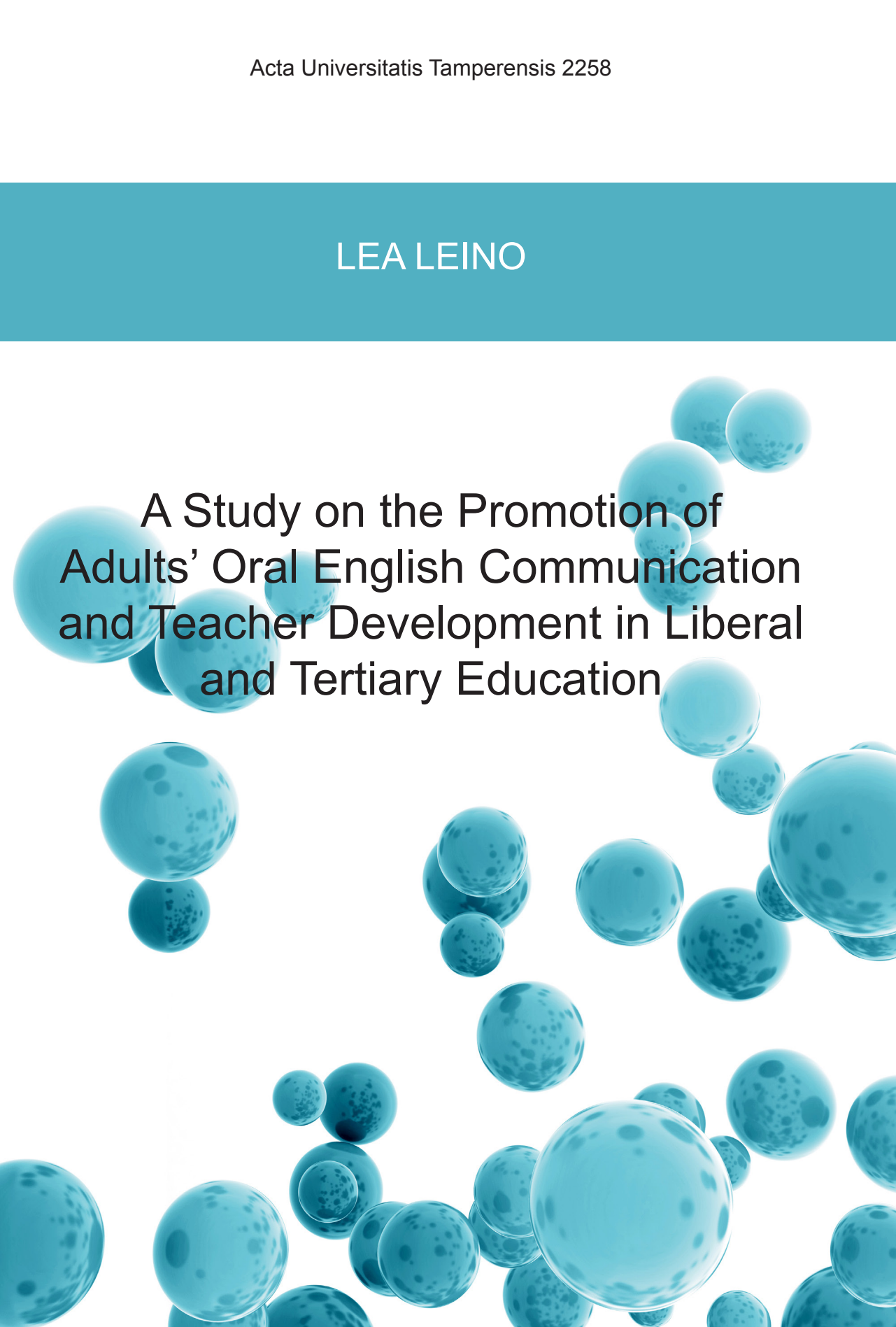


LEA LEINO

**A Study on the Promotion of
Adults' Oral English Communication
and Teacher Development in Liberal
and Tertiary Education**

The background of the cover features a collection of blue, semi-transparent spheres of various sizes. These spheres are scattered across the white background, with some appearing in the foreground and others receding into the distance, creating a sense of depth. The spheres have a slightly textured surface, resembling bubbles or small planets.



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and Teacher Development in Liberal
and Tertiary Education



ACADEMIC DISSERTATION

To be presented, with the permission of
the Faculty council of the Faculty of Education
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for public discussion in the lecture hall Linna K 103,
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LEA LEINO

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“By learning foreign languages men do not alter their relationship to the world...; rather, while preserving their own relationship to the world, they extend and enrich it by the world of foreign language. Whoever has language “has” the world.”

(Gadamer 1989, 453)

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Abstract

This research deals with oral English communication among adults and the professional development of the teacher carrying out the research, especially during the last decade of her career. The research in oral English communication provided answers to the question of how English studies support adult students of English who enter English speaker communities with a prerequisite competence level or, having achieved the level, still lack proficiency in speaking English. The research process began with two 45-hour parallel English courses designed and implemented by the teacher-researcher in liberal adult education. The data for answering this research problem were elicited through two interviews, one after the course, and another 12 months later, revealing how the students had achieved their aim as speakers of English. These data were supplemented by the teacher's course diaries. Both data also served the teacher's professional development. The empirical research was spontaneously followed by a postempirical research period within the researcher's full-time occupation at a university of applied sciences (UAS), where the teacher's professional development was supported by discussions and cooperation with colleagues, work among the students, conversations with them and diary writing. This period deepened and enriched the teacher's professional development. The diary data written at the UAS covered over two years.

The research philosophy and the decisions on how the research aims would be explored only took their final shape during the research process. The research, which began as a qualitative study, became increasingly influenced by hermeneutics, in particular Gadamer's philosophical hermeneutics. Gadamer's conceptions of understanding as interpretation, prejudgement, human historicity, language, meaning, participation and dialogue served both the research activities and the research interests. According to the research philosophy, the initially assumed views of theory and practice in language studies and the point of departure for teacher development were understood as a prejudgement that developed during the research.

The research on the promotion of oral English communication showed that plentiful, accessible opportunities for oral communication, ample participation and above all, a good study climate are most valuable characteristics of this kind of courses. Such an atmosphere inspires students, abolishes fears and encourages students to encounter their fears and even to share and talk about them. It is especially in groups where the participants' English competence and proficiency differ that meaningful assignments and tasks of changing level, freedom in choosing what to say and continuously changing pairs and groups promote speaking. These studies both revealed and increased, for example, such mental resources as student autonomy, awareness of English, of learning, personal awareness and motivation. Participation, ethical questioning, dialogue and listening became some of the leading issues in teacher development. According to this research, the teacher's professional development

through self-initiated development results in increased, updated theoretical knowledge, exploration of the beliefs as a teacher, continuing construction of the personal theory and enthusiasm as a teacher. The results also show that a research study on the promotion of specific foreign language proficiency in one adult institution benefit the adult teacher's professional development elsewhere and increases the justification of the whole research scheme.

Keywords: oral English communication, professional teacher development, learner autonomy, participation and motivation, liberal adult education, university of applied sciences, hermeneutics, qualitative research

Tiivistelmä

Tutkimus tarkastelee aikuisten englannin suullista kielitaitoa ja opettajan ammatillista kehitystä opettajan itsensä toteuttamassa tutkimuksessa opettajanuran viimeisenä vuosikymmenenä. Englannin suullisen kielitaiton tutkimuksen tavoitteena oli tarjota vastauksia siihen, miten englannin opinnot tukevat ja lisäävät aikuisten mahdollisuuksia osallistua kommunikaatioon englantia käyttävissä yhteisöissä ja tilanteissa. Tutkimuksen kohdetsona oli vaihe, jolloin opiskelijoiden kielenhallinta jo antaa edellytyksiä puhumiseen tai kun huolimatta kyseisen tason hyvästä hallinnasta opiskelija ei vielä pysty puhumalla kommunikoimaan englanniksi. Tutkimusmateriaalia tähän hankittiin haastatteluisia tutkija-opettajan suunnitteleminen, kahden rinnakkaisen vapaassa sivistystyössä toteuttamien englannin kurssien päätyttyä. Vuoden kuluttua tehdystä uudesta haastattelusta saatiin tietoa kurssin vaikutuksesta opiskelijoiden englannin puhumiseen. Lisätutkimusmateriaalina olivat opettajan kurssipäiväkirjat. Ne palvelivat myös opettajan ammatillista kehittymistä, jonka tutkiminen jatkui päätoimisessa työssä ammattikorkeakoulussa. Siellä tätä postempiiristä tutkimusta edistivät keskustelut ja yhteistyö toisten opettajien kanssa sekä työskentely ja keskustelut opiskelijoiden kanssa. Yli kahden vuoden ajan kirjoitetut päiväkirjat tukivat tutkimusta. Jakso syvensi ja rikasti opettajan ammatillista kehittymistä.

Päätökset tutkimuksen toteutuksesta ja tutkimusfilosofia muotoutuivat tutkimuksen aikana. Se sai lisääntyvässä määrin vaikutteita hermeneutiikasta, erityisesti Gadamerin filosofisesta hermeneutiikasta. Gadamerin käsitykset koskien ymmärtämistä tulkintana, ennakkokäsitystä, ihmisen historiallisuutta, kieltä, ymmärtämistä, osallistumista ja dialogia liittyivät sekä tutkimiseen että tutkimuksen sisältöihin. Tässä tutkimusfilosofiassa alussa omaksutut teoreettiseen ja käytäntöön liittyvät käsitykset kieliopinnoissa ymmärrettään ennakkokäsityksinä, jotka kehittyvät tutkimuksen kuluessa.

Tutkimus suullisen englannintaidon kehittymisestä osoitti, että runsaat ja helposti avautuvat mahdollisuudet englannin puhumiseen, runsas osallistuminen ja ennen kaikkea hyvä opiskeluilmapiiri ovat äärimmäisen tärkeitä tällaisella kursilla. Sellainen ilmapiiri innostaa opiskelijoita, poistaa pelkoja ja rohkaisee heitä kohtaamaan pelkojaan koskien englannin puhumista ja jopa jakamaan niitä ja keskustelemaan niistä. Erityisen tärkeää ryhmissä, joissa osallistujien englannin tiedot ja kyky käyttää englantia ovat hyvin erilaisia, vapaus valita sanottavansa, jatkuva parien ja ryhmien vaihto edistävät oppimista. Nämä opinnot sekä osoittivat että lisäsivät esimerkiksi sellaisia opiskelijoiden henkisiä voimavaroja kuten autonomisuutta, tietoisuutta englannin kielestä oppimisesta, itsestään ja motivaatiosta.

Opettajan ammatillinen kehitys hänen itsensä suunnittelemana ja toteuttamana tuo innostusta opettajuuteen, lisää päivitettyä teoreettista tietoa, tekee omien käsitysten tutkimisen merkitykselliseksi sekä tukee oman teorian jatkuvaa kehittymistä. Esimerkiksi tässä

tutkimuksessa osallistuminen, eettinen pohdinta, dialogi ja kuunteleminen tulivat keskeiksi opettajana kehittymisen ulottuvuuksiksi. Tulokset myös vahvistavat käsityksen siitä, että tutkimus vieraan kielen kielitaidon kehittämistä yhdessä aikuisoppilaitostyyppissä hyödyttää kieltenopettajan ammatillista kehitystä muissa oppilaitoksissa, mikä vahvistaa valitun tutkimusjärjestelyn oikeutusta.

Avainsanat: Englannin suullinen kielitaito, opettajan ammatillinen kehittyminen, oppijan autonomia, osallisuus ja motivaatio, vapaa sivistystyö, ammattikorkeakoulu, hermeneutiikka, laadullinen tutkimus

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I

THE SHAPE OF THE RESEARCH

1 Decisions and essentials

The whys and wherefores

The globalised networks, increasing international employment and transnational mobility of people demand a lingua franca. English has become a global identifier giving experiences of worldwide citizenship, and belongingness to the universal community (Kaikkonen 2004, 126). In countries like Finland, where English has never been a native or official language, English has become a constituent of participation in working life, societal life as well as social and personal life (also Risager 2006, 9). The command of a foreign language, today English in particular, is part of democratic citizenship and active participation in society. It is seen as everyone's right, a contributor to human autonomy, thus offering the possibility of change (see Rebenius 2006, 305–307). In working life, functional English is expected or required in far more numerous jobs than before. For many, English has by and by become a component of competence in daily work even when initially not a criterion of eligibility for the job and when the relevant qualifying studies have contained only short English studies, perhaps none at all.

Lifelong learning as continuous development of human resources benefits both society and the people involved in it (Pohjanpää, Niemi & Ruuskanen 2008, 15). Adult education is an economical solution to the demand for an educated labour force according to society's transforming and developing needs. The extensive European adult education survey (for its coverage, see Pohjanpää et al. 62–63), which was nationally conducted by Statistics Finland in 2006, revealed that 52% of people aged 18–64 years and permanently living in the country participated in education arranged for adults (ibid. 20). The self-assessment scale was adapted from the Common Framework of Reference for Languages, abbreviated from now on to CEF¹.

1 Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: learning, teaching, assessment is an action-oriented approach published by The Council of Europe. The CEF contains common reference levels of language proficiency. It describes language use and language user/learners, their general and communicative language competences, language learning and teaching, discusses tasks, curriculum design and assessment (see CEF 2001, vii) presenting principles and practices but not determining the practice (CEF 2001, vii–ix).

Out of the respondents, 9% studied foreign languages (ibid. 63, 212). The respondents assessed their productive and receptive proficiency in the languages they had studied. Oral and written skills were not distinguished (ibid. 143, 144). Proficiency means “real world ability” here, what one knows and can do (CEF 2001, 183–184 and 37), for example, being able to converse in English. Instead, competences enable us “to perform actions” while communicative language competences in particular empower us “to act using specifically linguistic means” (CEF 2001, 9).

According to the results of the survey, English proficiency clearly decreased in each ten-year older age group (ibid. 144, 146 and 149). In the 18–24 and 25–34 year age group, four out of five people were at least independent users (for the specification of the levels, see CEF 2001, 23–24), three out of five in the age group 35–44, only two out of five in the 45–54 age group and one out of four in the 55–64 age group (Pohjanpää et al. 2008, 149). The increasing English proficiency especially in younger age groups speaks of the widening of foreign language education, of English in particular, especially thanks to the Finnish comprehensive school already launched in the early 1970s and expanded post-secondary educational opportunities available after it (see ibid. 144). The comprehensive school offered the whole age group more extensive foreign language studies. However, many adults in working life, among them adults returning to studies later in their lives, attended school before the increased emphasis on spoken skills. Adults are expected to be able to study on their own but the goal is difficult to reach especially with regard to speech (e.g. CEF 2001, 27).

At the universities of applied sciences (in Finnish *ammattikorkeakoulu*; also referred to as polytechnics, from now abbreviated to UAS), students’ English proficiency tends to vary quite widely. One common and influential source for this variability is that the general eligibility for basic degree studies at the UAS is gained in one of three ways: through the matriculation examination after the general upper secondary school (in Finnish *lukio*), through vocational qualifications (in Finnish *ammattilliset perustutkinnot*) in vocational secondary school (in Finnish *ammattillinen oppilaitos*) or through corresponding studies (Polytechnics Act 9.5.2003/351 §20, abrogated by Polytechnics Act 14.11.2014/932 §25).

Students entering the UAS after the vocational upper secondary school have usually studied only a small number of credits of English after seven years’ English studies in comprehensive school. For many of them, the road to reach B2.1, the level demanded for the UAS diploma can be long and complicated (cf. Jaatinen, R. 2007, 147–148). To graduate, the UAS students must achieve a foreign language competency level necessary for work and professional development in one or two foreign languages (Decree on Polytechnics Studies 352/2003, 8§, abrogated from Jan. 1st, 2015 by Polytechnics Act 14.11. 2014/932 §68). In English, this level is defined as B.2.1. on the CEF scale (CEF 2001, 24, 26–27 and 35) and the studies begin at the level reached in general upper secondary education.

The growing share of students admitted to tertiary education from each age group reveals increasing diversity among them (Kantelinen & Heiskanen 2004, 132), a feature which also applies to English. Minor English studies usually denote limited proficiency

in spoken English, which hinders students from full participation and its benefits. Similar impediments tend to be faced also by students who enter a UAS after many years in working life and by students, whose earlier English studies have taken place in countries where studies of spoken English have received only minor attention. UAS foreign language studies as part of tertiary education aim at professionally oriented language use necessary for the practice of the profession and professional development. Good general language skills are the prerequisite and are presumed. (Kantelinen & Heiskanen 2004, 122.)

In working life, insufficient English skills arouse feelings of incompetence and inadequacy, something which concerns especially English because so many people are proficient and fluent in it. The inability to express oneself in oral English causes stress and anxiety and is frustrating and difficult to accept, even when caused only by the mere lack of fluency. Starting to use English publicly is an issue of identity and demands a favourable situation and environment. Crucially limited English oral proficiency is seldom sufficient for situations and contexts where adults use English. In her research among engineers, Valtaranta explored foreign language use, especially English by Finnish engineers in their own professional work contexts. Emailing was often preferred to phoning because it was not always possible to prepare for a phone call. Teleconferencing and presentations had become common. Interactional skills were considered difficult. Even so, the engineers enjoyed face-to-face communication. (Valtaranta 2009, 92–93.) The growing amount and variety of the use of oral foreign language use in a diversity of situations show the increasing significance of oral proficiency and readiness for it in working life.

Multicultural societies, the globalisation of the world and its increased networks, diverse changes and development trends in society also entail teacher development. The Act on the Universities of Applied Sciences (9.5.2003/352, 20 §; 10.6.2005/411) in Finland confirms the three-dimensional role of the UAS teacher as a pedagogue, an expert performing as a researcher and developer, and as a regional agent. The responsibility attached to the teacher's work demands continuous maintenance of professional development and growth of expertise (Day 2004, 122). I had the benefit of working with young language teacher colleagues, which made me even more interested in the teacher's professional development. Their recent studies and pre-service training had offered them comprehensive and up-to-date knowledge of the field, contact with expertise and opportunities for discussion and counselling. It is impossible to gain these merely by committing to self-development, keeping an eye on the developments in the field and by participating in occasional in-service training. Tacit and accumulated knowledge is often unsystematic knowledge. They cannot be compensated for by the experience of years, knowledge, the teacher's personal theory and its promotion through work. Instead, when explored and recognised, they can serve as an authentic foundation for further professional development.

At the beginning of this research, I had some ten years of my teacher's career ahead. I wanted my enthusiasm and the meaningfulness that I experienced in my work last across those years. Professional development including researching would contribute to this. Another research interest, arising from these considerations, was to be the teacher's

professional development. This interest would first materialise in the context of the promotion of oral English proficiency among adults, which also related to my work and interest at the UAS. Otherwise, I left investigation of this, more abstract interest to be defined in the research process.

Research problems

1 How do the oral English studies developed and lived in the research serve adult students at the level represented by the research group? How do these studies fulfil adult students' expectations, aims and needs and the assumptions and expectations society poses on them?

The first part of this research question entails the development of an English course on oral English proficiency for adults at the level defined by CEF as A2–B1. The research should answer the question of which way the course can serve these people. In other words, the research should reveal what is demanded of such a course. Proficiency here means here “real world ability”, what one knows and can do (CEF 2001, 183–184 and 37) while competences are the resources that empower a person to carry them out such as communicative language competences and the general competences (CEF 2001, 9 and 11).

The self-assessment-grid in the table on the Common Reference Levels divides speaking into spoken production and spoken interaction (CEF 2001, 26–27). They intertwine and alternate in speech situations as part of oral communication that entails productive, receptive and interactive language activities. In both, the participants alternate as speakers and listeners taking turns and giving them. The difference is that spoken interaction is characteristically interactive (also CEF 2001, 73–82, 92 and 26–27) and the turns alternate in a quicker sequence. In addition, spoken production and spoken interaction challenge a person's communicative competence in ways that differ to some extent (see e.g. existential competence CEF 2001, 105–106, for sociolinguistic competence CEF 2001, 118–120) and relate to different situations, activities and strategies (cf. CEF 2001, 57).

Spoken interaction involves collaboration, negotiation, alignment, unexpectedness, use of social language, information change (see also CEF 2001, 73) and spontaneity leaving little time for planning, controlling and solving problems of understanding (also Canagarajah 2004, 271). Although my primary interest was spoken interaction and interactive language use and the emphasis was on them, I have mostly used the general term oral interaction because it corresponds well with the use of English on the course, where the tasks included, for example, short narratives.

In spoken interaction, the threshold level B1 being the lower level of the Independent User (CEF 2001, 24, 26, 33–34 and 74) provides the entrance to English speaking communities and English interaction. The same grid and scales also show that initial prerequisites for such oral communication already appear at A2, being the higher level in the category of the Basic User. These facts and definitions created the main criteria for the

choice of A2–B1 and the exclusion of B2 (see CEF 2001, 24, 26, 35 and 74). The research level corresponded to the level reached in the studies of the first new language after the native one at the Finnish comprehensive school and approximately to the level attained at the form of school it replaced in the 1970s. This and a few credits of English at vocational education can be all their English studies when they enter tertiary education, often at the UAS.

In line with CEF the research assumption was that the use of any language is affected not only by communicative language competencies, which include linguistic, sociolinguistic and pragmatic competences, but also general competencies, such as one's "*knowledge, skills and existential competence and also their ability to learn*" (CEF 2001, 11–13, 108, and 105; italics in original). My teacher experience had shown that many other factors, other than learning more, influenced the promotion of a student's foreign language proficiency. For this multitude of possibly influential factors, the verb 'learn' has often appeared imprecise to express the idea of promotion.

The latter part of the first research problem emphasises that foreign language users are people with a personal and social life, societal membership and expectations of the future. Hence, the latter part concerns how studies like this can promote the fulfilment of students' hopes and meet their present and future needs arising from their present and past life contexts, experiences and histories as language students and users. This relates to the CEF terms (language) learner/user or user/learner (e.g. 2001, 14 and 101). Foreign language students are language users from the very beginning of their language student career, which is one aspect of holism. Therefore, it was important to explore what kind of studies are necessary for adults who have studied English but whose proficiency does not suffice for their participation in oral English communication in their work, their personal, social and societal lives and in the increasing multicultural communication. Finally, the first research problem includes the assumptions and expectations of society as demands, which raises the question of what kind of studies can help adults in meeting the assumptions and expectations of society.

2 What does this kind of investigative teaching, especially its researching component demand of the teacher and how does it support her and develop her professionalism?

This research problem was more difficult to put into practice than the first one but the ways of answering it developed during the research process. The context and research activities of this research problem and work on its data and especially the results obtained from them were an essential part of answering this second research problem. The teacher's work denotes development but as a chosen aim, it takes place more consciously, effectively and deeply. I was convinced that professional development would get a concrete point of departure from an interim change to another type of educational institute where students of English were already involved in working life. It would give the advantage of a different educational culture and teacher role and could challenge and develop the teacher's professionalism in

ways different from those at the UAS (see Luukkainen 2005, 187–188). Teaching in liberal adult education could place new demands on my teacher's theory and practice and bring both of them under scrutiny in different ways. Liberal adult education was remote from my present work but familiar to me. Becoming a teacher of much younger people would have given an UAS teacher less and brought more change and therefore less depth.

In another institution, the implementation of a study unit would necessitate much planning and concrete teaching. I would have to find out about these students' learning and I would have to study new issues and apply them appropriately. The CEF published in 2001 was one example of such a new aspect. I had not got properly acquainted myself with it. Liberal education would offer independent work and therefore risks; it would mean communication with people who studied without being formally committed to their studies and only as long as they found it rewarding. As a teacher there, I did not have the same status as a UAS teacher and had to earn the students' trust from the very beginning. Liberal education institutions had another ethos. They were differently organised and demanded a different orientation. A definite benefit was that students in liberal adult education were more familiar with the needs of working life English than the UAS students would be soon facing. However, on my return to the UAS, I made the decision to continue my research there with respect to professional development. Qualitative research on human experiences, life-related meanings and situations cannot and must not be exactly predefined in advance but steered according to gradually unfolding research. The concrete impetus for this came through diary writing that had started in liberal education and now spontaneously continued at the UAS with the focus on exploration of the second research problem.

The duration of the research, research data and research sites

The research spanned the years 2004–2016 covering the last nine years of my teaching career and the first few years of my retirement. The planning of the course, its implementation and the first conversational interviews except one took place during the study leave from the UAS. In the spring of 2004, I made an agreement with two liberal adult education institutes about a 45-hour course on oral English communication for the forthcoming autumn term and was given permission to use the course and the student conversational interviews as the empirical research data for my doctoral thesis. The first conversational interviews, altogether 25 conversational interviews, took place at the conclusion of the course or within a couple of weeks after it, all except one in 2004. The two diaries written on these two courses, one on each, are called course diaries. The second conversational interviews, a total of 19 took place in December 2005 when the follow-up research at the UAS beginning in January 2005 had continued for a year. By the end of the year 2007, new entries written in the teacher-researcher's diary had become few, which I interpreted as the conclusion of the follow-up research.

It was best to write about the course contents and events as soon as possible. Therefore, writing the first version of Part II excluding the results started first, already in 2005. The research journal consisted of separate files mainly written from the outset of the research to the year 2009. During the last few years, I wrote down my own questions and thoughts and the advice and ideas of others in a notebook. Despite its informality, it turned out to be a handy aid in the last phases of the research. The student interview data and the teacher's course diaries served the first and second research problem. The teacher-researcher's diary written at the UAS relates to the second research problem dealing with the teacher's professional development that was supported and enriched by the work at the UAS, especially in the communication with its students. The table below briefly presents the research data. The session plans are included because they helped to return to each session and the events that had taken place in them. In the table as in the text, the WE group stands for the weekend group meeting at three weekends and the E group for the group meeting in the evening once a week. One reason for the relative shortness of the WE group diary was that I probably failed to remember all that would have been worth writing on the whole day studies even if I had taken some notes during the breaks. Another reason was the group members' enthusiasm in conversing in English in small groups among themselves. The numbers after E (1–13) and WE (1–6) indicate the given session, which provides more useful knowledge than the date.

Part of the data concerned the main elements of the language course. They served as predefined themes in the interviews (see Appendix 1). The researcher started the discussion on these, often through open questions. Despite this, the interviews with the students were conversational by nature, even if less conversational than those that emerged spontaneously. Conversational interview data refers to both. For the sake of shortness, both are often called just interviews.

Table 1. Types and amount of the research data and other research material and the time of their generation

1 st conversational interviews with the students n= 25	218 pages, 12-point font, single spacing	End of Nov. 2004–early Jan. 2005
2 nd conversational interviews with the students n= 19	24 pages, 12-point font, single spacing	Dec. 2005
Two course diaries written by the teacher in liberal education	E group 30 pages, WE group 23 pages	Sept.–Dec. 2004
Teacher-researcher's diaries written at the UAS	73 pages	2005–2007
Research journal	82 pages	2004–2009
Supportive research data: Session plans: E group n=13, WE group n= 6	30 pages and 22 pages respectively	Sept.–Dec. 2004

The English studies serving as the empirical research here took place in liberal adult education also called non-formal adult education (for the terms, see <http://www.sivistystyo.fi/en.php?k=10261>) where studies take place with a teacher and follow a predefined curriculum but neither contain assessment nor accumulate credits (see Hager 2012, 207). Non-formal as a term often refers to administrations and institutions that provide studies for adults but liberal education has the connotation of the students setting their aims and taking responsibility for achieving them. I use the term liberal education here because its connotations correspond better to the goal and nature of the research.

Liberal adult education was a suitable site for this research in many respects. Its students enrolled for the studies on their own initiative and therefore could be assumed to be personally interested in English studies per se. They could be regarded as authentic assessors of the studies provided they consented to participate in the conversational interviews and felt comfortable about sharing their experiences. They could offer criticism because of their independent position with regard to the teacher and the institute. Studies in liberal adult education involved neither examination pressures nor grading affecting the data and results. The courses there were not long owing to the limited financial resources and adults preference for short study units (cf. Tarkka-Tierala 2004), which suited this research. Liberal adult education was a representative provider of English studies and, thanks to its open access attracted adults widely. Another benefit was that I been a full-time teacher in both institutions in earlier phases of my career.

The two adult institutes serving as hosts for the two parallel courses with the same course plan were located in southern Finland. One of them was an adult education centre (in Finnish *kansalaisopisto* or *työväenopisto*). In 2004, these institutes had a total of 620,000 students nationally, of which 5.8% studied English. (Vapaa sivistystyö numeroina 2004.) The centres serve adults living in the neighbourhood. They are usually owned by the local municipality and funded by it and by the state, which is another cornerstone of open access to them. The study groups mainly meet in the evening, occasionally at the weekends. The other course took place in a folk high school (in Finnish *kansanopisto*). Folk high schools have typically offered long-term all-round studies but they also offer short courses like ours among other orientations. In 2004, these institutes offered 21,124 English lessons, 4.8% of all their given lessons (Vapaa sivistystyö numeroina 2004).

The follow-up research took place in my regular work as a teacher of English and Swedish at the UAS where I returned after the conclusion of the empirical research. It was interesting to meet especially those students who had entered the UAS – about 30% of the students at my UAS, via vocational upper secondary education. Their English skills often corresponded or approximated to the level of the participants in the empirical research even if rather level B1 than A2 (on the levels, see Appendix 5). In my experience, it was especially their proficiency of oral English communication that was often limited. In the first years after my return to the UAS, I often had such English and Swedish groups. Like most of my students on the course in liberal education, many of them had already been in

working life for years but none of the students at the UAS were retired not even close to retirement.

The contents of the report and its voice

This research report has four main parts. Part I introduces the research interests and problems, the ontological, philosophical and methodological standpoints and the research philosophy, which are followed by the recurrent themes of identity and narrativity. The teacher-researcher's narrative as a teacher illuminates and gives background to the views and decisions in the research. Next, the focus proceeds to different aspects of language and language use, among them theoretical viewpoints, FLE and The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (2001) followed by some features characteristic of these English studies. The section concludes with the research methodology in theory and practice and the presentation and discussion of the research data.

Part II presents the oral English course serving as the empirical research and describes its participants and its implementation. Like the following Part III, it explores and discusses the data, and presents the analysis and conceptualisation of them also in the light of the literature. Conceptualisations form the reader the idea of what the research results of a given issue are and what they denote. These passages are written in a different font in the text. The course circumstances and its main elements are described closely because of their important role in the development of the meanings in the research.

Part IIIA continues the discussion on the first research problem in the light of inductively managed conversational data, with occasional intervening teacher diary data, leading to analysis and conceptualisation. The first two sections deal with classroom life and the growth of mental resources taking place there, for example reflection, awareness and courage. The last section of Part IIIA unfolds the participants' benefit from the course and its influence on their lives. The focus of Part IIIB is on the second research problem, that of the teacher's professional development. The data sources are mainly the inductively analysed teacher-researcher diaries and course diaries written in liberal education. The analysis is followed by conceptualisation. Like Part II, also IIIA and IIIB discuss the results in the light of the literature and present synopses of their results.

Part IV first presents the most important research findings concerning the two research problems. The appraisal of the whole research design and its coherence, the methodology and trustworthiness of the research and the research ethics are discussed in the second subsection. The last subsection of Part IV reaches out beyond the research to examine the implications that the research may have in the world of FLE and makes suggestions for possible future research prospects.

The report has 13 appendices. The first four concern the research activities. The fifth appendix describes the course level in terms of Common Reference levels: global scale (see CEF 2001, 24). The sixth appendix contains the groups and the first name aliases of the

course participants. The remaining seven appendices give examples of the course material. The last of them presents the music played during the text reading and as background music.

In qualitative researching, the researcher can and has to choose the voice for the report. I had designed and conducted the English course and lived it with the students. The course was based on my knowledge, the literature I chose, my conceptions, beliefs and thinking and experiences as a teacher and researcher. In the research, I researched, promoted and described my professional development as a teacher based on my knowledge, preconceptions, values, interests and my niche as a teacher-researcher (see Canagarajah 2004, 268). My experiences and reflections, part of them recorded in the diaries, influenced the researching and the choices there. Thus, a realistic, author-absent tale was inappropriate here. Being personally present in the research report was a choice for authenticity and best served this research and its story (see van Maanen 1988, 64).

2 Constituents of the research horizon

Qualitative paradigms and this research

This section aims at illuminating the research from paradigmatic viewpoints, the exploration of which increased the teacher-researcher's awareness of the paradigmatic orientations in the developing research and what they denoted. Qualitative research paradigms as sets of principles with internal consistency and definitions describe the way in which values inherent in them, knowledge and reality are understood and the way in which scientific problems are solved within them (Guba & Lincoln 2005, 197). My discussion mainly concerns qualitative research paradigms and a few educational paradigms. Separating these two types of paradigms was difficult in this case because the students had the role of co-researchers in addition to being researchers of their own learning.

Both the constructivist and participatory paradigm corresponded to the research beliefs, its nature and aims. Within the constructivist-interpretive paradigm, knowing is self-reflective and negotiated (Kohonen 2001, 13). The interpretive element, also central in Gadamer's thinking, brings negotiation and meaning to the centre, something which is also required by the target proficiency of oral English communication. In constructivist research, the aim is to understand the other in his/her terms, which involves values (Kohonen 2001, 13). The research results in local meanings, not in absolute truths (Kohonen 2001, 13) here too. Knowing is relativistic, co-constructed and subjective and leads to more informed, individually or collectively attained findings and reconstructions. Each person's interpretation of the world results from his/her subjectivist views and interactions with the

world. The researcher is a passionate participant and facilitator. (Guba & Lincoln 2005, 195–196.) These definitions apply to this research and its teacher-researcher-researchee.

This research aimed at transformation and empowerment, its findings were value-mediated and I could see myself as an advocate. These characteristics belong to the critical paradigm. (See Guba & Lincoln 2005, 194.) Overall, the critical-emancipatory paradigm presents the students' and the teacher-researcher-researchee's voices and their aims of change. The second problem concerns more what the constructivist-interpretive paradigm denotes: knowing that is self-reflective and negotiated (see Kohonen 2001, 13). However, the historical and structural insights and definite emphasis on social values (Guba & Lincoln 2005, 195–196) and on critical reflection (Nesbit, Leach & Foley 2004, 88) in the critical-emancipatory paradigm are far more all-embracing than those in this research despite the aim of development in knowing.

The participatory paradigm is not necessarily sufficiently different from the constructivist and critical theories to be named a paradigm (Heikkinen, Huttunen, Niglas & Tynjälä 2005, 346). It has criticalist orientation joined to hermeneutic elaboration (Guba & Lincoln 2005, 192 and 197). Agency, participation, aims, interests and values central in the research problems were clearly in line with this participatory, or cooperative, to use another term, paradigm, where the participation of those involved is at the core (Guba & Lincoln 2005, 195–199). Here, the student-interviewees were actively engaged and participated in the research as coresearchers contributing to it with practical knowing gained “in communities of practice” and reflectivity based “on critical subjectivity and self-awareness” (see Guba & Lincoln 2005, 192 and 196; also Wenger 1998).

Also in the constructivist-interpretive educational paradigm the student actively constructs and creates his/her own learning (Puolimatka 2002, 32–33; also Kohonen 2001, 13), which the conversational interviews and discussion about the course revealed. The teacher is a reflective practitioner who employs his/her experiential knowledge and through this becomes independent (Kohonen 2001, 13). The critical-emancipatory approach appeared in the students' aspiration for developing specific proficiency. Furthermore, it entailed their awareness of their own values (see Kohonen 2001, 15). The students' voices, their aims and efforts of change and their developing autonomy belong to the field of the critical-emancipatory paradigm. The critical element in teacher development entailed transformation and the maintenance of a critical attitude towards one's practices, routine and assumptions without the particular aim of social change included in critical reflection (Nesbit, Leach & Foley 2004, 88). The opportunities offered by the studies were not only attached to this context but to the imagined communities of future (see Norton 2001) and thus decidedly included an emancipatory element. Adding the participatory paradigm also as a learning paradigm would reflect much of the learning and how it took place in the research context.

Rauhala's conception of man

A qualitative research study on human learning, experiences and meanings requires a definition of how a human being is understood in it. This gives a recognised point of departure and at least in principle, ensures the inclusion of all that is essential in this respect and safeguards the inner coherence of the research (Rauhala 1990, 31). In addition, the expressed conception of man also promotes the teacher-researcher's awareness and challenges him/her to reflection. For this research, I chose Rauhala's holistic conception of man. In Rauhala's conception of man, human being is understood as an integrated entity of consciousness, corporality and situatedness (Rauhala 1990, 35–41 and 198–201; 2005, 29–42). They constituted our being on the course, participating in the conversational interviews and for my part, researching after them. All three had to be considered in the discussion on people in this research, which is in line with Riitta Jaatinen's decision in her *Learning languages, learning life skills: Autobiographical reflexive approach to teaching and learning a foreign language* (Jaatinen, R. 2007).

In corporality, in other words in our bodily being, human existence takes place as organic activity. Corporality denoted that we were also physical beings in class. Students' physical well-being and its demands had to be attended to and taken into account as such and with regard to their influence on the circumstances where the promotion of oral English communication took place. Consciousness consists of two parts: the lower one that animals also have, and the higher one existing only in human beings which concerns conceptuality and knowing, ethics, understanding of the transcendental, individuality and self-direction (Rauhala 1990, 38–39). Consciousness is the source of meanings and crucial for the recognition of the body and situatedness (Rauhala 1990, 45). Situatedness, a part of the person equally original as corporality and consciousness, constructs the whole situation of life for a person. Situatedness that includes culture and values, art, other people, human relationships, experiences, spatial and social environment and the living organisms in nature reflects our uniqueness, personality and identity. (Rauhala 1990, 40–41.)

Rauhala suggests spirituality as one further form of human existence. According to him, it can be justified through faith and hope but neither justified nor denied through reason. Rauhala finds this form problematic because as part of the conception of man, it should explain and be part of everyone's existence. Excluding it does an injustice to such people as have it as part of their existence. (Rauhala 1990, 35–36.) For the rigour and transparency of the research and for the holistic picture of the teacher-researcher-researchee, it is necessary to mention that for me Christian faith is the essential factor in my life, the source of meaning, hope, strength, comfort and ethics, and the basis of my conception of man. Christian faith is also involved in my situatedness, even if private and beyond the scope of this research.

Gadamer's philosophical hermeneutics

Gadamer's philosophical hermeneutics forms the basis of interpretation in this research. Research in the humanities and social sciences concerns human understanding because humanities share human heritage or culture, articulate and renew it and participate in it. For these reasons, the aim of hermeneutical research on humanities and social sciences must be the clarification of the ontological conditions of understanding. (Gadamer 2001, 40–41; 1989, 295.) They are discussed in the last section of this Part I. Like Heidegger before him, Gadamer defined *Dasein*, how human beings are in this world, in terms of time (Gadamer 1989, 257 and 259; 2001, 114; Heidegger 1962, 424–434). Understanding is “the *original form of the realization of Dasein*” and its “categorical and basic determinant” (Gadamer 1989, 259, italics in original; 2001, 39). Hence, we are historical beings, whose past and present are constantly mediated and whose history is permanently at work in their understanding, which invariably makes their understanding interpretation (Gadamer 1989, 307; 1976, 32; also Heidegger 1962, 194–195) thus meaning that we always take “something *as something*” (Gadamer 1984, 58 italics in original).

The concept of horizon denotes what is visible from a certain viewpoint (Gadamer 1989, 302). The world where a person lives and its traditions create his/her horizon, limit it and expand it. The horizon includes the past because people continually have to test their prejudices but the horizon is always in motion, too (Gadamer 1989, 304–306). Understanding denotes the fusion of horizons that happens to us (Gadamer 2001, 113). Through the already existing horizon, it is possible to discover something that further broadens it (Gadamer 2001, 43) and makes it move. Here for example taking place through understanding more about the fields of the research targets within the FLE.

Gadamer's conception of one moving horizon (see Gadamer 1989, 304) was especially descriptive here in the second research question. Gadamer writes that “our own past and that other past toward which our historical consciousness is directed help to shape this moving horizon” (Gadamer 1989, 304). Both of these pasts were mine. The former concerned what I first thought and believed and the latter, the more recent past about the research targets. The other past materialised in the diary and conversational interview data that also concerned teacher development and finally in the results. A concrete example of continually formed horizons (see Gadamer 1989, 302–307) was the three consecutive versions of the conversational interview data management, thus reflecting the movement of the researcher's horizon (see the last section in this Part I). This process in reading the data did not initially result from a methodological decision but from the movement of my researcher's horizon thanks to my changing understanding (see Gadamer 1989, 302 and 304; 2001, 48).

In Gadamer's hermeneutics, the concept of tradition covers a much wider field than specific, long-lived and widely recognised customs or ways of doing things within a certain group of people. According to Gadamer, tradition is part of us applying all the time and addressing us whether we are conscious of it or not. We exist and are situated

in it and cannot distance ourselves from it. (Gadamer 1989, 282; 2001, 45–46.) Even so, tradition makes our knowing possible exactly because we share it, are situated in it and therefore familiar with it (Gadamer 1989, 295 and 361; 1976, 15 and 29). Thanks to the presuppositions arising from this familiarity with tradition, we begin to understand the tradition in the text (Gadamer 1989, 377), i.e. in the research data. Tradition is “a partner in dialogue” (Gadamer 1989, 358) that takes place between the familiarity arising from our belongingness to tradition and the strangeness existing in the historically or otherwise distanced text alien to us (Gadamer 1989, 295).

Because of our historicity, we are always within a situation, see everything from that standpoint and are unable to externalise ourselves out of it, not even through reflection. What is more, when in a situation, objective knowledge of it is not possible. (Gadamer 1989, 301–302 and 304; 2001, 46.) Thus the researcher’s historicity, more exactly his historical consciousness prevents him/her from hearing the meaning of the historical text which is the research data, and from discovering its validity and intelligibility for the present world (see Gadamer 1989, 303–305). Instead, understanding that human consciousness is historically effected (Gadamer 1989, 300–302; also Friebertshäuser 2006, 233), which Gadamer calls “consciousness of hermeneutical *situation*”, makes it possible for the researcher to remain open to tradition and realise that it is really saying something (Gadamer 1989, 361; 2001, 46; italics in original). This gives the researcher the means to accept what the text says as truth even when it contradicts him/her (Gadamer 1989, 361).

In Gadamer’s hermeneutics language and conversation (Gadamer 2001, 39, 40–41, 65 and 113) are central issues. Gadamer compares the communication between the researcher and the traditionary text to dialogue and conversation. It is like a Thou and I where a Thou is not an object but has an opinion and relates to the other like the participants of the dialogue. (Gadamer 1989, 358.) According to Tontti, an appropriate dialogue makes it possible for the researcher to modify his/her prejudgement and test his/her prejudices through openness to the otherness that the tradition reveals (Tontti 2005, 64). Conversation is at the heart of hermeneutical research because understanding only takes place if hearing and listening are mutual between the participants as in real conversation (Gadamer 2001, 39), in other words the researcher and the research data. To understand the other in conversation demands that the participants cross their own borders of understanding (Gadamer 2001, 56). Neither of the participants possesses the language there. They share or rather, create a common language and speak about the same things and let the chosen topic lead the conversation. They do not know in advance how their conversation will come out, do not strive to develop it in a certain way, and do not argue for and against the other’s views. They do not search for its weaknesses but its strengths and weights. (Gadamer 1989, 367, 378 and 383.) The conversation between the text and the researcher opens him/her a new horizon because the conversation always adds something new not existing in the previous horizons, something he/she has not known or what lacks justification in his/her own thinking (Gadamer 2001, 48–49). According to Gadamer, this happens in a genuine conversation (Gadamer 2001, 49).

The themes served the purpose of throwing light on the students' experiences of the chosen central course elements. At the same time, the themes limited the research conversation. The change of my researcher's horizon concerning the significance of conversational research data took place gradually thanks to a more thorough exploration of Gadamer's hermeneutics. Distinguishing and benefiting from both types of data appears in the division of the data management into the chronologically consecutive three readings.

The analysis and interpretation of data demanded conversation and dialogue with the data. It does not suffice "to hear one another" but we must also "*listen to one another*", which is also the prerequisite of understanding (Gadamer 2001: 39; italics in original). Gadamer argues that dialogue and "the structure of question and answer" are of primary significance in hermeneutic researching (Gadamer 1989, 369). "Interpretation is a circle closed by the dialectic of question and answer" (Gadamer 1989, 388). To understand the text demands that the researcher sees it as an answer to a question he/she has to reconstruct to learn what is hidden behind the text (Gadamer 1989, 370, 373–375 and 388). Questioning denotes openness and presents new possibilities of meaning to the researcher. The questions must belong to the researcher's own horizon and be real. For this, he/she must move out of the original horizon of the question. (Gadamer 1989, 374–375 and 378.) Awareness of human historically effected understanding and the researcher's belongingness to the tradition help the researcher to find the right questions to ask the text and anticipate the answer (Gadamer 1989, 301 and 377–378). Thus, the researcher's familiarity with what he/she researches is indispensable.

Narrativity and the researcher's narrative as a teacher

Narrative thinking and logical-scientific thinking are the two types of human thinking (Bruner 1996, 39) and thus, also of learning. Narrative thinking is about making the thought into a believable story with a plot, structure, action, definition of time and place joining the knowing into chains of events and intention (Heikkinen, H.L.T. 2004, 180; Bruner 1986, 13; 1996, 40). A narrative "preserves the complexity of human action with its interrelationship of temporal sequence, human motivation, chance of happenings and changing interpersonal and environmental contexts" (Polkinghorne 1995, 7). This argument applies to the narratives in this research. One of the two sets of study materials was a long narrative. Many tasks on the English course took the form of narratives.

Narrativity suits the presentation of experiences in the hermeneutic research tradition (Polkinghorne 1995, 5). We are possessed by the past and through that "opened up for the new" (Gadamer 1976, 9). The description of the past serves the purposes of the present (Säntti 2004, 187). Through narrative thinking, we know how we became what we are and where we are going to (Antikainen et al. 1996, 20). Because in narration, the events and actions in human life appear purposeful and goal-directed, narrativity suits the description of human actions and thought (Heikkinen, H.L.T. 2004, 180), for example

learning a foreign language and describing the teacher's work, the latter especially because of the intentionality embedded in it (Heikkinen, H.L.T. 2004, 181). The teacher's course diary contained short narratives. Some of the teacher development data written during the follow-up research were narrative, too.

One among the different narrative traditions is the one with "brief topically specific stories organised around characters, setting and plot". They are answers to single questions and concern what the interviewee has "witnessed or experienced". (Kohler Riessman 2002, 697; see also Hyvärinen & Löyttyniemi 2005, 192–193.) This applies to students' narrative accounts of their earlier experiences, life situations and course experiences that they recounted in the conversational interviews on their own initiative. Here the creation of one's personal narrative became a "vehicle of meaning making" (Bruner 1996, 39). The shortness of this kind of narration is a consequence of their conversational context (Georgakopolou 2011, 396).

My ensuing autobiographical teacher narrative was a vehicle for the purposes of professional teacher development in addition to being required in a research study following Gadamer's philosophical hermeneutics. As the teacher, researcher and researchee, I was involved through my knowledge, conceptions, abilities and decisions, social and emotional skills, ethics, values and character, my experiences and meanings, my life and my unique horizon resulting from them. Factors like these make us unknown to each other and subjective as researchers and readers of a research report. The researcher's narrative increases the transparency and trustworthiness of the research and offers the reader tools to consider which way the researcher's experiences and relation to the research interests have shaped the research and its results. Writing the ensuing narrative, thinking about it, formulating it, adding issues and removing others was a source of awareness, reflection and understanding of my horizons as a teacher-researcher and researchee while also being part of the research methodology and philosophy.

Teachers work through their professional knowledge, basic beliefs such as the conception of man, of the world, and of learning. They work through their ethics and values and through their personality and their ways of communication. Nonetheless, according to Sääntti, half of what we are and do as teachers, half of our image of learning, of learning activities we use, of our thoughts and talk about learners, learning and teaching are equally much based on tradition (Sääntti 2004, 227). Thus, my narrative is about my past as a foreign language student and teacher but also about the tradition that I have shared and within which I have lived. Here, the narrative also serves as the researcher and researchee narrative. A story or a narrative on past events is always an updated story. As a situated human being acting in history, I could not reassume the horizon I had when the described events took place (see Gadamer 1989, 357) but I interpreted it from the horizon I had when authoring the narrative including what appeared important and necessary then.

I graduated from university and completed the one-year full-time preservice teacher training in the early 70s. Inservice teacher training for folk high schools and a third training period for adult education centres followed within a few years. With very few exceptions,

my career as a teacher of English and Swedish took place among adults. In the early 70s and 90s, I was a language teacher of full-time students at a Christian folk high school. Most of them were studying to be qualified church youth work leaders. Until the mid 1990s, my work in folk high schools included frequent participation in whole-school activities. The language teacher had much freedom but the need for qualified teachers' further professional development was hardly recognised. Over the years, the curricula for the youth leader students' Swedish and English studies became increasingly communicative and context sensitive with authentic field-specific material mostly related to their future tasks and work situations. Although the students' previous studies and language skills varied, all of them nevertheless participated actively in class.

Multiculturalism arrived early at folk high schools (see Koskinen 2005, 78–98), in the case of my school first through students from Kenya and Japan. I worked on international adult education seminars and seven-day senior education programmes organised in cooperation with an American organisation combining travelling and local cultures. I planned and conducted exchange programmes on language and culture between our students and the students of a folk high school for Swedish speakers. My teaching programme also included Open University courses. In the mid-1990s, youth leader education became part of tertiary education. As a result, I became a teacher in a university of applied sciences in the social and health care. More than 35% of its students were adults already with a career and several years in working life.

In the 80s, I worked at an adult education centre for six years. A strong interest in language pedagogy, learner motivation, materials and the inclusion of new students into language studies characterised this work. The 70s and 80s introduced a new generation of English study materials supported by radio and TV programmes. The pluricultural and narrative textbooks *Take It Easy 1–2* (Bennett & Webster 1982) and *3–6* (Bennett, Webster & Nordliner 1983/1984/1985/1985) included real people of different nationalities and stories about their lives, work, families and friends in empathetic and personal tones. These books approximately covered the extent of English studies at the relatively new Finnish comprehensive school. Speaking was encouraged by the student material and the teacher's guidebook but remained scarce. Adult students of the time were shy to speak. Then I heard from my colleagues that students really learned to speak English on suggestopedic courses.

For my first methodological course on suggestopedia, I studied a short presentation of suggestopedia by Lozanov (1980) and a book by the French author Saféris (1987). Communicative and humanistic learning methods had influenced suggestopedia (also Järvinen 2012, 242). For me, Saféris became more important. Her approach was more open, less authoritative and less controlled. As a teacher, I used suggestopedic course books written in Finland (Jaatinen & Rannikko 1983; Aarvala & Aho 1984) but planned field-specific material for vocational and working life courses. Besides the actual approach, suggestopedia taught and gave a lot: ideas, courage, creativity, the active use and development of one's talents, the significance of a friendly atmosphere and convivial attitude towards the students, group dynamics, organisation, even knowledge of classical

music. Holistic learning and perceptual learning styles (see Reid 1999, 301) were included. Overall, suggestopedia has affected my personal teacher's theory and practice in many ways but its implementation as an entity has played a minor role in my teacher's work.

Finnish liberal adult education where I worked for 20 years has a long humanistic tradition (Heikkinen, A. 2005, 257). Humanism, holistic education and a holistic view of students have been typical of folk high schools since the time of Nikolai Grundtvig, the father of the Scandinavian folk high school. His humanism emphasised the uniqueness of every individual, an environment characterised by the living word, free and living interaction and dialogue based on the equality of the teacher and the learner. (Kauppila 2007, 29.) The humanistic tradition in my career continued through the choice of Rauhala's holistic, existential conception of man with a close connection to humanistic psychology (see Rauhala 1990, 50–53) and Gadamer's humanistic idea of *Bildung* (Gadamer 1989, 18; cf. culture, p. 582) "as the properly human way of developing one's natural talents and capacities" (Gadamer 1989, 10).

In 2002–2003, I participated in several development programmes organised for UAS language teachers. The expert lectures with inspiring discussions, teamwork, individual and shared assignments and feedback on them introduced new fields of knowledge and recent developments within FLE and were a significant incentive to further studies. The developmental group project for spoken proficiency assessment in one of these programmes, my experiences as a teacher in liberal adult education, in vocational and tertiary education and my knowledge of suggestopedia have all been influential in the choice of oral communication for the research interest here.

During my career, I have met and worked with many language teacher colleagues. As far as I know, with only extremely few exceptions, have they been very successful language learners at school. I was also not such a learner in the first years of my foreign language studies, even if I did my homework, was active in class and studied for the exams. After my summer job in Sweden and entrance to the upper general secondary school, studying Swedish, English and two new foreign languages became easy and rewarding. This transformed my foreign language identity but I am still affected by my first few years as a less successful foreign language learner. These two opposite experiences have enriched my work and expanded my horizon as a foreign language teacher.

Identity notions

In the change and development of our identity and self, learning is the most central process (Ropo & Gustafsson 2008, 55). "We are both being and becoming" (Jarvis 2005, 5). What we would like to be now and in future influences us and our identity formation. In a research study on learning that arises in people's self-chosen learning and personal aims, the future is strongly involved, which here concerns both the students and the teacher. The first language remains at the core of language identity but we enter new symbolic systems of

meanings and cultural meaning making also through languages learned later (Kaikkonen 2004, 122–123). Today, they are inevitably part of our identity process influencing and shaping our identity (Kaikkonen 2004, 170). Tomperi presents language using a metaphor of a rope (2002, 39), which is related to Rauhala's conception of man. The centrality of language in the rope corresponds to Gadamer's thinking. The four strands of Tomperi's rope, our memory and memories, our temporal and located situatedness, our physical being or corporality and our social roles and position develop and are filtered through language that is located above, under or inside the rope or in the background, and which is seen as a system of meanings among which language has a specific position. (Tomperi 2002, 42.) Language is among the most significant factors, if not the most significant one, in the development of our identity (Kaikkonen 2004, 162). Like the first language, the foreign language increasingly becomes a cultural system of meaning making (see Tomperi 2002, 40–42).

In a research study on the promotion of oral communication, the personal and social dimensions of identities are deeply involved. It is especially in studies of oral foreign language interaction with plenty of group work that all people and their ways of encountering the others and interacting with them influence everyone's language study experience, both at the time and later through the memory of the experience. These experiences affect their self-identities, their foreign language identities and identities in general. Wenger suggests that identity is "a way of talking about how learning changes who we are and creates personal histories of becoming in the context of our communities" (Wenger 1998, 5). This is a dynamic identity conception that describes and corresponds to the ongoing influence of social interactions, human relationships and participation on the identities and self-identities in this research.

3 Theoretical and conceptual key components

At the outset of the research, the analysis of theoretical frameworks, conceptions and concepts central to this research was necessary for gaining sufficient knowledge of them in general, for consideration of the research holism, for the transparency of the research process and its results and for the recognition of the teacher-researcher's prejudices or presuppositions important in hermeneutic researching. Writing this section supported by a literature search and my dated diaries, research journal and sometimes earlier versions of the report improved my awareness of my initial prejudgement and its development. Nonetheless, it is impossible to return to one's authentic understandings of the past because the researcher's horizon is in continuous movement (Gadamer 1989, 307).

Learning theories/approaches on the course

The four learning theories or approaches of which I particularly made use of in the construction of the oral English course differed in their primary interests, conception of learning, how learning was believed to be achieved, what was assumed of human beings as knowers and learners and what was considered important and valuable to learning (see also Wenger 1998, 3–4). These theories or approaches served the English course and its implementation in different ways and introduced different aspects for consideration. They also contributed teacher development especially at the beginning of the research process. In the reading of the data and interpretation of results, the significance of specific understandings and conceptualisations by individual researchers and writers became more important. Of course, in addition to the four discussed here, the course displays characteristics of other theoretical frames. For example, cooperative learning was an excellent source of ideas and practices.

Before this research, I had applied Lozanov's **suggestopedia** on a few courses and employed its ideas on many others. Lozanov (1926–2012) was a Bulgarian physicist, psychiatrist with a psychotherapeutic orientation (see Lozanov 1978) and an educational researcher (Dhority 1991, 11) but not a teacher (Saféris 1987, 19). His suggestopedia was influenced by the contemporary scientific conceptions such as the predominance of behaviourism and his research and work as a psychiatrist. A person was globally, or holistically involved when learning something. Relaxed concentration, “unity of the conscious and the paraconscious”, the availability of human reserve capacities, joy and lack of tension were the main principles followed simultaneously and holistically in Lozanov's suggestopedia (Lozanov 1978, 258). According to Lozanov, human beings could learn much faster and more than commonly believed. Through suggestion, it was possible to increase the capacity of memory and create conditions where it was possible to deal with mental barriers impeding learning. (Lozanov 1978, 9–10.) A positive, supportive environment and course climate, holism, strong faith in students' ability to learn and attention to the students' well-being had a significant position in suggestopedia. According to Hooper Hansen, Lozanov's humanistic approach emphasises the aims of better health, learners' belief in themselves and their learning and the removal of their fears. Positive emotions are important because they open the mind. Negative ones are avoided because they create defensiveness, passivity and aggression. A long, passive period at the beginning and the text to be studied also in the students' first language promote their feeling of safety and comfort. (Hooper Hansen 1999, 214–216.)

Some of its conceptions of learning and the learner and a number of other elements in suggestopedia contain which according to today's FLE are even detrimental. Especially the belief in suggestion as a central and influential factor in learning and the subtle behaviourism (see Lerède 1986, 94–95) alienates suggestopedia from today's FLE. Suggestopedia seems to conflict with the development of students' autonomy undermining their awareness of their learning process, their self-assessment and assessment of their studies, factors which

today are considered indispensable for learning, especially today for adults studying independently. However, Hooper Hansen points out that the way to student autonomy in suggestopedia is first paved through security established by teacher authority leading to the growth of confidence and then promoted in co-operation. Suggestion according to her serves as the placebo before the growth of self-confidence and self-empowerment. (Hooper Hansen 1999, 212–218.)

Apart from Lozanov himself, my knowledge of suggestopedia is mainly based on and influenced by Western literature and practitioners. Especially in the West, suggestopedia and approaches based on it have many features of humanistic psychology, such as attention to affective factors, positive atmosphere, spontaneous creativity and meaningful communication as channels of the student's self-realisation (Hooper Hansen 1999), features that also apply to my approach. The promotion of participation, mutual respect and confidence, a humanistic teacher attitude, encouragement and attention to the student's self-confidence are other humanistic characteristics (see e.g. Kauppila 2007, 29) which have been my aims, too. Suggestopedia offered many well-functioning and wise practices and principles for the purposes of this research, one of which was the plot and the new names and identities employed on suggestopedic courses (Lozanov & Gateva 1989, 60 and 117). Suggestopedia attended to social factors (also Stern 1992, 320) and focused on speaking, which served the promotion of oral communication.

Sociocultural theory of second language learning draws extensively on Vygotsky's thoughts on the mediated mind, interaction and negotiation of meaning and on a growing diversity of other elements (Lantolf 2000). According to sociocultural theory, human beings have developed tools to act on the world. The symbolic ones, among them language as the most important have developed to meet the needs of human interaction. Mental actions arise from "external, materially based, social actions". (Lantolf, 2000, 1–2 and 14.) Thinking and speaking form a dialectic unit and the published speech completes the thought (Lantolf 2000, 7). It is not necessary to argue about the origin of mental actions and the arguments preceding them in this context. Because they were in contradiction Vygotsky's conception of the position of language was helpful in understanding Gadamer's conception, which I have assumed here. According to Gadamer, our whole existence and perception of the world comes through language (Gadamer 1976, 29). Understanding and thinking take place in the universal medium of language or rather occur as "coming-into-language" (Gadamer 1976, 68; 1989, 378 and 389).

Although I did not altogether agree with the theoretical basis of sociocultural theory of second language learning, its theory and practice concerning oral communication had much to give to the English course and to professional development. Especially Vygotsky's notion of the zone of proximal development, the ZDP was fruitful for implementing the course and my understanding as a teacher. The ZPD signifies the zone between what the learner knows and can manage on his/her own, and what he/she can manage with the support of a more knowledgeable person or in collaboration with such a person but not on

his/her own (Vygotsky 1978, 86; Lantolf 2000, 17). The CEF was of great help in making use of the ZPD among the adult students whose level of English was diverse and unknown.

In **Wenger's social theory of learning**, learning is a social phenomenon and corresponds to the social nature of human beings who have the ability of knowing (Wenger 1998, 3). Practice, which is central to this theory, denotes doing and mutual engagement. According to Wenger's theory, our courses were communities of practice. They were social contexts where the participants' enterprises were recognised as competence and worth pursuing and could be seen as "shared histories of learning" because people were mutually engaged there aspiring to learning that was significant for them (Wenger 1998, 5 and 86). Identity describes how learning changes people, which results in histories of what people have become in their communities of practice.

Wenger's theory challenged to view language learning from the social viewpoint emphasising the social aspect of the course. He places "learning in the context of our lived experience of participation in the world" (Wenger 1998, 3), which was in line with our course that contained plenty of participation. However, foreign language studies demand much else. For example, learning needs have to be personally recognised and solutions to them independently searched for and chosen. These are very important for an adult as a lifewide learner in his/her life and its communities of practice (also Karlsson & Kjisik 2011, 86–87). Wenger's concept of imagination (see Wenger 1998, 176 and 178–179) serves well in the analysis and conceptualisation of adults' ability to be and become independent learners and participants situated in their own social life contexts explored in Part IIIA.

Experiential learning among the more social theories was holistic in its recognition of the involvement of "emotional, social, physical, cognitive and spiritual aspects of personality" (Kohonen 2001, 25). It was more than Kolb's argument that learning in experiential theory denotes "integrated functioning of the total organism – thinking, feeling, perceiving and behaving" (Kolb 1984, 31; Elkjaer 2009, 86). A good guide to experiential learning was *Experiential Learning in Foreign Language Education* (Kohonen, Kaikkonen, Jaatinen & Lehtovaara 2001). I felt at home with its discussions, ideas and arguments, perhaps because the roots of experiential learning were in humanistic psychology (Kohonen 2001, 24–26).

For a long time, it had been important for me that language studies offered experiences. Even when the target language had been an object of examination and analysis in class, I had tried to attach appropriate use of target language to it, preferably interactive practices such as role-play, games, real-life and fictive stories shared in class or group discussions (see Kohonen 2001, 23). Hence, my exploration of experiential learning actually started as spontaneous reflection on the similarities and differences between my conception of experience at the time and "concrete experience" as one phase of experiential learning cycle. The other phases were abstract conceptualisation, active experimentation and reflective observation (Illeris 2012, 20; Kohonen 2001, 28–29). Experiential learning became increasingly central when the course participants' awareness, expressions of independence, interest in the learning process, autonomy and reflection on their learning started to appear in our informal discussions on the lesson, during the breaks and more extensively

in the conversational interviews. The researching also indicated that transformation of experience including active experimentation and reflective observation were essential for knowledge (see Kolb 1984, 38). This research plan offered two opportunities for it, first in liberal education and then at the UAS.

Participation, meaning, holism and affect

Participation, meaning, holism and affect and what these conceptions denote were central ideas in this research. They illuminate this research from different viewpoints, describe it, have influenced it and contributed to course practice and data interpretation.

Participation is used with two intertwining meanings here. Both of them mean taking part in something, doing something together, belonging and being included. Participation was necessary and important for the promotion of oral English communication on the course and for real life speaking in the future. According to Gadamer, in participation we share what has been passed down to us, namely culture (Gadamer 2001, 40–41) including language. “The whole inner store of our lives is always extending by participating” and belongingness (Gadamer 1984, 64), which also takes place in English speaking communities and belongingness to them. In Wenger’s social theory of learning (1998, 57), participation denotes the “profoundly social character of our experience of life”. When working together, students build and work on each other’s ideas, are excited by them, build networks, and find focus (Duckworth 2001c, 184 and 186; Scheier 2001, 190). Sfarid’s comparison between the acquisition metaphor (AM) and the participation metaphor (PM) of learning and particularly her description of PM (Sfarid 1998, 5–7) is helpful. Which of the Sfarid’s AM and PM metaphors is needed and applied and in what proportion, depends on the aims, circumstances and preferences but both are needed (Sfarid 1998, 10–12). Within AM, the learners collect knowledge for themselves like private entrepreneurs. In PM, the learning results from joint participation and negotiation. (Sfarid 1998, 6.) Instead, according to Lozanov’s suggestopedic theory, “memorisation” [and learning] took place through meaningful listening (Lozanov 1980, 51–52; Gateva 1991b, 96–97). Participation in the communicative activities only “completed” the acquisition (Lozanov 1980, 60) and gave the opportunity to practise the recently gained knowledge (Saféris 1987, 113). Even so, suggestopedia had many qualities of PM, such as contextuality, affiliation, engagement and belongingness to the community and participation. Seen from Sfarid’s PM perspective, suggestopedic activities and tasks indicated participation and were learning.

The second concept is meaning. According to Gadamer, the meaning a person gives to his/her experiences is autobiographically determined and “fused with the whole movement of life” (Gadamer 1989, 67; also see Jaatinen 2007). In a similar vein, Bruner argues that the personal interpretations of meanings reflect both a person’s own history and the ways in which his/her culture constructs the reality for him/her (Bruner 1996, 14). Vygotsky has two concepts, meaning and sense. The sense of a word is “the sum of all the psychological

events aroused in our consciousness by a word” while the meaning of the word has an exact zone and “no more than a stone in the edifice of sense” (Vygotsky 1986, 244–245). Thus, one can say that the “sense” comes through a person’s own experiences and encounters and thus denotes authentic language use and contextuality and refers to situatedness and holism. Knowing and using English words or expressions as translations from one’s own language or as meanings without a link to oneself, one’s experiences and identity is not authentic language use, which demands personal psychological meanings and experiences attached to the foreign language words, their use and one’s life. According to C. Rogers, study material without any particular significance for the learners only touches their mind while significant and meaningful material “combines the logical *and* the intuitive, the intellect *and* the feelings”. (Rogers, C. 1983, 19–20, italics in original.) The Vygotskian senses arise through holistic, personally and individually orientated learning and authentic experiences in the use of a foreign language. This way, the language touches one’s identity and becomes one’s own. Authentic experiences ought to become guiding principles on the course, too.

In the present research, the understanding of holism as a teacher-researcher expanded denoting teacher development, too. For me, holism used to relate to humanistic teaching and I attended to such aspects in the implementation of the course. Carl Rogers argued that the whole person of the learner becomes involved only when the right hemisphere was actively brought into play. This hemisphere is aesthetic, artistic and creative rather than logical and catches the “whole gestalt”. (Rogers, C. 1983, 20.) Personal involvement, both the feeling and the cognitive aspects should be involved in the learning event. Learning should be experiential, self-initiated and characterised by discovery, learner-evaluation and by correspondence to what the students need and want to know. (Rogers, C. 1983, 20.) These qualities were particularly important for lifelong, independently studying adults. Lozanov’s suggestopedia with roots in psychotherapy (Lozanov & Gateva 1989, 9) emphasised aesthetics, creativity, art, affect, social elements and the physical and mental well-being of the learners (Lozanov 1991, 14; 1978, 251–252 and 257–258, see also Hooper Hansen 1999, 217) and brought another aspect. In CEF, a strong expression of human holism is the inclusion of general competences (2001, 11–13, 101–108) as crucial factors and resources, seen as part of the language user’s competence beside communicative language competence. Rauhala’s holistic conception of man defined human beings as physical, conscious and situated beings (Rauhala 1990, 35–46). It is the last mentioned of these, situatedness that had most to give because I did not know about it before the research. Gadamer’s specific contribution to holism concerned time. Past, present and future form a unity, where past is always present and influential for a person through his/her experiences of life and belongingness to tradition within which we live (Gadamer 2001, 43 and 45).

According to CEF, communication demands the inclusion of the human being as an entity (CEF 2001, 1). The term language user/learner speaks of holism. Learners are social agents who use their “cognitive, emotional and volitional resources” and their abilities to

fulfil their aims (CEF 2001, 9), which is another view of holism. Agency calls for active participation. It was an important prerequisite for learning and future encounters with English and accordingly, in the studies I describe in this research. Volition is indispensable for successful language studies in general but especially for adults without any formal obligation to study.

The conception of language learners as “thinking, feeling, and acting persons in a context of language use grounded in social relationships with other people” (Breen 2001, 1) is an apt description of the research interest here. To involve the whole personality of man, there should be cognitive-constructivist, emotional-affective, socio-constructivist and experiential theories to capture the totality of man as a being which knows, feels, experiences and consciously strives for social relationships (see Kaikkonen 2004, 164–165). Cognitive-constructivist elements became prominent in the conversational interviews.

Affect has been a central element in my teacher’s practice and theory owing to my humanistic approach to teaching. To become better informed about the role of affect in FLE for the research, I first studied FLE literature, for example *Affect in Language Learning* which presented practical and theoretical perspectives from the viewpoints of humanism, experiential learning and the growth of human potential (Arnold 1999, xii–xiii). Damasio’s neurobiology (Damasio 2003; 2004) provided information on the influence of inborn feelings and emotions and helped me to see their significant position in the present study.

According to Damasio, affect plays a crucial part in the functions of the human body and being. Affect, a “central aspect of humanity” comprises “drives, motivations, emotions, and feelings” (Damasio 2003, 8). Emotions are often outwardly perceivable while feelings, “the bedrock of our minds” (Damasio 2003, 28), our “*being in a certain way*” (Damasio 2003, 88 and 85, italics in original) remain private and hidden except to the owner (Damasio 2003, 28). Damasio pinpoints the centrality of feelings in social behaviour and social encounters (Damasio 2003, 140). What is more, feelings have an immense influence on our lives and on us because feelings come first and “have a say on how the rest of the brain and cognition go about their business” (Damasio 1994, 159–160). Emotions make decision-making possible (Damasio 2003, 140–147). In the same line, Vygotsky argues, “Behind every thought there is an affective-volitional tendency, which holds the answer to the last ‘why’ in the analysis of thinking” (Vygotsky 1986, 252). Not making the same distinction between emotion and affect as Damasio, Oatley maintains that emotions “point to matters of vital importance, and energise us in relation to them... set priorities, make our lives meaningful, and create our commitments to friends and against enemies” (Oatley 2004, 12). In Bruner’s words, emotions and feelings are an inborn part of human existence, always present and at work in human life and decision-making (Bruner 1996, 12–13). To conclude, emotions and feelings have a significant position in studying and communicating in oral English classes.

Language and oral communication

Irrespective of how well a foreign language is mastered, it remains foreign in comparison to the first language, which is learned in an affective process where the belonging to the culture develops (Kohonen, Kaikkonen, Jaatinen & Lehtovaara 2001, 3; Kaikkonen 2004, 119). The first language is a way to live in one's body as oneself, a way of living and existing, says Nuolijärvi (2002), the director of The Institute of the Languages in Finland. We think, know, feel and are in contact with other people through our first language, identify ourselves with it and experience belongingness. It allows us to interpret and express our experiences and phenomena in the world. The words in the first language are connected with our life history and experiences during it (Kaikkonen 2004, 110 and 118–119). For these reasons, the first language includes affect, meaningfulness, intention, participation and belongingness, all of which the later learned languages do not. However, the recognition of the holistic processes of learning and the first language can facilitate and give suggestions to foreign language learning even if a foreign language can hardly denote the same kind of human existence and fulfil the same needs as the first language. Even so, what the first language means and how we use it and how it appears in our lives reveal how we ought to learn to use a foreign language and what we should face and tackle in studying a foreign language in order to make it become part of our life. We should be in contact with other people, express our thoughts, feelings, experiences and the phenomena of our world and deal with our life history in the languages learned later, too.

According to Gadamer, we exist in language that constructs our world (1976, 3, 13, 17, 29, 63 and 68). Language is the medium of common understanding and human togetherness (Gadamer 1976, 3, 13 and 68; 1989, 389) and present in “any acquisition of experience” (Gadamer 1989, 348). Understanding operates and is involved and “carried out within language” (Gadamer 2001, 37; 1976, 29; Gallagher 1992, 9). Through language, we become acquainted and familiar with our world and its ways of meeting us (Gadamer 1976, 62–63). Language stores and hands down the tradition, which is essentially linguistic (Gadamer 1989, 389). Gadamer also argues that language speaks us rather than we speak language (Gadamer 1989, 463). I believe that in the first phases of learning a foreign language we are nearer to the latter. Later, the foreign language starts speaking to us. Gadamer's arguments about the human resource of language also throw light on the languages we learn after the first one and what we can hope for, aim at and aspire to our command of them.

The following paragraphs contain thoughts and views on three topics, namely the competences that foreign language oral communication demands, the factors that seem to be at work and significant there, and which networks of factors hinder or slow down the process, especially when the emphasis is on situations with intense interaction rather than monologue (see e.g. CEF 2001, 26). I mostly refer to face-to-face oral communication even though today oral communication takes place through many media.

Bakhtin points out that communication always entails a listener from whom the speaker expects an active response, which can also be a silent response. On the other hand, the

speaker is a respondent to all the previous utterances he/she and the others have expressed. He/she presupposes these as also the specific system of the language and the notion that new utterances are located among all the previously expressed ones and become related to them. (Bakhtin 2004, 66 and 68.) Listening and comprehension are necessary because the turns of speech are ideally based on those (Bakhtin 2004, 66 and 68). One has to have understood and to remember all of them, at least most of them to be able to participate. The interlocutor's interpretation always intervenes, not with a delay as in written production but immediately. The speaker has to face the interlocutor's interpretation and deal with it at once. According to Gadamer, participation in dialogue challenges its participants through the provocation of interpretation (see Gadamer 1984, 63). In a foreign language, these are more challenging than in one's first language.

In written production, we have time to try alternatives, improve and erase. In oral communication, the participants have to attend to real time social concerns and have little time available for stance taking, decision-making and finding the right words. Oral communication tolerates little or no delay. Turn taking happens quickly and demands readiness for unprepared speaking, too. What is expressed in oral communication and how it is expressed become public and tend to have an immediate effect, which is socially demanding and intensifies the feelings arising from the communication. Intercultural encounters in foreign language contexts are common today and demand mutual cultural knowledge and sensitivity. Especially in these encounters, otherness, which is always present in human encounters, affects the communication. The way in which and the pace at which interaction proceeds and is concluded and the way politeness is expressed, are culturally specified, even culturally bound (CEF 2001, 119–120), which poses challenges. Luckily, owing to the position of English as a lingua franca today, it is easy to become familiar at least with some of those challenges through the media and in any case, people speak the lingua franca in many ways and more or less competently.

CEF as a source and aid for practice and analysis

The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (from now on CEF) employed here, is an extensive presentation of language education, specifically designed for Europe. The framework aims at improving communication across the different languages in Europe, raising questions, presenting principles and practices but not determining the practice. (CEF 2001, vii–ix.) CEF lacks philosophical discussion and does not define any given philosophy that it builds on (Kohonen, Lehtovaara & Jaatinen 2005, 329). Neither does it support certain approaches or views of learning but recommends such methods that are effective with regard to the view of the learners' characteristics, communicative needs and existing resources (CEF 2001, 18 and 142). CEF underlines the identities of language users/learners and their means of agency today and ties their language learning demands closely to the demands posed by their life (CEF 2001, 9). As an extensive and

multidimensional presentation of language learning and language proficiency, CEF provides teachers with a means of exploring their own theories and practices, questioning their assumptions and considering the use of other options (CEF 2001, 18). CEF served as a sounding board for the plans and theories I was considering and was used even in the analysis of the two different text materials on the course. CEF also provided tools for planning, teaching, learning and assessment (see CEF 2001, 1) thus supporting teacher development and professionalism. In many ways, CEF was valuable for the purposes of both research problems.

CEF defines competence as “the sum of knowledge, skills and characteristics that allow a person to perform actions” dividing them into general competences and communicative language competencies (CEF 2001, 9 and 13). Our general competencies affect and contribute to what we know and understand about the world, what we can do and what we are like as persons and learners and how we can communicate in a language (CEF 2001, 101–108). The general competencies in CEF highlight the diversity of life contexts, lived experience and selfhood factors and their influence on learning (CEF 2001, 101–105). Existential competence or selfhood factors in the form of “the sum of the individual characteristics, personality traits and attitudes” (CEF 2001, 11–14 and 104) affect communicative activity and as such, our general competence (CEF 2001, 1 and 105–106). The broad view that CEF takes of competence related to FLE, corresponds to the holistic view of people assumed in this research. It is evident that certain qualities of our selfhood factors promote learning while some others may form challenges, even impediments to learners/users of a foreign language. Without going deeper into discussion on the differences between people of different ages here, one can state that the general competencies of adults affecting learning differ in nature from those of children and the young. The CEF communicative language competences scheme (CEF 2001, 108–130) was an important aid to the syllabus design in recognising what was viable to aim at, what was meaningful to work on, what already existed, and what would serve the adult language students meaningfully and flexibly.

CEF divides oral production into the subcategories of spoken production and spoken interaction (CEF 2001, 26). Spoken production is manifested for example, in constructed descriptions, presentations, stories and narratives (see CEF 2001, 58–61). In this report, instead of using the two CEF terms spoken interaction and spoken production for the target of spoken English, I have chosen oral interaction. This was because here events of spoken production were also characteristically short and informal, so resembling spoken interaction (CEF 2001, 26–27) that is marked by frequent short turns of speech between the speaker and the listener(s). Productive and receptive turns typically alternate in spoken interaction, even overlap because the listener has to start initiating his turn even when listening (CEF 2001 57 and 92).

CEF was a valuable source when I began planning the course, which had been announced as taking place at A2–B1. This was all that I knew of the course participants in advance. “Common Reference Levels: global scale” (CEF 2001, 24; see Appendix 5) gave brief and

wide-ranging information in short on the course levels covering understanding, reception and production and explained what kind of text and speech students could approximately cope with and optimally benefit from. “Common Reference Levels: qualitative aspects of spoken language use” (CEF 2001, 28–29) as descriptors of students’ communicative competences provided a viable and multifaceted point of departure for general recognition of the students’ competence at A2–B1 and what they could approximately perform, cope with and benefit from at these levels. CEF also presents a coherent scheme of all the levels (CEF 33–36) where B1 signifies entry to independent use of language, for example through the ability to maintain interaction and cope in varying life situations (CEF 2001, 34) taking the user/learner towards more functional spoken language. Accordingly, reaching B1 and advancing at that level were important goals here.

Levels A2 and B1 denote different proficiency in many aspects of oral communication and therefore both demand attention. Social functioning in the target language already appears in A2 (CEF 2001, 33–34), but typically relies on routine there. Hence, expression benefits from models, and often demands planning and preparation. A language user at A2+ can already describe, give explanations and participate in simple conversation. Open discussion and flexibility in speech comes at B1. Narrativity appears at A2+. However, I wished to include narrativity in some form as it can go beyond routines and models and therefore can involve the speaker’s thinking, free meaning making and creativity and it does not demand strictly predefined contents. Concerning narrativity in the whole programme, the tasks most appropriate to B1 had to contain a certain amount of freedom and choice to make the participation of the students at A2 possible. Tasks that a language user can typically complete at A2 had to be modifiable to offer a suitable challenge to A2+ and B1, too. (Cf. CEF 33–34.)

The scales and grids presented in CEF were a valuable aid for planning the study unit. I analysed and employed them in decision-making concerning the tasks and practices on the course. Scales for spoken interaction, conversation, informal discussion (with friends) as well as transactions to obtain goods and services (e.g. CEF 2001, 74, 76, 77, 80, and 81) were especially good for the identification of target levels, activities and strategies. Overall, oral production (CEF 2001, 58) and spoken fluency (CEF 2001, 129) illustrated qualitative aspects and gave clues on how the students would approximately be able to cope in various language use situations. There were also some single useful scales such as sociolinguistic appropriateness, turn taking and spoken fluency (CEF 2001, 122, 124 and 129).

4 Research data – generation and investigation

Gadamer's conditions of understanding and this research

The first condition of understanding in Gadamer's hermeneutics is that the research target says something to the researcher. For this connection to exist, the researcher must be familiar with the tradition it concerns or acquire such familiarity to be able to broaden his/her experience and enter what is alien there. (Gadamer 1989, 195 and 299; 1976, 15 and 29) Familiarity with the research target is bound to denote prejudices as part of the researcher's historical reality (Gadamer 1989, 359) which are always involved and real for him/her and therefore govern his/her thinking and understanding (Gadamer 1989, 299; 2001, 45). Prejudices can be either productive or harmful but always justified, necessary, and not exclusively erroneous. Nevertheless, they hamper the researcher's understanding of others and their otherness. (Gadamer 1989, 270 and 276) It is impossible to separate the productive prejudices from those that hinder understanding (Gadamer 1989, 295) but the researcher can and must recognise them through self-reflection and critical consciousness to prevent them from affecting his/her understanding unnoticed (Gadamer 1976, 38 and 93; 1989, 360). This helps the researcher to suspend them, remain open to other possible meanings, become sensitive to the text, its otherness and claim to truth and more easily recognise the meaning of the text (Gadamer 1989, 269 and 298–299).

In hermeneutics, the researcher must explore his/her foremeanings and their legitimacy, which here among other things denoted theoretical and practical beliefs in learning, personal beliefs of practice and being a teacher (see Gadamer 1989, 267). Some of this exploration appears in Part I. For me, the course and teacher-researcher's diaries speak of my prejudices which Gadamer also calls presuppositions. I believe that discovering the significance of not saying my teacher's opinion or the last word on the course discussions resulted from my awareness that my own knowledge perhaps was prejudiced. This indicated their engagement and made me question my knowledge. The awareness of my fore-meanings increased because of new literature, conversations in class often written down in the diary, my own course experiences, also written down, the conversational interviews and, above all, the data analysis. All of these made me question my fore-meanings and made it easier to hear the students' meanings (see Gadamer 1989, 305). As to the research problem of teacher development, I was familiar with the field thanks to my long career as a foreign language teacher among adults. By contrast, my theoretical knowledge of professional teacher development was limited at the outset. However, the education offered to UAS foreign language teachers in 2002–2003 had increased my knowledge, revealed old preconceptions and brought new conceptions. Through the activities involved in researching the second research problem I could familiarise myself with questions of teacher development and reflect on them through writing the course diary.

Temporal distance or distance in general is another condition of understanding and productive in the effort of understanding text (Gadamer 1989, 298). Initially, Gadamer only accepted temporal distance between the origination of the research data and the researching and only later other kinds of distance (Gadamer 1989, 298). Here, researching started in another institution for adults with a kind of life situation different than the adults at the UAS had and with another ethos. The focus was on a specific proficiency and level different from the target level at the UAS. Thus, distance first concerned distance in general. During the long research process, the temporal distance grew. Distance makes the events it concerns fade and gives space to the real meaning to appear (Gadamer 1989, 297–298). The otherness brought by the distance can provoke the researcher’s prejudice, remove errors, fade, and exclude misleading prejudice. Distance lets such prejudices emerge as are true and speak of genuine understanding making the recognition of the meanings in the text easier. (Gadamer 1989, 293–299 and 377.) Thanks to distance, it also becomes easier to accept the truthfulness of contradictory knowledge (Gadamer 1989, 361). The delayed analysis of the course diary data brought distance between its creation and interpretation. By the time of the course diary data analysis, I had already conducted the follow-up research.

According to Gadamer, written tradition has become separated and free from its original events and has moved into the meaning that its words express. “The continuity of human memory” makes the tradition of the distanced text become part of the present world. Thus, written data is always contemporary and the tradition it has to tell has something to say to the present world. For the researcher, written text does not in the first place denote a return to the past but present involvement with the text and sharing what its words say. (Gadamer 1989, 390–391.) Thus, the data elicited in 2004–2007 became part of the world where the interpretation took place and would take place in future. However, as the circumstances and contexts in which understanding takes place and what they concern are unique, they must be clearly described.

Because I had planned the course, implemented it and put my own ideas to use there, I had conscious expectations of it and was unavoidably personally involved in its success and failings. To become affected and influenced by this was at least possible, even probable (see Gadamer 1989, 305). Through temporal distance, my personal memories as such and unfounded self-assurance as a teacher lost much of their significance and faded. Instead of finding some student-interviewees’ experiences and meanings differing from mine less welcome, I saw that their history and lived experience and their expectations arising from these affected their experiences on the course. Part of the benefit of this researching was seeing each text as part of the researchee’s horizon (Timonen 2011, 31) and understanding the fact that its context concerns the person’s whole life (Gadamer 1984, 63). Thanks to the long research span, the distance between the courses and data generation following them and the final reading and interpretation of the data was long. Understanding the significance of the conversational data, mainly discussed in Part IIIA, was one result of this increased temporal distance.

In the interpretation of the teacher development data in particular, the temporal distance was important because the source of the data were my own experiences and understandings. For example, when I was writing the last version of this report and reread the data, it was no longer close but distanced. The two research sites and what was related to them created another kind of distance. Going into the liberal education and then returning to the UAS gave space and time to understand in another way what the research contained. The periods of working on teacher development were separated by distance created by the management of the conversational interview data for the first research problem and my duties as a full time teacher. Despite the unexpected similarities between the UAS and liberal education students, the differences with regard to their histories and life situations, their motivation, learning, openness and independence brought further distance. The differences between being a liberal education teacher and a teacher of English and Swedish at the UAS were another source of distance.

The realisation of the hermeneutic circle of understanding (see Heidegger 1962, 194–195; Gadamer 1989, 266–267) in researching is another condition of understanding. The circle describes the constant movement between the part and the whole. Thanks to the researcher's familiarity with the research target, he/she has anticipations of the meaning of the text (Gadamer 1989, 377). The anticipated meaning of the whole becomes understanding when "the parts that are determined by the whole themselves also determine this whole". The prerequisite of correct understanding is that the whole and the details are in harmony. (Gadamer 1989, 291.) The researcher can anticipate the meaning of the text thanks to his/her belongingness to the given tradition and existing foremeanings that have justification in his/her thinking and say something to him/her (Gadamer 1989, 267, 269, 295 and 378; 1976, 9). Anticipation emerges from human projectedness and materialises in the expectations concerning the whole text and its meaning and in the projection of a single emerging meaning to the whole text. (Gadamer 1989, 273–267 and 291.) The researcher enters the circle with what he/she anticipates as the meaning (Gadamer 1989, 267), which determines the process of understanding the text (Gadamer 1989, 293; Heidegger 1962, 195) and gives the researcher the means to discuss with the research data (Nikander 2005, 247). For example, the transfer of conversational data from one category to another and the reformation of categories and, above all, the change in understanding conversational data resulted from the ongoing circle of understanding between the parts and the whole.

According to Gadamer, it is easier for the researcher to recognise and understand what is familiar and expected, but it takes more time and effort to hear the meaning of alien text (see Gadamer 1989, 305). It took me a long time and considerable effort to find any interpretation for the strange contradiction between Ari's – he was a WE group student – courage and willingness to communicate in class and his fear of having to speak, or the puzzlingly contradictory tones in the two conversational interviews with another student, Mirjami by name. Here the text, i.e. the research data, did not provide any meaning and did not correspond to my expectations at all (Gadamer 1989, 268). I realised that I could

not assimilate them into anything I had understood (see Gadamer 1989, 302 and 304–305). I returned to these data and their contexts many times to become more familiar with them in their entirety and tried to find the right questions to discover new possibilities of meaning. According to Gadamer, a given text always forms an entity even if it is at first unintelligible (Gadamer 1989, 390). Here the entities were all the data from Mirjami and Ari. The understanding resulted from the recurrent movement between my anticipation of meaning and the data which is always understood in another, new and different way (Gadamer 1989, 296–297 and 309; Friebertshäuser 2006, 234).

The generation of conversational interview data

The course participants heard about the research, my particular interest in oral foreign language communication and the voluntary conversational interviews in the first lesson. This procedure was practical and honest but involved the risk that especially someone already considering about whether to continue or discontinue the course would quit. I explained that the interviews would take place in Finnish and I wished to hear about their opinions of the course. Mine were only those of the teacher. With the exception of one interviewed participant, Finnish was their first language that is the central means for a person's being in this world (Kaikkonen 2004, 41). I asked for and received their consent to the interview towards the end of the course when they knew more exactly, what they would concern. As a frequent teacher interviewer at admission exams at the UAS and its predecessor institute, I was familiar with the interviewer's tasks, role and conversational interview practice.

According to the course participants' choice, the first conversational interviews took place in our classroom, elsewhere in the institutes, at work places, in homes and twice in cafés with a low noise level and a sufficient distance from other customers. At the beginning of the interviews, I asked for the interviewee's permission to audiotape the interviews and received it. For this purpose, I had a small recorder. Some tension appeared at the beginning of some interviews but it soon melted. I explained that the aim was not to prove the successfulness of the course but to discover what the course had really been like according to their experience. The interviews ranged from 30 to 80 minutes depending on how much the interviewees had to say and wanted to discuss, and how much time there was available. In a few cases, the time reserved for the interview ran out before we had dealt with all the themes. Then I decided that discussing all of them was not an end in itself. At the end, I asked all of them if they had anything to add, but this request generated only few comments. Some of them asked whether they had been able to offer me useful data. The students' responsible and painstaking involvement, commitment and contribution and their interest in the improvement of the study unit turned them into coresearchers.

The interviews with these people with their different histories, situations of life and views of the future were unique and diverse. They presented a wide variety of experiences

and viewpoints concerning the studies. For example, Vesa often assumed a societal view approaching the issues from the vantage point of adults, education, the institute and FLE in general. Ilona with a long career as an independent student of English reflected on her learning and searched for new ways of promoting her English. Pia and Kirsi, for example, often presented emotional issues including worries and impediments to participation but even more, experiences of coping. Elina rather listened than spoke, which according to her own words was what she used to do at work. The preference was visible in her short contributions and small amount of data from her. Pia and Ilona had much to say even if they had not participated throughout the course. It was possible to discern that Ritva, Vesa and Anneli primarily stated facts in brief rather than described and narrated their experiences. In qualitative interviews, the interviewees' contributions often tend to be narratives, irrespective of the questions (Hyvärinen & Löyttyniemi 2005, 191). Constructing a narrative is a skill that varies between people and even for an individual person in different situations (Bruner 1996, 39 and 40–41). Narrativity was a frequently chosen channel for Katri, Maarit, Kirsi, Pia and Ari and obviously suited their way of thinking and meaning making (see Bruner 1996, 39). Narrativity shaped their process. It was the mode of their expression of experiences. For them, narratives were the way, at least one significant way among others, through which they told who they were (c.f. Hyvärinen & Löyttyniemi 2005, 189 and 191).

The first 25 conversational interviews yielded 218 pages of text (12-point font, single spacing). These pages included Sandy's experiences as a student and user of English, told to me by Sandy in several occasions. An interview with Sandy was not possible. Sandy, even if less competent as a member in a group, was a user of English, which was one reason why Sandy got an English user name in this report. I transcribed the first interviews verbatim except for a few short stretches of speech that I failed to understand despite listening to the recording many times. I removed such contributions of mine as 'yes', 'aha', 'huh-uh' etc. To clarify and shorten a citation in the report, I have sometimes replaced words unnecessary for the intended thought with three dots. Only the interview data used as citations in the report were translated into English.

The second conversational interviews, 19 in all, lasted 5–20 minutes, took place over the phone and provided 24 pages of data in 12-point font with single spacing. I did not contact those students who had discontinued their studies a little before halfway through the course, the reasons for which we had already discussed in the first conversational interview. The telephone interview turned out to be quite appropriate when it had been preceded by the face-to-face interview (also Hirsjärvi & Hurme 2009, 64). I first introduced myself and told them I had realised the importance of learning about the usefulness of the course for their English and about its use in their lives after the course. I would not record the interview but take notes online, ask for a clarification or repetition when necessary and check the notes right after the concluded call. I asked everyone for his/her consent to the interview and received it. Some of them were ready for it there and then. For the rest, we

agreed on another time. These conversational interviews were characteristically student-driven. I had some questions in store but few were necessary. They described which way the course had fulfilled their hopes. They told about their benefit from the course with regard to their needs and their lives, about their English use after the course and about their plans for future studies. In these smoothly running second interviews, the students mentioned a few issues related to the interview themes. Instead, they recalled other course experiences. They also told me that the second interview was important for the research.

After the second interviews, I transcribed all conversational interview data and read them. This I did quite a few times alternating between reading all first or second interviews, reading both interviews from everyone after each other and reading some of them for some specific purpose. This and the data analysis spanned over several years. The recurring two-and-a-half month breaks in the middle of each term caused by the intensive work periods at the UAS were a drawback. On the other hand, the distance resulting from them also brought something new to the understanding of the data. I also divided every conversational interview into meaning units that were comprehensible independently, even when separated from their context (see Tesch 1990, 116–117). This made me notice the conversational elements. Some interviews typically contained short segments while others had longer ones, especially those containing narrativity. I recognised the issues introduced by myself and those by the interviewees (see Tiittula & Ruusuvuori 2005, 15), noticed the influence of power relations on some occasions and became aware of how the consecutive turns related to each other (see Ruusuvuori 2010, 424). For example, I had kept on asking about some issue even if they did not have much to say about it, but I also noticed that the students persisted with an issue revealing their particular interest in it even if I had already moved on to another.

The three readings of the conversational interview data

This research contained three consecutive readings of the conversational interview data. The first reading covered only the deductive data on the preset interview themes according to my initial research plan. They concerned the frequently applied elements of the course covering a significant part of the course contents. This reading was my own in the sense that it was based on my preconceptions of what was central in the research target (see Appendix 1). My double role as a teacher-researcher had provided a good point of departure for this conversational thematic interview that demanded the researcher's familiarity with the research target (Eskola & Suoranta 2008, 79; Dörnyei & Ushioda 2011, 237).

This first reading of data followed the principles of deductive data management while the subcategories were created inductively. In deduction, the researcher tests his/her arguments about a pre-assumed theoretical framework (Peuhkuri 2007, 134), which appeared as the themes here. Through the interview themes, the researcher already presupposes something of the phenomenon (Jaatinen 2007, 49) and controls what becomes

the meaning (Kohler Riessman 2002, 695). Predefined themes do not reveal which way the researched phenomenon is holistically shaped and silence the interviewees' individual ways of analysis (Säntti 2004, 189–190). As a result, the course elements serving as interview themes (see Appendix 1) first appeared to be the main factors of the course.

Despite their drawbacks, the themes served several purposes. The themes and data on them covered and illustrated the contents of the course, which was the source of the meanings for answering the first research problem. The themes reminded of the events on the course, which had extended all of three months, and gave easy access to conversation (see Tuomi & Sarajärvi 2009, 76) on other topics. According to Dörnyei & Ushioda (2011, 236), open interview design helps the interviewee in the exploration of the issues. A factor contributing to this was that the interviews were focused, semistructured interviews where the themes remained the same but their order varied and the interviews were formulated to suit the speech situations, for example the interviewees' short narratives and other contributions (Tiittula & Ruusuvuori 2005, 11; also Tuomi & Sarajärvi 2009, 75). Furthermore, participants steered the interview and introduced new topics (see Tiittula & Ruusuvuori 2005, 11–12), which often made the interviews spontaneous and developed them towards equally led conversation, even if in varying amounts.

The second reading resulted from the understanding of the value of the data that had emerged on the interviewees' initiative or in our conversation. This reading of the interview data resulted from inductive data management and excluded what clearly and solely concerned the themes. Certainly, the increased temporal distance to the conversational interviews contributed to this change of horizon (see Gadamer 1989, 296). About half of the contents of the first interviews and most of the second interviews contained long stretches of speech varying in topics and contents revealing more "participative, conversational, and dialogic" understandings (see Schwandt 2000, 195). It was possible to draw new ideas and categories inductively from the data (see Peuhkuri 2007, 134). The categories were as follows: adults, awareness and self-study, challenges and received help, group levels, atmosphere and relationships in the group, group cohesion, the teacher, empowerment and its impact on the course, critique, suggestions for the improvement of the course, non-functional and unproductive tasks, fears, fear of errors, expectations and goals, students' narratives and self-efficacy. A busy work period at the UAS interrupted the work on this reading after the organisation of data into categories but there was some time for background literature. As a result, Gadamer's hermeneutics became the main research philosophy. In addition, the second reading had continued long enough to bring the understanding of how the third reading ought to take place.

The third reading was inductive like the second one. It did not include data that merely concerned the themes, data which still in this phase appeared to be outside the research interests or concerned general conceptions and customary ways of thinking in culture rather than the interviewee's own (see Laine 2010, 38). However, such data were not excluded if they clearly presented the interviewee's authentic experiences and own

conclusions. For the data in the third reading, I constructed an Excel table with a column for each new tentative category and a row for each interviewee's contributions and marked the data from the second conversational interview with a II. Each cell in the table expressed the data in compact form. This table shared a few categories with the second reading, perhaps slightly changed. The names of the categories in this conversational data table and examples of the contents of the categories are presented in Appendix 2. The whole table with all 21 categories is available from the researcher. The amount of abridged data in the cells varied between non-existent and so ample that I had to write part of them outside the table. Because these data were conversational or completely student initiated, an empty cell did not indicate that the student had nothing to say about the issue but only that it did not come up in the two interviews with the student concerned.

The third reading covered a wide variety of student experiences on and about the course and the people there, about struggles for success, failures, feelings, reflective thinking, motivation, awareness, gains and plans and about their past as students and users of English. I had told the students when they were only potential interviewees that the interviews concerned their experiences on the course. This did not entitle me to enquire about their earlier experiences as language students and users, even less about their personal lives (cf. Jarvis 2004, 288) but they talked about these matters unasked. For them such matters belonged here and I did not interrupt them even if I first considered these narratives digressions (see Kohler Riessman 2002, 695) and less relevant. For example, all interviewees except one referred to their past English studies and all but four to their previous use of English. Thus, the conversational data table also contains categories on these (see Appendix 3).

The table made the construction of meanings across the categories quite feasible and facilitated movement between the whole and the parts (for example Gadamer 1989, 266–267). It was easy to view and explore data from each interviewee separately, focus on either of the two conversational interviews or both of them, or pick one or two specific aspects across all interview data. As I only saw what the students had said, it was easier to listen to them and hear them better without the sound of my own voice. The increased distance was a helpful factor here.

Most of the categories in the conversational data table came through what resembled abductive reasoning. I left the theories and the familiar concepts of foreign language education and learning aside for a while and instead focussed on the student interview data. In other words, I started from the research material, not the theory (see Paavola & Hakkarainen 2006, 271). When working with these conversational data, I formed categories, joined them and removed them after having found a more suitable context for the given data elsewhere. Only after I felt that the data was meaningfully placed in the categories, I started to build theoretical ideas from what I had discovered (see also Peuhkuri 2007, 134) and condensed the data into phenomena and theoretical concepts (see Eskola & Suoranta 2008, 77), which brought the construction of Part IIIA in this report.

Through abductive reasoning, it was possible to discover something new from in many ways familiar phenomenon. This way the process proceeded from the research material to theory combining them (see Paavola & Hakkarainen 2006, 271).

Participation as a theoretical concept corresponded to the participants' different activities and agency on the course but was also a scientific concept giving a theoretical frame to agency (see the first subsection in Part III). The contents of some other emerging categories bore a resemblance to such familiar theoretical concepts within FLE as motivation, autonomy, reflection, awareness, and spontaneity inspiring further reading on these. Even if the student data did not speak in terms of these concepts that according to the present FLE promote learning, in this case oral English communication, the data described the students' experiences and understandings of them introducing new views on the data (Eskola & Suoranta 2008, 77) and opening up new horizons for the research. This reading answered to Gadamer's demand that instead of the phenomenological stand to build concepts into a system and "applying them to all sorts of things", the concepts have to arise intuitively and from "the spirit of language" (Gadamer 2001, 113–114).

The three different readings of the research data contained different engagements and transactions, highlighted different data and led to deviating descriptions and understandings as Atkinson and Coffey (2003, 115–116) point out. Even if the first reading contained weaknesses brought by the predefined themes and uneven power relations, it revealed the students' experiences of central elements in the course implementation offering such as the other two did not. Furthermore, they often served as a less demanding opening to conversation. However, the other two readings were indispensable because they told without predefinitions more authentically the students' experiences about the studies. Even if the second reading did not proceed further than to the creation of categories, it created viable ideas for the third reading.

Appraisal of the interview data

The number of student-interviewees was small enough to let them remain individuals to me, which helped me to understand their single data contributions through their entire contribution. Apart from a number of single comments on the interview themes, no one interview resembled another. For the first interview, I did not contact those who had dropped out before halfway through the course reasoning that the interview situation might be awkward for them. Thus, the report fails to tell about their reasons for discontinuing their studies even if I learned that some people had dropped out because the course level was not suitable. I also learned that backache exacerbated by sitting made one student leave the course and along with him his wife. The length of the interviews differed for example depending on the time available, on how much the interviewees had to say, wanted to say and had thought about these issues, all of which influenced the amount of data from a

person and also the amount of citations from him/her. Sometimes an interview turned into a sequence of questions and not even short answers.

Lea: *But that [long-term role] didn't bring any benefit anyway.*

Anneli: *Well, no. Not in the way that ...*

Lea: *Like you said, at the beginning it was, like, more difficult.*

Anneli: ---

Lea: *When you said that at the beginning, then how come it didn't at the end. Was it that what you had to say was different and you didn't have to ---*

Anneli: *Not like that.*

In the interview setting, the students were the ones who knew (see Tiittula & Ruusuvaori 2005, 14). They expressed opinions opposite to mine, presented a critique of course practices, suggested improvements and told what had promoted their learning and what had not, which resulted in the category of Suggested improvements to the course, preferences and criticism in the conversational interview data. It also happened that they insistently continued with a certain issue even if I did not support them. These kinds of expressions told of autonomy, agency, shared power and the person's trust in his/her knowing. However, I certainly failed to notice something that I would have liked to hear and the interviewees wanted to tell but never got an opportunity to say. It happens that a researcher only notices his/her negligence in the interviews afterwards, which affects the data. During the transcription of the interviews I became aware of two instance of negligence:

"The questions I pose are sometimes too long. Annukka had to ask: What was the question again?"

"I do not manage to keep the dialogic attitude all the time. Too often I bring theoretical ideas to the discussion. It seems to disrupt the sharing, equality and prevents the researcher from hearing what is new. In addition, I do not always seem to be ready to wait to let the student dig out what demands more time to recall. Discovering and creating new knowledge requires time. Repeated knowledge is more readily expressed".

According to Gadamer, it is not enough to hear the interviewee. To understand, one must *listen to* him/her (Gadamer 2001, 39, italics in original). Because I wanted to pay full attention to the ongoing conversational interview, I did not take any notes during the first interviews, such as on my thoughts in the situation or on the interviewees' gestures or other non-verbal expressions. In the second interviews on the phone, I had to write down what they said. These interviews, however, were not dialogues and the students had the main role.

Spoken production and class events take place in fleeting moments. Videoing or audio recording in class would have allowed me to return to the situations and events later, given support to the course diary and the conversational interview data and increased the diversity of data. Videoing would have strengthened the contextuality and saved more of

the communication and non-verbal expressions (cf. Kvale & Brinkmann 2009, 179). The main reason against audio- and video- recording was my strong feeling that the students would not have welcomed it. For some of them, this was their first English course for years or perhaps the first since their school days. They had paid for the course and for having a teacher, but not for having their participation on the course videotaped. They could individually decide on their participation in the interviews but not on the audio recordings or videoing in the sessions. In class, the locations of activities of the varying-sized groups were scattered across the classroom. It would have been difficult for me to align the camera or microphone appropriately and I did not have anyone available for the recording.

During a UAS in-service training period that took place before the course, I had oral role-play exams videorecorded by another person while I stayed with the rest of the group in the lesson in class. Although the videorecordings were very good and served well their purpose, I still found them void of life and unsuccessful in transmitting the experience of communication and freshness of lived experience. Largely, my decision on not videoing the interviews meant that the course diary data only contained what the students had said in class and I had written down. Data written by the research participants on their course experiences would have been another source of data but in liberal education, such homework is rare and writing about the session would have taken time from the main aim of the course. Because of the course level, writing in English would have been too demanding for most of them.

The course diary data

The course diary data written in autumn 2004 concerned both research problems while the teacher-researcher's diary data written in 2005–2007 at the UAS concerned the second research problem. The names of the categories in course diary data are in Appendix 4. Apart from that, the report contains no overall account of these.

I had planned to write at least short course diary data notes during the sessions to remember everything important. Because it demanded too much attention, I started to write the notes right after the sessions, occasionally on the breaks and added notes during the next few days if remembering something more. The detailed session plans were a good help to recall what had taken place on the sessions but of course, it was impossible to recall everything that would have been worth writing down. The WE group course diary contained clearly fewer notes than the E group course diary. It was easier to remember and write down about a session of three hours than about the whole day. The evening group told about and discussed their experiences and learning in class and I could write them down. The weekend group enjoyed having long group conversations on the tasks. "We were never ready", Maria said. They may have discussed also their learning in their groups but I did not hear them.

I first computerised the initially handwritten course diaries and marked each with the group name and the number of the session before putting them together. Reading and dealing with these diary data and their analysis was inductive but at the same time, my increasing knowledge of the research target and literature contributed to the creation of the categories. The source of the course diary data was the same as that of the conversational interviews that I had already analysed. As a result, some of their categories resembled each other or were the same. Moving between these two data and juxtaposing them was possible and rewarding. The angles, positions and realities from which the students and I viewed the same events and issues, were different and partial affecting our views (cf. Richardson & Adams St. Pierre 2005, 963). For example, I worried about such incidents on the course that none of the students ever mentioned and perhaps did not even notice but failed to see that for some of them, reading in class was a burden and source of worry. A couple of the emerging categories, especially the teacher's self-criticism and teacher reflection, related to the teacher's professional development. Possibly, the early decision on the themes in the first conversational interview influenced the diary data categories. On the other side, the diary categories of atmosphere, spontaneity, empowerment etc. dealt with the same issues as the inductively drawn conversational data (see Appendices 3–4).

The teacher-researcher's diaries

The teacher researcher's two diaries written at the UAS in 2005–2007 after the empirical research formed the backbone of the follow-up research that did not comprise any other specifically implemented research activities. While the teacher-researcher's diary written in 2005 mainly contained reflections on teacher development, the other diary written in 2006–2007 described the thoughts and experiences of the researching researchee as a UAS teacher. Especially the latter diary dealt with the teacher's work, encounters and discussions with the students and colleagues and reflections on new ideas related to professional development. There were notions and reflections between theory and ongoing practice, notions of meaning and languages, learning in general and learning with and from the students. The writing of diaries spontaneously continued what had started in liberal education. Thus, there were neither any schemes nor preset aims set for them before the recognition that they could serve as research data. The diaries did not concern predefined themes or contexts. Therefore, inductive data analysis and conceptualisation based on it was natural here.

Research journal

The research journal consisting of separate files of varying length written during the research process contained reflections on issues of the proceeding research, developing research philosophy, methodology, data management and on changing them, aspects of FLE new to me and considerations of how the different elements were in line with each other. Thus, also the journal was a means of reflection. Because the journal also contained plans and tentative schemes for the construction of the research report, it allowed me to return to the earlier phases of the research and retain an overview of the research process.

II

EMPIRICAL RESEARCH: ORAL ENGLISH COURSE AND EXPERIENCES OF IT

Part II describes and explores the 45-hour study unit of oral English communication and presents the course participants' experiences of it and the relevant research results. For the main part, the results originate in the management of the deductive data from the conversational interview themes. Most of the subsections concern a theme and this is indicated in their titles. The analysis of the results and their conceptualisation are included in the same context. The course participants also commented on the study sites, classroom arrangements and course timing, which are included in the course presentation. In the interviews, people also talked unasked about their earlier studies, use of English, their goals, course expectations and recognised needs in their English (see Appendix 2, categories 1-4), proving that for them such issues were an essential part of these studies and this research. These inductively analysed data are dealt with in the first section and acquaint the reader with the course participants throwing light on their backgrounds and points of departure and also serving the discussion of the results in Part IIIA. The second section presents the course material and the third section describes how the studies took place on the course. The fourth section explores the students' spontaneously expressed course assessment and their suggestions for improvement of the course. These views were often more comprehensive and wider in comparison to the thematic data employed in subsections 2 and 3. The teacher's comments, which occasionally add another aspect to the discussion in this Part II, come from the teacher's course diary data.

1 The context for the course: organisation and participants' past experiences as students and users of English

Preparations, advance information and scheduling

During the spring and summer of 2004, I made the initial plans for the course, decided on the study materials and informed the institutes about these and about the working practices on the course. The institutes published the advance information on the courses on their homepages and in programme handouts available at local libraries and at a number of other public premises well before the beginning of the autumn term. The bigger institute sent its programme to all local households while the smaller one sent it only by request. The students enrolled over the phone, by email or the Internet or sent their enrolment form by post. The institutes revised my draft of the course aims and contents to make it conform to their overall layout and choice of the informed issues based on their expertise in what should be included from the viewpoint of their customers. As a result, the information given by the two institutes differed in some aspects but the target level was A2–B1 in both. The studies would aim at functional English skills in oral communication and speaking on the course would take place in plausible speech situations resembling natural ones.

The two parallel English courses started in late September and lasted to the end of November or early December, respectively. At 45 hours, they were the longest among the short courses at these institutes. Financial resources and the long experience of the institutes of the time that adult students could and wished to invest in a single project (see also Tarkka-Tierala 2004) dictated the length of the course. The weekend (WE) group in the smaller institute studied eight hours on Saturday and seven hours on Sunday once in September, October and November. Between each period of one hour and a half, there was a break with coffee or lunch. The group had altogether 11 students who enrolled separately for each of the three weekends, which brought some variation in the size of the group. One student found the level of the course too low and enrolled only for the first weekend, another could not participate in the last weekend and one student entered the course for the last weekend. Otherwise, absences from the sessions were very few and everyone participated in the conversational interviews. The evening (E) group initially with 19 members, met once a week and had three hours with a break in the middle and a six-hour session with breaks on two Saturdays. Absences were more common here, especially those caused by participants' autumn holidays. Five of these students discontinued the course in an early phase and were not interviewed and do not appear in the list of course participants' first name aliases and their group membership (see Appendix 6). Students in both groups commented on their course schedule in the conversational interviews.

Ari: Yes, of course, we have courses in our firm, but it's hard for a salesman because you're on the move so much. I prefer having it at the weekend. It's hard after a day's work. At the weekend, so you get some benefit from it. In the morning at least you feel fresh, err, so yes, for me it works better like that.

Maarit: Yeah, I really liked it because on Saturday there was more time. That was the reason I joined that course; not the level. So it was because of those Saturdays that, I, yeah, really liked it because it's a longer time. That's the reason I joined the course. It wasn't the level. I came because of those Saturdays because I reckoned the thing was, like, I can immerse myself and so reinforce what I'm learning because you have to be there a long time and you can't, like, run away once you've arrived and then you're just there.

Annukka: First, I was afraid of the two and a half hours. It was a really long time but, once I got myself there, then the hard work of learning started. And the break in-between.

The E group members usually came to the course after the working day while the WE group most probably had no work duties on the same day. For some participants the weekend studies were the only feasible course time. In long sessions one could really focus on English and learn a lot. No one in the weekend group mentioned the long gap between the study weekends as a drawback. Some students in the E group had to wait at their place of work or somewhere else for the course to begin; others had to rush to arrive in time but nonetheless, the general feeling was that they left the class refreshed. In advance, even if no longer on the actual course, a session of two and a half hours in the evening after a long break in studies appeared even frighteningly long. On the other hand, there were people in the same group who were disappointed when they missed one or both of their long Saturday sessions because of their other duties and commitments. Not being able to participate in them and their many activities and shared hours aroused feelings of being less included in the group. A changing programme, varying activities, the experience of learning and the breaks made the time even fly and invigorated even after a working day. The breaks were well-timed and also the days with 7-8 hours passed quickly. Long sessions, either over the weekend or on Saturdays, seemed to take place without tiredness or hurry and allowed for a good time with focus and joy in learning. They had also been a significant factor in the choice of the course, even more important than the level. However, one student in both groups said that they had once got tired, even exhausted, on a long session even if one of them assumed that it was partly caused by her general tiredness. No one mentioned that this would have happened in the short evening sessions.

The diversity in the schedules and in the length of sessions increases adults' opportunities for participation in the language courses that for them more often than not, take place alongside of daily work and other duties. When a course extends over the whole term, it unavoidably causes absences, for example owing to seasonal holiday trips, travelling, impediments caused

by work, family, illnesses and competing interests. Weekend courses with day-long studies are a good alternative for those whose work demands travelling, are busy on the week or cannot participate in the evenings on the week when most courses are available. Two whole days on three weekends had brought people who were ready to stake themselves. Weekend studies and even a few Saturdays between evening classes give unique and welcome opportunities to concentrate on English. One is not tired then. Despite the will to learn, a student can experience the thought of joining a session as uncomfortable. Getting over this threshold and joining a long session rewards the student with many hours of English studies, a wide range of experiences and immersion in English.

In long sessions as in shorter ones, intensive thinking and participation in many activities and assignments must alternate with well-timed, sufficient breaks. The less active phases in the session support learning and wellbeing and prevent tiredness and fatigue because they allow the students to relax and gear themselves up. In case the teacher fails to notice the signs of tiredness and fatigue in class, it is important that the students feel free to suggest, for example, a change in the programme or an earlier break.

Classrooms and other site arrangements

The weekend group was given a large spacious room where it was easy to move around and find space and distance when necessary. The room had big windows, comfortable chairs, a carpet and pot plants. It lacked desks but the easy chairs were low enough to allow study material to be kept on the floor. Available services included lunch and coffee in the dining room. The evening group met in an austere physics classroom at an upper level comprehensive school. The swivel chairs were hard and necessitated an upright sitting position but they were height adaptable, easy to move and turned to both sides for a pair work and towards the board. We started without desks but soon changed to two or three students sitting around one desk but with no one their back to the blackboard or behind another student. There was no cafeteria to go to during the breaks but the electric cooker in the classroom inspired us to prepare potluck lunches in our two Saturday sessions. In both session rooms, we had maps of the world, the USA and the British Isles for reference, posters of landscapes and large sheets of paper with language items, such as phrases and vocabulary on a given theme. The evening group had two blackboards, the weekend group a flip chart. My table for papers, the CD player and fresh flowers was inconspicuous.

Minna (group WE): *I thought it was really nice, the class. It was a small thing, but anyway it was the semicircle. That was the good part of it. Really good. That it was really good. First I was a bit surprised, that "oh yeah". It looks a bit different here.*

Ritva (group E): *The feeling you get at school was missing, or actually the feeling you get when you study. And that was good. You're not talking down the neck of the person in front of you. Nobody talks like that. It was good that the environment was different right from the start.*

Most of the comments on the study environment concerned the semicircle and its benefits and drawbacks. The semicircular seating in language studies was new but the students soon got used to it and recognised its benefits. Above all, it did not give the feeling of a school classroom. The easy swapping of places and the frequent change of people sitting next to you came with the semicircle. In real life oral communication people do not speak to the back of each other's neck. The semicircle allowed everyone to speak face-to-face with everyone. However, I noticed that, despite the semicircle, the students often spoke to me instead of the whole group (E2). The semicircle helped the students stay alert and receptive. You could not hide behind a desk for security. It took little time to get used to the openness of the semicircle but carrying out tasks and assignments quickly brought the essential experience of security. The semicircle also ensured better hearing. The lack of tables for study material caused some inconvenience in the E group. The small tables adopted for use turned out to be a good solution but they paired or grouped people, which slightly diminished the feeling of togetherness and the experience of cohesion. The weekend group enjoyed their comfortable, low and wide armchairs. No one mentioned the lack of tables as a source of inconvenience.

The quality of the classrooms and their furniture influence expectations of the studies and are important for effective learning. Comfortable chairs seem to contribute positively to the atmosphere. These rooms conveniently allowed whole group and small group activities and this way promoted participation from the very first class. Semicircular seating is good and helpful in studying where communication and the participation of everyone are central aims. This seating, common in suggestopedia and cooperative learning because of the good eye contact between all involved (Lozanov & Gateva 1989, 20; Leppilampi 2002, 292), facilitates general and multi-directional communication better than seating where the students face only the teacher. Being able to see the face of everyone who speaks makes it easier to hear and understand what people say.

Semicircular seating where swapping places is easy familiarises everybody with each other, which fosters togetherness, equality and the social quality of learning. This seating does not pose the traditional choice between sitting at the back or in front. However, students very often speak to the teacher, not to everyone in class. When new, sitting in a semicircle can make people insecure. The semicircle suggests that people have to speak there, but it does not tell them how it will take place, which may make people feel less secure at the beginning. Thus, it is necessary to alleviate it through practices that create safety. On the other hand, the semicircle setting can diminish the negative memories of earlier studies. Unfortunately, such memories can be relived, for example through the practice of having to read in turns in the circle.

Course participants and their histories as students and users of English

At the beginning of the courses, I received the lists of the participants and their telephone numbers – I only used them for the second conversational interviews – and copies of the registration forms from one of the two institutes. During the course, I learned that some

of them had studied languages or other subjects at the same or a corresponding institute, but most of them were first-timers in both respects. Very few people knew somebody else in the group. Four fifths of the participants were women. The oldest students were born in the 1930s and the two youngest who studied in the WE group, were in their early twenties. Study experiences varied. Students and their learning are affected by the education of their teachers, the beliefs about learning psychology at that time and the materials (Kaikkonen 2004, 163–164; Kohonen 2005, 9), the teachers' personalities, their ways of working and their theoretical and methodological preferences.

I asked the course participants about their expectations, wishes and needs, which resulted in a few comments. Halfway through the course I inquired about their opinions on the course contents and its implementation to adjust it to their wishes and needs (E6 and W3). For the people in the evening group, the strongest reason for choosing the course was the development of their English competence to functional proficiency (E1). My course diary contained many notes on their questions and comments and on our discussions on learning, language and on grammar, too (E1–E6 and E8). In the latter half of the course, especially after our halfway discussions, the evening group typically shared their difficulties and problems concerning English and their successful and less successful experiences of speaking and strivings for this proficiency (E6, E8, E11 and E13). There were also spontaneous discussions on learning between individual students and me before and after the sessions and during the breaks.

The advance information of the WE group had emphasised speech and defined the course as suggestopedic. This group had less interest in text exploration and grammar issues than the evening group, wished for conversation and discourse phrases, was very keen to start work on the assignments and enjoyed long and extensive conversational tasks (WE 1 and 2). The WE group used to consult each other instead of presenting their questions in class. General discussions on learning and English were fewer there. (WE 1–6).

The course participants' personal reasons and the advance information contribute to their choice of course and influence its formation and the life on the course and to some extent, its contents and it is the contents that demand listening, interpretation of the situation and impartial flexibility. On courses like these, people are assumed to be eager to speak and here they turned out to be such. For some people the aim of developing one's English oral foreign language competency and its promotion to proficiency are indicated by asking questions on the target language, expressing and discussing one's problems in the use of English, sharing one's experiences of it and receiving ideas and advice from others. Especially in liberal education, such questions and discussions are helpful for the teacher because they also inform about the participants interests, level, difficulties and needs concerning the target. A few questions can also suggest that to give the students more, the level of the course could be higher.

The course participants spontaneously told about their earlier English studies and use of English, their expectations and goals and about their weaknesses and needs in English, which appear as the first four categories in the conversational data table. I would like

to point out that these, like the other data in the table, emerged in the interviews after the course. When placed here in Part II, these data and the discussion on them serve as background information for the course implementation and its results. The time that had elapsed on the course cannot have changed much of their histories as students and users of English. Instead, the growth of awareness of one's aims and needs is an ongoing process resulting from experiences and learning, and the course certainly had an impact on thinking about one's expectations, goals, needs and weaknesses, and on changing the last of these. The criterion for the formation of the groups in the discussion on all four topics was the amount and length of earlier English studies. Each topic begins with a representative of the group with the most extensive studies and ends with the one of the group with least studies. Some of the students mentioned all their studies, others only the school years, vocational studies and/or their English studies ongoing elsewhere. If the student had mentioned little or nothing of his/her earlier studies, I chose the group based on his/her participation in the lessons documented in the course diary notes. The unusually ample citations aim at telling about the course participants as people with different, unique histories, needs and hopes as users and students of English. In addition, it opened up a new view for the researcher, too.

Earlier English studies

Maarit: *The thing with me is that I've studied English for a hundred years but I've never needed to, or I've never had a chance to speak it.*

Ritva: *For me, my strong language is German and then I also speak Russian, but English. Yes, I know enough to cope as a tourist but that's all.*

Ilkka: *What have I studied? I've had all sorts of things, at least studying English for various occupational fields.*

Elina: *I studied English for a couple of years in primary school, but I'm sure I've forgotten all of it. I've studied on my own a lot. As well as on adult education centre courses ... I always started at the beginning and then I stopped and then I started once again.*

Maarit represents those who had studied English in the comprehensive school or its predecessor and in the upper secondary school, perhaps followed by field specific studies. Surprisingly, these people with the most extensive English studies formed the biggest group on this A2–B1 level course. Three of them had studies of written English ongoing. The members of the small second group, represented by Ritva here, had shorter, either six-year or only three-year English studies at school, often because German had been their first foreign language. Each of them had studied English in the upper secondary school. Those whose studies had taken place in the comprehensive school or its predecessor and more often than not in the context of vocational studies formed the third group that was the second biggest. In the small, fourth group English studies were scarce. Two of them

had conducted their English studies during a long span of time, mostly in liberal adult education. One of these people had also taken a course abroad. The third one had extensive school studies in German and had quite recently started her English studies on a course offered by the employer. All three had studied much on their own.

The course members' English studies varied a lot, both in length and quality. The people in the first group had chosen this course with regard to their spoken English proficiency and/or their limited experiences of it. It turned out that even though the second group's English studies were hardly longer than those of the students in the third group, they had altogether a more extensive and higher level of language studies, probably including relatively long studies in Swedish. This had given them a more solid basis for English than the third group, whose English studies – perhaps all their English studies - had taken place when they were quite young. For them, their vocational studies and learning English through their work were more important, but clearly these had not given much support to their grammar. Ilkka had noticed this and had started to study grammar systematically on his own. The fourth group consisted of lifelong students who had already retired from the working life. Each of them had firmly decided to become a user of English and they had concluded that this course would be a rewarding and suitable part in the sequence of their studies.

Earlier use of oral English in one's life contexts

Mirjami: When we are consulting, everything is in English and we answer in English and all the instructions underneath are in English and so on. So I manage to read them more or less but when it comes to talking English – oh dear but when it comes to talking English – oh dear. One of the things with me is that I don't remember a single word.

Kaarina: ... When I'm with my husband's Irish relatives, I never say anything. And when I travel with my husband, he's the one who talks because he's much better at it and I just listen in the background.

Mika: Yes, like I use English every week. Italians and Spanish, they speak the same sort of English. They're not too good at it. I get along with them. Just unbelievable.

Mirja: Those others have so much to say. For me the words don't come out like that ... If I'm abroad, I can talk calmly and explain what this is. This is made of this and this is the way it is.

For many of these students, the use of English especially in working life, was frequent, often daily, and for some of them the permanent working language. They sent emails and used other means of electronic transmission for international communication in English, including one student who had only recently started her English studies. In the written medium, the communication systems gave the opportunity to turn to colleagues and to language aids, for example, target-focused formula, work-related vocabularies, phrases and email phraseology. Many of them spoke English with their foreign customers, both on the

phone and face-to-face and, if necessary, they prepared for the meetings in advance. Some of them had a wide-ranging store of occupational English and they prepared themselves for contacts in English, but it was less helpful in unexpected phone calls. Taking notes and understanding only caused minor problems, except when the spoken English was different from what they were used to. It was easier to speak English when travelling abroad, especially on longer trips, but it was often what they called tourist English. Difficulties in initiating conversation emerged in personal life, too. It was the travelling companion with the better speaking skills who took the speaker's role and spoke for both. A long span of time between the occasions when English was spoken was an impediment. Unfortunately, for two of those who had studied least, the classroom had been the only place for the use of English. The third one had travelled alone to Great Britain and taken a course there.

The results from the use of English data presented an intriguing fact. Quite a few of those in the first group did not speak English at all or spoke it only when as a tourist abroad. They could not find the words when they tried to say something or they could not make themselves speak or were too afraid or too shy to speak English, even if they communicated daily in written English. Being able to speak German was not of much use but it seems to support people in speaking English in informal contexts. Those belonging to the third group used to speak English face-to-face or mainly on the telephone with their customers, who often spoke world Englishes. In contrast, though, written communication was not easy for everyone in this group. They had not needed speaking and writing to an equal extent.

Expectations and goals

This section describes what these people strived to achieve in English in the future.

Anneli: I'd like to, sort of, concentrate on vocabulary, but quite a bit on listening, too.

Leena: ... you've got to do something when you get to this age, and I think it's a good way of keeping your head above water ... I mean like for exercising your memory and stuff like that. It's precisely for that as well.

Ari: ... I can only talk about my own world where I use English and there the only important thing is that things move, like, forward. And that's been, like, my first objective and then that it will improve.

Mirja: Now I should just start speaking.

These people needed English for work, work promotion and for future studies in English, for travelling and free-time activities to communicate with people who were interested in the same hobbies but did not speak Finnish. They hoped to be able to start speaking on the course, to gain an incentive to speak and study English and to improve and expand their oral communication and use English in a more expressive and many-sided way. They hoped to understand spoken English better or refresh their English and memory through revising

what they had learned and partly forgotten. An improved command of vocabulary and common phrases used in communication was also mentioned. In general, they wanted to make progress with their English. For Leena, one of the main purposes of English studies was to activate her and make her use her memory. Mirja was aware of the many things that she needed and wanted to learn in English, but to start speaking was the main thing for her.

Rogers suggests that adults join a learning episode to solve a particular problem and apply their gain in a specific, concrete context (Rogers, A. 2002, 123). With few exceptions, these people knew what they wanted and needed and for what purpose. Rebenius underlines that the use of the target language in one's social life contexts, not native-speaker skill is the proper aim (Rebenius 2007, 308). None of course participants mentioned native-speaker skills as their aim. Ojala assumes that an obvious aim elderly persons set for lifelong learning is to uphold their mental vigour (Ojala 2005, 54–55), which was also expressed here. On this course it turned out that such people were also active, goal-aware and successful students of English. For the people in the fourth group, these studies denoted the fulfillment of what had been impossible to realise earlier, as Ojala points out (Ojala 2005, 55–56), but they had not joined the course for entertainment and company, motives which Ojala discovered in her research (Ojala 2005, 54–55).

Experienced weaknesses and needs in one's English

Again, this discussion on the specific needs and weaknesses people had noticed in their English come from the conversational interviews after the course. Thus, this discussion speaks of awareness of their own English competence and proficiency and questioning of them. The citations reveal that they had thought a lot about their English but were still wondering at the time of the first interviews. In the second interview after a year, Tuuli explained that the situation with her English was fine. She had become a speaker of English.

Tuuli: Yeah, the thing with me is that I reckon I, like, understand English pretty well, but, but like, and I understand, you know, text, but it's just that I can't speak a word of it.

Aino: Would it have helped more, or perhaps it would've helped me more, or should there have been more material?

Vesa: I wanted travel vocabulary, but myself I've got a strong feeling that the first thing I should do is that (studying grammar).

Merja: Yes, I understand pretty well, but I'm weak at producing speech, and pronouncing and all of that.

Especially those with extensive English studies found that their speaking lagged behind what they could read and understand and write. A wider vocabulary or even the activation of their existing vocabulary and the ability to express themselves freely would be helpful.

Speaking was hampered because one found no words at all or lacked the words needed in a situation or one could not find the necessary words quickly enough to be able to speak before someone else did. Even if one likes to speak, the better and more confident speaker easily assumes the speaker's role. For example, lacking central travelling vocabulary makes communication difficult abroad. It did not help that one's work-related language contacts mainly took place with non-natives if they most often took place in written English. Despite the wish to speak, one had to fight one's preference to listen instead of speaking. People needed viable opportunities to speak, even the obligation to speak, because it was difficult to start speaking. Some even disliked speaking despite their wish to learn to speak English.

The telephone was a difficult medium of communication, one reason being the assumption of one's limited vocabulary in the given field. Furthermore, the people with whom one had to speak often spoke and pronounced in an unfamiliar way. Prepositions and articles caused worry. It was difficult to distinguish between articles and prepositions. Both were short. The construction of sentences was mentioned as being difficult. Some of them just felt they simply needed to learn more. Anneli, who had studied English in five institutes and whose knowledge of English was one of the widest in the group, found it difficult to understand non-native speakers. Another student used vocational and professional English material but could not communicate orally at all. Part of the students had a sufficient command of grammar; part of them had studied very a little of it or had forgotten much of what they had learned. For some of them, the most important thing was to get over their discouraging memories of speaking in class or to get rid of their feelings of shame caused by their pronunciation.

These people were not ashamed of telling about their weaknesses and needs but talked about them freely on their own initiative. They had joined the course to improve their oral communication but they were also aware of what slowed the process down and tried to discover what they needed to develop their skills and what the weaknesses were they had to deal with and fight. They also had expectations and goals that told about their motivation. The course also faced challenges concerning the length and quality of preceding English studies and people's uneven foreign language profiles, for example the fact that the students had interpreted the course level either as their English in general or to speaking in particular. Furthermore, there had not been many courses with focus on oral English and the necessity to find suitable timing limited the choice further.

Pavlenko and Lantolf maintain that foreign language learners are "socially constituted and situated beings" with histories and intentions. They are people with affect and agency. (Pavlenko & Lantolf 2000, 155.) These people's study histories, life contexts, earlier experiences of the use of English and the meanings they gave to them influenced their existing speaking proficiency and their English competence in general and made their points of departure, their expectations and hopes, needs and weaknesses different. Even when adults' overall foreign language competence can be considered to be approximately at the same level like here, the extent and profiles of their communicative language competencies

as students and users differ widely. On the other hand, the discovery of existing differences such as these speaks of the reality.

2 Course materials

The criteria for the selection of the text material were its suitable level, its appropriateness for adults and for a course of this length, its sufficiently action-based quality and interactive, realistic or at least apparently truthful situations in spoken language for the promotion of the target proficiency for real life communication in English. My own experience and the literature, especially CEF (2001), provided information on what these students' level of English denoted in theory and practice, what they probably knew and what their current aims would be. It was on the course and, in fact, in the conversational interviews after the course that I first learned to know the course participants' real English competence and proficiency. General language would best serve at this course level. Furthermore, such vocabulary would leave the students with more resources for the target proficiency itself.

At the UAS, quite a few students with a fair knowledge of English had told me that they believed they had sufficient professional vocabulary but not enough general vocabulary to pass the oral English exams at the UAS. My UAS students, whose improved proficiency was part of my interest in the present research, qualified for work in social welfare and health care. In these fields, communication lies – and must lie – at the core of the care. Even when taking place in a foreign language, communication demands a holistic encounter with otherness. (Kohonen et al. 2005, 333–334.) This means that the encounter with clients and patients is not only a matter of professional language.

In CEF, the communicative needs of learners were at the centre, which underlines the use of materials that fulfil such needs and take the learners' characteristics into account (CEF 2001, 142). It was important to have inviting and communicative material offering appropriate and rich opportunities for speech and providing the students with meaningful contexts for many-sided oral communication at A2–B1. Finally yet importantly, there is one more viewpoint to offer in favour of general language. It is the viewpoint of the student who is expected to join a new foreign language group, has to adjust to it and its teacher, get to know all the unknown course participants and start conversing with them.

Anneli: I think it was a good, good idea because, like, it's a starting point for everyone, with us all being new there are certain tensions: adapting to the group and then when you've met the group of people a few times, you dare to be brave and I reckon the thing with Finns is that they find it hard to speak, then for me it was good and if the vocabulary is familiar then the discussion comes out, like, better.

Main text materials: *Hear Say* and *A Holiday in Cornwall* (conversational interview theme)

The main text materials on the course were a recently published booklet called *Hear Say* (Nurmi & Pitkänen 2003) and a 19-page photocopied narrative material called *A Holiday in Cornwall*, which I wrote for the course (Leino & Leino-Sandberg 2004). Their conceptions of using and learning a foreign language differed. They advocated different methods of learning but both focused on oral English communication and had language that was used in oral communication. Both contained culture-bound conventions of greeting, addressing and politeness (see CEF 2001, 118–119) and fixed expressions, such as phrasal verbs, and other fixed expressions (CEF 2001, 110–111) that often lack a close equivalent between languages. Tuuli had thought about the usefulness of having two sets of materials:

Tuuli: Having two (sets of material) was good in that there were two, like, very different ways or different types of text. That one of them was in a way, like, one of them was more informal. But, err, that book (Hear Say) was good because there you once again went through, you know, you went through pretty much the same things as here (in the handout) but in a different way, somehow.

According to its authors, *Hear Say* was meant to serve as a handy guide to conversation in English. If no time existed for extensive studies, conversational expressions learnt by heart could offer at least some introduction to intercultural communication where non-participation was often considered impolite. (Nurmi & Pitkänen 2003, 3.) The fifteen dialogues in the book presented service or information situations in a matter-of-fact style and in simple language and contained commonly used phrases. The expression was economical and the dialogues followed a strictly logical sequence. After each dialogue, the book presented information on the English language, oral and short written assignments, frames for further interactive speech situations and sociolinguistic and cultural knowledge (see CEF 2001, 118–121). *Hear Say* also gave the students an Internet address to check their answers to the assignments. The last pages presented a communication catalogue with discourse phrases, a comprehensive alphabetical vocabulary for the book and a short list of abbreviations. The two CDs attached to the book contained the dialogues, oral exercises, assignments and a simulated animated cocktail party where the language of socialising played a significant role. The focus on oral communication and the CDs were the decisive reasons for the choice of *Hear Say*.

In *Hear Say*, students appreciated the clear layout, the arrangement of the contents on the pages and the short but sufficient vocabulary, which was conveniently placed beside the dialogue and logically grouped. *Hear Say* contained useful phrases and everyday routine situations that one perhaps had forgotten but needed for participation in everyday situations. The lack of grammar was a positive thing. For those with lesser English competence, the level of the texts was good. Their easiness gave self-confidence. In line with the authors' thinking, learning such expressions by heart was considered to

be valuable help in communicative speech situations. The students with a good level of competence appreciated the word explanations and tips on English culture and language but were slightly disappointed with the level and the shortness of the dialogues. On the other hand, some students liked the brevity of the situational dialogues. It was possible to concentrate on them fully from the beginning to the end. The CDs were a good support for learning. It was possible to listen to them and repeat and recall the pronunciation at home. Unfortunately, the recordings of the dialogues were often too fast for the student to repeat, let alone to think and repeat the lines without pressing the pause button, and so it was impossible to listen and repeat the dialogues while, for example, doing housework at the same time. Instead, one could listen to them when driving a car.

The assessment of *Hear Say* tells of the diversity of adult students' needs even in groups with a defined study level and the shared aim of promoting oral communication. A text that appears rewarding and suitably short for some, may be of little use for others. The multifacetedness of the course book, demonstrated in its cultural issues, pronunciation tips for demanding words and the CDs with well-chosen contents, expands the usefulness of the book in a group with diverse foreign language competence. The command of common phrases gives self-confidence and serves as a means of entering to English conversation. Learning by heart and using its results can add the students' awareness of different ways of learning, which happened here.

A Holiday in Cornwall was a handout with 19 photocopied pages stapled together. Students got it in the first lesson. The English text was on the left side and Finnish translations on the right side of the page like in suggestopedic books (for example Saféris 1987, 28; Aarvala & Aho 1984). The handout did not have any grammar sections. My experiences of foreign language classes had told me that the course participants' level of English would differ widely and not all of them would study the text in advance. In the study of the text, the Finnish translation could narrow the differences caused by these two facts. When understanding the text did not pose obstacles, we had more time to explore the text and could proceed more quickly to speaking.

The course aims were wider than those in *Hear Say*. Coherent discourse and increased length of stretches of speech (see CEF 2001, 24 and 123–129) were a specific challenge at these levels, especially at A2. The handout contained text for reading, conversation and vocabulary for level B1 and alternative expressions and expressions of negotiation and hesitation. It was necessary that the texts in *A Holiday in Cornwall* presented truly interactive speech events. *Hear Say* had what Burns calls transactional genres that concern pragmatic outcomes such as services. Interactional genres deal with the development and maintenance of such social relationships that are, for example, typical of casual conversations. (Burns 2003, 129 and 131–132.) *A Holiday in Cornwall* included events with natural human encounters, personal experiences, shared and different interests and opinions, unexpectedness and spontaneity, all of which aimed at the emergence of improvisation. *A Holiday in Cornwall* was a story. According to Bruner, a story demands action and consciousness, agency, intentions and situations (Bruner 1986, 14). These are

elements which bring liveliness, introduce values and make the identities and relationships diverse the way they are in real life.

Moreover, the material should open the door to students' stories and drama, creativity and freedom of expression through imagination, which is also a means of creating of atmosphere. Especially at A2 and even at B1, the matter-of-fact and here-and-now style makes negotiation difficult. A story should also express what the characters know and feel and what they do not (Bruner 1986, 14). Aesthetics is part of human existence, thought and language, and thus an authentic and productive part of language education (see CEF 2001, 56) worthy of inclusion in this story. Our first language, which is born along with our life and feelings we experience with the people in our immediate environment, becomes an emotional language and emotional memory is constructed differently from the memory that stores knowledge (Kaikkonen 2004, 119). We cannot have the same emotional basis when speaking English but emotional memory could be involved and benefited from here if emotions were included in the texts and tasks in *A Holiday in Cornwall*. The language in the material should address the students as visual, auditive and kinaesthetic persons (see Reid 1999, 301; Kottler, Zehm & Kottler 2005, 33–34). For example, a kinaesthetic person learns more effectively and more authentically if the text material creates images of movement, touch and physical activity.

I presented my plans for the second set of text material to Päivi Leino-Sandberg who shared the first two writing sessions with me bringing along her sense of humour, her ideas and good knowledge of spoken English. The initial plan of the scenes developed into six dialogues forming a plot. Next, we wrote more text to join the scenes logically together. After this, I expanded the already existing scenes and wrote a few more to increase the amount of interactive situations. Scenes taking place in various situations and locations forming logical chains of events brought vocabulary, ideas for tasks and some one-page handouts. When most of the dialogue texts were practically finished, my co-author proofread them and commented on them. Next, I started to work on linguistic issues. By adding plans for future activities and memories of the past, I could increase the variety of tenses. Hopes, dreams and plans strengthened the affective quality and the diversity of modalities.

A Holiday in Cornwall shared many characteristics and themes with a suggestopedic course book. Apart from the fact that our handout contained the translation into the students' first language, its texts were communicative, happy, optimistic and light-hearted. Affect was included and the events resembled those in real life (see Lozanov 1980, 62; 1978, 278; Lozanov & Gateva 1989, 65). In *A Holiday in Cornwall*, the characters arrived in Cornwall, participated in trips and excursions, made visits, organised parties, shared meals, followed their interests, conversed and told stories about their lives and finally, said goodbye to each other at the airport. It was a story of a carefree holiday shared by eight people speaking English as their first language. There were no crises and nothing went "really awry" because of the characters and circumstances (c.f. Bruner 1986, 21 and 16), but a few minor conflicts and problems occurred. Scenes with something negative were

necessary because disagreement and non-positive feelings are part of human life and its interactions.

A Holiday in Cornwall abounded with human relationships and encounters. Therefore, writing the dialogues concerned ethical decisions on the activities, on the tasks drawn from the story, on conversations and shorter expressions and on the attitudes that the persons showed towards each other. The students would use and respond with the language and expressions available in the material both in class and probably in real life encounters in future.

Mika: *I think the stories were the best bet. The story sticks in your mind a lot easier so it's not just the learning. Something sticks, the story sticks in your memory. Then via the story some of the English version also sticks.*

Ilona: *You aren't left with your own thoughts and guess when you have to read it on your own. Sometimes I took the Finnish version and translated it and then I had the other to check from.*

The students liked the tone of speaking and the personal approach in *A Holiday in Cornwall*. It was enlivening and cheerful, resembled real life and told about “living people” that one got to know and that conversed in a natural way. The conversations concerned familiar holiday and free time events and it felt as if you were on a holiday yourself. The material invited you to read it just for fun, even as a bedtime story. The students were content with the texts and its length, with its vocabulary, including travelling vocabulary, with the useful idioms and phrases. In general, it gave more to the level B students than *Hear Say*. A story with a plot and logical structure was easy to remember and the story made it easier to remember the language, too. However, the inclusion of some working life vocabulary would have been welcome. Some students, including one of those with very little school English, were of the opinion that this material would have been sufficient on its own.

The students found use for *A Holiday in Cornwall* especially when studying on their own at home. The answers to any questions they might have had about the text were quickly available. You did not have to go back and forth between the text and a wordlist placed elsewhere or search a dictionary for an unknown word and, while doing so, forget the context. With the help of the translation, they could check their understanding of a word, an expression or a whole sentence, which liberated them from misinterpretations. It was important to learn what the whole expression really meant. They analysed the text, its grammar, constructions and word order, compared them with the Finnish text and thought about the differences between English and Finnish. Some students translated sentences from Finnish into English to expand their expression and active vocabulary. Someone just had a quick look at the translation; another almost forgot its existence. The approach with emphasis on translation and grammar in foreign language studies is a linguistic method and is not based on a theoretical ground (Järvinen 2012, 228). Here the adult students found diverse use for the translation according to their needs, level and interests. On the

other hand, finding the meanings of the unknown words in the dictionary by oneself would have had another impact on learning especially for those for whom coping with the text did not take much time and effort. The lack of information on the pronunciation of unknown words was mentioned as a drawback.

When the students in a group have very different background studies and widely different abilities to understand English text, when the text is not easy and no vocabulary exists, translations in the students' first language are a useful resource. Especially for those with short English studies, the translations are helpful, serve as a time-saver and help them to cope with a demanding text. Finding those strategies which really promote one's learning and awareness of the language demand decisiveness and motivation to learn, something which these people had. A pronunciation key and/or a CD recording for demanding text material with regard to developing the students' competence would improve the benefit for all students. On the other hand, demanding pronunciation and tongue twisters can bring fun and courage, provided the course climate is supportive as it was experienced to be here. The two sets of materials contained ordinary situations common especially on travels. Two different materials increased the suitability and benefits of the material on a course where the students' earlier studies, their previous experiences of English use and their aims were relatively unknown and differed widely, which is common in adult language study groups, especially within liberal education. Those with their English at B1 or above it have more abilities to participate in extended communication demanding initiation, flexibility, wider expression of personal views and coping with unexpected situations and demands (CEF 2001, 34 and 74). On a course like this, the text material has to be suitable for the facilitation of speech and participation and contain prerequisites of growth for everyone. For example, some people think and learn well through narratives while others prefer matter-of-fact texts. Encountering the same expressions in different contexts supports learning. Two different text materials with differing levels, purpose and tone bring variety to learning, are helpful in the fulfilment of expectations and preferences and ensure participation and learning.

The difference between *Hear Say* and *A Holiday in Cornwall* concretised the difference between social phrases and service communication on the one hand and spontaneous, on-the-spot constructed speech on the other hand. During the course, I wrote in the course diary "I have also thought a lot about what exactly the study material should offer on a course with the focus on spoken production. What is too easy or too difficult, when the aim is not knowledge but the ability to participate and speak" (course diary E8). Later, I found one answer from Wenger. "For practice, information must be coherent enough to be translated into a way of being in the world. To be empowering, negotiable and not fragmented, information must build up "to an identity of participation" (Wenger 1998, 220). Hence, the information, not only the texts but also the rest of the study material, must be transferable and applicable to how the students are in this world as people, students and speakers of English.

Culture from the English-speaking world

Language as a cultural phenomenon implies the inclusion of target culture into language education (see Kaikkonen 2004, 166–168). *Hear Say* offered a good amount of cultural knowledge related to life and customs in Britain. Penzance, St. Ives, the Lizard Peninsula and Lizard's Point in Cornwall where the events of *A Holiday in Cornwall* took place became familiar through their authentic websites. The wall maps were in frequent use for example when the students planned trips and assessed distances. We had American, Irish and English songs and folk music. The restaurant menus used in one task were based on British menus.

Sociocultural knowledge was a good source of tasks. We had proverbs that told about English and Irish beliefs and attitudes to life and present-day American folk wisdom. In the task on proverbs, each student received a slip of paper with the beginning or the end of a proverb and found the person who had the other part of it. Each pair read their proverb to the whole group and the proverbs were explained if necessary, after which people started to work on another assignment with the person they had shared the proverb with. Another time, the students received a collection of present-day American folk wisdom (Brown 1991; Appendix 10) and found out in small groups what it said. Then each student chose his/her favourite from among them, presented it in their group and finished by sharing it with all of us and also justifying his/her choice. Here, they had to orientate and consider folk wisdom from the viewpoints of two cultures, which brought encounter with the other culture (see Kaikkonen 2004, 153–154) while the first task was merely an example of the pedagogy of information (see Kaikkonen 2004, 150–152). Like many other tasks, the two described above gave every student an opportunity to read and listen to the others and, especially the second one, to speak to the whole group without much preparation.

Learning-to-learn material (conversational interview theme)

Learning-to-learn skills improve, enhance and strengthen our capacity to learn in the present circumstances and later when the circumstances of learning have changed (Hargreaves 2004, 2 and 27–28). Specific reasons for emphasizing learning-to-learn within adult education are the wide variation in their needs and English skills and the limited time for guidance from a teacher between their independent studies. For an introduction to self-assessment and a means of implementing it, I chose sensory modalities, learning strategies, and a few criteria-based scales and one grid from CEF. I did not know the students' interest in learning-to-learn issues but assumed that they would prefer pragmatic knowledge to theory and prefer speaking and doing to only hearing about them in English. Thus, practical applications followed the discussion on them.

Sensory modalities also called perceptual learning styles (Reid 1999, 301) offer metacognitive knowledge important for future studies. Sensory modalities include visual,

auditory and kinaesthetic style (Kottler, Zehm & Kottler 2005, 32) and influence how people see, perceive and understand the world and how they learn and remember. Acquaintance with them has helped my students to understand more about their own language learning, for example. Even if relatively well known, I believed that they were worth presenting in this course. We had a grid with three columns suggesting visual, auditive and kinaesthetic/tactile alternatives for taking action in ten everyday life situations. The students decided which way they would most likely act in each. After this, we had tasks falling within the scope of each modality to give opportunities to further consider one's own preferences and strengths.

Ari: I was so sure I'm an auditory person that I didn't have to think about it a lot, that I didn't, like, when I see a word then I don't necessarily understand anything of it at all ... When I hear a lot more of the language then I somehow learn it by ear. First and foremost. And then when I read something and ask someone what this, this word, means and then they say it out loud and I don't even have to ask anymore.

Maarit: And the fact is I was really happy we went through the different learning methods and that might have had the effect that for the first time I realised I was more of a kinaesthetic learner than I thought and I noticed that while I was actually spinning around in that chair.

People told about their strengths and weaknesses in the sensory modalities and made discoveries but they also saw that practising one sensory modality made it even stronger. They realised that for them it was more difficult to understand and remember what they received auditive and/or visually, but that they enjoyed and benefited much more from learning kinaesthetically. On the course, participation in the tasks and activities entailed moving from one place to another, swapping places, moving chairs and desks and doing things with the hands. They brought kinaesthetic elements and movement to the sessions and represented procedural memory, which is related to body movement and activates learning (Tileston 2004, 48). Speaking while walking or doing something with the hands, for example drawing made speaking easier and memorable. Setting oneself into a situation was found to their specific means of learning or starting to speak English. It was not enough for learning that one saw and listened to what one wanted to learn. The combination of several sensory modalities was more effective and so reduced boredom.

Overall, finding one's strengths through knowing the modalities gives courage, faith and expertise in one's learning in general, and affects one's attitudes towards learning, which increases motivation. The discovery of one's effective and best ways of learning makes one more aware of oneself as a learner. It is rewarding to realise how they are actualised in foreign language studies even if one already knows about them in general. Last but not least, the exploration of the sensory modalities and their use in tasks bring variety and liveliness to the lesson. It is unfortunate that a primarily visual or auditive teacher easily prefers and employs his/her own strong modality or modalities, which diminishes the attention given to the kinaesthetic

modality. To avoid this, I included many kinaesthetic elements in *A Holiday in Cornwall*, in other materials and in the tasks.

Strategies are a means of mobilising one's resources, activating skills and finding ways to cope with language deficits one might have (CEF 2001, 57). Due to the course target, our strategy handout (Appendix 9) contained many social strategies for social learning, interaction, cooperation and coping (Oxford 1990, 8–9 and 144–146). The list offered metacognitive strategies for monitoring and focusing (Oxford 1990, 8) and many affective strategies for overall empowerment in the use of English, for self-encouragement and for combating anxiety (see Oxford 1990, 140–142). Quite a few of the strategies on our list came from Toivanen-Sevrjukova (Juurakko & Airola 2002, 91). Some of the strategies were mine. The students studied the list in small groups and then told each other which of them they used and why and then presented one or several of their own strategies that they had found useful and encouraging. Then they picked out those that they did not consider suitable for them and others that they might try in the future. In the end, we all heard everyone naming one strategy on the list he/she used, another he/she might try and at least one he/she had invented. The group work on the strategy paper and sharing one's opinions and experiences seemed to run effectively. For example, choosing one's favourites was a good assignment (E 8) but in the conversational interviews, the strategies arouse only moderate enthusiasm.

Iloa: It's useful in the sense that it at least gives you a base for not keeping quiet but for thinking how I'll manage in this situation. And if for instance I don't understand the other person, I can come straight out and say I didn't understand, and there again how the other person says the same thing using the same words, if there are any. What supports the language is using the language, and the worst thing of all is if you don't even try.

Ritva: At least I learned that a little and often is better than seldom and a lot.

The gain varied between having got new vantage points and hardly anything at all. There was also some suspicion as to the value of the strategies. Data containing more than a short response told about personal strategies, understandings and opinions related to the promotion of their English at large and speech in particular. For example, trying to be courageous and seizing the chance of speaking and working regularly on one's English were mentioned. Even if one needed many strategies, speaking was the key to learning because then one remembered. In the WE group the strategies aroused little interest even if the sensory channels did (WE 5). In the E group, the text in the strategy paper demanded much effort from some students. The students with a good level of competence were pleased with the challenge brought by its sentences with new expressions and vocabulary. The discussion on strategies and sensory modalities sometimes merged. Writing English because it makes one remember better is a strategy, but simultaneously it refers to sensory modalities. After long consideration, Ilkka said that he learned best when he could talk with people and that

was what he always tried to do. In fact, modalities and strategies are the two different sides of the same coin.

It is important that people who are motivated to study independently be acquainted with what learning strategies are, learn something of their usefulness and become aware of the possibilities of finding and creating their own strategies to suit their learning styles, opportunities and personal preferences. The use of strategies denotes the involvement of the whole personality of the language user (Kohonen et al. 2005, 340). In a small way, this was visible in the students' interest in discussing and telling about their own strategies and finding those that they might use. In contrast, such benefits of strategies as learning becoming "easier, faster, more enjoyable, more self-directed, more effective, and more transferable to new situations" (Oxford 1990, 8) did not materialise here. More than any other assignment, the strategy paper revealed the differences in the students' level of English because it was more demanding than any other text on the course. In general, on an oral English course, the texts must be easy enough to give support to speaking and the level of the target language in handouts must be considered. However, being just one of a kind and studied in cooperative and supportive groups where the challenges are shared, such an assignment does not become overpoweringly difficult for anyone. Intervening conversations on experiences and opinions on learning are good because everyone can participate in them in their own way and at their own level. Furthermore, such a demanding text as the strategy paper here is also a source of learning to everyone.

After the presentation of the **self-assessment scales and the grid**, the students examined them and then we briefly discussed them. A possible, closer examination was left for independent self-study. Familiarity with self-assessment could help these students to recognise more exactly what they already had a command of, what they needed in order to proceed and which goals would be useful and important to set next. The discussion had to be compact. They had come to study English and speak. In class, we studied Common Reference Levels: self-assessment grid (CEF 2001, 26–27; levels A1–B2, also in Appendix 5), Conversation (CEF 2001, 76), Transactions to obtain goods and services (CEF 2001, 80) and Sustained monologue: describing experience (CEF 2001, 59). The students got time to find their location on the grid and scales. Then I asked them to view the levels above and below their location for comparison and for recognizing what they had already achieved and what would probably appear next. The students were given the scales and grid in Finnish to ensure their understanding of their contents. In the conversational interviews, the students considered both assessment and self-assessment.

Aino: Perhaps it's us who've all learned that evaluation is about those mistakes, about what you don't know. Or about criticising. Evaluation is thinking about those shortcomings.

Reetta: It was really easy to find yourself in them and notice that you're like a whole lot weaker in speaking than in some other skills ... I should just find out more about them. I had the feeling that it's perhaps nevertheless not quite like it was then, you know, before this course I would've thought that I'm really at level 1.

Self-assessment was, for example, somewhat interesting, hardly of any use, not in the present situation in any case, or certainly useful as a means of identifying one's level and one ought to explore it, given more time available. Self-assessment aroused negative connotations of errors and defective competence, but it could become more interesting and useful when one's command of English had improved. Despite the negative feelings towards assessment, the exploration of several levels gave the students useful insights, such as that participation in a conversation demanded a higher level than telling facts and asking for services. What is more, self-assessment could reveal which level one ought to choose to get what one needed and which level was no longer sufficiently rewarding. Here, the study of the scales and the grid revealed that their speaking was at a lower level than other proficiencies, but assessment also gave some positive ideas about one's level increasing motivation and self-confidence. It was confusing that on the one side, one's level differed depending on the proficiency and on the one hand, that two levels of the grid or a given scale described their level in some particular aspect. In general, there was less interest in self-assessment among the WE students (WE 3). Their advance information had not mentioned such a theme while that for the E group had slightly referred to such activities even if not by that name.

The value given to self-assessment is related to awareness and motivation and their growth, the will to proceed, the reliance on one's possibilities to do so and the lack, – or at least manageable experiences – of harsh critique in the past. Such memories can diminish the interest in self-assessment. It can appear unnecessary, uninviting and discouraging if it appears as a detector of shortcomings and faults. Unfortunately, when one avoids self-assessment, one misses the help and guidance it gives to the student. Even if people are motivated to learn and trust in their ability to learn, they need sufficient guidance on self-assessment as a resource. Because assessment in the CEF is based on progress and gain, self-assessment can also contribute to dispelling fears of errors and the phantom of assessment based on shortcomings and failure. When acquainted with the CEF self-assessment, people see what they already know and can do. Shortcomings are also signposts for the steps ahead helping them to focus their future learning (see CEF 2001, 192). Here, the time used for the self-assessment was short. More thorough tuition on self-assessment could have better shown its value, increased its positive influence on learning, and decreased the experiences of its role as a fault detector.

3 The course experience

The use of the main text materials and discussion on grammar

The events in the six chapters of *A Holiday in Cornwall* and the plot they formed were the backbone of the course activities. *Hear Say* dialogues on common service situations containing some thirteen lines integrated easily with the events in *A Holiday in Cornwall*. For example, the first dialogue about course enrolment in *Hear Say* suited the context where the holidaymakers made plans for their last afternoon in Cornwall. For each handout chapter, we had 2–3 dialogues from *Hear Say*. The ratio of the time used for dealing with one chapter in *A Holiday in Cornwall* and the speech activities including the study of *Hear Say* and its assignments was approximately one to three. The discussion on a chapter in the handout began with my reading the text and the students then reading it. I explained what I thought might require explanation and anything they asked about. We discussed some grammar, practised pronunciation and expressions, and I introduced some additional expressions and phrases. In short, the approach was quite traditional. (Cf. Lozanov 1978, 271.) After this, I twice read the text aloud accompanied by music (see Appendix 13). During the first reading, they followed the text in the handout. On the second reading with music, they just listened. At the end of the course, we had just one reading with music and they could choose whether to have their books or not. The text reading by the students elicited many comments.

Reetta: ... there was a lot of the kind of thing in senior secondary school ... but here from the very start I took the attitude that I won't even look at my sentence in advance and then when it comes up I'll read it.

Pia: I thought it was a nice part. It like belonged to it. You listen as the other person reads. You have to read aloud yourself and have a little go if you can do it yourself. That's difficult in itself and then how it's pronounced.

For the students, reading the text aloud in class had benefits and drawbacks. It taught the pronunciation of the words. Learning to pronounce gave more words. One can use only those words that one can say. However, to learn new words from the reading was also difficult because the reading was so “automatic”, as someone said. Reading in pairs was good and important. One could take the time to see what the text really said and then read it. Some of these students had fears, even traumas about reading publicly, especially in English lessons, as a consequence of their earlier negative experiences, even humiliation, owing to their pronunciation. Worry and old fears made people count ahead to find which sentence would be theirs so as to cope better with it instead of focusing on listening. However, people with fears had an opportunity to fight their fears and get rid of them in the safe atmosphere that we had on the course (see Part III, 1.1), something which Reetta's decisiveness and

encouragement proved (see the citation above), too. In the conversational interviews, I was advised not to leave reading aloud out, only to delay it. Given good self-confidence, having to cope with many tongue twisters in one's part was one natural part of learning and this was seen as being quite all right and fun. Reading aloud in a group lowered the threshold for speaking publicly, which did not take place in pairworks.

Adult participants' negative experiences of the course practices such as reading aloud in class, are difficult to recognise. They do not show these experiences but may reveal them later in another context, here in the conversational interviews. Because people suffer from them despite a safe learning climate, alternative practices for going through the text would be better, at least at the beginning of the course. A delayed start for reading aloud in class was a good piece of advice from a student. Since the course implementation, it has become easy to attach CD recordings to a self-written text and hand them to the students for support, which I would do now. Even if getting the upper hand over one's fears from the past is good and took place here, worry about one's coping in reading always diminishes learning.

Hear Say texts were easier and demanded little explanation. An example of a session programme is given in Appendix 7. Except for the final Sunday, every seven- or eight-hour day in the WE group ended with the introduction of a new handout chapter. The E group had a new chapter approximately every second time. The *Hear Say* dialogues found their place between the tasks. First, I played the dialogues twice, one reason being the fast speech on the CDs. I answered questions and helped where necessary. Then the students worked in pairs on the dialogues and the assignments attached to them. Both text materials functioned as sources of language, course themes and tasks. The overarching story of our being together was similar to the plot in *A Holiday in Cornwall* and justified the tasks originating from *Hear Say*, thus increasing the holism of the course contents. The programme was practically the same in the E group and WE group but attending to the needs, suitable pace and interests in each group was not difficult. Neither of the two text materials contained grammar sections. In the weekend group, I "sensed tiredness and lack of interest in grammar and syntax" (WE 1). My own experience had shown that long grammar explanations in the session would fragment the thematic unity and take much time. These students had come to speak.

Maria: *And then there wasn't any grammar ... That was good, too. Err, I just can't, like, manage that grammar. All the time. When it comes up everywhere then it's a bit too much ... And otherwise the grammar, I thought it was all familiar to me.*

Kirsi: *That's what I think, too. No grammar for some reason, even though I'm sure we would've perhaps needed it. But I think perhaps the whole point was that we should get speaking.*

The students' grammatical competence varied widely (see A2 and upper B1 in CEF 2001, 33–35). Some of them said that they knew the grammar well or well enough, others used to study it on their own, often through the Internet, quite a few disliked it, had

forgotten much of what they had learned about it or had never learned much of it, which unfortunately sometimes made it difficult for the others to understand them. In the view of the relatively short course, the students' main interest in speaking and the wide differences in their knowledge of grammar, we had a few selected issues of grammar and some specific cases of language use on the students' and my initiative. Examples include auxiliary verbs, the use of -ing, present and past continuous and conditional. We also talked about and had assignments on question tags like "We aren't invited, are we" and shortened forms such as 'he'd', 'we'll', 'let's'. The evening group also asked for revision of the s-genitive, of-construction and adjective comparison (E2, E3, E5 and E6), which illustrates the diversity of their English. Most of the issues we discussed were used in speech with reference to the current theme to make them meaningful also for those who already had a command of them. For example, after the arrival in St. Ives, the students told what they 'were going to do' there. Conditional and if sentences were first explained. Then each student wrote down three different continuations to the question "What would you do if..." and gave them to another student who answered them beginning with "I would ..." but sometimes reality proved stronger: "What would you do if you lost your money?" "It is impossible. I do not have cash".

Principles and practices

Principles and practices on the course influence learning, classroom climate, students' experiences and enthusiasm, mutual relationships, course participation and motivation, even if their influence differs from student to student. To begin with, English was the language of communication in general but discussion on learning and grammar issues usually took place in Finnish because English would have been an impediment to understanding and participation at least for those at A2 (see for example illustrative scales, CEF 2001, 66, 81). I have learned to appreciate the simple advice of avoiding saying 'no' and using negation in response to the students' answers and their other speech turns. Such expressions signify non-acceptance and are especially influential in education due to the power relationships prevalent in class (see Gieve & Miller 2006, 28). I also believe that the avoidance of such expressions strengthens the possibilities of dialogue in class and directs the teacher's attentiveness to listening to the students more carefully and to valuing their expressions for other qualities than correctness. I also followed my long-standing decision not to say 'yes' or use corresponding expressions after students' answers or turns in general. Despite the positive message, such expressions are a concrete case of wielding power and as such an impediment to dialogue. Furthermore, through agreement and non-agreement I emphasise my judgement instead of my overall duty to promote theirs (also Illeris 2007, 159). Instead, I sometimes repeated an answer adding some conversational expression to it or expanded the given issue by asking a further question that the student would certainly

cope with. It was one way to create natural conversation with meaning and here a particular aim was to reduce the strangeness of speaking in class.

I did not forward a question from one student to another to get a more appropriate answer. The practice weakens group cohesion. The teacher has to decide between valuing what the speaker means and what he/she says. Even if they are a group and appear as such to the teacher, the individual student's experience is that of being a knower, a better knower or a non-knower for themselves and for the others. I told my students that I rather listened to what they said (E6). The practice of correction relates to the conception of learning and to the notion of the existence of interlanguage (CEF 2001, 155). Errors are a natural part of the learning process. The ultimate question is how much and when does correction help the student towards improved speech. Frequent error correction gives priority to correctness instead of giving priority to the thinking process and its results (see Knox 2001, 163). In real-life encounters, correcting someone's language is impolite besides which it overlooks the message.

At the outset of the course, the students expressed their opinion that too few corrections were better than too many. We decided that I would correct only when the expression was "quite wrong", as the students expressed it (WE 1). I told them that I preferred saying the correct or a more idiomatic alternative twice in passing (E6). I did it only after the student had finished his/her turn, leaving it to him/her to decide whether to take another try or not. If possible, I used the expression in its corrected form in another context with hardly recognisable emphasis. When the students were conversing in small groups and telling about their views, experiences and opinions, my interruptive corrections would have disrupted their conversation, which their errors hardly ever did. Getting over the threshold of speaking publicly can be hard even without the threat of criticism. Furthermore, what the teacher says becomes part of the students' experience of their language learning and language use. Even if students are very familiar with corrections, expect them and even find them of vital importance to their learning, the attention paid to errors or less fortunate expressions has discouraged many students. I started to comment on the students' pronunciation as well as also other language issues from the beginning of the second weekend in the weekend group and from the third time on in the evening group. The evening group had noticed this (E6).

The type of questions posed to the students affects the communication in class. The questions dealt with ideas, opinions, and experiences and were open. Answering such questions elicited real communication because neither the questioner nor the other students knew the answer in advance. Such questions let the student choose the size of the challenge, with regard, for example, vocabulary, expressions, and the length of their input, which also helps them to recognise what they can cope with and where they can improve. Open questions enabling the students to participate even with a lower level of skills and limited vocabulary were important because of the wide differences in the students' competency and proficiency. I avoided asking questions with an existing answer agreeing with Belanger,

who maintains that such situations are not motivating (Belanger 1978, 217–218). They only give the pleasure of knowing or the disappointment of not knowing.

Improving one's pronunciation was necessary at our target levels. If there was a tricky word, we practised it together a couple of times. Long words with consonant combinations unknown in Finnish, possibly with the stress elsewhere than on the first syllable, were challenging. We first said them silently in thought and then together, with everyone experimenting at their own speed. I maintained that the stressed syllable was the most important to be heard. Sometimes I asked the students to say the first, unstressed syllable(s) quietly or just in thought, or stand up at the stressed syllable to be able to place the stress on the appropriate syllable. Sometimes we started from the very last syllable and added the remaining syllables one a time until we had the whole word. For example, 'particularly' and 'immediately' became quite manageable this way. This unusual way of practicing pronunciation does not pose familiar demands and downplays self-criticism.

Ilkka: And then this backwards pronunciation (together). It taught me quite a lot. Often you get stuck when there's some tricky word, at least I couldn't make any headway.
L: Did you mean when you start the word from the end?
Ilkka: Yeah, that you start to build it up ... Yes, it like seemed to work.

The sessions began and ended with a speech activity involving everyone. The topic was connected with the themes recently worked on or upcoming or, for example, guessing about the weather in such a far-away country as Finland or describing their breakfast at the hotel in the morning. At the end of each session, I told the students about the programme of the following class and its text material, suggested what they could do for their English related to what we had done or would have on the course next, but I did not set them specific homework.

Pairs, small groups and all together (conversational interview theme)

Practically all assignments in the sessions, excluding the whole group activities, took place as interactive pair work or small group work. According to the conception of learning here, group work and participation in activities were of primary importance to advancing the desired skills. I never noticed that the students would have been uninterested in participating in group work and the assignments it entailed. However, I cannot exclude the possibility that a student quitted the studies after the first few sessions because of the plentiful group work.

As the teacher, I organised the group work, gave the instructions, circulated among the groups, answered questions, occasionally participated with a short comment, but mostly just listened, probably nodded and perhaps smiled. The students took the responsibility for the work in the groups. I fought against unnecessarily intervening in it because they could understand my too readily offered help as a sign that I lacked confidence in their ability

to cope with their possible problems, which in turn would nullify peer support, their togetherness and learning through negotiation. To strengthen everyone's participation and to have each group finish at approximately the same time, I often said towards the end of group conversation that there was still time for everyone in the group to add one more comment, which they willingly did. Usually, each group presented the results of their group work or the main contents of their conversation to the rest of us or to another group. Sometimes I asked them to choose one single issue they had raised or discussed with their pair or in their group and retell it to another person or in another group or to all of us. These variations gave opportunities of speaking, being listened to and listening. Sharing did not always take place. The conversation itself was valuable. Group work with its prioritization of meaning over accuracy and many opportunities for speaking was well suited to the promotion of oral communication. The plentiful pair and small group work was based on the belief in the resources of novice-novice groups and the students' ability to learn and negotiate in them.

The flexible and meaningful jigsaw method from cooperative learning with cross-role teams was in active use. After a discussion on a theme, the groups usually with four members dispersed and formed new groups of four, one from each of the previous groups. First, they shared what they had learned in their first group, received a new theme to discuss in this group and, after a while, returned to their original group giving an account of their discussion in the other group. Among other things, the jigsaw approach offers meaningful activity and responsibility to everyone, promotes group interdependence, group support, participation and equal appreciation of everyone in heterogeneous groups. (Clarke 1994, 34–50.) Every member of the group has equal opportunities to speak and be heard (Sahlberg & Sharan 2002, 41). Simultaneous communication in small groups increases everyone's opportunities for participation even if the time spent on it is not long (*ibid.* 39 and 49). It is possible to ask for advice, give and receive encouragement because of the mutual, positive interdependence (*ibid.* 41) but at the same time to retain the responsibility for one's own contribution and sharing it with others (*ibid.* 42). The students had to listen to the others all the time, tell what they had already said or heard once. In all of these activities they could choose the size of the challenge they took. During the different phases, they could improve and reorganise what they were saying, add new considerations, recognize their improvement, get used to a bigger audience and keep private what they did not want to share. The students did not learn the jigsaw method under its name. Instead, they appreciated the group changes that were most typical of the jigsaw.

Oral communication in the target language is a construction site for language identity, which applies to speech in pairs and small groups, too. Therefore, in the organisation of groups there was much at stake. I justified the frequent change of pairs and groups by referring to real life encounters without the possibility of choosing the person and encouraged them to take different seats each session (see also Nicolson, Adams, Furnborough, Adinolfi & Truman 2005, 53). They did so only in the beginning but always welcomed new, different

group formations on varying grounds. Usually the first assignment took place between people sitting next to each other. When one student moved from one end of the semicircle to the other end, they got a new pair. Other criteria were, for example, picking out the ends of the same thread from a bunch or choosing paper slips of the same colour or shape, or matching the top and bottom of a long word cut horizontally in two. Once they found their pair by grasping the left hand of someone when standing with closed eyes in a ring, and every now and then, I asked them to find someone they had never or seldom worked with. Changing pairs gave an opportunity to move during the lesson and to listen and follow instructions given in English. Free choices gave the students the opportunity of choosing pairs with whom they liked best to work. When I had learned something about their English competence and proficiency, I sometimes placed the students with a good level of competence in the same group where they could enjoy conversation at a higher level, stretch their proficiency and learn from each other. For me, one merit of bigger groups was I could listen to the students in groups with some 5-9 members more comfortably than in pairs and learn how individual students managed because fewer students spoke at the same time (WE 3).

Maria: I'm a little, like err, a little shy, so I perhaps withdraw, so when there was a big group and everybody was listening, everybody listening, so OK, just speak. When there are just two of you, perhaps there you have the courage to speak more and say a little bit.

Mika: I think it was just fine, that was when there were those medium-sized groups. In fact, they were really good because you got your turn a lot more quickly and to be honest you could talk a whole lot more if you compare with the whole group ... Perhaps it was in that medium-sized group that there was the start of some real discussion. There wasn't just that speaking in turns, but everybody took part, spontaneous stuff. You had to speak about this topic and then somebody messed up, or something else like that happened and then it began, like, the thing broadened out and spread, it became like this sort of general chattering and speaking. With just two it was easily that it was like compulsory, you just had to do it. That's why five or six is great but ten or more, that's a bit like nothing really happens there. You're just waiting your own turn.

The students liked and appreciated group work. One always had to react some way, which promotes learning, irrespective of whether one knows what to say or not. The students accepted the group compositions and the changes in group size, which brought variety and always created a new situation, different contacts and one did not get bored. In changing groups and pairs, speaking with everyone in class increased one's confidence in one's ability to communicate and the main speaker's role and responsibility for speaking did not self-evidently fall to a certain person. Changing groups prevented the formation of cliques and the emergence of "best friends" in class. The group changes were good because the amount of speech depended much on the pair's proficiency and because with some people, one finds much to speak about while with some others far less. It was good to be able to communicate

with anyone even when his/her command of English differed. A drawback of group work is that active speakers sometimes dominate their group. It was rare here but appeared, but nevertheless in friendly terms. The group changes abolished the obligation to talk repeatedly with someone who dominated the discussion or with the same person, which gives less and can be tedious, too. If the whole group had been even bigger, it could have offered even more opportunities for talking with different people and mixing the groups.

Bigger groups posed the students increased challenges concerning participation, turn taking, turn giving, speaking to many people and being listened to by them, which some of the students much appreciated. A big group that involved about eight to ten people offered risk-taking and increased courage. One could hear many expressions and ways of saying things and had to take the turn. On the other hand, speaking in bigger groups was not always active. The medium-sized groups with four to seven members created spontaneous discussion, taught turn taking and gave help to its members when they needed it. Everyone participated and even started chatting there. One did not have to wait for one's turn as long as in a big group. In a motivated group with eager speakers, people failed to keep to the theme, which sometimes resulted in spontaneous conversation. The teacher's course diary tells that the medium-sized groups functioned very well. Spontaneity sprouted quite easily in them and they gave many kinds of stimuli all the time. (E9)

A pair and a group of three gave much speaking time, security and support and participation was less overwhelming, matters which are important to some students. Despite the wish to learn to speak, not everyone was an eager speaker in a group. Groups of this size entailed a gentle obligation to speak. A drawback to speaking in a pair was that the talk there tended to follow the same track all the time. The benefit of the group of three in comparison to pairs was that two members could have a proper conversation even if the third member could not contribute much to it. According to Sahlberg and Sharan (2002, 45), in groups of three there is always someone left aside. No one mentioned this.

Varying group sizes and compositions enrich and expand the students' gain, give experiences of many types of conversation, bring change and encourage speaking with different speakers, from one person to very many, which also prevents dullness. Sometimes a small group does not give as much as one expects but the problem is less serious if many other group formations follow. Through different group sizes, it is possible to take into account the students' preferences, proficiency, security needs, wish for more speech time and spontaneous speaking. Medium size groups are particularly useful because they can elicit spontaneity, turn taking and conversation, even chatting, which are especially welcome for the students with a good level of competence. In real life, people chat but adult students of English have few opportunities to do it. Perhaps groups of a medium size create the experience of "us" and it is easier to speak and participate also because, apart from demanding less courage, they subject everyone to the demand to speak.

Group size preference seems to depend at least on the person's courage, English level, aims and the wish to speak in general. In real life, too, some people prefer talking with one person or perhaps two people, some others enjoy speaking in a bunch, all of which certainly applies to foreign language groups, too. Changing groups and group sizes also serve the

students' well-being in this way, too. It seems that the scheme where the teacher mainly forms the groups after consideration and where free choice is available every now and then results in various kinds of speaking and suits the students, too. Working and sharing study experience in groups of different sizes covered an extensive part of the course time and, as a result, was a significant factor in the students' entire course experience and the support available for their learning.

Tasks and other assignments (conversational interview theme)

Tasks are understood to deal with real world communication or at least reflect what takes place there. They are pragmatic and meaning-centred assignments with a gap that is filled during the task through communication, which becomes the outcome of the task. The student has the freedom to choose what to say and how to say it in the situation at hand, even if the task constrains the student's choice and the work plan further defines the task and its range. (Ellis 2003, 9–10; Järvinen 2012, 219 and 242; also CEF 2001, 157–158.) In general, assignments that define more closely what the student is expected to say, define much of the language used, too. The term assignment is also used as a general term in this report, for example, when the reference is both to tasks and to other course assignments. The aim and focus of the course assignments was the promotion of oral English. According to the conception of learning followed here, the assignments on the course were not exercising what had been learned but an important form of learning. The level of the assignments was approximately A2–B1 (for example CEF 2001, 33–35).

Many of the task types originated in suggestopedia, suggestopedia-based approaches, cooperative learning and sociocultural learning. I had invented quite a few of them myself. My enthusiasm for inventing tasks, preferably resembling real-life events and concerns and never “decontextualised practice of forms” (see CEF 2001, 157–178), has come from suggestopedia. The CEF scales and grids were a rich and reliable source of knowledge and aid in planning the tasks. The scales and grids described and advised on what the students at A2 and B1 were able to express in English and what they should work on to advance their oral proficiency. The personal and public domains on different contexts of language use (CEF 2001, 48–49) corresponded best to the studies of general language use at this level. The illustrative scales under the title Spoken interaction (CEF 2001, 74–82) provided information on the different forms of interaction at different levels, rewarding ideas for the choice and development of tasks. The descriptions of listening, spoken interaction and spoken production in the Common reference Levels: self-assessment grid gave another view because it expressed the issues from the student's viewpoint (CEF 2001, 26–27). The interaction strategies told what kind of communication the students could maintain at each level (CEF 2001, 86–87). In real life, we make use of our cognitive, volitional and emotional resources (Kohonen et al. 2005, 328). For the expression of knowing, intentions,

feelings and conversational sharing, it was good if the tasks based on *A Holiday in Cornwall* and the course plot dealt with such matters.

The tasks aimed at giving ample and flexible opportunities for speech, many-sided use of vocabulary of one's choice, communicative freedom and promotion of fluency. Other aims were to invite the students to search what they knew and be able to speak out there and then, get them used to unprepared speech situations common in real life and help them to rely on themselves as users of English. Sometimes the emphasis was on fluency. At B1, the language user can more easily maintain and enter conversation unprepared (CEF 2001, 74 and 76–77). B1 tasks included wider language use and conversational elements than *Hear Say* assignments. Beginning with a *Hear Say* assignment, if possible on a given theme aimed at preparing those students nearer A2 to cope with the more demanding B1 tasks. In any case, it turned out that the students not yet at B1 could also cope with B1 tasks because these did not pose exact demands on what one ought to say. I usually asked the students to reread the corresponding parts of the text on their own to remind them of the resources they had available. The first tasks on each *A Holiday in Cornwall* dialogue were short and related closely to the text while the later ones were more extensive. The aim set for *Hear Say* by the authors had been to help people to cope in English in common situations abroad or in conversation with foreigners (Nurmi & Pitkänen 2003, 3). Accordingly, *Hear Say* contained role-play assignments on common transactions of information. Because *Hear Say* texts and assignments related to them did not change much, I developed other ways of dealing with them.

The data on *Hear Say* assignments mainly concerned two assignments that are discussed next. In both, we listened to the dialogue twice, studied it and the students read it in pairs. Then I suggested that they close the book or at least put it aside and say each line to the person sitting on their left as soon as they heard it from the student on their right. I thought that really saying the sentence to someone was good and that they were capable of repeating sentences like “Yes it is. I'm really enjoying myself” now that they were familiar with the dialogue. I was the first to say each line in turn to the person on my left. When repetition of the initial line had advanced far enough, I said the following line, and so on. Many of them found this task extremely challenging. The conversational interviews revealed what was wrong in the assignment and made people think about their learning.

Kirsi: The fact is that I noticed with this that you've absolutely got to, you must understand what it is. Somewhere there. And then again be able to say what it is. When you see the whole thing. You can't learn it by heart, that this is this thing and this is this, like I've sometimes done.

The request for repeating something caused tension and anxiety, especially if you did not understand what the person on your right had said to you, which commonly took place. Sometimes, the sentence had already changed and was not meaningful any more. When you only tried to listen and remember the words as exactly as possible, you switched off

your brains, did not listen to the meaning and failed to recall the whole thing. You had to understand in order to say it. Without understanding and putting yourself into the situation, you can remember a short, simple sentence word-by-word but not longer ones. Like in your first language, you soon find yourself asking for repetition. You failed to rely on yourself and to use your spontaneous ability. You would have been able to say it in some other way but you were expected to say the same. Another problem was that when the sentence is in English, you first have to translate it to yourself, i.e. into Finnish, and think what it means and then translate it back into English. Those with many years of English studies could cope with this task. They understood what was said and could quite easily remember it. However, despite the big difficulties with repetition, which appeared like a step backwards, the experience was not a fatal one, as someone said. In principle, many different methods can ensure that you remember and the assignment had also brought variety to the session, too.

We had another pair assignment based on a *Hear Say* dialogue, which was more successful and employed several times. The dialogue was first listened to and read in several ways. After the students had once more read the whole dialogue now written on the board, I first removed the ends of long words, then whole words and the ends of the lines till only very few key words were left. After each removal, the students acted out the dialogue swapping their roles.

Mirja: It was good. Then you had to think and make the effort and concentrate ... You could somehow say what was on your mind. Yes. It was precisely that you could see what the topic was ... I think it was real learning ... If you had the topic and you had to say something else about it. For example, saying a longer sentence about it.

Maria: Of course you learn because you have to use it yourself, decide, in that situation. For instance, because generally if you read a text then generally those texts, everybody says, yeah, I know. That should go like that, OK, and that should go like this. But when you take the text away, you don't necessarily know, like hang on, how did that go. There you have to decide yourself how. Could it be like this or could it be like that.

This task taught the students to speak and invent and create the contents of their turn while speaking. Reading and understanding the text gives a false impression that one can say it by oneself, too. Here one gradually broke away from the text. When only the key words remained, one had to think, focus, decide and construct what to say in the situation and really learn when doing so. The contents of the task reminded the students of what was necessary to say but left the freedom of thought and expression. It was possible to invent new things, too. The task resembled real life situations where one has certain issues in mind – the remaining words expressed them – and one has to gather the issues together and express them. It was like being in a situation where one cannot exactly know in advance and prepare what to say next because it depends on what the other will say.

An assignment that causes tension or anxiety brings feelings of failure, makes people worry about their coping and suspect their progress. In this way the assignment creates impediments to learning. On the other hand, if many people have difficulties in trying to repeat, it becomes quite evident that the task itself is a flop. If one feels safe and remains calm, one can focus on the whole entity and its meaning and, as a result, rebuild the sentence if necessary. However, assignments based on rote learning are not fruitful, especially in groups of adults. For them, tasks where they can choose and say what they mean are good. On the other hand, because repeating an easy, familiar thing without the book was so difficult, it made the students think about their learning and which strategies were beneficial and which less so in the promotion of their English proficiency. An expression printed on paper could appear quite familiar and even too easy to be worth studying but saying it on one's own is totally different, as someone said. Adults' strength is that they can deal with their difficulties through reflection, which here resulted in their understanding of how their learning took and did not take place.

This kind of task functions as an intermediate stage between freedom and the support offered by a model and serves many levels including those whose English competence is still restricted. The possibility to invent and add new aspects, use long sentences or construct short turns made the task suitable and rewarding for everyone. The criterion of a successful task is that the speakers use such language as promotes their English (see Ellis 2003, 8). Flexibility with regard to the level and the contents of a task is a benefit in adults' English studies. The recognition of resemblance to real life situations makes the tasks meaningful. When the original formula was changed only slightly, as it was in some *Hear Say* tasks, the students' own contribution was meagre. Here the students could include their own meanings and add sidetracks. Even if one has difficulties with sentence construction and is slow at it, one can stretch one's expression, increase one's self-confidence in a task that offers choice and freedom, and learn through negotiation and communication.

The tasks developed from *A Holiday in Cornwall* and from the additional handouts (examples of them in Appendices 9–11) corresponded to B1. Even if the course events were fictive and imaginary, the tasks dealt with real world communication and its events and issues, or at least reflected what took place there (Ellis 2003, 9–10), which the students confirmed in the conversational interviews.

Because the two sets of materials had many themes in common, it was easy to combine them. For example, *Hear Say* contained a dialogue on purchasing everyday items. Within the plot following *A Holiday in Cornwall*, the purchase involved a useful or interesting item for oneself or for someone back at home. For further ideas and language needs, the students got a handout with words for materials, shapes, origins, expressions of time and so on. Next, the students made the item out of modelling clay. While modelling, accompanied by soft music, they planned what to tell about the item, the reason for buying it, what it was used for, its age, the place of the purchase and possibly the person who would get the item as a present. When ready, every participant presented the item to the whole group holding it in his/her hand and finally passed it round to give the others a better view of it and an opportunity to present comments and questions while viewing it. During the break, which was an opportunity to clean the clay off one's hands, the items had disappeared. After studying the appropriate pieces of text in both sets of materials, the participants visited a

lost property office to reclaim their items, describing them to one of the clerks and got them back, which often demanded much explanation and negotiation.

Auditive and visual style tasks (see sensory modalities, subsection 2.3) are common on language courses. Developing and implementing kinaesthetic and tactile tasks and activities demanded more imagination, risk taking and therefore sensitivity from the teacher. Students may not be used to such activities and feel insecure about these tasks with stronger elements of play and more holistic personal involvement. Kinaesthetic and tactile tasks and activities included, for example, walking along the school corridors while talking about one's dream holiday, telling about one's family with the help of a bunch of pictures and listening to a story with many kinaesthetic and tactile expressions. In the first session, it was very important that the students crossed the threshold of speaking. Thus, there was a cocktail party with small glasses – just the glasses though – and the participants walked around, talked with many people supported by the tips given to them and learned to know each other by their course names. Some kinaesthetic tasks had a strong spatial element, such as planning a trip with the help of a map or explaining the location of items in relation to the other items using appropriate expressions, a task that came from *Hear Say*. Annukka's contribution here is about the photographs of the family members of their course characters. First, I do not get what she means, and then I try to lead her but she keeps to her point.

Annukka: It was really fun, those photographs. That activity with the photographs, what was in the photograph.

L: Aah, yes. Err, ...

Annukka: The picture where you had to come up with something about it. Like, you were travelling somewhere and at least according to what you knew you could talk about it, with all sorts of things coming out.

L: Yeah. Was it like there was freedom?

Annukka: There was this family tree and you could talk about it. (The pictures were supposed to present the persons in the family tree that they had drawn before they received the pictures). The situation and then if this was granddad, and there were some old couples, and sports events and then you, err, told your partner what was happening there, so like that.

Kinaesthetic and tactile tasks were effective in promoting learning and welcomed for their liveliness, variation and the movement they brought.

The tasks with elements of sensory modalities attend to different people's inclinations and talents. Because they can demand what a person does not like to do or cannot do, for example draw something, there must not be many tasks of the same type. On the other hand, drawing creates opportunities for listening, explaining, negotiation and conversation. Tasks that attend to various sensory modalities and bring variety to the lessons are useful, especially on a course with long days or evenings.

Some of the B1 level tasks were based on containing expressions, phrases or words related to a specific theme which, for the main part, had already been studied in either set of material or in both of them. First, the handout was studied and then applied in an interactive task. In interactive situations both in class and in real life, it is necessary to understand what the interlocutor says. If a language user fails to do so, he/she often finds it difficult or lacks the courage to interrupt the speaker and ask for clarification. To help in such situations, I compiled a handout with alternatives in such requests (Appendix 11). Two people forming a pair received a different list of sufficiently complicated expressions. When acquainted with the contents of their own handout, they said the expressions on their own list in turns as naturally as possible, and the other person asked for clarification using one of the phrases or perhaps several of them and had the expression repeated and often explained, too, even at length. Another handout provided the hosts and guests at a party with suitable phrases from the study material (Appendix 11). The task was to use all of them while talking as a guest or host with people at the party. In the conversational interviews, the students assessed the meaningfulness of the handouts.

Katri: Yes, it worked. And we could all do it. ... I feel that they were all the kind of things that somehow activate, that they nevertheless inspire you the whole time, and that somehow they all, they all fit in nicely with each other ... Just like those slips of paper, the invitations, and all those things and all the different ways of somehow learning. In some way they're different ways, but they're all connected to the same system, to precisely this that you try to go a little bit beyond what you know.

Tuuli: When you have a sheet of paper, then somehow you rely on that sheet of paper. That it's the sheet of paper, that's the right way. You just start reading the sheet. It's just, a bit like the same thing when you repeat a sentence, and like you know it but you don't, you just see the stuff there. At least I get stuck like there. They're just fine and they're guidelines when, you know, in a way you use them like that. But often, like at least in this group and with those people I've done these things with, everybody always relies on the sheet of paper, on something you read from the paper.

When one had to use the new vocabulary of the handout to describe something that one had seen or designed or produced with one's own hands, one remembered much better than just saying it. The handouts had the same aim. They served the planning and construction of a given story or conversation and what to say there. However, to really learn them, one ought to return to them later on one's own. The handouts combined the new and what one already knew and gave the feeling of competence. Everyone could participate. Tuuli's experience of the handouts was quite different from Katri's even if their English was at about the level where speaking is not impeded by problems. According to Tuuli, people could not abandon the handout contents.

The handouts, for example with phrases, expressions or words scaffolded the students to use more than they could on their own, which was their aim and an illustration of working in the ZPD

(see Vygotsky 1978, 86; Lantolf 2000, 17; Hammond & Gibbons 2005, 8). When the students used the words and expressions in the handout, the students could attach meanings to the words (see Vygotsky 1986, 244–245). Thus, the construction of what one wants to say using the new words through one's own intention, thinking and decision-making is more than the meagre experience of merely reading a list of words. Tasks based on a handout give necessary support to those at A2. Being tied to the handout can denote that the person concerned needs the support of the handout. Handout study also offers a break and a phase of tranquillity between active phases of participation and so prevents the students from getting tired.

Narratives describe human intention, aims and action, and locate them in time and place (see Bruner 1986, 13). According to McCaslin, a story should enhance and “give life” to what is told. It should capture and hold the listeners’ attention, invite into involvement, stir imagination, involve creativity and arouse wonder. (McCaslin 1999, 240.) Thus, storytelling and narratives expand the range of tasks involving the student in another way than service and information situations and conversations. I told short narratives as an introduction to the theme of the session while some other narratives, like the imaginary walk through Penzance, a town in Cornwall presented words and expressions in a new context and with an ample amount of kinaesthetic and tactile expressions in addition to the more common auditive and visual ones (see Appendix 12). In the sessions, the students narrated about the lives, preferences, plans and so forth at least formally as their long-term identity characters. Handouts containing words and expressions scaffolded them in storytelling and narration and at the same time introduced new vocabulary and expressions. One list consisted of commonly used adjectives that took a certain preposition, for example *good at*, *crazy about* and *happy with something*. The students used them when telling about themselves, at least formally as their role characters. Group work included narrative tasks. For example, each small group planned a trip and shared it later with another group as an event that had already taken place. For independent studies between sessions, I suggested the construction of narratives on the daily events and encounters in their life but did not ask them to write the narratives down.

CEF defines narratives as spoken/oral production (2001, 58). The difference between A2 and B1 in spoken production concerns diversity, richness, reasoning, explanation and the ability of discussing issues beyond oneself. At B1, a language user can, for example, describe events, experiences, dreams and tell a story or outline the plot in a book. At A2, the language user can cope with spoken production in simple language, provided the theme deals with issues concerning the speaker and people overall. (CEF 2001, 26.) It seems that the choice of such themes and in addition, freedom of expression helped the students at A2 in narration. However, some of them said that they would have had much to tell but did not have enough words to do so.

Role play (conversational interview theme)

Ongoing role-play and a plot, similar to drama have been typical of suggestopedic courses (see Lozanov & Gateva 1989, 60 and 117; Hooper Hansen 1999, 222–223). The aim of using long-term roles was that through them the students can start speaking English, promote their oral English communication and become encouraged to speak, despite the differences in their preferences, existing English proficiency and experiences as students and users of English. In Lozanov's theory, the long-term roles aim at the removal of the negatively influencing social norm, people's negative assumptions about their learning. This removal makes the students spontaneous and able to express more of what they can. (Lozanov 1978, 191–192) This subsection tells about the strengths and weaknesses of the long-term roles and how the students liked them and found use for them.

Before this course, I had used long-term roles and a plot on English courses for adults in liberal education, at the UAS and in working life contexts. In addition, in 1998 I had researched long-term roles on two English vocational education courses in the suggestopedic frame in 1998, which served as a pilot research study for this course. In the conversational interviews, the course participants told that the roles had expanded their speaking abilities, encouraged and inspired them to it and made the speaking meaningful. The long-term roles and the plot had created an atmosphere of positiveness and fun and brought affect, creativity and imagination into the sessions. Only the student with the widest command of English said she would have preferred to have studied without the role. I had also noticed that the plot, the long-term roles and the tasks attached to them prevented fragmentation, brought holism and created a mutually shared experience that takes place in drama (see Erberth & Rasmusson 1991, 105).

An oral English course demands a substantial number of conversation topics suitable for the participants' level. Questions by fellow students, answers to them and conversation on the course are a significant way of eliciting student speech. At the course level, especially at A2, the students' ability to express themselves in the target language mainly concerns the domain of personal issues (see CEF 2001, 33–34, and 48–49), which are awkward to ask about and share with strangers, which is what people often are on short courses for adults. Thanks to the plot and the long-term roles, people can talk, tell and ask about personal issues, combine them with real life elements, if they so choose, plan and discuss future events and refer to the stories told and experiences shared. The plot and the roles give the activities and speech a reason and meaning like in drama. Thanks to the plot, people always know the context where everything takes place and get hunches of upcoming themes and tasks. The plot provides the logic and gives the teacher another additional responsibility (E4). On the other hand, the plot helps the teacher to remember the sequence of different phases in the session.

In the first session, I told the students in Finnish about the idea of the long-term roles and its imaginary, fictive world that gave freedom to choose what to say. I also told the students – and returned to this a couple of times later – that one could say either what

the character of one's long-term role might say or what they themselves would say or combine these two, even if outwardly in the long-term role and by that name. The roles did not require people to play the role fully, for example to speak like an American or have costuming or props, only to speak as if one were the role person. There was no need to tell about personal issues. The students were ready to try the long-term roles. However, someone was a little hesitant (E1).

The students chose their roles from 25 alternatives written on small cards. Each of them contained a name, occupation, place of residence and home country, all implying English as the character's first language. The available occupations were a sea captain, an archaeologist, a student, a globetrotter, a stockbroker, a musician, an author, a foreign correspondent, an actor, a pianist, a composer, a designer, a physician, a painter, a bank manager, an architect, a TV newscaster, a photographer, an attorney, a philosopher, a journalist, a pilot, a film director, a sculptor and a TV producer. Art has traditionally been well represented among the occupations in suggestopedia because of the assumption that people would have an idea what such people do, which also applies to many other occupations used on suggestopedic courses. Before their final decision on the role, I ensured that they knew what their role was in Finnish.

The students learned each other's course names, occupations and nationalities through the many occasions when they presented themselves. Those joining the course in the second or third session gave another opportunity for renewed presentations. The course names were easily adopted and employed. With few exceptions, they were the only name they knew for each other. The tasks in the first few lessons often dealt with giving information about oneself, one's interests, preferences, favourite activities and professional issues and asking others about them. Thus, the long-term roles developed in narration through the owners' imagination just as in a drama (also Owens & Barber 1998, 31). Goffmann writes that if we claim that we have certain social characteristics, others are obliged to treat us accordingly, but continues that we should have those characteristics we claim we have (Goffmann 1959, 13). We probably did not have much of what we claimed to have as the characters of the long-term roles and were aware of it. Fiction and reality were present and recognised, as in drama (see Owens & Barber 1998, 15), but people were treated according to what they claimed. In the tasks, the prominence of the long-term roles varied. Sometimes, they were hardly recognisable in the contents of the conversation.

I enquired about the use of the long-term roles halfway the course and the result was that they were continued. The teacher's diary contains the note that "we have discussed their benefits and drawbacks and as a result, retained them. However, it seems that instead of being actively employed all the time, they surface on certain occasions and in certain tasks when they are helpful and called for by the nature of the task" (E8). The conversational interviews revealed the diversity of the students' experience of the long-term roles. Most of these data come from the first conversational interview. The unusually many citations aim at to illustrate the diversity of the opinions.

Annukka: *It's all the same to me whether I'm myself or that other person. As myself, it would have been done a lot more carefully and more of it. But when it was the role figures, you could've said this and that. Of course, it was hard for me to come up with words about the occupation, but there could've been some vocabulary (for that).*

Aino: *Perhaps at the beginning, when there were the role figures, perhaps it nevertheless did give us some freedom. It wasn't so stiff, what we were doing, as when we would've had to present ourselves, I'm this and this person.*

Ari: *One of those imagination subjects. Of course, it gives you unlimited possibilities ... I can come up with anything at all I can talk about. So it gives you the opportunity to talk more because you have, you can talk about the things you have the words for. That's just fine. In my opinion it's very good.*

Kaarina: *For me it was really a lot easier. I didn't have to think what I'd done. That I've been to the shop and made food for the family. And you don't even want to talk about everything. You can't come up with things to tell which are true. You can say what you like, or perhaps even exaggerate. With that new identity I somehow escaped from that glass cabinet I was in. At least I got it said.*

Pia: *It was fun because it was, like, it was somehow ... it led to some really enjoyable conversations when people just talked and babbled on, a load of nonsense when you know yourself that no way is that true. There's a really fun feeling when you occasionally get to fly high.*

Maarit: *Yeah. I got a lot of joy out of it (the new identity). I got a lot of joy out of not really having to, like, produce anything of my own, there was no pressure whether this was right or wrong. Made no difference. I really liked it. And then as it progressed then you began to produce and you added your own stories.*

The diverse experiences of the long-term roles told about their benefits and drawbacks, which varied from person to person. A few said that they would have liked to study without the role. It would have been easier that way and one would have found more to say without having to invent it. When in a role, the lack of words made communication more difficult or at least limited it more. Instead, speaking as oneself and telling about oneself and one's life and finding words for those things would have been interesting, rewarding and useful for future use of English. It would also have been easier because one already had some experience of doing so. Here, especially their real working life remained on the sidelines. I was also told that the role did not matter much because, after all, one used English to say the things one could.

Some students found good sides in both practices. The roles made the beginning, especially the presentations on the first lesson, less stiff. With the roles, speaking started easily but being oneself would have been more rewarding later. Even if one had never liked role-play, these roles were fine because one did not have to speak in a specific way and

behave in a different way than usual. Speaking about one's life was probably easier but one could speak and therefore learn more when with a role. Even if the roles had not caused any trouble, some people with a good level of competence would have liked to speak without them.

The majority of people found the long-term roles helpful and productive. The role gave unlimited possibilities for saying anything you had words for, either as the role person or as yourself behind it. It was difficult to find what would have been both true and worth telling about. The role helped, if you did not want to tell about your life, like buying food and cooking for your family. You could be what you wanted to be and mix your real self with what you said as the role person and take risks to see how far your English would take you. The role did not demand really knowing about the role or following any preset pattern of speaking. Despite the role, the topics on the course concerned such issues as there were in one's real life. The freedom and the possibilities to invent activated imagination and creativity and inspired one to say what one otherwise would not have thought of saying. When with the role, you could do what you would have liked to do, but would not do in reality, which lightened the atmosphere in the class. People invented funny nonsense stories, which appeared especially in the WE group conversational interviews. The roles were also a source of encouragement. Plunging into something new like an invented story about one's role person made one forget to think about what one can and what one cannot. As a result, one started trying more but did not feel like having to put your own self-esteem at stake. Self criticism and the pressure of not saying anything wrong were forgotten.

The long-term roles create conversation. The freedom that the roles bring can help a student with a lower level of skills. The long-term roles can also make it easier to apply the vocabulary one has, which can provide good opportunities for speaking, even if a small English vocabulary or limited English can also prevent the full use of roles. The flexibility offered by being able to speak about the role person or about oneself behind it can be a valuable and inspiring resource for speaking or cause confusion. Inventing and telling stories in the role are not equally easy, helpful and enjoyable for everyone. Narrative and logical-scientific thinking are the two types of human thinking (Bruner 1996, 39) and people differ concerning them. Some people are better narrators than others and some like playfulness more than others. Students can also choose a role that they later find difficult or demanding. Perhaps the most suitable roles had already been taken before they were ready to make their choice. The suitable role can be one near to one's own life because then one can benefit more of the role and more easily identify with it and thus feel secure. The gain can come through something challenging and new, the enjoyment of freedom, opportunities for imagination, playing with the role and taking risks and forgetting oneself and one's old role as a user of English.

The students had also thought how the functionality of the roles could be improved. The role card could contain more information on the role person, for example what the person's work contained, and on the family or offer some alternatives to these. Another suggestion was that one would have the possibility of choosing one's occupation perhaps from a list, even one's own that would not be revealed. Traditional, everyday roles would have been easier and some vocabulary for the role would have been helpful. These suggestions reveal that at least for some of them more information on the roles and familiarity with them would have been welcome. For

the improvement in the use of long-term roles, a good idea might be to give the students more alternatives and a more open choice in the combination of the offered role elements or ask them to search for the necessary vocabulary for them. Second, it would be very important to check that everyone has got sufficient information on the use of long-term roles, even those absent at the time of the delivery of the information on the roles. A more profound discussion halfway through would have been useful for hearing more about the students' opinions on the use of the long-term roles. In my course diary (E6) I wrote: "Maybe the basic idea [in the long-term roles] is the imagination and not having the struggle to find something truthful and realistic."

Situational role-play (conversational interview theme)

Many encounters in life are service or information encounters involving schematic turn taking between the informant and the informed. Such situations and the speaker roles demand the use of specific vocabulary and expressions, asking and giving advice or information as a client, customer or informant. The course plot entailed such situational roles as waiters, receptionists, clerks, shopkeepers, bar tenders, even a horse farm owner. The roles were swapped so that everyone could be the customer. A Holiday in Cornwall usually had a few lines on them but Hear Say dialogues with corresponding situations provided further material. Even if the service and information situations were considered useful, it was mainly those events where the speakers' interests were contradictory that inspired discussion. Tasks with conflicting ideas are like dramas. They must always involve a problem, antagonism or conflicts to create suspense. Without these, a drama easily remains boring and uninteresting. (Erberth & Rasmusson 1991, 97.) According to Rantala, a primary school teacher, learning is mush if it only offers positive feelings (Rantala 2006, 29). Here the negative took the form of complaints. People complained about the food in the restaurant, about their room and its fitting at the hotel and claimed their property at the lost property office where the clerk was quite uncooperative.

Maria: And the other person had the difficulty of what do I say now. In these situations you also have to think and stuff like that. In that sort of situation generally try to be as awkward as I can be ... I start using masses of vocabulary especially when the other person has the opposite opinion. It's then that you start expressing all kinds of things so well, or you have to express yourself and use the language.

Ilkka: But the complaints, I couldn't, like, couldn't quite, I couldn't say things naturally, perhaps ... But this is exactly what, like, what I'm trying to find myself, that even if the situation comes about, like, in principle, you can blend in with it and see how it goes.

The course diary (WE5) tells:

Maria as the receptionist receiving complaints was self-reliant, both funny and serious and presented surprising comments. All the group was involved listening, laughing and waiting for what would be said next.

Role-play with opposite interests was fun and inspiring because it stirred the imagination, contained feelings and challenged to invent new things. One could put one's heart and soul into these dialogues and if the other person did the same it was even more rewarding. These situations gave inspiration for speaking and one found much to say. When complaining one could be troublesome or choose to be polite.

Receiving complaints posed stronger demands to mingle and cope. When the dialogue took an unexpected turn, one could not rely on the book but had to invent and construct one's turns on the spot and work at the limits of one's ability. It was very good because one learned to know what one had still not mastered. Strong emotions support memory and bring vitality (Oatley 2004, 22–23 and 91) and conflicting ideas bring new insights (Scheier 2001, 190). Johnson and Johnson argue that tasks with controversies and disagreements lead to novel solutions, stronger involvement and creativity (Johnson & Johnson 1994, 73–76). However, these tasks with emotions and contradictions did not offer every student something specific. Role-plays like these give feedback on one's skills and as such are an opportunity for self-assessment and the growth of awareness of one's English. They also strengthened the ability of being able to merge into unexpected situations that are impossible to know and plan in advance. One must think there and then and invent what to say and discover suitable expressions and vocabulary for the unexpected. It is useful because in real life people do not say at all what one assumes.

The emphasis naturally shifted from accuracy towards fluency and mutually understood meaningful communication. Studying that takes place in a good atmosphere, as these studies did, brings juxtaposition or playful confrontation, changing the tone of the communication for a while, giving the speakers an opportunity for intensive and inspiring participation, challenging their English and increasing their awareness of their proficiency. However, it is important to ensure that everyone, irrespective of the level of his/her English, has the prerequisites to cope in these situations, for example by previous study. In these useful tasks the contradictions took place with a person with a situational role. Thus, course participants did not actually have to contradict each other but a person who acted a role. A good course climate is another safeguard in tasks like these.

Music (conversational interview theme)

Music was used in many phases on the course. On my earlier courses, people had found classical music a good companion to text reading. Based on the experiences and students' comments, I mostly chose lively music in major key with recognisable themes (see Appendix 13) for the background to reading the dialogues in *A Holiday in Cornwall*. I turned the music on about two minutes before I started reading and gradually turned the volume down about two minutes after having finished the reading. During the first reading of the chapters in *A Holiday in Cornwall* with classical music, for example by Beethoven, the students followed the text in their books. Baroque music accompanied the second reading and the students listened to it without books, which has been the common suggestopedic practice (Lozanov & Gateva 1989, 71–72). Some students found it more useful to be able to see the text during both readings and could choose to do it. For the last chapters, we had

just one reading with music and for this the students usually opted for the baroque music. I did not plan how the text and certain moments of music would occur but knew ahead how the music would go on and could adjust the reading to it.

Instrumental music with diverse line-ups in different styles from several cultures of the English-speaking world served as background music at many phases and on many occasions, for example, when people were arriving and often when they were leaving at the end of the session. We often had music at low volume during pair and group work. Background music accompanied, for example, the dinner at the restaurant, the visit to the pub and the story of the walking tour in Penzance (Appendix 12). We had classical guitar music (Walker 1987), Celtic music on traditional instruments (Bilk 1996) and well-known folk melodies on the clarinet (Celtic Orchestra 1984). The few pieces of vocal music were Irish folk music (The Black family 2003). In my experience, music with a clear melody was most suitable for the purposes here. Lively music gave a good start to speaking (E4). We sang together a couple of times, even in canon. In a busy session, we sometimes had a short piece of music for a break and relaxation (see also Nicolson, Adams, Furnborough, Adinolfi & Truman 2005, 53), for example *The Legend* composed and played on the piano by Hillel Tokazier (Tokazier 1990) and *The Rose* played on clarinet by Acker Bilk (Bilk 1984). Both pieces took approximately three minutes.

Elina: The music calmed things down. It was better for concentrating on listening. Somehow for me it's difficult to concentrate on listening. Of course, not all music is suitable, for example, noisy stuff, but these were suitable.

*Mirja: When you were reading with the music, I didn't really benefit from it. But when I was looking (at the text), then that way I got some benefit. I'm not capable of, you know, listening like that. I've got to, like, really, really concentrate on everything anyway. So, for me it wasn't so useful. When you listened to this *Hear Say* (without music) it stuck in your mind and when you did other things and looked at the board and talked, then that for me was more useful.*

Classical music played in the background of the text reading was a new experience for the students. Music calmed and brought relaxation and variation. Listening to it was defined even as a wonderful experience. Music created a specific atmosphere because it stirred emotions and contained changes between the moments of lighter and stronger tones (also Hooper Hansen 1999, 219). Music gave a rhythm to the reading and made the reading an entity and stirred the imagination. According to Arnold, baroque music promotes receptiveness (Arnold 1999, 219). Because the music prevented one's thoughts from wandering and suppressed other thoughts, it was easier to listen to the text, concentrate on it and enter the target language. Experiences like these are in line with the aim given for music in suggestopedia where music has been used to facilitate learning because it creates a calm, relaxed state of mind (Hooper Hansen 1999, 219). Listening to the music and understanding the story of what was read gave an experience of competence. The

classical music also brought experiences (also Hooper Hansen 1999, 219) and this way facilitated remembering. For one course participant, music accompanying the reading was an impediment to learning. She had noticed that her learning demanded undivided concentration and she soon decided to follow the text in the book whenever there was music.

Music played in the background during the tasks and other activities helped one to concentrate on the work of one's own group and created a warm atmosphere. Music prevented the whole group from hearing what single students said in small groups and also prevented the groups from being disturbed by what was going on in the other groups not far away from each other. Music was also an atmospheric factor. Somehow, the unexpectedness of the music and singing on the course brought encouragement because they contributed something that deviated from the basic programme.

According to these results, music is an influential and, for the most part, positive factor in foreign language study groups. If music can help people to concentrate on listening to texts of such length as these texts were, and to remember the language there better because they feel the text and get images of it thanks to the music, it is a recommendable practice providing it is otherwise suitable. When successful, at least for the most part, music can have many other positive effects such as positive relaxation. However, not all people in the groups welcome music and not all circumstances make the inclusion of music a benefit. Any group may have participants that find the use of music useless, even disturbing, perhaps in some phases even if not always, which demands discussion on the use of music and requires flexibility in making decisions. Because of its marked influence, the choice of music must be done with consideration. The choice of background music suited this group of adults with a wide age distribution, but the suitability of this music would not be the same in another time and in other groups.

4 Perspectives on course evaluation

The summary of the students' course experiences with the teacher-researcher's interpretations and comments

On a course like this where the participants' language competence and proficiency differ, two main text materials at slightly different levels serve the course participants better than one single main material. The translation of the text into Finnish beside its English counterpart levels out differences in skills but also invites the students with a good level of competence to rely unnecessarily on the first language text. CD recordings of the text material are very useful for adults who may find listening comprehension worth specific attention. If the recording is paused, it gives the student time to repeat and does not

require the student to remain close by the CD player. The presentation of sensory channels, learning strategies and self-assessment through the CEF scales and grids demand proper preliminary tuition but all of them improve the students' awareness of their own learning. Tasks related to these activities bring variation to the course programme. In general, the course material was considered appropriate, useful and different from the usual. Opinions varied according to the participants' English level and preferences.

Adults appreciate tasks that allow free expression, where one has to collect the ingredients and think. Even if some tasks types were repeated, learning was diverse and varied. If the language use is not closely bound to the book, it gives more. Conversely, assignments involving rote-learning do not serve adult students. Especially when the sessions are long or take place in the evening, varying tasks and participatory activities like changing groups are welcome. They help people to stay interested and active after their working day. Changing group sizes bring diverse experiences and introduce the course participants to everyone else. Whole group activities increase courage and give an opportunity to participate in general conversation. Medium-sized groups are convenient for the practice of spontaneous discussion and turn-taking especially if the order of the speakers is not predefined. Pair work is useful because it gives a secure environment for speaking but the gain depends much on the level of the pair. People on this kind of oral English course appreciate tasks that allow free expression, provide multifaceted learning and are not closely bound to the course book. The sessions ought to pass quickly on to active tasks and assignments. A suitably brisk tempo keeps the students involved. The challenges of pronunciations and circulating turns maintain interest. Speaking and communication ought to be ample, meaningful and empowering and aided by sufficiently easy vocabulary and material.

A plot spanning the whole course joins separate tasks and activities into a sequence and retains some familiarity across students' possible absences from the course. A good plot creates liveliness and a positive atmosphere, includes the unexpected, gives freedom of expression and many possibilities for language use. Role-play attached to it can increase fluency, generate encouragement and individual freedom and, despite the roles, can concern real life. The roles provide a good start for speaking English. According to this research, the majority of students gain from the roles but there are people who find speaking as themselves and about their own lives more rewarding on the course and for the future. The plot and the roles involve narration but all people are not narrators, not equally creative and inventive as others, which diminishes equal participation. Also limited language resources for speaking can impede speaking when roles are used. In any case, the long-term roles should be carefully explained and later repeated to avoid uncertainty that disturbs learning. According to these students, it is helpful to have more choice in the roles than is available here. The roles and authenticity are discussed in the context of autonomy in Part IIIA.

Music gives much, especially to the course climate. Listening to music facilitated concentration, had a calming influence and brought enriching images and this way supported language learning. However, music had the opposite influence on a person for

whom focussed concentration on one thing at a time was essential for learning. Background music prevents the work groups from disturbing and hearing the conversation in another group, even when they were not far away.

According to the inductively organised conversational data, the course stimulated speaking but was relaxing, too. It was a good course to resume English studies after a long break. The sessions moved on quickly to active tasks and assignments. The tempo kept the students involved all the time. The course was characterised by conversation, meaningful speaking and freedom in doing these.

Course participants' suggestions and critical comments for the improvement of the course

Collecting words and expressions for a task in groups and writing those down by oneself would have given more than receiving them as handouts, which took place more often. As a more participatory activity, collecting the words together would have been good and it would have created a calm moment in the middle of other activities demanding more energy. On the other hand, this practice offered less material for the task than a handout. One valuable suggestion was that reading the text aloud in turns in the session should be delayed if people had worries about it. Even so, the reading should not be left out to help people overcome their fear or even trauma attached to it from school. It was important that it happened and mentioning it shows that they believed that the change could take place on this course. Less text reading and more conversation, the wish presented most often, could have increased the benefit. It would be worth trying provided the students study the text by themselves in advance. However, the change should not increase the amount of activities and tasks that demand a lot of action, especially in long sessions. On the other hand, some students could benefit from several readings of *A Holiday in Cornwall* texts. Another suggestion was that one could get homework to make up for what one missed when unable to participate in every session but especially if there had been many such requests, it would have demanded more time than I could afford. Instead, the student in question got a compact presentation of the basic grammar that he also needed.

The course participants' earlier studies and their English competence and proficiency varied, which is reflected in the suggestions. A short, compact grammar revision at the beginning was mentioned. It could have been quite useful for some of those at level A2. For some of them even the basic grammar had become vague. Many others had a sufficient, even very good command of grammar. We could not have begun with grammar on a relatively short oral English course especially when the preliminary information mentioned nothing about it. Some of those at B1 or perhaps above it suggested more demanding conversation beyond common situations, tasks involving listening to a text followed by the teacher's questions on it, a prepared short talk and more demanding free conversation, tasks that

were too demanding for the rest of the group. For several of the people at this level, *A Holiday in Cornwall* could have been without translations. It was also presented as a wish that student negotiation on puzzling issues in the small groups would take place in English. According to my experience, one of the two persons suggesting this would have coped easily with it. From the other person it would have demanded more effort, but this person had a strong motivation to learn and he was always looking for challenges to learn more. For him, non-speakers of Finnish would have been welcome on the course.

Students' suggestions tell about the diversity of English levels among the course participants affecting their preferences and expectations. The English competence of many of them was at least B1, probably above it, even if their proficiency of speaking was not. A sufficiently low course level gives safety and it becomes even more important if the study context is new as it was for the majority of the students and if the previous studies are far in the past. The proficiency of those with a good general command of English advanced quickly as soon as they got used to speaking, started to recall what they had learned years ago and got over such impediments as scarce or practically lacking experience of speaking and fears of speaking. They noticed that they could cope with more demanding oral tasks. If so, they had reached their goal. The course was of suitable length. On a longer course, the differences in speaking English and in the course expectations among the students would have grown further.

IIIA

PATHS AND SIGNPOSTS TO ADULTS' ORAL ENGLISH COMMUNICATION

Part IIIA continues answering the second research problem on the promotion of oral English communication and explores which ways course participation supported the students as users of English and promoted their oral English communication in the light of the inductive data analysis. The first section describes the key components of the course life which, according to the data analysis, were the course climate, the students as peers to each other, the teacher and participation as the prevalent form of work. The second section is conceptually organised and deals with the students' cognitive, emotional and volitional resources and the changes in them during the research span. In this section, participation is viewed from the viewpoint of learning. The third section examines how the course influenced these people's lives and identities as students and users of English, their achievements and plans whatever plans they may have for the future.

The data employed in Part IIIA came from the conversational interview data (for the categories, see Appendix 3) through inductive data analysis where the categories developed gradually and step by step. Because the data used here emerged from the fact that the students chose to mention them or alternatively, that the conversation somehow led them to these issues, the data discussion speaks of the diversity by dealing with all opinions but not everyone's expressions. However, it is probable that for those who for example did not mention anything about a certain topic here, – climate and affective issues were prime examples of this – then, it had not been particularly important for the given student. Although the two course groups differed from each other, the data from them are discussed together, with the exception of the last subsection in the first section, which only concerns the WE group. The membership of each student appears in Appendix 6. In addition to the conversational data, Part IIIA includes a small amount of teacher diary data.

1 Classroom life and the people sharing it and contributing to it

The influence of climate, the group and the people in them, the teacher and participation as the main form of work were intertwined. The students were peers who learned to know everyone else because they worked with everyone and through that learned to know the people in the entire study group as persons. Plenty of participatory activities, the students' familiarity with each other as peers and the teacher's role contributed to the course climate, setting the tone for it and the studies taking place there. The prevailing participatory nature of the course activities shaped the teacher's role and her work. Tuuli put these thoughts into her own words:

Tuuli: Yes, for learning it's ..., yes, it's also the group and the climate and the teacher and, and, the teaching material and the ways and tricks, they have a pretty big effect on how you, like, experience it and what you get out of it.

Course climate

Even if either the word climate or atmosphere could often serve elsewhere in the report, I have chosen climate to the title. It denotes "the mental, moral, etc. environment prevailing in a body of people in respect of opinion, some aspect of life etc" (Shorter Oxford English Dictionary 2007), which tells more about the course than atmosphere that has also been used in the report.

Pia: All the time there was this laid-back feeling, all the things we did were, like, radiating this relaxed feeling. Which is really important just from the learning viewpoint. There's this very positive mood all the time. You're like, open to everything.

Vesa: Well, the climate was reasonably relaxed and free. But not too relaxed. But it definitely wasn't too relaxed. Then everybody loses their grip on things.

According to the students, the course climate was open, cheerful, warm, homelike, peaceful, to the point and supportive, not boring or frightening. These features and the lack of tension and pressure resulted in a good feeling. Students also mentioned that the course was not too relaxed but like any course, it demanded adjustment. Positiveness was the prevailing tone. No demands or criticism were presented. You could be yourself, speak and forget that you cannot speak English. There was plenty of fun and humour. Peers with cheerful energy infected the studies. People invented unbelievable stories with no truth in them and laughed when working in the groups. There was play and use of imagination and people came up with funny ideas and suggestions. Even so, studying was serious and matter-of-fact and there was considerable enthusiasm for learning and speaking and an

obvious joy of learning. The students themselves, their shared goal and the experience of their togetherness influenced the climate. It is possible that the teacher had initiated the quality of the climate through her cheerfulness and lack of authoritativeness but after all, the positive charge on the course was a more important factor than the teacher. The variety of activities and tasks, the changing groups, the music and the light-hearted topics, together with *A Holiday in Cornwall* and its leisure time atmosphere, as well as the long-term roles influenced the climate in a positive way. The semicircle seating and the lack of desks increased openness among the students, as did the changing of pairs.

Communication on the course often had an imaginative element. The study material was implemented imaginatively and the tasks and conversations demanded imagination. As one student said, through imagination one gets more learning opportunities and can take on bigger challenges, finds more to say, invents new things and uses words that one cannot otherwise use in a lesson. Imagination is connected with play, playfulness, humour and imaginative stories. They appeared especially in communicative situations. Some people were more absorbed in the play than others, but all of them “played” in the communicative situations and did appropriately. Sometimes the long-term roles came to the surface but often play mainly concerned just setting oneself into the situation at hand, yet no one was a spoil sport. Play helped students to improvise and usually provided them with initiatives, too.

Humour, fun, play and cheerfulness and serious learning can flourish side by side on a course, provided the first three do not make the climate too relaxed. In both groups, the general climate had given people the experience of not having to be nervous of anyone. It did not seem to be of utter importance to be able to speak without any mistakes and it did not matter if sometimes you could not say anything at all. The feeling of togetherness experienced here joins people together on a course and brings the sense of ownership. A warm, anxiety-free, positive and relaxed study climate promotes learning and creates and maintains the self-confidence even to struggle with the challenges and experiences of not always being successful in oral communication. In this kind of study climate one does not have to waste energy worrying about teacher and peer criticism. Obtaining knowledge and creating ideas and insights are facilitated in a supportive, anxiety-free atmosphere of joy and through the sense of ownership, personal meaning and sharing (Rogers, C. 1983, 104). Students’ joy comes from the experience of success in the lesson (Rantala 2006, 140) and from the experience of having command of new knowledge and using it (Luukkainen 2005, 72–73 and 75). These students’ English competence differed, and consequently, there was a wide difference in their speaking, especially towards the latter half of the proceeding course. The freedom in speaking English and in choosing what to say and the size of the risks one wants to take is important, which increases success in speaking.

Playfulness enables us to create new meanings and think in another way and makes us give up the idea of the existence of one single understanding that is the correct one (Puolimatka 2010, 177). Play with its basis in imagination gives people negotiability in the form of experience (Wenger 1998, 204). Through imagination, we can, for example, try out new things, benefit from freedom and “assume contacts between people and place ourselves in completely new contexts” (Wenger 1998, 194), which took place here. The notions presented by Wenger and Puolimatka speak for the benefits of play and playfulness on oral English courses. Losing oneself in play is

of specific purpose for those who were shy, lacked courage or had some other impediment to speaking. According to Gadamer, play contains seriousness. The purpose of the play is to lose the player in the play. It liberates the player from having to take the initiative through absorbing the player into itself. (Gadamer 1989, 102 and 105.) Some students talked about play, others about the use of imagination. However, not everyone finds play and use of imagination easy or is equally enhanced by them. There was also the notion that a relaxed climate can disturb learning. A good study climate is not similar and equally important to everyone, but everyone enjoys themselves and flourishes in a good learning climate. In such a climate, it is easy to relate with each other, negotiate about the learning and about your conversations, find your footing in the course group and this way form the group and its climate (see van Lier 2007).

The significance of affective factors and the quality of the course climate in general varies among people and between study groups, even though the teacher and the study material are the same as they were here. In their interpretation of Wenger's social theory of learning, Kohonen and Kaikkonen point out that the context in which the students speak to each other is related to the given situation and formed by the history of their mutual interaction (Kaikkonen & Kohonen 2012, 90). Everyone in a classroom contributes to the creation of classroom life. Everyone influences the communication and learning of the others through their participation and through the impression that the others get from them. (Tarone 2006, 163 and 173.) For example, the climate was more relaxed, open, secure and positive in the WE group, which may have contributed to differences between the groups in the long run.

One's peers and course group

The course participants talked, conversed, negotiated about their differing conceptions and meanings, and listened to each other, shared experiences, knowing and ideas in changing groups. They learned to know each other's level of English and what its influence was on their communication. In the bigger E group the differences in the students' English levels were wider than in the WE group where no one had any particular language impediments to speaking. Instead, one of its members had other difficulties, which are discussed last in this subsection.

Mirja: Yes, I thought a lot of them (students) were pretty good. A lot of them very good. Everybody was treated equally. First of all I thought they were also clever and wise ... when I'm this old person but in the end I noticed that yes, I can also cope just like the others.

Kaarina: That morning we were there, the first feeling was that I couldn't get anything out of myself. But when we had Pia and the new one, Katri, in our group. She's certainly better than me. Then the talk just started coming out of me as well. And then I was just amazed and surprised that I could say so much.

The lack of sufficient grammar was a crucial impediment to a person's own participating and a problem for the co-speakers because it made understanding difficult. Sometimes difficulties in sentence formation caused similar problems. Neither of these problems

appeared in the WE group. When the level of the co-speakers was quite different, the ones who knew most gained less and their proficiency benefited the partner with a lower level of English skills. According to the students, changing pairs and groups mitigated this problem but most rewarding challenge was when the speakers were at the same level. Especially if the partner was not a very competent speaker either, speaking was quite easy, sometimes also funny. Some mild criticism was expressed in the interviews, because there had been no control of the level. Despite the occasional harm caused by the different levels of English, people accepted that one had to compromise in group studies and one could not get the best possible.

After instructions for the upcoming task, the groups organised how they intended to speak. I followed their working from a distance and helped when asked or when, for example, I noticed that they might benefit from an additional idea for their conversation. The team spirit was good. You could talk with many people and never knew in advance with whom and in what kind of group. No strain or pressure caused by the course group or small groups was mentioned. Help was asked for and offered when it was needed. People could also compare their own English skills to those of the others and learned what they did not yet have command of. In the group work, the peers strengthened each other's commitment to learning through attending to everyone's speech opportunities. Questions were posed to everyone and in such a way that it felt good and natural, which helped a shy person. Everyone was given a turn, also when the group had responsibility for assigning turns. However, according to the data, in one of the course groups, one participant used to take more than her share of the floor but in the other group everyone attended also to the others' opportunities to speak.

Scaffolding one's peers can be frustrating as one cannot take on such challenges in language use as stretch one's own proficiency (also Crandall 1999, 226). However, negotiation on their use of English certainly helps both the weaker and the stronger participant (for example Eardley & Carrido 2005, 218). When the group members are at about the same level, the conversation can expand in an appropriate way and it is mutually more rewarding and also encouraging for those in such a group where the participants have low conceptions of their own proficiency. Mutually constructed social relationships that build on hierarchy also appear in adult groups and their sub-groupings (Tarone 2006, 172–173). There was no evidence of this here.

A supportive study environment with social interaction and collaboration promotes students' self understanding and increases their learning (Kohonen 2009b, 139). People are important to each other because they scaffold each other and are mutual learners (Bruner 1996, 21–22). The experiences and work with everyone in the group bind the group together and enrich everyone (see Rogers, A. 2002, 75). When students work and converse in different compositions, their emotions become part of the relationship with the conversation partner (see Oatley 2004, 150–152). Togetherness, the feeling of being in the same situation with the others in a group that does not set pressure, is important. No competition appeared and help was willingly and readily given. However, in groups working independently, students can diminish each other's opportunities by taking more than his/ or her own share of the time. A group that does not set pressure is important. A positive, respectful climate, togetherness and the feeling of being in

the same situation with the others are important, too. Study groups are unique communities where the members have unique circumstances of life, expectations and needs, language competency, learning styles, beliefs of learning and habitual personal ways and patterns of learning (Rogers, A. 2002, 73–82). This concerns here both the two course groups and smaller work groups. It is necessary to consider, what counterbalanced or diminished the drawbacks brought by the diversity of competence and proficiency. In a study group with some ten people or little more, the participants cannot avoid working with everybody. The changing group sizes and group memberships were unanimously considered good on many grounds. It mitigated the disadvantage of sometimes having a pair or small group member who could contribute little to the group work and needed much time to construct what he/she had to say. People knew that speaking with anyone lasted for only one group work task at a time. The freedom in dealing with the topics was considered a valuable resource in heterogeneous groups. Those with extensive English studies, even if at first lacking speech, advanced quickly. If the course had continued longer, they would have found speaking at this level and on these topics to be insufficiently challenging and rewarding.

The students as people to each other

Ilkka: Because we all had to do things. If there's just one out there in front of the class and everybody sees that there's only one person who knows and dares. But there like everybody gets to, like, make an appearance.

Maria: Just like the way we got on with each other. In a way we were so free towards each other, somehow like open and so on and so on... we were all like in the same boat, in a way like in a bunch.

Ari: There in our group ... when you heard of people's needs and worries and you could see yourself in them, then you noticed you aren't the only person in this world who finds it hard there.

The experience of participants was that the people in one's group were likeable and friendly, which was recognised as one of the reasons why the course did not feel like hard studying. There was no strain caused by peers. The groups welcomed new participants and it was easy for them to join and integrate both in the E and WE group, as these people themselves and some other student present from the very first session mentioned. Those able to speak less and not always understanding right away were aware of their lesser competence and proficiency, but at least according to the data, never through the other students' comments or behaviour. Awareness of one's shortcomings and lower level did not form an impediment to speaking in a group. It sometimes brought the unexpected experience of knowing and one's unexpectedly abundant speaking. Having got acquainted with the others in a climate of prevailing openness concerning their English, students with lesser competence and proficiency were helped both by speaking and by noticing that the others had their own difficulties to cope with, which was a source of experienced togetherness and courage. You saw that no one was perfect and there were others who had the same weaknesses and

worries as yourself. In the groups, one heard and learned words and expressions and got tips on learning English from the others. The intensity and zest to study came from the group. Opportunities for speaking were equal and everyone had to speak and everyone was listened to. People spurred each other on. For a shy person, it had been helpful that the others asked her questions. For her, starting to speak was difficult even if speaking in itself was not. Studying on the course and integrating in it had been easy, even for those who joined after the first few sessions, something which was mentioned by one of two such students and by another student.

Notwithstanding differences, for example, in their level of English or age, a friendly attitude of respect and approval prevailed, which helps a person to accept themselves as a speaker of English such as they are. A lower level of proficiency and competence did not cause shame. It seems the amount we are able to present of what we know depends on the attitude and reactions of the person we talk to and face (see also Damasio 2003, 28). Language classrooms are “*locally negotiated*” and of a complex nature and “have social structures that are mutually constructed by student-student interactions, over which the teacher may have minimal control” (Tarone 2006, 172–173, italics in original; with reference to Allwright 2006, 15–16). The differences between the students’ levels of English were of less importance compared to these structures. In both groups people were aware of how the group had helped them and what they had got from it and its members.

The ensuing discussion only deals with the WE group, but what took place there can concern other English study contexts elsewhere. Sandy was one of its members. Owing to Sandy’s marked influence on the group, it was necessary to include the issue of Sandy as a theme in the WE interviews. The course level was neither too low nor too high for Sandy who had joined the course because it was good to repeat old things (WE 1). Sandy was polite but loud, listened to the teacher but not to fellow students, did not understand group work as a site of learning and was not able to take any responsibility for the others’ learning opportunities (WE 5).

Ilona: Of course, everybody thinks that they’ve paid for this course and have come here to study and want to get the benefit of it, so when there’s so much disturbance the course organiser should do something about it.

Pia: I think Sandy was shut out and was avoided and people didn’t really want to take any notice of Sandy. I can’t say that I made a lot of effort myself. It was a bit frightening too when Sandy started to go on about these things and didn’t want to stop. All in all, regrettable and sad that the situation sort of completely turned against Sandy but Sandy was disturbing the class.

Sandy’s behavior caused confusion and irritation, for some people more than for others. It was hard to try to concentrate on one’s own learning. Perhaps Sandy’s participation increased the togetherness of the others. Even when considered harmless, such behaviour was disturbing and influenced everything, the climate included. The others felt that after

having paid for a course and reserved time for it, one had the right to study and learn there and was entitled to expect what had been promised and get one's money worth, especially when the course was not cheap, as was the case here. Students argued that the institute was responsible for offering lessons where learning could take place without continuing disturbance. Where such disturbance took place, the institute should step in. On the other hand, students felt pity for Sandy who was avoided. People got irritated when getting tired of Sandy and afterwards regretted their negative reactions and lack of respect. They were aware that Sandy could not participate like the others. Even so, Sandy like other people ought to have the right to enjoy life and study like the others. People started developing damage limitation strategies. Here, they avoided taking a seat next to Sandy, did not listen to Sandy's comments unrelated to the present topic, tried intensively to focus on the task, paid no attention to Sandy and, as I learned in the interviews, also told Sandy to be quiet. Another strategy in a group including Sandy was to conclude its work more quickly. The whole situation turned against Sandy. In the interviews, a different kind and way of learning was suggested, as was also kicking Sandy out and returning the course fee.

One student left the course because of Sandy. The institute did not take any action even if they were told about the situation and Sandy's inability to participate, which they knew about because of Sandy's earlier participation in other courses. Our situation was marked by confusion, by disturbances in course life, by group cohesion and by Sandy's negative influence on the others' learning. I had to resort to such decisions as avoiding situations where someone had to work alone with Sandy and not placing anyone in the same group with Sandy in consecutive assignments, either. Sandy was included in the work of the whole group and half-groups. In pair work I used to work with Sandy, who seemed to be content with the arrangement. (WE 2) Because of Sandy, the others got less support from the teacher (WE 4).

One student's inability to follow the theme, join in and listen had a destructive influence especially on the small group work and conversation. It is difficult to concentrate on what to say when one member keeps on talking something quite different. Even if it is understood that for people like Sandy life is certainly not easy and that they come to meet people and speak with them, these people are shut out. The right to study a foreign language was one extension of Rebenius's fifth meaning of autonomy as democratic citizenship (Rebenius 2007, 305). As Hartog suggests, the situation of shared experiences creates a bond between people in a group strengthening their collective identity and their experience of inclusion (Hartog 2004, 163). Here the bond and collective identity were strengthened because of and against one group member. Instead of bullying (cf. Hamarus 2006) taking place also among adults, the situation generated questioning and irritation and occasionally orally expressed resentment against Sandy. On the other hand, considerations of one's lack of empathy and ethical questioning also surfaced here. The communication between people denotes a relationship, "solid give-and-take of talk", "being gazed upon", "knowing and being known" and thus resembled more an *I – Thou than I – It* relationship (Buber 2004, 79). With Sandy, this was not possible.

Despite the disturbance and anger Sandy caused, the data revealed that the group was very content with their studies in the group and their gain. One student's problematic contribution to

the course does not necessarily go beyond the limit of what a course and its students endure, provided there is a counterweight in the form of well-functioning and meaningful studies, student motivation and their ability to work independently as was the case here. However, if the teacher has to pay continual attention to one student, he/she cannot pay sufficient attention to the others' needs, even less concentrate on their needs.

Teacher

The teacher was another essential part of the course as was the students' course experience. I did not ask the students about my work but the majority of them introduced the topic in the interviews, usually quite briefly. The course participants assessed their teacher's course management and teaching, the quality of her authority, her communication with them and her contribution to the course climate.

Ari: Like, there wasn't, sort of... Well, there wasn't any authority there, like the sort in the olden days ... Yet it was in a way more or less... of course you had the bits and pieces under control ... but I don't feel that I personally felt any kind of tension between us so that we couldn't have come to talk.

Tuuli: So it was like I never felt at any stage that, somehow, you could do something too difficult, or that I would come up against something too hard for me, like that then, that everything was easy and then of course you are so terribly positive and like, sort of, perhaps like that, using your own personality, you bring to others, to the whole course, that kind of peacefulness and, and that sort of laid-back feeling, that when you, that you were an awfully gentle teacher, you weren't like one of those strict ones.

The course participants appreciated the teacher's approach and course management. The differences among the people and their level of English had been taken into account. She did not require anything too demanding. Actually, she could have demanded more. The students had found her for example positive, cheerful, gentle, encouraging, and never critical. She had brought warmth and serenity to the course. There was freedom to fling oneself into speaking. Some students viewed their teacher from a practical, non-affective viewpoint. They assessed the approach, the management of the course, the teacher's proficiency and her ability to motivate students and analysed her application of teacher authority. People could come and talk with her about their learning and ask her what they wanted to know. She had also inquired about the students' wishes concerning the course contents and implementation and attended to their requests for going through certain language issues. She had been a reliable teacher, served them with new ideas and had corrected in a nice way. In the interview, one female student, Merja, hoped that my text on the board, often quickly written, had been clearer. I had written a corresponding note in the course diary (E1).

The two citations at the beginning of this subsection illustrated how differently students characterised their teacher and how different their expectations of her were. For some, the teacher's friendliness and gentleness had been important enough to be mentioned. According to Laursen, students learn more, when the teacher can maintain friendliness, good organisation and enthusiasm (Laursen 2004, 176). In these respects, the course seems to have been on the right track. On a course for adults for whom a given language course can be the first one for years, students' experience of their teacher as an encouraging, positive and non-critical person is important. Actually, there was no correction of errors in the first sessions. Later, the correction usually meant that I said the correct or a more idiomatic alternative in passing when the student had finished, leaving it to him/her to decide whether to take another try or not. Freedom is important in a study group where participants' English skills are not known. The combination of fun and serenity is also useful there. If the students feel that they can rely on the teacher and she affects the study climate in a positive way and can at least diminish stress, it facilitates learning and supports the student. It is clear that the lack of clarity on the board adds to students' difficulties to understand. On the other hand, tips for the improvement of the course and the critique of it and also of the teacher tell about the students' experience of course ownership and shared authority.

The discussion on teacher authority revealed that the students had thought about it and probably also compared it to the teacher authority in their school years. The student experience of the teacher and the quality of his or her authority affects the ways in which they dare manifest themselves in his or her presence (Lehtovaara, J. 2001, 158). These students talked with the teacher during the breaks. E group sometimes started to speak about their learning in the lessons and the interviews became conversational. At the beginning there was some tension and some distance existed. A couple of times I worked with the student one-on-one without a pair. They were a little shy to work with their teacher. However, Sandy did not mind having to work with the teacher. Another student enjoyed working with the teacher, because she felt she could get more out of the task.

According to Gadamer, the true basis of authority is an act of freedom and reason that grants the authority of a superior fundamentally because s/he has a wider view of things or is better informed, knows more and what he knows "can, in principle, be discovered to be true." Thus, the teacher's authority must be based on freedom and reason, not on obedience. I was considered to be competent as the teacher on the course, which brought me authority (Gadamer 1989, 279–280). The students' appreciated the flexibility of the learning situation. Authority was divided through the attention given to their suggestions and comments, their requests for going through a number of language issues forgotten or never mastered and my inquiries about their wishes and preferences. The occasional modification of tasks by the students to improve their gain speaks of divided authority.

Participation as dense, shared and mutual engagement

Learning, or knowing as Wenger also calls it, through dense, shared and mutual engagement, interaction and participation in "a joint enterprise" in communities of practice is an expression of the deeply social human nature (Wenger 1998, 3–4 and 73–74). Wenger places learning "in the context of our lived experience of participation in the world" (Wenger 1998, 3). Despite its literal meaning of taking something away, participation adds

to something that enriches and enlarges what is shared with others (Gadamer 1984, 64). The course aimed at such participation in the course community as a means of entering the communities of English speakers. Despite “dense, shared and mutual engagement” and participation being part of the phenomenon of learning (see Wenger 1998, 73–74), I have divided my discussion on them so as to be able to focus on both. This subsection focuses on participation on the course. The second aspect of participation, Participation as learning and awareness of how to monitor one’s learning” is in the following section and focuses on learning in particular. I begin with participation.

Aino: My daughter said that you don't have to go on that course. You can read my book. But it's not the same thing. On the course you have to take part. You have to say things ... Get the feeling that you know how to speak. You get courage. And the teacher speaks there and the others.

Mika: It wasn't just passive listening where you just listen. Somebody speaks and the rest listen, and what happens is you, sort of, take a look out of the window and wonder what's going on out there. That's the way it is, but if you have to take part the whole time, then there's none of that.

Pia: If you hit it off with a person, then talking is easy. And there were indeed some really fun people there ... You had to listen to different people talking, in various situations. You don't know what the other person will reply to you, but you have the courage to go forward with your antennae out and waving just like in real life, the thing is, like, when you're talking you can't anticipate, and you've got to move on and go with the flow. Earlier you thought about what you could say but the situations pass you by. When you're ready to say your sentence, it's too late. Now you think, right, this sentence isn't ready but I'll have to work on it.

Through participation in the activities and tasks you became part of the group and the communication there. Different group formations made it possible to talk with everyone and listen to what they had to say. You participated, for example, through planning, conversing, speaking, asking, collecting words together and working together on texts, tasks and other assignments. Speaking and doing things together and experiencing that you could speak and functioning with the language had been unforgettable. Everyone joined in and was involved in the course activities. You only had to get over the initial threshold of speaking. Despite wishing to speak, not everyone wanted to come to the fore very much because of shyness or not wanting to push oneself forward and it brought disappointment for the person concerned. The groups used the allotted time for their communication, even if having Sandy as one member made the group sometimes conclude the work earlier. Participation taking place in small groups helped you to start speaking and showed that you were able to speak English. You needed some courage and could not think and hesitate too long. Thinking too much was considered an impediment to participation. The course was demanding because you were engaged all the time but you did not just have to listen

for long stretches of time. It was good, because then you would get tired and bored with the class monotony and your passive role there and start doodling or looking out of the window for something more interesting.

The prerequisite of social learning through participation is active involvement that denotes “doing, talking, thinking, feeling, and belonging” and involves the whole person and body and also social relations. Participation is active involvement and membership that gives both social and personal experiences as well as providing and forming our identity. (Wenger 1998, 56) Wenger argues that in participation “the nature of what is shared and learned and becomes a source of cohesion” giving a form to the structure and practice (Wenger 1998, 283), which aptly describes both course groups. Meaningful communication and getting good experiences are important for the student’s self-esteem, encouragement, identity development and future participation. Through participation in the activities and tasks you become part of the group and the communication there. Talking about the group as “us” was a sign of these happening. If you have never communicated in spoken English, speaking in English in a context of participation while doing things together becomes a turning point. For a person who prefers agency to a non-active role, listening to long stretches of speech especially in the evening after a working-day can make the interest flag. In Gadamer’s words, “the whole inner store of our lives is always extending by participating” (Gadamer 1984, 64). “Through participation we are taken up into the whole” (Gallagher 1992, 64). This was a community of practice. In such a community people “sustain dense relations of mutual engagement organised around what they are there to do” (Wenger 1998, 74). In his research on learning in communities of practice Wenger found that for the research participants the most memorable thing had been the people. “They act as resources to each other, exchanging information, making sense of situations, sharing new tricks and new ideas, as well as keeping each other company and spicing up each other’s working days”. (Wenger 1998, 46–47.) It seems that these benefits were apparent also in this research on learning.

The engagement in a particular “practice” ends like this course did, but the results of participation go beyond it. They remain and are carried on since they have become part of who these people are and constitute their identities and continue as negotiation of meaning in the context of their forms of memberships in various communities (Wenger 1998, 57). Such things would take place among these students. Meaningful communication and getting good experiences of speaking are important for the student’s future participation, self-esteem, encouragement and identity development. Experiences of inadequacy can affect a person’s conception of him/herself and affect later efforts at participation. “Our identity is produced as a lived experience of participation in specific communities” (Wenger 1998, 151). In oral communication, the involvement of the person and the identity concerns are stronger because of the recognition of oneself from one’s own point of view and from that of the others.

Discussion on findings

The influence of the course climate, the group and the people in it, the teacher and participation as the main form of work are intertwined. The teacher’s role as the one who sets the tone for the course is important. The lack of pressure, authoritativeness and

criticism build reliance on the teacher and on the course, as for example with the availability of sufficient necessary instructions. A friendly, not too demanding teacher does not make the students doubt their learning. After the first few sessions, the course climate and the course participants and their participation become more central on this kind of course with plenty of group work. Togetherness and different sequences of practices, humour, fun, joy, imagination and improvisation stimulate and increase speaking. However, people's inclination to humour, imagination and improvisation and the ability to benefit from them varies. Adults come to an oral English course to participate, not to listen, even when they have fears about speaking. They are serious about their studies and work on the course, which appears as proactiveness. The experience of being in the same situation makes people motivate and support each other.

The opportunities for learning seem to be tied up with the group dynamics and the students' relationships there (Nikkola 2011, 217). Students find group work valuable for their learning, but the results suggest that becoming friends and learning to know each other better on courses like this is not important. According to this research, adults as students respect each other and integrate well in changing groups. They accept compromises concerning their own gain and promote each other's learning, which decidedly diminishes the possible negative influence of the differences in levels. It was a site of experiences that stimulated and promoted learning. Participation where everyone is included and listened to adds active engagement, social learning and the experience of being included. Language both arises from the reality of social life and creates this reality (Hamarus 2006, 40). If a person does not have sufficient command of the foreign language in a situation, he/she cannot participate in its production, shape it and gain belongingness to it. Allwright's scattergun principle of diverse tasks is good and encouraging, because it gives opportunities to everyone (see Allwright 2006, 13–14).

Adults' English competence and proficiency differ and their missing skills, their needs and preferences can be difficult for the teacher to recognise. However, everyone's inclusion has a strong influence on the course climate and the togetherness there. Inclusion is facilitated by freedom in speaking, open tasks, the possibility to choose less or more demanding language and the length of one's turn. Everyone's communication with everyone else in groups of different sizes shapes the classroom life and influences the participants' mutual relationships on the course. Most probably, this is at least one reason for the absence of hierarchy among the students. The positive influence of suggestopedic principles on course life was evident on the course.

If classroom life gets unsocial features even through one single student, as happened here, it at least somewhat affects the climate and, as a result, the learning, which is discussed later. However, it seems that contentment with the course and a good course community balance the situation and help people to accept also such negative events that are not too frequent. In 2006, Allwright suggested that the life in the classroom is the most significant factor, because of its influence on people's mental health and their motivation for learning

later in their lives (Allwright 2006, 14–15). According to the results, the people and their participation created a favourable classroom life here that did not alienate them from later studies. The gain was important but interestingly, the course was a major contributing factor in developing their mental resources and their growth.

2 Mental resources and their growth as promoters of oral English communication

The last phase of the step-by-step formation of the categories of the inductively drawn conversational data brought into view the significance of the students' mental resources concerning reflection and autonomy, awareness, motivation and fear and courage in their studies. These had much to do with the promotion of the course participants' English and their oral English communication in particular, besides the contribution of the course, independent studies and use of English in their life contexts during the course (also Dörnyei & Ushioda 2011, 200). The formation of these categories and grouping the data into them took place through what bears a resemblance to the abductive process, where the researcher's familiarity with the concepts through FLE literature contributes to the result of the analysis (for details of this process see *The three readings of the conversational interview data* in Part I). Reflection opens the discussion because it is an important prerequisite for all the phenomena discussed in this section, especially for autonomy and awareness, and an essential element in all of them. The division of awareness into three discussions comes from Kohonen (Kohonen 2007, 185–186) even if this correspondence with the third one is smaller as its name "Student reflections on English as a foreign language and on communication in English" reveals. Reflection and autonomy, awareness, motivation and courage describe the students' mental resources and their growth in achieving the course targets. Like learning on the course, everyone's development concerning these resources was unique. Each of them lived their own process. Their achievements took place in different ways and areas. The development of these mental resources concerned both the use of what already existed and what was new.

Reflection

Reflection is an important means of learning for a mainly independently studying adult. Adults understand the value of experiences in learning, reflect on them, view their successes and failures critically and learn from both (Mezirow 2009, 103–104). According to Little, learning becomes more efficient and effective through reflection because it implies personal

engagement and focusing (<http://www.llas.ac.uk/resources/gpg/1409>). The conversational interview data abounded with the students' reflections on their language learning, and on themselves as language learners, which suggests that adults who study English are used to reflect on their learning. They also find reflections on learning in class worth listening and joining even if the course groups seem to differ here. However, some people prefer telling facts or narrating to turning to reflection (cf. the extract from Vesa's interview in Appendix 2).

The course experience gave the opportunity for questioning and participation in reflective discussions helping in the evaluation of their own learning (Little 2004, 22). Telling another person about one's ideas demands formulation and clarifies one's thoughts (Eardley & Garrido 2005, 218). Especially the E group started this kind of discussions. In both groups, people welcomed them and listened to each other. The classroom climate in the groups and the people had brought sufficient security for such discussions to take place. Awareness and reflection together lead people to challenge and question their ideas and routines and this way make them managers of their own learning processes (see Murphy, Hauck, Nicolson & Adams 2005, 60–78). In the interviews, students told about their reflections and their existing and past understandings as well as exploring and sometimes discovering more informed ones (see also subsection "Personal awareness and self-direction" in studies and speaking). Above all, the interviews revealed the students' habit of reflection and its dynamic influence on their learning, as shown especially by the conversational data categories (Appendix 3). One can only take responsibility for one's learning if one knows what responsibility covers, something which demands reflection that also empowers the learner (Little 2004, 22). Monitoring one's learning processes is a crucial factor in the development of one's English (Kohonen et al. 2005, 331; Kaikkonen 2004, 165). Reflection promotes autonomous learning (CEF 2001, 141).

Student autonomy

The majority of the course participants' English studies had taken place before learner autonomy was understood to be of such importance and worth promotion in FLE as it is today. However, adult life is characteristically autonomous. These students' informal studies and self-directed learning in other contexts were manifestations of this. The ability of goal-oriented working/learning and willingness for it are central prerequisites for autonomous learning and the maintenance and accumulation of language skills (Kohonen et al. 2005, 331). This subsection deals with the course as a site for student autonomy and its growth in their learning and use of English. Among other things, the students' course gain in section 3 at the end of this Part IIIA describes how the course and what was attached to it helped the participants towards confidence and autonomy as learners and speakers of English in real life.

These students were used to studying on their own and making individual choices. On the course, their work took place cooperatively in groups. Some forms of Rebenius's analysis of the forms of autonomy gave a suitable frame for examining autonomy and its possible growth within these studies (Rebenius 2007, 305–310). Autonomy – efficiency in language learning denotes responsibility for one's own learning, planning it, carrying it out and evaluating it (Rebenius 2007, 306–307). Rebenius's second definition of autonomy, "the well-adjusted autonomous student" includes both individual and collaborative autonomy and takes the view of an autonomous student who plans, carries out and evaluates his learning, acts efficiently and in a concentrated way, checks his/her results and welcomes peer evaluation. (Rebenius 2007, 307–308.)

Hona: I reckon I'm one of those, all the time I have to be doing something with the language, that I'm like active, you know, so at home as well I read and listen even to little sections one at a time so that I would somehow learn to listen and would learn to understand. It's like if you have to have long gaps then it feels like you've forgotten everything that... So in a way it's no good relying on attending the course just now and then but in a way there has to be continuity. You have to keep it going along. That's the way the words come and you get the listening.

Annukka: What I meant to do was listen to the same chapter on my CD and look at it, but it just went by, the weeks just flew past and then it's Tuesday again and you haven't had time to do anything about it. I feel that much responsibility then.

Related to the first two forms of autonomy noted by Rebenius, the students invented strategies for promoting their English on their own. They compared the Finnish and English text in *A Holiday in Cornwall*, analysed their differences and translated the text from Finnish back into English. They listened to Hear Say dialogues, repeated the lines, and even bought a CD player for the purpose. When watching films at home, they started to use the teletext option of hiding the accompanying Finnish subtitles. Reading books in English gave plenty of new vocabulary. Thinking about all the events of the day in English was another strategy. Being actively in contact with English regularly, even if briefly, was important for remembering. Unfortunately, people with daily work and often a family had little spare time to work regularly for the course between the sessions despite their intention to do so. Peer evaluation, as mentioned by Rebenius, did not take place.

People had found their own ways of promoting and checking their learning and planned further studies on the basis of what they had learned about their English on this course. Independent, autonomous study material was either related to the course material or was individually chosen. Thus, their autonomy as learners clearly broke the bounds of the classroom and was part of their lives. They had set their own goals and were willing to work for them and shouldered the responsibility for their studies and their promotion, but at the same time, they were aware of their need of opportunities for communication. Self-directed learning increases the student's knowledge of the "constructivist and contextual nature of knowledge, reflection, creative

problem solving and critical thinking” (Hansman & Mott 2010, 17), which are a good support for adults like these.

Rebenius’s “Autonomy, a social context and communication” describes students as social beings who interact, negotiate and communicate authentically, share responsibility with others, learn with others and are interdependent with them (Rebenius 2007, 308). This form of autonomy applied to these students both on the course and also elsewhere during the course.

Ilona: Yet they work, the groups. It was always about helping each other, it wasn't like one person doing the speaking and the others listening, but that, err, everybody had the chance to speak.

In small groups they discovered new ideas for moving forwards, gave turns to everyone and asked for help and helped each other, for example by giving those words in English which someone else did not remember. The tasks demonstrated interdependence between the members and made them responsible for keeping the conversation alive and meaningful. Outside the course, it was possible to speak English with a family member or a friend. Quite a few students had used English on their autumn holiday. On their return, they shared the successful experience with the rest of us.

Aoki, who has researched the influence of the teacher’s absence and presence, maintains that the teacher’s absence promotes student autonomy (Aoki 1999, 151–152). Because the students practically always worked on the tasks on their own in the groups, it resulted in increased student interdependence, autonomy, and inventiveness in their groups, especially in the WE group (WE4). People were ready to assume the role of an agent even if it differed in intensity from person to person. The use of the target language in collaboration with others empowers, increases autonomy and responsibility and involves reflection, too (Little 2004, 19).

In addition to individual and shared autonomy, Rebenius’s results also include critical autonomy. “Autonomy as critical awareness” is a very different kind of autonomy that manifests itself as disruptiveness, resistance and conflict in learning contexts (Rebenius 2007, 309). It did not appear here, but its constructive alternative occurred where the student recognised his/her possibilities to bring change to the existing circumstances (Rebenius 2007, 309).

Ari: Well, yes, learning something new is still, something as foreign as a foreign language, it takes a certain amount of your mental capacity, and, like, it was perhaps the case that without them (the breaks he took himself) I would have been more exhausted at the end of the day. Yes, you could catch your breath during them and think about something quite different. So there was also this other side involved.

On the course, the students presented opinions that were not in line with mine, suggested changes and spontaneously asked for explanations of language issues. Occasionally, they

felt that particular tasks did not work successfully. Then they made the best of them or even felt free to invent another, more profitable implementation. The decision to take a beneficial break and slip unnoticed out of the class instead of participating in a less useful phase was a sign of autonomy even if uncommon. Those who had a good command of English language and usage and were perhaps used to reading English or could already converse, found the support material in the tasks useful just as the other students did. However, they soon discovered that they did not really need it to speak and converse. Because it contained new words and expressions that they wanted to learn and use elsewhere, they decided to study them on their own and take them into active use. It felt like taking charge of one's learning and doing one's own part in the process. When Sandy could not be removed from the course, they looked after their own interests and found strategies to mitigate the harm that Sandy caused. Some students decided to discontinue their studies on this course because its level was unsuitable or because they did not find the course useful enough in terms of the time it demanded or because with everything there was too much to do. These reasons speak of autonomy. Volunteering to come to the interview and explaining the reasons for one's discontinued participation speaks of strong autonomy, openness and reliance on the teacher's professionalism.

Students' contribution to planning, discussion and the evaluation of the methods promote their independence and autonomy while the decisions imposed on them create dependency (Rogers, A. 2002, 276). Their suggestions for course improvements were a sign of autonomy and ownership. The students found their voices, which made them subjects rather than objects (Rebenius 2007, 309). This kind of autonomy as speakers of English would also help them towards speaking in the critical contexts of language use in real life (see also Kohonen 2009a, 19). If a student gives spontaneous, overall value to the teacher's knowing, it can denote a lack of reliance on his/her own understanding and knowing. In many ways these students were able to apply their autonomy which is characteristic of adults' studies despite most probably having had many experiences of teacher authority but few of student autonomy in their earlier foreign language studies.

A concept invigorating autonomy and independence is **ownership**, which "refers to the ways meanings and our ability to negotiate them, become part of who we are" (Wenger 1998, 201; also Kohonen 2009a). Kohonen also defines ownerships as an emotional experience and as understanding of one's learning, tasks, oneself and one's experiences (Kohonen 2009a, 21). Such features as Wenger and Kohonen described appeared on the course.

Katri: Well, true, they were rather different people, but anyway there was quite a good community spirit, in principle then a good community considering there were different types of people. Everybody adjusted to it, sort of, as to their own, in their own way, I reckon.

Kirsi told the rest of us that in her thoughts she thinks everything in English as well. Mirja said that she tries her hardest to study but speaking is difficult because the words disappear when she tries to say something. Annukka said that there would have been much to say but she did not have enough words. (Course Diary E12.)

Students enjoyed the freedom of speaking in their groups; sometimes they shaped the tasks to make them better suit their interests, needs and level and through this took responsibility for their learning. The decisions to conduct a task in their own way because they felt that it was more rewarding than mine was another manifestation of ownership. Apart from telling about the relationships and the climate on the course, the teacher's course diary entry on the spontaneously emerging talk in E group lessons speaks of the experience of ownership. "Ourselves" was considered the source of the course climate (see section 1 in this Part III). Another sign of the students' ownership was their spontaneous conversation about learning, language use, related problems and their own learning strategies, conversation in which I was the only silent participant (E3). Similar events took place later, too. On the course, the students recommended each other films they had found interesting and suitable for their English level. They shared tips for learning and told about Internet sites for independent studies (WE4). In class, they presented wishes for issues to be dealt with.

The ability to shape practice affects how people experience their participation in a learning context (see Wenger 1998, 57). Students' contributions to the discussion and evaluation of the methods promote and are signs of their ownership (cf. Cotterall 2008, 111), and awareness of their own learning. The decisions to conduct a task in their own way because they felt that it was more rewarding than mine was another manifestation of ownership. Having a voice leads to the recognition that one can negotiate, find coherence through negotiation and be empowered to promote one's interests (Canagarajah 2004, 268). Reflection on learning together with others supports the experience of learning and increases the gain (Leppilampi 2002, 294). Because working alliance and social reflection can denote challenges, they flourish in a secure environment (Hartog 2004, 161). This course, its teacher, participants and contents seemed to fulfil this condition. The constructiveness of the course participants' critique as students and co-researchers visible in their contributions suggests that they felt like owners, even co-workers. Furthermore, when students are allowed to influence the studies, it diminishes the teacher's position as the sole knower in a positive way, encourages and strengthens the students' voices and improves teaching.

Student autonomy also concerns **authenticity**. Like ownership, it is related to the use of one's voice. Rebenius's "Autonomy, a social context and communication" views students as social authentic beings who interact, negotiate and communicate authentically. Ushioda suggests that language classrooms aiming at student autonomy should "encourage students to develop and express their own identities through the language they are learning – that is to be and become themselves" (Ushioda 2009, 223). On this course people often negotiated about their learning and about their language use in Finnish instead of English, which few of them regretted. However, at A2 level using English for this purpose was demanding, even

too demanding and probably new to many of them. I had not mentioned using English for language negotiation. Hear Say assignments concerned common situations in people's lives and in this respect they were authentic but not in the sense that the students could have put much of themselves into them. Gadamer underlined that "whenever words assume a mere sign function, the original connection between speaking and thinking, with which we are concerned, has been changed into an instrumental relationship" (Gadamer 1989, 433–434). According to their quality and definition, tasks deal with real-life events and are therefore authentic (Järvinen 2012, 219 and 242). In tasks, people have freedom to choose what they say and can communicate authentically. Instead, the use of long-term roles on this course put authenticity at risk.

Eliina: I don't think any of us is such a good actor that we can present the role like that. Everybody is nevertheless the way they are, I suppose.

Anneli: An easy-going atmosphere and I'd say the reason was that we were our own selves there, it wasn't that, at least I didn't get nervous.

It was considered impossible that people like these could act out a role fully on a language course. They participated as themselves and were such as they really were and they learned to know each other as such, as people despite the roles. Apart from this, it was good that they did not and could not start to make any assumptions raised by what they knew because they knew nothing about the others. People started to live as their authentic selves for each other without what framed their everyday lives beyond the course. In these respects, the roles lost their meaning. People met each other and communicated with each other as people do in everyday life.

The course participants did not show much interest in learning to know the others otherwise than as course participants, even if they clearly liked each other's company on the course and on the breaks. Despite the roles, they felt that they could be themselves. However, some of them would have liked not to participate with a role. I was also told that it had been difficult to find what to say as the role person. Some of them had chosen a role that was nearest to their real occupation because they assumed that it would make speaking easier and they could better identify with it. Some others chose a role where they could use imagination and play with the role. Authentic speech about oneself started to appear in the conversation after the first few lessons, even if the role names were the only names used on the course. Authenticity involves the courage of being oneself. Roles can serve as a shelter but they were hardly needed. Instead, as a role person one did not have to discuss one's everyday life, which can be considered either a lack of authenticity or a resource for speaking. In the interviews, I was told that working life language would have been a good addition, which told about their long-range plans and related to their everyday lives and future.

Authenticity requires a readiness to work on mutual understanding, which demands negotiation concerning meanings. Negotiation is the means through which human experiences and engagement in the world gain meaning. (Wenger 1998, 53 and 286.) On

the course, it often happened that people did not understand what their co-speakers said and they had to decide whether to overlook it or ask.

Tuuli: I don't quite remember what it was like right at the start, but now that we're getting to the end you get to know them a bit better, all these people, when I've had to work, like forced to work, with everybody, then it was, like, easy to say sorry, I don't understand anything at all of what you're saying. But yeah at the beginning it was a bit like, you know, OK, it doesn't matter.

Katri: When you're quiet, you know everything, even though you don't know a thing.

At the beginning of the course people did not always say that they had not understood and did not ask their co-speaker to repeat. When they learned to know everyone better, asking became easy. For some people asking was self-evident from the very beginning but single words that they could often guess were not asked. It was often sufficient if they understood what the speaker meant. Conversing was so demanding that it was important to understand all the time. Otherwise it was difficult to continue after the other person's turn. If people just remain silent, they give the impression that they understand even if they do not. When not understanding, they simply asked what the other person meant, tried to suggest the meaning by using other words, asked how the given word was spelled, what the thing was related to or tried to make the person explain it otherwise. Then the other person did his/her best to explain what he/she had meant, which is how it also takes place in real life. People do not only listen without trying to understand. Sometimes the students had to ask what the word or expression was in Finnish.

A common situation among learners of a foreign language is that they do not understand each other, but it is the listener who has to ask even if the failure may be caused by either of the participants or by both. When asking about the meaning, the listener has to reveal his/her failure but he/she can suggest that the speaker has failed to be understandable. When people are strangers, not asking may appear a better solution. In a group that has studied together for some time, asking is less awkward. The responsibility for the conversation has increased. According to Lehtovaara, asking for clarification is a sign of involvement, courage and authentic communication, while only pretending to understand speaks of the lack of such things. The decision on asking or not asking in this kind of situation is also an ethical decision. If the co-speaker does not ask what he/she does not understand, it is misleading for both and undermines the authenticity of their communication. (Lehtovaara, J. 2001, 170–171.) Negotiation is a source of learning (Wenger 1998, 84). If it is avoided, the meaning and the meaningfulness of participation diminishes. Negotiation of meaning between students speaks of an ongoing learning process and is learning because through it the incomprehensible becomes comprehended. Speaking is enhanced and improved through negotiation and especially the one with less knowledge learns. (Van Lier 2000, 246–249.) In the present study the contents of the other's turn in tasks were not predictable, which gave the students additional learning opportunities (see *ibid.* 248–249).

Spontaneity is another concept related to autonomy and authenticity in particular.

Ilkka: The thing here is that like what I'm expecting of myself is that even if the situation arises, in principle, then you're able to blend in with it and how it goes.

Speaking in real life situations demands willingness and the capacity to start speaking and communicating without having planned, prepared and practiced it in advance. It was these people's aim. Spontaneous speech appeared (WE2, E9) and people added things after some thought (E4). People expanded their turns finding more to say and not constantly worrying about their errors as they went on with their turn. In *Hear Say* assignments one knew in advance what the questions and answers would concern and what one would need for them. Tasks on *A Holiday in Cornwall* and those developed from the plot usually demanded and developed spontaneity because they were conversational and one had to invent how and what to contribute to a conversation. The complaints about the service at the hotel were a source of inspiration and spontaneity (WE 2). The task where the students in groups of two were waiting for a delayed bus at a bus stop demanded most spontaneity. They did not even get any tips on what to talk about.

Prerequisites for spontaneous speaking are that the task is meaningful and inspiring and that the students can manage with the language. Transposing oneself into a situation supports spontaneity. Tasks with emotions often liberate people to speak and bring enthusiasm. For some people starting to speak spontaneously is difficult and must begin with such small steps that it does not look spontaneous to those who are more competent in speaking. A little support material can help as can the possibility to repeat more or less the same to different people. Some students are characteristically more spontaneous, even if not always more skilful speakers of English, some others like to have more time to invent and formulate what they say and check in advance that they can cope with the language they would use (see Kottler, Zehm & Kottler 2005, 32–33). Knowing in advance how one should speak in a given assignment brings security but you have to remember your words. Not having time to prepare and still being able to cope with the situations increases self-confidence and courage.

In conclusion, autonomy appears in students' own inventions for studying the course material on their own or discovering opportunities for speaking and listening to English and even practicing by thinking how to express daily events in English. The course gave continuous opportunities for social autonomy. In such group work as ours, the speaking and conversation and initiating them depend on the students themselves. It is obvious that adults are content with such responsibility and the autonomy it gives. A course allowing student autonomy at least in this amount, offers possibilities for constructive critical autonomy that benefits the students because it promotes their learning and makes the course serve them better. Students assuming the role of the co-researcher and suggesting changes in the course interviews are signs of experienced autonomy. Finding one's voice in the studies and assuming ownership of one's studies took place on this course and also appeared in the interviews as manifestations of student autonomy. Through them students become the subject in their studies and learn to rely on their ability to know what is best for them, which is important in the future choices on the study path. On this course, students used Finnish when they negotiated about the language. All assignments did not offer opportunities for authentic use of English. Speaking as the owners of roles was not authentic speaking. These can appear as negative factors on a course. Nevertheless people gradually start communicating as authentic selves for themselves and for the others on a course and

also say when they do not understand the other. Perhaps it no longer appears fair to mislead a person you have learned to know and the courage to ask and the value of communication increases during the course. Spontaneity is a common aim among students of English and denotes fluency in speaking where one does not have to think and assemble the sentence word by word. Instead the words just come (see subsection "Student reflections on English as a foreign language and on communication in English"). Even if some people tend to be less spontaneous than others, spontaneity can be practiced on a course. The course climate, students who get on well with each other, plenty of speaking in groups, material easy enough for spontaneous speaking and increasing courage are good supports for the emergence of spontaneity.

Personal awareness and self-direction in studies and speaking

In studying and learning a foreign language, personal awareness and self-direction, being able to grow through awareness and reliance on oneself, are solid supports (see Kohonen 2007, 185), especially for an independently studying adult. Foreign languages contain much novelty and unpredictability because they always differ in many ways from the first language. Feeling at home on a language course and with the studies there leaves more resources for one's learning and exploring one's understanding of it and its promotion. The course climate and the relations between the people in this study were good, as was revealed above. Only for two participants was the course level quite demanding and contained much that was new and unknown for them. The others could cope with the level of the English in the text material and tasks without any serious difficulties. For them, it was mainly the experiences of speaking and in particular oral communication that added the actual element of "novelty and unpredictability" to their studies (Kohonen 2007, 185) occupying their thoughts and opening new understandings.

Pia: I think the best thing of all I got out of it was understanding myself that, hey, you're not a fool. If you don't know, you don't know. So what. You try to throw something out and try to say it. And is it such a terrible situation if it takes you a bit longer to produce something.

Katri: So when you had one of those things where you could, like, think about something else as well, a little bit more that you were capable of. Even though you don't demand it of yourself, having to be capable of more, what it does is anyway is that you automatically try and you don't feel it like, now you have to be able to do it, but you know, like, try more, sort of upwards ... And no harm even if you try more than you're capable of, then there's no harm in it.

If you did not worry about what to say and how, you could usually say it somehow in the end and not even the way you had been planning to say it. You could just throw yourself into the conversation. Noticing positive changes in your communication increased self-confidence. Freedom made speaking easier in the group and you could try to say more than you were really capable of. When you had to react and say something, you were learning

all the time, no matter if you first thought that you could not do it properly. When you were not quite sure about how to say something, it was good to know that it was quite all right to correct on the way. You did not get the feeling of being stupid just because of being unable to speak about something. Speaking became easier when you learned to know the others and noticed that they also made mistakes. However, earlier negative experiences of speaking had brought lack of self-confidence, even of shame. They were a burden and caused nervousness. Both course groups included members who had to struggle to develop confidence in their own ability to learn and speak but also many who did not mind taking risks and were ready to enter into the new and unfamiliar.

The growth of personal awareness and self-direction is related to selfhood factors (CEF 2001, 12). Self-esteem, self-confidence, taking chances and tolerating ambiguity as a student and speaker of English are important for every foreign language student in the promotion of their foreign language skills (Kohonen 2007, 187). It turned out in this research that the dividing line between having and not having these characteristics did not correspond to certain levels of English competence. People whose English was at A2 or a little above usually had very realistic aims and hardly any of them had any traumas about their English. On the other hand, some of those with more than ten years of English had specific difficulties concerning speaking. Those with medium long English studies were usually efficient students, had self-confidence and did not worry about their English.

Existential competence, expressed by CEF as “the sum of the individual characteristics, personality traits and attitudes”, also concerns features that have been learned during one’s life time and can change and be modified (CEF 2001, 11–12). The feeling of security was essential to expressing oneself in English. A secure study environment for the facilitation of the exploration and use of the target language is necessary for the growth of self-esteem as a speaker of the target language (also Kohonen 2007, 187) and it was unexpectedly important for many of those with the longest studies behind them. Opportunities for speaking with many people in groups of different sizes gave a multitude of experiences of coping in different speaker environments and allowed a person to try different speaker roles. In their groups, people heard the others speak even though they had difficulties and made mistakes. In the sessions and during the breaks, people shared their difficulties and their learning in general without being embarrassed. The experience of insecurity may have been the reason for some discontinuing the course soon after the beginning. Varying the groups did not bind anyone to any person in particular, which protected people’s independence and supported their self-direction. Each for their own sake, as Annukka concluded. On the other hand, many group tasks made them both familiar with and dependent on each other, thus making the course a joint venture.

On an oral English course people perform in public. No remarks were made on errors nor was anyone’s performance criticised. They can suggest failure and undermine people’s self-esteem and self-confidence. Security and a good environment help people in speaking and it becomes easier for them to face ambiguity and go beyond their own limits. The level of an oral English course should increase one’s self-confidence and self-esteem as well as determination and endeavor, but a sense of security on encountering an unfamiliar group is crucial.

Personal awareness and self-direction and their growth are especially crucial for independently studying people. Tasks that are open, as they usually were here, demand that people have to think about, choose and invent what they want to say, which according to Carl Rogers (1983, 39–40) brings the speaking close to them as persons and enlivens the studies.

In contrast, saying things learned by heart makes the personal experience slight. Selfhood factors and lived experience as students and users of English affects people's self-esteem and influences their oral English communication, such as their proficiency in speaking it. A supportive study environment and peers, a good course climate and dense participation in speaking make the studies a joint venture where crossing new frontiers could take place and where people do not avoid speaking that could contain ambiguity and the risk of making mistakes. In such an environment there are more possibilities for the positive development, attitude change and increased self-esteem. However, security is of crucial importance. Changing the make-up of groups supports self-confidence and independence and brings many mirrors for comparison and therefore increases awareness of self-direction.

Participation as learning and awareness brought by monitoring one's learning

Ilkka: This is what I've always wanted, that you have to, like, ... it's like in working life when you're faced with English and you sort of try in some way or other to explain and manage. You can't just turn your back on it and walk away.

Mirjami: Of course I didn't get the feeling, or I really didn't bring it up at any point, or I didn't feel I was being left out somehow because I don't want to be on show anywhere, I'm not that type.

Mirjami: The experiences and what I've learned through the groups and through the others, that's what's been really important, and this informal thing has actually been quite fun. It's one of those things that should be part of it, being fun.

Annukka: Yeah, for me at least it was [interesting]in that I wanted, like, to say something more difficult but I didn't have the language skills to say it, so I took the easy way out.

You learn through speaking and doing things together with people and in groups. In the group, everyone got opportunities for speaking with the others. You had to think and come up with what to say and how to say it and you had to react when someone said something to you. One particular way of learning on the course was when you could not anticipate what the others would say to you. People said different things in different ways. You had to say something. It was like in working life where you cannot just walk away. By participating frequently and regularly, you started to understand more quickly. In the group you learned new ways of saying things from the others and you learned to say things even spontaneously. Participation in speaking gave experiences of oral proficiency and made remembering easier. You can learn many things from dictionaries but you forget them easily. Participation in speaking revealed what you did not know or had forgotten over the years. Somehow, speaking first and then realising how it ought to have been expressed was not an embarrassing event but a way of learning. Fluency was initially the main goal but during the course, it also became important to expand vocabulary. Otherwise you keep on using

the same vocabulary. The conversations, the feeling of learning, investing in it and the fun increased learning and the gain. Trying to memorise words, phrases and expressions does not take you far. Speaking in a situation was a much more efficient way of learning than cramming English. It was the experiences that made remembering easier. Understanding this was like finding the philosopher's stone. In the same way, if you watch films, it is much better if the voices of the actors come through headphones. Apart from hearing more precisely what they say, you feel as if you are in the situation yourself. Simple speaking was valued also for the reason that you did not have to plan in advance. The freedom of choice made speaking easier. If speaking feels good and you can put your heart in it, you learn. An interesting topic intensified your learning. A positive charge was a good support for communication.

Difficulties in sentence construction were a rare impediment to communication but probably the gravest difficulty. The lack of sufficient vocabulary limited what you could say. For people who had to think about words one by one and their order in the sentence, this kind of conversation made high demands but they did their best. In bigger groups it sometimes happened that someone was not fast enough to join in the conversation and when finally ready, the situation had already passed. They had to consider first what they could express about the topic in English. It was disappointing not to be able to say something that you really wanted to express. The use of imagination on the course and the freedom given for completing tasks were intended to help participation. Nevertheless, finding what to say was sometimes difficult. Because some others were good at inventing what to say, it brought feelings of inferiority. Mirjami found it hard to join in speaking despite her good knowledge of English and she was disappointed after the course. In the second interviews she also mentioned the good and supportive qualities there (see the two citations from Mirjami above). Her disappointment had diminished.

It was helpful that there was always something familiar to start with and that the new and already existing knowledge were combined. You learned that way. It was not like in school where everything in a lesson tended to be new. Studying this way did not demand too much effort. Therefore learning remained fun. You could always check things elsewhere. Mixing the old and new this way took more time because you had to think more but at the same time, you could recall what you had studied earlier. Because there were many possibilities for how to say things and freedom to choose between the easy and the difficult, you could pick and choose between the alternatives and find a suitable way to contribute and learn.

Simple speaking and chatting with familiar contexts, vocabulary and simple language allow live action and denotes participation and learning, the kind of learning people at these levels need. Language knowledge without participation in language user communities can disempower and overwhelm students and alienate them from becoming speakers (see Wenger 1998, 220). Speaking about small things is important also for persons whose work demands only formal, written English. For the more advanced students, the good thing about participation in

conversations as the main form of work is that you cannot prepare for it. It relates to work life situations where you cannot turn to anyone else for help or walk away but have to manage the situation in English with a customer as well as you can and without having time to plan how to do it.

If people do not have to keep on struggling with the words and sentence constructions, they can focus on speaking as authentic selves, and the need for planning in advance in the first language what to say is diminished. Challenging language use has to be included to suit the diversity of competence in an adult group and for increasing everyone's proficiency. Such material and freedom of choice and possibly handouts are a viable combination and also serve well the participation of those at a lower level of English. The applicability of the tasks to everyone's level is important for everyone's participation and experience of being included as a member of the English speaking course community. Freedom in carrying out tasks and in all speaking gives opportunities for using new words. Short comments are easier to compile but they give less satisfaction. In oral communication, the involvement of the person and the identity concerns are stronger because of the recognition of oneself from one's own point of view and from that of the others. Inventing nothing suitable and creative at a short notice can even cause shame.

In Wenger's terms (1998, 4), knowing is participating and active engagement. Students' participation was learning and it related closely to their agency. Students' comments also relate to Sfard's participatory metaphor that signifies membership and learning in a community, situatedness and contextuality (Sfard 1998). In students' minds, learning here related to their earlier studies, their personal experiences of them and their earlier use of English. We give meanings to our experiences and interpret them against our subjective entity of meanings derived from our historical and autobiographical development. The meaning making and interpretation take place in connection with other people and circumstances of our lives. Subjectivity, historicity and intersubjectivity are always involved in the holistic development of our experience of the lifeworld. (Gadamer 1989, 247–248; Lehtovaara & Jaatinen 2004, 90; Jaatinen, R. 2007, 179.)

In conclusion, understanding speech and remembering the language increases through participatory learning. Doing together gives the realistic feeling of being proficient, for example by making you notice what you can and cannot do and, on the other hand, reveals what you need in order to promote your English, for example new vocabulary. Through participation, you learn much from the others. Speaking in a situation and the experience of it is an effective way of learning. Speaking about easy and small things promotes fluency, is necessary in working life communication, makes speaking a living activity and paves the way for joining English speakers' communities. The level of the target language on a course sometimes creates disappointment with one's speaking in a group of students with differing levels of proficiency. On a short course group dynamics, students' relationships in the group, changing work groups, tasks and a good course climate seem to compensate for these problems quite well. It helps if all tasks contain something familiar to begin with. You recall what you have learned earlier and search for the new that is available and find what is suitably demanding for yourself. Freedom in speaking makes this possible. Working with others, participation and doing together promote reflection. For self-directed learners, awareness of one's needs and effective, suitable ways to study are vital because formal teaching has ended for their part (see also CEF 2001, 141–142). Monitoring of one's learning processes are important for them. According to this research, adults monitor as they study and use their English. It seems that they also find the course interviews a good opportunity to monitor

and reflect on their learning. Quite evidently, they were used to doing this also before the course, which increased their awareness of their learning on the course.

Student reflections on English as a foreign language and on communication in English

Students compared their first language and English. It was intriguing that in English a preposition or an adverb after a verb familiar to them changed the meaning of the verb altogether and it was the combination that defined the meaning. They analysed the foreignness in English and in which way it related to their first language and their thinking based on it. It was disappointing when they could not always find the English words to express their ideas. *Hear Say* had given plenty of useful social phrases for speech situations and they had been helpful, especially for those at A2 at the beginning of the course in particular, but the use of phrases awakened many thoughts, because they also denoted limits to expression. With the exception of **Ari**, the reflections on communication in English come from the students with longer English studies behind them.

Ari: If you've got, like, if you can only use those phrases, then surely you can't ever have a conversation with anybody ... OK, (with the phrases) you can cope with a situation but you don't necessarily get below the surface of the language. It's, sure, you can learn certain phrases and get .. but do you really know any more about that person. You can ask what hobbies they have, and other things... Well, OK, you can get quite far with that, but that you can't like have a spontaneous conversation.

Authentic speaking was one important aim. Phrases were helpful but they only served a specific purpose and solved the situations at hand. Phrases were not spontaneous speaking and not really one's own. Exchanging information did not help you to know a person and you did not really say anything to that person. You could not converse through the phrases.

Conversation, dialogue, authentic speaking and responsibility for what they said had become important but this kind of speaking was demanding and they did not always succeed in it. However, through the experience they became more aware of the demands and what lay ahead to be learned. In addition to the support the phrases gave, through them people became aware of their own aims. Relying on social phrases in communication raised the question of authenticity. Language cannot be an empty shell, signs expressing only themselves, but it relates to the speaker's experiences and reality (Madison 1990, 165). "Genuine speaking, which has something to say and hence does not give prearranged signals, but rather seeks words through which one reaches the other person, is the universal human task" (Gadamer 1976, 17). These people were aware of it. Speaking this way was difficult for a foreign language learner because, at least for the most part, they thought in their first language. Our interpretation of everything is based on our first language. We become biased as we grow into own our linguistic interpretation of the world (Gadamer 1976, 63 and 64; Gallagher 1992, 9).

Ilona's reflections on learning concern conversation, even dialogue. Although Ari's and Ilona's English competences and proficiencies differed, they talked about the same thing, about conversation, even dialogue.

Ilona: Somebody speaking another language and you nevertheless have to express what you want to say to her so that she understands it and you also understand what the other person is saying. To you.

It was crucial that you could speak with another person so that she/he could understand what you said, and you could hear and understand what he/she said. Asking questions, getting an answer to them and understanding what the other person said to you were indispensable for a dialogue. It demanded courage to communicate this way but noticing you could do it increased your courage.

Ilona, who had recently studied English in the context of a study degree, seemed to be able to use the resources available to her for learning and organising her communication without worrying about them. Ilona did not only speak of her contribution. Making it such as the other person could understand you, learning to understand the other, hearing what he/she says, and how he/she says it, being able to pose questions, getting an answer and replying to the other person were essential for her. It was equally important in conversation to understand and to be understood. "To speak means to speak to someone. The word should be the right word. That, however, does not mean simply that it represents the intended object for me, but rather, that places it before the eyes of the other person to whom I speak" and belongs "in the sphere of the We". (Gadamer 1976, 65.) Ilona had understood this.

Although **Kirsi** had a good command of English given the course level, speaking was almost impossible for her at the beginning of the course. In the interview she talked about what she had discovered.

Kirsi: I'm sure you shouldn't think at all that this is this part and I'll take it. It should somehow just take off, without thinking about anything. Then, like, only after that start thinking what is this thing. In other words, generally our time goes on thinking that this sentence here was there somewhere and now I have to find it here and then the situation has passed you by. What I felt doing this stuff was that all I had to do was open my mouth. Then, only then, does it just come ... They haven't happened before because I've thought that, OK, if I go into a shop then I'm here, so it's here that information, and if I go to a hotel then it's here. And then I have to remember what to say and when. But now when I just go there I just open my mouth, and so it just somehow, it just somehow comes ... And in the end I don't say it at all like it is there in my memory. Like, it was in the book that you should say this. By rote. When I say that when I start off with one of those words then the rest just comes after it. You're not at here. You're in here. And you can't be both at here and in here. And if you're thinking here all the time that I can't do it, I don't dare, then you get nothing. You have to get the understanding and then in the end you notice that, err, in the end the words there, there aren't very many of them. That

you don't need to say a whole lot. You can use the same words, you can manage with a lot less. Somehow you've just got to bring the present moment somehow into this being here. Then somehow it's being able to be in this moment, that the situation doesn't, like, make you worried or anxious, and you don't sort of look for something ready-made, then somehow you give it everything.

Kirsi does not speak about not having enough words, about sentence construction or grammar and not exactly about the demands of interaction either, but only about speaking and about how she can make it happen. During the ongoing course, she had understood that she did not have to plan in advance or try to recall what she ought to say in the present situation using what she had encountered in some book and which was saved somewhere in her memory. These efforts required her to be in two places at the same time and she could not cope with that. Instead, she only had to remain open to the situation where she was and start speaking. The summer after the course, Kirsi travelled to Great Britain with her daughters. The trauma and fears disappeared and, as she said, they integrated with the English speaking community.

Even if understanding always takes “the form of language”, it is not put into language but essentially it is something that happens and comes into language. (Gadamer 1989, 378; Tontti 2005, 64.) It is what we want to say, what we understand. “The more language is a living operation, the less we are aware of it”. (Gadamer 1976, 65.) Total awareness of one's speaking would make it impossible to say one sentence or anything at all (Gadamer 1984, 62). This was also Kirsi's understanding. Kirsi had realised through practice that speaking was completely characterised by being “completely forgetful of itself” (Gadamer 1984, 62). A speaker cannot think about the language when he/she speaks and speak when he/she thinks about the language. At this level, a student can seldom afford such forgetfulness and forget the language, but the possibility of forgetting the language increases along with the increasing familiarity and command of the language. Communication is at the core, not the words (Gadamer 2001, 112). In line with Gadamer's thinking, Kirsi only had to stop thinking about the language and just start speaking. Unlike many others, Kirsi had a good theoretical knowledge of the English language, and the language could become “a living operation” for her. Probably, Ilkka was thinking something similar when he said that you should not think too much, because then you forget the words.

Tuuli and the use of handouts

For some tasks, the students got handouts. One of their main purposes was that they would give support to those at around A2, and additionally that they would give the students new vocabulary and expressions for use. They helped students to cope with the task situation at hand, generally speaking with a predictable situation and ensured everyone's inclusion in the task. Evidently, they served that purpose. No one mentioned about failing to communicate in these tasks and feeling like an outsider in conversations. However, the handouts were also discovered to have weaknesses.

Tuuli: When you get the piece of paper, you just start reading the paper. It's just like, a bit like when it's repeat the sentence, you know you could do it but ... you just see the story there. I at least somehow get stuck there. They're fine and they guide you when you sort of use them like that. But often like in this group at least and with these people you're doing it with, then like everybody always relies on the piece of paper, for something, like, that isn't on the paper... It made me think that, you know, what if a situation like that happened, what then.

The phrases and the support material in the handouts had been helpful but they could also create illusions of knowing. With the handout in your hand you could cope in a situation but it did not mean that you could do so in a real-life situation. Having certain words to use also hampers the speaker. A phrase may not be of any use, if the situation changes. People say the same things in many different ways, say something else or more than you expect and you have to react to these things. For Tuuli, always turning to the support material was not providing a strategy for speaking and learning. Besides this, such material could also bring an unfounded feeling of competence, as Tuuli pointed out.

Tuuli was one of those people on the course who had a good command of English. At the beginning of the course she could not speak but soon could do so. As a result, she did not understand some others' intensive use of the handout vocabulary and phrases. Of course, Tuuli was right. One should learn to use phrases fluently in appropriate situations but also be prepared to cope without them. Especially in working life context, it is impossible just to walk away, as Ilkka said. Most real life situations demand spontaneous speaking. However, for many others on the course, the support material was important, even necessary for speaking. Tuuli's criticism that concerned her peers was one of the very few of this kind on the course and, as far as I know, they were expressed only in the interviews.

Transformative learning and learner identities

The preceding subsection described four students' understandings about learning. Especially Kirsi's story tells about transformation. The revision of beliefs, assumptions or expectations of learning into qualitatively new forms makes learning transformative (Kohonen 2009b, 139). Transformation of learning, here often with regard to one's conceptions of learning, is discussed first. Discussion on transformation of learner and speaker identities, which also took place, then follows.

Reetta: That philosopher's stone can't actually be such a big stone and I'm sure you can never find all of it, but it's just that kind of, a certain kind of self-confidence and then a sort of enthusiasm perhaps that I really can still learn this ... And then in the end you notice how with little steps you sort of move forward.

After having lost her confidence in her ability to learn, one student became convinced that after all, learning was quite possible. After trying hard to find time really to focus on

learning English, another student realised during the course that learning could also go forward in small steps. It did not have to concern “everything at once”. Learning started to take place, even if many difficulties and even pain had already convinced the person of its impossibility. For another person, the decision to try and remain calm and managing to do so when having to speak English brought about transformation in her speaking of English. A firm decision to change and start speaking was one step to the change from a non-speaker to speaker. Instead of believing the voice in your head that told you that you could not speak, you suddenly realised from experience that it was only a high threshold you should overcome and it was possible. For one student, fluent speaking was the aim, not learning for example new words, above all not prepositions and articles that he could not even distinguish from each other. He was a person with a good command of what CEF defines as skills and know-how, existential competence, fast developing study skills and heuristic skills (CEF 2001, 104–108). He was also good at learning from his experiences and at giving up his earlier opinions for what turned out to be more rewarding viewpoints. A transformational shift took place. In his future studies the articles and prepositions would be next in turn. On the other hand, there were many people on the course, whose learning proceeded evenly without any recognised turning points.

The student has to be willing to move beyond his/her own horizon based on his/her preconceptions, risk abandoning familiar territory of understanding and allow the possibility of learning and new meanings, which permits the new and unfamiliar to find its place (Gallagher 1992, 138–139). Transformative learning demands openness to new understandings. In her article in the volume *Levinas and education*, Joldersma writes that listening to one’s teacher signifies openness. This leads the student to a risk situation, because through openness the student becomes influenced by something unknown that causes uncertainty till he/she can understand and evaluate its influence. Moreover, learning demands a critical stand on oneself and on what one knows and the acceptance of the disturbing voice and the claim it presents. (Joldersma 2008, 52–53.) On courses where the students are adults and work together most of the time, the experiences of course participation, the peers and, above all, the students’ own reflection and their earlier experiences seem to suffice for transformation. They may have felt initial uncertainty before becoming convinced of the superiority of the new understanding, as Joldersma claims. The transformation events mentioned above were described in the interviews when students had probably had time to think more about these events. There they were already considered valuable discoveries.

Transformation can also take place in students’ English speaker identities.

Maria: Now that I’m studying at the university, I’m noticing that now I like English more, I don’t know how much it’s from the course, but after the course I wanted to go and study more English. I’m bad at languages and bad at learning but after that course, well, I couldn’t use that excuse anymore.

The course changed Maria’s conception of herself as an English student and user. Less successful experiences of speaking or their absence had strengthened students’ identities

as persons who were not able to say in English what they would have liked to say, but participation in the course brought changes. There were people who had assumed the identity of remaining behind and leaving the speaking to others. People with a good command of English yet hardly able to speak, started to do so quite well on the course, which for them denoted transformed speaker identities. Another student who had doubted her ability to learn to communicate discovered after the course that she had become quite a competent speaker in communities of life. Some identities were difficult to change. One of the students made daily use of a computer for electronic communication in English but did not find anything to say in conversations on the course. When a person's identity at her work is rather that of a reader and writer than a speaker, it easily becomes the identity in English communication also elsewhere. On the other hand, there were course participants who actively said what they could on the course, studied to extend their range and this way by and by strengthened their speaker identities. Some people were quite aware of their present shortcomings in English but it was more an issue of work than of identity for them.

Identities are closely involved in learning because learning changes them (see Tett 2012, 76). Wenger correspondingly views identity as belongingness to communities of practice (Wenger 1998, 173–178), where identities are constructed in relation to the community. Participation in a community is more than mere belongingness and inclusion. It concerns action, membership, active involvement in shared social enterprises and practices in the community, reflection with others and relating to them (Wenger 1998, 4 and 74–57). Our community of practice corresponded to these definitions as a source of identities and identity change. A course that is a community of practice can transform people as persons and their ability to do things (see Wenger 1998, 215; also Kumaravadivelu 2006, 175). Participation in this course was a chance for identity change as students and speakers of English, and of course as a teacher, which is explored in Part III B. Participation is a source of identity also because people mutually recognise each other there (see Wenger 1998, 56). Identity exists in the constant work of negotiating meaning, which brings together our experiences of participation and how we reify ourselves and how others reify us (Wenger 1998, 149), which is projected in how we think of ourselves (Wenger 1998, 58). Also CEF underlines the social basis of identity built in social groups where people as social agents create their relationships (CEF 2001, 1). The data spoke of changing identities as one result of the courses.

In conclusion, when self-evident assumptions are called into question and reflected on, it is possible to assess one's judgements and critically examine one's presumptions and presuppositions and imagine alternatives to them (Mezirow 2009, 90–105; Mälkki 2011, 138; Fenwick & Tennant 2004, 55). This concerns both learning and learner identities. These students had aims and were motivated to reach them. Even apparently small steps were significant because they could set the process of transformation into motion. The exploration of the reasons why speaking has been difficult, assess and change earlier stands for new understandings can be a long process. Through participation and active involvement students get experiences of their learning and identity and can explore and reflect on them also against those of others, all of which increase awareness. This 45-hour course brought both transformation of learning and of identities as students and users of English. The course communities of practice contributed to these changes. However, the students themselves, their increasing awareness

and motivation and also their other mental resources and their growth were the essential resource for the change.

Based on this research, changing one's speaker identity seems hardest for persons who, after all, do not like speaking and for whom speaking is not an essential form of communication or who are already used to leaving the speaking to others. Identities are difficult to change because they have become part of us but it is easier to regain a lost identity back, as it turned out here. If communication is also personally important or speaking has suddenly become crucial because of work, people make an almost total commitment to change their non-speaker identity into a speaker identity. The impediments are overcome one way or the other. According to this research, the expansion of identity as reader and user of written English to speaker identity is not very easy but a community of practice is of a good help and the students consider such a community important. In line with Wenger's argument, for many of these students, their speaker identities, even they themselves, were transformed and the change made them more able and courageous to enter English speaking communities (cf. Wenger 1998, 227). A positive change in a person's English speaker identity increases the meaningfulness of their speaking and gives energy to it (cf. Wenger 1998, 215). Based on my earlier experiences, I had wondered whether a course of 45 hours would have any noteworthy influence on student identities as users and speakers of English. I believe any such influence was more precisely the result of participation.

Motivation

According to a widely agreed definition, "motivation is responsible for why people decide to do something, *how long* they are willing to sustain the activity [and] *how hard* they are going to pursue it" (Dörnyei & Ushioda 2011, 4; italics in original). These students had both extrinsic and intrinsic reasons for studying English (see Ushioda 2008, 22). They wished to be able to use English in their personal lives and at work where the need for English was growing but they also liked to study on the course and had general interest in self-development. Motivation comprises both the cognitive and affective dimension and these two must be integrated (Dörnyei & Ushioda 2011, 5). Motivation helps people to fight and overcome their fears, shame and worry concerning English. Ushioda underlines that "the mutually constitutive relationship between persons and the contexts in which they act" forms a dynamic relationship (Ushioda 2009, 218). This adds the suitability of Ushioda's "person-in-context relational view of language motivation" (Ushioda 2009, 215) to this research context where the central form of the work was participation, learning together and where the students shaped their work on the course. The goal was shared, even if the levels they aimed at differed.

All students expanded the conversational interviews to the contexts of their lives and their histories of learning and use of English (see section I in Part II), which told of the dynamic relationship between them as persons embedded in their life contexts and the studies. On the course, they were not only students of English but people living in the middle of their lives, people with histories and prospects as speakers and advancing students of English. This refers to situatedness as one form of human existence (see Rauhala 1990) and corresponds to Ushioda's "person-in-context relational view of language motivation",

where motivation emerges “from relations between real persons, with particular social identities, and the unfolding cultural context of activity” (Ushioda 2009, 215), here the course, the participants, their identities and also their life contexts. Although students were not asked about the reasons for their studies, motivation was a frequently emerging topic in the interviews.

Ilkka: I think that everybody who came there, they sort of wanted to learn to speak. They had the same goal. And that's the way it should be.

Katri: Yes, there was the conversation, yes, it does sort of, of course it depends on who with. There was really, I think, yes, there was even real conversation, too. At times it was as if there wasn't going to be any end to it at all. You just wanted to go on, when you were supposed to go on to the next one, then there was something unfinished, as though you hadn't finished it off.

For people on the course, the importance of studying, listening, being active and conversing with the others was self-evident. It was important for them to discover what would be good to focus on. I never noticed any signs of their unwillingness to get on with their work on the course. Active participation was important and there was a firm decision to learn even when there were impediments. In the lessons, the students focused on the studies and the tasks both in the whole group and when on their own in the smaller groups. It was seldom that they talked about other things than what concerned the course and studies there but they did speak Finnish when consulting each other. The teacher's task was only to make the students interested in the topic and task. These students considered themselves active and eager to learn and speak. Given this approach, things grew of their own accord. If time allowed, they invented new things to discuss in their groups and sometimes decided to improve the task to make it more meaningful and to get more out of it. Having a good time on the course was one source of motivation. Simple tasks involving chatting could develop into a spontaneous, lively and extensive conversation. Those with a higher competence in English would have been motivated to use English to negotiate on language and their tasks in the groups, but it hardly took place here. Communication motivated people to study grammar to be able to speak understandably. However, if you did not know much about the grammar of your first language, many other learning projects looked more appealing and therefore more motivating. One student would have welcomed homework to make up for what he missed when unable to participate in every session. This speaks of strong motivation.

Students took the responsibility for their own and their peers' learning. Despite the diversity of the participants' English and its influence on the studies, motivation and willingness to participate were obvious. Doing the tasks together was motivating as such. Seriousness, positiveness and enthusiasm when working on the tasks tell about motivation to work for the promotion of one's English. Eagerness and enthusiasm were acceptable and valued. There was never any need for control. Characteristic of these students' participation was that they were proactive, which according to Little denotes motivation

(<http://www.llas.ac.uk/resources/gpg/1409>). Motivation to learn increases if students understand the purpose of the task and find it relevant to themselves (Rogers, A. 2002, 78). The immediate answers to the teacher's questions on how they would like to do a given task are further signs of their motivation to work effectively. In such a setting also the students serve as source of motivation for each other and for the whole group. Motivation arises from their personal meaning-making and feelings and how they generally behave in social situations (Ushioda 2009, 219). Above all, these people's motivation was internalised and their decision to study and the intensity in studies were self-determined, which are considered to be crucial for the sustainability of motivation (see Ushioda 2008, 22). Participation in free-formed work in their groups, finding what to say there, having a good time and the possibility to invent and be spontaneous and forgiving themselves for being less competent all had a positive influence on motivation. The main reason for discontinuing the course after participating in it for about a month or more was the ebbing motivation caused by the unsuitability of the course level.

Today, English has gained the position of a global language. Its students and speakers do not have to strive for their belongingness to the group of native speakers external to them. As students and speakers of global English, these people were members of this global community, which concerns identity and self from the very beginning of the studies. (Ushioda & Dörnyei 2009, 1–3; Ushioda 2006, 150.) Yashima's term 'international posture' illustrates this (Ushioda & Dörnyei 2009, 1–3; Yashima 2009, 144–163) and describes these course participants and their English use. It seems they had no motivation to learn to speak the way native speakers spoke. None of them mentioned native-speaker English as their ideal. Their aim was a global identity and belongingness to "a non-specific global community of English language users" (see Ushioda & Dörnyei 2009, 3). The course participants' experiences of speaking with native speakers had been rare, but those with non-native speakers of English were part of their real life, often through their work and free time interests. These real life experiences were the important source of their motivation to promote their oral English communication (see Kaikkonen 2005, 245–246).

Motivation to study on this course and the maintenance of that motivation were related to the person's English level and the course level. Merja was one who discontinued the course.

Merja: At last it was useful in that next time I can go a bit lower ...

Lea: And it could be that there'd be less of the speaking because that's the hardest thing for you, the hardest thing of all.

Merja: But that'd be important anyway. No matter. That was the reason I went there, for that, but there wasn't any at this stage. But it's important, all the same. I just have to try, stick at it.

The course had participants for whom the level was either so too high or too low to satisfy their needs. Merja found that her knowledge of the basics of English was too low but it did not affect her motivation to learn English. One student even took the trouble of checking the self-assessment scales to be sure that her decision was the correct one. One more reason for discontinuing the course was the uncertainty about what one really needed and this undermined motivation. Absences from the course, especially from consecutive classes and the loss of what had been studied during them were a risk to motivation. A session of many hours increases the sense of belongingness to the study group. Absence from such classes

can arouse the opposite feeling: The others have worked together for hours and learned much during them.

Motivated people's persistence and effort increase their gain as learners. Motivation to learn can also lie behind the decision to discontinue when one does not really get into learning, because of the course level or one is uncertain of the value of the course for oneself. Awareness motivates people to search for other studies that can give them more. The experience of learning is essential. Adults are ready to take the responsibility for their learning but they learn and study only what they find meaningful, interesting and important for them (Illeris 2006, 16–17). Those present in the first session are only potential students until they have learned about the course, its aims, contents and forms of activity, met the group and the teacher, and concluded that the course would be sufficiently in line with their expectations and aims (Rogers, A. 2002, 28–30). Because course prices are usually low in liberal education, the monetary loss of leaving the course is minor. Teachers can fail they focus on the practices of engagement and not on students' imagined communities (see Norton 2001, 165), in other words where and how they hope to use their English in future. In liberal adult education, students' imagined communities are endlessly diverse and unknown to the teacher who always faces the risk of failing to attend to them. It seems that for most students the 45-hour course was relevant and supported their motivation. However, based on the interview data it looks obvious that if the course had continued for a longer time, the course level would not have motivated those with more extensive studies and at the beginning non-existent or limited speech. These people achieved their aim of becoming encouraged to speak or starting to speak during the 45 hours. After this, more demanding language would have served them much better.

One of the components in Dörnyei's "Motivational teaching practice" is "Creating the basic motivational conditions". They include "Appropriate teacher behaviours", "A pleasant and supportive atmosphere in the classroom" and "A cohesive learner group with appropriate group norms". (Dörnyei & Ushioda 2011, 108.) According to the data discussed earlier, these components existed on this course (see section 1 in Part IIIA) and can be considered a source of student motivation. Student motivation on this course with plenty of group work and student cooperation can also be traced to Dörnyei's view of the favourable influence of a cooperative environment on the development of motivation. Among others, Dörnyei mentions shared experience and goals that concern both learning and communication, mutual dependence, responsibility, everyone's contribution, positive climate with an emotional tone, diminished stress, group commitment and autonomy. (Dörnyei & Ushioda 2011, 122.) On the course, people did their best when communicating but did not compete against each other. Their ownership of the course came through group work where the teacher was peripheral. Empowerment, autonomy and motivation often appeared as spontaneous and relaxed agency.

Sociocultural theory gives another view of student motivation on this course. Donato describes a course where the work and learning took place in collaboration, mediation and mutual scaffolding concerning language and negotiation in the social context of the groups. The students transformed their learning, not only conformed to the plans there. Learning was shaped by the situation existing in each task and by the changing memberships of the groups. Communication came through collaboration. Agency mattered as it does in sociocultural theory. In the groups, expertise was not predefined but relative and owned by the students. Everyone was a knower. (Also Donato 2000, 46–47.) In Vygotsky's words, "behind every thought there is an affective-volitional tendency, which holds the answer to the last 'why' in the analysis of thinking" (Vygotsky 1986, 252). Learning and studies demand mental energy that is mobilised

by emotions and called motivation (Illeris 2012, 23). Such mental energy clearly existed on this course.

According to Little, if a negatively influencing factor is only temporary, autonomous students are able to overcome its demotivating influence (<http://www.llas.ac.uk/resources/gpg/1409>). The course was not long but Sandy's influence on the studies in the WE group lasted for the duration of the course. One student lost her motivation to study on this course for this reason. In general, Sandy was not considered a serious impediment to the studies. Ushioda points out that adults can choose, how they think of what they feel. Understanding this is pivotal in the growth of their motivational self-regulation. (Ushioda 2008, 29) It seems that the students in the group were autonomous, decided how to think about the situation and retained their motivation to study. Another supportive factor was that they enjoyed studying in their groups. Motivation appeared in the students' independent studies during the course (discussed in the autonomy section) and after the course in their new horizons concerning the use of English and continued English studies (described in the second interviews). These people showed both micro-motivation concerning the task level during the course and macro-motivation concerning the whole course of study and their whole history as students of English (see Dörnyei & Ushioda 2011, 60).

Some people lost their motivation to study on this course and left it because the level was not suitable, which may indicate that they were motivated to study on a course that really serves them and through this experience they perhaps learned something about their level. In any case, good pre-information is important because discontinuing a course is not motivating.

In conclusion, this course had the prerequisites for sustainable student motivation. English was already part of these people's lives. Their aims were global English and global English speaker identity. It was more motivating because these aims were already included. The students did not only want to study English but needed English in their lives and were aware that they would benefit from better English spoken proficiency. Their decision to join the course was self-determined. At the beginning of the course most people were a little shy and a little on their guard. For many of them this was the first language course in liberal education, and for some the first one since school. Only a few people knew someone else there but they shared the same interest. Perhaps it is a good point of departure for a mutually constitutive relationship between the people and the course. They had come to this course because of their own histories and future. These two factors were involved all the time. Especially in the abundant group-work they had to look for their own English, negotiate about it and make their own decisions. At the same time, they promoted the others' learning and benefited from it. Much of the course motivation grew out of this collaborative participation. This exemplifies the "person-in-context relational view of language motivation" (Ushioda 2009, 215). The group work here showed that doing tasks not with the teacher but together with people who share the same motivation and aims strengthens study motivation and helps everyone to learn. Meaningful and rewarding group work can compensate for temporary demotivating factors on the course. On a course like this, the teacher's task is to create opportunities. It seems that eagerness and enthusiasm are acceptable on courses like this and they spread, which among other things increases spontaneity. Students used their opportunities to influence the studies by changing or developing the task or assignment. Sometimes they suggested changes or chose between programme alternatives even if their ownership materialised more often in the group work, where they often chose their own way. Thus, the course had qualities that are understood to support motivation.

Students' fears, worry, shame and vulnerability appearing in the studies and contexts of oral English communication

Learning is “a temporal process that always has a dimension of pastness and a dimension of futurity and incompleteness” (Gallagher 1992, 78). Earlier study experiences and emotions attached to them are present in new learning experiences (Jarvis 2004, 96) and unfold in the students' actions there and influence their identities (Wenger 1998, 87). Affect is part of the human body, human existence and survival and central in social practices (Damasio 2003, 8, 28 and 140). Affect is embedded in human relations, in personal life contexts, in learning, identity formation, meaning making, participation and engagement (Wenger 1998). Feelings seem to be the particular ingredient in our experiences that give *meaning* to our lives (Turunen 2004, 76, italics in original). The data indicate that feelings did not appear to play a significant role for every student on the course. At least, the interviews with Anneli, Ilona, and Ritva, Vesa and Merja and the course diary data contained little or nothing about the affective side of their course experience, neither negative nor positive. It is also possible that they did not consider the interviews a situation where they could speak about affect.

The first readings of the interview data seemed to suggest that many of the course participants had fears related to their learning and speaking English. Later readings revealed that sometimes it was more precisely worry, vulnerability or shame that caused the lack of courage and security. Even if these feelings were rare and sometimes mingled with each other and only a few people suffered from them, they emerged and were therefore worth discussion. One of the leading principles on this course definitely supported by suggestopedia was to avoid and act against what would arouse these feelings. Unfortunately, the course was not completely successful in this effort. This subsection explores the fears, worry, shame and vulnerability that appeared on the course and gives short accounts of what dispelled them or could have contributed to their abatement. *Summary of findings on courage and encouragement* on the course explores and describes encouragement, which was a significant part of the course gain.

Fears

Fears were a common impediment to learning and to enjoying it even if such fears did not exist for many of the students, including those with limited proficiency.

Reetta: I really felt or I've always felt going right back to senior secondary school that I can't do anything and I didn't dare open my mouth ... and then there was this really authoritarian English teacher, about to retire, he/she told you to speak louder and louder and pronounce the words, like the same word, many times over until it was correct ... And for me it's been, like, pronunciation that's sort of been my worst thing and I haven't dared to pronounce even simple words because I've thought I pronounce

them really oddly, that it sounds terrible in other people's ears so that you don't dare say a word with other people listening, so it ... So, when there were other Finnish people listening, I didn't dare to say even simple words out loud, I've like avoided everything English as much as I can. There were lots of exchange students and others in the group and I really felt I can't do it ... I remember that we took turns reading the books aloud and you'd always count how many people there were in the row and then count how many sentences there were and then go through that sentence and my heart would start pounding more and more as it got nearer and then you had to read that one sentence and that was it for speaking.

Among these people, there were students who had not studied English since they entered working life. Thus, it could be a daring act to say anything aloud in class. Earlier opportunities to speak had been rare and often also disappointing. Negative experiences including negative feedback had created uncertainty and diminished self-confidence. Adults' fears of speaking English can date back to school where you had experienced little success in English studies and so you hated them. Not being able to pronounce, having to read in turns or pronounce a word again and again, louder and louder in class or being otherwise humiliated by the teacher had become a burden and caused fears and anxiety. Your heart started pounding even when you had to say one single, simple word. Counting ahead to identify and practice your part before having to read it did not help at all.

Memories like these survive across years and can even develop into a trauma. As an adult you still feel that you cannot speak at all. You resist the language, which makes it difficult to learn and speak it. One reason for your fears can be that you never find anything to say. Dyslexia has made it difficult to learn English at school, or you are afraid of speaking because you have hardly ever spoken English. Because you feel you are stupid and have no courage to speak, you would rather avoid such situations or try to flee. When it is your turn to speak in class, you stiffen and lose the words, even if you are already an adult, there is no reason, the team is good, the course climate is safe and you are doing fine. Speaking with an unknown foreigner was frightening, but it helped if the person you talked to already knew about your poor English. There was no reason to hide it any more. It became easier to speak.

Pressure appears in a language class where the students are asked to take their turn in saying something. I had given considerable thought to the issue of turn-taking and decided in the end to employ it in the class, but I told the students that it was all right to pass the turn to the next student, which happened very seldom. One contributing reason for fear could have been that when you are young, you easily lose your self-esteem. Participation in communicative activities in general is hampered by feelings of danger, stress, fatigue, discomfort and distress (Stern 1992, 201). People can be afraid of making errors that reveal the defectiveness of their English proficiency. The performance pressure in a group is increased by the attention paid to the speaker's proficiency, general shyness or self-criticism. (Laine & Pihko 1991, 19–20.) Especially those studies that demand personal involvement and give experiences of failure and insufficiency are harmful because of the constant engagement of identity and negotiation of self taking place in participation in communities (see Wenger 1998, 150–151), here English

study contexts. Tileston maintains that learning situations are social situations that are survival encounters. Awareness of danger and threat makes emotion dominant. It prevents learning, interferes with the thinking process (Tileston 2004, 91) and hinders a person from drawing on what he/she already has mastery of (Stevick 1999, 55).

During the ongoing course, people learned to know each other's English and speaking itself became easier even if other impediments to speaking perhaps obtained. For many, reading aloud in class or saying something in turns is one practice among others. For some others, like for two students in these groups, it caused fears. In liberal education, the course participants' histories and experiences as students of English differ in many ways and they, like the participants themselves, are often unknown to the teacher. Reading in turns in class can be good but not at the very beginning of a course. Reading the text in small groups would be a much better strategy at least at the beginning.

Joining an oral English communication course with memories of fears and lack of success told of the resolve and courage which adults can create for themselves. The course had made these people discover what was necessary for encouragement: You need a fighting spirit. You have to face your traumas to overcome them. You have to fight to remain calm and not mind your pounding heart. You must focus on what you want to say and not let the situations frighten you and make you give up. You must not count which line will be yours. Students also said that reading English aloud in class should not be left out because you need the opportunity to fight and overcome your fear.

Worry

Worry as a concept and phenomenon is cognitive. Even so, emotions can be involved. Here, people who worried about their English on the course spoke very little about emotions. Pia told about her worry of not being able to communicate in English and starting to overcome it.

Pia: Your own mind is doing a whole lot when you convince yourself that I can't do it and I can't manage ... There wasn't the feeling [here] that you'd fallen outside. You were part of the group... Earlier you thought about what you could say but the situations pass you by. When you're ready to say your sentence, it's too late. Now you think, right, this sentence isn't ready but I'll have to work on it.

Pia was one among those who had a good command of English. During the course she realised that her constant worry about her inability to participate in English conversation was not caused by lack of knowledge but by her own mind that carried deep memories of errors. It made her ability to speak vanish. Another student who had studied equally much English as Pia and used literature written in English at work, had never had opportunities of speaking English at school. She seriously suspected her ability to learn English, and this had formed the high threshold she wanted to overcome now. Her worry about her inability was growing all the time, because she ought to have been able to use it at work. She never said that she lacked courage or had fears. For another student, the onset of middle age brought worries of not being able to learn any more. Almost all through the course, Elina

worried about not being able to communicate even if she knew the basic grammar and vocabulary and could write in English. Kaarina's long-term worry had been that she had never got the chance of speaking and therefore could not communicate properly. Still, Kaarina had had plenty of experience of studying English. Mirja had been told that there was no need for her to try to speak because she would not be able to do it anyway, but she was not afraid and tried hard to dispel her worry.

Experiences or lack of experiences of speaking English had convinced some people of their limited ability to speak English. According to Dörnyei, worry as the cognitive component of anxiety affected performance more than the affective component of anxiety (Dörnyei 2005, 198). Worry can for example be caused by uncertainty or mental unease concerning upcoming tasks and duties as was the case here (see Shorter Oxford English dictionary 2007). These people's worrying had been a long-term phenomenon and they doubted their ability to learn. Their worrying was evident at the beginning, but their participation in the course and performance during it brought a change. All of them communicated in English on the course. New positive experiences of opportunities of using English and coping, speaking in the groups, success, satisfaction and hope make worries disappear – or at least reduce them – and contribute positively to students' identities as foreign language students and speakers and lead to intensified efforts and increased speaking.

Shame

On a course with plenty of conversation in changing groups, people hear everybody else speak. They learn to know each other's level and assess their own speaking against that of the others. The comparison can result in feelings of shame on the course, just as in other contexts of speaking.

Mirjami: The others come up with all sorts of things. Sometimes I feel really ashamed ... When I'm at the point when I'm supposed to say something, everything gets lost. Yeah, that's my problem.

At the beginning of the course, telling about yourself with your bad or limited English made you ashamed. It felt good to have a role instead of speaking in your own name. If you cannot invent new things or do not even remember anything suitable to say, it brings shame. When the others can do these things, the shame is bigger. Strangely, speaking English in Finland made you ashamed but did not do so abroad.

Shame is a social sense related to moral and non-moral demands and above all those that are related to appreciation. Shame concerns values and becoming accepted and appears in connection with lack of success. (Turunen 2004, 59, 61, 68 and 70.) Oral foreign language learning and communication situations inspire shame. In a group like this, situations where one has failed in trying to do something arouse feelings of shame, which also speaks of the awareness of what would have been the valued alternative (Turunen 2004, 64). Speaking and

conversation in English was the shared aim, everyone's personal aim and an issue of identity. Therefore, speaking as a role person had helped some people, especially at the beginning. Typically, shame brings feelings of insignificance, worthlessness, being a failure (Puolimatka 2004, 274) and unable to meet requirements (Turunen 2004, 57). These feelings threaten a person's self-esteem. Shame can also be aroused by the fear of being assessed by others. (Turunen 2004, 60 and 65.) I believe that the shortness of the course, the continually changing groups, good course climate, the fact that people did not know each other otherwise as members of the group who only met for the sessions were preventive factors in the assessment of the others' English.

Every person needs the experience of being accepted (Turunen 2004, 68–69). Even if the students' assumed level of English on a given course is defined closely, shame and feelings of inferiority cannot be removed. Students are individuals with different personalities and study histories. Gadamer writes: "What is said in language constitutes the common world in which we live" (Gadamer 1976, 65). It is difficult and shameful not to be able to join the community of English speakers or to do it poorly even when the community is just a community of students of English. In any case, shame prevents people from using their resources in full.

Despite their experienced shame, adult students can think about how they can fight and lessen the shame: From their own experience, including both failures and successes, these students had learned that you should accept that you cannot say something well. The main thing is to try and use the opportunities of speaking you have got. Open your mouth and speak, try not to be afraid of mistakes! It can help you to start speaking, if you cannot flee from a situation but have to speak. If you can express what you mean in any way, it helps you forward, gives you a boost and as a result, you become more interested in participating in speaking. Students accepted that the process takes time. One of them argued that stumbling along with one's English in front of many people lowers the threshold of speaking.

Vulnerability

Among those people who started the course, there were people who were convinced of their limited ability to start speaking English and who were afraid of and anxious about speaking English and afraid of it because of the others, which made them vulnerable on the course, i.e. liable to be emotionally hurt (see Short Oxford English Dictionary 2007). One of them was Johanna. I had seen her speaking in small groups and believed that saying a sentence after me would not be difficult for her. She could not make herself do it and she did not come to the course after that. Even if Johanna and the others who left the course after one or few lessons were not interviewed and included in the list of the course participants (Appendix 6), the course diary contains a few notes of Johanna.

Johanna was shy but will cope. She is the youngest and a little embarrassed when talking. (E1)

I have perhaps lost Johanna. I made her read a text too difficult for her. My misjudgment. (E6)

I understood too late that it was very hard for Johanna to speak and read aloud in the whole group. At least for her, my approach was not sufficiently secure. Kirsi, who had shared the same difficulties as Johanna, advised me:

Kirsi: It would've been better to wait a little longer before we went on to that (reading aloud in turns).

For those who have fears of speaking English, and suffer from vulnerability, their voluntarily made decision to enrol on an English course and remain there was already a step from fear to courage and from vulnerability towards entering the English speakers' community. For Johanna, who was also shy, the situation of speaking to many people was overwhelming and she discontinued her studies. Vulnerability could also have been the reason for some others' leaving the course. Adult students with an immigrant background are not always used to such active participation and communication as prevailed on this course (see Kottler, Zehm & Kottler 2005, 36), which may have contributed to Johanna's decision. Johanna could not participate in a way that would have constituted her identity in a positive way. Instead, even if Reetta's and Kirsi's fears brought vulnerability, they could fight it because their fears were not overwhelming. Mirja focused on setting aims and reaching them. She was not vulnerable. Ari was not disturbed even if he knew that his foreign colleagues said among themselves that his English was terrible.

To conclude, if a course of studies like this with some 25 adult students have people who suffer from fears, shame, worry, anxiety and vulnerability, investing in student security is crucial and decisive especially at the beginning of a language course.

Encouragement and sources of security

As the main sources and factors of encouragement, the course participants mentioned the programme and the practices, the people there and the course climate. The first subsection in this Part IIIA already touched on issues of security and overcoming fears given the course climate. This discussion mainly concerns the encouragement brought by the programme, the practices and the peers. The students had much to tell and comment about this theme, but there again, the comments come from individual students and say nothing about any general agreement between their opinions.

The programme and the course practices

Ilkka: In itself it's pretty good that there are these surprising things, that there's a song or something that's a bit more different, that it isn't always that lecturing, or like that. Perhaps that too brings you out, that you have the courage to speak, in a way.

Maarit: I was thinking about it, like, that way that how do you speak here. And then I was relieved when I noticed that you start this off very safely and with support. Relying on the material to sort of get things moving. I don't know what you've planned or

thought about but we get going, like, by reinforcing or making sure that everybody has to say something but with some secure support. No pressures when you can read it on the paper.

Starting to speak was difficult but safe and secure. There was no feeling of panic and no strain whether what you said was right or wrong. You got used to speaking. Especially at the beginning, long-term roles were a source of encouragement. You did not have to speak as yourself. The correction practice was encouraging, because all answers were good and accepted. You did not have to worry about saying something wrong, which diminished embarrassment, fear, panic and strain.

The assessment scales that told you how much you already knew were encouraging. Learning strategies were a source of discovery and courage, just like the strategies you invented yourself for reaching a higher level. Doing things while speaking gave you courage to speak. Freedom in tasks that were not too demanding and speaking in general was encouraging, just as were the experiences of speaking spontaneously. Speaking in groups of different sizes and different members made you feel that you were able to cope. You did not have to be a good speaker with much courage to start speaking. You spoke with everyone and noticed that you could cope with all of them. It was easier to speak in pairs. On the other hand, big groups lowered the threshold of speaking English more effectively. There was always something familiar to begin with and you could use imagination and creativity and choose to say whatever you could. There were also plenty of phrases available for you to use. You joined in and could not prepare, which spurred you on. Instead of set patterns the session programmes contained unexpectedness and sometimes surprising tasks, which was encouraging. Even if you never knew what would happen next, like in real life, you still felt secure and relaxed, not tongue-tied. The course strengthened your self-confidence at least a little. It gave a good start to your English studies after a long break of years and gave confidence that you would learn to speak English.

Especially at the beginning of a course, the experience of security is important. Its absence or the feeling of insufficiency can, particularly in liberal education, make people give up and leave the course, something which may have occurred here soon after it began. At the beginning, speaking in pairs is good, especially if people are unknown to each other in the course group and insecure about how they will cope. Speaking, taking risks and even failing to perform at their own desired level in a big group are welcome to those with a conscious aim to increase their courage to speak. The general practice of not correcting what people say does not bring the experience of not knowing enough. Correction in conversation usually denotes criticism that often does not have a positive influence. Here the aim was real life conversation where people are assumed to listen to what others have to tell them, not how well or correctly they say it. Support is provided by the security of the course and its climate, the peers and the group work, the teacher and the experiences of having worked with many persons with different skills. If you cannot speak much yet, you need a lot of courage because there is not much to lean on.

These students knew the material to be used in a session in advance, but not the tasks and activities and the pattern that would take place there. The unexpectedness is useful because

it is common in everyday real life situations. The foreseeable does not prepare people to meet with real-life encounters equally well. The course encouraged students to face situations in English. In a group where the level of English among the speakers varies, freedom in speaking makes different ideas acceptable and speaking possible for everyone. Freedom provided security because it gave the students the opportunity to choose what to say, say what they wanted to say and take as much risk as they wanted to take.

Peers and encouragement

Here the particular interest is in the support these people received from their group, work groups and from each other.

Mika: I think being afraid you can't speak, can't do that, that it's going wrong, or somebody noticing that you're speaking. In that sense it's really good that we do speak even if there are mistakes and every Finn can in fact think that nobody dares speak when they know it'll go wrong, so in that sense that kind of group speaking is good, so that everybody dares to speak, everybody notices that nobody else is perfect either.

Maria: I'm a little, like err, a little shy, so I perhaps withdraw, so when there was a big group and everybody was listening, everybody listening, so OK, just speak. When there are just two of you, perhaps there you have the courage to speak more and say a little bit.

At first, it had been a little difficult to speak with some people in the group. After getting acquainted with everyone, speaking became easier in every subsequent session and the tension you felt disappeared. You did not mind even if you did not know what would come next but remained open. Changing partners in group work from the very beginning of the course had been a good practice. You got used to listening to many people and noticed that it was possible to speak with everyone. When the others already knew the level of your English, there was no reason for being ashamed any more. If you were shy, speaking in smaller groups was easier. In contrast, it happened that the whole group could look on and was entertained, when a person who considered herself shy acted as a receptionist dealing with a dissatisfied customer. Noticing that the others were at the same level as yourself in communication spurred you on to use more of your English and communicate. One of the independent students with formal studies only in liberal education had learned to speak quite well and it encouraged the others with the same study background.

Especially in the work groups, people unavoidably influence each other's English proficiency, positively or negatively. Alan Rogers points out that participatory methods foster people's confidence, personal growth and assertiveness (Rogers, A. 2002, 51). The focus on practical chores in tasks, not only on the language alleviates possible anxiety (see also Nicolson, Adams, Furnborough, Adinolfi & Truman 2005, 53–54). Our tasks were often like those used in suggestopedia but they also resembled those in cooperative learning, which Crandall argues reduce anxiety, increase motivation, and promote positive attitudes and foster self-esteem

(Crandall 1999, 227). It was also more natural to speak when doing something than just sitting and talking. An inspiring task, like being a receptionist at a hotel, can make people forget their shyness, find their own way and start using their dormant resources. Nobody mentioned having received negative comments from the group participants. Such a study environment helps people to have more trust in themselves as speakers of English and in the others, too, even when the latter know more. In a safe environment people can reveal and discuss their fears, weaknesses, ignorance and their problems in speaking English. This kind of sharing tells of courage and serves as encouragement to the others.

Foreign language teachers can accidentally create fears in the students. Such fears can spread to other learning contexts. As the course diary told, Kirsi had become aware of the existence of such a phantom of hers and had decided to fight and eliminate it. The interview with Kirsi took place after the last session but one. At the end of the interview she said:

There is still one monster left: The teacher. Could you be my partner next time? (E12)

The course diary tells: Quite unexpectedly I got a good opportunity to work with Kirsi. She was a little on edge, and so was I, but she was pleased, too. It was difficult for both of us not to smile when we were talking. (E13).

Because of her smile I think that she already knew that she had overcome her fear, but I believe that she also wanted to experience the feeling of not being afraid of a teacher of English.

In conclusion, self-direction and meeting the challenges posed by the otherness of the foreign language demand courage and taking risks (also Kohonen 2007, 187). For some people, encouragement to speaking is necessary and crucial for starting to speak. For some others it only denotes increased courage. Extensive English studies are not a decisive factor in students' confidence in speaking English. Past learner and user experiences of English are highly influential. Different sources of encouragement mentioned by the students tell that a course like this can answer diverse needs for encouragement. Asking the students to read aloud causes fears and threatens continued participation. The practice that the teacher does not comment on the students' English and point out errors in class – which naturally seldom occurs in the extensive group work taking place here – does not remind students of what they don't know and this way helps them focus on speaking. Correction of students' expressions belongs to the teacher's work and language studies, but leaving it out was a good decision here. In fact, after the first few lessons I usually said the correct expression as if it were part of the conversation, which did not cause feelings of failure. In groups, people get used to speaking, facing different situations and getting experiences of being able to cope as speakers of English, finding things to say even when they don't have time to plan what to say and don't know what will come next, just as in real life. Knowing in advance how to complete a given task improves the feeling of security and makes inclusion easy at the beginning. Not having time to prepare and still being able to cope is more encouraging. The research showed that the long-term roles lose their significance as a source of support, while the growing familiarity within the group and its members, confidence in the course practices, participation that is experienced as successful and the course climate, to a significant extent created by the course participants themselves, are central sources of encouragement.

Courage makes people more open to upcoming demands while security helps in fighting fears. Because real-life situations of communication are often unpredictable, such situations need to be

included in an oral English course. Even if those at B1 or above it are better equipped to deal with them, it seems that also students at A2 can cope with them even if it takes time. When a student takes a risk to proceed beyond what he/she is already familiar with, the experience of security is important (Duckworth 2001c, 184). The research also revealed that adults work on their fears in order to overcome them and have the motivation and willpower to place themselves in situations where they have the opportunity to overcome them.

The course participants had discovered strategies for encouragement in oral English communication and its promotion. You had to challenge yourself, seize the chance of speaking and fight the fear of reading a sentence in class when your turn came and resist the temptation of counting ahead to identify your sentence. You had to prepare for real-life situations, then stay in the present moment and open your mouth. There is no hurry to explain. You can start with one word, and ask if you do not understand. You can reach a new level through learning strategies. Being relaxed helps you to understand better. A non-speaker of Finnish on the course would be an excellent thing in future. These understandings can be considered part of what they themselves regarded as their gain.

Security, good for everyone, is of vital importance for those who are shy, vulnerable, have fears and easily get ashamed. Freedom provided security because it gave the students the opportunity to choose what to say, say what they wanted to say and take as much risk as they wanted to take.

Plans and hopes for future studies

Reetta: It was enough for this. Now if I were to go on from here, then it might be nice to get a bit of vocabulary and grammar and reading comprehension and grammar, but on the other hand they're the kind of things you can do on your own a bit as well. So something like that could be good with homework. If only you yourself have the time and energy. That there'd just be homework and reading comprehension.

Ilona: Of course, if you're in that kind of thing where you do things on your own then you don't get the speaking and that's what you'd need, Sometimes I think if there are courses where you'd just speak, just discuss all the time, or something like shorter things like that, that there'd really be something to talk about, or at least speaking would be to someone at the same level ... Yeah, well, I don't even have that kind of friends so that I could do that, or friends who are English-speakers.

In both interviews, the students told about their plans for continuing their studies. Another course like this was often mentioned. Similar interests and the same level among the students in the group would have been good. The level of a new course should be about the same as here. One student hoped for a course with homework that would be checked together. Because studying on this one had been fun, another student planned to participate in another course, even though the mere thought of studying on a course was not inviting. Private lessons and independent studies were planned. One could brush up one's English in general or focus on grammar studies. Two people were planning a trip to the USA. For this purpose, they planned to listen to English in their home gym. One student would go on reading books in English, which she had started during the course. For another, the

main aim was to be able to take hold of herself and speak. Conversation was important but finding such courses had already turned out to be difficult.

The students' plans for future studies were quite different, despite having studied on the same course. Not everyone had any specific plans, only that they would continue their studies but it could also take place later, also because motivation comes and goes and then after a while returns, as one student said. The oral English course had contributed to their understanding of what they should do next. It was time to orient one's studies according to what the course had revealed and they seemed to know what it could be they needed and wanted. On the other hand, they were aware that finding time for studies would not be easy. The course seems to have been of suitable length. The students had crossed thresholds and started to speak, which had been difficult for them for a diversity of reasons. On the course, everyone's aim had been to speak, but they had noticed that a course level corresponding to their own would be more rewarding. The data also included a wish for approximately the same level.

Wenger's concept of imagination reflects adults' ability to be and become independent learners and participants situated in their own social life contexts. Imagination involves that world and expands people's identities and their opportunities in real life. (Wenger 1998, 176 and 178–179.) Imagination is a creative process that expands over time and space and produces new "images" beyond what people presently have and what they are. These images become part of them and generate new relations through time and space. (Wenger 1998, 176–177.) Through imagination, "we see our own practices as continuing histories that reach far into the past, and it is through imagination that we conceive of new developments, explore alternatives, and envision possible futures" (Wenger 1998, 178).

Through imagination, these people saw the history of their English studies and could imagine possible futures as users of English (see Ushioda 2009, 225). It was "looking at an apple seed and seeing a tree" (Wenger 1998, 176). Through imagination, it is possible to see beyond the present engagement and assume connections between people and locate oneself in completely different life contexts beyond the present ones (Wenger 1998, 176; see also Pavlenko & Blackledge 2004, 17). The creative character of imagination is anchored in social interactions and communal experiences. Imagination in this sense is not just the production of fantasies. Hence, both the course as engagement and its social world were important, here even more so if they reflected the real world. It is only within social interaction and shared experiences that the creativeness of imagination can expand our range of reality and our identity (Wenger 1998, 178). The course as practice, social interaction and a shared experience gave hope and supported imagination and, precisely because of these three features, the images born on the course clearly created realistic, not unrealistic fantasies and removed unrealistic pretenses for not being able to learn. Many of the people whose English competence and proficiency were at a lower level could imagine their future as users of English and plan how they would promote it. Unexpectedly, some of those with a good theoretical command of English and motivation to learn did not imagine how they could expand their future as speakers of English, even if the aim seemed to be much nearer and more realistic for them.

For human beings, hope "is an ontological need". Lacking hope makes us fatalistic, and we do not find reason to struggle or our struggle is weak. (Freire 1972, 8 and 99.) Critical hope is a state, an attitude towards the future (Freire 1972, 9) and a force that motivates and sustains people enabling them to act in the way that can make their ideas and aims come true (Keyes 2004, 198). Like the transformation of learning, also hope must necessarily be anchored in practice. If not, hoping is futile (Freire 1972, 9). For the course participants the course, and for

many of them the experiences of using English in their life contexts during and soon after the course, turned out to be the kind of practice that removed “fatalism” in speaking English and strengthened the attitude of hope, in particular critical hope concerning their future language learning and use. As described above, fatalism could be transformed into the recognition of one’s possibilities.

In the second interviews about twelve months after the conclusion of the course, the interviewed participants talked about whether and how they had continued their English studies. Part of the plans expressed in the first interviews had not come true, especially participation in English courses, not at least before the second interviews. Those who had participated in English studies offered by their employer before and during the course had continued doing so. Three course participants, two of them retired, had participated in English courses in liberal education, one of them also in an English course in Great Britain. One student had started to study at a university and was excited about the upcoming first lecture given in English and by that point had already successfully passed the English studies there. However, it was common that people had not participated in any course because of their lack of time or because of not finding a course with a suitable level, timing and focus, or with the main focus on oral English communication. This applied to both, those already with a good command of English conversation and those at a lower level. Instead, one student had started to study a new foreign language in liberal education because of her increased self-confidence and success as a student of foreign languages on this course. The student who had missed grammar on the course had acquired a computer study programme that also dealt with grammar. Some others had also returned to grammar studies. People had studied their school textbooks and the use of phrases and listened to Hear Say CDs especially when expecting foreign visitors at work. Some of them had read English novels.

The student data revealed that in the development of their English proficiency, these people habitually and creatively combined formal and informal English studies, which proved their long-term motivation to study and learn. Our course, even if containing only a small amount of grammar studies, had made some people discover their need for grammar studies to reach a higher level in English and they studied it on their own. The course had not alienated them from further studies but rather given them incentives. Popovic writes that today self-directed learning arises “from the interaction of the needs of the person and their environment and context”, from their real life and the situation demanding learning (Popovic 2012, 220). These people continuously negotiated about things when the needs and goals emerged and tried to find such solutions as suited their needs, lives and time resources.

3 Answers to the first research problem on the promotion of oral English communication

The first subsection summarises how the course and studies there served the students in the promotion of their oral English communication and how it fulfilled their expectations and needs. The data come from the conversational data category under the name “Course qualities facilitating and promoting speaking”. These results relate to the students’ assessment of their gain from the course and their participation in it such as it appears in the light of the data. In contrast, the summary towards the end of Part II told about the students’ course experiences and through this provided information on the course as the source of the promotion of the students’ oral English communication described in Part IIIA. The second subsection describes the students’ gain from the viewpoint of their oral English use during the year following the course. Thus, this subsection answers the question, which way the course had motivated and supported the students in their use of English in real life and in their continued English studies.

A review of the students’ course gain in oral English proficiency and in learning supporting it

The course gave students opportunities to experience speaking, to converse and learn useful vocabulary for speaking. Communication contained both everyday talking and conversation in real-life situations. Listening and reading were helpful. Even if you knew your English was imperfect, performing on the course in the context of the tasks made you like speaking. As a result, you started to like speaking also elsewhere. The course stimulated speaking, gave opportunities to try and use your English. It gave you the freedom to expand on what you said and helped you to learn spontaneous speaking and in a good way, obliged you to speak. It also gave a spark to continued English studies. You learned to know what you knew and could speak and what you needed in order to progress with your English. You learned to rely on yourself when having to speak English, which was more important than learning for example more words. The course helped you to find the right way for yourself to learn. On the course, you started to study for yourself, not for the teacher as you had done at school. Even if the progress often took place in small steps, the course helped you in having faith in your ability to communicate and learn new things. You noticed that you could really express yourself in English. The course helped you to find the encounter situations in real life and become an active and spontaneous speaker who is not afraid of mistakes. The course increased your zest as a student and user of English and gave ideas what and how to study next. More independent studies on your own alongside the course would have increased the gain. Someone was of opinion that it was not realistic to expect

much of a short course like this. Another said it was as much as was possible to get from a good course.

The account of the course participants' gain above reveals their different levels of English and differing gains, but most people had got what they had expected of the course. Listening to the others, reading for pronunciation and not getting tongue-tied when having to speak in class had been rewarding. For some others, becoming active and spontaneous speakers on the course and participating in conversations available here which all students can and ought to find important. These included, for example participation, situations resembling those in real life, increased confidence in one's speaking, reliance on oneself as a speaker, awareness of one's learning and of what one needed next and what one would study next. Performing, speaking and perhaps at the same time doing something in front of other people, starting to like speaking in English, increased zest as a student and user of English ought to be important for everyone. Getting rid of your low self-esteem as a speaker of English leaves more resources to trying. Finding the right way to study refers to the fact that adults are good learners, if they find a way that serves them and helps them draw benefit from resources adults have. The recognition of yourself as the key person in studying, finding your own way to study and studying for yourself were gains that tell about the growth of the ownership of their English studies. Learning useful vocabulary is good but the growth of self-confidence supports you in all speaking. For some students, the course had not brought any particular, welcome gain worth mentioning in the interviews. However, all people had achieved at least something that they had expected of the course. Particular prerequisites for the gain had certainly been the course climate, the ample participation and the people there, especially the students themselves, because they were so committed to speaking with each other most of the time. The first subsection in Part IIIA examines these prerequisites.

It is also possible to learn something about the experiences of those people who discontinued the course. Several students volunteered to participate in the first interviews, even if they discontinued their studies after studying about half or more of the course. Thus, it is possible to compare what these people told about their expectations, aims and needs either in the sessions or in the interviews and how the course programme had fulfilled these expectations. Aino, who had expected conversation at a level above the familiar common speech situations and failed to participate in several consecutive sessions, said that her courage to speak and think in English had awoken on the course, but there had not been much growth after the halfway point. She believed that a more systematic grammar revision could have been useful for her. Minna had hoped for plenty of opportunities for conversation. She decided that her gain from the course was minor given her English level and the two whole-day weekend sessions. She was also studying full-time elsewhere. Merja had come for conversation, which turned out to be too demanding for her. It was clear that the course had not met their expectations. For these people, the course level, unavoidable absences, lack of grammar and also their other studies or commitments became the reasons for leaving the course. They were well-grounded and told of autonomous decision making. In fact, several students said, the level had not been a central criterion. Not all of them knew exactly what A2–B1 denoted. The location of the course, the course timing and above all the focus on oral English communication had been important for them.

Speaking English after the course

This subsection examines this aspect by comparing what the course participants had said about their oral English use in 2004 and what they said in the second interviews in 2005, even if not everyone mentioned them. In 2004, Kirsi, Tuuli and Maarit said that they had not been able to make themselves speak English, but at least Tuuli and Maarit were used to reading material written in English. Pia said that she manages to speak English only on a holiday abroad provided it is long enough. Kirsi had traumas about speaking English. After the course Kirsi spoke English in London and used it with her foreign business partners. Maarit participated in seminars abroad where English was the language of communication. Also Tuuli had gained courage to speak and Pia spoke English daily at her work. These four students were among those, who had the longest English study histories and a good general command of English. For them, the course and participation in it removed the impediments to their speaking. They achieved the aims they had set for the course. The subsection "Student reflections on English as a foreign language and on communication in English" tells more about Tuuli's and Maarit's new understandings of their oral English use.

Ari, Annukka, Mika, Ilkka and Vesa, for example, had studied less English at school than those mentioned above. They had spoken English on the phone and face-to-face at work already before the course and did so after the course, too. Even before the course the duties of one of them had included guidance of visitors. Now it was almost daily and he enjoyed it and was content with these opportunities. Another had duties that demanded increased travelling and using English. One of them also practiced English at home with his spouse. One student, who had been afraid of speaking because of her school memories, counseled immigrants in English at her work. In fact, people whose daily work demanded communication with their customers and business partners and who represented about the medium English level on the course had got many opportunities to speak. Maria, who had claimed to be shy of speaking and not good at it, used English on her travels and later in her university studies. Another student who had no confidence in herself as a student of English occasionally had to use English at work. The student who rather would have spoken the two other European languages she had a command of and who needed a spur to speaking English did not avoid using it any more. These people's life contexts, just like those of some others, had offered them suitable, natural opportunities for speaking and they had noticed that they could communicate quite well with their English. Instead, quite a few others had no opportunities to speak English at work. People employed by firms that use written CMC (computer-mediated communication) hardly ever spoke English at work. Holidays abroad were their main context of oral English communication. For some students, English courses seemed to be the only viable opportunity to speak English. The student who could easily converse in English already at the beginning of the course said that besides her enjoyment of speaking on the course, her gain from the course had been that she noticed it was the time to learn to speak correctly.

The course helped those people, who were not able to speak English at all or only little, even if they had a good command of English. After the course the impediments had disappeared and they had started to communicate in English abroad, at their work or in their personal lives. Their need had not been to learn more English but getting plenty of opportunities of speaking in a safe climate and secure course environment. The course had also invited many people whose level was the informed A2–B1, who already before had spoken English on the phone or face to face with their customers. After a year, their work demanded the use of English more often and they could cope quite well. Even if the speaker did not feel like a competent speaker, speaking with immigrant customers was rewarding. These people were also inventive in finding more opportunities of speaking. Participation in an oral English course encouraged even shy people to enjoy the challenges given by a new environment of English use. This course also gave a sufficient impact to the use of English, despite the choice earlier had been one of the other two foreign languages in her command.

A central criterion for the successfulness of a language course is whether it and the studies there support the students as speakers of English and increase their participation in English speakers' communities. The course participation in oral English communication on the course should expand into their other communities of life that demanded English. The course had served most of the students as an opportunity to promote their oral English communication. Most of them had communities that demanded English. On the other hand, some people did not have such communities. However, participation in the course prepared all of them for real-life English speaking communities of the future that could now become new communities of learning for them.

IIIB

PATHS AND SIGNPOSTS TO PROFESSIONAL TEACHER DEVELOPMENT

Part IIIB explores and answers the second research problem of what this kind of investigative teaching demands from a teacher and how it supports her and develops her professionalism. The promotion of the teacher's professional development covered the whole span of the research activities. The first subsection deals with the English course and the research on it as promoters of the teacher's professional development. The decision on an additional research period for investigating the teacher's professional development as a follow-up study at the UAS took place soon after the teacher-researcher's return to her permanent work there. The recognition of the minor and one-sided attention to it during the English course in liberal education was one reason for this. A concrete impact on extending the research was the spontaneously continued writing of what later was called the teacher-researcher's diary focusing on teacher development and the second interviews taking place during the follow-up research were concrete impacts on extending the research. The writing was enriched by the reading of the first interview data and course diary data, which among other things contained the categories of "*Teacher's self-criticism*" and "*Teacher reflection*" that related to teacher development. Researching at the UAS added much work that professional development as such would not have demanded. On the other hand, the research frame made the developmental process disciplined and served as its backbone.

4 Researching the promotion of the teacher's professional development in liberal education and at the UAS

Oral English course in liberal education

The two oral English courses in liberal education also created an authentic field of teaching for the promotion of professional development. I chose and wrote material, implemented the course and found answers to the problems. These tasks, the independence, complete responsibility for the studies and the freedom supported professional development. A type of educational institute for adults other than the UAS expanded the teacher's horizon of language education. Researching and developmental activity were closely intertwined in the planning and implementation of the study unit. The decision on the conception of man in this research demanded comparison between such conceptions and the understanding of the grounds for the decision. In line with the chosen main research philosophy of Gadamer's philosophical hermeneutics, the researcher was obliged to analyse her overall teacher beliefs, assumptions and her history for the research in general, to recognise her prejudices and become aware of them and their influence on her thinking. The recognition of human understanding as historically effected (TM 300–302) makes it possible for the researcher to remain open to tradition and realise that it is really saying something (TM 361). This gives the researcher the means to accept what the text says as truth even when it contradicts him/her (TM 361), which applies both to researching and the teacher's professional development. Language, conversation, dialogue and listening central in Gadamer's philosophy were central also in teacher development. Because Gadamer's focus was not on language education, his work was intriguing, even if also demanding just as Wenger's ideas on learning in general in communities of practice and his stand that participation is an expression of human social nature and at the core of human learning or knowing (Wenger 1998, 3). These two approaches brought new viewpoints adding to what the more common theories and approaches gave.

In the first years of this research new and recent literature on FLE pragmatics was available. CEF had been published in English in 2001. It was especially important for teacher development, here to be studied for a concrete purpose that made the study of CEF even more meaningful and rewarding. For a wider view, it was necessary to study theories of learning. Suggestopedic, cooperative and sociocultural theory and practices were important for the assignments, especially the tasks. Inventing new tasks was one fascinating part of the teacher's professional development also serving the classes at the UAS. *A Holiday in Cornwall*, which resembled traditional suggestopedic material, was by far the most extensive study material I had ever written and thus one specific extension of

teacher development. The theories and other knowing sought and discovered for the course created and contributed to a course, where reflection, awareness, encouragement, autonomy and their growth could take place, which supported motivation and where experiences of failure, discoveries and successes could be dealt with, overcome and discussed in class and in the interviews. In fact, the construction of the course had served teacher development better than the results from the interview themes, because I was already somewhat familiar with what the results would be. In contrast, the analysis and the results of the inductive data demanded a close study of the literature on the significance of the study climate and peers, learning as participation, on reflection, autonomy, student awareness and motivation, on students' fears and associated feelings and on how encouragement in the studies can take place. The inductive data were authentic and valuable research data for interpretation because the students spoke about them on their own initiative showing that they were important parts of their course experience.

At the beginning of the two courses in liberal education, I regretted that the plans for the language course sessions were too unfinished. Later I realised that this made the implementation of the course more open to ongoing direction according to the needs and expectations of the course groups and their participants (see also Jaatinen, R. 2003, 94), as my understanding grew concerning them, even if big changes did not take place. Especially in liberal education, a teacher does not know much of what the students and above all what the groups will be like and how these shape the studies. Everyone in class influences the course studies and what takes place on the course (also Tarone 2006, 163). With completed plans, I would have missed this reality and the benefits of negotiation with the students and with myself concerning the course. We must have a prejudice, but we need to look forward to learn more (see TM 270–271).

The interviews in liberal education gave unique opportunities to discuss learning and teaching with students who were interested in studying, motivated to explore their learning and willing to share their experiences. The conversational interviews taught the teacher-researcher about adults as people and students, about their learning, their ways of knowing, their lived experience, their needs and expectations. Results from them presented aspects of the foreign language teacher's work and told about what I did not expect, not at least to this extent. The students' evaluation of the teacher's work in the conversational interviews increased the knowledge of me as a teacher. The teacher learned both from the criticism and the successfulness of practices. When studied more closely later, they gave incentives for future development. The interviews often developed into mentoring discussions where we functioned as mentors for each other. A secure environment is necessary for a working alliance and shared reflection because people can challenge each other's views. These people did not have to think about the consequences of what they said because the course had concluded. What they said could not have any influence on them later. The deductively and inductively drawn interview data provided the teacher with two quite different views of the same course and studies there. There were two truths. The course diary data recorded

the teacher's notes on the course events, students' and teacher's reflections, and students' comments contributing to the teacher's professional development. After the interviews I wrote in the diary: "The criticism and assessment presented by the students in the interviews on what worked and what did not, did not give a feeling of hurt, loss or failure." The course project had become our shared effort to discover better alternatives. The long time gap between the course and the data analysis influenced the same way. The value of some research aims decreased but new ones emerged:

With regard to the gain, learning about how to teach oral communication in particular appears less significant. Instead, I learned about students with this aim, about the development of oral communication in class and in relation to their lived experience and communication there. I learned about the necessity of dialogue, about adults as independent students and about the interplay between researching and teacher's work, about the relationships in adults' study communities and the relation of the learning and the life of people involved in it. They all link with the social. (Teacher-researcher's diary, April 2006)

The students' awareness, reflections and their understandings in the conversations, often of a dialogic nature, were a resource and enhanced new ideas. Interviews as conversations have a transformative power (see Gadamer 2001, 60) and they transformed the interviewer's conceptions. For example, I understood the central role of affect in the study unit and the variation of its significance from person to person. Affect, except for its positive manifestations, did not appear in class. I learned to consider the learning situation as shared participation, this especially thanks to Wenger, where everyone sees the situation differently and has his/her own aims, hopes and ways of being there. Reading and analysing the student interview data in 2005–2007 during the follow-up research activated the memory of those experiences and were, beside the diary writing, an essential part of the follow-up research on the third research problem. The ample amount of student data on mental resources that was revealed later reminded of the human holism influencing studies.

The students in liberal education, most of them in full-time working life, taught much about English needs there. They had aims for the development of their English and ideas how to strengthen their identity as speakers of English. The full time students at the UAS usually had a short working life experience or perhaps worked part-time or sporadically and had their main investment in professional studies at the UAS. If I conducted the course among adults another time, I would distribute authority even more evenly than the first time. As the following section shows, they had resources to take charge of their studies on the course. Self-determination in English studies was stronger and more influential among adults in liberal education. They decided on their future studies on their own. A goal-oriented encounter with a foreign language and learning is experiential, curious, exploratory and reflective (Kaikkonen 2004, 170), something which the course in liberal education revealed and which ought to be supported at the UAS.

The English course containing researching and developmental activity was a good start for the research on the teacher's professional development at the UAS. The start from the conception of man, and of learning served teacher development like the exploration of theories of learning, CEF and of adults as students. I wrote course material, invented new tasks with regard to the assumed level and the aims, and then learned about how they functioned in the interviews. The text materials that differed in their nature, level and aims revealed for me and the students much of their learning. These people had many ways of how to take charge of their own learning, which could serve as one ingredient in the teacher's developing professional understanding. The assumption of Wenger's concept of participation was transferred to the UAS and turned out to open views on the interpretation of the student data and served the exploration of teacher development there. Gadamer's research philosophy, among other things his beliefs concerning prejudices and their influence, historically effected human understanding and the circle of understanding and on the other side, my history, conceptions, teacher beliefs, prejudices and assumptions opened up views of having to change my conceptions for better ones. This analysis revealed the significance of reflection, awareness, autonomy, encouragement and motivation and made it necessary to study literature on these. All of the above aspects, just like the notes on language, conversation, dialogue and listening often occurring in Gadamer's texts affected teacher development at the UAS. All of these gains helped to add greater depth to the researching at the UAS.

Follow-up research at the UAS

Two institutions as the location of teaching and researching expanded the teacher's views of teaching. The course on oral communication was good for professional growth. A course conversational by nature adds participation and empowerment. Conversations on language, on learning and on difficulties emerged spontaneously, as did also conversations on the course itself and its suitability. This also happened in the interviews. In addition to what the course, its creation and implementation and the interviews in liberal education gave, the course challenged my preunderstandings and put them more at stake than the work at the UAS before the empirical research (see Gadamer 1976, 38). Through experiences and hermeneutical reflection it is possible to see differently and, see beyond what one considers well-grounded knowledge. (Gadamer 1976, 38; TM 296.) Otherwise, teacher development had remained in the background as a side issue, despite the literature studied and the teacher's diary written on the course events and reflections on them. There had been dialogue between the social and the personal that professional development demanded (Eteläpelto & Vähäsantanen 2008, 29; see also 43–45), but such development had mostly taken place in the contexts of the course and was not closely related to what the personal and social denoted in the work in the UAS. Therefore, it was meaningful that the research continued, first as diary writing at the UAS from January 2005. The continued spontaneous diary writing showed that the first part of the research containing the empirical research and the ensuing follow-up research could form an entity for the teacher's professional development.

Transformative professionalism demands teacher collaboration, which promotes the students learning (Kohonen 2009a, 134). At the UAS, I had colleagues who were researchers and interested in pedagogical, philosophical and ethical questions. We shared understandings, explored our meanings, negotiated, and learned from each other especially when our professional expertise existed in different fields. The teacher-researcher's diary written by hand in 2005 contained reflective notes on concrete events and experiences on the courses, with individual students, student groups and colleagues, on new forms of work and on the first interview data that I was reading. The latter part of the diary, compiled as computer files and written in 2006–2007, mainly described the thoughts and experiences of the researching researchee at the UAS. There were thoughts related to professional development, reflections between theory and the ongoing practice, notions of meaning concerning different languages and my own English, learning in general and learning with and from the students. The transcription of the first interviews and the intervening second interviews with the students in liberal education in December 2005 formed an essential part of the teacher's professional development, just as the reading of the first interview data. The two-and-a-half years' follow-up research at the UAS became an organic part of the research despite the change of research site and the lack of plans and organised research activities. The follow-up research signified another cycle of experimentation and reflection (see Kolb 1984) that strengthened the benefit and the ecology of the research and increased the meaningfulness of the research by expanding the benefit to the teacher's permanent work at the UAS. At the time, the work there denoted a broad field of organisational and practical changes because of the continuous development taking place in foreign language education. The growing distance to the experiences and thoughts saved in the course diaries also helped me to recognise and investigate my habitual ways of thinking, acting and reasoning.

Kohonen (2012, 82) writes with reference to teacher students that the aim of reflective studies is a deeper understanding of one's work and the activation of the necessary processes of change. Learning from one's experiences is not an automatic process but demands time for the understanding and assessment of the new knowledge, its conceptualisation and application (Kolb 1984, 39–43). The long temporal span from the empirical research to the end of the follow-up research gave time for all of these.

5 Experiences and new understandings of the teacher's professionalism

Ethical reflections on being a teacher

The teacher's profession is an ethical one with ethical guidelines and a moral dimension (Luukkainen 2005, 74). Hence, ethics and moral issues are part of the development of professionalism for a researching teacher. Values and ethics are also an influential part of the teacher identity, sources of personal reflection and negotiation at work and a crucial factor in aims and meanings. Values and ethics are in continuous interaction (Luukkainen 2005, 75). Teachers' work is intensive work in the midst of numerous and varying human relationships demanding involvement (Luukkainen 2005, 220), especially when the interactive practices and tasks are a prerequisite for the promotion of the target proficiency. A long experience as a teacher can denote the increase of routine negatively affecting the teacher's work and decision-making. Here, the change of the educational environment for research reduced the routines and brought a different environment, relations, tasks and ethical considerations, even extending to touchstones that challenged the teacher's ethics and increased her awareness of her own ethical stands and actions. Exploring them critically is constructive of the teacher's professional development and brings uncertainty and a questioning of one's being and acting right that are prerequisites of an ethical course of action (also see Kaikkonen 2004, 144–145).

In liberal education, students' freedom, equality and rationality are basic values. One of the two adult education institutes involved in the research formulated their values through human dignity, respect for everyone, culture, lifelong learning, development and the promotion of communality. Dysfunctional situations have to be resolved and everyone's concerns have to be taken into account as much as possible. The case of Sandy, already described through the voices of the members of Sandy's course group, directed the teacher's professional development research interest to ethics. How should a teacher act towards an adult student for whom the learning situation was shaped in a totally different way, whose aims completely differed from those set for the studies and whose actions, while disturbing, were carried out without any consciousness of the harm they caused to the fellow students but never wilfully so?

The teacher's ethics imply showing respect, taking responsibility and giving help. In short, ethics are commitment to other people and agency in relation to them. (Luukkainen 2005, 78.) The teacher's ethics contain unwritten principles on helping, encounters with the dissimilarity between people, attendance to the needs of groups and the common good (Luukkainen 2005, 74). His/her professionalism includes independence with responsibility, commitment, ethical codes and working to the best of the learner and society (see Luukkainen 2005, 41). The teacher is responsible for the situation in class and

has more power than the participants and has to consider the morals of his/her actions carefully. Having to face and consider the morality of my actions so intensively and continually again and again and searching for moral solutions were totally new me. I had to assume responsibility for coping with the situation because the institute did not consider it their duty to intervene. It was difficult to know how I should interpret my responsibility in this real life situation (see also Kaikkonen 2004, 146) in a group where people had paid for their studies, temporarily shelved their other commitments and wanted to study and learn in an institute where tolerance and respect for everyone were some of the basic principles. Some notes from the course diary clarify the situation:

Again, I had to interrupt Sandy's stories many times but I tried to be friendly and kind... I have to decide task by task whether Sandy is able to participate and if not, I work with Sandy. Sandy is not able to participate at all in tasks where one has to invent what to say. (WE 3)

Do I need to invest in making special arrangements with Sandy instead of working on essential and more widely beneficial issues? I neglected to pay attention to the silent Elina because I had to attend to Sandy. (WE 4)

A couple of years after concluding the study unit, I started to explore the literature to get acquainted with views concerning our course situation. According to Walker, adult participants' understandings of how to behave in a study group are usually comparable. As a rule, the principles followed in the studies are discussed and agreed on either explicitly or implicitly at the outset of the studies. (Walker 2005, 79; see also Rogers, A. 2002, 25–26.) Everyone becomes committed both to themselves for self-respect, and to the others for the duty to support each other in everybody's individual self-determination. Commitment forms the basis for the community and demands "caring for each other". (Walker 2005, 79; Rogers, A. 2002, 42; for the students' actions concerning this, see One's peers and course group in Part IIIA.) On the other hand, especially Walker is uncompromising in his opinion that nobody is allowed to destroy the situation for the others. If necessary, an individual participant must be controlled, even through coercion, and if necessary by the other students (Walker 2005, 79). Coercion did not take place here but, in addition to the teacher, at least one student tried to control Sandy.

According to M. Lehtovaara, qualitative research always concerns human encounters and in rigorous researching, the researcher encounters both themselves and those participating in the research. Hence, qualitative researching is closely tied to ethics, not essentially the ethics expressed in generally assumed ethical norms but to do with which way the research has encountered the researcher in its different phases and how he/she has encountered the Other. (Lehtovaara, M. 2004, 40.) Even if our situation also concerned ethical norms, with regard to Sandy, it concerned the Other. An argument that also echoes my understanding is Levinas's thoughts referred to by Standish in his article 'Ethics before equality' (Standish 2005, 230–237). Standish interprets Levinas and argues: "When

confronted with the face I see something that necessarily goes beyond anything my senses can determine". Something of the "interiority of the Other" revealed by the face "always exceeds any possibility of knowing that I may have. Moreover, for the face to be a face, it must reveal a being whose ultimate vulnerability and needs puts me always in a position of obligation". (Standish 2005, 233.) This stand is in contradiction with Walker's stand, which is practical, viable and convincing, too. The same contradiction also existed for me on the course. Acting ethically was indeed difficult and led to uncertainty (see Kaikkonen 2004, 144). Uncertainty provokes reflection and this way fosters professional development, but a teacher has to decide instantly on how to deal with the situation.

Quite insignificant issues can evoke ethical thinking. The last dialogue in *A Holiday in Cornwall* ends with a scene where the characters are waiting to board their flights. One of the persons hears someone humming in the middle of the general airport hassle and asks her friends who it is. In the first version of the handout, nobody answers her. It seemed to imply that the others did not appreciate her. In the final version, she gets an answer, half-whispered in the middle of the sudden emergencies and voices of farewell. It was years later that I read that the word "always wants to be heard, always seeks understanding". Remaining without a response is the most terrible thing to happen to it. (Bakhtin 2004, 127.) Sandy was often deprived of being heard and this way excluded from the dialogue. Sandy was real and thus immensely more important and Sandy was vulnerable. Practically seen, there was the immediate and constant concern with finding viable practical solutions to problems that Sandy's presence gave rise to in the group. Second, I had to attend to the needs of the rest of the group as best as I could in the situation to mitigate the harm caused by Sandy's presence. I had to set limits but still base my actions on respect and freedom, but following it demanded a lot of energy and negotiation. Sandy's inclusion in half-groups and with me in pair work seemed to be the best and ethically most acceptable solutions in the situation, even if I kept asking myself whether it was really so for the other students.

This research showed me that the core of ethics was in relationships and in 'being-for' and that ethics and making ethical decisions did not concern rules but daily encounters. Real-life experience was indeed a natural context for the teacher's ethical reflection and search for what is right and wrong. (Schwandt 2001, 204.) Individual cases demand creativity and application and the teacher has to solve emerging cases based on his/her own thinking and principles (Martikainen 2005, 77–78). According to Gadamer, the rational, the right thing to do in a concrete situation is not given in general prescriptions about good and bad. Instead, one has to be able to interpret the situation, which is reached through comprehending the given situation and reaching an understanding about it (Gadamer 2001, 78–79). However, I would rather state with Christians that the solution came into being in "the fallible and irresolute voices of everyday life" (see Christians 2005, 154).

Teacher stories about learning and teaching events after returning to the UAS

In this research, where the research activities began with a course on oral English interaction in liberal education, human encounter and relationships were central. They remained important also at the UAS where the research focus was on teacher development. “Components of learner development need to be accompanied by and consciously linked to the teacher’s professional growth and what it means to be a professional language teacher and a language educator” (Kohonen 2007, 186). The following four stories tell about how student and teacher development were entwined at the UAS. The first two stories were documented in the teacher-researcher’s diary and were slightly edited to suit this context. The last two stories from the years 2008 and 2010 tell about the teacher-researcher’s continued interest in professional development after the research period. These two stories were written down in the developing research report.

The first story tells about one of the first tasks after my return to the UAS. It was an English course for a group of young adults whom I did not know in advance. Their first two sessions before my return had been cancelled owing to the temporary teacher’s sick leave. At the time no English textbooks for the social field existed and there was no course plan. The students’ upcoming practical training limited the available time to some three weeks crammed with many other studies. The interviewees’ autonomy and motivation and their ability and interest in reflection on their learning in the recently conducted first interviews had surprised, impressed and inspired me. Thus, in our first session I suggested we plan and schedule the studies together there and then. They were ready to start at once. The first discussion took place in groups, which was followed by the presentation of the results and a general discussion on them. We constructed the study unit by starting from the existing time resources, what the students considered necessary and useful and wished to be included and what the curriculum said. A few timed lessons existed but we agreed on independent studies. This way the students became authentic actors of their own learning (see Kohonen 2009a, 20). We agreed on the deadlines for handing in the results of the independent studies, exam contents and the dates for the exams that suited the rest of the timetable set for their group. They completed the studies and were content with the way their studies had turned out. The opportunity to plan and decide on their own studies also gave them the ownership of their studies (see Kohonen 2009a, 21). In every way, they were competent to do so. They could negotiate and advance their own interests and invest both in the learning events and their outcomes, which were reflected in their later Swedish studies. A practice like this promotes the students’ independence and autonomy, so decreasing their dependency on the teacher (see Rogers, A. 2002, 276). My absence from the UAS and work with the students in a different environment in liberal education helped me to break my routines and let the students build the course around their priorities and the conditions of the resources and restrictions of the particular context.

The second story is about remedial Swedish studies. My interest in A2-B1 language level brought me both remedial English and Swedish courses. They were available for students who had not completed the upper general secondary school or, for some other reasons, had only undertaken short studies in them. For Swedish there was a compact book on Swedish grammar and exercises. The studies consisted of a basic grammar course with abundant homework and individual guidance sessions for which the students sent a written assignment in advance. The individual counselling was conversational, just like the interviews in liberal education, thus adding dialogic qualities to my work at the UAS. Like the previous interviews, these sessions showed that also these adult students thought about and knew about their own learning and about themselves as students of Swedish much more than I had thought. On the courses and in the interviews in liberal education, I had become aware of my habit of having the last word and had started to fight it. I had also learned the value of remaining patient. I reduced my speaking and instead, listened more to the students, allowed them time to struggle with their problems and formulate their questions (see also Duckworth 2001a, xiii), which is how people learn. Kayes argues that also silence is an important part of experience. Silence can be a sign of having become aware of and reflecting on what has been discussed. (Kayes 2004, 69.) Listening attentively to the student gives the message that what he/she says is appreciated and important. Silence and listening turned out to be useful in many guidance sessions, but one of them was by far the most memorable.

One of the written student assignments sent to me in advance was such that correcting or commenting on it would have concerned practically everything there was. Suggestopedia had taught me not to forget positive feedback, but there was nothing I could honestly say. On the other hand, I had learned by experience that the errors in the student's language use reveal to the teacher the student's hypotheses about the foreign language and this way function as guides for the teacher. Being able not to say too much or not to be quick to explain turned out to be more important than saying enough or saying what for me seemed to be the right thing. Puolimatka (2002, 334) suggests that the student has his/her inner dialogue, microdialogue. Here it took place between what the student had thought and the new idea that he/she was trying to understand and it demanded time. She/he learned by comparing his/her earlier understanding, with the result that the new one led to the reorganisation of the old one. (See Puolimatka 2002, 334.) We found out that we had to have an idea of each other's logics and the differences between them. For the student, this meant seeing the difference between their former understanding and the one I had introduced, and for me it meant understanding what the distance contained.

Thanks to the English courses in liberal education and studies of the literature I had started to learn not to teach when it was not the time for teaching. Gallagher argues that "both for the teacher and the student, moving beyond their own narrow horizons toward an indefinite interchange contains a challenge and a risk. In some sense, the pedagogical presentation transcends the teacher, but this happens only in that the teacher attempts to

enter the student's horizon and the student attempts to interpret the lesson for herself". (Gallagher 1992, 138–139.) It is useless to talk with someone who sticks to his/her prejudices and is not willing to question them (Gadamer 2001, 44). Such a person can also be the teacher. The educator/teacher needs to explore and reflect on the quality of their influence and his/her biased understanding (Fenwick & Tennant 2004, 55–56). Just as the student's historically based understanding about grammar was biased, also my explanations were biased even if based on the commonly agreed grammar of Swedish. Listening, dialogue and mutual trust were crucial here. I had learned that motivation was the students' basic incentive in English studies in liberal education but did not know enough of the UAS students' motivation. I was worried about how to return the essay in order not to damage the student's motivation but she had chosen to seize the challenge. She treasured her task paper, because it told her what she knew and what she had to learn. It was only during the research that I fully realised the significance and power of independence. This student was an excellent example of it.

The teacher-researcher's diary contains a reflective note concerning these and many other students:

The discussions with the individual students and hearing their FLL histories and listening to such a diversity of learning experiences and especially their reflections on learning and understandings made me realise their real existence among students in general and understand that talking about them promoted the learning and teaching especially in adult groups. Courses and study guidance in Swedish expanded the teacher's professional development in ways different from English. In fact, for them, Swedish was more foreign than English and it was often necessary to explore the basic system in Swedish, which they did not understand. For the teacher it was necessary first to listen to them explaining in order to begin to understand how and what they understood of it. It was really talking about the language. (Teacher-researcher's diary, October 17th 2006)

The third story tells about young adults and their English course. Here we already had Way to Welfare: English for Social Services (Saarinen & Saarinen 2008). The event brings together several streams of professional teacher development in the research and opens up new understandings of them. The students had previously taken their Swedish courses with me and achieved the required Swedish skills, which had often demanded hard work and perseverance. Even if quite a few of them had very little knowledge of Swedish, the working climate and understanding between us had been good. Accordingly, I had great expectations of the ensuing English course. I was correct in my assumption that they would not be familiar with the field-specific English but did not understand how fast they could pick it up. Neither did I know that in the group that previously needed much support and encouragement in Swedish, the majority were active and fluent English users. They were my first group where the students frequently visited Internet communities and had interests, contacts and hobbies involving both oral and written English. Some of them showed little

interest or effort in class. A couple of them were noticeably bored and occasionally chose to talk aloud about their own concerns or left the class to return after a while or not at all. Many of them did not take the trouble of speaking in class and showing their proficiency. As a result, I never found out about their skills or took them into account. Even if part of the students were content with the studies, my uppermost experiences on the course and after it were frustration and failure.

Renshaw points out that a conversation on the common language, worldview and rules to be observed in a class promote smooth interaction but notes that such conformity can result in a diminishing number of new insights arising from other perspectives than the ones mutually agreed. (Renshaw 2004, 8.) Neither Renshaw's recommendations nor the possibly negative consequences he mentioned took place on the course. The distance between our views invalidated all the rules for some students, which affected everyone's learning. When I met them later in other contexts, they seemed to have forgotten what had taken place on the course. For me as a teacher-researcher, the course gradually became rewarding. The experience made me aware of the power of motivation and decreased motivation and led me back to explore the understandings of motivation in the literature and to recognise the centrality of its position in the already existing student interview data. Through the lack of dialogue in the UAS English group, I recognised the significance of dialogue.

Engaging in actively listening to them and hearing what they were telling me through their behaviour could have started the sharing (see McManus Holroyd 2007, 9) and through that we could have avoided what appeared to me to be almost a catastrophe. I forgot negotiation, dialogue and careful listening because they did not behave and react the way students used to behave according to my experience. Nonetheless, the teacher's task is to invite students to conversation about aims and activities and let them use their own voices, which had happened in their Swedish studies. It was clear that I lacked the openness that would have helped in finding solutions here. The situation also told about a lack of balance between the students' autonomy and the teacher's guidance. Attending to their contribution and what they bring to the studies is important because it shapes their gain (Breen 2001, 1).

Furthermore, this course experience introduced me to a phenomenon which later affected my work, especially as the teacher of English, and which will increasingly challenge and benefit English teachers' work. Already in 2006, Saarenkunnas pointed out that young people who have learned English when playing network games challenge formal education because these people are ahead in English even when having less formal studies (Saarenkunnas 2006, 216–217). My students were proficient communicators. They were not only involved in the one-to-one communication of television, radio etc. They participated in the "many-to-many interaction" in the new media, something which Kapitzke and Renshaw maintained about youths already more than ten years ago (2004, 58). Changes continuously challenge the teacher and he/she has to regain his/her expertise again and again (Luukkainen 2005, 203).

The fourth story, or rather only a note, dates back to 2012 when I happened to meet one student from a group of the previous term in the corridor of our UAS. I had worked hard to plan and organise the studies for the group but she told me:

It was a different course. There you could quietly concentrate on learning.

Before the course experience in liberal education and the years after it at the UAS, I would not have understood equally well the value of this kind of student experience that speaks of motivation, autonomy in one's learning, its ownership, the authenticity of one's learning and the awareness of how one's learning takes place. This person studied in a group of adults with different English skills and work histories. The possibility to focus on one's own learning was important also for this reason. Their class had not formed a "flat group of students all learning the same thing at the same time" (Wenger 1998, 269). However, her words also referred to the students' group work and therefore also concerned social motivation, because they often worked in groups and could decide on their work there. Today, the teacher is increasingly considered a facilitator and it is discernible in this story. The teacher-researcher's diary contains reflections on the teacher's alternative roles:

When I see learning as a many-sided, extensive event, it becomes easier to see the importance of the student at the centre of his/her learning, as its constructor and promoter. If I see learning as essentially resting on the material, constructions and the course programme and as something produced by them, also the teacher's role in learning grows and the student's awareness and independence is less necessary. (Teacher-researcher's diary, October 2006)

Spin-offs: Exploring and understanding more about languages, language use and meaning

Reading and searching for information in English scientific literature and teaching English and Swedish generated reflections on languages in general.

Our meanings are extensively tied to the words and expressions of the first language, our thinking to its constructions and expressions. A Finn's failure to use appropriate forms for the third person singular in other languages is part of their cultural and linguistic situatedness. As easy as it seems, knowing the feminine and masculine form is not enough to start using them unerringly, when the native thinking is devoid of them. (Teacher-researcher's diary, February 2005)

There was another line of thought concerning language learning and teaching, namely understanding grammar as meanings.

The choice of form is a choice of meaning (always), and avoidance of distorted meanings. In foreign language studies, one first tends to think that the choice concerns the successful choice between the right and wrong. (Teacher-researcher's diary, March 2005)

Reflections like these, good or less good, during the research increased my teacher ownership of English and Swedish. Most probably, owing to writing the teacher-researcher diaries and continuing researching well past the empirical stage, the research did not remain an island but developed into a part of my teacher's philosophy and affected my work at the UAS. Diary writing supported and kept reflection alive throughout the research activities. I have written down a few comments on writing:

At the beginning, the main idea was just to write down notes on what had happened. It was mysterious how the writing almost at once started to spur reflection and how it transformed the experience into reflection. There was excitement and urgency to write. Writing became important. (Teacher-researcher's diary, January 2005)

One of the diary notes combined reading, writing and taking stand. The note begins with what I should also think about and remember as a teacher:

I have found that some authors welcome the reader into the discussion and facilitate it while others are content with telling what they know and think and what the reader should learn. I have also found a voice for myself. Writing is easier. Making decisions and taking stands have become intriguing. (Teacher-researcher's diary, March 2005)

Later, I became aware of some turning points:

I have become aware that there is a person talking behind the text, someone I discuss with through the text. Instead of being mere information the text speaks of the person's opinions, views, convictions, negotiations and search and where the person has arrived, and the person is in dialogue with me. (Teacher-researcher's diary, April 2005)

By and by, I have started to see differences in views and in persons behind the text and become aware of these people's personal views and deliberate choices of expressions and words. I have gathered knowledge of my own and am finally able to discuss with the writer. I have realised that my lack of knowledge has made me unable to write, that is, to discuss or take a stand of my own. It is as if my brain has now started to have more life of its own, which almost feels like a celebration. (Teacher-researcher's diary, May 2005)

The texts have started to speak, the same text in a changed way. I know more and there is interaction between me and the text, which did not exist at the beginning of the studies. Earlier, I could not write anything that would have been really my own, because I only knew what I had read about this field in the books and articles. One cannot negotiate if one has nothing to negotiate with. (Teacher-researcher's diary, November 2006)

The process began simply with writing down notes but even as such it was important because the notes were transformed into reflection. As a result, it was possible to discuss with the text, recognise the writers' personal views. I saw each text as part of the researchee's horizon (Timonen 2011, 31). I could have conversation and dialogue with the writers and learn more through these. Above all, in this process I learned to negotiate between the different stands and make my own decisions. This process started only through making notes and reflecting on them. In the same line, Kayes argues that first reflection maintains the tension in learning between experience and abstract thinking. Second, reflection deals with taking a critical stance and prevents us from taking our experiences for granted and leaving them unevaluated. Third, reflection gives an impulse to sense-making. (Kayes 2004, 70.)

Increasingly important concepts in my pedagogy

As reifications, concepts are projections of meanings and thus abstractions which after a while gain independence and start talking to us (see Wenger 1998, 58). It was what Bruner meant when he referred to the concepts in Vygotsky's theory. "They provide a means for turning around upon one's thoughts, for seeing them in a new light" (Bruner 1986, 73; also Kiviniemi 2007, 74). At the beginning of the research process, I met with dozens of unclearly speaking or mute concepts being reifications of projections of others' meanings. By and by the concepts got life and gave birth to new notions and were transformed into focused narratives (see Wenger 1998, 60). In Vygotskian terms, the concepts gained "senses" (Vygotsky 1986, 244–245) for me.

The analysis and interpretation of the interview data and the course diary data first led to the inclusion in the research of such common concepts in FLE as reflection, autonomy, awareness, motivation and courage, partly through their familiarity and through abduction. Further concepts attracted my attention in the literature because they described what the research had revealed. Concepts that also formed, expanded and enriched my thinking and language, also contributed to the development of my pedagogy as a teacher. These concepts were also combined with the research interests related to the promotion of oral English communication and teacher development, or seen from another viewpoint, the study unit, the work at the UAS and the teacher's theory. A research study not bound to its initial position benefits from its own evolvement, which creates new learning. These concepts and conceptualisations I have included here have an ethical and/or axiological element, which makes them also idealistic, impossible to be brought to full completion but worth consideration and attention.

Thinking about student and teacher vulnerability

As earlier revealed, the two course groups in liberal education had participants, who were vulnerable, i.e. liable to be emotionally hurt (see Shorter Oxford English Dictionary 2007)

as students of English. CEF tells about the novice driver whom the risk of failure and worry because of his/her incompetence had made vulnerable until he/she gained self-confidence through practice (CEF 2001, 11). Duckworth's term of vulnerability had a cognitive, emotional, volitional and social element (Duckworth 2001b, 1 and 40). In Duckworth's real-life example young teachers tried to solve the problem of floating and non-floating objects. One of Duckworth's course participants called Pierre, never presented ideas that he was not quite sure of and never revealed that he did not understand. The others presented half-baked ideas and guesses and constructed self-invented tools to solve the problem. They failed again and again, but it never made them embarrassed and ashamed. Finally, in the last session, Pierre got over his vulnerability and told about his ideas, even if he knew that they were only guesses. (Duckworth 2001b.)

Many students are like Pierre. It was evident that Johanna left the oral English course because she could not face a situation where she had to take a risk and say in public what she believed she could not say properly. A teacher seldom knows if there are people suffering from vulnerability in a new group. Hiding one's lack of proficiency distorts one's learning process. Self-confidence, positive self-image and willingness to face risks are important (also CEF 2001, 161), but not everyone has them. A safe study environment, sufficiently small risks, especially at the beginning, and the supportive atmosphere prevailing in the studies are crucial. The practice of receiving scaffolding from peers takes place in group work and Johanna could cope there but scaffolding another student does not and cannot take place when the whole group and teacher are involved. In his article on Dewey's and Gadamer's philosophy "A Deweyan theory of democratic listening", Garrison knits together the same two elements as Duckworth: "Openness involves risk and vulnerability, but that is how we grow ... Nonetheless, it is dangerous. [because] openness in Gadamer's hermeneutics is ontological, about our being". (Garrison 1996, 433.) Several others had similar experiences but they found the group and course climate safe enough to seize the opportunity for learning and especially for encouragement. Pia said in the interviews: "What does it matter if I do not know something or say something wrong!"

Duckworth's concept of vulnerability imposes on the teacher the requirement to listen and ensure the students' experience of security (Duckworth 2001c, 185). For comparison, infantilisation in suggestopedia creates reliance, removes pressure and creates an encouraging atmosphere for fighting overt self-consciousness (Lozanov 1978, 192 and 193). In comparison to Garrison's and Duckworth's viewpoints, Lozanov's theory lacks the struggling part and at least in theory, demands less of the students' own conscious effort. Situations that can possibly demand too much are avoided. Vulnerability is removed by the joy and easiness of learning and abolishment of earlier negative experiences based on Lozanov's belief that everyone can learn equally. Duckworth's discussion on fighting vulnerability, not avoiding it, tells that fighting and coping with one's vulnerability is a battle that can be won and become a source of reflected, personal learning. The recognition that one might be wrong is an essential element of negotiation. For Garrison, overcoming

vulnerability is a source of growth. While in Lozanov's suggestopedia, the teacher does not give tasks that turn out difficult and involve risks, Duckworth praises cognitive curiosity, even moments of ignorance and hardships (Duckworth 2001b).

Van Manen writes about children's natural vulnerability. It makes parents doubt and question themselves, which he interprets as pedagogy. (van Manen 2015, 19.) "Pedagogical tact preserves a child's space, protects what is vulnerable, prevents hurt, makes whole what is broken, strengthens what is good, enhances what is unique, and sponsors personal growth" (van Manen 2015, 79). This is also what pedagogy in adult education among other things should contain, even if for some students they are less vital than for others.

Vulnerability is also a concept relevant to the teacher's work. In the article written by H.L.T. Heikkinen, Syrjälä states vulnerability is an essential part of teacher's work because his/her work concerns human relations. One particular cause of teacher vulnerability according to her is that the teacher has to make his/her decisions and face its consequences even if he/she does not know what they will be for the pupil, which causes experiences of insufficiency. It is also typical of the teacher's work that his/her all decisions can be called into question. Also for this reason, teachers' work creates feelings of insufficiency. (Heikkinen, H.L.T. 2005, 33.)

Garrison argues that listening exposes us to vulnerability and is a threat to our prejudices, which is dangerous because it endangers our identity (Garrison 1996, 438 and 449). For me, discussing the weaknesses or less strong aspects of the English course in the interviews first stirred my vulnerability, but later the hurt disappeared, which was part of professional teacher development but certainly also resulted from the increased temporal distance. According to van Manen, also worry about another person's vulnerability can be troubling and bring pain but it is necessary, because "worrying keeps me in touch with the presence of this other" (van Manen 2015, 73). On the basis of my experience, I can agree with him.

Criticism and assessment on what worked and what did not, did not hurt. It was not an issue of loss and failure and of not being good. The course had become a shared effort to search for good solutions to make the best of it, and assessment was part of it. (Teacher-researcher's diary, June 2005)

Openness denotes that we also accept what is against us even if openness is not required at all (Gadamer 1989, 361). Whether I had the courage to be wrong instead of being vulnerable was muffled by the acquaintance with Gadamerian hermeneutics that took a totally different stand. In proper hermeneutics there is no last word (Gadamer 1989, 579). Even if we move toward truth, all is not understood (Gadamer 2001, 46; 1984, 64; McManus Holroyd 2007, 1). I believe that I had understood something of this when I had been fighting the temptation of having the last word on the English courses.

Listening

I have planned the whole programme for each time in advance to allow me full attendance to the students and their learning ... Listening is important, too, for accurate directing of the course and for supporting students' self-efficacy. (Course diary, early October 2004)

There could be less structure and less precisely planned activities. I can afford that. As a teacher I ought to trust also the students understanding of what is important and which way we can proceed to promote it. I might have asked more about their opinions and listened more to them. (Course diary, late October 2004)

Listening to the students when they talk about their learning, discussing with them and understanding the significance of hearing them explain how they understand is important. This way their learning becomes situated for me. (Teacher-researcher's diary, April 2006).

The first two citations above come from the course diary data written in liberal education. In the first one, the course situation is still relatively new and for me being able to steer and direct the course is important. The reins are tightly in my hands. A couple of weeks later, when I had learned to know the participants and their knowledge of their own learning and their interest in it, I am ready to and share the decision-making with them.

The third note on listening was written at the UAS. Listening to the students' comments, views and stories guide us on how to continue. They are valuable regardless of whether they reveal learning, unlearning or the process of learning, whether in line with the teacher's anticipations or not. Listening carefully to the silence in class is also important. Listening puts the teacher's prejudice to the test and can abolish his/her mistaken useless prejudice. Gadamer writes: "We do not need just to hear one another but to listen to one another. Only when this happens is there understanding". (Gadamer 2001, 39.) The interviews with the students illustrated this. They told me, both spontaneously and as an answer to my question, what had been less good on the course and what could have been better when implemented in another way.

Dialogue

The first note on dialogic learning and dialogue entered my when the two English courses had started. I realised the significance of not commenting too quickly or remaining silent in order to hear their voices or rather, in order not to silence them and lose the dialogue.

Silence and patience, when comfortable, pave the way for dialogue and dialogic learning and give the student time to follow his/her lines of thought. (Course diary, October 2004)

Another note followed by others with the same theme said:

I need to learn better the skill of dialogue and not be the wise one. (Course diary, October 2004)

The concept of dialogue and dialogic learning gained more footholds after the empirical research in the contexts of the teacher's professional development and especially thanks to my Gadamer studies. With Gadamer, I better understood the relation of dialogue both to ethics and epistemology. According to Gadamer, mutuality, openness, listening and letting the other "really say something to us" (Gadamer 1989, 361) are signs of I-Thou relationships. The piece of dialogue below comes from the first interview. Ari is careful to express his opinion politely but honestly and openly and makes the best of the opportunity to be heard.

Ari: *Yes. I didn't experience them [the texts] either as... so I'm not saying useless ... they weren't useless, but ... reading from a text, I didn't find that, like, so necessary. I would've wanted us to try and go through the page so that we'd be speaking.*

Lea: *Exactly.*

Ari: *That it would've been, like, perhaps more, you know, fruitful for me. Difficult, of course, I was just one of the group, like. There were a lot of other needs there besides my needs ...*

Lea: *Yeah.*

Ari: *It's not useless, I'm not saying that, but I didn't learn, but I'd reckon that you wouldn't necessarily ... here I'm getting back to the thing that that phrase [Ari means the text] and speaking, that interweaving them ...*

Lea: *OK, yeah. But if you think about the greatest possible benefit ...*

Ari: *Perhaps more that we would have spoken more, even though we were at different levels and I'm sure someone else experiences it differently. On the other hand, there was one thing I took personally, like, and so I went out to take a break. Like.*

Speaking was most important for Ari. My experience was that it was impossible to speak English all the whole day, even less so to find so many topics, situations and supportive material for the group with such a variety of levels on two consecutive days. People get exhausted with having to speak too much, as two course events showed. Authentic encounter with a student demands openness and mutual autonomy as far as it is possible in the prevailing circumstances of power (Lehtovaara 2001, 167–170). My contribution to the spoken dialogue was minor. Mutuality, openness, listening and letting the other "really say something to us" (Gadamer 1989, 361) are signs of I-Thou relationships. I listened to him and let him really say to me what he wanted to say but mutuality and openness for my part hardly existed. Even so, my listening and his speaking created shared knowledge and became a source and means of learning even though he was free to tell his opinion and I was quite unfree to agree. According to Freire, dialogue cannot exist without humility and it does not survive self-sufficiency, manipulation and domestication (Freire 1972, 62–63

and 136). There was no lack of humility and nothing of the other three, only I was at a loss as what to say.

6 Answers to the second research problem on the promotion of the teacher's professional development

This section summarises the teacher's professional development in this research, both in liberal education and at the UAS, and how I as the teacher-researcher understood it. What teacher's professional development would precisely concern here and how it would take shape evolved as the research proceeded, but it began with a planned oral English course in liberal education.

The two different institutions as the locations of teaching and researching expanded the teacher's views of teaching. In liberal education, I started the construction of the course from the very beginning, based on what I knew and what I had already found out in the literature. I chose and wrote material, planned and implemented the course and found answers to the problems. These tasks, and the independence, the freedom and complete responsibility for the studies and decisions and for what happened there supported professional development. Through these, the course developed the teacher's professionalism in ways different from those at the UAS. Dörnyei and Ushioda write: "It is an exciting and illuminating process to find one's own answers, and being engaged in this process can be one of the most effective forms of professional development" (Dörnyei & Ushioda 2011, 196). The interviews and course discussions with the students in liberal education became mutual mentoring events and sources of teacher development. The interviews contained, among other things, discussion on such important conceptions in FLE as for example autonomy, motivation and student awareness. Discussion on ethics emerged in one of the two course groups. The UAS gave the possibility to work and converse with the students and colleagues there. It was necessary that the first research phase in liberal education was planned. It gave a good start. As a result, the research at the UAS after it easily found its paths as it proceeded.

The study of literature is a self-evident strategy for increased theoretical knowledge, perspective and insight into the research area and beyond it. At the beginning of the research phases, my lack of knowledge central to this field hindered me from understanding the concepts and the relations existing between different theoretical frameworks. This deficiency made the theories and especially more demanding literature needed for the research "inaccessible" (see Duckworth 2001a, xiii) or perhaps somehow semitransparent, but a change took place along with the reading process. I noticed that I had learned to discuss with the authors and negotiate between the text and my own thoughts.

I explored Rauhala's holistic existential conception of man (Rauhala 1990, 31-32) and found it helpful when beginning this research. However, what I gained most from considering it was the clarification of my own conception of man as a teacher. I became aware of what it means to me "*to be a foreign language teacher*" (see Lehtovaara, J. 2001, 141, italics in original). The exploration of the teacher-researcher's history and horizon as a teacher, her knowledge, abilities, and experiences, conception of man, values and ethics related to being a foreign language teacher were one point of departure especially in a research study related to Gadamerian research philosophy. The awareness of these was a prerequisite and a possibility for change and holistic development.

A long career as a teacher creates convictions and beliefs. Here a good example of such beliefs is suggestopedia with its roots in another time and different culture. This research, first the oral English course and then the follow-up research convinced me that features characteristic of suggestopedia and often of humanistic learning such as, for example, positive study climate, student support, good atmosphere, promotion of participation, mutual respect and encouragement (see also the first subsection, in section 3 in Part I), are beneficial and bring confidence. Furthermore, the students value them, even if their significance varies from person to person. I noticed that the humanistic orientation of suggestopedia was still a living part of my teacher's personal theory even if only to some extent.

With regard to the students, the students in liberal education strengthened my understanding of adult students' awareness of their own learning and its challenges, how they monitored it, their self-direction and the significance of their independent studies for the growth of their proficiency. As a result, I found more opportunities for drawing benefit from the students' self-assessment and their self-direction at the UAS. Other understandings reinforced in liberal education were the division of power, reliance on their expertise in their own learning and the significance of their awareness of their needs in English and Swedish, which the stories above reveal. In liberal education, I had got used to the students' feedback on the course and their suggestions for improvement. The experiences in liberal education also taught me more about the difficulties and resources of those UAS students whose English studies only consisted of studies in lower secondary school and perhaps a few study units elsewhere. This had been one of the initial interests in the research.

The diary writing continued, which showed that the visit to liberal education had promoted not only knowledge of oral English communication but also the teacher development at large in her permanent work. The diary written in 2005 concerned the studies at the UAS, just as the diaries in liberal education had. In contrast, the 2006–2007 diaries contained the researching teacher's thoughts and experiences. It was meaningful to increase the extent of the research. Learning from many experiences in a research study takes time. Ethical considerations concerning the teacher's work are one such good example. During the follow-up research, much of my language teacher' theory was encapsulated

around concepts and conceptualizations. Such were dialogue and listening and the familiar conceptions of motivation, autonomy, student-awareness and encouragement.

The teacher-researcher's work at the UAS contained English and Swedish courses in several UAS units. The courses often became recognised sites of the teacher's professional development. The students and the teacher's professional development were entwined. In one of these events, my experience of the motivated and autonomous students in liberal education made me decide on sharing the organization of a study unit and the decisions on the course contents, the timing and the exams with the students there. I saw the power that motivation has on the students' learning also when the studies are very demanding for the student. I also noticed how important dialogue and listening is in study guidance. Teaching is not always necessary. It is important to hear the students' voices and be open to them, even if they do not act as expected of adult students. They may have good reasons for doing so. For example, the same group can need much support for their learning in one language but it hurts and frustrates them if they are considered to need it in another language. I also learned to consider whether I ought to be the facilitator rather than the teacher on a course. In any case, the student ought to have the ownership of his/her studies. Lifelong learning views people as self-directed and autonomous students who take responsibility for their own learning and are willing to do so when they find that it helps and is necessary in their present or future life situations (Filander 2007, 262). The teacher's role was clearly that of a facilitator in liberal education and it suited well a language teacher and foreign language studies at the UAS.

At the beginning, there were many assumptions and hopes about acquiring the competency and professional teacher development required to update my knowledge and gain a wider view of the FLE. I wished to know more and still do, but I cannot help recognising that the research, despite my aims, led me to think that it is even more important to understand differently. In hermeneutic research, prejudgements follow each other and the interview data tell about the proceeding researching but not the final results. Becoming a teacher is a lifelong process. If you think that you have reached destination, you are mistaken. If you act as if you were already there, you make bad decisions.

IV

MAJOR FINDINGS, SIGNIFICANCE AND IMPLICATIONS

1 Major findings

Findings concerning the promotion of oral English communication

Despite their different English levels, people were able to get what answered their needs, expectations and what they found important, which indicates that the course was sufficiently many-sided as a course in liberal education. However, there were some people who left the course because it did not fulfil their expectations. For the others, the course gave plenty of opportunities to speak and converse. The inclusion of easy speaking was important especially at the beginning, just as was the experience of safety. If students enjoy speaking on an oral English course, as they did here, it suggests that they will also start speaking elsewhere. Although speaking proceeded in small steps, the course gave the confidence that they would reach their aim in the future. The course made people find their own way of learning. A positive and friendly study climate and people who enjoy group work and being together and attend to others' needs, as they did here, are important for the promotion of speaking. The unexpectedness of the tasks prepared the students for real life situations. The research results clearly show that students' mental resources contribute to their oral English communication. The growth of these resources can have a decisive impact on speaking. Students can suffer from fears of speaking English or even have traumas of it or just cannot start speaking. With one exception, the course eliminated fears of speaking and other mental impediments to it, or at least alleviated them enough to help students to start speaking. Most probably, the course participants were motivated autonomous students who already explored their learning before the course and knew how to draw benefit from their studies on the course. The students' increased awareness of their learning visible in the results helped them in finding their own way of learning and served them in the promotion of their autonomy. Increased courage, motivation, awareness of English and communication in English are significant aims on a course like this and can be reached.

One criterion of a successful foreign language course is that people start using the language studied. When students enjoy or at least start to like speaking on an oral English course, which took place here, it helps them to start speaking also in other contexts. Those with a good command of English but impediments to speaking it at the beginning of the course could communicate in English also in demanding contexts after the course, when the opportunity arose. In fact, many course participants who assessed their English level as A2–B1 had already communicated in English with their customers and business partners before the course. Now they were able to expand it after the course. A course like this can also serve as support for English studies at the university. Thus, the course had encouraged people to use their English. However, people who are employed by firms that use Computer-mediated communication with non-Finnish-speaking customers seldom get opportunities to speak English at work. For some people, holidays abroad and English courses are the only opportunities for speaking English.

Although institutes offering language courses provide information on the level of course, people's choice of course and its level may be more influenced by other factors. The advertised level can be understood to mean the general level of English or the target proficiency. Here those who had a good command of English, developed into speakers as soon as they lost their impediments to speaking. The course length of 45 hours was suitable. The students had enough time to start speaking properly with the people they had got to know, but very few considered the others' lower or higher level an impediment to their own speaking, which might have happened on a longer course.

Findings concerning the promotion of the teacher's professional development

The research on the teacher's professional development began with the oral English course planned for liberal education. This work, together with the independence, freedom and entire responsibility for the studies supported professional development. For professional growth, the course on oral communication is good. A course which is conversational by nature adds participation and empowerment. The research on the promotion of the teacher's professional development at the UAS was not planned. This scheme was justified because teacher development cannot be planned in advance. It allows development to take its own path. The reading of literature was important. For example, a close study of the Common European Framework of Reference for languages: Learning, teaching, assessment gave a holistic view of the field. A wide study of the theories of learning, of language learning and teaching was necessary. Even if much of this served the oral English course, the reading also promoted the teacher's professional development. Wenger's Communities of practice was about learning in a working life context opening the teacher-researcher to different and deeper views for development. Gadamer's philosophy altogether was challenging and rewarding, as was also his discussion on conversation, listening and dialogue. Literature like this opened up the discussion between them and me as a teacher-researcher. I could start

negotiating and drawing my own conclusions, which lifts the research to a more conceptual level, to theoretical considerations and deeper considerations of one's work.

Two institutions as the location of teaching and researching expanded views of teaching. On the oral English course conversations on language and on associated difficulties emerged spontaneously as did conversations on the course itself and its suitability, something which also happened in the interviews. Partly because the interview data among other things contained discussion on such important conceptions in FLE as autonomy, motivation, reflection and student awareness, these also became important elements in professional teacher development. Discussion on ethics emerged in one of the two course groups. The interviews became mutual mentoring events and sources of teacher development.

The return to the UAS gave the possibility to work and converse with colleagues there. The diary writing continued, which showed that the visit to liberal education had promoted not only knowledge of oral English communication but also ideas and thoughts about the teacher's professional development at large in her work. It was good to expand the scope of the research, because learning from experiences in a research takes time. Ethical considerations concerning the teacher's work are a good example of this. I kept on reading literature and learned to discuss with the authors and negotiate between the text and my own views. During the follow-up research, much of my language teacher' theory was encapsulated around concepts and conceptualizations, such as dialogue and listening - they were important also in Gadamer's philosophy - and vulnerability and the familiar conceptions of motivation, autonomy, student-awareness and encouragement.

The work at the UAS made me recognize many events that were thought-provoking. The experience of the motivated and autonomous students in liberal education made me decide to share the organization of one study unit with the students there. The English and Swedish courses at the UAS often became sites of the teacher's professional development. The students' and the teacher's professional development were entwined. I saw the power that motivation has on the students' learning also when the studies are very demanding for the student. I also noticed how important dialogue and listening are in study guidance. Teaching is not always necessary. It is important to hear and listen to the students' voices and be open to them, even if they do not act as adults are expected. They may have good reasons for doing so. I also learned to consider whether and when I ought to be a facilitator rather than a teacher on a course.

2 On the justification of the whole research approach, the trustworthiness of the research and the research ethics

On the justification of the arrangement of this research for teaching and researching in this research context

This subsection explores the arrangement for researching the promotion of oral English communication and the teacher's professional development in the same research to show the cohesiveness and the meaningfulness of researching both of these topics in the same research context based on the implementation and exploration of the research process.

The same student interview data and the diary data served both the first and second research interests as was initially planned, which shows the closeness of these two interests. Even so, the diaries written in the liberal education phase concerned the first research problem more, while the focus of the diaries written at the UAS was on teacher development. The research process proceeded easily from one phase to the other, first to liberal education where the field studies began and then back to the teacher-researcher's permanent place of work at the UAS. The course and answers to the first research problem were part of the teacher's professional development as one domain of the foreign language teacher's work. Such a course was not possible at the UAS. Liberal education gave the teacher practically full responsibility for the course, plenty of freedom in planning the course, in writing and choosing the material, deciding on the course arrangements and the course implementation, which served the teacher's professional development. Fostering oral communication on a course denotes face-to-face encounters, supporting the students, resourcefulness and immediate decisions and equal attention to everyone. Meeting with ethical problems on a course with open enrolment was another source of the teacher's professional development.

The students in liberal education and at the UAS are adults, even if those in liberal education are usually somewhat older. For the UAS students, vocational English studies are part of their study programme and they are usually motivated to study English. Students in liberal education join the language courses because of their particular motivation to study and learn English. Most of these people are or want to become users of English in working life. They are usually independent students who have aims and who are aware of their needs, which were proved in this research. In liberal education there are no grades and no negative consequences resulting from course assessment by the participants. For these reasons, they can openly assess the studies, suggest changes in them and seem to be good at it. At least if the atmosphere on the course and in the interview is good, as the students thought they were here, there is openness in course discussions and the interviews.

In small study groups it is easier to share one's learning experiences and knowing. In the interviews, the students not only shared their experiences of certain themes and their opinions on the course in general but also their aims and conceptions, their history and process of learning and how they steered it, their experiences of participation, learning, autonomy and responsibility emerging from their experiences of studying. The interviews, which became occasions of study guidance, also of teacher guidance, and often of equality, benefited the research and the teacher's professional growth. Such openness increases the teacher's understanding of adult students' learning and studies at the UAS and guides her to support their motivation and awareness of their studies and their independence. Students' stories about the impediments to their learning and use of English, their fears and different speaker and learner profiles and their stories of English use after the course were valuable knowledge. There was much to bring to the UAS from liberal education.

The English course in liberal education was a concrete opportunity for practice and offered an authentic context for the promotion of the teacher's professional development. The course also fed into the reflection on teacher development, which was more difficult to approach. The English course strengthened the orientation to participation, conversation, dialogue and listening. This resulted in better understanding of adults and their ability to reflection and discussion, their personal interest in self-development and their lived experience and individuality. The interviews served both the promotion of oral English communication and teacher development. The English course formed a concrete, extensive and organised frame for the purposes of the teacher's professional development even if it got minor attention and was one-sided.

Qualitative research on human experiences, life-related meanings and situations cannot and must not be precisely predefined in advance. Instead, the gradually unfolding research targets, the researcher's understandings and the new directions resulting from them direct the research and affect the methodological procedure. Contrary to the initial decision on the sufficiency of one research period, the field study was continued at the UAS extending across the years 2005–2007. This follow-up research started spontaneously as the teacher's diary writing on issues of teacher development and ended when the diary writing declined. The return to the UAS smoothly transferred the focus on the teacher's professional development and balanced the research between the two research problems. The gain from the research study conducted elsewhere was transferable to the work at the teacher's permanent place of employment. Concluding the research in full time work at the UAS was more rewarding for the research aim of professional development.

At the UAS the reading of the interviews, course diary data and the impact on the study of literature contributed to the intensified exploration of the promotion of the teacher's development that was more difficult to grasp and conceptualise than the promotion of the oral English communication. The UAS gave opportunities for collaboration and conversation with colleagues. The full-time work with its variety of resources advanced and deepened the exploration of teacher development through action and reflection. Diary

writing, reading literature and the interview data in parallel to the English and Swedish courses at the UAS intertwined the two research interests and gave new impacts on the teacher's work. The language course as the empirical research was a true-to-life, natural study context with a natural diversity of adult students. The UAS was a different site for researching. It seems that the experience of changed study aims, research sites and educational institutions remove the researching to a more reflective and conceptual level. This was visible in the teacher-researcher diaries. It increased the teacher's professional development in an authentic way. The UAS served as a hatchery for the teacher's professional development. For answering the first and second research problem, two institutions were a good solution. As one single example of this, there was a clear increase in our study conversations in class at the UAS resembling those in liberal education, which the stories in Part IIIB reveal.

The trustworthiness of the research

According to Gadamer, human understanding is conditioned, which affects the researcher's understanding of the text and, in qualitative terms, the trustworthiness of the research. Gadamer's conditions of understandings – the researcher's familiarity with the research aim and his/her presuppositions about it (Gadamer 1989, 267) that help the researcher anticipate the meaning of the text (Gadamer 1989, 273–267), temporal distance or distance in general (Gadamer 1989, 298) and the understanding developed in the hermeneutic circle (Gadamer 1989, 266–267) and their fulfillment in this research are discussed in section 4 in Part I. This subsection explores the trustworthiness of the research results from the viewpoints of credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability presented by Tuomi and Sarajärvi who refer to several researchers whose conceptions are influenced by Guba and Lincoln's work (Tuomi & Sarajärvi, 2009, 137).

Credibility in the research demands that the researcher's interpretations and conceptualisations correspond to the researchees' conceptions (Tuomi & Sarajärvi 2009, 138). The report should give the reader the means to assess the credibility of the researcher's interpretation and conceptualisations (Kiviniemi 2007, 83). In qualitative research in general, the researcher is the main criterion of trustworthiness and closely involved in it through his/her inevitable influence and subjectivity that must be revealed in the research report (Eskola & Suoranta 2008, 210–211; Guba & Lincoln 2005, 196). Here the researcher's involvement as the interviewer and in addition as the course designer, teacher and researchee added subjectivity. For this purpose and for the transparency of the interpretations, Part I examines the research horizons and other research beliefs including the research philosophy, the research conception of man, the preconceptions of foreign language learning also relating to learning in general and oral communication in particular and the researcher's story as a teacher. The report describes the researcher's contexts of work as a teacher, understandings, decisions and her communication with the students on the

course. The interviews are described in the report. Part II describes the language course in detail and the course participants. The report also contains the recognised weaknesses and problems concerning the course and teaching at the UAS.

The thematic data and the inductively drawn interview data were analysed several times for credibility. The categories of the student data and the course diary data are included in the appendices. To some extent, the course participants referred to the same experiences in the first and second interviews, which supported the interpretation. The course diary could be used as support for the interpretation. In Parts II and III, the whole variety of student data concerning the topic of the given subsection presents the different views on the same issue and help to confirm the correctness of the researcher's interpretations (see Heikkinen, H.L.T. 2004, 186). Conceptualisations often demand the use of concepts. Their meanings are explained if not commonly used or with a specific meaning. The student interview data were not explored and analysed immediately afterwards but after a span of time which brought distance to the experiences and so diminished the influence of the personal and expanded the perspective.

The description of the teacher-researcher, and the teacher-researcher narrative in particular, served the description of the researchee for the purposes of the teacher's professional development. The results from the student interview data on the teacher and the whole course give another perspective on the teacher researchee. The fact that the students also presented a critique of the teacher's work reveals that at least to some extent, they could tell about their opinions concerning the teacher's work. However, especially with regard to the teacher-researchee, the credibility of the results also relies on her ethics. Writing the teacher-researcher's diary at the UAS began as an interest in learning more and reflecting on the concluded research in liberal education sites and continued with what the teaching at the UAS brought. Originally, these data were not intended to serve as research data, which made them authentic, but they also contained a wide variety of topics, including those that were outside the research interests. For these reasons these data were not categorised.

The definition of the **transferability** of the research results is another criterion of the trustworthiness of a research. The research results of this study are not readily transferable and applicable elsewhere, because of the unique situatedness of each human being (Eskola & Suoranta 2008, 211–212; also Tuomi & Sarajarvi 2009, 138). Particularity enters the research because a person cannot exist without being an individual with his/her history, situation and horizon, which concerns everyone involved in the research. Instead, generalisation can be applied beyond the researched, if the results reveal something that also describes the reader's own experiences in the world. For this, the researcher's description should be as communicative as possible. (Eskola & Suoranta 2008, 68.) Such experiences can relate for example to adult students, especially in liberal education or foreign language teachers there. Generalisation can also exist between the data and theory and take form as concepts (Perttula 1996, 89; Eskola & Suoranta 2008, 68) into which the results are

condensed, here for example into autonomy and motivation that are defined and described in the report. Such concepts can also build a theory (Perttula 1996, 89) or part of it for the research as was the case here. This research illuminates their appearance and growth supported by the students' decidedness for the promotion of their target proficiency.

In the teachers' work, all events and encounters are unique (Heikkinen, H.L.T. 2005, 32). Every teacher's experiences and knowledge differ from those of the others owing to their uniqueness as persons, their history, experiences, career and work. Therefore, the research report must aim at transparency on the part of the teacher-researcher, for example through explanations and a teacher narrative, reflections, diary data and citations, which may remind the reader of her own experiences. The teacher's professional identity is always negotiated within sociocultural contexts (Heikkinen, H.L.T. 2005, 45). Teachers' work includes teaching, supporting, communication with students and ethical decisions. On the other hand, according to Eteläpelto and Vähäsantanen, (2008, 41, 44 and 45), the individual and personal elements gain more weight in the construction of a professional working life identity when experience, power and belongingness to the community have strengthened. Such a teacher already has a certain place there (see *ibid.* 45). I believe this report confirms this. The identity of a teacher with a long career in adult education and at a UAS is not similarly affected by the work as that of teachers with a shorter career, which affects the possibilities of transferability. On the other hand, research by a teacher with a long career can bring experiences either of familiarity or of the unknown and new views depending on the length of the career of the reader.

Research **dependability** demands that possible unforeseen factors, either external or arising from the research itself or the researched phenomenon are recognized and taken into account. The basis of course assessment was the participants' own level, personal preferences and needs. All of them were different and each of them viewed their experiences on this basis. The deductive data on individual persons reveal that these data speak about unique people whose experiences differ. For example, someone said that easy vocabulary helped speaking and there was much to say. Another person lacked the words to say what he/she wanted. Mention was made that the course was never tiring, but one student in both groups got tired or even exhausted in a long session.

Even though the course contents and the teacher were the same in both groups, the different schedules, fees, even the availability of accommodation, for example, influenced the enrolment on the course and may interested different people and groups, as was the case here. Among other things, the choice of a course session in advance once a week across a study term or on three weekends was affected by the participants' life situation. Another possibly influential factor here was whether a person was ready to spend three weekends with people he/she did not know in advance. For example, the study climate was positive in both groups, but the weekend group typically developed livelier task conversations between them while the people in the evening group often had discussions on their learning, often initiated by themselves. Institutes like these attract adults with different life

paths and situations, working contexts and at different phases of life. They bring their own contribution to the course and unforeseen factors influencing the studies actually giving a true picture. Facts like these cause natural diversity that appears in the contexts of studying English, a lingua franca and language that is widely studied and needed in today's Finland.

It is evident that the data and results present a somewhat more successful and less diverse picture than there probably may have been. This is because the results concern those people who remained on the course and participated in the interviews. If those who left the courses earlier had been interviewed, the data could have produced more diversity in the results. Especially the experiences of those with an immigrant background would have been of significance for the research results and for the institutes that hosted the courses. The inclusion of data concerning the interview themes as the only source of interview data would have lessened the trustworthiness of the research because these data only informed about a specific part of the students' experience. Only the interviews and students' awareness of the research distinguished the researched courses from the regular courses at the institutes in that particular term.

The conversational interview data were analysed both deductively and inductively, which brings different aspects of the English studies into view revealing the research target more extensively than initially planned. The course participants were interviewed in the same way except for Sandy and those who discontinued their studies early. The analysis of the interview data and teacher diary data was systematic. However, owing to the long research span, it was not meaningful to contact the interviewees and offer them the opportunity of checking the correctness of the researcher's interpretation of their contributions, which may have caused misunderstandings. The course diary data and the student interviews concerned the course events thus bringing which two perspectives on the same phenomenon. The course diary data were written down only after the course sessions but the detailed sessions plans served as a reminder of the course events.

Students can be authentic and critical assessors of the studies if they feel comfortable about sharing their experiences. In general, research interviews within education are vulnerable because of the unequal power distribution. Even if in liberal adult education the teacher is only a teacher and, for example does not assess the students' skills, there is the question of whether the students are able to speak in their authentic voices in the interviews (see Lehtovaara 2001, 157–158), whether they could “speak for themselves” (Guba & Lincoln 2005, 209) and whether they had the courage to do so when with their teacher. It is possible that as interviewees some of them may have felt the obligation to be polite to their teacher and avoid mentioning certain or perhaps any negative aspects of the course. However, there was criticism and opinions opposite to those of the teacher-researcher. An external interviewer would have removed this potential drawback but brought others in the form of the interviewer's non-existent knowledge of the studies and of the interviews at large. The distance between the course and the data analysis also brought the benefit that it had erased the teacher-researcher's own initial views of the data.

Research **confirmability** demands that the report stands up for scrutiny and enables the reader to follow the decision-making and assess the grounds for the research decisions. The points of departure at the beginning of the research, the study unit and the English courses as the empirical research have been described extensively. The changes during the research process, the different phases, the methodological process, the decisions made there and the grounds for the analyses and interpretation are described. The authentic interview extracts make it possible to assess the justifiability of the researcher's decisions. These also concern the research problem of the teacher's professional development even if the citations here are much fewer. The inductive interview data, which are available from the teacher, were condensed into a table that helped to take all of the data into account and opened new views of it. The appendices contain sample interviews, the data categories of the interview data, sample programs, extracts from the study material and the definition of the English levels related to the course. The follow-up period with its focus on the teacher's professional development took place within the teacher-researcher's daily work. Much of this part of the research was such as the researcher investigated herself as a teacher, which complicated the research process and its trustworthiness. However, the discussion on the contribution of the English course to the teacher's professional development explores the same aspects as the course interviews and can be compared. The stories of the learning events were presented in detail, including positive and negative aspects, thus resembling real life which includes both. The long span of time used for reading the data and its analysis gave distance to the researcher's own initial interpretations.

The literature used in the research is one criterion of research confirmability. The research spanned a long period and the literature reflects the research process and the development of the researcher's thinking. Much of the older literature, especially on the research philosophy, is classic. When the research began, there was plenty of recent literature on foreign language education that was used in the course plans and in the discussion of the results. In addition, also recent handbooks on learning were used.

Research ethics and codes of ethical research practice

Research ethics concerns the whole research study. At the beginning of the courses, the students learned about the research, its purpose, the voluntary interviews, their purpose, the contents of the interviews and their approximate length. Consent to the interview was requested and received towards the end of the course when they had more exact knowledge of what the interview would concern. However, participation in the course did not entail participation in the interviews. The permission to record the interviews was requested at the beginning of the first interviews. When contacted for the second interviews, the students were first told about the purpose of the unexpected telephone call, the purpose of these second interviews and the strategy of saving their contributions. After these they

were asked for their consent to the interview. All of those who were asked to participate in the interviews agreed.

Because the data, with few exceptions, were personal, identifiable and the number of the interviewees was 25 at the most, observing privacy and confidentiality was indispensable. The interviewees knew that instead of their real names or course names, they would have pseudonyms for anonymity. The report would not reveal their names and the exact sites of the liberal adult education institutes. I do not see that the publication of the research can have any consequences for the participants (see Kvale & Brinkmann 2009, 73–74). I have taken additional measures to conceal identity and to avoid possible consequences for the participant given that there was a marked disturbing influence on class proceedings and group work. For the participants in the group, the report may reveal their fellow students' interpretations of a particular person, also things which they had not personally noticed or heard on the course. According to Perttula (1996, 95–96), it does not violate research ethics if the interviewees can recognize each other on the basis of shared experiences, stories and accounts. The long time span between the empirical research and the publication of the research report diminishes the risk and the significance of disclosure. As far as the UAS as the site of the follow-up research and the source of second teacher diary data is concerned, the report does not reveal the identifications of individual people or groups. At the time, I taught in several institutes, which further decreased the possibilities of recognition. The students at the UAS were not research participants and not interviewed even if they as students contributed to the development of the follow-up research. Even so, a research report can bring some consequences for the institutes and the groups of people involved in the research (Kvale & Brinkmann 2009, 73–74), here for example for the institutes of liberal education and the universities of applied sciences and for adult students in general, which is difficult to avoid.

The research and the relationships between the researcher and the students also in the role of co-researchers, especially in the interviews were influenced by relations developed during the course. The researcher's ethics in the interviews, in addition to being regulated by the formalistic, commonly agreed ethics of qualitative researching, were also affected by teacher ethics. The English course that served as the source of the researched experiences was an intervention that affected the people involved (see Varto 2011, 19) and could cause negative experiences, which unavoidably takes place in foreign language studies. A study environment like this has unequal power distribution (see also Luukkainen 2005, 74–75) but no other dependency existed between the researchees and the researcher. The students and the teacher learned to know each other only on the sessions, on short occasional talks after or before the sessions or during the breaks and in the interviews. Even if the course atmosphere was friendly, there was no friendly identification with participants, which might have affected the interpretation of results (see Kvale & Brinkmann 2009, 74–75). A defect in the interview ethics and in research credibility was that the interviewees did not get the opportunity to check how their comments were interpreted. Checking did not

appear meaningful owing to the long temporal gap between the course and the researcher's interpretation. There was no continuity or contacts after the research and no possibility of the interviews' negative influence on their future. No learning assessment on learning or information on the students as learners and interviewees was forwarded to any quarters that could affect their future. The researcher's independence is part of his/her ethical role (Kvale & Brinkmann 2009, 74). Except for the negotiation with the adult institutes about the timing, length, level and contents of the course, there were no quarters that influenced the research nor any external funding or grants for the research except one two months' period of paid study leave from the UAS and the statutory course salary paid by the liberal adult education institutes. The institutes hosting the course cannot be identified, which removes the possibility of negative implications that the publication could cause them.

As to follow-up research, I contacted the research manager at my UAS, explained my research activities there and enquired about the necessity of research permission. I was told that research permission was not necessary if the research concerned reflections on my own work and not directly the UAS, which was the case. In line with this, the UAS students were not involved in this research in such a way that would have required them to be informed about the research.

3 Implications of the research results and prospects for further research

For a teacher, an interim change of work place from formal education to liberal education denotes different challenges, a break in routines, independence and freedom to work. If the interim site is somehow familiar to the researching teacher, it does not take long for him/her to get acquainted with. When the two research environments have both similarities and differences, as was the case here concerning adult students and their oral English communication studies and the teacher's role, the research generates what is applicable and useful in both, and opens up new viewpoints and activates development. It seems that the research activities should begin in the interim research site because it provides a good start for researching. One term in such an institute is sufficiently long. A drawback in an interim institute is that there may be limited discussion with local colleagues.

Research implications and further research for the promotion of the proficiency of oral English communication, especially among adults

The course level was announced as A2–B1 but students had interpreted it in many ways. They had also had many reasons other than the level for choosing this oral English course. As a result, the students' English level and the speed of their promotion of oral English varied widely. Nevertheless, the course had to serve its participants so that everyone's oral English communication would be improved despite their different skills. The research results imply that a study climate that is friendly, positive and supportive gives everyone fairly equal opportunities to everyone for participation in English, thanks to a wide variety of tasks, freedom in speaking and groups of changing sizes and memberships. Most people retained strong motivation to the end of the course and moved from individual learning to individuals as learners in their social environment (see Järvinen 2012, 237).

People come to an English course also because they are afraid of speaking. It is important that they start speaking even if they are afraid of it. The course must encourage people towards this goal. If they do not overcome their fear of speaking, the course may make them more afraid and lose their motivation. A course with a good atmosphere can invite people to converse on their learning, tell about their problems in their learning and about their understandings and assess the learning, which took place for them here. Through these, students become aware of their learning and of themselves as English users, which is important for people who mainly study on their own. Study guidance would be an excellent opportunity for students who study on their own, but people in liberal education may not welcome such guidance. Here the course interviews developed into conversations about learning on the students' own initiative and showed the usefulness of the interviews as an opportunity for such conversations. Self-assessment from the viewpoint of continuing learning took place. However, not everyone was interested in these and did not find them important. Someone who comes in order to speak does not necessarily get interested in self-assessment and in learning to learn. The explanation of what learning strategies are and conversation on one's learning strategies can awaken the interest in learning to learn. Grammar is another topic where opinions and needs differ. Some people know all that is necessary, some others very little. For these and for many other reasons, course conversations on issues like these are both important and useful. The course length of 45h is suitable in a group like this where the participants' skills differ widely.

Especially liberal but also formal vocational education can benefit from this research in the development of their language programmes, particularly concerning oral English communication, and find ideas for increasing conversation in such programmes. One particular challenge for oral English courses today is that even at these course levels, people also wish vocational English because they use it at work. However, it is a very wide field to cover. For students who enter the UAS through vocational education, this kind of oral English course could be an opportunity for recalling their English, for speaking and for encouragement. This could be helpful for them especially if they have had only few

opportunities for conversation in English. Even though people hear and listen to English, they need opportunities for speaking. It is an issue of identity and identity development.

This research was conducted already in 2004. To describe the command of English among adults in Finland at the time, I cited the results of the Adult Education Survey conducted by Statistics in Finland in 2006 (see Pohjanpää, Niemi & Ruuskanen 2008, 15; see the first subsection in Part I). The most recent, corresponding survey was conducted in 2012 (see Niemi, Ruuskanen & Seppänen 2014). This research revealed that in the space of eight years, especially the number of people aged 35–44 and 45–54 who have reached the level of independent user, B1-B2, had increased in Finland. When all the levels are considered together, it shows that the amount of people achieving the independent users' level in English has increased in Finland. Three in ten adults considered themselves as independent users of English but the table shows that there are still many Finns for whom a course like this is still useful.

However, it is obvious that to serve people equally well now and in future, raising the level of a course like this could be a topical issue. It is also worth noticing that the adult education surveys take into account reception, production, constructions and vocabulary and do not refer only to oral English proficiency.

Implications for the independently organised promotion of the teacher's professional development

In Wenger's words, "through engagement, competence can become so transparent, locally ingrained, and socially efficacious that it becomes insular: nothing else, no other viewpoint, can even register, let alone create a disturbance or discontinuity that would spur the history of practice onward. In this way, a community of practice can become an obstacle to learning by entrapping us in its very power to sustain our identity." (Wenger 1998, 175.) Wenger describes utter stagnation but his words suggest that changes are important for learning even when there is sufficient proficiency. Starting research on the teacher's professional development by leaving a long trodden track for a while for another working environment is rewarding, for example when about ten years of the teacher's career are left. Even if the change is only a matter of one term, changing one's place of work and crossing institutional borders from one adult institution to another, in particular among adults, can provide a good point of departure for the continuation of the teacher's professional development in his/her permanent work. It seems that the benefit comes both from what these two have in common and what is different. However, it is necessary that the researcher can properly attend to the demands of both institutes.

A self-directed research project and its implementation, the possibility to focus on a personally interesting research target demanding attention and research, such as adults and their oral English communication, can have a long-term and broad impact and provide

inspiration. A flexible, not closely predefined research frame suits a teacher's professional development because it allows new developments on the way. After many years in full-time work, a research period and part-time working is welcome. Such a period gives distance from routines but still enriches and develops the work at the permanent place of work. When the work is not full-time, it leaves time for self-development, studies and for the analysis of one's work and provides the impulse for scientific work and for the study of field specific literature. A hermeneutic study obliges the researcher to explore and present his or her initial prejudgement, which gives the research a clear point of departure. Seeing the development as a hermeneutic circle of understanding and not a straight path to knowledge supports the research process. Here the scarce opportunities for discussion with colleagues in liberal education were a drawback, which I could make up for at the UAS after the visit. In contrast, the students in the other institute – not my own – were a great resource for teacher development. They were different. They had a great capacity for reflection and discussion, they were motivated to study and aware of their learning and needs, which grew during the course. Their lived experience, individuality, stories of language that they told to their teacher taught her much. Among other things, this made me notice such stories as a UAS teacher and listen to them. Good cooperation between the students and the teacher also took the form of offering criticism and proposing better alternatives concerning the course. All of these enriched the teacher's experience. Furthermore, differences make the teacher more aware of what takes place in a familiar institute.

Carrying out research on the teacher's professional development does not demand very extensive life changes. Even so, a self-developed project on the teacher's professional development with a scientific basis updates the teacher's knowledge of her field and makes the last ten years as a teacher inspiring and rewarding.

Recommendations for further research

An oral English course like this one, based on conversation, could be developed especially with regard to immigrants' needs and implemented for exploration of the participants' experiences of such a course and how it has served them and perhaps also teacher development. The idea of this conversational course could be applied to their Finnish studies and its impact explored. Another theme could be "Immigrants and native Finns studying together on an English course". On this English course there were at least three immigrants but only one of them continued to the end of the course.

Another rewarding theme to be researched could be "Fighting and overcoming non-learning. Language students as narrators". This English course revealed that foreign language students meet with many difficulties in their studies and have fears but try to overcome them and do not give up. Finding reasons for non-learning helps the students and also promotes the teacher's professional development. Because language study groups often consist of people whose skills are different, "Research on the existing differences in level

between course members and on the means of alleviating the possible negative influence of these differences on the study group” would be a rewarding and revealing research study. As a long-time teacher of English at the UAS, I find such research useful which explores UAS students as users of English in working life, how they have benefited from the UAS English studies and how they use English later at their work. This would also benefit the language teachers at the UAS.

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Legislation

- Polytechnics Act 9.5.2003/351 §20, abrogated by Polytechnics Act 14.11.2014/932 §25.
- Decree on Polytechnics Studies 352/2003, 8§, abrogated from Jan. 1st, 2015 by Polytechnics Act 14.11.2014/932 §68.
- <https://www.eui.eu/Documents/ServicesAdmin/LanguageCentre/CEF.pdf/13>. Last visited in January 3rd, 2016

Internet Sites

- <http://www.eui.eu/Documents/ServicesAdmin/LanguageCentre/CEF.pdf/13> Common Reference Levels A1-B2: global scale (in Appendix 5). Last visited in January 3rd, 2016.
- <http://www.sivistystyo.fi/en.php?k=10261> Information on non-formal and liberal education in Finland. Last visited in August 7th, 2016
- <http://www.llas.ac.uk/resources/gpg/1409> Little, D. Learner autonomy and second/foreign language learning. Retrieved in January 4th, 2015. (Also in the references)
- Lizard's point <http://www.thecornishcottagecompany.com/lizard.htm>. Last visited in June 5th, 2005.
- Penzance <http://www.thecornishcottagecompany.com/penzance.htm> Last visited in June 5th, 2005.
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APPENDICES

Appendix 1. Themes in the first interview

The main text materials: *Hear Say* and *A Holiday in Cornwall*

Learning-to-learn material: channels, strategies and self-assessment

Pairs, small groups and all together

Tasks and other assignments

On-going role play and long-term roles

Situational role-play

Music

Sandy's participation on the course (for WE group)

Appendix 2. Examples of data from the first interviews

The two extracts below are examples of conversational data where both participants lead the conversation forward. In both, the students actually take greater charge of it. The different approaches tell about the uniqueness of people's understandings. Kirsi's contribution is personal and contains much affect. Vesa's contribution contains hardly anything affective and he speaks in general terms. For Kirsi, oral English communication has been very difficult despite her knowledge of English. Kirsi has suffered from the trauma of reading aloud in class and wants to solve the problem.

Kirsi: It's good that we read it aloud together.

Lea: Yeah.

Kirsi: Because then you have take a close look at what you're reading when there are two of you at it.

Lea: Yeah, yeah.

Kirsi: It's terribly important, absolutely. But that ...

Lea: I was thinking the same, that how does it, like

Kirsi: Perhaps it's just that that you say it aloud. I don't know about the rest of the gang. Perhaps it's ... Perhaps it isn't so typical. On the other hand, I was thinking that perhaps with this job too you should, this one too, just, like, do it. There shouldn't be anything vague about it, that I don't want to do this. That it would really put you off.

Lea: On the other hand you wonder whether there's any corresponding benefit. Do you learn something from it. Do you learn as much, given all the time spent on it?

Kirsi: It's perhaps that, yeah, you notice that the same things come out of it that ... Sometimes it feels that what comes out of it, that, err, you're capable of keeping, you know, calm and your turn will come, and this is the way it is, and there again it makes you nervous and gets your heart pounding, which perhaps ... We should just concentrate on being calm.

Lea: Yeah.

Kirsi: But I don't know, perhaps on the other hand this is actually going fine but in spite of that I notice that I nevertheless get tense when it's my turn, in spite of this being a good team and there's no reason for it.

Vesa juxtaposes traditional classroom practice and group work and mentions some drawbacks of the former and merits of the latter. The conversation passes on to pair work, which is an example of how the conversational quality of the data blended with the discussion on the preset themes. Although Vesa's stand is rational and impersonal, he tells about his own experiences. Like many others, he came to the sessions after the working day. For him, the drawback of pair work is that it is not completely fair, but the changing of pairs removes the problem.

Vesa: If you think about some of them, it's certain that most of them were people who in their recent past don't have a background of a very intensive period of study and so a time like that (135 minutes and a break halfway through) is pretty long. If you think that it was something traditional, like a desk and going out to the front, then for that sort of thing it gives a really good feeling, and then that this course had the clear aim of encouraging us to speak and develop those skills. For that I'm sure it worked pretty well. And then in traditional teaching what the pupil hears is what the teacher says or what you yourself say or (like here) he has to hear what is said in real life as well, different people, with different backgrounds. And then if there'd also been a mixture of the limited number of nationalities we have speaking then, yes, sure, it always brings, brings, like, something more and in one way you can, like in inverted commas, lighten up a pretty long evening's stint. I'm sure that it helps this way in like keeping up and being receptive to what comes out of it because I'm sure for all of the people who come after work it's not the time they feel most attentive and lively.

Lea: No, it's not ...

Vesa: I found it to be pretty good.

Lea: What if you think about producing when you're talking to your partner, if there was a little more time.

Vesa: Yeah.

Lea: or was it by changing your partner or by ...

Vesa: Changing partners was definitely not a good thing, just the opposite it was

Lea: Ahaa.

Vesa: No, sorry, I think I got that wrong. It wasn't a bad thing, changing your partner, but the very opposite, the good thing was the different contacts you had. If you think that the same pair were together continuously. If one of them has skills that are noticeably more advanced or dominating then he has to bear the heavier burden and the other person just, like, goes along with it. And then if the pairs continually change, then there's always, like, a new situation. It isn't the case that you can rely on your partner to see this through.

Appendix 3. Conversational data categories and examples of their contents

Studies of English before the course

Use of spoken English before the course

Course expectations and goals (Motivation I)

Specified needs and experienced weaknesses in English

Motivation (IIa) and the sessions

Studies/use of English during the ongoing course (Motivation IIb)

Course climate/atmosphere

Peers and one's course group

Teacher

Course qualities facilitating and promoting speaking

Suggested improvements to the course, preferences and critical comments

Fears/no fears of speaking English and other impediments to it

Courage and its sources

Spontaneity, breaking away from the text, ad-libbing, not speaking by rote (also awareness, etc.)

Participation and active engagement (also awareness, etc.)

Reflections on how to promote (one's) speaking (also awareness, autonomy etc.)

Course gain 1 (1st interviews Dec. 2004–Jan. 2005)

Course gain 2 (2nd interviews Dec. 2005)

Successfully completed studies, planned studies but not always completed in 2005 (2nd interviews Dec. 2005)

Planned future studies and use of English (2nd Interviews Dec. 2005)

Examples of the contents of the categories of Peers and one's course group and Courage and its sources (Data marked with II from the 2nd interview):

You need not love everyone. II Not being the only one with difficulties

Because all had the same starting point, it was more rewarding.

Always helped each other. A great, open group, nobody better. II Nice group, adults in the same situation.

People authentic, playful but serious. II People are different. No reason to be shy.

No one better. No sense of inferiority. II If you did not know or had forgotten, you asked the others.

Participation in conversation encourages.

Seating arrangement was encouraging. I/II Speaking with many people and preceding lessons encourage.

Encouragement: others make the same mistakes.

Confidence in the course, speaking not as oneself, feeling of safety, nothing bad

Firm decision on not counting ahead so as to know in advance what one has to read aloud.

Appendix 4. Categories in the teacher's course diary data

Timing, Seating

Students' aims and goals, Students' English proficiency, Students' self-assessment through the CEF scales and a grid

Individual students, The two course groups, Small groups and pairs

Course material, Grammar on the course, Long-term roles and situational roles, Music

Practices, Tasks, Tips to studying on one's own, Two short class conversations

Atmosphere, Courage, Spontaneity, Student awareness

Puzzles and discoveries, Decisions and plans, Teacher's self-criticism and ideas of improvement, Teacher reflections

Appendix 5. Common Reference Levels A1-B2: global scale

This appendix contains levels A2–B1, which were defined as the course levels, and additionally one level below and one above to indicate those things which the course participants were already assumed to have a command of and those which they would proceed towards next.

Independent user

B2 Can understand the main ideas of complex text on both concrete and abstract topics, including technical discussions in his/her field of specialisation. Can interact with a degree of fluency and spontaneity that makes regular interaction with native speakers quite possible without strain for either party. Can produce clear, detailed text on a wide range of subjects and explain a viewpoint on topical issue giving the advantages and disadvantages of various options.

B1 Can understand the main points of clear standard input on familiar matters regularly encountered in work, school, leisure, etc. Can deal with most situations likely to arise whilst travelling in an area where the language is spoken. Can produce simple connected text on topics which are familiar or of personal interest. Can describe experiences and events, dreams, hopes and ambitions and briefly give reasons and explanations for opinions and plans.

Basic user

A2 Can understand sentences and frequently used expressions related to areas of most immediate relevance (e.g. very basic personal and family information, shopping, local geography, employment). Can communicate in simple and routine tasks requiring a simple and direct exchange of information on familiar and routine matters. Can describe in simple terms aspects of his/her background, immediate environment and matters in areas of immediate need.

A1 Can understand and use familiar everyday expressions and very basic phrases aimed at the satisfaction of needs of a concrete type. Can introduce him/herself and others and can ask questions about personal details such as where he/she lives, people he/she knows and things he/she has. Can interact in a simple way provided the other person talks slowly and clearly and is prepared to help.

<https://www.eui.eu/Documents/ServicesAdmin/LanguageCentre/CEF.pdf/13>.

Appendix 6. Course participants by their groups and first name aliases

The list contains those who participated in the conversational interviews.

Evening group = E group:

Aino, Anneli, Annukka, Kirsi, Leena, Maarit, Merja, Mika, Mirja, Mirjami, Reetta, Ritva, Tuuli and Vesa.

Weekend group = WE group:

Ari, Elina, Ilkka, Ilona, Kaarina, Katri, Leena, Maria, Minna, Pia and Sandy

Appendix 7. Sample programme for one session

The weekend group, 4th session, 7h, three breaks

Themes: Travelling, leisure time, learning-to-learn

Materials:

From *A Holiday in Cornwall*: Happy people travel light, prepared on the previous session and now reread for the part of the text related to the tasks on the session and Downtown and on a balcony studied for the upcoming session

From *Hear Say*: At the railway station, At the hotel, Going on a course (Pair tasks for all of them)

Language aids and ideas on the blackboard/flipchart for the task situations

A handout: Asking for clarification (Appendix 8)

Strategies for learning and communication (Appendix 6); sensory channels

At the students' request: Handouts on Email phrases

Music: Vivaldi, Antonio: Oboenkonzerte in A minor, C Major and D Major played as the accompaniment for the text Downtown and on a balcony

Background music: Celtic reflections

The session plan:

Inquiries: Distances, time tables, reservations

At the hotel: Planning and presenting one's particular wishes, complaints, problems and questions

Where to go? Deciding on an activity for the morning; course enrolment on the phone

In small groups: Planning how to spend Sunday afternoon: the programme, negotiation on who takes care of what, the schedule and activities etc.

Conversation: Telling about one's favourite/recently seen film as answers to questions in groups of 6–7;

In pairs: Asking for repetition of (challenging) expressions, repeating them/explaining them

Together: Ideas for preparing for the following session

Watching and listening: A short home video on a family trip in Cornwall on school computers

Learning to learn: Small group work and whole group talk on the strategy paper; discussion on the sensory channels

Close study: As a preparation for the next session: Downtown and on a balcony: read, studied and listened to

Appendix 8. Two extracts from A Holiday in Cornwall

2. The More the Merrier

- Ray: Let's get to know some of the surroundings. I already went running this morning. The weather is fine.
- Wendy: Why don't we go for a picnic?
- Kathy: That's a brilliant idea. There is a four-wheel-drive at the hotel. A Land Rover, I believe.
- Jennifer: Is it big enough for all of us?
- Kathy: Certainly.
- Shannon: The more the merrier. Nice to have company on the way, for a change. When do we meet?
- Martin: How about quarter to ten?
- Laura: That would be fine. Where shall we meet?
- Kathy: Outside the George. See you there in an hour.

Mitä useampia, sen hauskempaa

- Tutustutaan lähiympäristöön. Ilma on upea. Minä kävin jo juoksulenkillä tänä aamuna.
- Mentäisiinkö eväretkelle?
- Se on loistava ajatus. Hotellissa on nelivetoauto, Land Rover luullakseni.
- Onko se tarpeeksi iso meille kaikille?
- Varmasti.
- Mitä useampia sen hauskempaa. Mukavaa kun on matkaseuraa, vaihteeksi. Milloin tavataan?
- Kävisikö neljänestä vailla kymmenen?
- Se olisi hyvä. Missä tavataan?
- Georgen ulkopuolella. Tavataan siellä tunnin kuluttua.

6. Never Say Never.

- Back at the George after two sunny days in Penzance. It is the last day of their holiday together. At breakfast they are discussing their plans for the day.
- Martin: I saw a note on the notice board about a one-day surfing course that starts today. I always try to learn one new thing on each holiday. This year I thought to try surfing. I have never tried that before.

Älä sano koskaan ei koskaan

- Taas Georgessa kahden aurinkoisen päivän jälkeen Penzanceissa. On viimeinen yhteinen lomapäivä. Aamiaisella keskustellaan päivän suunnitelmista.
- Näin taululla ilmoituksen yhden päivän surffaussista joka alkaa tänään. Yritän aina oppia jonkin uuden asian joka lomalla. Tämä vuonna ajattelin kokeilla surffausta. En ole koskaan aikaisemmin kokeillut sitä.

Ray:	I can't say I know anything about surfing, but you can count me in. I bet the sea is warmer here than home in Canada.	En kyllä voi sanoa, että tiedän mitään surffauksesta, mutta olen mukana. Olen varma, että meri on täällä lämpimämpi kuin Kanadassa.
Peter:	Surfing sounds like fun. Never say never.	Surffaus kuulostaa hauskalta. Koskaan ei pidä sanoa ei koskaan.
Jennifer:	As an Australian I was practically born with a surfing board, but I wouldn't mind learning a few new tricks myself. Maybe they have an advanced group as well.	Kun olen australialainen, olen käytännöllisesti katsoen syntynyt surffilaudan kanssa. Mutta ei olisi hassumpaa oppia muutamaa uutta temppua. Ehkä heillä on myös jatkoryhmä.
Martin:	I think they do. It starts two hours later.	Luulen, että on. Se alkaa kaksi tuntia myöhemmin.
Jennifer:	Have you already enrolled, Peter?	Oletko jo ilmoittautunut, Peter?
Martin:	Yes, I did it through the Internet, but you can also sign up for the course on location.	Kyllä. Tein sen Internetissä. Mutta voit ilmoittautua kurssille paikanpäällä.
Peter:	How do we pay for the course?	Kuinka kurssi maksetaan?
Martin:	You can do that through the internet. I'll show you.	Voit maksaa sen internetissä. Näytän sinulle.

Appendix 9. Strategies for learning and communication

(The strategies are abbreviated from the original.)

Which of these have you used?

Which of them sound interesting, effective and worth trying?

1. I use a word in a sentence to remember it.
2. Every now and then I pay active attention to pronunciation
3. I pick words and expressions from other people's speech and start using them.
4. When I can't think of an English word, I use gestures or try to say it in other words.
5. I try to guess what the other person is saying next.
6. I make up stories about daily incidents.
7. I give myself reward or treat when I have done well in English.
8. I assess my own skills to notice how I have advanced and where I can improve.
9. I encourage myself and others.
10. I try to tolerate uncertainty.
11. I take risks.
12. I do not mind making slips and mistakes.

Oxford 1990 and Juurakko & Airola 2002, 90–91

Appendix 10. American folk wisdom of today (abbreviated from the original)

1. Don't be afraid to say, I don't know.
2. Have a firm handshake.
3. Be the first to say 'hello'.
4. Donate two pints of blood every year.
5. Make the best of bad situations.
6. After you've worked hard to get what you want, take the time to enjoy it.
7. Learn mouth-to-mouth resuscitation.
8. Become the most positive and enthusiastic person you know.
9. Don't whine
10. Learn to disagree without being disagreeable.
11. Don't ever watch hot dogs and sausages to be made.
12. Avoid negative people.

Brown, H. Jackson Junior

Appendix 11. Phrases for hosts/hostesses and quests and requests for clarification

Phrases for Hosts/hostesses and quests:

Nice seeing you.
Come on in.
Glad you could make it.
Make yourself comfortable.
Thank you. I'm glad you like it.
Help yourself to the buffet and the drinks.
Need any help?
By all means.
I don't think you two have met before, have you?
Thank you for coming.

Phrases for the guests:

It was very kind of you to invite me.
Nice seeing you, too.
Thanks what a nice house you have!
Thank you. I'll find my way.
Do you mind if I answer my phone? It may be urgent?
No, I don't think so.
Not at all.

I was told that you could possibly help me.
Well, I think it's about time I started making my way home.
It's really been a wonderful evening. Thank you very much.

Asking for clarification:

Can you say that once more?
Sorry, I didn't quite catch/follow what you said.
I am afraid I didn't catch your point. Can you go over it again, please?
Could you repeat it, please!
I beg your pardon?
What did you say?
Come again?

Appendix 12. A walk in Penzance: A story told with many visual, auditive and kinaesthetic elements (abbreviated from the original)

You are walking under green shady trees along the boulevard. Even this late in the autumn the leaves are still in the trees even if some of them have fallen to the ground. They make a rustling sound when you walk on the pavement. And you almost stumble on the chestnuts hiding among the leaves. This year they have had an Indian summer in Cornwall. The sun is shining warmly even now. You can feel its warmth on your face. You look around you, and ahead of you. There is a church in front of you. It has been made of yellowish stone. When past the church you enter the park behind it. And you come to think of the last year's holiday group you have heard about. It was probably here that they had their famous picnic with coffee, tea and sandwiches, which they had bought at the take-away not far from the park.

By the park gate there is an iron ball fixed on a stone. The ball is a little rusty here and there. You notice that there is some text on the stone. "A cannon ball shot to the shore by the Spanish Armada"... You touch the cannon ball and feel that there are small holes in it. The ball is quite warm. You go on with your walk and enter the promenade that takes you along the shore. It is windy there and the fishing boats by the quay are rocking on the waves. The wind carries a smell of fresh fish. The fishermen are busy working on the nets on their boats and you hear them shouting to each other...

Appendix 13: The music played during the text reading and as background music

- Beethoven, Ludwig van. Violin Concerto in D Major, Op. 61
Beethoven, Ludwig van. Klavierkonzert No. 5 in E flat, Op. 73 “Emperor” B-flat
Mozart, Wolfgang Amadeus. Symphony No. 38 in D Major, (“Prager”) KV 504
Mozart, Wolfgang Amadeus. Clarinet Concerto in A, KV 622
Bach, Johann Sebastian. Brandenburg Concertos No. 1 in D Major, No. 3 in G Major , No. 4 in G Major and No. 5 in D Major
Corelli, Arcangelo: Concerti Grossi, Op. 6 No. 1 in D Major, No. 2 in F Major, No. 3 in C Minor, No. 4 in D Major, No. 6 in F Major, No. 7 in D Major and No. 9 in F Major
Locatelli, Pietro. Violin Concerto No. 1 in D Major
Locatelli, Pietro. Violin Concerto No. 9 in G Major
Vivaldi, Antonio. Concertos for Flute and Chamber Orchestra in F Major and C Major
- Bilk, A. 1984. The magic of clarinet of Acker Bilk. London: K-tel International.
Celtic Orchestra. 1996. Celtic reflections: Instrumental airs and melodies of Ireland. Dublin: Dolphin Traders.
The Black family. 2003. Dublin: Dara Records.
Tokazier. H. 1990. Hillel Tokazier & piano. Helsinki: Base-beat studiot.
Walker, T. 1987. Classics for guitar. London: Castle Communications.

