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Seeking understanding: categories of linguistic (non)belonging in interviews

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Abstract: This paper discusses how persons of multicultural backgrounds describe in interviews their everyday experiences when using Finnish. The focus is on categories of linguistic (non)belonging described in interview interactions. The data consist of 23 single and pair interviews of 33 informants in total and come from two interview datasets. Data are analyzed discursively, taking into account positions and identities constructed in interviews. First, the study concentrates on descriptions where the informants' interlocutors (particularly customer service persons) switched to English and the interviewees assumed reasons for it. Secondly, the recounted experiences where multiculturals have received comments on their Finnish language use are examined. According to the informants, language choices and evaluations arise from the perception of difference by the interactant. When language choice is discussed, categorizations of the informants as non-Finnish speakers arise. When the focus is on received comments, the informants discuss the categorizations of non-nativeness and origins. The informants position themselves in relation to these categories: They discuss the motivations and conditions for them. The study takes a closer look at how, in the interviews, there is space to criticize linguistic practices contrary to many everyday situations. The study brings to light the informants' interpretations of switching language and commenting on one's language as well as underlying ideologies of these situations, thereby also bringing about the possibility for change. The descriptions are multilevel, and we discuss how the categories of identification are constructed and how they are perceived in the interviews.

Keywords: category; evaluation; ideologies; interview; language choice

1 Introduction

In this study, we discuss how recognizing an interactant as somehow “foreign” has an effect on interaction and linguistic choices. We examine in the (pair) interviews how

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multicultural interviewees describe their experiences of cases where their Finnish interlocutors switch language or comment on their Finnish. In particular, we explore how the informants perceive the motivations behind the behavior of others as they try to understand their interlocutors. By multiculturals, we mean people whose background is in other countries than Finland, that is, they themselves or at least one of their parents has moved to Finland from some other country. Hence, the informants have experience of multicultural and multilingual life even though not all of them might be considered actual migrants.¹

Triggers for perceived foreignness are name, appearance, and the linguistic resources of the interactant. Behind the surface actions of switching languages or commenting on one's speech lies an act of categorization. Categories help one to interpret the world and social relations, but at the same time they reflect certain ideologies intertwined with them in addition to evoking different feelings. That is why it is also important to know how categories are created in interviews, what kind of meaning or interpretation informants ascribe to these categorizations, and how they themselves position in relation to them.

Our general framework is the sociolinguistics of mobility, and we contribute to the discussions of new perceptions of “normal” (Blommaert 2017; Karimzad 2020), in particular the discourses of belonging, inclusion, and exclusion of different language users (Bolonyai 2018; see also Butorac 2014). These themes arise for instance in the attitudes towards non-native speakers (Canagarajah 2013; for “broken language” and stereotypes see, e.g., Lindemann 2005) and in the discussion of nativeness (see, e.g., Djuraeva and Cathedral 2020). In addition, we rely on approaches that show the connection between appearance and perceptions of language (e.g., Butorac 2014; Vigouroux 2017). These approaches contribute towards revealing discourses on boundaries that concern not only sounding foreign but also overall assumptions on foreignness.

We continue by presenting the linguistic situation in Finland and our theoretical background related to categorizations and ideologies. We then move on to introduce our data and methodology, followed by our analysis that is divided into two sections. First, our findings concern how the informants deal with linguistic choices made by other interactants. Secondly, we examine direct comments on the informants' Finnish language use. In the final section, we conclude our work and discuss our results.

¹ We do not call our informants “migrants” because not all of them meet the criteria of moving to Finland from someplace else. Also, in Finnish, term “migrant” (*maahanmuuttaja*) is nowadays a loaded term (see Säävälä 2008) and may connote a certain kind of migrant: people coming from Middle East or Africa in contrast to people from Western countries. In addition, since the term “foreigner” is used as an index of categorization in our data, we prefer not to use it to refer to the informants.

1.1 A brief overview of linguistic diversity in Finland

During the 20th century in Finland, there was a relatively small proportion of people who spoke a language other than Finnish or Swedish as their native tongue. Finland has not attracted immigrants in the past, and in fact many Finns themselves have emigrated elsewhere (Saukkonen 2013: 272). During the last decades – but not earlier than the late 1980s – diversity has increased as there has been a rapidly growing number of immigrants (Saukkonen 2013). However, the number of those who speak an L1 other than Finnish or Swedish remains under 8%, with the largest foreign language groups being Russian and Estonian (Statistics of Finland 2020). The percentage of mother tongue speakers of the two official languages, Finnish and Swedish, at the end of the year 2020 was 87 and 5% respectively (Statistics of Finland 2020). In the statistics of Finland, there can be only one mother tongue for one person.

Despite the historical and official multilingualism of Finland, the nationalistic understanding of a nation has persisted, ethno-cultural unity has been positively valued (for more on the topic, see Saukkonen 2018), and Finland is perceived to be linguistically and ethnically relatively homogeneous (Blommaert et al. 2012: 10, 12; Ruuska 2020: 20). In addition, multicultural people and different ethnic groups live mainly in the larger cities, in particular the capital city area (Saukkonen 2013: 272). These people of different ethnic and cultural backgrounds represent new kinds of Finnish speakers who may not fit into traditional categories of Finnishness (see, e.g., Ruuska 2020). Recent studies (e.g., Ruuska 2020: 251) show how, alongside the increasing linguistic diversity, the awareness of a variety of speakers of Finnish is also increasing.

There are popular discourses on the distinctiveness of the Finnish language in comparison to other European languages; Finnish is claimed to be internationally insignificant (Ruuska 2020: 20). Thus, Finnish people are on the one hand flattered if foreigners learn the language, but on the other hand, the narratives of the difficulty of Finnish might contribute to the creation of boundaries (cf. Latomaa 1998: 57), and a common problem for learners is that they do not have the possibility to practice their Finnish skills as English is used so eagerly (Ruuska 2020: 20). Overall, the impact of English in Finland has increased, and its role has strengthened significantly during the last decades; it is currently the most popular foreign language in the country (Leppänen et al. 2011).

2 Language ideologies, categorizations, and actions

Language ideologies are useful for conceptualizing the link between social and linguistic forms as well as the power relations behind the valorization of language

(Woolard and Schieffelin 1994). Ideologies are connected to discourses, which we see as ways of speaking about certain people, topics, and phenomena and having a capability to create, (re)construct, and negotiate social reality (e.g., Pietikäinen and Mäntynen 2019; Wodak and Meyer 2016). Hence, ideologies are abstractions, which are manifested in discourses (e.g., Kroskrity 2000). Language ideologies can capture the unconscious nature of language use such as categories that speakers orient to as inherent in language (cf. Verschueren 2000) and assumptions that are taken for granted like “mistakes” in comparison to standardized language or the higher value of “native” competence.

The unequal value of varieties is naturalized through ideological processes, which means that the social and historical background of cultural conceptions is forgotten (Irvine and Gal 2000; see also Ruuska 2020: 57; Woolard and Schieffelin 1994: 58). Negative attitudes to different ways of speaking are embedded in the dominant essentialist language ideology of nativeness (Bolonyai 2018: 260; Lippi-Green 1997). Research on ideologies of (non-)nativeness has paid attention to how multilingual speakers might internalize or reject the ideals connected to native speakers, that is, how multilingual speakers are positioned and how they position themselves (Djuraeva and Catedral 2020: 272; for monoglot ideologies and orientations see, e.g., Piller 2002).

Linguistic behavior in social situations can be interpreted via discourses, as is our approach in this study. We make use of the concept of social categorizations that are essential part of discourses, and hence they carry the potential to make ideologies visible. Social categorization is a way of making sense of social systems, and in this process, culturally meaningful ways of classifying people are formed. On the one hand, social categorization helps people to understand social environments, but on the other hand it can lead to stereotyping, prejudice, and discrimination (Rhodes and Baron 2019: 359). The perception that members of a certain category are similar to each other is a prevailing consequence of categorization that occurs frequently (Rhodes and Baron 2019: 368–369). Ideologically, the *erasure* of differences occurs (cf. Irvine and Gal 2000). For instance, as Lønsmann (2014: 104) points out in her study, categorizing all Danes as proficient English speakers ignores the fact that there are Danes who do not speak English, and as a consequence, the English comprehension problems of this group of Danes remain hidden.

Social categorizations and the ideologies behind them are seen in everyday interactions. Ideologies of language guide the evaluation of linguistic resources. Ideologies direct the use of linguistic resources which in turn index identities (Pavlenko and Blackledge 2004: 14). For people of multicultural backgrounds in Finland, and for example in other Nordic countries, the language of an interaction is easily switched to English when the interactant is perceived as an L2-speaker (e.g., Eskildsen and Theodórsdóttir 2017; Lehtonen 2015; Ruuska 2020). There are different motivations behind

language choice: for instance, practicality or politeness (Lesk et al. 2017: 282–283). Evaluating and balancing linguistic resources is an endeavor shared with interlocutors in a given situation. Piller (2002: 183–184) argues that conclusions on someone’s linguistic identity (and hence language choice) are not only based on language production but also – and more importantly – on perception. For example, visual perception may override speech production when people evaluate (non-)nativeness. Several studies have also revealed the significance of non-linguistic markers of a person’s background and identity, as these markers trigger perceptions of linguistic competence (Butorac 2014; Lehtonen 2015; Lindemann 2005; Niemelä 2019; Piller 2002; Vigouroux 2017). People not only switch languages but also, for example, speak slowly (Butorac 2014: 240) or make a perceived asymmetry relevant by attempting to figure out one’s origin and commenting on it (e.g., Bolonyai 2018). These actions following perceptions may evoke experiences of non-belonging and hence prove to be a barrier to social inclusion (Butorac 2014: 245). The bias against non-native accents is rooted in social categorization and group membership (Bolonyai 2018: 259). Non-native speakers evoke prejudice in terms of social difference as well as categories indicating non-belonging, that is, categories of “migrant” or “foreigner”. Here we highlight the construction of categories as a process of boundary-making and as an (in/ex)clusionary practice (see Heller 2008: 512). There is a strong connection between social categories and identities, both of which develop and take shape in discourse (see, e.g., De Fina and Georgakopoulou 2012: 171; Pavlenko and Blackledge 2004: 14). Identities are not essential, but individual, negotiable, and multiple (Blommaert 2005: 203). Thus, they are situational and have potential for change (Blommaert 2005: 203). As the interviewees construct categories of (non)-belonging, they simultaneously construct their identities through positions taken in the interview.

Sociocultural change entailed by increased mobility and migration has re-established the understanding of taken-for-granted assumptions about the homogeneity of language, identity, and place (Bolonyai 2018: 257). The increasing diversity and fluidity of linguistic boundaries has attracted more and more attention amongst researchers, although such views are not presently common in the society at large (Jaspers and Madsen 2019). Instead, people orient to languages as entities. Categories circulating around languages and belonging demonstrate the prevailing ideas of communities and identities and hence the boundaries between different groups (Heller 2008: 506). These aspects are seen in language when boundaries and identity categories are constructed in everyday interaction (Bolonyai 2018: 259).

In our analysis, we examine categories of (non)belonging that prove to be socially important according to our data and how the informants interpret these categories. Contrary to many previous studies, we have heterogeneous datasets of people with multicultural backgrounds: not only those who have migrated as adults but also those who have different linguistic backgrounds and countries of origin.

Theoretically, we contribute to examining categorizations in interviews, concentrating on the assumptions our interviewees present, challenge, and identify with. Understanding social categorization processes can contribute to greater tolerance in intergroup contexts (Rhodes and Baron 2019: 376). We align ourselves with Heller (2008) when we consider it important to shed light on the understanding of how and why these categories are constructed.

Our research questions are as follows:

- 1) How do the informants with multicultural backgrounds living in Finland discuss the reasons for their interlocutors to switch language to English or comment on their Finnish language use?
- 2) How do they use the interview situation to construct, oppose, and identify with categories of linguistic (non)belonging?

3 Data and method

Our data consist of a total of 23 single and pair interviews with people of different linguistic and ethnic backgrounds residing in Finland. The interviews come from two different datasets: 20 informants participated in the pair interviews (Dataset 1) and 13 in the interviews (Dataset 2)² that were collected as part of a project called A hundred Finnish linguistic life stories (cf. Hundred Finnish 2017). In other words, a total of 33 informants were included. The data comprises approximately 15 + 14.3 h of video or audio recordings. In the informant codes, *F* indicates female and *M* male, and the following number signifies the informant's age at the time of the interview. In the first dataset (pair interviews), the last number of the informant code identifies the pair being interviewed. For example, informant code F_26_9 means that the informant is a 26-year-old female who was a participant of pair interview number 9.

Participants of the pair interviews (Dataset 1) were found via different type of contacts³ and selected according to our definition of multicultural (see Section 1. Introduction) and the requirement of somewhat permanent residence in Finland which excludes, for example, such groups as exchange students or seasonal workers. Of a total of ten pair interviews, eight were conducted in Finnish and two in English, and the informants were questioned about their experiences with interacting in Finnish society. In Dataset 2, the informants were a part of a larger collection of language biographical interviews, in which the questions included a wide range of topics on their

² Sixteen different mother tongues were reported by the informants in Dataset 1 and 12 by the informants in Dataset 2.

³ The informants were found via students and staff members of the University of Oulu, as well as via a specific Facebook page.

languages. Informants were selected through different networks, and the informants in this study include those who represent different language groups living in Finland. All interviews in this dataset were conducted in Finnish. All participants have given their informed consent to the use of their data for research purposes.⁴

Due to slight differences between the datasets, there are some differences in the questions asked, and some themes of inclusion and language use were dealt with more thoroughly in Dataset 1, which was designed especially for this kind of examination. However, there is a common focus on questions about the informants' experiences in Finnish society when they are speaking Finnish, and this can be seen as the strength of this study that we have found similar themes in both of the datasets even though their overall design was slightly different. For example, the datasets point to the essential role of English in the categorizations even if English is not mentioned, nor is its meaning directly asked in the interview questions of either dataset. Despite the slightly different aims of the two datasets, they offer similar topics, and in addition, they enrich the approach and show processes of categorizations from different angles.

We demonstrate in particular how the informants evaluate their interactants' language choices and comments, and how they position themselves in discussions when they report on their experiences. Concentrating on reported interaction has an impact on the analysis in several ways. Firstly, the discussion of language choices reflects how the informants described the situations, and in particular, what they assume to be behind their interlocutors' behavior in the interactions. The analysis of comments on the informants' language use helps to deepen our understanding of what happens in the interactions, because informants bring *other voices* to their accounts, that is, what *others* have said to them in the reported situations. Secondly, these reports are produced in interview and pair interview situations, which themselves differ from recorded everyday conversations for example. The participants share with the interviewer and/or the other interviewee reports of such situations they presumably find important. Finally, it is relevant that the interviewer asks certain questions which guide the storylines of informants.

The noticing of differences or "foreignness" is an indication of the social norms reflected in the categories people orient to and construct in interactions. The categories that the informants construct in the interviews are analyzed discursively (Fairclough 1989), taking into account their connection to identities and belonging (De Fina and Georgakopoulou 2012: 171). Selected excerpts in the analysis concern the topic of foreignness and how it is intertwined with language switch and comments on one's language use. We have examined what the informants say about the

4 All participants were given information orally and in writing about the protection of their privacy and storage of the data.

interactions as well as how they describe them. Transcribed data examples illuminate specific categorizations and discourses in the data. Since we analyze our data mainly on a discourse and content level, a relatively rough transcription is suitable: Detailed information, for example on overlapped speech or the length of the breaks, is not indicated (see more footnote 5).

Next, we analyze the interactions and divide the analysis into two sections: First, in Chapter 4, we discuss cases when the language switch is the topic, and the informants ponder the reasons for this kind of practice. The chapter focuses on the category of Finnish speaker. Second, in Chapter 5, we move on to the way of speaking, with informants reporting on cases where they were already speaking Finnish and received comments on it. In this section, the categories of non-native Finnish speaker and origin are prominent.

4 Understanding language choices: categorized as someone who does not speak Finnish

This section focuses on the category of Finnish-speaker: how negotiations of someone's belonging or non-belonging to this category are made visible in discourses of our informants. We discuss how the informants report on the interactions and linguistic behavior of Finnish speakers in these encounters and position themselves to them, and here, the informants highlight situations where the language is switched. We illustrate the informants' interpretations of reasons for categorizing them as non-Finnish speakers. It is also apparent how the informants interpret the category of Finn to be intertwined with language use and hence to the categorization as a Finnish speaker or non-Finnish speaker. The first excerpt illustrates how the perception of someone speaking "different"-sounding Finnish or using a language other than Finnish is described to result in a categorization of non-Finnish speaker, which is indicated by switching to English according to the informant.

(1)⁵ Dataset 1 (originally in English).

01 M38_4: - - so people mostly switch to English with me,

02 F36_4: one of the funny ones in relation to that, it doesn't happen so much anymore

5 In the transcription, unclearly heard word/s are marked in single parentheses (), whereas comments made by the transcriber are in double parentheses (()). An omitted word is indicated by a single dash -, and omitted longer parts of the transcription by double dashes - -. Unfinished word is marked by a dash: no-.

- 03 *but when I first moved here it happened all the time cause, one of the first*
 04 *things I could do totally fine in Finnish was, like kassamynti pisteet*
 05 *((“paying at the counter”)) - - so me and my friend would be chatting away*
 06 *in English, waiting to get up to the front, and then I’d speak to the,*
 07 *person working at (the) register in Finnish, so then they’d speak*
 08 *to my ((Finnish)) friend in English. even though, she looks*
 09 *as Finnish as you can possibly ever like.*
((36 s of recording omitted))
- 10 M38_4: *((speaks about similar occasion with his friend)) try (and) guess which*
 11 *one’s the - - they assumed that one of us could only speak English.*
 12 *so tried to figure out like,*
- 13 Int: *aaah so that’s why they are trying to figure out which one is.*
- 14 M38_4: *yeah yeah.*
- 15 F36_4: *(a) requirement. and like with you -, (damn) to be (mean) but your Finnish,*
 16 *comes out with an American accent, on it.*
- 17 M38_4: *yeah.*
- 18 F36_4: *at least a clear accent for someone. which is not necessarily case for me*
 19 *when it’s a - small enough thing as speaking to somebody at a register.*
- 20 M38_4: *(well) all I said - - all I need to do is is roll an R in in in terve ((‘hello’)) - -*
 21 *and it’, they might not catch that it,*
- 22 F36_4: *yeah cause if you don’t really say anything else.*

The informants in Excerpt 1 connect language switches to customer service situations and have noticed customer service staff to behave somewhat oddly (l. 2, “*one of the funny ones*”). Hence, they position themselves to oppose the linguistic choices and underlying categorizations they are going to talk about next. The informants interpret the interaction situation in a way that staff members attempt to find hints of a “default or correct language” and accommodate their actions in the interaction accordingly. Both F36_4 and M38_4 describe their experiences in the customer service situations: Due to overhearing English being used, the customer service person spoke English to F36_4’s Finnish friend (l. 7–8), and M38_4 underlines that in his experience, overhearing English lead to an assumption “that one of us could only speak English” (l. 11). The other option is that language assumptions (l. 10, “*try - guess*”; l. 11–12, “*they assumed; tried to figure out*”) are based on audible hints of foreignness, “non-Finnishness” or “non-nativeness” in speech (l. 16, “*American accent*”; l. 18, “*clear accent*”; l. 20, “*roll an R*”).

Ethnicity has often been reported as a crucial factor when categorizing people as foreign or Finnish, in spite of other factors such as language skills (e.g., Lehtonen 2015: 98–100; Niemelä 2019; see also Ruuska 2020: 99–100). F36_4 describes her interlocutors’ switch to English (l. 7–8), and she questions it by contrasting the use of

English and the appearance of her friend (l. 8–9, “*even though she looks as Finnish as you can possibly ever - -*”). She seems to interpret language choice as an action of categorization and, in fact, in doing so, explicitly connects two categories: Finn and Finnish speaker. In different data examples, informants also discuss who looks more or less like a Finn, that is, fits best into the categorization of Finnishness. According to Lehtonen (2015: 255), youth of immigrant backgrounds have experienced not fitting into the category of Finns due to their appearance, even though they have been living in Finland all their lives. Niemelä (2019: 235–236) argues that based on the pictures of different people shown to them, Finns preferentially assumed as Finns those who were considered culturally and ethnically close to themselves. Thus, in spite of increasing diversity, ideologies that connect ethnic and linguistic Finnishness persist (Ruuska 2020: 99).

In Excerpt 1 the language choice is estimated to happen in the first place due to audible hints, but the role of appearance is also referred to (l. 8–9). In the following, we look more closely at a case where looks are not mentioned but might have an impact on language choice. The informant (F29) is from an Asian family and her appearance is not traditionally ethnic Finnish. However, she has lived in Finland all her life, and Finnish is her strongest language. The possible ideological motivation behind language choice is explicitly expressed by the informant.

(2) Dataset 2.

- 01 F29: *ehkä joskus niinku, törmää semmoseen asiakaspalveluun jossa niinku, mm*
 02 *yritetään olla huomaavaisii ja sit mulle puhutaan*
 03 *englantia, vaik mä ymmärtäisin suomea.*
 04 Int: *aijaa. ((naurahdus)) joo,*
 05 F29: *ni se on joskus mun mielest vähä huvittavaa. ja joskus se menee niin pitkälle*
 06 *et sit me, molemmat suomenkieliset hoidetaan, se, asiakaspalvelutilanne*
 07 *englanniks.*
 08 Int: *okei. et sä jatkat sit englanniks. joo,*
 09 F29: *sit mä jatkan sillee mut et joskus mä saatan sanookki sit jotain niinku*
 10 *suomeks. ja sitten he on et ai anteeks anteeks ja, sillee ni,*
 11 Int: *joo.*
 12 F29: *se on ehkä se, miks mä sitten saatan jatkaa sitä englanniks*
 13 *ku sit siihen tulee semmonen niinku episodi et pyydetään*
 14 *kauheesti anteeks ja,*
 ((20 s of recording omitted))
 15 Int: *joo, joo. tuleeks noit tilanteita usein.*
 16 F29: *aika, nykyään aika usein. mä en tiedä et onks se niinku johtunu siitä et, öö*
 17 *Helsinki on kansainvälistyny ja on paljon niinku turisteja vaikka,*

- 18 *vai mikä siinä on. vai oks ihmiset vaan niinku tietosii et on niinku,*
 19 *paljon erikielisii ja et kaikki ei välttämät*
 20 *suomee ymmärrä.*
 21 Int: *joo.*
 22 F29: *mutta, ehkä se on vaan hassuu et et, et heti, niinku aletaan, ilman et edes*
 23 *niinku tunnustellaan et puhuuks se ihminen suomee, ni siirrytään heti*
 24 *englantiin ni se on vähän semmonen, et okei, että -,*
- [01 F29: maybe sometimes like, I encounter this kind of customer service where
 02 like, ((the customer service person)) is trying to be considerate and then
 03 I am spoken to in English, even though I could understand Finnish.
 04 Int: okay. ((laughs)) yeah,
 05 F29: so in my opinion it's sometimes a bit amusing. and sometimes it goes so far
 06 that then we, both Finnish speakers, deal with the customer service
 07 situation in English.
 08 Int: ok. so you then continue in English. yeah,
 09 F29: then I continue like that but sometimes I might then say something in
 10 Finnish. and then they are like oh sorry sorry and, like that,
 11 Int: yeah.
 12 F29: it's maybe the reason why I might then continue the conversation in
 13 English because otherwise it becomes like an episode where everyone
 14 keeps apologizing and,
 ((20 s of recording omitted))
 15 Int: yeah, yeah. do you come across those situations often.
 16 F29: quite, quite often nowadays. I don't know if it's because, uh
 17 Helsinki has become international and there are, say, a lot of tourists,
 18 or what. or are people just like aware that there are like, lots of
 19 people speaking different languages and that not everyone necessarily
 20 understands Finnish.
 21 Int: yeah.
 22 F29: but, maybe it's just funny that that immediately, like they start speaking in
 23 English, without even like trying to get a feel of whether the person speaks
 24 Finnish, so switching immediately to English it's a bit like, okay, that -.]

In Excerpt 2, the informant criticizes the language choice made by the customer service person, evaluating it as amusing (l. 5) or funny (l. 22, see also Excerpt 1), as it can happen that “Finnish speakers” deal with the whole situation in English. It is noteworthy that informant herself explicitly produces the Finnish speaker categorization (l. 6) which refers to both of the participants in the described situation

(“*we both*”). In the interview, F29 constructs the identity of Finnish speaker contrary to the assumptions in the described situation.

F29 aligns with the interviewer’s comment on continuing in the same language when English is initiated (l. 8) but this statement makes the other option – that is, switching language into Finnish – visible. Thus, F29 adds an explanation for why she does not necessarily challenge the categorization of non-Finnish speaker that is manifested here as language choice: Resisting assumptions concerning one’s language could cause an interruption in the interaction as well as awkwardness in the situation (l. 13–14, “*because otherwise it becomes like an episode where everyone keeps apologizing*”). Hence, negotiating language choice and opposing the categories can be seen as an act of “breaking social rules”. As the extract illustrates, the informant describes that in the actual situation, she might accept the categorization of non-Finnish speaker, but in the interview the categorization is renegotiated.

According to the informant, using English is an indicator of politeness in customer service situations (l. 2, “*((the customer service person)) is trying to be considerate*”). As the interviewer inquires how often this happens to F29 (l. 15), she does not only comment on the frequency of this practice but also provides further reflections on the reasons for using English: internationalization and a common awareness of people in Finnish society who do not necessarily know Finnish (l. 16–20). F29 criticizes how this awareness somehow overrides other options and customer service persons start to speak English immediately, “*without even trying to get feel of whether the person speaks Finnish*” (l. 22–24). Through criticism, this kind of categorical behavior is constructed as inconsiderate, that is, opposite to the motive that the informant mentions first (l. 2). The use of English in Finland has increased during the last few decades, and the language is presumed to gain even more ground, especially in the capital city area (Leppänen et al. 2011). Thus, it is possible that especially in that area, sometimes the need for use of English is overestimated. Although there are already, for example, immigrant initiatives present in Finnish media, the visibility of Finns of color is still low, as Ruuska (2020: 24) states.

The social nature of assumed identity (cf. Pavlenko and Blackledge 2004: 19) is visible here: It is not an identity categorization people feel they align with, but they navigate social situations according to non-spoken rules. Since the informant shares this kind of encounters in the interview, it proves their meaning to her. At the same time, she brings this categorization made by others to light, thereby allowing for the possibility to reshape it.

Excerpt 3 concerns the name of the person when the language is switched to English. Informant F26_9 describes her experiences in customer service encounters.

(3) Dataset 1.

01 F26_9: *esimerkiksi, kaupassa, - kun mun on pakko, näyttää mun ii, ii dee. sitten*
 02 *kun, ihmiset kassalla he - näyttää että, minä en ole suomalainen vain*
 03 *puolalainen vai, jotai, sitten hän, puhuu minulle englanniksi. aina.*
((3 s of recording omitted))

04 F26_9: *joo ensin, on keskusteltu, suomeksi. kaikki hyvin. ja sitten,*
 05 *mä näytän mun ii dee ja aha, okei. ((naurahtaa)) joo ulkomaalainen*
 06 *sitten on pakko puhua englantia - - ehkä, - - ihmiset, ajattelet näin.*
((1 min 35 s of recording omitted))

07 F26_9: *- kun, he eivät tiedä että minä olen ulkomaalainen, se ei haittaa niin kun,*
 08 *suomeksi menee kaikki hyvin. mutta, se on niin ku tuo ongelma jos, he*
 09 *tietävät minun - identiteetti.*

10 F32_9: *okei.*

11 F26_9: *sitten ((tauko)) he voivat vaihtaa ehkä. ((tauko)) se varmasti myös*
 12 *riippuu, ihmisestä.*

[01 F26_9: *for example, in a shop, - when I have to show my ID, then*
 02 *when the people at the counter, they see that I'm not a Finn but instead*
 03 *a(n) Polish or something, then s/he speaks to me in English. always.*
((3 s of recording omitted))

04 F26_9: *yeah, at first, the conversation is in Finnish. everything is fine. and then*
 05 *I show my ID and ah, ok. ((laughs)) yeah ((it's a)) foreigner*
 06 *then one must speak English - - maybe - - people think like that.*
((1 min 35 s of recording omitted))

07 F26_9: *- when they don't know that I'm a foreigner, it doesn't matter like, in*
 08 *Finnish everything goes well. but it's like that problem if they know*
 09 *my - identity.*

10 F32_9: *okay.*

11 F26_9: *then ((pause)) they might switch ((language)) perhaps. ((pause)) it surely*
 12 *also depends on the person.]*

Informant F26_9 recounts the interaction situation with a customer service person and describes how the interaction remains undisturbed up to the point where a hint of non-Finnishness is perceived (the same phenomenon is visible in Piller [2002: 192]). As in Example 1, the category of Finnishness is connected to the other category of Finnish speaker. F26_9 highlights that this kind of hint is “showing ID” (l. 1, 5), which means that the customer service person sees her name in the document. The informant interprets the thoughts and actions of other participants: the recognition of non-belonging to the category of Finnish

(l. 2, “*they see that I’m not a Finn*”; l. 5, “*yeah ((it’s a) foreigner)*”), which in turn triggers the visible sign of non-Finnish speaker categorization, resulting in a switch in language. This has similarities with cases where visual hints may override speech production in the evaluation of the nativeness of speech (Lippi-Green 1997: 226).

F26_9 brings forth several times her experience that everything happens in Finnish until the difference is recognized (l. 2–3, 5–6, 7–9). Language switch is presented to occur “always” (l. 3), but a little later, she points out that it might vary according to the person (l. 11–12). In addition, F26_9 describes using English as a necessary conclusion that interlocutors arrive at when perceiving a foreigner (l. 6, “*then one must speak English*”). The informant does not talk about negotiations of language and her identity in the described situation, but as in the previous extracts, the identity negotiations become actual in the interview as the categorizations are challenged through criticism and reflection. She adds a speculative expression to her description of the mental process she assumes people go through (l. 6, “*- - maybe - - people think like that*”). In the same way, Lindemann’s (2005: 207) study of native US English speakers shows that the first main categorization when constructing categories for people outside the US is native versus non-native speaker of English.

F26_9 names the category of “foreigner” without reservations as she refers to the realization people have when seeing her ID (l. 5, “*yeah ((it’s a) foreigner)*”), and when she defines herself (l. 7, “*when they don’t know that I’m a foreigner*”). Thus, it seems that the problem lies not with the categorization of the informant as a foreigner, but with the inability or refusal to acknowledge that the categories of “foreigner” and “Finnish speaker” are not necessarily mutually exclusive. F26_9 resists the identity ascribed to her in the situation. This is seen in the conversation a little later when the informant recounts how she reacted in the situation: She was angry and left before the actual matter was finished. Hence, the language switch leads to the disruption of the encounter, which was evidently not the desired result in a customer service situation. It has to be noticed that in addition to the cases where English use was challenged, we had at least one example where the interviewee wanted service in English but did not receive it; in that case even negotiation was not enough, but here, we focused on cases when the negotiation did not occur.

To conclude the discussion of the chapter, belonging or non-belonging to the categories of Finnish speaker and Finn is constructed in the informants’ accounts when they reflect on their interpretations of the interactions where their interlocutors have switched to English. They mentioned overhearing English, politeness, and internationalization as well as seeing a foreign name as the reasons for

language choice and contested these assumptions in many ways. The interviewees speculated about the practices and positioned themselves in the interview situations critically while also re-creating the discourses and boundaries. Context has its own effect on language choice: Customer service situations are highlighted in the descriptions of several informants. These are encounters with complete strangers which might be of relevance to our analysis. It is interesting that good customer service is understood in such different ways: On the one hand, English can be interpreted as an inclusive practice displaying an international attitude. On the other hand, as seen here from the customer's perspective, switching to English appears as an exclusionary practice, categorizing the person as a non-Finnish-speaker contrary to reality. Our study shows that informants do not necessarily favor language choice that is done on their behalf, instead preferring negotiation as a means to improve service (for language negotiations at the service desk, see Losa and Varga 2016). All in all, it seems that the interview situation enables criticism and identity negotiations which perhaps were not possible in the actual encounter.

5 Trying to understand comments on language: categorized as not belonging here

In this section, we discuss the informants' accounts on how categorizations are constructed in commenting language. Unlike in Chapter 4, in the recounted situations of this chapter, belonging to certain categories is not connected to language switch; instead, the interviewees tell how they have received comments on their Finnish language use. That is why, in the following excerpts, categories of non-native Finnish-speaker as well as the category of origin are prominent. We focus on how the informants describe the reasons behind native speakers' comments on their different way of speaking Finnish or their assumed different background – that is, the categories of non-native speaker and origin respectively.

5.1 Positive comments on language use

The informants report how they have received comments that people cannot distinguish them from native Finns, or consider their linguistic resources to be almost equal to that of natives. Commenting carries the ideological assumption that

there is a difference between Finns and “the others”; such comments are triggered by the informant’s ethnicity or any knowledge that he or she is of a different background. This kind of categorization can be seen as an exclusive practice, and comments highlight language ownership (e.g., Higgins 2003) and the perception of the native speaker as an ideal in addition to hinting that the speaker has the authority to judge and decide the boundaries of Finnishness. By recounting these occasions, the informants strengthen these experiences and make them visible to others. Positive evaluations may question the role of Finnish in the informant’s repertoire: Despite the fact that there are no audible differences, it must be underlined that the interviewees were not born into this language tradition (cf. Leung et al. 1997: 557). However, there is also an attempt to understand the language use of someone who does not seem to fit into traditional categories; additionally, this kind of commenting can be seen as doubting the validity of categorization and hence as an attempt to discuss the contents of linguistic categories.

Bolonyai’s (2018: 259, 265) research suggests that perceiving non-native accents and making them visible in conversation is a boundary-making practice and questions like “Where are you from?” are explicit markers of perceived otherness. Piller (2002: 192) has noted that people sometimes perceive accents as soon as they gain knowledge of a speaker’s linguistic identity. Ideologies of authenticity can be detected in these reflections; origins and roots are seen as the basis of the “authentic language” (cf. Woolard 2013: 222). The question of the category of origin is illustrated in Excerpt 4 where M47 talks about his experiences:

(4) Dataset 2.

- 01 Int: *mm, ootsä saanu muita kommentteja sun, niinku, puhetavasta tai,*
 02 *kielenkäytöstä muuta ku että,*
 03 M47: *mno siis ku tapaa asiakkaitten kanssa ni ne kysyy kyllä multa että*
 04 *kauanko oon, olen, ollu, Suomessa, joka voi viitata siihen että ne on*
 05 *niiku huomanneet mun nimestä et se on mun,*
 06 Int: *joo.*
 07 M47: *mul o eri nimi ku suomalaisilla ja sitte nähneet ehkä*
 08 *mu profilista että,*
 09 Int: *joo.*
 10 M47: *mul o erillaine nenä ku suomalaisilla tai jotai nii sitte tota,*
 11 Int: *aijaa. ((nauraa))*
 12 M47: *ni tota, tai si- ja sitte kolmas vaihtoeht- ne on kuulleet*
 13 *mun puhetavasta et mul on jotakin, jostakin muualta,*

- 14 Int: *nii.*
 15 M47: *ne on kysyny multa sit kauanko olen ollu Suomessa sit mä sanon et*
 16 *seiskytyhdeksän, tosi hyvin puhut suomea.*
 17 Int: *nii. okei. ((nauraa))*
 18 M47: *elikkä siis, siit voi jotai päätellä et jotkut hu-,*
 19 *jotkut niinku siihe reagoi,*
- [01 Int: mm, have you received other comments on your, like, way of speaking
 02 or language use other than,
 03 M47: well so when I meet clients they do ask me
 04 how long I have been in Finland, which may indicate that they have
 05 like noticed from my name that it's my,
 06 Int: yeah.
 07 M47: I have a different name than Finns have and then they have seen
 08 from my profile that,
 09 Int: yeah.
 10 M47: I have a different nose than Finns have or something so then,
 11 Int: okay. ((laughs))
 12 M47: well, or the- and then the third option is that they have heard from
 13 my way of speaking that I have something from somewhere else.
 14 Int: yes.
 15 M47: they have then asked me how long I have been in Finland and then I say
 16 the year 1979, you speak Finnish very well.
 17 Int: yes. okay. ((laughs))
 18 M47: so yeah, a conclusion you can draw from that is that some people
 19 no-((tice)) some people like react to it ((my way of speaking Finnish)),]

The origin of a person appears as a relevant category: The informant quotes the questioning that he encounters in his daily life (l. 3–4). Then he begins to guess the reason for categorization and, in this excerpt, sums up the cues of name, appearance (l. 8, “*profile*”), and way of speaking. He formulates these explanations without hesitation, which might indicate that he has thought of this question before, but at least in the interview situation he positions himself with these qualities as an outsider. He uses his qualities as resources in his narration, and the interviewer reacts with laughter, showing amusement (l. 11, 17). It is interesting that M47 has lived in Finland since childhood (he immigrated when he was eight) but still receives positive comments on his language skills (l. 16, “*you speak Finnish very well*”) (see also, e.g., Bolonyai 2018). Thus, the ideology of a permanent link between language, body, and region, as Cornips (2020) has put it, is visible here. M47 himself concludes

that there must be something in his way of speaking (l. 18–19, “*a conclusion you can draw from that is that some people - - react to it*”), which was indeed the interviewer’s question here (l. 1–2, “*have you received other comments on your, like, way of speaking or language use other than*”). In this case, the language skills of the informant do not seem to differ from that of the so-called native. In Excerpt 4, the name and appearance the informant mentioned first – and not necessarily his actual language skills – could also be reason enough to trigger categorization. The comments about speaking *very well* reflect the assumption that knowing Finnish is somehow surprising despite the amount of time one has spent in a Finnish-speaking environment. All in all, questions about one’s origin construct the idea of difference (Bolonyai 2018). The informants discuss the discourses of belonging and evaluate these categorizations; in the case of a person who has been part of the local society for a long time, it may trigger irritation, but as in the Excerpt 4, the attitude is more humorous, and the informant does not oppose the questions about the length of his residence in Finland.

5.2 Critical comments on language use

In the following section, the question about a speaker’s origin is presented in a different light: Informants report critical comments that are based on audible differences and that construct categories revealing ideologies of nativeness and belonging. In Excerpt 5, the informant (M67) is a man of German origin who migrated to Finland in 1974 as a young adult. He describes his experiences and feelings on moving and recalls an incident in which a salesperson in a department store had commented on his way of speaking Finnish as “miserable”. However, he interpreted this evaluation positively, which is apparent from the context of his comment.

(5) Dataset 2.

- 01 M67: - - ja kun, rupesin solkkaamaan, eev, suomea niin, niin, ee, yksinoman se
 02 yritys jo palkittiin tavattoman suuresti. esimerkiksi, ee joku, ee joku
 03 Sokoksen myyjä Helsingissä, semmonen naispuolinen, yli viiskymmentä,
 04 kysyi minulta mistä päin Suomea olet kun niin kurjaa suomea puhut.
 05 minä menin t- t- tuon e- myyntitiskin taakse halasin häntä, sanoin kiitos
 06 kun minua, luokittelit suomalaiseksi. että että minä olen ulkomaalainen
 07 ja yritän oppia suomea. ((naurua))
 08 Int: ((naurua)) nii, nii-i, kyllä,
 09 M67: se oli ihastutava. hän, tietenkin pelkäs hurjasti että ajatelinko oli niin, l-

10 *laukonut tämmöstä niinku tavalaan sopimatonta. Että minä tekisin*
 11 *valituksen mut päinvastoin.*

[01 M67: -- and as I began to babble in Finnish, just the attempt in itself was
 02 already handsomely rewarded. For example, a salesperson at Sokos
 03 ((a department store)) in Helsinki, a female in her fifties, asked me which
 04 part of Finland I am from, since I speak such miserable Finnish. I went
 05 over to the other side of the counter and embraced her, I said thank you
 06 for categorizing me as a Finn. that in fact I'm a foreigner and
 07 I try to learn Finnish. ((laughter))
 08 Int: ((laughter)) yes, yeah, alright,
 09 M67: it was delightful. she, of course, was awfully scared that I thought she had
 10 said something that was somehow inappropriate. that I would make
 11 a complaint but ((it was actually)) the opposite.]

The informant describes how his attempts to speak Finnish were rewarded “handsomely” (l. 2). The assessment of the informant’s “miserable” Finnish was combined with the question of which part of Finland he was from (l. 3–4), and the category of origin is activated. This was crucial to his delighted reaction: He describes how he thanked the salesperson with words and even in an embodied way for categorizing him as a Finn (l. 5–6) when the question about his origin was confined to regions of Finland. The strong reaction highlights his positive experience that he still after decades recalls as a milestone in his linguistic story as a Finnish speaker. The orientation towards nativeness is clear, and the categorization of the informant as a dialect speaker is at the same time the categorization of him as a native speaker, which was the desired and highly valued outcome (cf. Ruuska 2020: 105). The categorization made by the other person appears to override the informant’s self-categorization as a foreigner. The motivation for the comment was audible observation, but the topic of foreignness comes up only when the informant himself included this label in his self-presentation (l. 6, “*in fact I’m a foreigner*”). It must be noted that at the time of this interaction, which probably occurred in the seventies, there were only a few people of foreign background in Finland but increasing numbers of migrants from other parts of the country to Helsinki (cf. Latomaa and Nuolijärvi 2005: 132).

In the following Excerpt 6, the informant, who is of Estonian background, notes the concept of *huono suomi* (‘bad Finnish’), which refers to a recognizable way of speaking differently, such as speech with a “foreign accent” or anything non-idiomatic (Lehtonen 2015: 240; Niemelä 2019: 237–238). The informant interprets “bad Finnish” particularly in the sense of “foreignness”: It is something that goes against

the norms of an ideal, coherent language and thus underlines the differences in the ways Finnish is used (see also Halonen 2012: 453–456), even if one might not produce notable mistakes. She reports that she often receives comments on her language at work.

(6) Dataset 1.

- 01 F45_3: *joo. mulle itse asiassa oli moni [asiakas]⁶ sanonut että, ((matkii:)) että*
 02 *[ammattinimike] puhuu vähä huonoa suomea.*
((3 s of recording omitted))
- 03 F45_3: *tavan ihmiset monesti sanoo ku se ei, -, huono suomi ei tarkotahan sitä*
 04 *että haukutaan että mä puhun, huonosti, vaan se tarkoittaa että*
 05 *mä en oo, se ei oo äidinkieli. et ei ne loukkaamalla ja sitten että*
 06 *((matkii:)) mistäpäin sä olet kotoisin ja, ja, sitten, niinku ((matkii:)) joo*
 07 *että Viro ihanaa minäkin olen käynyt*
 08 *tämmöstä että. ((nauraa))*
- [01 F45_3: *yes. in fact many [clients] had said to me that, ((imitating:)) that*
 02 *[occupational title] speaks little bit bad Finnish.*
((3 s of recording omitted))
- 03 F45_3: *ordinary people often say that it isn't, -, bad Finnish doesn't mean that*
 04 *they are criticizing me for speaking badly, but instead it means that I'm*
 05 *not, it's not ((my)) mother tongue. that they don't ((mean to offend me))*
 06 *and then ((imitating:)) where are you from and, and then, like*
 07 *((imitating:)) yes, Estonia, wonderful, I too have been there,*
 08 *((something)) like that. ((laughs))]*

The informant refers to how her interactants have pointed out the difference in her Finnish (l. 2, “*bad Finnish*”). In the informant’s opinion, the people who comment on her Finnish do not mean to offend her (l. 3–5) but instead to show that they recognize that Finnish is not her mother tongue (l. 5) – that is, her belonging to the category of non-native speaker. Again, the attitude towards the comments on “bad” language is seen as positive. F_45_3 emphasizes that the underlying meaning is not negative, nor do the people mean that her actual language use was bad; instead, they serve as a way to highlight other qualities of the speaker using the categorization as non-native speaker and coming from somewhere else, that is, the category of origin. A similar observation has already been made in Lindemann’s (2005: 211) study: “broken English” is not necessarily used to indicate inadequate language, and respondents define “accented” speech in different ways.

6 Text in square brackets represents redacted personal details about the informant.

The pejorative meaning of “bad” is expressed only implicitly in Excerpt 6, as the informant rejects this (obvious) meaning and gives it a new definition (4–5). Bolonyai (2018) remarks that even though categorizations are often considered to be everyday processes of othering, questions regarding one’s origin do not have to be intentionally hostile and exclusionary. Rather, they can be seen as positive curiosity and the seeking out of potential categories of inclusion. However, Fleras (2016) highlights nature of this kind of verbal behavior: It is seemingly innocuous but can be taken as offensive “racial micro-aggressions”. These micro-aggressions often reflect the confluence of language and race in the unequal positioning of individuals in interaction (Alim 2016). Also, positive comments given to certain people who represent minorities can include implications that certain groups are not expected to speak certain languages well (see Excerpt 4). This sort of commenting can be termed “raciolinguistic exceptionalism,” a way to exceptionalize one individual while racializing an entire group (Alim and Smitherman 2020).

Alongside her remark on the interpretation of comments she has received concerning her Finnish language, F45_3 also supplements her positive interpretation of the other party’s comment by further quoting a possible dialogue which again contains a question about origin and an enthusiastic comment about the informant’s home country (l. 7, “*wonderful*”). Such comments may be a way for the interactant to affiliate with the interviewee. Thus, the motivation for commenting “bad Finnish” is not to point out misunderstandings or challenges in understanding, but curiosity and a desire to talk about and highlight the person’s origin.

As a summary to Chapter 5, it can be concluded that comments highlight both the ideological connection between language skills and origins and the ways in which someone takes the position to evaluate and categorize others according to his/her perceptions. Commenting on language – both in a positive or negative way – can be a boundary-making practice: Complimenting one’s language skills highlights their origins and thus the differences between them and their interlocutor(s), as Example 4 illustrated. However, taking a closer look also reveals how an inclusive interpretation is possible even in the case of negative evaluation. Excerpt 5 contained an assumption that the informant was from another part of the country and belonged to the “Finns”, and in Excerpt 6, recognizing one’s “bad Finnish” provided an opportunity to show affiliation with the speaker.

6 Conclusions and discussion

This study discussed categories of linguistic (non)belonging in reported interactions in interviews. (Non-)Finnish speaker was the main category as the informants recounted the language choice of the other party in their everyday experiences, and

the category of non-native Finnish-speaker and the category of origin as not belonging here were prominent as the informants discussed the comments they had received on their Finnish language use. The categorizations were constructed and intertwined with the informants' use of Finnish and their name and appearance. The aim was to examine the motivations behind the reported practices: first, how the informants interpreted their interlocutors' use of English instead of Finnish, and secondly, how they interpreted their interlocutors' comments on their Finnish language use. The interview interactions involved identity negotiations as the interviewees positioned themselves to categorizations and subsequently the ideologies behind them.

In Chapter 4, the focus was on switching language to English, through which the informants were categorized as non-Finnish speakers contrary to their own desires. They described themselves as Finnish speakers in specific situations and, for example, evaluated the language choice of customer service persons as funny. Furthermore, they speculated on the reasons for the possible switch, such as a different accent and appearance, internationalization and politeness, and a name that differed from a typical Finnish name. Typically, the categorization of someone who does not speak Finnish evoked negative feelings. However, accounts on direct attempts to subvert categorizations and direct negotiations on language choice are rare in the data (cf. Bolonyai 2018: 259, 269). Direct confrontations were usually not favored, at least not with strangers. There is a danger of being negatively judged if one challenges the other party's good intentions to be polite (cf. Bolonyai 2018). Mismatches in common ground are evident: Finns are not aware that their language choice (English) is interpreted negatively, and interactants orient to different norms. Finns might have an aim to be welcoming and polite, displaying an international attitude, whereas the informants orient to Finnishness, integration into Finnish life, and speaking Finnish.

Commenting on one's Finnish language raised slightly different views on categorizations, as Chapter 5 proved. Evaluating comments are based on categorizing speakers as not belonging here, and the evaluator questions the authenticity and belonging of their interlocutors by commenting on their language, and thus ideologies of authenticity are made visible (Woolard 2013). However, the nuances of these categories of origin and nativeness were detected as the examination was focused on positive and negative comments in their context. The positive comment of speaking "very well" got the informant to discuss one's qualities as a non-native Finn, whereas the negative comment of not being from here had been delightful for the speaker as he felt connected to Finnish dialect speakers and, consequently, "original" native Finnish speakers. In addition, "bad Finnish" was mentioned as not only showing non-native speech but in the end expressing affiliation with the speaker's origin.

Hence, categorizations of not belonging here are not only accepted but also treated with humor, benevolently, even if they are unfair and unfounded. The critique is focused on cases in which the interlocutor has jumped to the conclusion to switch language or comment on it due to a certain name or appearance. However, when an imagined difference is perceived and commented on, there is also a possibility to negotiate new, broader definitions of being a Finnish speaker and accept greater diversity. Negotiation on language would establish new categories and help to see the boundaries as fluid; as Makihara's (2009) study on Easter Island proves, an ideology that acknowledges heterogenous competences exists and can be fostered, for instance, through creativity in language practices.

All in all, we have shown how our informants use interview situations as a space to criticize and renegotiate the actions and linguistic choices of others. That is, they discuss languages, identities, and ideologies, which would not have been suitable in the actual situation due to the orientation to the issue at hand, or because they did not want to challenge the other party's inquiries about their origin. In addition, the study offered interpretations of the behavior of others: The informants create categorizations, sometimes accepting and sometimes rejecting them. Studying both language choice and direct commenting shows the interviewees' ideological positioning among Finnish speakers. The study shows how the categorizations of "not belonging here" do not in itself constitute a problem, and the comments on language use are sometimes interpreted in an unexpected way so that the situation, not just the word choice, must be taken into account. Bringing together the categorizations that are negotiated in interviews gives a deeper understanding on how speaking many languages and having various backgrounds enrich the established ways of thinking about the category of Finnish speaker. For future research, it would be interesting to conduct an even more detailed analysis of categorizations and specific situations, and to bring both parties together to discuss these practices and findings.

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collecting the data. The University of Helsinki Ethical Review Board in Humanities and Social and Behavioral Sciences has provided a description of the ethical review system for research in Finland concerning the dataset and it is available by request.

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