

Language acquisition and linguistic requirements in peacekeeping: a case study

Juha Anttila

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University of Oulu

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1 Introduction

With thousands of languages in the less than 200 countries in the world, an international working environment is becoming more and more common in an increasingly globalising business world. Still, language rarely causes problems in an international modern day working environment. The language training in most Western countries is on a level that gives the crucial skills for fluent communication. This fluent communication is imperative for forming a team that has to meet the standards set for a functional working group. This requirement is magnified when an individual is separated from a large group of equals. When acting as a leader of a large workforce, one must be able to relate to most of the individuals present at that time and deliver the message in a way that everyone can understand. This situation may present some major challenges when the speaker's language skills are below the average or at least out-of-operation for a long period of time.

Although cultural differences are discreet, the minute aspects of language skills and cultural protocols may actually affect the working environment and morale. For example, a Finn might feel his or her privacy offended when asked "How are you?", when in fact it is actually just a form of greeting used by most English speakers. In turn, as the Finn counters this by telling about their latest goings-on, the English speaker might feel slightly confused.

In order to provide effective language training for its workforce, an international enterprise must be aware of the different situations an employee encounters in his daily work. According to each training providers' own judgement, the training may, for example, concentrate on the most common skills needed in a multilingual working situation, or even pay less attention to those aspects that are developed independently during the work employees do.

This study aims to look into the ways language acquisition is presented in a foreign language environment in order to shed light on the ways language training for international workforce might be improved, as well as raise awareness of some of the most common situations they may find challenging and mentally prepare other people that will work in an international environment in the future.

The data is gathered from recordings and memos provided by a Finnish peacekeeper, a Chaplain who is affiliated with the ISAF (International Security Assistance Force).

ISAF, in support of the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, conducts operations in Afghanistan to reduce the capability and will of the insurgency, support the growth in capacity and capability of the Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF), and facilitate improvements in governance and socio-economic development, in order to provide a secure environment for sustainable stability that is observable to the population (www.isaf.nato.int).

The recordings gathered from everyday situations in peacekeeping consist of natural conversations, speeches and an interview, and the recordings are analyzed with the support of the memo entries and a questionnaire. This paper presents some theoretical material regarding experiences in English language use, self assessment and an assessment scale for the data provided by the Council of Europe. The data is then assessed in three phases of work experience, which are compared in respect of language learning and compared with observations of a similar setting in working in a foreign language environment. Lastly, based on this comparison, some discussion is provided for possible improvement of language training for peacekeepers.

2 Research on English as a lingua franca and language assessment criteria

The use of English as a lingua franca in the business world has been studied among a group of Finnish engineers working in an English-speaking working environment in an article on firsthand accounts on language use experiences and self-assessment (Virkkula 2008). As a comparison to self-assessment, the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages provides a common basis for the elaboration of different aspects of language through an assessment scale based on an infusion of numerous theories, comprehensively describing the learner's goals for learning that enable the communicative use of a language, defining the skills that have to be developed in order to use it effectively (CEFR 2013). Research on peacekeepers' language skills is not very common. However, language training and maintaining language skills in this international work is of utmost importance. One study introduces the possibilities of improving international cooperation in everyday work in peace-support operations work through the use of interpreters (van Dijk, Soeters: 2008). But using interpreters as a medium for communication might set challenges in resources as language use situations are difficult to predict. Instead, the language acquisition aspects in peacekeeping offers new information for implementing the language training of peacekeepers more effectively and giving the language users more chances to work independently in situations where foreign language skills are needed. As this is a language research is focused on an adult learner, there is more partly overlapping research in the field of language acquisition. Similar research has been carried out where the vocabulary of adult learners after decades of exposure to a second language would result in the same level as that of native speakers (Hellman: 2011). Also, the complicated interaction between phrasal prosody, syntax, and meaning in English and Spanish and its applicability to second language acquisition theories has been studied before (Zubizarreta, Nava: 2010). In the field of prosody, language acquisition has been studied through stages of phonological units, from segments to syllable structures and onto a higher stage of prosody (Archibald: 2006). Furthermore, in predetermined spoken interaction, prosodic features have been studied in triggering prosodic units compared to spontaneous conversations (Couper-Kuhlen: 2006). The effects of age on

language learning prosody have also been studied on learners that have started their language immersion at different ages (Huang: 2011).

The findings of Tiina Virkkula in her article on Finnish employees' experiences on English as a lingua franca in the business world are used in comparison in this research due to its similarities in the setting of both researches. The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages is used as an internationally accepted set of standards in order to assess the subject's language competence appropriately.

2.1 English as a lingua franca

Virkkula's article presents situations in the use of English in a working environment as the primary common language by Finns with employees and customers of different nationalities, which is a similar situation to this research.

Virkkula (2008: 382) claims that globalisation is growing more and more prominent in most professions, and as English is agreed to be the lingua franca in the business world, its importance as one of the basic requirements while looking for work is growing by the day. A multicultural working environment is something that some people will eventually have to get used to, and peacekeeping gives a good example of what the direction might very well be.

Virkkula (2008: 383) mentions a study by Neil Mercer (1996), according to which there are two distinctive ways of using English. One is within the work place, between supervisors and employees, or between the employees themselves. The other is using English outside the working place, with people from other professions, clients for example.

Virkkula (2008: 389) points out that written and spoken English have their share in business, but printed English is the type most commonly encountered. On their free time, use of English is mostly of the passive and receptive type, watching TV for example. Some multicultural working environment may allow for some alternative options aside with English, if most of the participants speak some other language that they feel more comfortable speaking.

Virkkula (2008: 385) claims that earlier research has shown that the majority of problems in English communication are related to speech and vocabulary. In most Finnish schools, the native accent of English is about the only type Finns have the opportunity to listen to at school. This makes many non-native accents very hard to understand for many Finns. Although native accents are hard to follow, Virkkula (2008: 385-386) brings up some studies (Charles & Marschan-piekkari 2002, 17-18; Palo 1997; Lahtinen 2000) according to which many people working in a multicultural environment have said that the communication between two non-native English speakers is considered to be the easiest. This is most likely due to the limited vocabulary of both speakers, which make the expressions more simple and easy to understand. However, getting past the problem with the accents would be of great assistance for many people working in a multicultural environment.

Virkkula (2008: 400) also says that assessing one's linguistic skills is usually based on personal experience with the language in question. At least in Finland, the later one has attended school, the more teaching in English there has been. Older have people studied less English at school compared to younger people, who have studied English for at least six to seven years during their primary school years, not to mention education after that.

Supervisors usually assess their own English skills realistically, as they have experience in using English in its primary use, communication (Virkkula 2008: 400). Students, on the other hand, usually assess their language skills as poor, or satisfactory at the most, as

they are comparing it to their success at school (grammar and accuracy) (Virkkula 2008: 400). However, as many students study abroad, their assessments change as their attention is turned to using English in everyday life. This may be the result of practice. They may be improving while using the language every day, or their views may have become more realistic when seeing what the most necessary functions of language are.

According to Virkkula (2008: 401), most language problems were mostly related to vocabulary and grammar, especially when speaking in English, which implies problems in overall language competence. Spoken interaction seems to be most difficult, most of all in meetings, where the communication is fast-paced and spontaneous (2008: 401). These factors make the situations hard to follow, and the spontaneity reduces all advantages of preparation close to nothing. Spontaneous interaction in English requires a vast active vocabulary, and since vocabulary is established as one of the weak points among Finnish speakers of English, it is no surprise that Finns do not feel most comfortable in spontaneous language situations.

Virkkula (2008: 402) also mentioned the problems with pragmatic language skills. In the business world, small talk and compliments can cost a company an entire sale. In some situations even poor language skills can be sufficient, but more demanding situations require a comprehensive set of communication and social skills.

Virkkula (2008: 407) also raises the important question of language identity. Since Finns are widely known as quiet and straightforward people, Virkkula discusses the possibility of communicating that identity across language barriers. One of the major influences in Finns evaluating their language skills is what they are comparing themselves to. When comparing a quiet and to-the-point talk of a Finn with a socially fluent talk of a native English speaker, Finns usually rate their language competence quite low. However, if the comparison were made over language barriers, for example comparing a Finn talking English and then Finnish, considering the communication and information within the speech, results would be different. Even though Finns do not

usually give their language skills the credit they might be worth, many non-Finnish people say that the language skills of Finns express reliability and efficiency, according to Virkkula (2008: 409). When having to choose between Finnish and English, Finns mostly use English for practical reasons, to achieve the status as a member of a work community, not so much as a means for social activity.

Finally, Virkkula (2008: 411) points out that the most comfortable environment for Finns speaking English is with other non-native English speakers. In these situations, the participants talk more slowly, more simply and, most importantly, with a limited vocabulary. This encourages Finns to take part in the conversations, and makes them more relaxed, which makes the communication even easier. Virkkula (2008: 411) claims that the English of Hungarians and Swedes is the easiest to follow, because their pronunciation was very close to Finns'. Overall, using English as a lingua franca may offer a common ground for all non-native participants, thus reducing the effect of superiority through language. Still, language skills may affect the status between crew members. Although expertise and professional qualifications should be the most important aspects in defining the potential of a crew member, it is challenging to transmit those traits in an international environment if the language skills do not reach the appropriate level.

2.2 Common European Framework of Reference for Languages

Linguistic and pragmatic competences will be assessed in this study using the categories for communicative language competences provided by the CEFR. The CEFR presents an assessment scale for language users on different proficiency levels in an attempt to create an appropriate and widely approved means of language competence assessment. The CEFR has divided their assessment scales into six levels which take the wide levels of language learner competences into account. The six levels are divided into three categories; the basic user (A, basic), the independent user (B, intermediate) and the proficient user (C, advanced). Each of these categories consists of two levels of

language use. The basic user language skill levels include the breakthrough level (A1) and the waystage level (A2), the independent user language skill levels are divided into threshold (B1) and vantage (B2) levels, and the proficient user language skill levels consist of effective operational proficiency (A1) and mastery (A2) (CEFR 2013: 23). The common reference levels are represented in the table below.

Proficient User	C2	Can understand with ease virtually everything heard or read. Can summarise information from different spoken and written sources, reconstructing arguments and accounts in a coherent presentation. Can express him/herself spontaneously, very fluently and precisely, differentiating finer shades of meaning even in more complex situations.
	C1	Can understand a wide range of demanding, longer texts, and recognise implicit meaning. Can express him/herself fluently and spontaneously without much obvious searching for expressions. Can use language flexibly and effectively for social, academic and professional purposes. Can produce clear, well-structured, detailed text on complex subjects, showing controlled use of organisational patterns, connectors and cohesive devices.
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 a 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 and answer 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.

(CEFR 2013: 24, table 1)

The data in this research will be assessed in respect of linguistic competences, sociolinguistic competence and pragmatic competences, which are components of communicative language competence (CEFR 2013: 108).

2.2.1 Linguistic competence

According to the CEFR, linguistic competences include lexical, phonological and syntactic knowledge, and they relate to the range and quality of knowledge and the manner in which it is stored and accessed (CEFR 2013: 13). The organization and accessibility of this knowledge varies not only between individuals but also within the same individual, and culture is one of the factors that moulds an individual's learning process which in turn affects the cognitive organisation of vocabulary and the storing of expressions (CEFR 2013: 13).

Lexical competence

Lexical competence has to do with the knowledge of vocabulary of a language, as well as the ability to use the vocabulary (CEFR 2013: 110). Lexical elements include fixed expressions such as 'How do you do?', 'to kick the bucket'; as well as single word forms, in other words the awareness of different meanings of a single word (CEFR 2013: 110-111). Lexical competence will be assessed in this paper with vocabulary range and vocabulary control (CEFR 2013: 112). Vocabulary range has to do with the range of words that a language user knows, as on the other hand, vocabulary control has to do with the accuracy of the meanings of the words from that vocabulary: how it is appropriate to the discourse at the time. Vocabulary range ranges from C2 level to A1, where a C2 language user not only has a wide vocabulary but also knows some colloquial expressions and is aware of different connotations of words in his vocabulary, and an A1 learner is able to use only a limited amount of words related to the subject at hand. Vocabulary control, on the other hand, is assessed by the accuracy of the words chosen to be used. Ranging from C2 to A2, a C2 speaker is able to continuously select the correct words needed for the interaction, as an A2 speaker is

able to use single words that are not necessarily even correct words but closely related to the appropriate words.

Grammatical competence

Grammatical competence has to do with the knowledge of grammatical resources, as well as the ability to use them (CEFR 2013: 112). As lexical competence deals with the knowledge and use of fixed phrases, grammatical competence deals with forming and understanding new phrases in accordance with widely accepted grammar principles. Grammatical competence will be measured in this paper with grammatical accuracy (CEFR 2013: 114), which basically means the grammatical correctness of language ranging from C2 to A1, where a C2 language speaker is able to form grammatically complex structures and simultaneously working in accordance with the recipients' reactions, and an A1 level speaker is only able to use simple grammatical structures and sentence patterns.

Semantic competence

Semantic competence has to do with the meaning of different language elements (CEFR 2013: 115). Semantic competence can be divided into different categories. Lexical semantics deals with word meaning, grammatical semantics with meaning of grammatical elements, and pragmatic semantics with logical relations (CEFR 2013: 115-116).

Phonological competence

Phonological competence has to do with the knowledge of different phonological items as well as the ability to produce and detect them (CEFR 2013: 116). These phonological items include phonemes and allophones, distinctive features of phonemes, the phonetic composition of words, prosody and phonetic reduction (CEFR 2013: 116-117). Phonological competence will be assessed in this paper through phonological control

(CEFR 2013: 117). According to the CEFR chart, a C1 speaker is able to change the pitch and volume of their speech, through which they can express nuances and emphasis in meaning. An A1 level speaker, on the other hand, has only a narrow range of words or phrases that a native speaker of the target language is able to understand.

The most common pronunciation mistakes that occur in the speech of this study's subject are very typical for an average Finnish speaker of English. The most notable of these would be the perpetual difficulty in making a distinctive difference between the alveolar and the palato-alveolar sibilants (*sheep – cheap*) Morris-Wilson (2004) points out that the main problem for Finns is to find the correct and exact quality, because the Finnish 's' is post-alveolar and normally less grooved than the English /s/. Also, the distinctive difference between voiced and voiceless plosives (e.g. *bat – pat*) is usually ignored by inexperienced Finnish English speakers. Because the Finnish language does not have an alveolar sibilant or the aspiration that is used in the voiceless plosives, the speaker then resorts to the Finnish phoneme closest to the one used in English. As will be pointed out later on in this research, this may occasionally lead to misinterpretations.

Orthographic competence

Orthographic competence has to do with the knowledge of the symbols in which written text of the appropriate language is written, as well as the ability to produce them (CEFR 2013: 117). Although English uses the same alphabet as Finnish, orthography may provide problems. In addition to symbol recognition, orthographic competence also includes the knowledge of spelling conventions, which may not be as self-explanatory to a foreign language learner as it might be to native speakers. Orthographic competence will not be assessed in this paper due to lack of written data not written with the aid of some proof-reading software. The speeches were written using Microsoft Office, that has this feature, and none of his writings qualify as appropriate research material for the purposes of assessing orthographic competence. However, if appropriate data were available, orthographic competence would have been assessed through the scale of orthographic control (CEFR 2013: 118), where a C2 writer is able to write flawlessly

and an A1 writer is only able to copy (strings of) words or names that they know beforehand and are familiar to the writer due to regular usage.

Orthoepic competence

Orthoepic competence has to do with the ability to read aloud a prepared text as well as the ability to correctly pronounce a written word (CEFR 2013: 117). This requires the knowledge of spelling conventions, the ability to use a dictionary in order to find out the correct pronunciation, knowledge of the effects of punctuation on phrasing and intonation, and the ability to detect the differences in pronunciations based on the context (CEFR 2013: 118). The CEFR does not have a separate scale for the assessment of orthoepic competence, so orthoepic competence is assessed through the combination of orthographic control and phonological control. Language skills aside from orthoepic competence will be assessed through natural conversation extracts, but his orthoepic competence will be assessed based on his speeches. The speeches represent the best situations for the assessment of reading texts aloud and orthographic competence is best assessed based on actual written text produced by him.

2.2.2 Sociolinguistic competence

Sociolinguistic competence is involved with the social aspects of language use, which include linguistic markers of social relations, politeness conventions, expressions of folk-wisdom, register differences, and dialect and accent (CEFR 2013: 118). The markers of social relations depend on the relative status, the closeness of relation and the chosen register of discourse. According to these factors, a language speaker has to make a choice, conscious or unconscious, in greetings, address forms, turntaking and expletives. In politeness conventions, a speaker has to be able to make positive and negative polite remarks, use 'please' and 'thank you' appropriately and be aware of deliberately impolite remarks, as well as use them when necessary. Folk wisdom expressions include linguistic items such as proverbs, idioms, familiar quotations and

expressions of belief, attitudes and values. Awareness of register differences is useful in understanding and expressing the differences of language use in different contexts. For basic language levels a fairly neutral register is what native speakers expect and use themselves. Knowledge and use of more formal register is something that comes naturally to a language user over a longer period of time using and being subjected to the language in question. The incorrect use of register may lead to misinterpretation of impoliteness. Linguistic markers of dialect and accent has to do with the user's ability to recognise differences in language use according to the social class, regional provenance, national origin, ethnicity and occupational group of another language user. These aspects of language use are expressed through a wide range of linguistic components, such as vocabulary, grammar, phonology, vocal characteristics, paralinguistics and body language. Not all Anglophone cultures are similar in the sense of language use and culture. The awareness of these differences is of great use for the language user in order to understand the conventions of language use of a certain community and using the language themselves accordingly. The sociolinguistic competence in this research will be assessed through sociolinguistic appropriateness (CEFR 2013: 122). According to the CEFR scale, a C2 speaker understands the meaning and purpose of idioms and connotative language expressions, is able to use language appropriately in respect of sociolinguistic and sociocultural implications of language with native speakers as well as between native speakers of the target language and speakers of the language user's own community. An A1 speaker is able to use basic language items concerning politeness, such as greetings, thanking and apologising.

2.2.3 Pragmatic competences

Pragmatic competence comprises discourse competence and functional competence of a language.

Discourse competence

Discourse competence has to do with the ability to arrange sentences in a manner which produces coherent language (CEFR 2013: 123). Such arranging requires knowledge in,

for example, what the topic is, what is established as new and what has given information and the relation between the topics within a sentence (CEFR 2013: 123). Discourse competence also has to do with turntaking and length of the used sentences. Inexperienced language users generally start with short turns consisting of single sentences (CEFR 2013: 123). Discourse competence will be measured in this paper with flexibility, turntaking, thematic development, and coherence and cohesion (CEFR 2013: 124-125). Flexibility is assessed C2 through A2, where a C2 speaker is able to reformulate their thoughts in order to change the emphasis, or to use language appropriately according to the requirements of language use established by the setting of the situation. An A2 speaker, on the other hand, the language user is able to use simple, memorised language items to adapt to different language use situations and reformulate the phrases through combining the elements of those memorised phrases. CEFR has divided the skill levels in turntaking from C1 to A2, where a C1 speaker is able to take their turn in conversation for the appropriate amount of time by starting the turn with phrases or utterances from a range of already familiar set of discourse elements. An A2 speaker only uses simple techniques to indicate their desire to begin, keep and conclude their turn in a short face-to-face conversation. Thematic development is assessed C1 through A2, where a C1 speaker is able to coherently narrate a story and conclude it accordingly. An A2 speaker is only able to describe certain aspects of what they are trying to talk about through listing some of the main points. Coherence and cohesion is ranges from C2 to A1, where a C2 speaker is able to use different patterns of organisation and a large number of cohesive devices in order to use language coherently and cohesively. An A1 speaker can use the most basic items of language in order to connect words or phrases.

Functional competence

Functional competence is concerned with the purposes of communication (CEFR 2013: 125). It is not a question of which language forms express which functions, but the awareness of the processes of interaction through actions and responses to those actions that are supposed to lead the conversation towards a common goal. (CEFR 2013: 125). Skills in functional competence allow the speaker to understand this process and use it.

It enables the speaker to deal with dead ends and keep the conversation going and elaborate on one's thoughts (CEFR 2013: 125). Functional competence will be measured in this paper with spoken fluency and propositional precision (CEFR 2013: 129). CEFR assesses spoken fluency on a chart of C2 to A1, where a C2 speaker is able to spontaneously express oneself in a fluently flowing manner without pauses, excluding ones where the speaker has to find the exact and correct word that describes what they want to express. An A1 speaker's previously thought-out speech consists of recurrent pauses due to finding an appropriate word for the message. Propositional precision has to do with the ability to express ideas and proposition clearly. Assessed from C2 to A2, a C2 speaker is able to express nuances in meaning through the precise use of qualifying language devices, as well as emphasise and differentiate varying aspects of their ideas. An A2 speaker is able to directly express their thoughts in a limited manner on previously familiar subjects, but in unfamiliar situations they are forced to compromise the message.

3 Data

The data is gathered from recordings and memos provided by Chaplain Markku Töllli, a Finnish peacekeeper, whose language skills are studied in this research. He has authorized the use of his own name in this research in a verbal agreement. Mr Töllli completed his matriculation examination in 1981 with an excellent grade in English, but according to himself, has since been avoiding all and any situations requiring the use of English. After being accepted in the European Union Battle Group in 2007, he completed a mandatory English course for officers, but has had few situations that have required the use of English in the past 20 years. This has resulted in a significant regression of his English language skills, which adds to his challenges in his work. Also, as the English examinations in 1981 in Finland had little or no tests for oral language skills, nor did the education in English include very much of conversational or pronunciation exercises, Mr Töllli's self-assessment on his spoken English skills being quite poor may be in fact relatively accurate.

Mr Töllli has completed two separate tours in Afghanistan. A tour of duty, or simply 'tour', is a period of time for which a peacekeeper, or any soldier, is sent abroad to perform operational duties or assigned to service in a foreign country. He was on his first tour from February 11 to August 27 in 2009, and on his second tour from September 9 2011 to March 14 2012. On his first tour, Mr Töllli's duties were largely administrative; to provide spiritual maintenance (defusing and debriefing) and field services, and act as a liaison officer as well as an information officer for hundreds of peacekeepers from Finland, Sweden and the USA. On his second tour he performed duties on the field which included standard patrols and intelligence. Regarding these duties in a linguistic sense, Mr Töllli, as well as other peacekeepers, was in charge of writing up reports and meeting with local people. During both of these tours, English language skills played an important role in effective cooperation and communication not only between the peacekeepers and the locals but also within the ISAF, as many nationalities are represented in the organisation.

Mr Töllli agreed to collect the data alongside his own work, and he helped to draw up the consent forms (appendix 1) that were submitted to the commander of Finnish crisis management in Afghanistan. He also gave the other Finnish peacekeepers a short questionnaire on language use and self-assessment (appendix 2). Mr Töllli also gave short informal interviews and discussed the topics via email. The data that will be used in this are extracts from the recordings from the first and last months of Mr Töllli's first tour, as well as from two weeks after his return from his second tour in Afghanistan.

The research is divided into three phases; phase 1 includes recordings from the first months of his first tour, phase 2 includes recordings from the last months of his first tour, and phase 3 is presented by an interview carried out two weeks after his return from his second tour in Afghanistan. The data is first assessed according to the CEFR standards for language assessment and the results are compared with Virkkula's findings on her article.

Mr Töllli recorded over 200 minutes of monologues and dialogues with the locals in Afghanistan. Due to the classified nature of Mr Töllli's work and surroundings, the monologues recorded only consist of non-specific descriptions of their accommodations and everyday life, but that does not interfere with the linguistic research and assessment that is conducted on the data. These 'data-logs' prove useful in most of the language skills that will be assessed according to the CEFR (lexical, grammatical, semantic and phonological competence). The dialogues consist of discussions between Mr Töllli and the local shopkeepers, where Mr Töllli is engaging the shopkeeper in the most natural type of conversation available in the conditions he was in. Most of the discussions between him and his colleagues either classified topics or the recipients simply denied the request of taking part in a recorded informal conversation. Also, discussions in English with other Finns would not have been very natural data for the purposes of linguistic research. The dialogue recordings serve as data for the assessment of discourse competence and functional competence. All of the recordings have been

transcribed completely using the transcription symbols and conventions according to the discourse transcription system (DuBois 2003) used in the Barbara Corpus of Spoken American English (www.upenn.edu).

The questionnaire that Mr Töllli distributed to some of the other Finnish peacekeepers consisted of questions regarding self-assessment in language competence, previous experience or training in English, as well as dangerous situations caused by language problems. 86 peacekeepers answered the questionnaire.

One of Mr Töllli's duties was to give speeches and hold services for the other peacekeepers, and he recorded some and gave written copies of the speeches for research purposes in this paper. The recorded speeches and their written copies are useful in the assessment of orthographic and orthoepic spoken skills defined in the CEFR.

Mr Töllli also submitted some short memos regarding his experiences in English as well as his own observations on his progress in the use of English, which are useful in comparing his self-assessments in English language use with the progress found according to the CEFR language assessment scales.

The recordings used in this research are divided into three phases. The first phase is the beginning of his first tour in Afghanistan, the second phase is the conclusion of his first tour and the third phase is after his return from his second tour. Here are some short characterizations on three recordings. Mr Töllli recorded them himself with a dictating machine. The first two phases included the few natural conversation recordings provided in the data that occurred during the longest possible time period during his first tour. A longer period between recordings gives more time for the language skills to develop and gives the research a more realistic impression of the entire development. Also, the more similar the discourse situations in both conversations are the easier it is

to take only the linguistic aspects of both recordings into considerations as no other external variables, for example the language skill level of the other participant or participants or the degree of formality in the conversation, interfere with the data. Also, a speech recording is used from each phase to assess the phonological competence of Mr Töllli's language skills.

I buy carpet to make profit

This recording, which consists of five minutes and 30 seconds of conversation, is the most interesting as Mr Töllli's language skills are put to the test in an actual business negotiation. Here, Mr Töllli is at the market that is located in their camp and he is trying to buy a carpet from the shopkeeper. The shopkeeper's spoken language seems to work in a situation like this, but still mainly consists of simple statements and single words. These make the negotiation process possible but do not offer very much depth in the expressions or language itself.

The most notable problems seem to occur when they start talking about the price of the carpet. The shopkeeper asks what the given price (in euros) would be in US dollars, and they end up debating the exchange rate of euros and dollars, not always knowing when the other one is talking about the price of the dollar or the carpet. Eventually, as Mr Töllli gives his final offer, the shopkeeper declines by saying that the price does not make profit for him. As Mr Töllli does not understand this right away and has to ask him again, the shopkeeper seems to lose his temper slightly, uttering something incoherent. Finally, the shopkeeper explains what his absolute minimum price for a profitable sale is and Mr Töllli seems to decline it.

Just look today

The conversation on the second recording lasts 12 minutes 30 seconds and is recorded four to five months (no exact date available) later than the first conversation with a local shopkeeper. On the recording, Mr Töllli is talking to the same shopkeeper as on the first

one. The quality of the recording is quite weak as for some unknown reason the first dictating machine broke and a new one had to be provided. This makes the shopkeeper's speech almost completely inaudible, but Mr Töllli's voice can be heard and understood quite easily.

Mr Töllli sets out to buy a painting for a friend from the shopkeeper, but the shopkeeper tries to sell him more carpets. The conversation starts from the painting and goes on to Mr Töllli telling the shopkeeper how his family liked the carpets he had bought before. Even though Mr Töllli tells the shopkeeper he is in a hurry, the shopkeeper keeps offering him deals on the carpets. Mr Töllli makes remarks on the supposedly good quality of the carpets and so the shopkeeper is lead to an assumption that Mr Töllli is actually interested in buying more carpets. They discuss the prices and eventually Mr Töllli tells the shopkeeper he will phone his wife and discuss the matter with her.

Pictures from Afghanistan

This recording is a 62 minutes and 55 seconds' long interview with Mr Töllli. Most of the recording consists of Mr Töllli describing the working conditions in his work and the nature of his responsibilities during his second tour in Afghanistan with the help of some pictures he took. Most of the recording can be described as monologue, but the interviewer occasionally asks Mr Töllli some specifying questions in order to bring the nature of the speech more closely to conversation setting. This way the material remains more comparable to the conversation material gathered on his first tour in Afghanistan.

Speeches

These recordings are all 2-minute speeches Mr Töllli prepared and gave in Afghanistan. The first speech is from the earlier part of Mr Töllli's first tour in Afghanistan (phase 1), the second is from the latter part (phase 2), and the third is recorded a couple of weeks after his return from his second tour in Afghanistan (phase 3). The speeches can be described as a part of service that is regular to Chaplain's work in the military, taking

care of the troops' spiritual and mental health. The speeches will be used in the assessment of the progress in Mr Töllli's phonological competence. The same speech was used in phase 2 and phase 3 in order to keep the assessment simple and comparable. The same speech is not available in the first phase of the data gathering because Mr Töllli practiced his speeches only once during his first tour.

4 Language competence assessment

In order to gain understanding in the effects of peacekeeping on language skills, the data must be assessed based on a widely approved set of standards. The extracts are first analyzed by assessing Mr Töllli's language skills according to the classifications provided by CEFR. The recordings are divided into three phases in chronological order. The first phase includes recordings from the earlier parts of Mr Töllli's first tour, the second phase is presented in recordings from the latter parts of his first tour, and the third phase consists of recordings from two weeks after Mr Töllli had returned from his second tour. The recordings consist of conversations between Mr Töllli and local shopkeepers, an interview between the conductor of this research and Mr Töllli, as well as three speeches, one from each phase. Mr Töllli's spoken English can be described as having a very strong Finnish accent with occasional hesitation between words throughout the recordings. In order to achieve a reliable assessment of each competence, each of the examples provided for the assessment below are all single cases of many similar instances.

After the assessment of Mr Töllli's language skills in each phase is complete, the phenomena concerning the progress of his language skills are compared to the findings of Virkkula according to her article on language use experience in a foreign working environment.

4.1 Phase 1

This phase consist of recordings during the first months of Mr Töllli's first tour in Afghanistan. This period of time is presented here by a conversation between Mr Töllli and a local shopkeeper, where the shopkeeper is trying to sell his carpets to Mr Töllli, as well as a speech Mr Töllli gave to the rest of the peacekeepers during a service.

Mr Töllli's general language skills on this recording meet the requirements of level A2 (CEFR 2013: 110). A2 requires basic knowledge of the language with which he is able to deal with simple everyday situations if he has the possibility to prepare for them, which is possible in a situation like this, but still having to compromise the message he is trying to get across. B1 level, on the other hand, requires language skills adequate to giving descriptions on situations that may have not been prepared for on which only some hesitation occurs, but the message should not be compromised on this level. In the following example, Mr Töllli discusses the currency rate of dollars to euros with the shopkeeper.

Example 1

60 Töllli: Uhh, I pay with euros.
 61 Local: How much is one dollar,
 62 one euro is how mu- [how many...
 63 Töllli: Uhh,
 64 one] dollar is uhh one point tree euros
 65 (2.0) Uhh,
 66 one yearie is [one..] point three dollars
 67 Local: [One euro is-]

Here, Mr Töllli is able to discuss the carpets and their prices to some extent. However, sometimes he is forced to search for words and compromise the message (example 1, line 64), but eventually he is able to get the meaning of the message across. In the following example, Mr Töllli makes what is first thought to be his final offer on the carpet.

Example 2

83 Töllli: I have 650 .. euros to you,
 84 (1.8) take it or leave it.
 85 Local: It doesn't make profit-
 86 Töllli: I like that carpet.
 87 Local: Yes.
 88 But it doesn't make-
 89 because you told me choose a high quality,

90 and this is a high quality.
 91 Töllli: Mm.
 92 Local: I have differ-
 93 (2,2) different price I have here
 94 Töllli: Are these high q- quality?
 95 Local: You want small high quality?
 96 Töllli: Are <HI>these</HI> high quality?

He is able to use basic sentence patterns and communicate with memorised phrases (example 2, line 84) and in cases of misunderstanding he simply repeats what he said before (example 2, line 96) rather than rephrasing a new, more simple or accurate, structure. In the next example below, Mr Töllli gives his offer on the carpet and justifies his decision.

Example 3

36 Töllli: Mm,
 37 (1.2) Is too high to me.
 38 I think.
 39 I offer you--
 40 (1.4) six hundred fifty euros..
 41 I like that carpet..
 42 I like its design,
 43 I like details..
 44 But I'm not ready to buy,

His inability to spontaneously create long new sentences does not allow him to express himself fluently, but he survives the situation by using short, occasionally memorized sentences (example 3, lines 41-43).

4.1.1 Linguistic competence

Lexical competence

Mr Töllli's vocabulary range meets the requirements of level B1 (CEFR 2013: 112), which means he has a sufficient vocabulary to express himself. He is able to discuss the carpet deal in an acceptable manner mostly using the correct words. In the example below, Mr Töllli presents his final offer on the carpet.

Example 4

```
128 Töllli: My last is my--
129           My maxim .. last ..
130           maxim and last offer is..
131           seven hundred
```

B2 level would require variation in vocabulary selections, but Mr Töllli constantly repeats the same words in cases where variation would potentially make his speech more fluent (example 4 line 130). His vocabulary control is on level B1 (CEFR 2013: 112), which means he has good control over elementary vocabulary, but has problems expressing more complex thoughts. B2 level language use requires high lexical accuracy, which is not presented in the recording.

Grammatical competence

Mr Töllli's grammatical accuracy meets the requirements of level B1 (CEFR 2013: 114). He is able to communicate reasonably accurately, however there is a noticeable interference from Finnish on some occasions. In the next example, Mr Töllli describes what the reaction of his colleague was on the price of the carpet.

Example 5

```
30 Töllli: Okay.
31           But--
32           (1.6) When I told.. your price,
33           offer price
34           (1.9) He.. he shook his head
35 Local: Mm?
```

36 Töllli: Mm,
 37 (1.2) Is too high to me.

When he is discussing the initial price with the shopkeeper, Mr Töllli makes a mistake with prepositions (example 5, line 37). The meaning is still clear, although the message is not entirely grammatically correct. In the example below, Mr Töllli continues with the discussion on the price of the carpet and gives his decision.

Example 6

133 Töllli: (4.5) Seven hundred is lot of money.
 134 Local: For you lot of money,
 135 for #profit not a lot of money
 136 Töllli: Mm.
 137 Local: I ask ### for four hundred euros.
 138 But you can compare with that one?
 139 Never. @@@
 140 (9.3) Make it seven.. fifty euros,
 141 I give you.
 142 Töllli: Seven fifty.
 143 Local: Seven fifty euros,
 144 it makes forty dollar profit for me.
 145 Seven fifty euro make forty dollar profit.
 146 Töllli: (3.2) Mm.
 147 (2.5) I must think about it.
 148 A while.
 149 .. In the afternoon I I came back,
 140 back and err,
 141 with that carpet or with money.

Later on in the conversation, Mr Töllli makes some mistakes with articles (example 6, line 133) and one with verb tense (example 6, line 149) which interferes with the message, not giving the recipient an absolutely clear description of his intention; is he going to come back with some other carpet or is he going to come and buy the one they are discussing. Even though his pronunciation seems to have improved, the hesitation seems to present itself again in this conversation. This is most likely the result of

nervousness suggesting that he needs more conversational practice than vocabulary or monologue practice.

Phonological competence

Mr Töllli's phonological control is on level B1 (CEFR 2013: 117). B2 level requires clear and natural pronunciation and intonation, but Mr Töllli's intonation generally follows the same falling intonation regardless of sentence structure or function, which is characteristic of Finnish spoken language. The example below includes two excerpts from the speech he wrote, where they bought gifts for orphans and describes the way it made him feel.

Example 7

21 (3.1) Then we drove to the orphaners nearby our camp,

24 (1.1) Afterwords.. we felt radder good about all that,

There are occasional pronunciation mistakes; however, they do not interfere with the message. Mr Töllli's noticeable accent does not lead to misunderstandings on the recording but in other situations repetition may be required. His sentence structures are not made very clear through pronunciation, because in addition to the falling intonation of each sentence, he pronounces each word as its own unit. This makes it difficult to follow the speech at some points as he tries to continue his sentences after a short break.

4.1.2 Sociolinguistic competence

Mr Töllli's sociolinguistic competence is best described with the level A1 definitions provided by the CEFR for sociolinguistic appropriateness (CEFR 2013: 122), that

requires the ability to establish social contact through the use of common greetings and saying please and thank you. The following example presents the way Mr Töllli greets the shopkeeper in order to start the conversation.

Example 8

15 Töllli: Ohh,
 16 Are you are in a in a hurry.
 17 Local: No.

Here, Mr Töllli fails to use any type of common greeting in order to establish a social contact to the shopkeeper, but still manages to use a polite way of starting the conversation by asking whether the shopkeeper was busy. The register used is neutral, which is an appropriate choice considering Mr Töllli and the shopkeeper do not have a social connection outside the establishment the shopkeeper is running at the camp. In the following example, Mr Töllli is leaving the shop and bidding the shopkeeper farewell.

Example 9

151 See you later.
 152 Local: Okay.
 153 Töllli: (1.2) Bye bye.
 154 Local: Thank you Markku.
 155 Töllli: Thank you.

At the very end of the conversation, Mr Töllli uses an appropriate farewell (example 9, line 151-153) to which the shopkeeper first responds with a confirmation of what Mr Töllli says and then thanking Mr Töllli for doing business with him. The register here still remains neutral, which has generally been the case throughout the conversation.

4.1.3 Pragmatic competences

Discourse competence

Mr Töllli's flexibility is quite challenging to assess in this situation since there is very little appropriate material for the assessment of flexibility. Still, Mr Töllli's skill level is best described as level A2, since he is able to expand memorised phrases by combining their elements. In the following example, Mr Töllli describes the carpet he is interested in buying.

Example 10

```

39           I offer you--
40           (1.4) six hundred fifty euros..
41           I like that carpet..
42           I like its design,
43           I like details..

```

Level B1, which is one level higher than A2, would require the ability to use wide range of simple language, but here Mr Töllli only repeats the same phrase rather than combining them into a single sentence (example 10, lines 41-43).

Mr Töllli's discourse turntaking meets the requirements of level A2 (CEFR 2013: 124). B2 level requires the ability to initiate, maintain and close conversations, which is not presented in the recording. The next example presents the way Mr Töllli initiates the conversation with the shopkeeper.

Example 11

```

18   Töllli: (3.1) Yes.
19           We shall talk.. about that carpet.
20   Local: Yes.

```

21 What is--
 22 Töllli: Mm.
 23 Local: What.

Mr Töllli starts the conversation without a natural conversation technique by merely suggesting discussion on the carpet (example 11 line 19). The shopkeeper seems to be quite disoriented at first as Mr Töllli expresses his desire to make business in such a direct way, and he hesitates and asks Mr Töllli for more information. Still, he is able to maintain a simple face-to-face conversation with the shopkeeper, although many pauses occur throughout the conversation, mainly on Mr Töllli's turns (for example, example 11, line 18). The next example presents the way Mr Töllli ends the conversation.

Example 12

144 Local: But I don't make profit,
 145 I cannot sell that carpet.
 146 Töllli: ..Last offer is seven hundred fifty,
 147 Local: Yeah.
 148 Seven hundred fifty euros is last offer
 149 Töllli: Mm.
 150 Okay.

Before the farewell, he ends the conversation (example 12 line 150) without any type of transition that would indicate that the conversation is coming to an end that could be classified as a B1 level conversation closer technique. In the following example, Mr Töllli describes his colleague's reaction to the carpet price.

Example 13

24 Töllli: Pertti said that.. it's okay.
 25 Mm?
 26 Local: @@ So-
 27 Töllli: Martti said too.
 28 Local: ## for Pertti,
 29 he says okay.
 30 Töllli: Okay.

31 But--
 32 (1.6) When I told.. your price,
 33 offer price
 34 (1.9) He.. he shook his head
 35 Local: Mm?
 36 Töllli: Mm,
 37 (1.2) Is too high to me.
 38 I think.
 39 I offer you--
 40 (1.4) six hundred fifty euros..
 46 [##]

Mr Töllli's thematic development reaches the level A2 (CEFR 2013: 125), as he is able to tell the shopkeeper through a list of descriptions about another peacekeeper who told Mr Töllli that the price the shopkeeper was asking was too high (example 13, lines 24-34). First, the shopkeeper is amused, but then understands that Mr Töllli is actually there to buy a carpet and not for small talk or interrogations of some sort. Also, the pauses regarding maintaining a conversation reoccur here dominantly (example 13, lines 32, 34, 37, 40), as the shopkeeper is not able to support or help Mr Töllli by even guessing what he is talking about since Mr Töllli is in the middle of a description of what he heard or saw before.

Mr Töllli's coherence and cohesion skills reach the requirements of level A1 (CEFR 2013: 125), where the language user is expected to be able to combine words or groups of words together in the simplest of manners. In the next example, Mr Töllli gives his justifications for his decision on whether to buy the carpet or not.

Example 14

41 I like that carpet..
 42 I like its design,
 43 I like details..
 44 But I'm not ready to buy,

Level A2 would require the ability to link a sequence of points into a coherent story, but here (example 14, lines 41-43) Mr Töllli simply lists the qualities he likes about the carpet without any connectors. However, he is able to link the contradictory aspect of his unwillingness to buy the carpet at the end with the connector ‘but’. Still, this one occasion is outweighed by the number of occasions where a connector is lacking throughout the conversation.

Functional competence

Mr Töllli’s spoken fluency is on level A2 (CEFR 2013: 129). A B1 level speaker is able to express oneself easily, but Mr Töllli constantly faces problems in expressing himself. The following example includes the process of Mr Töllli’s decision making as well as the pause that follows the continued intonation during his turn.

Example 15

41 I like that carpet..
 42 I like its design,
 43 I like details..
 44 But I’m not ready to buy,
 45 (2.6)

He speaks using short sentences with repetitive structures (example 15 lines 41-43) and recurrent pauses (line 45). His inability to combine clauses into long sentences results in a staccato style of speech, but still makes himself generally understood to the recipient. The following example includes an instance where he tells the shopkeeper the currency rate but corrects himself after a significant pause.

Example 16

63 Töllli: Uhh,
 64 one] dollar is uhh one point tree euros
 65 (2.0) Uhh,

66 one yearie is [one..] point three dollars

Mr Töllli also encounters many hesitations, occasionally correcting himself (example 16, line 66). Eventually, the shopkeeper understands what Mr Töllli is talking about.

Mr Töllli's propositional precision is on level A2, as he is able to express himself in a simple and direct manner, but in some cases has to compromise his message. In the following example he tries to explain the reaction of his colleague on the price of the carpet and sums up his meaning in the following turn.

Example 17

30 Töllli: Okay.
 31 But--
 32 (1.6) When I told.. your price,
 33 offer price
 34 (1.9) He.. he shook his head
 35 Local: Mm?
 36 Töllli: Mm,
 37 (1.2) Is too high to me.
 38 I think.

As in the case of Mr Töllli's opinion on the carpet (example 17, lines 32-37) he uses very simple expressions to give reasons for his own decision by telling what his colleagues think of it, but the shopkeeper is not able to see the connection with the story and the current situation until Mr Töllli literally says what he thinks of the price (example 17, line 37).

Overview

The situation seems to go over quite well. There were some misunderstandings due to vocabulary or grammar mistakes, but Mr Töllli was able to work around them by explaining the expressions in other words. Pronunciation did not seem to affect their

communication in a notable way, although both speakers were non-native English speakers with little experience in speaking English. Most of the encountered problems have to do with the taking and keeping of conversation turns, as it is common for native English speakers to hold their turn by filling the gaps of conversation by indicating they will continue to speak, which is a technique not used in Finnish.

4.2 Phase 2

This phase includes recordings from the last months of Mr Töllli's first tour in Afghanistan. The recordings consist of another conversation between Mr Töllli and local shopkeepers, where Mr Töllli is fetching a painting for a fellow peacekeeper while the shopkeepers try to sell him some carpets, as well as a speech that Mr Töllli is practicing privately for a service he will be holding later on.

Progress is evident. Mr Töllli is able to fluently express himself with some minor occasional hesitation and mistakes. His general linguistic skills reach the level B2, which is two levels higher (skipping level B1) than the A2 on the previous recording (CEFR 2013: 110). He is able to keep the conversation going without much sign of having to restrict what he has to say. The conversation may be followed more easily as Mr Töllli's language skills have improved to the point where he is able to concentrate on the topic rather than struggling with problems expressing himself. In the example below Mr Töllli is describing the painting as well as his colleague's probable reaction.

Example 18

65 Töllli: Very beautiful painting,
 66 Local1: # # #
 67 Töllli: Yes.
 68 (1.3) Good colors and--
 69 Local1: # # #
 70 Töllli: (Hx)
 71 Local1: # # ?
 72 Töllli: (3.2) Yes,
 73 I think Heikki is satisfied with the.. painting.

74 And very happy.

He is able to comment on the painting they are looking at as well as the reaction his colleague will most likely have on it (example 18 lines 65-74). In the next example, Mr Töllli tells the shopkeeper how many carpets he has bought already.

Example 19

201 Local2: How many carpets have you got.
 202 Töllli: Uhhmm,
 203 Four=
 204 Four=
 205 My= wife,
 206 one,
 207 to my daughters,
 208 two three.
 209 Uhh on- one quite big and two small.

He is also able to tell the shopkeeper about the carpets he had bought before for his family. This is something he possibly did not have the chance to get ready for and he is able to express himself spontaneously without any distracting pauses or mistakes. He makes up for the time coming up with the correct words by elongating the words he first comes across, but this is a technique more closely related to discourse competence, which will be looked at in more detail later on in this paper.

4.2.1 Linguistic competence

Lexical competence

Mr Töllli's vocabulary range easily meets the requirements for level B2, which is also one level higher than the previously assessed B1. (CEFR 2013: 112). He does not seem to have problems with understanding the shopkeeper's speech anymore since he does not have to ask him to repeat what he said or face too many misunderstandings, and he

is able to spontaneously express his thoughts without noticeable pauses caused by search for words.

His vocabulary control is also on level B2 (CEFR 2013: 112), one level higher than the previous B1, as he finds the correct – or at least the appropriate – word for each expression and the shopkeeper generally understands what Mr Töllli is talking about. In the following example, Mr Töllli tells the shopkeeper what he will tell the other peacekeepers regarding the price of the carpets.

Example 20

235 Local1: Two hundred dollars.
 236 Töllli: Mm?
 237 And if.. somebody wants [this]
 238 Local1: [This] is #one hundred #this #is #fifty dollars
 239 Töllli: Okay.
 240 I'll say those prices,
 241 And I will say.. come to you,
 242 And and discuss

In some cases, there is an interference from Finnish (example 20, line 241; comparing Finnish *sanon nuo hinnat*), but it is merely a matter of nuance and does not hinder the conversation.

Grammatical competence

Mr Töllli's grammatical accuracy reaches level B2 (CEFR 2013: 114), which is a single level improvement to the previous conversation. In the example below, Mr Töllli tells the shopkeeper assures the shopkeeper he will tell the other peacekeepers to buy their carpets at the shop he is currently in.

Example 21

344 Local2: They go buy carpet from that carpet shop?
 345 Töllli: Yes.
 346 Local2: Or they come to this shop.
 347 Töllli: Yes.
 348 Local2: We are only # people,
 349 we don't go get see [#]
 350 Töllli: [Mm.]
 351 I don't know about that.
 352 But.. but=,
 353 I'll tell.
 354 That's okay.

Some minor grammatical blemishes occur (example 21, line 351-353), where the object in the clause is occasionally, but quite rarely, left out and usually the grammatical difficulty can be overcome through the context.

Phonological competence

Mr Töllli's phonological control is on level B1 (CEFR 2013: 117). He still makes some occasional mistakes regarding pronunciation in this phase, but the rate of mistakes is less frequent than in the previous phase. The next example is from the speech where he talks about Jacob's struggle with an angel (or God).

Example 22

41 and it was threwn out of joint.

Here, only one clearly audible pronunciation mistake is made. The rest of the recording may be more closely described as Mr Töllli having a very strong Finnish accent rather than any major mistakes being made. The occasional mistakes (e.g. example 21, line 41) do not attract enough attention that it would interfere with the message itself. Still, the most notable difference to phase 1 speech is the confidence in pronouncing the word, without any major gaps between words.

4.2.2 Sociolinguistic competence

Mr Töllli's sociolinguistic appropriateness has improved to level A2 (CEFR 2013:122), which is due to the increased ability of responding to suggestions in a polite manner. In the following example, Mr Töllli declines the shopkeeper's offers for a new carpet.

Example 23

163 Local2: (4.3) You look carpet Markku?
 164 Töllli: No carpet to- day.. today.
 165 Local2: Have you got any carpet from us.
 166 Töllli: N- n- yes,
 167 I have,
 168 Local2: You want carpet from us.
 169 Töllli: @@ Not today,
 170 Maybe later,

Here, Mr Töllli politely declines the second shopkeeper's suggestion of buying another carpet as Mr Töllli is not there to buy one in the first place. He first declines the offer (example 23, line 164), but indicates the possibility of buying one on another time. As the shopkeeper persists that he would buy one, Mr Töllli repeats his refusal preceded by polite laughter. This makes it easier for the shopkeeper to accept Mr Töllli's answer.

4.2.3 Pragmatic competences

Discourse competence

Mr Töllli's flexibility remains on level A2 as he still shows little or no variation on expressions between instances. In the examples below, Mr Töllli tells the shopkeeper he will discuss buying a new carpet with Mr Töllli's wife.

Example 24

292 Töllli: Mm-m.
 293 (3.2) (H) I will ask my wife,
 294 if he if she wants one carpet more,
 295 and come to you.

Example 25

385 Local2: When do you want more carpet?
 386 Töllli: Uhh,
 387 I don't know,
 388 I must take a foot--
 389 Take a- uhh phone call to my wife,
 390 and ask if she wants one carpet more.

Here are two examples of similar responses to the same question of whether Mr Töllli would like to buy a carpet from the shopkeepers. In both cases, Mr Töllli uses the same phrase when answering the shopkeeper (example 24, line 294 and example 25, line 390). Still, he does add on the latter example that he will call his wife before asking about the second carpet, but this does not qualify as a wide range of expressions which is required for level B1 competence.

Mr Töllli's turntaking reaches level B1 (CEFR 2013: 124), which is also a single level improvement comparing to the previous recording of a similar conversation. The next example is from the beginning of the conversation where Mr Töllli starts by greeting the shopkeepers.

Example 26

16 Töllli: Hello.
 17 Local: How are you.
 18 Töllli: Fine thanks.
 19 How are you.
 20 Local: ###
 21 Töllli: No no,
 22 I- I'm just.. taking.. a painting.

23 ..From this boutique.
 24 ..Okay
 25 Local2: #Hello.
 26 Töllli: Hello,
 27 How are you.
 28 Local?: #Fine #how #are #you.
 29 Töllli: Fine thanks.
 30 Local?: Hello
 31 Töllli: Hello

He starts the conversation with the usual phrases (example 29, lines 16, 18-19 and 26-27) and makes it start in a very fluent way, unlike in the previous recording. In the example below, Mr Töllli is engaged in conversation with the shopkeeper regarding the delivery of paintings for Mr Töllli's colleagues.

Example 30

130 Local2: #Well you #can tell them,
 131 well,
 132 tell them # who likes to have painting,
 133 and come here,
 134 Töllli: Mm.
 135 Local2: They have a special order something,
 136 Töllli: Mm?
 137 Local2: They can tell some,
 138 Töllli: Mm?
 139 Local2: We can make it.
 140 Töllli: Yes.
 141 Okay.
 142 Local2: Then we can offer for them
 143 Töllli: Mm-m.
 144 Local1: (1.2) If they like have li- like this one this,
 145 Two hundred two hundred fifty dollars.
 146 It is good quality
 147 Töllli: Mm.

Also as the shopkeeper talks, Mr Töllli can be heard confirming the shopkeeper's statements and indicating that he understands what the shopkeeper is talking in short, utterances that are typical to native English speakers but usually forgotten among Finns speaking English. However, as he finds himself not having phrased his thoughts

appropriately, or not finding a word he wants to use, he does not use conversation fillers that are commonly used by native English speakers. This occasionally leads him just to be quiet when he tries to think what to say next, which in an English conversation means the end of a turn. Still, as this problem was more prominent in the previous recording, it occurs significantly less frequently here, which is one of the most notable improvements between the two conversations.

His thematic development is on level B2 (CEFR 2013: 125), which is a two-level improvement to the previous conversation. The following example presents the way Mr Töllli will tell his colleagues about the carpet prices.

Example 31

226 Töllli: Y- yes,
 227 If somebody says,
 228 I want this painting,
 229 uhhmm,
 230 Local1: This one?
 231 Töllli: Yes
 232 Local1: That is two hundred dollars.
 233 Töllli: Okay.
 234 Two hundred.
 235 Local1: Two hundred dollars.
 236 Töllli: Mm?
 237 And if.. somebody wants [this]
 238 Local1: [This] is #one hundred #this #is #fifty dollars
 239 Töllli: Okay.
 240 I'll say those prices,
 241 And I will say.. come to you,
 242 And and discuss

He is able to suggest with ease to the shopkeeper that he will tell the price of the painting to the other peacekeepers and direct them to the shopkeeper in the case where they would like to buy a similar painting from him (example 31, lines 226-242).

Mr Töllli's coherence and cohesion skills have improved onto level A2. He is able to describe his intentions of telling the other peacekeepers about the shop by connecting the sequences of actions together. In the next example, Mr Töllli tells the shopkeeper he will recommend the shop to his colleagues.

Example 32

331 Töllli: I will tell and--
 332 uhh that they are (1.1) two carpet shops here,
 333 and and every- everyone should.. come and look,
 334 and [compare--]
 335 Local2: [Yes come compare] the price,
 336 Töllli: Price
 337 Local2: and quality,
 338 Töllli: and quality.
 339 Local2: Yes come here,
 340 if want good price good quality,
 341 Töllli: Yes.

Here, Mr Töllli combines four elements together, although the shopkeeper helps him on the last two parts. However, it sounds like Mr Töllli would have been able to express these ideas on his own and the shopkeeper took over Mr Töllli's turns by finishing his thoughts.

Functional competence

Mr Töllli's is much more fluent in his speech compared to the earlier recording. His spoken fluency meets the requirements of level B1 (CEFR 2013: 129), which is a single-level improvement to the previous recording. In the example below, Mr Töllli tells the shopkeeper he will phone his wife and discuss buying another carpet.

Example 33

382 Local2: When they work ##.
 383 Markku?

384 Töllli: Mm-m?
 385 Local2: When do you want more carpet?
 386 Töllli: Uhh,
 387 I don't know,
 388 I must take a foot--
 389 Take a- uhh phone call to my wife,
 390 and ask if she wants one carpet more.
 391 Local2: #?
 392 Töllli: And then,
 393 I will come.
 394 Local2: You will come to me.
 395 Töllli: Yes?
 396 Of course.
 397 Local2: Thank you.
 398 Töllli: @@

He is able to express himself relatively easily, even though some pauses caused by formulation occur, or he notices a mistake in his expressions, where he keeps the turn by taking a few steps back in his speech (example 33, line 388-389). He is able to go on without any help, though many of his turns consisted of relatively short expressions.

Mr Töllli's propositional precision has progressed to level B1 (CEFR 2013: 129), as he is able to express himself accurately not having to compromise his message. In the next example, Mr Töllli confirms the shopkeeper's intentions on how he will be able to sell more paintings to other peacekeepers.

Example 34

102 Töllli: Uhh,
 103 Is your idea that,
 104 I uhh bring this paintings to Finnish house.
 105 Local1: Yes,
 106 The Finnish house--

Here, Mr Töllli is able to confirm the shopkeeper's ideas of what he would like Mr Töllli to do with the paintings with simple and straightforward expressions. Level B2 would require the reliable conveying of detailed information, but no such instances were presented in this recording.

Overview

The poor sound quality of the recording makes the hearing of the shopkeepers' speech quite challenging, but Mr Töllli's speech is clear enough for the analysis. Overall, the conversation sounds relatively fluent throughout, mostly due to Mr Töllli's ability to fill the silent pauses of the conversation. Although the shopkeepers seem quite eager to sell him their goods, Mr Töllli maintains a dominant role in the conversation by keeping up in the conversation through quick responses and questions about the goods. The shopkeepers, who are not the same shopkeepers as in the previous recording, seem to have slightly poorer spoken language skills than the shopkeeper on the previous recording, which could also add to the confidence Mr Töllli exhibits in this conversation. Mr Töllli does not make any major mistakes regarding grammar or vocabulary, which also contributes to the fluency and progress of the conversation.

4.3 Phase 3

This phase is represented by an interview with Mr Töllli about his work in Afghanistan as a peacekeeper, where he narrates his experience with the help of some pictures he took there, as well as the same speech as in phase 2 read out loud again.

Mr Töllli's general language skills meet the requirements of level B1 (CEFR 2013: 110) in this phase, which is one level lower than in phase two. B2 would require clear expressions without much restriction, which is not the case in this interview. In the example below, Mr Töllli describes the weather conditions in the mountains of Afghanistan.

Example 35

366 ...there is snow in the mountain there,
 367 there's.. snow.. much.. more.
 368 than you can see here.

369 And if the avalanche come.. comes,
 370 it's it's... it's very.. err @ it is err.. th-
 371 those houses are so flat,
 372 ..err.. the avalanche comes
 373 and dies-.. destroys all houses,

Mr Tölli occasionally starts off with an idea that would require complex language item formation, but failing to do so, he resorts to simplifying the idea he is expressing or completely starts over the expression (example 35, line 371). He is generally able to explain the main points of what he wants to say on, but on some occasions he fails to express himself and simply resorts to Finnish. But this happens only once during an hour long conversation, so it is not an often recurring phenomenon.

4.3.1 Linguistic competence

Lexical competence

Mr Tölli's vocabulary range is on level B2 in this phase. He is able to use idiomatic expressions (for example "win their hearts and minds" and "full like weapons"), which is mentioned on the level above. In the next example, Mr Tölli describes the requirements for peacekeepers doing the same work he was doing.

Example 36

26 Uhh every men have.. have to be.. uhh an officer,
 27 and uhh... of course uhh
 28 basic military skills were--
 29 ..uhh.. uhh... (COUGH) uhh.. were a- err,
 30 Basic military skills were.. were..
 31 uhhmm *pakolliset*.@@ (H)

He exhibits his broad vocabulary related to his work with ease but in some cases, for example in the beginning of the interview he fails to find the correct word for what he is trying to express (example 36, line 31).

Mr Töllli's vocabulary control has remained on level B2 (CEFR 2013: 112). As mentioned before, Mr Töllli is able to exhibit good control over vocabulary related to his work, even though he occasionally makes some minor mistakes regarding vocabulary. In the example below, Mr Töllli describes the transportation the local people commonly used.

Example 37

297 ...Ermm but uhh only rich people.. err had a car.
 298 Most of people didn't have,
 299 But they maybe owned a donkey like this.
 300 The burden of this *monkey* is quite.. large.
 301 It's uhh I sin- I think sticks.
 302 ...Err ... *monkey* is very good vehicle,
 303 And they can carry very.. very heavy burdens.

At one point of the interview, Mr Töllli makes one of the most notable mistakes regarding vocabulary control. At first, by selecting the correct word describing an animal useful in carrying heavy burdens (example 37, line 300), he is able to indicate that the current word is in his vocabulary. However, in the next sentence, and in the following one as well, the word changes to an entirely different animal, one that is only one letter (or phoneme) different from the previous, correct, choice. This may be considered as a minor slip-up, but still, in some cases would cause misunderstanding.

Grammatical competence

Mr Töllli's grammatical accuracy has remains on level B2 (CEFR 2013: 114). Mr Töllli's most prominent mistakes regarding grammatical competence have to do with the use of

prepositions. Mr Töllli also makes some mistakes regarding concord. However, this does not occur very often during the one-hour interview.

Phonological competence

Mr Töllli's phonological control remains on level B1 (CEFR 2013: 117). Still, while comparing the exact same speech performed at two different phases in this research, Mr Töllli's pronunciation has slightly regressed. Here, Mr Töllli pronounces almost each word as its own unit, as opposed to the confident, fluent flow of sounds Mr Töllli presents in phase 2. However, this difference does not affect the assessment of phonological control according to the CEFR, since it does not give any requirements for the rhythm of speech on level B1 phonological control. In other words, Mr Töllli's pronunciation skills have stayed the same according to the CEFR although some differences can be heard.

4.3.2 Sociolinguistic competence

The sociolinguistic aspects of language in the third phase of assessment are difficult to assess due to the interview nature of the recording material. Also, as the situation also differs from the previous phases as the interviewer is socioculturally quite close to Mr Töllli. Still, Mr Töllli presents, for example, some polite language-use techniques on the recording which allows some assessment of his sociolinguistic appropriateness. For example, when Mr Töllli does not understand the question presented by the interviewer, he uses a phrase commonly used for repetition in English: "I didn't catch you", instead of the simple "what" that he used in the previous phases. In the example below, Mr Töllli describes the location of their base.

Example 38

220 ..surrounded our.. uhh FOB everywhere.

221 ...And I would like to say
 222 that the location was very bad.
 223 But.. nothing happened.

Mr Töllli's sociolinguistic appropriateness are best described as level A2, as he is able to express his opinions in a simple manner and politely. Here, Mr Töllli describes the location of their base, and as he knows that this is an opinion that might offend someone, he buffers the opinion by stating the following to be his own opinion (example 38, line 221). Also this formulation is also an indication of Mr Töllli's acknowledgement of this situation being formal although the interviewer is an acquaintance of his. In the next example, Mr Töllli talks about the reactions of local people in the villages where they patrolled.

Example 39

664 We all sai--
 665 always when we came to to a village,
 666 we we uhh.. said hello and smiled,
 667 and and tried to be kind,
 668 ...and tried to win their hearts and minds,
 669 but in (COUGH) some villages,
 670 uhh they were not very kind for us,

Here, Mr Töllli presents some expressions comparable to folk wisdom, when uses a phrase that refers to an American campaign in the Vietnam War (example 39, line 668). The expression is used properly here, as the Vietnam War campaign was implemented in order to win the support of the civilians in Vietnam, and here Mr Töllli is talking about similar motives; trying to be kind to civilians and winning the support of the local villagers.

4.3.2 Pragmatic competences

Discourse competence

In this extract, Mr Töllli uses simple language in quite a flexible manner, which puts him on level B1 on the flexibility scale, which is one level of progress comparing to the previous phase. He is able to reformulate his structures in order to express himself more fluently. In the example below, Mr Töllli describes the effects of weather in the lives of the local people.

Example 40

369 And if the avalanche come.. comes,
 370 it's it's... it's very.. err @ it is err.. th-
 371 those houses are so flat,
 372 ..err.. the avalanche comes
 373 and dies-.. destroys all houses,
 374 and human beings.

Here, Mr Töllli starts his sentence in a way that requires the structure of that sentence to be more complicated than his proficiency would allow. Instead of completing that sentence with the structure he starts off with, he rearranges the elements of the sentence in a way that allows him to express the idea clearly enough.

Mr Töllli's turntaking is relatively challenging to assess due to the interview nature of the recording. However, as the interviewer asks Mr Töllli for more specific information on some of the issues discussed, the interview maintains some characteristics similar to a discussion. Based on this recording, Mr Töllli remains on level B1 (CEFR 2013: 124), that requires the ability to start a conversation on a familiar topic. Level B2, on the other hand would require the ability to use set phrases (for example: *That's an interesting question.*) to gain time in order to come up with a response to what he has just heard. The following example presents the way Mr Töllli starts the recording.

Example 41

15 T: Okay,
 16 I will show some pictures...
 17 From Afghanistan.
 18 ...Uhhh,
 19 ..I think there's..
 20 about thirty... thirty pho- photos.

First of all, the way Mr Töllli initiates the interview by introducing the material (example 41, lines 15-20) may be considered as evidence of his ability to start a conversation. He does not simply begin describing the photos but gives an introduction to what he is about to say.

This interview is excellent for the assessment of thematic development, as it has to do with narratives and descriptions and this recording consists mainly of Mr Töllli describing and narrating different aspects of his work in Afghanistan with the help of some pictures. His thematic development reaches level B2 (CEFR 2013: 125), as he is able to give comprehensive descriptions of the working conditions in Afghanistan while supporting his views with the help of examples and details related to his descriptions. In the example below, Mr Töllli describes the dangers presented by the location of their base.

Example 42

202 Mountains surrounded
 203 our forward operating base everywhere.
 204 and the.. location of our forward operating base
 205 was not very good.
 206 because.. for example from here,
 207 where you can see that link,
 208 it's eighty- eight hundred meters to our camp.
 209 And you can.. shoot with a machine gun,
 210 easily shoot with a machine gun,
 211 from there to our camp.
 212 Direct to our accomondation.
 213 And from top of this mountain
 214 it's two kilometers.
 215 ..to our forward operating base.

216 You can shoot,
 217 for example with mortar.. from there.
 218 Easily.
 219 And the mountains,
 220 ..surrounded our.. uhh FOB everywhere.
 221 ...And I would like to say
 222 that the location was very bad.
 223 But.. nothing happened.

Here, he makes a bold statement about the location of their base, but is able to give good arguments supporting his statement. He first describes the surroundings of the base and then gives the reasons for why he does not think the base was located in the safest of places.

As Mr Töllli was telling his story with the help of the pictures, he was able to describe the circumstances in Afghanistan quite extensively. He provided each picture with a coherent description through linking simple elements to a complete story, and based on this, his coherence and cohesion level has improved to B1. In the next example, Mr Töllli talks about his suspicions towards a local person they encountered.

Example 43

808 And this guy for example,
 809 we... we uhh I'm quite he's an insurgen.
 810 But we didn't catch him.
 811 uhh..Because we couldn't prove it.
 812 ...But some guys this and this also
 813 very were very intreche- interested,
 814 in our for example am-
 815 our equipments and vehicles and weapons and,
 816 ...I'm quite sure now these guys were insurgents.

Here, Mr Töllli describes his own suspicions of a possible insurgent by linking the elements of his suspicion by using different conjunctions (example 43, lines 808, 810-812). This creates a description with four different elements, or clauses, creating a complete, coherent sequence of points. Although he is using the picture as help for the

narrative, the picture does not offer detailed information on the story Mr Töllli is telling, so the story is a clear example of Mr Töllli's own language proficiency.

Functional competence

Mr Töllli's spoken fluency remains on level B1 (CEFR 2013: 129). The CEFR standard for B1 allows conversational gaps to plan and formulate the following structures. This is the most prominent feature of Mr Töllli's language use. In the following example, Mr Töllli describes the requirements for the peacekeepers he was working with through planning pauses during his turn.

Example 44

26 Uhh every men have.. have to be.. uhh an officer,
 27 and uhh... of course uhh
 28 basic military skills were--
 29 ..uhh.. uhh... (COUGH) uhh.. were a- err,
 30 Basic military skills were.. were..
 31 uhhmm *pakolliset*.@@ (H)

He is able to keep his turn in speech for over long periods of time by using the gap-fillers familiar to native English speakers (for example: *uhmm*, *err*, *what's the word*), which also serves as a functional language skill. Here (example 44, lines 26-31), Mr Töllli cannot remember the English word for *pakollinen*, and maintains his turn even though he has a lot of trouble remembering the correct word.

Mr Töllli's answer to question what "an open source" is very short and precise, which puts his propositional precision on the same level as on phase 2: B1. The next example is Mr Töllli's answer to the question and the definition of an open source.

Example 45

573 T: Because we didn't have to pay them for information,
574 or we didn't have to meet them in secret situation.

Here, he gives an exact description in a concise manner and does not leave the interviewer uncertain of what the term means. Although he says the word "situation" at the very end of line 574, the description has been already made, and it does not make the already given definition any more difficult to understand. The given information is simple, but a good example of similar descriptions he gave during the interview and a straightforward description of simple information is what is required on level B1.

Overview

Mr Tölli's active vocabulary seems to have regressed through lack of use because the job he had during his second tour did not require as much use of English as on the first tour. Still, his language skills have not suffered too much because most of the CEFR ratings have remained on the same level as at the end of his first tour. The most prominent language skills maintained are the pragmatic skills, which improved most on his first tour and have not suffered much regression until the end of his second tour.

5 Language skill progress and permanence

On the Phase 1 recordings as Mr Töllli is trying to say something, he has trouble remembering the correct words, resulting in silent pauses in the conversation. His intonation also follows a pattern typical among Finns, which makes the speech quite hard to follow on some occasions, for example when citing a list of words or at the ends of sentences. However, on the Phase 2 recordings he seems to have overcome some of the most evident difficulties. Mr Töllli's grammatical mistakes are not the most prominent ones on either of the two first conversation recordings, which may be attributed to his already fairly good written skills in English or the way in which he is able to convey meaning through context. However, Mr Töllli occasionally makes mistakes regarding concord, but it does not affect communication in a significant manner, since the same characteristics are common in informal use of English. This 'insignificance' of grammar might also contribute to the lack of progress in his grammatical accuracy: as it does not make his communication more difficult, there is no practical reason to pay attention to those aspects of language use.

Mr Töllli kept track of new words during his first tour in Afghanistan, which aided him in broadening the range of his vocabulary at the time, proven by his progress in pragmatic language competence. Also, as Mr Töllli has pointed out in his language diary, knowing the correct words when wanting to express themselves or understand what someone else is saying is critical in the ability to communicate effectively in English. This situation forced Mr Töllli to keep track of unfamiliar words that he will most likely run into again, which in turn helped him in the progress of language learning.

Between phases 1 and 2, Mr Töllli claims to have gained confidence in initiating conversation according to the language diary he updated regularly during his first tour. This confidence also shows in the phase 2 speech recording. Not only does his

pronunciation sound more confident and precise but starting conversations became easier and easier through time.

Although Mr Töllli has suffered some regression concerning his vocabulary in Phase 3 his most permanent progress has taken place in his functional competence. This is quite surprising because the skills he managed to improve and maintain are those that are not commonly concentrated on in language training, or even in conversational situations among Finns. Through these skills Mr Töllli is able to compensate for his weakened active vocabulary by keeping his turn in conversation in a way similar to native English speakers.

In the ISAF, working with people from other cultures is something they face day-to-day, whether it is with people from the Western culture or some of the Middle-Eastern civilians. Both situations, Mr Töllli's work in the ISAF as well as Virkkula's description of an increasingly globalising working environment (2008: 382), well describe the line of work what many people might come across in the future in the business world. English is considered to be part of professional competence in both the ISAF as well as international business. It is quite rare that one can work in one's native language if either of these is the chosen career.

The trend in assessing one's own language skills described by Virkkula (2008: 400) in her article does not seem to apply to peacekeeping on a general level. Most peacekeepers aged 30 and over usually assess their language as mediocre, average at most, as peacekeepers aged 20 to 30, according to the questionnaire filled out by some of the peacekeepers, commonly assess their language skills as excellent, or at least average. This may be the result of the younger generation, or the so-called computer-generation, being subjected to English more often than older people, most likely through the daily use of the Internet. Mr Töllli's self-assessment on his language skills in phase 1 were similar to Virkkula's observations (2008: 400) on self-assessment among employees aged 30 and over, but were very different from the self-assessment of other

peacekeepers his age. Still, his language skills did not cause any major problems concerning his work in Afghanistan, or in other words, he met the linguistic requirements of a competent peacekeeper from the start.

In the ISAF, avoiding English is quite challenging, as it would mean avoiding the situations where it is needed, and that opportunity does not occur very often, at least if one would like to participate in the more informal social situations. Abiding by Virkkula's division of language use situations (2008:383), Mr Tölli's progress in functional language skills are most likely the result of frequent natural conversations either with his co-workers or the locals, since the language-use situations between employees and superiors requires accurate expressions regarding grammar and vocabulary, and these were the language skills least developed during his work as a peacekeeper. Peacekeepers usually have to deal with their superiors in English as some of the superiors are people from another country, and in some situations with the local civilians or authorities. Both situations call for a different use of English. According to Mr Tölli, exact and informative expressions are required when talking to superiors, in order to avoid misinterpretations that may lead to unfavourable operation decisions. On the other hand, many Middle-Eastern people understand only the more simple expressions. However, it is worth noting that according to some peacekeepers, crew members usually need English in their free time, when the social setting is less formal and free time activities are involved.

Mr Tölli's most prominent problem with the use of English throughout the phases had to do with his vocabulary, and, according to himself, he found the pronunciation of English very challenging. Although his pronunciation rarely caused any communicative problems, his vocabulary did make his communication quite hard to follow, or at least slow. These, too, are some of the most difficult aspects of language use for Finns according to Virkkula (2008: 385). This problem is well emphasized when considering the peacekeepers in the ISAF dealing with locals. The local languages (Dari Persian and Pastho) differ from English very much, and many of the people the ISAF are dealing

with do not have a high education or skills in English, thus making communication quite challenging. Even more for Finns, as for most of their education they have heard only the native accent of English.

Mr Töllli's self-assessment on his language skills was quite accurate because of his practical experience in English language use during his time in Afghanistan. Virkkula also made similar observations regarding self-assessment among supervisors (Virkkula 2008:400) also due to the practical nature of their work. Mr Töllli assessed his initial language skills as satisfactory at best, but improved throughout his first tour. The comparison between phase 1 and phase 2 data confirmed these assessments as correct.

As for the spontaneity of language use, active vocabulary is established as a weak point for many Finns speaking English (Virkkula 2008: 401), resulting in discomfort in most natural conversations that one has not been able to prepare for. Mr Töllli's experience gives evidence of similar phenomena, as in phase 2 he claimed to have more confidence in taking part, or even initiating, natural conversations. Considering Mr Töllli's line of work in Afghanistan, this probably not hinder his work entirely on his first tour, since he usually gave speeches which he could prepare beforehand. However, it is worth looking into how his active vocabulary developed during his stay. Like Mr Töllli, also many other Finnish peacekeepers did not resort to English very often, which does not actually affect the work itself in the case of crew members, but in fact it affected their social activities in their free time. Since they favoured Finnish over English, most of their social intercourse was restricted to other Finns, which may have lead to minor isolation from the rest of the peacekeepers. Mr Töllli said that in the beginning of his first tour one of the first things that seemed difficult was the small talk most non-Finnish people seemed to use every day. However, Mr Töllli seemed to overcome this difficulty. His improvement in vocabulary range (from B1 to B2) and vocabulary control (from B1 to B2) combined with his increased confidence in conversations confirm the same observations made by Virkkula.

In peacekeeping operations, considering there are people from many different cultures, it seems only fair that everyone should try to put cultural differences aside and concentrate on the most relevant features in the language. Although Mr Tölli claimed small-talk being more a question of image rather than a practical skill, it is very hard to imagine his progress in functional language competence having absolutely nothing to do with his increased confidence in conversations. Virkkula claimed that these skills, or lack thereof, can be costly to a business (Virkkula 2008: 402). Work in crisis management can be seen to have similar consequences. As the presence of peacekeepers in a country may already be enough for averting conflicts, the image of peacekeepers becomes more important in order to accomplish their goals more effectively.

6 Discussion

In this section, the benefits of this research on the planning and providing of language training for peacekeepers are discussed. The different aspects of progress in language competence discovered in this case are taken into account while considering the different possibilities for areas of emphasis for language training.

One possible approach to the division of skills for training involves the amount how much each language skill, or competence, is used in the work in question. According to this, the objectives for the language training could be to improve 1) those language skills that are most improved due to frequent use or 2) those that are more rarely used and found to be the most problematic in order to compensate for the less frequent situations where the skills in question are used.

In order to find which linguistic competences improved the most during Mr Töllli's tours, the assessments of each competence are compared with one another. The linguistic competences that have progressed the most comparing phase 1 and phase 3 results can be seen as the most permanent progress, because phase 3 represents the end of the period of time during which he did not need to use English as much as in the previous phases. The most improved competences between phases 1 and 2 can be seen as the most potentially improvable linguistic competence.

Most of the improvement in Mr Töllli's linguistic competences can be seen between phases 1 and 2, which is a result of the frequent use of English, in contrast to phase 3 where he had not needed to use English as much during his second tour. Still, there is not much regression in linguistic competence either.

The most permanently improved linguistic competences of Mr Töllli were thematic development which started from level A2 in phase 1 and assessed at level B2 in phase 3, and coherence and cohesion that was at level A1 in phase 1 and at B1 in phase 3. This may be evidence of these skills being used the most frequently during his tours. Both of these competences are under discourse competence in the CEFR, having to do with conversation situations. Were the authorities responsible for the language training of peacekeepers interested in improving those skills that are most used and needed in peacekeeping, it might be most useful to carry out great amounts of conversation exercises and maybe give instruction on conversation techniques useful in conversations in English.

The least improved linguistic competence of Mr Töllli was his phonological control, which started and remained on level B1 from phase 1 to phase 3. Although it is obvious that Mr Töllli has used his phonological skills at least as much as he has used his skills regarding discourse, the phonological skills may not have been one of the aspects that he has had to pay attention. Still, if this was something that the language training authorities would like to concentrate on, it might prove useful to carry out exercises regarding pronunciation, or at least raise awareness about the effects of mispronunciation in order to make the peacekeepers observe their pronunciation more closely.

As the progress in linguistic competences included nearly every one of the competences defined by the CEFR, it is clear that a peacekeeper will improve their language proficiency one way or the other during their work. Another idea for improvement of language proficiency during language training would be to make the peacekeepers more aware of their language use in order to find their own weaknesses and keep track of the most improved competences, through something similar to a language diary or data-log that Mr Töllli used. This would give the peacekeepers more independence and diversity according to their own needs in language proficiency improvement.

7 Conclusion

This research provided a three-phase assessment on language skills of a peacekeeper working in Afghanistan for two occasions, each lasting longer than six months. According to the assessment and comparison of language skills between the three phases, peacekeeping has positive, and in some cases permanent, effects on language skills. Between the first two phases, Mr Töllli improved on his language competences on nearly all of the standards of communicative language competences provided by the CEFR. Nearly all of this progress were still present in phase three, and can consequently be seen as permanent progress in communicative language competence.

Even though situations that require the use of English can be avoided to some extent, one cannot go through a tour without having to use English at some point. Although not everyone has to take part in many conversations, it is quite certain that peacekeepers unavoidably learn English at least in a more passive way, by listening to briefings and conversations.

Mr Töllli's case is actually quite favourable: as he starts off with, as he assessed his own language skills, English skills satisfactory at best, there are many sectors where he has the opportunity to progress. As the analysis shows, he overcame many of the difficulties presented by Virkkula, difficulties that are typical for most Finns in English. He might not have reached the same level as native speakers, but one must take into account the considerably short period of time (about seven months) Mr Töllli spent in Afghanistan. It is also safe to assume that he would have progressed even more, had it been a longer period. Additionally, had he taken part in the social occasions on his free time during his stay, his development would have most likely been even more impressive.

During his second tour his work position changed from a liaison officer to the field, and language use situations became less frequent. This resulted in slight regression in

vocabulary, but was compensated through other language skills developed during his previous work in Afghanistan. This suggests that in order to maintain one's language skills more comprehensively, one has to use the language on a regular basis. Still, exposure to the target language does improve language skills to some extent.

According to Mr Töllli's own experience, the language training provided for the peacekeepers alone does not guarantee success in language use situations in peacekeeping. Many of the other peacekeepers working aside Mr Töllli were younger, and had more extensive and recent exposure to English before their work as peacekeepers, and managed well with their language skills. But Mr Töllli had many colleagues that were in the same age group as him, and most likely had similar backgrounds in language education. However, most of these colleagues had long careers as peacekeepers and had had the chance to practice and develop their language skills at work. In the case of peacekeepers going on their first tour, it might be useful to provide them more practical language training. It might prove useful to even provide some situations during the tour where the peacekeepers are able to practice their language skills, regardless of job description.

Further research on this topic could be carried out in a larger scale, organising language tests for larger groups of peacekeepers in different parts of their careers in order to apply these findings more generally. This way it would be possible to provide language training programs specifically tailored for peacekeepers in order to maintain effective working methods and cooperation in international operations. It would also be useful to see similar research being carried out to peacekeepers from other countries in order to see how the Finnish education system differs in the effectiveness to develop competent international workforce in an increasingly multilingual world. This could also give the Finnish schools an even broader picture of the success of present day language education goals.

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Appendices
Appendix 1



UNIVERSITY of OULU
OULUN YLIOPISTO

ANOMUS

ARVOISA KOMENTAJA

Kunnioittavasti anomme lupaa Oulun yliopistolla suoritettavaan englannin kielen tutkimukseen, jossa tutkitaan suomalaisten rauhanturvaajien kielitaitoa ja sen kehitystä rauhanturvatyössä. Tutkimuksen pääpaino on suullisessa kielen tuottamisessa.

Tutkimusmateriaalin kerääjäksi on lupautunut sotilaspastori Markku Tölli (SKJA 109). Anomme lupaa tutkimusmateriaalin keruuseen seuraavassa esitetyillä tavoilla:

Sotilaspastori Markku Tölli nauhoittaa kenttähartauspuheitaan sekä tietyin väliajoin epävirallisia "taukokeskusteluitaan", joissa ei esiinny mitään operatiivisia asioita. Nauhoituksiin osallistuvilta henkilöiltä kysytään joka kerta erikseen lupa. Nauhoituksiin osallistuvat henkilöt pidetään tutkimuksessa nimettöminä. Nauhoituksissa tarkkaillaan vain suullisessa tuotoksessa ilmeneviä kielen piirteitä.

Tölli kirjoittaa kielitaitoonsa liittyvää kirjallista raporttia, jossa käsitellään kielenkäytössä ilmeneviä ongelmia, niihin käytettyjä apukeinoja ja hänen työnsä aikana tapahtuvan kielitaidon kehityksen tarkkailua.

Tutkimukseen sisällytetään myös kyselykaavakkeen muodossa kerättävää materiaalia. Tämä lyhyt kyselykaavake kierrätetään Töllin toimesta tietyllä määrällä muita rauhanturvaajia, ja se sisältää yleisiä kysymyksiä liittyen henkilön omaan kielitaitoon ja englannin kielen koulutukseen rauhanturvatyötä varten.

Toivomme myönteistä suhtautumistanne tutkimukseen. Sotilaspastori Markku Tölli ottaa vastuun siitä, ettei millään edellä mainituista tiedonkeräysmenetelmillä kirjata ylös mitään salassa pidettävää tietoa. Materiaalin sisältöä voidaan tarvittaessa muokata kaikkien osapuolten etujen ja oikeuksien mukaisiksi. Tölli hyväksyytään kaiken materiaalin Teillä tai määräämällänne henkilöllä ennen sen luovuttamista tutkimuskäyttöön.

Juha Anttila
Englantilaisen filologian opiskelija, tutkimuksen suorittaja
+358-40-5127557

Elise Kärkkäinen
Yliopistonlehtori, työn ohjaaja
+358-8-553 3283

Markku Tölli
Sotilaspastori
(Lumijoen seurakunnan kirkkoherra)

Appendix 2



UNIVERSITY of OULU
OULUN YLIOPISTO

KYSELY

Oulun yliopistossa suoritetaan tutkimusta liittyen suomalaisten rauhanturvaajien kielitaitoon ja sen kehitykseen kriisinhallintapalveluksessa. Vastauksia käsitellään luottamuksellisesti, eikä niitä luovuteta ulkopuolisille. Tutkimus on luonteeltaan ainutlaatuinen, joten jokainen saatu vastaus on tärkeä. Rehellinen ja kaunistelematon vastaus antaa suurimman hyödyn.

Juha Anttila

Tutkimuksen suorittaja

1. Ikäluokka: ___: alle 20 | ___: 20–25 | ___: 26–30 | ___: 31–35 | ___: 36–40 | ___: 41–45 | ___: 46–50 | ___: yli 50
2. ___: Puolustusvoimien henkilökuntaa | ___: Reserviläinen
3. ___: Miehistö | ___: Res. aliupseeri | ___: Aliupseeri | ___: Res. upseeri | ___: Opistoupseeri | ___: Kadettiupseeri
4. Montako kertaa olette ollut kansainvälisissä tehtävissä (myös GBG ja NBG luetaan mukaan): ___
5. Kriisinhallintapalvelusta edeltänyt siviilikoulutus

___ Toisen asteen tutkinto (lukio/ammattitutkinto) ___ Ylioppilas/IB tutkinto (alleiviivaa), vuosi ___

___ Alempi korkeakoulututkinto (AMK) ___ Ylempi korkeakoulututkinto (yliopisto)

5.1 Englannin kielen arvosana ylioppilastutkinnossa (jos suoritettu): ___

5.2 Siviiliammatti (reserviläisellä): _____

6. Oletteko asunut/työskennellyt/opiskellut ulkomailla ennen kriisinhallintapalvelusta? (K/E): ___

6.1 Kyseisten aikajaksojen kesto yhteensä: ___ v ___ kk

6.2 Tuona aikana tekemisissä englannin kielen kanssa (asteikolla 1-5, 1= ei koskaan, 5=jatkuvasti): ___

7. Oletteko saaneet englannin kielitaitoon liittyvää koulutusta kriisinhallintapalvelusta varten? Jos, niin mitä?

8. Arvioi omaa englannin kielen taitoanne *ennen* kriisinhallintapalvelusta asteikolla 1-5 (1=heikko, 5=erinomainen):

8.1 Suullinen: ____

8.2 Kirjallinen: ____

9. Arvioi oma englannin kielen taitonne kriisinhallintapalveluksen *jälkeen* asteikolla 1-5 (1=heikko, 5=erinomainen):

9.1 Suullinen: ____

9.2 Kirjallinen: ____

10. Englannin kieli kriisinhallintapalveluksessa

10.1 Tekemisissä englannin kielen kanssa (asteikolla 1-5, 1= ei koskaan, 5= jatkuvasti): ____

10.2 Minkälaisissa tilanteissa englannin kieltä tyypillisimmin tarvittiin?

10.3 Kielitaidosta aiheutuneita ongelmia (1= ei koskaan, 5= jatkuvasti): ____

10.3.1 Onko kielitaidon puutteista aiheutunut jonkinasteisia ongelma- ja/tai vaaratilanteita?(K/E): ____

10.3.2 Lisätietoja (esimerkiksi johtuivatko mahdolliset ongelmat omasta vai toisen osapuolen kielitaidosta, minkä asteisia väärinkäsityksiä, olivatko ne helposti oikaistavissa, miten vaikeuksista selvittiin, tapahtuiko väärinkäsityksiä vapaa-ajalla vai virkaa toimittaessa, muuta?):

Korostaisin vielä kohdan 10.3.2 tärkeyttä, tutkimuksen kannalta on tärkeää saada monipuolista tietoa erilaisista tilanteista vapaan tekstin muodossa. Mikään ei korvaa aitoa ja vapaata kerrontaa kokemuksistanne kriisinhallintapalveluksessa ja kielitaitoasioissa. Kuten yllä mainittiin, kyselyn voi tehdä nimettömänä, mutta tilaa tässä kyselyssä on rajallisesti. Siispä teille tarjotaan myös mahdollisuus osallistua tutkimukseen vielä jatkossa, esimerkiksi pienten haastatteluiden tai jatkokyselyjen muodossa. Näitä varten voitte halutessanne jättää yhteystietonne alle (puhelinnumero ja/tai sähköpostiosoite). Kiitos yhteistyöstänne.

Puhelin: _____ Sähköposti: _____