1984: 42), code-switching is a frequently applied strategy for bi- or multilinguals to contextualize interruptions in the sequential cohesion. S1 acknowledges F1's comment, likewise, in English (line 17) but marks the return to the conversation with F2 by switching back to Swedish (line 18). On the other hand, F1's language choice may, again, mark the audience design for his remark. By using English, F1 marks that also the others present in the room are "allowed" to be aware of the joint dinner plans of F1 and S1 and thus part of the ratified audience of his talk.

In line 19, F2 addresses a question to F1 in Swedish concerning F1's lunch plans. F1 replies in English even if the premeeting talk shows that the preferred common language of F1 and F2 is Swedish (F2 is a Swedish-speaking Finn). It is noteworthy that F1 in this occasion, however, replies in English. This conversation can, of course, be seen as an evidence of fluent bilingual language use in general terms, in which "different languages are employed with no hesitation, no flagging, and no other overt marking of

being different from each other” (Jørgensen 2005: 396). In addition, however, F1’s choice of language can be ascribed a local purpose. It can be seen to display that he is simultaneously also addressing the others by taking farewell from them because what he says may be seen to account for why he has to hurry out.

It is evident already on the basis of extract 1 what Auer means when he states that “a single instance of language alternation can relate to more than one feature of the situation” (Auer 1984: 31). The above analysis of extract 1 shows that the possibility of using their multilingual resources allows the participants, firstly, to design their speech locally with reference to the overall structure of the activity type. Secondly, it seems to give them an excellent resource for designing their talk with regard to the diverse aspects of the audience. Thirdly, it supports the assumption that, instead of being a sign of incompetence, code-switching is a particularly advanced interactional skill (see, e.g., Kalliokoski 1995; Söderberg & Jørgensen 2003).

4.2 Code-switching as a resource in premeeting talk

Extract 2 is taken from the beginning of the meeting of another company internal project group. This meeting has seven participants, two Swedes and five Finns. The meeting is held in Finland. The extract illustrates how participants may go about when deciding on the transition from premeeting talk to the initiation of actual meeting talk, and how multilingual code-switching used as a resource in this process. Six people are already in the room when F1, one of the Finnish participants, walks in. Four persons are sitting by the table (two Finns and two Swedes), either discussing quietly or studying some papers on their own. Two persons stand aside discussing.

Extract 2 (Project meeting/2)

(F1, F2, F3, F4 = Finnish participants; SC= Swedish Chair, S1, S2 = Swedish participants)

- | | |
|-------|--|
| 01 F1 | <i>£HE:J£</i>
<i>£HELLO£</i> |
| 02 S1 | Hej [hej]
<i>hello[hello]</i> |
| 03 SC | [Hej] |

04 F1 **£SEKreterare är här£** ((laughs))
£SEcretary is here£
05 ((joint laughter))
06 S1 **£You're welcome (.) you're <very very> welcome£**
07 ((joint laughter))
08 F1 **£Eller hur?£** ((looks smiling at S1 and gets seated))
£or what?£
09 S1 **£Ja-a£**
£yes£
10 (1.0)
11 F2 **£Hon kommer med egen vodka£** ((F1 is carrying a small bottle of water.))
£she comes with her own vodka£
12 ((joint laughter)) ((pause))
13 ((several non-audible parallel discussions take place: F1 and F2, SC and S1 are
14 discussing on a low volume; F4 and F5 are standing aside and discussing))
15 SC °((first name of F3)) (.) will will we have some feedback (.) from from this
16 analysis (.) ↑yes (.) from this (.) (statistics) you KNOw this (.)°
17 (1.0)
18 F3 °I'm not sure°
19 SC **£(-- yeah (--)**£
20 ((F1 and F2 continue discussing in Finnish, the others have stopped discussing.))
21 SC OKAY.
22 ((all discussion stops, people take their positions by the table, F4 and S1 stand up
23 for shaking hands across the table))
24 S1 Yapp
25 F4 ((first name and last name of F4)) **hej**
hellow
26 S1 **Jaa**
yeah
27 SC Okay.
28 S1 °((first name (last name) of S1))°
29 SC I think ((first name of S2)) just went out of the room we can start without him er
30 welcome (.) to this meeting (.) (I talked with er ((first name of F3)) and ((first
31 name of S1)) about trying to to to to end this meeting at one o'clock so let's at
32 least have that that er goal) er we have an agENDA standard agenda (.) which I
33 think we can approve of and then we have the er last meeting's minutes (.)
34 from ((first name of F1)) (.) from the meeting.
35 (1.0)

20) and people moving around in the room, can be seen in extract 2. Such activities evidently show that the focused joint activity has not started yet.

In line 21, SC clearly displays a change of footing. He orients to his institutional role as the chair through “okay”, a standard topic transition marker in meeting interaction (e.g. Boden 1994: 96). Based on the behavior of the participants in lines 22 – 23, it is evident that this is for them a contextualization cue marking the potential beginning of the focused activity. All the parallel discussions stop and people take their positions by the table. The subsequent side sequence in lines 22 – 28 indicates that the participants are not quite ready yet to begin the conjoint activity. Two participants, F4 and S1, evidently meet for the first time as they introduce themselves to each other by getting up and shaking hands over the table (lines 22 – 28). The occurrence of the side sequence illustrates concretely that the factual beginning of the meeting is conjointly accomplished by the participants. SC’s long turn after the side-sequence (lines 29 - 34) marks the factual beginning of the meeting.

Code-switching as an interactional resource in extract 2

Similar to the postmeeting talk illustrated by extract 1, also the premeeting talk, as exemplified by extract 2, may be characterized by multilingualism in the studied meetings. When entering the room, F1 addresses the others by a greeting in Swedish (line 1) and adds “secretary is here” (line 4), also in Swedish. F1’s choice of language displays that she projects the Swedish participants as her particular audience, and they are also the ones to verbally react both to the greeting and to the additional comment. Both SC and S1 provide a second pair part to F1’s first part of the greeting adjacency pair in Swedish (lines 2 and 3). F1’s humorous comment (line 4) said in laughing makes all participants (including all the Finnish participants) laugh, which presupposes that there is a reference to some previously shared experience. S1’s reaction obviously continues the humorous mode initiated by F1 as it is also followed by joint laughing (“you’re welcome, you’re very very welcome”, line 6).

Evidently, the meeting participants are involved in constructing conjoint humor, and, hence, collegiality (see, e.g., Holmes 2006; Vuorela 2005; Rogerson-Revell 2007),

and code-switching is used as a particular resource for this purpose. Similarly, Mondada (2004: 37) found out that making jokes in the first language of another team was a way for the teams of inviting co-participation, i.e. joint laughter, across the sites.

There seems to be, however, an additional aspect involved in the code-switching of extract 2. It is noteworthy that S1 does not construct his talk in Swedish, but shifts to English (line 6), when reacting to F1's comment even if F1 says her lines in Swedish. F1 seems to ignore this shift as she directs a confirmation check to S1 in Swedish ("or what", line 8). To this question directly addressed to him, S1 answers in Swedish ("yes", line 9). After a short pause another participant, F2, continues both the humorous mode and the language choice initiated by F1, by saying in Swedish "she comes with her own vodka". The reaction is, again, joint laughter. That is, however, the end of the joint talk and after that the conversation dispatches into parallel dyadic conversations, carried out in English, Finnish and Swedish. What I suggest that is accomplished in this extract, in addition to conjoint humor, is local negotiation of the joint language of the premeeting talk. F1 and F2 are not only using Swedish words and expressions for achieving laughter, but they can also be seen to display that a choice of language is locally available and negotiable (for a similar finding, see Mondada 2004: 25). As I see it, F1 and F2 are explicitly displaying their willingness to speak Swedish and offering, thus, the Swedish participants the possibility of using Swedish as the joint language of the talk. SC and S1, however, show obvious reservation in taking this opportunity. This is signaled, on the one hand, through the lack of alignment between the languages (see Li 2002: 169), as displayed by S1's use of English in stead of Swedish in line 6. On the other hand, the reluctance of SC and S1 is signaled through their unwillingness to pick up on the open slots offered to them by both F1 (line 8) and F2 (line 11) in order to continue the conversation in Swedish.

According to my interpretation, through their reluctance to keep to the suggested Swedish language, SC and S1 display an orientation to a recipient design which takes into account not just F1 and F2 but also others present. Thus, their reluctance to use Swedish would be explained by their unwillingness to potentially exclude some of the participants and prevent them from becoming active participants in the interaction (it is obvious that F3 in particular does not prefer to speak Swedish) (for a similar conclusion,

see Skårup 2004: 40.) This orientation is particularly displayed in such environments where the talk is overheard by everyone present, and anyone could, in principle, be projected the next speaker role (see Sacks et al. 1974). When directly addressed in Swedish, and selected as next speaker, S1 provides his replies in Swedish, very briefly though (lines 9 and 26).

In the subsequent interaction (lines 13 - 20), the conversation dispatches into several parallel and private discussions conducted in different language. In these, Finnish and Swedish are used as native languages but also English is used in one of them (the only one at least partly audible in the recording, lines 15 – 19). Both the language choice and the low volume mark these conversations as private and reduce the addressed audience to one person.

Once the meeting activity starts (line 21), there are no signs of local negotiation of the language but the talk is constructed in lingua franca English. The fact that the side-sequence after the chair's first "okay" (lines 22 - 29) is constructed in Swedish is, as I see it, an additional way of marking the non-institutional identities of the interlocutors still at this point.

4.3 Code-switching as a resource for constructing collegiality

Extract 3 occurs in the opening phase of a management meeting. The meeting is held in Finland, in the company's premises. Participants are gathering in the meeting room. They have been moving around getting coffee, greeting each other, and conducting parallel private discussion. Extract 3 occurs at a stage where most of the participants, including the chair, are already sitting at the meeting table, studying their papers.

Extract 3 (Management meeting)

(F1, F2, F3 = Finnish participants; SC= Swedish Chair, S1, S2 = Swedish participants)

- | | |
|-------|---|
| 01 | ((F1 walks towards the meeting table and shake hands with S1)) |
| 02 F1 | Morning all others (.) as well |
| 03 | ((F2 lifts up his hand as a greeting gesture)) |
| 04 ? | Morning |
| 05 | (2.0) |
| 06 SC | What it's (it) in Finnish humentä or (.) good morning in |

07 Finnish is (.) (**hu**[**menta**])
 08 S2 [**huome**]nta ((S2 walks to the table and sits down))
 09 F1 <**Hyvää HUOmenta**>
 10 F2 **Hyvää huomenta** (.) good ((first name of S2))
 11 (2.0)
 12 SC £Good learning after two years£
 13 F2 He he (.) yeah
 14 S2 Great improvement
 15 F3 [Mm mm]
 16 SC [Yes h]e he from zero to (.) no it's a bit
 17 S2 From zero to good morning he he
 18 He he ((joint laughter))
 19 (.)
 20 SC Let's see now are we all (.) all here?

F1 walks towards the table carrying a cup of coffee. She shakes hands with S1 (sitting next to her) and greets the others by saying in English “morning all others as well” (line 2). F2 greets her back with a hand lift and somebody says “morning”. Starting from line 6, the chair initiates a sequence where he invites the others to share with him how to say good morning in Finnish. He asks “what it’s in Finnish humenta or” and reshapes the question in a word-search format that offers a slot for co-participation through a final completion of the utterance (e.g. Goodwin & Goodwin 1986; Lerner 1996), “good morning in Finnish is”. Consequently, the completion is produced conjointly by the chair himself and S2 (lines 7 – 8) and ratified by F1 and F2 (lines 9 – 10). F2’s ratification is accompanied by an evaluation which the chair goes on to comment, in line 12, by self-irony (“good learning after two years”), which then develops into a sequence of conjoint humor (lines 13 – 18). After the conjointly constructed humorous sequence the chair initiates the opening of the meeting activity by saying “let’s see now are we all here” (line 20).

In contrast to the situation in extract 2, it is evident that the use of the item from the Finnish language in extract 3 does not display an availability of Finnish as an open choice for a language to be used in the interaction. Code-switching in extract 3 can be seen as a device of what Rampton (1995) calls *crossing*¹⁴ – use of linguistic items, words, phrases, and expressions by the speaker which do not ‘belong’ him. Through the use of a

¹⁴ “Crossing ... focuses on code alternation by people who are not accepted members of the group associated with the second language they employ. It is concerned with switching into languages that are not generally thought to belong to you.” (Rampton 1995: 280)

crossing, i.e. the use of the Finnish expression, the chair can be claimed to display a specific attention to the shared knowledge of the multilingual repertoire of the team (see Jørgensen 2005). The subsequent conjointly constructed sequence emphasizes the sharedness of the particular linguistic item among the team members, and, contributes, hence, to strengthening solidarity between the members of the team and displaying, hence, their common identity.

Evidently, the participants are also involved in constructing conjoint humor in extract 3. The (fumbling) use of an item from the other team's language offers a specific resource for the chair to invite co-participation since it invites others to join in the laughter. It has been claimed that the opening is a place in which the participants constitute "what the activity will be like" (e.g. Schegloff 1979: 25; Firth 1996: 189). In the present data, this is displayed through the chairperson's tendency to initiate conjointly constructed humorous sequences in the opening phase (see Kangasharju 2007), displaying thus that the meeting about to start is an activity characterized by collegiality. It is not rare in the present meeting data that a Swedish chair uses Finnish words or expressions as a resource for this purpose.

4.4 Attuning to the previous speakers language choice

Extract 4 illustrates what Auer (1984) calls *discourse-related code-switching*, and, more specifically, attuning to another speaker's language choice. This extract originates from the premeeting talk of the same meeting as extract 1. One of the Swedish participants is attending the meeting through telephone connection. Extract 4 occurs at a point when the participants are in the midst of attempting to open up the connection to this participant. They are facing obvious technical problems in getting the connection and several attempts have already been made.

Extract 4 (Project meeting/1)

(F1, F2, F3 = Finnish participants; SC= Swedish Chair, S1, S2, S3, S4 = Swedish participants)

01 SC	Er what's the country
02 F1	Nine nine ou to get out of Finland

03 SC	Nine nine
04 F1	Nine nine ou and then for the rest you know
05 SC	((dialing)) is it double zero to get out
06 F1	No just one zero
07 SC	One zero
08 F1	One zero yes then nine nine ou (.) forty-six (--) ((S1's phone rings))
09 S1	Ja de är ((first name of S1)) (.) Ja vi håller på och försöker ringa till dig men <i>Yeah this is ((first name of S1)) (.) Well we are trying to call you but</i>
10	vi vi begriper oss inte på telefonen ((laughs)) vi har tydligen telfonnumret till <i>we we don't grasp the phone ((laughs)) we seem to have the number to</i>
11	(.) ((others talking)) ja ja de va de han fundera på (.) (.) ((others talking)) Well yeah that's what he was thinking (.)
12 F2	Numret är ett sex fem <i>The number is one six five</i>
13 S1	Ett sex fem <i>One six five</i>
14 F2	Två fem <i>Two five</i>
15 S1	Två fem <i>Two five</i>
16 F2	Nie ett tre <i>Nine one three</i>
17 S1	Nie ett tre ett sex fem två fem nie ett tre (--)Förlåt vad sa du nu nu verkar <i>Nine one three one six five two five nine one three (--) excuse me now now</i>
18	det ringa på ditt (.) Näe näe (.) Ja vad är landsnumret till Sverige då före <i>it seems to be ringing in your (.) no no (.) well what is the country code to Sweden then before</i>
19 SC	Fyrtiosex <i>Fourty-six</i>
20 S1	Ja men vi har ju ett internt <i>Yeah but don't we have an internal</i>
21 S2	Ja om vi tar interna det det kan ju i alla fall (.) det är noll tolv noll nie <i>Yeah well if we take the internal it it can always (.) it is nil twelve nine</i>
22 S2	Ja han skulle ringa från Sverige <i>Yes he should call from Sweden</i>
23 SC	Okay
24 S2	Från Sverige <i>From Sweden</i>
25 F3	Är det nån som kan numret <i>Does anybody know the number</i>
26 S1	Ja jag har numret här han håller på ((first name of S3)) att prova ringa dig <i>Yeah I have the number here he is also attempting to call you</i>
27	här också ((to S4 on the phone, laughter)) <i>also here</i>
28 S1	Nu verkar det hända nåt <i>Now something seems to be happening</i>
29 S3	((first name and last name of S4; on the phone))
30 (?)	Perfekt <i>Perfect</i>
31 S4	Det behövs en tekniker till allt ((laughter)) <i>A technician is always needed for everything</i>

- 32 F3 **£Du har förtjänat din lön idag£**
 You have deserved your salary for today
 33 S4 Okay ((laughter))

This extract shows a long conjointly constructed process in which the participants, stepwise, manage to find out the right number and establish the connection to the external participant. It is noteworthy that the language promptly shifts from English to Swedish, in the middle of an on-going episode (line 9). The code-shifting is connected to a reframing of the participation framework, caused by the sudden entry of a new participant (S4) to the scene via S1's phone. The conversation is now conducted between S1 and S4, while SC and F1 interrupt their talk. In addition to new animators, the new participation framework is also marked by a change of language, i.e. the use of Swedish. Mondada (2004) points out that various technical problems occasionally interrupt ongoing talk in her meeting data, and these occasions are often characterized by language shift. The summons, in line 8, could be taken as a similar type of technical problem. In line 12, F2 joins S1 and S4 by starting to enumerate, in Swedish, a telephone number, obviously as a reaction to S1's "we seem to have the number to" (line 10). Attuning to the language of S1 and S4 makes it possible for F2 to mark that he co-participates in constructing the episode initiated by them. So, the multilingual resources available for the participants may provide them with extra resource for marking contextual aspects. Aspects of alignment may also be involved. Poncini (2003: 30) remarks that switches to languages other than English can "fulfill a solidarity-building function and help create a kind of groupness,"

4.5 Code-switching as a resource for referring to shared knowledge

Once the meeting talk begins, the talk is marked by a predominant use of lingua franca English. At this point, the interactants display that the language is not locally negotiable. At some occasions, short switches occur, as illustrated in extracts 5 – 9.

Extract 5 (Project meeting/1)

(F1, F2, F3 = Finnish participants; SC= Swedish Chair, S1, S2 = Swedish participants)

- 01 S1 Er so I think most of us have seen this text or (.) is
02 it new for anyone (.) er (.) that they say in (.) er
03 from the [Company X] side that they say that what you
04 have said from the Finnish side er it's about **tycke and**
05 **smak** >**tycke och smak**< what's what is it in English I
06 don't know and er you agree
07 F1 yeah
08 S1 in that
09 F1 yeah
10 S1 Maybe you can continue I think
11 F1 Well as I told er told you before I think that we can er
12 put these matters in in two boxes one is **tycke and smak**
13 and the other is er er
14 F2 Outright errors
15 F1 Errors yes and er and er (.) I feel very much strong
16 about that errors we should correct of course but er
17 when it's question about **tycke and smak** it's er we have
18 bought it as is and we have accepted it as is so (.)
19 it's about program and er when we are going on and and
20 er making retailed training programs in the future then
21 I'm sure that **tycke and smak** should be in the line of
22 our identity as (.) that's a different
23 SC But you are ready to accept this
24 F1 Yes definitely I am yeah

In extract 5, the participants of a project team are discussing the feedback of an external company on a matter which is of vital importance from the perspective of the aims of the team. Starting in line 1, S1 is referring to some knowledge (i.e. a text) which he marks as probably shared ("I think most of us have seen this text"). His candidate interpretation is confirmed by the fact that nobody reacts to his question ("or is it new for anyone", lines 1 to 2). He goes on referring to the text by saying "what you have said from the Finnish side it's about tycke and smak". The version of the Swedish expression "tycke och smak" ('likings and taste', i.e. a question of taste) which he uses has the content words in Swedish but the conjunction is in English. He goes on to rephrase the expression in Swedish and continues with a self-initiated repair sequence (Schegloff et al. 1977) where he seems to be asking himself what the expression could be in English, and ends up saying that he does not know ("tycke och smak what's what is it in English I don't

know”) (line 6). Thus, he marks the use of Swedish as accountable through flagging¹⁵ and as “potentially problematic” but not “really problematic”. Instead of asking explicitly for help or providing the recipients with a slot to assist him, he continues with his turn (“and you agree”). The subsequent interaction shows that the recipients do not react to S1’s account as a problem to be solved. Instead, F1 starts using S1’s original expression “tycke and smak” as a joint interactional resource (lines 12, 17, 21). F2 displays his understanding through the completion in word search, in line 14. Without understanding what is referred to by “tycke and smak”, a completion comprising the opposite in terms of the propositional content (“outright errors”), would be hardly feasible.

Code-switching is used, in extract 5, for quoting someone else’s speech, which is one of the conversational functions of code-switching as suggested by Gumperz (1982: 75ff). This type of joint construction of a multilingual expression for the participants’ own communicative purposes could be seen as an example of how a *multilingual community of practice* (see Skårup 2004; for ‘community of practice’, see Wenger 1998) locally creates its own multilingual language resources from the premises of their shared sociocultural practices (e.g. Linell 2003). The established use of the ad hoc expression could also be seen as a way of marking a common identity of the team (see Mondada 2004: 37).

Extract 6 illustrates a slightly different case.

Extract 6 (Project meeting/1)

(F1, F2, F3 = Finnish participants; SC= Swedish Chair, S1, S2 = Swedish participants)

- | | |
|-------|---|
| 01 F1 | And then I had it approved in |
| 02 | ((company X’s)) steering group before that and I also have been |
| 03 | in the (.) samarbetskommittés in in Sweden and in Finland |
| | <i>cooperation committees</i> |
| 04 | last week and and and told about the coming coming training |
| 05 | program |
| 06 SC | that’s a (--) for the union |
| 07 F2 | that’s the labor unions kå i kå ((KIK)) in Sweden yes (.) y |
| | te ((YT)) in Finland |

¹⁵ The term ‘flagging’ was originally used by Poplak et al. (1987: 39) of the phenomenon where an interrogative is used to announce the absence of a searched item

F1 is reporting for the others on what he has been up to. In the middle of his talk, conducted in English, he uses the Swedish word “samarbetskommittés” (line 3). He does not mark its *other-languageness* (Auer 1984: 9) in any way but marks, instead, its normality by using an English plural ending instead of a Swedish ending (samarbetskommittés pro samarbetskommittéer). Through this use F1 can be seen to position all participants as members of a bilingual group (see Mondada 2004: 32). The (Swedish) chair, however, does not approve this but makes the use of Swedish accountable by initiating a repair sequence, which F2 joins and fulfills. In both 5 and 6, code-switching is used especially as a resource for referring to a concept of particular professional importance. Extract 7 illustrates still another case where the importance of a concept is marked by the use of a Swedish word.

Extract 7 (Project meeting/1)

(F1 = Finnish participant; SC= Swedish Chair)

01 F1	Original uppdrag was two hundred for this study and
02	home PCs and (.)
03 SC	Yeah

In this case, the ‘other-languageness’ of the Swedish word “uppdrag” is not marked by any of the participants.

4.6 Code-switching as a resource for getting help in finding a word

In contrast to what was the case in extracts 5 and 6, in extracts 8, 9, and 10, code-switching is explicitly used as a resource for searching a word. In all the three cases the search is clearly marked as a problem in finding an English word. These are all examples of what Kurhila (2003: 145) calls *substantial word searches*, i.e. “searches where the speaker tries to involve the recipient in the searching process”. The particular way of flagging the search in these examples is the use of the shared multilingual resources.

Extract 8 (Project meeting/1)

(F1, F2, F3 = Finnish participants; SC= Swedish Chair, S1, S2 = Swedish participants)

- 01 F1 I would like also to have er acceptance er **mö- möte vad är det**
 02 F2 yeah
 03 SC meeting
 04 F1 meeting with ((company X)) so that they accept that er this system shall be in
 05 production and that they take the responsibility of er maintaining it in the future
 06 F2 I'll call that together
 07 F1 yes
 08 F2 okay
 09 SC okay
 10 F1 thank you

In extract 8 the search is flagged “on-stage” (Poncini 2003: 26), i.e. F1 addresses the request to provide the term in English to the whole group (through loud voice and use of Swedish), and gets help from the chair. Hence, the problem is addressed and solved “within the team in a collaborative manner using the resources of the team’s language” (Mondada 2004: 32).

Extract 9 (Committee meeting)

(F1, F2, F3 = Finnish participants; SC= Swedish Chair, S1, S2 = Swedish participants)

- 01 S1 he is dealing with the (.) the with this
 02 project about er (--) (**förbättrat pappersbruk**)
 03 SC improvement.
 04 S1 improvement
 05 SC in news-
 06 S1 in newsprint. (.) that’s one thing.
 07 SC okay. and he’s doing that for the group then?
 08 S1 yeah.=
 09 SC =yeah. okay.

Excerpt 10 (Committee meeting)

(F1, F2, F3 = Finnish participants; SC= Swedish Chair, S1, S2 = Swedish participants)

- 01 F1 I have here (--) I mentioned ((NN)) is draw this=
 02 SC =who?
 03 F1 ((first name + last name))
 04 SC okay.
 05 F1 he’s this ((2.0)) a guy who who er (.) hhh (.) e:r works as
 06 an (.) **kouluttaja**.

07 F2 e:r trainer
08 F1 (trains)
09 SC mh.

In extracts 9 and 10, the search is addressed “off-stage” (Poncini 2003: 26) only to own countrymen at low voice. In all three cases, the successfully completed word search is also important as it allows the interaction to proceed.

5 Conclusions

This study examined the multilingual appearance of the face-to-face meeting interactions of merged Finnish-Swedish corporations. The study was based on the assumption that code-switching is essentially a conversational phenomenon related to the creation of meaning in situ (e.g. Auer 1984, 1998; Li 2002, 2005).

According to the findings of the study, multilingualism is a potentially available resource, first and foremost, in the pre- and postmeeting talk. Through the use of their multilingual resources the participants display their interpretation that the common language is locally negotiable in these phases. Occasional code-switching occurs in the actual meeting talk. Code-switching is used in the pre- and postmeeting talk for various contextualizing purposes. First, it is used for the purposes of contextualizing either sequential contrast or change of participant constellation and, hence, a change of footing. It is used as a resource for displaying transition both from meeting talk to postmeeting talk and from premeeting talk to meeting talk. At the same time, it is used as a resource for specifying and restricting the audience. Moreover, it may be used as a resource for marking a change from professional role identity to that of a private person. Second, it may be used by the participants as a resource for ascribing to each other individual preferences for one language or the other. Third, code-switching (or rather crossing) is used as a resource for prompting collective humor. Still another use, identified in other studies of multilingual meetings as well (Mondada 2004), is the alternating use of languages in dealing with technical problems.

In the actual meeting talk, the use of other languages than lingua franca English is usually marked as accountable. In some occasions, code-switching is explicitly used as a resource for solving word-search problems. This is not necessarily accomplished in the “own” language group but may also be accomplished “on-stage” (Poncini 2003) within the whole team, displaying thus the multilingual identity of the team. Some previous studies (Mondada 2004; Poncini 2003) have indicated that multilingual teams are characterized by on-going local negotiation of language choice. Evidently, language choice does not seem to be negotiated to the same extent in my Finnish-Swedish data as has been shown in these data. Yet, there are some occasions where the language choice is negotiated as some of the Finnish participants demonstrate a willingness to speak Swedish. This is, however, usually promptly rejected by the Swedish participants.

In sum, language alternation may not be taken as a sign of deficient language proficiency in the studied meetings, but, it is, instead, used as a multifunctional resource for accomplishing various actions. It is used as a resource for constructing the structural context of the activity. Furthermore, it is used as a resource for constructing alignment between the participants and collegiality within the team, and, moreover, as a resource for controlling the progress of the interaction.

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