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## **Abstract**

The following thesis displays research on code-switching within the oil- and gas industry based out of Rogaland county in Norway. The thesis' objective was to discover (1) where code-switching occurred in the workplace, (2) how code-switching was perceived among the workers of these workplaces and (3) how it was possible to view code-switching as a viable resource within these workplaces. The foundation for the thesis were five subjects working within different companies in the oil- and gas industry based out of Rogaland in Norway participating in sound recorded interviews with open ended questions. The thesis falls under the category of sociolinguistics and displays different aspects to the concept of code-switching and contributes previous studies on code-switching in a multicultural and multilingual workplace. It is seen that code-switching occurred in many instances of the working environment for the subjects. Lunchrooms, meetings, written work material and general conversations. It is especially displayed in connection to foreign colleagues and as a major part of a multilingual working environment. The general feeling from this thesis was that code-switching is perceived and used in a positive and constructive manner among the workers in oil- and gas related workplaces.

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# From industry to conversation: Code-switching among native Norwegian oil industry workers

## 1. Introduction

This thesis is a study of how Norwegian employees within the oil and gas industry based out of Rogaland county (Norway) use code-switching as a means for communication in the workplace. The main approach has been commonalities in the practical and social usage of English work-related words and phrases among workers who were directly or indirectly involved with offshore or onshore processes, whether that was ‘equipment’, ‘staff’, ‘supply’ or ‘management’. The research questions for this thesis were the following: (1) Where does code-switching occur in the workplace, (2) how is code-switching perceived among the workers and (3) how is it possible to view code-switching as a viable resource within the workplace. The overall goal was to research multilingual practices in this kind of work environment. To accommodate this study, a qualitative comparison between employees whose work descriptions fell under the categories mentioned above has been performed. Five participants who fit the previously mentioned parameters was part of making the structural foundation for this thesis. The subjects interviewed in this thesis had Norwegian as their first language, as it was viewed as more reliable to compare data when the parameters were equal.

The interviews have been conducted in Norwegian and transcribed into English. The idea of this was to make the subjects more relaxed, enabling them to speak more freely, and interact in a way that was closest to the ‘real life’ scenario they met at work. There has also been a review of previous work on similar research. Although most of this research does not constitute all concepts of code-switching, they provided solid insights and powerful discourse on language in the workplace, and have been of great importance for this thesis. The presented part of methods and methodology in chapter 3 have answered and raised some questions regarding subject interviews, especially on the nationality and spoken language of the subjects. The initial thought of this thesis was to do as Socarraz-Novoa (2015) did in her research on code-switching within a multilingual workplace at a university. She integrated herself in the workplace environment and took an active part in the observation over a longer period of time. However, due to the global Covid-19 pandemic, there was unfortunately no possibility of conducting all of the interviews at the subjects’ workplaces. Lastly, this thesis

has reflected on the relevance of this project for how it can enable further research on sociolinguistics and what existing research it may contribute to.

## 1.1 Background

Code-switching is a difficult concept to determine, but completely necessary to capture the essence of this thesis. There are different views as to how researchers define this concept, but some commonalities can be observed. Meyerhoff explains how “moving between distinct varieties is known as code switching” (Meyerhoff, 2006:116). By that she is referring to different varieties of language. Code-switching refers to those language changes that happen in a single utterance in an unchanged setting, e.g. shifting between English and Norwegian when speaking with your friends from school (Bullock & Torbio, 2009:2). By that notion, one could see code-switching in the light of a multilingual workplace environment, where colleagues with different languages change, or switch between Norwegian and English in order to progress the conversation.

This thesis has reviewed some previous works on language in the workplace. Among these there have been central elements from Hiss's (2017) study on multilingualism in the workplace. This study involved multilingualism among different ethnolinguistic groups in a Norwegian copper mine in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. This study was relevant because it involved a British mining company operating in another country. Parallels have been drawn to much of the oil-oriented businesses stationed in Rogaland, which also involved international companies employing people from different ethnolinguistic groups and operated in Norway. Condamines' (2010) study of risk management related to workplace language, which especially focused on professional terminology, proved relevant to this thesis. Without the main focus of risk and risk management, this thesis will also be addressing terminology as a central aspect under the branch of sociolinguistics. Socarraz-Novoa (2015) looks at code-switching at a multilingual university and connects how participants in a multilingual and multicultural workplace categories instances of code-switching towards different assigned meanings. The Mondada (2007) case study on bilingualism in a French hospital portrays how code-switching organizes action, interaction and participation, and are a part of establishing and displaying social relations and membership in a talk-in operation with remote viewing.

## 1.2 Method and methodology

In the process of this thesis, qualitative interviews have been conducted. Five workers who fit the subject description required for the previous delimitations will be the basis for this thesis. This concurs with both Mondada (2007) and Socarraz-Novova's (2015) studies of code-switching within a workplace. Although Mondada's (2007) study is based on observing a medical operation, and Socarraz-Novova's (2015) observations were from a university, they both used five and six participants for the basis of their analysis. The subjects of this thesis needed to have a hundred percent position at a company based out of Rogaland county in Norway, whose primary business was related to the oil and gas industry. It was also important that the employees participating in this study had worked at the firm for at least six months. The reason for this was to make sure that the subjects were familiar with their job description and had (hopefully) developed a workday consisting of regular tasks relating to the previously mentioned areas of work (equipment, staff, supply or management). This was to make sure that he/she was not involved in an 'educating program' at the time of the interviews. In order to compare the subjects of the study in a reasonable way, the selected subjects needed to be employed and work primarily at an office onshore. This was mainly because of the requirements for entering an offshore workplace, where one needs to go through a physical check and take a safety course. Doing this only allowed for entering one specific offshore installation. If one were to collect data from several installations this would have required too much time and expenses (Brenna, 2019). By doing these interviews from various companies, one was able to determine a broader understanding, and enable possible observations of the actual workplace environment, but because of the global Covid-19 pandemic this was not possible with more than the first subject, who was interviewed before the pandemic reached Norway. Most of the participants were known to the interviewer through social networks from the university of Stavanger. The questions of interest will address work related language, such as phrases, lexical words, terminology and social communication with other employees referencing specifically to progress descriptions and social connections. The questioning was supposed to be a conversation rather than short specific answers. Initially, the thought was to conduct the interviews in English as Socarraz-Novova (2015) did. However, as her place of study was an international university within academia with a primary focus on language it was unrealistic to expect the subjects of this study to possess the same understanding of English. Therefore, the interviews were conducted in Norwegian and transcribed into English.

### 1.3 Relevance

A Norwegian worker with a hundred percent working position will spend between 37,5-40 paid hours a week doing things related to his or her job (Bergsli, 2018). This considerable amount of time is worth examining in order to further knowledge on how a person uses language with regards to code-switching as a way of communicating more effectively, but also as a way of establishing identity, social bonds within the line of work. Although there are several factors that determine how a person utters meaningful talk, words and phrases in a workplace, this thesis have then, arguably, added information and understanding on how code-switching occurs and is perceived as a viable language resource. The thesis will build and contribute to Socarraz-Novoa's (2015) research on codeswitching at a multilingual university. She argues that "Future research should study various multicultural and multilingual groups, in order to obtain and compare more data" (Socarraz-Novoa, 2015:7). By adding an alternative workplace in a different setting, but with some of the common parameters of the research, one enables knowledge on code-switching in a multilingual workplace.

## 2. Research Context

### 2.1 Theoretical Background

This thesis will have its primary focus on the concept of code-switching and its conversational essence. The approach will then fall under the branch of sociolinguistics (Gardner-Schloros, 2009: 8). The central problem is how code-switching, jargon and foreign words occur within an oil and gas related workplace environment, and how this affects the employees' personal and professional identity. Although much work has been done on multilingualism and identity in the workplace, this thesis will focus on these central concepts within the branch of sociolinguistics; Code-switching, jargon and foreign word usage and specifically how these are connected with language and identity in a multilingual workplace. By this way of thinking it is viable to isolate three central factors with regards to code-switching in a particular instance: (1) Factors which are independent from some speakers and circumstances where language varieties are used, but affect all the speakers in that given speech community. Power relations, prestige and covert prestige are examples of these factors (Gardner-Schloros, 2009: 42-43). (2) Factors relating to the speakers and their identity, as individuals and as members of groups; that being social networks, relationships, attitudes, ideologies, perception of others and self-perception (Gardner-Schloros, 2009: 43). (3) Internal conversational factors where code-switching is used. As code-switching is a conversational resource it can be used to better structure and develop the discourse between bilinguals as opposed to monolinguals (Gardner-Schloros, 2009: 43). Code-switching is a phenomenon of interest among researchers in the field of linguistics and is widely studied. A consequence of this is that it has evaded a uniform definition among researchers (Bullock & Toribio, 2009: 1-2). However, one must be able to make general definitions in order to understand the concept. Code-switching can be explained as "the use of several languages or dialects in the same conversation or sentence by bilingual people" (Gardner-Schloros 2009: 4). Bullock & Toribio (2009: 1) explains it as "the ability on the part of bilinguals to alternate effortlessly between their two languages". It is implicit by these two broad definitions that they are both describing code-switching. The ability to change between two or more languages in a conversation, utterance, or discourse.

### 2.2 Literature Review

The following four studies will be presented thematically by importance. The first three sources are case studies. The Hiss (2017) study's empirical background is much older than

this thesis, but it is relevant because of its close link to international businesses operating in Norway and employing workers with different ethnolinguistic backgrounds. The second case study (Socarraz-Novoa, 2015) is also closely linked to code-switching. Here, the study displays a method which is highly favorable regarding the approach to data gathering which was first intended in this thesis. It also demonstrates a valuable link between language and identity in a working environment. The third source (Mondada, 2007) gives a thorough and explicit view of a working situation where code-switching not only occurs but is central in the organization of speech. The fourth (Condamines, 2010) paper is not directly related to code-switching but can however provide valuable insight in how terminology can have a connection with risk related to language use in the workplace.

Hiss's (2017) study on multilingualism in the workplace involves different ethnolinguistic groups in a Norwegian copper mine in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. This study is relevant because it involves a British mining company operating in another country. Parallels can be drawn to much of the oil-oriented businesses stationed in Stavanger, which also involves international companies employing people from different ethnolinguistic groups and operating in Norway. The mining company's workforce consisted of different ethnolinguistic groups from Norway, England, Sweden, Russia, and Germany. There were also Kven and Sámi workers. Hiss continues to draw a parallel between the Norwegian government's assimilation policy and the mining company's refusal of its implementation. The laborers would primarily work in the same ethnic groups and were allowed to speak their native language. Hiss argues that in doing so, the company was able to keep the wages down and maintain a lucrative economic situation. This, however, changed over the years, and the workforce was later also organized into mixed ethnic teams (Hiss 2017: 705)

The central aspect of this study is that it relates to the diversity of multilingualism in an industrial workplace and how it was distributed. English was the dominant language used in official and administrative situations and writings, while local language was used in everyday situations. The blue-collar workers used a mix of different linguistic varieties in the workplace. Often the workers would do paperwork of different varieties, and while the official frameworks of documents and listings for the Alten Copper Mine (ACW) were in English, some of the content could appear in Norwegian or Kven. For example, in a delivery form which registered who delivered what, a man and his wife had been registered as "Sall. Karpiaine og kone", which translates to *Sallomon Karpiaine and wife*. Since *Karpiaine* is a Kven name, one can assume the Sallomon and his wife were Kven and the person who

registered them was Norwegian because he or she wrote “kone” as wife (Hiss, 2017: 706). This could be an important factor in this thesis as well, namely how the language is distributed between the employees, but also how it is used depending on work-talk and official writings or private conversations concerning non-work-related talk or writing.

Another important discovery in this study is the diverse multilingualism between the Norwegian and Kven families. While all the Norwegian families were able to speak Kven to some degree, only a few individuals of the Kven population in Kåfjord were able to speak Norwegian. Hiss explains this as the outcome of the ACW’s language diversity efforts, especially towards the Kven population. As they were the most affordable workers of the mine, the ACW had a great incentive in letting them live on a location separate from the rest of the workforce. They also had their own schools where the Kven language was practiced (Hiss, 2017: 209) It could have value, in a modern adaptation, to study if some nationalities or workforces have different contracts or opportunities when it comes to facilities provided by their employer and how that would affect their linguistic abilities. This would necessarily be a study on the socio-economic background which would prompt or create these contracts and opportunities in question. However, the study displays little to no information about identity and language, in particular, it lacks in terms of personal thoughts and identity. Most of the written material is done by directors and administrators of the ACW. This leaves a gap where it would be interesting to have explicit written material from the workers themselves, for example about their feelings, thoughts or experiences towards language, identity, communication, and collaboration among the diverse workforces of the copper mine.

When looking at concrete instances of code-switching, Socarraz-Novoa’s (2015) study on code-switching in a multilingual workplace gives valuable insight into different meanings ascribed by interlocutors at a multilingual university in Spain. She identifies three meanings as a result of code-switching: (1) Face-saving, (2) expression of raw emotion, and (3) compartmentalization of work and private life. Face-saving here denotes a sense of ‘self’ and refers to politeness and acknowledgement of others’ identities. She uses an example where the faculty members of the university switches from English to Spanish when the head of the department (M.M) walks into the room. One of the members labels this as politeness or respect because of their knowledge of M.M’s lack of comfort in her proficiency of English (Socarraz-Novoa, 2015: 5). Expression of raw emotion refers to how emotions and sudden situations can produce a switch in language, code-switching, generally from the second language to the first. Here, Socarraz-Novoa uses a situation that occurred when the faculty

members received a question from another individual at the university on something administrative that they did not know the answer to. The individual becomes upset, and after he/she has walked out of the room, one of the faculty members utters: “que morro tiene” which can be translated to *oh, what nerve*. Socarraz-Novoa explains how emotions are often expressed in one’s first language, because that is how we first learned to express ourselves, whether it was anger, excitement or another spontaneous emotion, one tends to use verbal utterances in the first language. When considering this in a workplace environment such as the oil industry, which can be unpredictable, a potential study from this specific feature would be interesting to see. To recognize the occurrences of this feature when something unexpected or challenging happens in the workplace, would provide us with more insight into how strong this tendency is.

Compartmentalization of work and private life relates to the division of how switches occur when the theme of the conversation is changed. When talking about parts of life that were linked to work, the subjects mainly spoke in their native language, and when speaking of work-related topics, the language preferred was English (Socarraz-Novoa, 2015: 6). An example of this is when a work-related conversation, carried out mainly in English, between Socarraz-Novoa and one of the subjects includes a story from a hairdresser where the ceiling was leaking. The subject uses the Spanish word “pelu” for *hairdresser* and “goteando” for *leaking*. This is because the words used are so clearly not words that the subject would use on a regular basis in a work-oriented conversation, and the knowledge that the recipient in this setting has Spanish as her first language. This could be an interesting factor among oil industry workers as well: specifically, how the subjects use their language given the specific topic. Will they as well switch between first- and second language depending on work related talk or private life conversation, or will the conversation mainly transpire in one language?

The study shows a variety of concrete examples on code-switching, as well as highlighting the increased importance of this topic: “the phenomenon of code-switching is more prevalent as groups of people from around the world work together in a shared place” (Socarraz-Novoa 2015: 7). However, given that the interviews in this thesis will be conducted with a smaller foundation when it comes to observation, it can be difficult to obtain the same kind of specific results and instances of code-switching. Socarraz-Novoa knew the participants on a work-basis, and integrated herself in meetings and situations, but this is not the case for the interviews conducted in this thesis. It can for instance be difficult to get expressions of raw emotions, because the interviews will then require the subjects to

remember exact situations where they expressed themselves based on an emotion. In addition to this, the subjects must also remember how and in what language they expressed that emotion.

Reviewing Mondada's (2007) case study on bilingualism in a French hospital, this provides an interesting take on how code-switching can be defined as a "resource for the organization of action and interaction" (2007: 297). Situated as a medical operation with surgeons, viewing trainees, and external experts all communicating together, the study shows how code-switching not only relates to identity or ethnicity but how code-switching can *demonstrate* and *construct* notions of identity and ethnicity. The medical procedure is transmitted via cameras to a screen in a remote amphitheater where students, teachers and experts are gathered to view the procedure. Mondada argues how code-switching, in this situation, organizes action, interaction, participation and at the same time distinguishes between status, social relations and membership (Mondada 2007: 301).

Moreover, the study shows how code-switching can be seen as multilayered and multifunctional in specific situations. She continues to argue how code-switching helps organizing turns and sequences in specific talk-in-interaction. As code-switching here is perceived as an organizer of speech turns, it categorizes the participants into groups (Mondada 2007: 314-315). In that way, code-switching is here closely linked with personal and professional identity, and specifically how code-switching helps the correspondence of interactional and institutional order, and how these two affect each other. Mondada has a particular perspective on the way the interaction with code-switching works for the talk-in interaction; (1) Code-switching is a resource that is both defined and shaped by the participants and at the same time makes a specific order of interaction. (2) Mobilized in relevant ways, this resource shows how code-switching is adjusted along the way of sequence and of turn. (3) By choosing code-switching instead of another resource, one can produce a specific social and interactional positioning for the participants. (4) The participants orient and adjust to this position as they prepare for their turn (Mondada 2007: 300-301). A great example of this is when the surgeon, explaining his procedure for a specific cut in the patient, switches from English to French when directing the camera operator on where to film; "after that, we know that", "montre a gauche" which means *show to the right*. Here code-switching is used as an abrupt and displays a transition in the activity and in the participation. More clearly, the same speaker indicates a turn of event, activity or order simply by code-switching (Mondada 2007: 305). What is interesting about Mondada's research is that it primarily shows

instances of code-switching from the second to the first language. Often one thinks of code-switching as something that occurs primarily from the first- to the second language. This is not always the case, and Mondada shows how functional it can be the other way around.

Although this thesis will be different from Mondada's in both method and research questions, there are a lot of central factors and interesting findings that can be both useful and important. The organization of speech and social order could be potentially interesting in this thesis as well. Both physical- and interactive meetings that oil industry workers engage in at their workplace is relevant to both code-switching and identity, but also the unwritten social order of the interaction.

Even though code-switching is not the central argument of Condamines (2010) research, it still displays some important findings regarding language in the workplace and in some ways relates to Mondada's (2007) research. Condamines argues for the importance and possible implementation of sociolinguistics as means for risk management related to language in the workplace. A central aspect of this paper is the variation in terminology. Condamines isolates four categories on which this variation depends: (1) Point of view, (2) textual genre, (3) the nature of the application, and (4) diachronic variation (Condamines 2010: 31-36). By point of view, Condamines argues that classes of context can have different points of view depending on how a term is used, and in what way that term relates to different individuals. For instance, the term *satellite* can have different definitions depending on what department of an institution it is used within; "Artificial body", "Moving object", "Platform", "Vehicle", "Host" and "Relay". These six meanings came from six different departments, and although all of the definitions were used in all of the departments, there was one definition that was more prominent than the others in each department. Textual genre refers to the differences in terminology depending on different genres. The nature of the application is explained as the way terminology will vary according to the application.

Condamines, however, points out that the notion of application itself is not clearly defined. Researchers involved in creating language resources (dictionaries, lexicons, etc.) will consider these objects as the "applications" to which their studies are the end goal. Whereas within the field of linguistics, application is often understood to involve the end target and refer to real needs and users (Condamines 2010: 34-35). When speaking of diachronic variation, Condamines links terminology variations to the factor of time. Especially in companies with projects expanding over a larger period of time, it can be useful to anticipate how terms, meaning and key-personnel can change during the duration of a project

(Condamines 2010: 35-37). This last variation could be of importance in this thesis as well. In a business consisting of both short, and long-term contracts, a project could have a change in experts, engineers, and other important personnel. And as new technology develops, terms and meanings may change over time. Upon these categories, Condamines makes the point that “the most important characteristic of sociolinguistics is its inclusion of situational factors in communication studies” (2010: 37). Because situational factors are varying, language will reflect on the dynamics and how this affects communication. The relevance of this study is largely in the way that personnel, time, and other situational factors can affect and determine the notion of terminology and communication within a workplace environment.

In summary these four studies provide a valuable basis for this thesis. The Hiss (2017) study is important not only because of its close relations to a foreign company operating in Norway, but also because of the use of code-switching as a resource for work and communication. Socarraz-Novoa (2015) shows direct instances of code-switching and pinpoints categories for when it is used within a multilingual workplace. The importance of code-switching as a resource for the organization of speech is relevant for reasons relating to meetings and conversations between interlocutors in a multilingual workplace (Mondada, 2007). In Condamines (2010) the focus on how situational factors can affect the notion of terminology is of great value. When looking at these studies not only as entities, but as a whole, they provide useful and necessary context for this thesis. They illuminate key topics such as code-switching, terminology, identity and multilingualism in ways which provide viable information for how code-switching occurs, is used as a resource, and displays identity. There are other important works on code-switching in the workplace that are also of relevance; Holmes & Stubbe (2004), Dewaele & Wei (2013) and Nam (2009).

## 3. Material and Methodology

### 3.1 Introduction

Because the thesis aims to map attitudes, opinions and instances of code-switching and jargon, a reasonable way to collect data would be through a qualitative method. There were a lot of possibilities to collect qualitative data from the subjects, but seeing as long term observations would be too time consuming for this thesis, an interview guide with much room for free speech would be favorable for obtaining a reasonable amount of data. The recruitment of workers was initially done by contacting known subjects that would fit the delimitations for this thesis; They needed to be Norwegian citizens, work within the oil and gas industry based out of Rogaland and have a full-time working position at their company. As the first subject received a brief introduction to what this thesis would involve both in terms of the subjects' qualifications and its aims, he contacted other workers, through his own network, who gladly participated. This resulted in five participants who volunteered to be interviewed.

### 3.2 Qualitative data collection

The goal of a qualitative research method is to use predefined procedures to seek answers and findings to questions that were not predetermined in advance. Qualitative research can provide valuable insight on how people experience a research problem. It gives information about values, social context, behaviors, and opinions in a given or specific population (Mack et al, 2005: 1-2). In contrast to qualitative research, the quantitative research approach will differ both structural and content wise. Where a qualitative approach often will have open-ended questions with high degrees of flexibility, the quantitative methods generally have close-ended questions with a stable and uniform design. This in turn leaves little room for the subjects to express or reflect on the questions (Mack et al, 2005: 3). Within qualitative research one can generally distinguish between an inductive or a deductive approach. The inductive approach is most used when there is not enough prior knowledge, or the existing knowledge on the topic is fragmented. A deductive approach is when the structure is based on previous knowledge and the goal is mainly theory testing. One can summarize by stating that where an inductive approach moves from specific to general, the deductive approach does the opposite (Elo & Kyngäs, 2007: 109).

Given that an in-depth interview was favorable for qualitative method, it was natural to establish contact with individuals that were known through social networks of the interviewer, as a place to get started. However, the interviewer was able to recruit the first subject through the professional network of a close relative. The subjects had to have a Norwegian nationality, have a full-time position at an oil- and gas-oriented workplace based out of Rogaland county in Norway. The rest of the subjects were recruited through the social networks of the first subject that was brought in by the interviewer. This resulted in getting five participants for the in-depth interview. The interview consisted of thirteen open-ended questions and was conducted at the workplace, in the home of the interviewer, and in the homes of the subjects. The initial plan was to conduct all the interviews at the participants' workplaces, but due to the Covid-19 pandemic, this was unfortunately not possible due to safety regulations. This means that only the first interview was conducted at the subject's workplace, and alternative approaches had to be found for the remaining four.

### 3.3 Background

Because the initial idea was to contact known subjects, the first approach was through text-messages on a mobile phone, or through Messenger, which allows members to communicate directly online. The first subject to be interviewed was however contacted by a close relative, who then agreed to be put in contact through a phone call. The next four subjects were willing to be interviewed if their boss would approve their participation and allow the interviews to be conducted at the workplace. All four subjects were approved by their company leaders, but unfortunately, the COVID-19 epidemic made physical visits to workplaces very difficult. To ensure the safety of both the interviewer and the five subjects in question, the direct approach was necessarily discarded.

The first subject to be interviewed had a leadership position and was able to approve the interview's location at the workplace herself, and it was also conducted before the virus reached Norway. In order to conduct the remaining interviews, the subjects were invited to do this over Skype, which is an online visual and audio application used for communication, or in the home of either the interviewer or the subjects, in order to accommodate everyone's safety. Two of the subjects preferred to do the interview in their own home, and two wanted to do them in the home of the interviewer. Everything was conducted with regards to the Norwegian governments infection control measures (Helsedirektoratet, 2020). All of the

subjects had Norwegian nationalities, as was one of the delimitations for this thesis. One of the subjects was female, while the others were males. The age of the participants ranged from 26-42 years: respectively 26, 27, 28, 33, and 42. Ideally, a wider range in age among the subjects would have been beneficial for this study. However, due to time and health restrictions it was too difficult to obtain a larger selection of participants.

Because of the flexibility a qualitative research approach allows, one could focus on constructing questions for the subjects that enabled them to speak freely, and reflect over opinions, values, instances and procedures regarding communication and code-switching in the workplace. The questions were formed in a way that would enable the subjects to cover as much as possible of the communication that occurred in the workplace, whether it was work-related communication, or communication regarding aspects of the private life but occurring in a work-related setting. Because all the participants were Norwegian citizens and the goal was to enable as much free speech, reflections, thoughts, and feelings around their answers, it was more natural to conduct the interviews in their first language, Norwegian. It was also reasonable to believe that some of the technical terms used to describe equipment and work progress would be in English, and to determine whether the subjects deliberately used the English versions, while the rest of the interview should take place in Norwegian.

### 3.4 Data collection

Before the interviews could start, it was necessary to get an approval for data collection by the NSD (Norsk senter for forskningsdata). The approval of the data collection was founded on the basis that names, companies and central places related to the companies were anonymous, and the stored data would be deleted after 31.12.20. When collecting data, it became important to both enable the subjects to speak freely and at the same time answer critical questions that reflected on code-switching, quantity and quality of English language use, identity and attitudes towards English communication. The questions were presented in Norwegian to the subjects before the interviews started and were as following:

1. How long have you worked for this company?
2. What are your main tasks in this job?
3. How would you describe the general communication in this workplace?

4. Can you say something about what kind of people you communicate with on a daily basis, when it comes to work-related communication?
5. If you are to guess, how much of the written work material you process is in Norwegian and how much is in English?
6. If you are speaking to colleagues with a foreign background, can you describe how that conversation is to you? Are there any differences with regards to language if you talk about something that is work-related versus something that concerns your private life?
7. Do you feel like English can be a barrier? If that is the case, how?
8. Which tools do you use if there are words, phrases or general difficulties regarding the language (English) that you have to work out?
9. Have you gotten any notions on how to communicate with regards to Norwegian or English, for instance through email or telephone?
10. Do you sometimes experience that you switch between Norwegian and English when you talk to others in a work-related setting?
11. Do you feel some form of pride when you talk to other people within the oil and gas industry?
12. Do you believe it could be difficult for people who are not acquainted with your line of work to follow conversations which are related to the specifics of your job? Do you have any examples?
13. Do you feel like your employer facilitates for colleagues with a multilingual background?
14. How would you range your proficiency in oral and written English on a scale from 1-10? 1 is unable to understand almost everything, 10 is English on the same level as Norwegian. Can you elaborate on your answer?

(Introductory Appendix).

The subjects' interview guide was in Norwegian, so all the questions were asked and answered in Norwegian (Introductory Appendix). The idea of presenting the questions beforehand was that the subjects were able to maybe remember specific instances or situations relating to some of the questions. The subjects also received a copy of the questionnaire to look at while the interview was happening. This was meant as a way of seeing the questions and avoid repeating them if something was inaudible or articulated in an unclear manner.

Although the participants had the questions at hand, only the first subject chose to look at it actively, the rest put it aside and did not look at them once the interview had started. The interviews were collected on a audio recorder and afterwards stored on an external flash drive. The sound files will be deleted once the project is done.

As the interviews were recorded in Norwegian, an English-language translation of the transcripts was made for each of the five interviews. A list of conventions was made in order to explain some of the translations, abbreviations, anonymous names, places and companies, and specific instances of code-switching. The stylesheet was designed by the interviewer in order to make transcriptions as understandable as possible.

I= Interviewer.

S= Subject.

?= Rise in intonation (not necessarily a question).

(COMPANY)= A company or name of a place which is to be anonymous.

(CS)= The previous word or utterance in quotation marks “..” was spoken in English.

(EAB)= The previous word or utterance in quotation marks “..” was an English abbreviation by the subject or interviewer.

(NAB)= The previous word or utterance in quotation marks “..” was a Norwegian abbreviation by the subject or interviewer.

(NAME)= The name of an individual who is to be anonymous.

(NOR) = Norwegian word in quotation marks “..” that there is no good translation for in English, but an approximate translation has been tried. The part behind the slash in quotation marks is the approximate translation.

(TRANS) The word or expression in quotation marks divided with a slash needs to be showed in Norwegian in order to make sense. The part behind the slash is Norwegian.

### 3.5 Validity and reliability

There will always be doubts and uncertainties with regards to both the method of choosing and the subjects that participated. The questions which are presented relies heavily on feelings and assumptions. The credibility of this thesis can depend on a lot of factors: The length of

units answered by the subjects, gender, age and experience (Granheim & Lundman, 2004: 110-111). As experience in this thesis varies from 1,5-13 years among the subjects, one is arguably provided by a reasonable division. However, only one of the subjects had been in the industry for 13 years. The rest had worked from 1.5-2.5 years in the industry. With regards to gender, only one of the subjects was female, the rest were males. Age can be a factor worth mentioning. Even though the subjects' ages varied from 26-42 years, three of the five subjects were under thirty years of age, which can affect both experience and attitudes. The fact that not all of the subjects answered all of the questions can be considered challenging but as some of the intent behind the questions were to construct them as a conversation enabler, it is important to note that

“interviewing and observing is an evolving process during which interviewers and observers acquire new insights into the phenomenon of study that can subsequently influence follow-up questions or narrow the focus for observation” (Granheim & Lundman, 2004: 110).

As follow up questions, and narrowing focus, are done in these interviews they do not contain a uniform order, but they give a context and more detailed explanation to some parts that could be hard to interpret if this were excluded. Two aspects that can question some of the answers are the transcriptions and the number of subjects. (1) As time was a restricting factor, it was only possible to conduct five interviews. (2) These were transcribed from Norwegian audio directly into English. It is difficult to illustrate points, references, and expressions into another language, and this can have affected the essence in some of the answers. As everything identifiable in this thesis was anonymized, the subjects that participated had no direct reasons for answering untruthfully, so their trustworthiness and reliability are arguably considered to be strong.

### 3.6 Summary

The readers are now informed in the approach of this thesis to find answers for the research questions. The goal is to collect and analyze findings on how oil industry workers use and perceive code-switching as a means for communication, work and identity in the workplace. The questions on the questionnaire are formed in order of establishing structure and detect similarities and differences. However, as the qualitative approach has a focus on free speech, the interviews will vary some in form and structure. For example, there will be references in the results to particular sub questions that occurred naturally during the interviews. These

were asked to further clarify meanings in the answers already provided and they were aimed at gaining the most amount of information possible according to the research questions asked by the interviewer. There are five participants from various oil and gas related companies based out of Rogaland. One of the subjects were female and the remaining four were males. The respective ages in the order that the interviews were conducted was 42, 26, 33, 27, 28. The interviews are conducted in Norwegian but translated and transcribed into English.

## 4 Findings

### 4.1 Introduction

In order to present the findings of this thesis there will be a comparison of the fourteen questions that the subjects answered during their in-depth interviews. The findings will be presented question by question and involve at least one excerpt from one of the subjects from each question. Given that the interviews were conducted as a conversation loosely based on these questions, the interviews do not portray a uniform order. Some of the questions are not given in the order that they are showed on the stylesheet, some of the questions are not uttered exactly as they are written in the stylesheet and some of the questions were not asked and therefore not written in the transcriptions. In some instances it was more natural to ask another question than what was originally intended, some of the questions had to be formulated in another way in order to accommodate the subjects in a way that it was reasonable to get the response that reflected their working situation. In one case the subject wished to read some of the questions herself and then answer them, and in this instance the questions are not written explicitly in the transcription. When exploring the answers provided by the subjects, sub questions or changes in the original questions, will be acknowledged for full transparency.

### 4.2 Question 1

How long people had been working for their current company varied in some degree. S1 had worked in this company for almost 13 years, although the company had been bought by another company before that. It is, however, unclear for how long S1 had worked in the business in general (A1, L1-7). S2 mentioned that he had been hired to this job 1.5 years ago, originally as an offshore worker. This position changed at a later date, so that he worked some of the time onshore and a portion of the time offshore (A2, L1-5). S3 had been employed by his current company 1.5 year ago (A3, L1-4). In the case of S4, he mentioned that his employment had been for a little over 2 years (A4, L1-4). S5 had been working for his company for approximately 2.5 years (A5, L1-4).

### 4.3 Question 2

When asked what their main tasks in their job were, the answers were plentiful. In addition to answering what their task was, some of them also mentioned what their position or title was. S1 mentioned that she “has been working with health and safety and operations “offshore” (CS). I have been working with projects since 2016” (A1, L4-5). S1’s current work was then with the projects department where she was in charge of preparations and restructuring of an oil rig. She was set to lead a team both internally in Stavanger, but also a separate team that worked towards two companies they were collaborating with on the previously mentioned oil rig (A1, L15-17). When asked about his task at the workplace, S2 answered how he did several jobs and tasks. S2’s position was divided between an onshore and an offshore job within the same company. When he was onshore, he planned much of the operations, had contact with their customers, and made sure that necessary equipment was sent out to the installations. The latter was his primary task. Offshore, he pointed out that he was part of a drilling crew and that he sometimes was executing those jobs he was planning onshore (A2, L14-39). S3 had a large description of his job and explained what he did on a daily basis:

S3: A normal day is for instance planning of future operations. That means a lot of contact with the customer I am working towards, which is drilling engineers from that company. I get drilling data from them, and then I plan what kind of equipment we are going to use in the well within our line of work. I also do simulations to verify that the equipment can be used, that it can withstand the powers and the pressure it is being exposed to. After that I often make some rapports out of the results of those simulations and send that to the drilling engineer. I also have some responsibility in overseeing the process in the workshop, making sure that they are where they are supposed to be in the process of building the equipment. I also have some part in the process of mobilizing the equipment to the platforms (A3, L23-31).

Here is a detailed description of what kind of work S3 does on a daily basis at his company. He is involved in planning, overseeing the production of equipment, as well as producing reports. He also mentions that his official title is ‘associate technical professional’, but he refers to himself as a project engineer.

S4 identified his title as ‘piping engineer’ or ‘piping and layout engineer’. He explains that his work consists of planning and designing systems on platforms top-site. His field works

specifically on something called qualitative maintenance jobs, which are smaller modifications or repairs of pipes (A4, L10-23). There were also possibilities for working offshore sometimes. This could happen if documentation on existing pipes on a platform were inconsistent, and physical measures had to be done. This had only happened three times for him. S5 also identified his title as a 'piping engineer'. He explains that the work is varied and that he is involved in several parts of a project from beginning to end.

S5: It is very varied. We have a horizontal organization where we follow a project from A to Z a lot of the times and are often involved in large parts of a project. I do not just sit and make a certain type of technical drawings. It is everything from a study face, "detail engineering" (CS), "survey" (CS), instalment and also an "as built" (CS) face.

**I: What do you do at work this week?**

S5: Right now, I am sitting with "as built" (CS). It is called "as built" (CS).

**I: Can you explain what "as built" (CS) is ?**

S5: That is when we are done with a project, and the 3D model has to be updated, so it can reflect reality. So "as built" (CS).

**I: So it is the way it is actually built?**

S5: Yes (A5, L9-25)

In addition to explaining what he does at work, S5 also uses the English words and expressions. He uses three instances of code-switching; "detail engineering", "survey" and "as built". Further on, when asked about it, he explains why the activity he's doing is called "as built".

#### 4.4 Question 3

As a general question, the subjects were asked about how they would describe the general communication at the workplace. This question was very open and gave a great variety in answers and interpretations. The answer that S1 gave was divided by a question from the interviewer that was not directly linked to the question 3. S1 answered that question and then came back to the main question about communication. She experienced the communication mainly through emails and meetings, and said that it is primarily mediated in English.

However, if it is a meeting with only Norwegians, the language would be Norwegian. She also points out that if a person with a foreign background is involved in the meeting, the language would not be Norwegian (A1, L28-31). After the follow-up question by the interviewer, she said that around 80 percent of the communication was in English. She then made a point regarding meetings: If there was a meeting with only Spanish workers, they would do as the Norwegians and speak their native language. Another part of the communication was towards the Norwegian Petroleum Safety Authority and other public institutions, most of this was mediated in Norwegian (A1, L58-63). On question 3, S2 interpreted the answer in the direction of language. He made a noteworthy explanation on how language onshore differs from the language offshore:

S2: That is very varied, and there is a pretty big difference between land and “offshore” (CS). By that I mean that “on shore” (CS) and “offshore” (CS) are two very different places when it comes to communication. When I am at the office on land, very much of the communication is in English, primarily because there is a lot of people at the office that do not speak Norwegian or are not that fluent in Norwegian, so it is easier to communicate in English ? At the same time, those who speak Norwegian at the office are more proficient in English than those who are “offshore” (CS). That probably has to do with their relation to education, I would think.

**I: Ok, what do you think with regards to that ? Can you elaborate ?**

S2: I work with a lot of engineers at the office. And at the engineering studies at the university, a lot of the lectures and subjects are carried out in English. You get used to speaking English, you get used to reading English, and you get used to solving tasks in English. Meanwhile “offshore” (CS) almost everyone speaks Norwegian, there is usually not that many English-speaking people that do not speak Norwegian. If, then, there is someone who does not speak Norwegian, I think that the language quickly becomes a barrier. It becomes difficult to communicate properly (A2, L50-67).

S2 points out that there are a lot of workers at the office that do not speak Norwegian, and the Norwegian speakers are more proficient in English than those offshore, so it is easier to communicate in English at the office. He thinks it is because of the large number of engineers onshore that contributes to this difference. According to S2, the engineering program at the

university conducts many of their subjects in English, and by that accord do more speaking, reading and task solving in English. He feels that being unable to communicate in Norwegian offshore can be a barrier for a worker because most of the communication there is done in Norwegian. Further on, when asked a sub question about a further reflection on this, being that S2 himself was an engineer, he mentioned that the way of speaking offshore was maybe a bit more jokingly. Given that there is more talking in general offshore, compared to onshore where you are alone behind a computer much of the time (A2, L69-84).

According to S3 there is a lot of communication face to face within the office. Communication externally, with customers, usually takes the form of emails. He also mentioned the interactive communication channels that they use; email, Skype, Teams and telephone. When asked a sub question on whether he communicates most with those within the office, or if it is most towards customers, he answered that it was mostly within the office (A3, L66-77). Although S4 had worked in the company for around two years, he considered himself new to the game, and mentioned that he had a senior by his side, and that their communication was primarily oral. He mentions meetings as a large part of communication and notes that the meetings at their workplace had shifted from physical meeting rooms to digital meetings on Teams. S4 felt it was more efficient with Teams, because then one could work while the meeting was going on. He also mentioned that they worked in an open office, and it was easy to just walk over to another co-worker if he had questions (A4, L38-71). S5 said that the general work language was English, especially within his team, which worked with piping. A lot of the communication towards their current customer was in Norwegian, given that the customer was a Norwegian company and they demanded that documentation was presented in Norwegian, but S4 did not know the specifics behind this request.

#### 4.5 Question 4

On question 4, the subjects were asked about the people they communicated with on a daily basis, when it regarded work-related communication. As S1 was the first subject to be interviewed, and answered some of the questions without being explicitly asked them, this question was unfortunately not brought up by the interviewer. Neither S2 was asked this question explicitly, because his previous answer in question 3 led to a lot of follow-up questions. He did however mention that he worked with a lot of engineers at the office onshore (A2, L61-62). S3 pointed out that he spoke to a lot of people regarding work; the

builders and the leader of the workshop where they got their tools built, other engineers and coordinators, and a technical guide who was located in their building. The engineers were those who S3 felt that he communicated most with during the day, given that they were physically sitting together and worked on the same team (A3, L89-102). S4 began an explanation on how the company some time ago recruited foreign workers from India, the Philippines and Britain and gave them citizenship. This in return meant that they are Norwegians on paper. After some follow-up questions, S4 gave a more detailed answer on who he communicates with at work:

S4: The people I talk to are primarily those within the workplace. But say we weld something onto a pipe, and we need to conduct a pressure test, to make sure that it is sealed properly. We cannot do that part ourselves, because we do not have our own people to do it, so we get another company to conduct that test. Then we get another company to do that test, and you have to communicate with them to get it done. We do not make any products other than the engineering, so everything we install, we have to buy. So that is some of the communication, but for me, there is not that much of that kind in the workday. So, most of it is internal (A4, L119-125).

Here, S4 explains how most of the communication is done internally within the workplace, but some of it is also with other companies who conducts tests and sells products to them. He also points out that even though this happens, it is not that common for S4 during the workday. During some of the other sub questions, S4 also mentions a customer relationship where almost all communication is mediated in Norwegian. He explains that the customer is a bit distinct in that way. (A4, L97-99).

S5 communicates with the workers within the same group as himself, mainly those who worked with piping. He also explains how all of the disciplines were gathered in the same office landscape, and that one talks and cooperates with both project leaders and management as well. He also states that the office landscape on the same floor is divided into three parts, and that anyone working on a specific contract sat together in the same part.

#### 4.6 Question 5

In this question, the subjects were asked about how much of the written work material they went through was in English. As previously mentioned, S1 was the first to be interviewed and had another approach to some of the questions and was unfortunately not asked about the quantity of her written work material. In a sub question of question 3 she did, however, mention an estimate around 80 percent English communication, but this could also include oral communication in addition to the written. The question that S2 was given was formulated a little differently, so he was in addition to the English also asked about how much of the written material was in Norwegian. S2 narrates his experience from offshore where he noticed that everything relating to procedures and documentation was in Norwegian, with a large amount of American words, he was asked in a sub question whether he had some examples of this:

**I: Do you have any examples that you can think of ?**

S2: Yes, “elevator” (CS) is a lifting equipment that hangs from the “top drive” (CS). The “top drive” (CS) is really the drilling machine. But when we have to lift “pipe” (CS) and drive that down the hole, there is an “elevator” (CS) which grips the “pipe” (CS) either when we are pulling up or driving it down. Another equipment that we use is a “conveyer” (CS). That is a feeding drill that we lay from “pipe” (CS) towards “pipe deck” (CS) (A2, L166-172).

S2 makes the point that some of the procedures or documentation that they receive offshore is primarily in Norwegian, and often contains a large number of English words and expressions mixed with Norwegian language.

S3 had an estimate of 90 percent English written work material. All reports, emails and simulation programs were written in English. Even the computer software package was installed in English. On a sub question on what language he would use in emails to other Norwegian workers within his team, he mentioned a coworker from Algeria who was currently learning Norwegian. The coworker had specifically asked S3 to write and talk to him in Norwegian so that he could learn the language. However, if swift decisions had to be made, something was hard to explain, or S3 needed quick answers, he would speak or write in English to the Algerian coworker (A3, L120-129). S4 had a shorter answer, but also provides

a number to how much written material is in English, and how much is in Norwegian. He guesses around 50 percent English, and 50 percent Norwegian. It is also explained by S4 that he does not always notice whether he speaks or writes in Norwegian or English. To him both come naturally, and it depends on who he is communicating with (A4, L129-134). On the same question, S5 did not give a number. Most of the documentation, except for some very technical drawings, were supposed to be in Norwegian. In a sub question where he was asked to include emails in this estimate, as well, S5 answered that it would depend on the recipient. If he knew the recipient had Norwegian as their main language, he could write it in Norwegian, while if he was uncertain, he would write it in English. He also underlines that it was never wrong to write emails in English (A5, L84-95).

#### 4.7 Question 6

Here, the subjects were asked to describe conversations they potentially had with colleagues with a foreign background, and if there were any differences whether they talked about something work-related or something that concerned their private life. Some of the subjects were asked this as two separate questions; (1) describe the conversation and (2) say if they noticed any differences in language depending on it being work-related or related to their private life. Both S1 and S2 was unfortunately not asked this question. S3 was asked this as two separate questions.

First, he was asked how he felt about oral conversations in English co-workers, where he answered that he thought it was ok, but he was a little unaccustomed to it in the beginning. He does not talk that much about individuals but mentions that meetings were hard when he first started at the company. S3 received instructions by his mentor to write down words and expressions that he did not understand. Afterwards S3 and the mentor would go through the words and expressions, and the mentor would explain them to him (A3, L141-164). In the second question, S3 was asked about differences in language depending on whether the topic was work-related or something that concerned his private life, for instance in the lunchroom. He answered that the lunchroom was a place with a common exclusion of work-related talk by the workers. S3 was therefore asked if he felt more comfortable with speaking English in the lunchroom rather than in general at the office when they spoke about something work-related? He mentioned that it was a hard question but said both yes and no. He felt it most natural to speak Norwegian, because he was from Norway. However, when he arrived at

work, he tended to switch to English pretty fast if there was someone who did not speak Norwegian, and that it happened naturally (A3, L240-251).

The full question was asked to S4 who did not think there were any differences. He pointed out that everyone in the company was proficient in English, and several of them knew Norwegian. He also mentioned how he sometimes spoke with foreign workers in Norwegian to help them improve and sometimes used a little English to help them (A4, L140-147). S5 was asked two separate questions; (1) could he describe how he experienced conversations with foreign colleagues and (2) if there were any differences in the language with regards to work-related talk or something that concerned private life. On the first question he mentioned how he felt that the conversation had a good flow, but that sometimes the seniors at the company used terms that S5 did not understand, which could lead to a halt in the conversation. On the second question, about differences in language regarding work-related talk or something that concerned private life, he answered the following:

S5: Because we speak English at work, we prefer to speak Norwegian during the breaks. Often, we are mostly Norwegians who sit together. But sometimes English-speaking colleagues join in as well. Some of them are learning Norwegian, so they actually prefer that we speak Norwegian during the breaks. That way they get practice (A5, L177-180).

S5 points out that he preferred to speak Norwegian during the breaks because they often spoke Norwegian when he was working. Sometimes when English-speaking colleagues joined in, they would prefer that the conversation was in Norwegian so they could get some practice.

#### 4.8 Question 7

The subjects in these interviews were asked if they felt like English could be a barrier, and if so, how? The question does not specify if this meant at work or just in general, so it was up to the subjects to interpret. The question was interpreted by S1 to relate work-related situations:

**I: Do you ever feel that English can be a barrier for you ?**

S1: Sometimes, maybe. If there is something that is very detailed. I am not afraid to

speak English, but sometimes you do not bother to have that kind of conversation at work, because you think; what are all those words in English ? Maybe you hold back a bit. It does not happen often, but it will take too much effort to say it in English.

**I: In these cases, is it the technical terms that are hard ?**

S1: No, because we use the technical terms just as much in English as we do in Norwegian. So, we use the English words for pumps or “down-hole safety valve” (CS) “Down-hole safety valve/nedi hulls ventil” (TRANS). So, we use those English terms even though we are speaking Norwegian. It is almost weird to say the Norwegian words for those terms (A1, L93-105).

S1 explains that if something is very detailed it can be a barrier for her. She points out that she is not afraid to speak English, but if she is thinking of translating some words into English, it can lead to not having that conversation. As a sub question to this, she was also asked if it was the technical terms that were difficult, but she did not believe that to be the case. The English terms were used just as much as the Norwegian ones, and it was almost weird to say those terms in Norwegian.

S2 would not classify English as a barrier, but mentioned that he sometimes had to search a little further for words and expressions when communicating in English. He also mentioned that this was not only at work but could occur off-work as well. Because he was more proficient in Norwegian than English, it was easier to express himself and maintain a conversation in Norwegian (A2, L256-262). When S3 was asked the same question, he answered that he did not think it was a barrier, but that his brain sometimes froze, and he could not always remember what something was in English. This could lead to mumbling. S3 also mentions a company trip to the US where he had some courses. He was traveling with a co-worker from Venezuela, so everything was in English. This was described as a transitional period at the beginning of his stay in the US, but eventually he got used to only speaking English. When he came home to Norway, he continued to speak English for a little while (A3, L274-283). As a sub question to this, S3 was asked if it was the pace that was the difficult part.

**I: If you think about what you said when you were in the US. Was it the pace that was difficult ?**

S3: Not necessarily the pace, because the instructor was from Argentina, so he was not the most proficient in English. But the course was about something that I previously had not dealt with that much, regarding equipment, so there were some new words and expressions. If you are at work, and you are stuck, you can ask someone, and you will probably get an answer. Here everyone spoke English, so there was no one to ask. I sort of had to investigate those words myself, and that is why it took a bit more time in the beginning. But when you find the words you can use them the next time (A3, L291-300).

The pace was not explained as the language problem for S3, because the course instructor was from Argentina, and not very proficient in English. The challenge for S3 was new words and expressions with regards to new equipment. When he was at his regular workplace in Rogaland, he could always ask someone about this and he would mostly get an answer. In this situation he had no one to ask, so he needed more time in order to get acquainted with those words.

S4 did not consider English to be a barrier. He had lived abroad for several years, and felt English to be more natural. He, as well, answered that there are situations where he did not always remember certain words, but that he always managed to express himself in the end. If he had problems with language when for instance writing a report, he would use Google Translate. In a sub question to this, he was asked if it was difficult to find the right words if he did not have technological aids? S4 answered no, but that sometimes it could be the Norwegian words he did not find, so he had to use English (A4, L197-206). S5 was asked the question with a notion that it could relate to work or private life. He answered that he did not see English as a barrier because he had written his master's degree in English, and he had done some gaming in his younger years (A5, L196-198). In a sub question he was asked if he had some examples from situations where the language felt complicated and/or he had troubles keeping up:

**I: Have you ever encountered situations where you have thought that this is very complicated, or that you have problems keeping up ? With regards to language.**

S5: Yes, but it is usually not because I do not understand the English, it is more the pronunciation of the speaker. Like I mentioned earlier, not all of the Filipinos or the

Indians have a great pronunciation or sentence structure. Also, my nearest boss is British, like really British. He speaks British, so it is a bit “tricky” (CS) to understand sometimes when he speaks really British. Maybe it is not so much the understanding part with him, but more the pace.

**I: Does he talk fast ?**

S5: No, not really. I think it is the whole package. He has got a “groggy” (CS) voice, has been smoking for ages, talks really British and he has worked in every part of the “piping” (CS) business. I think it is like that with Norwegians as well. If you have worked on the floor of a factory for forty years, it can be difficult to keep up in the conversation there as well (A5, L204-218).

S5 communicates how some of the co-workers are not that proficient in English when it comes sentence structure or pronunciation. He also remembered his boss, who he describes as difficult to understand sometimes. This was not because of the pace in which he spoke, but a groggy voice put together with the way he sometimes spoke, given that he had worked with piping for over 40 years.

#### 4.9 Question 8

The question here was intended to research how the subjects solved difficulties with regards to language and which tools or aids they would use to solve them. S1 was asked this with two questions: (1) If she was writing an email and struggled to find the words, how would she solve that? (2) If it could be difficult to find the right words sometimes, in an oral conversation? On the first question she answered that in a worst-case scenario she would use Google Translate or Clue. She pointed out that it was of great importance that the recipients understood what was meant, so she would take her time, and maybe rephrase herself if it were necessary. In the second question she answered that sometimes it could be difficult to find the right words in a conversation, but that there was always another word she could use instead. She underlined that it was easier now with the Spaniards than it was with the Americans. The Spaniards would explain something in a different way if there were any confusion (A1, L151-165).

Because S2 worked both onshore and offshore he was asked the question, but it was mentioned by the interviewer that he could think of examples onshore. S2 answered that it

was not always easy to look things up if he was sitting in a meeting or had a conversation. He would maybe have tried another word, or he would have said the word in Norwegian. Perhaps they could understand that word and then understand the context. If it were with regards to writing, he would use Google Translate to find single words. If it were something written, he would have the time to think it over, look it up, and rephrase (A2, L277-291). In the case of S3, he would use the people around him as the first option when it came to words or expressions in English:

S3: First and foremost, I tend to use my colleagues. I will just turn around and ask; hey remind me, what is that called in English ? Often I get a response, and if that person does not know the answer I will just turn another 90 degrees and ask the same question. Often, I get what I want, but if not, it is often the good old Google Translate to see what they have to offer. Often you will understand by the suggestion that Google Translate comes with, if it is a good translation or not. Very often we know what it is called, but you just do not remember it. It is sort of like an elimination process.

**I: It is not always correct ?**

S3: It is not always a 100 percent, no. So the most practical, in my experience, is to use the people around me. Now I sit with the other engineers, the coordinators and also the chief of the workshop. And I do not think I have experienced that no one knows what a word or an expression is called or means in English (A3, L302-318).

S3 indicates that he would first have used his colleagues, who sat next to him, if he was struggling with a word or a phrase in English. As a second option he would use Google Translate to help him. Even though this was not always a hundred percent correct, it was good to use as an elimination process. According to S3, the most practical for him was to use the colleagues around him as he was sitting together with other engineers, coordinators, and the chief of the workshop. He had never experienced that none of the people around him had been unable to help.

As the interview progressed with S4, question 8 was unfortunately not brought up by the interviewer and was therefore not answered by the subject. When S5 was asked this question, it he often used Google as a quick way to find the meaning of a word (A5, L223-224). In a

sub question to this he was asked if he ever used the people around him? S5 answered that he would use his colleagues, but that was more with regards to understanding concepts, or how a technical solution works, for instance a valve. He could search for it online, but it was often easier to ask someone for an explanation of why it was built that particular way (A5, L226-231).

#### 4.10 Question 9

The subjects were asked about eventual guidelines on how to communicate with regards to language in the workplace. Some of the subjects were asked about written communication and some were asked about general communication. S1 was asked about how it was when she started at the company, and if they had any guidelines with regards to communication? She describes it as 'learn as you go', and points out that the team changes dynamically, so there had been a lot of changes with regards to personnel and nationalities from when she started at the company. When she started there were only Norwegians she communicated with. Presently there were more foreigners on her team, and it was more natural to communicate in English. In a sub question she was asked if this felt like an abrupt transition? S1 felt this as a natural transition. When she started, there were Americans and Canadians and she felt that they expected more with regards to language, so she was often more insecure in conversations. But she knew that both the Americans and the Canadians in reality thought that Norwegians were generally good in English. She felt that it had been easier to communicate over the years because there were more foreigners who were also not that proficient in English (A1, L70-91).

S2 admitted that he had not 'read the contract up and down' when it came to guidelines about communication, but it was of S2's perception that if he received an email in English or engaged in an English conversation, you were to answer in English. Although this was his general stand, he admitted that he sometimes answered foreign co-workers in Norwegian if they were trying to learn Norwegian. S2 points out that he only does it with those who were willing to participate, and they thought it to be fun (A2, L298-213).

**I: Are there someone that you do it with consequently ? Who likes the challenge ?**

S2: Yes, there is. It is probably not suitable for everyone, but those who have expressed that they want to learn Norwegian, gone to language courses etc. For them it

is a golden opportunity. And to learn a language you have to speak in that language. You have to hear that language, and you have to write it.

**I: Are there any typical nationalities ? Or are there all sorts of people ?**

S2: It could be anyone. I do not feel that some nationalities are more willing to learn than others.

**I: Do you have any examples that you can remember concretely ?**

S2: Yes, there is one from England who has lived in Norway for about 1.5 years. He has taken some Norwegian language courses, but he does not speak it on a regular basis. He usually speaks English. With him I sometimes switch to Norwegian, to challenge him a bit. He thinks that is nice. I think it is nice as well (A2, 315-332).

According to S2 it was a golden opportunity to answer them in Norwegian, because in order to learn a language you had to speak, listen and write in that language. He mentions an example where he switches to Norwegian when speaking to a co-worker from England who had lived in Norway for about 1.5 years. S2 believed that they both thought this was ok.

On guidelines with regards to communication, S3 thought there were a lot of unwritten rules, but he would always try to portray the company in the best way possible. If it was communication with customers, he would not write smiley faces or emojis, but within the department, for instance Skype or Teams meetings, there was room for joking and writing with emojis (A3, L320-329). As a sub question to this, S3 was asked if he would send an email in Norwegian or English if he knew that the recipient was Norwegian? He had done both with the customer. If he knew that the recipient was Norwegian, but there was a chance that the email would be forwarded, he would write it in English so the original recipient did not have to translate the email in order to forward it (A3, L336-344).

S4 was asked the same question, but as he had previously mentioned a customer who primarily communicated in English, the interviewer mentioned this in the question. S4 thought that was the way they wanted information, in Norwegian. When it came to emails, he would answer in the same language as he was contacted in, with regards to the customer. In a sub question, he was asked what he would do if he wrote to someone else than their main customer (who wanted almost everything to be in Norwegian) and he did not know if the recipient was Norwegian or not? S4 would primarily write that email in English, but he had to

see the whole picture. If it were a typical Norwegian name, he could write it in Norwegian (A4, L212-223).

S5 mentioned that they had not gotten any official instructions on how to communicate other than a demand from their customer that all documentation needed to be in Norwegian. He also points out that the reason for using English as the official working language was that there was a majority of foreigners there. If it had been all Norwegians, everything might have been in Norwegian (A5, L254-262). As a sub question, he was asked about lunchtime. If there were groups based on nationality or language:

**I: Are there groups in the lunch-room ? Do those who speak English or share the same nationality sit together ?**

S5: That happens frequently. It is a bit natural. When we are working, it is not necessarily your own choice. All of the Pakistani or the Portuguese do not work together. I think it is ok for everyone to get together with those you have much in common with. It is not always like that, but often. And you will see in the cantina that those who speak the same language or have the same nationality tend to group together. That applies to the Norwegians as well. I think it is something about using the 30 minutes of lunch to not speak English (A5, L264-272).

Here, S5 explained that those who had the same nationality or spoke the same language tended to sit together. S5 thinks the reason for this is that the nationalities did not necessarily work together physically, so it could be ok to sit together with those you had much in common with. Also, he pointed out that it was comfortable not to speak English during the break.

#### 4.11 Question 10

Here, the subjects were asked if they switch between Norwegian and English when they talked with others in a work-related setting. S1 was asked this question combined with a second question; if she felt any differences in language whether she talked about something work-related or something that concerned the private life? According to S1, it depended on who was sitting around the table. If there were only Norwegians, they would speak

Norwegian, but if a Spaniard sat down next to her, they would switch to English (A1, L131-137). As a sub question to this she was asked if that would happen in the lunchroom as well?

**I: You would do that in the breakroom as well ?**

S1: Yes. You cannot exclude them, so you switch. Sometimes I say; “I have to say this in Norwegian” (CS). Because maybe it is something specific and I can only articulate it in Norwegian. That does not only apply to me, that is just the way it is. The Spaniards do it too. They say that they have to say it in Spanish. But then they let us know that they have to explain this in Spanish. But like I mentioned, this is a very international company, so it is probably different depending on the oil company. It is probably different depending on the departments as well. On my project there are a lot of foreigners. The finance department only consists of Norwegians, so they might have another culture. All the meetings and communication there is in Norwegian. It varies from the different departments (A1, L139-149).

S1 would switch to English if a person with a foreign language sat down by the same table as her. She points out that she sometimes let that person know if she had to utter something in Norwegian if it was too difficult to articulate it in Norwegian. According to S1, this was done among the Spanish workers at the company as well. She mentions that this could vary depending on the departments. Her department was very international while the finance department at the company only consisted of Norwegians, so they might have had another culture with regards to switching.

When S2 was asked this question, it was in addition asked if such a language switch could occur within a sentence? He rarely felt it happened during the same sentence, except for maybe if there were some words or phrases that he could not express in English and had to say it in Norwegian. It was pointed out by the subject that sometimes there was a ‘lag’ in the conversations if they were speaking English. If a conversation started in English and the only foreign worker left the conversation or the room, the conversation could keep going in English for several minutes before someone noticed that there were only Norwegians left, and that they could switch to Norwegian. According to S2, that had happened on several occasions (A2, L343-367).

S3 was asked if he sometimes switched and uttered whole sentences in English if he was talking with other Norwegians? He rarely said whole sentences, but said that there were a lot of words and expressions that he did not know any good translations for. As a sub question to this he was asked about the lunchroom. S3 had previously mentioned that the lunchroom was a place where they were not supposed to be talking about work. He was then asked if he sometimes used English in the lunchroom? If it for instance had been a day with a lot of work-material mediated in English. He admitted that if there had been a lot of English during the day, he might have problems with finding the Norwegian words, and would then say it in English (A3, L346-359). S4 mentioned that a switch from Norwegian to English could happen if someone who did not speak Norwegian joined a conversation. He also mentioned that they tried to 'push' foreign workers who were currently learning Norwegian (A4, L235-240). In a sub question to this response, he was asked if this was their own wish?

**I: Is that their own wish ?**

S4: Someone mentioned that they think we switch to English too fast, and then it is harder for them to practice. I also know some colleagues better than others, and then we have the possibility to joke around a bit. Then I sometimes urge them to speak Norwegian.

**I: Do they enjoy that ?**

S4: It is easy to notice. If they do not like it, you switch to English (A4, L242-250).

Here, S4 explains how some of the foreign workers thought that the Norwegians switched to English too fast, and that made it harder for them to practice Norwegian. S4 points out that he primarily did this with co-workers that he knew better than others. If the co-workers did not like it, he would switch to English.

S5 mentioned that the workers in general often used the Norwegian words for something written in the media that was related to Covid, layoffs, and welfare. He points out that he would have had to look up those words, and then it was easier to just say them in Norwegian (A5, 278-288). With regards to this question S5 also mentions switching from English to Norwegian in meetings.

S5: There is also another classical instance that several of us do. Say there is a meeting where there is one who speaks English, then the meeting usually proceeds in English. If that person has to leave in the middle of the meeting, we often continue to speak English for 5-10 minutes before anyone realizes it: Why do we continue to speak English ? Then we switch to Norwegian (A5, L302-306).

S5 said that a meeting usually proceeds in English if there is one person present who does not speak Norwegian. If that person should leave in the middle of the meeting, the remaining Norwegian participants would continue to speak English for several minutes before anyone would notice that they could be speaking Norwegian. When that was pointed out they would switch from English to Norwegian.

#### 4.12 Question 11

On this question the subjects were asked if they felt any form of pride when they talked to others within the oil and gas business about something that was related to work? S1 was asked this question, but it was not specified whether it was a conversation with someone within the oil and gas business or outside of it. S1 mentioned that she was proud of the work she did. She was in a follow-up question asked if it was fun to talk about her work with for instance someone from another oil and gas company? S1 said that it depended on who she was sitting together with. If she were sitting with girlfriends who worked in grocery stores or as nurses, she would not talk about it, because they did not know what it was about. She points out that it could in return be the other way around as well, and she would not understand so much about what a nurse did. If she was sitting with co-workers, that was mainly what they talked about. She underlined that she believed that nurses, doctors and teachers were also proud of what they worked with (A1, L167-189). S2 pointed out that the oil industry had not gotten a lot of positive publicity over the last couple of years, but he was proud of the work he did. He was proud of his position and he had no problem recommending this kind of work to others (A2, L369-376). When S3 was asked this question, he pointed out that it was more fun to talk to others within the same business about it.

**I: If you talk to someone who works within the same line of business that you do, can you feel some sort of pride talking about that ? Is it fun to talk about ?**

S3: I understand what you mean. I think it is cool to talk about, because a lot of what we do within the oil and gas field is exciting, and there is a lot of cool technology. I do, however, think it is more fun to talk about with others in the same business. A lot of what I do is hard to explain to outsiders. It can be really difficult to explain what I actually do. It is like when we started this interview.

**I: I was just thinking about that.**

S3: But I think that will be the case if it is outside the oil and gas business as well. In my previous job I also thought about that. How are you supposed to compress that to a level where others can understand it ? (A3, L361-374).

S3 thinks it is fun to talk about his work, because there was a lot of cool technology and it was generally exciting. He felt it was more exciting to talk about it with others who was in the same kind of business, because it could be hard to explain his work to outsiders. S3 would also think that related not only to the oil and gas industry and mentioned that he had the same challenges in his previous job.

When S4 was asked the question, he first said that he did not feel any particular pride. The interviewer then rephrased the question a bit and asked if he thought it was fun to talk about? S4 then said that although this was not his dream job, and that the best part of it was his co-workers, he did not feel any shame in working in the oil and gas industry (A4, L259-274). S5 was asked if he felt any form of joy, pride or excitement when he talked about his work with others in the business? S5 mentioned that among his friends there were not that many that worked with something that was oil and gas related, so when he could talk to someone who did it was extra fun (A5, L344-351). He then told about a friend of him who also worked within the industry:

S5: We are mainly doing modifications and maintenance “topside” (CS) on platforms, while she, the one I thought of right now, works with what happens below the surface. Drilling down in the well. Still, we have much more in common with regards to work-conversations than we have with others. The others understand nothing about this (A5, L355-358).

He explains that although his work is mainly top site or above sea level and she primarily worked with drilling, they would have much more in common with regards to work-conversations than he would have had with the rest, because the others would not have understood anything about what they were talking about.

#### 4.13 Question 12

The subjects were asked if they thought it could be difficult for people, who were not acquainted with their line of business, to follow conversations that were related to the specifics of their job, and if they had any examples. S1 said that when they had multidisciplinary meetings at the workplace, she was not sure if the company nurse would understand when she was talking about welding, for instance. She points out that it was not always necessary that the nurse understood it either, but sometimes they would explain it a bit different. The most important for S1 was that the people who needed to understand the information did (A1, L195-208). S2 thought it could be difficult for others because there were so many words and expressions that were unique for the business. In general, it was ok for S2 to explain what his work was, but if he started talking about sub-operations, how things were done or special equipment, it could be difficult for outsiders to follow. The concept was easy, but it was everything around it that was hard, he explained (A2, L378-394). In a sub question to this information S2 was asked if he sometimes felt good about knowing something that others did not. S2 did not feel it that way. He mentioned that he had difficulties explaining to his girlfriend what he had done in a day, because it would require so much background information for her to understand it (A2, L396-408). When S3 was asked this question, he thought it could be difficult to understand if you had not seen it for yourself.

S3: A lot of what is going on is very complex so it can be hard to understand it if you have not seen it for yourself. So, it is very difficult to understand if someone just tells you; “hi, I am putting three thousand meters of steel pipes down the ground”. And if they ask you how ? Only with the help of conversation I believe it is hard to give a thorough explanation of how it works.

**I: Did it help you to physically see the equipment you are working with ?**

S3: Definitely. Things can be written as good as it gets on paper, but nothing is better than seeing it in real life and being present when it is used (A3, L396-405).

S3 believed that it was difficult to explain in words what he worked with. He pointed out that it was easier for him to actually see the equipment and the process in which it was being used in reality.

S4 believed that it would be difficult for outsiders to take part in those kinds of conversations. For him it was given what 'roughneck' or 'top site' was, but for someone who had never dealt with that terminology it could be difficult. S4 believed that you had to be in the business to understand it. In a sub question he was asked if he had some trouble with the terminology when he first started in the company. To S4 it had gone pretty fast, but he pointed out that a lot of his work had to do with flanges, and he had no idea what that was when he first started at the company (A4, L281-302). S5 felt that it was easy for him to be carried away if he was talking to others who worked within the industry, but that outsiders probably did not find it that interesting. The conversation would most likely come to a natural stop, but if there was a majority of people who worked within that line of business, it was harder to stop talking about it (A5, L376-383).

#### 4.14 Question 13

The subjects were asked if they felt like their employer facilitated people with a multilingual background. S1 believed that the company did do that and pointed out that you needed to be able to communicate in English. That was an official criterion if you were to work there (A1, L218-231). S2 thought this was a difficult question. He was then asked if he felt personally involved in that facilitating process. This was according to S2 maybe the most important part of that process. To make those who did not speak Norwegian feel included in the conversation and as a part of the group (A2, L434-446). S3 mentioned that this was a part of the culture. If someone spoke English, they would switch to English. He also mentioned that the company had some social events for the employees.

#### **I: So you have that ? Is that something the company is in charge of ?**

S3: Yes, the company is in charge of that. They have different activities like golf, volleyball, field hockey, football, handball, and hockey. Sometimes they arrange some trips. So, the idea is that you can socialize with others from the same company, and not necessarily just from the same department (A3, L416-421).

The company that S3 worked for had different activities and trips that the employees could participate in if they wanted to. This way, they were able to socialize with other coworkers from the whole company and not just their own department.

S4 felt that the company did facilitate for people with a multilingual background. He mentioned that the company had previously had Norwegian language courses for the employees, but that there were less offers of that kind now (A4, L304-312). S5 did not know of any specific measures that the company made. He thought that there had been some options before the recession in 2014, but was sure (A5, L397-409).

#### 4.15 Question 14

In the last question, the subjects were asked if they could rate themselves on a scale of 1-10 with regards to English proficiency in written and oral English. They were also asked for how long they had been learning English. In these questions, S1 answered that she would rate herself an 8 in written English, and a 7 with regards to oral skills. She felt that she was more proficient in written English because there she had more time to do it properly. She had been learning English since the first grade, and then concluded with her total being around 35 years (A1, L240-251). S2 would estimate himself as a 9 in oral English and a 7 in writing. He felt he was more proficient when it came to speaking, although he admitted that there were some words and expressions that he was not always sure of. S2 thought he had been practicing English for around 20 years but mentioned that he had not been actively using it for all of those years (A2, L507-521).

S3 would rate himself around a 7 in both written and oral English. He imagined that he had been practicing English for around 26 or 27 years and pointed out that he had increased his proficiency more during his years at the university (A3, L447-457). S4 rated himself as a 9 in both oral and written English. He pointed out that he had lived several years abroad and among them one year in the US, and thought that his English skill were above average. He had been practicing English for around 21 years, and mentioned that those years abroad made a great difference (A4, L314-324). S5 felt he was average and around the general level compared to the rest of the office. He rated himself as a 7 in both written and oral English. He said he had been practicing English for around 21 or 22 years (A5, L424-434).

## 5. Discussion

This part of the thesis will have a look at some of the important findings from chapter 4. The discussion of these findings is presented in each of the questions and are useful and necessary for creating a context around findings in other questions. Discussions in this chapter involve instances of code-switching, how it occurred in the workplace, how it is perceived by the subjects and if it is possible to view code-switching as a viable language resource for communication in an oil and gas-oriented workplace. Some of the findings are not directly related to the research questions, but nonetheless contribute valuable context for reading and interpreting the research questions in this thesis. This part also contains excerpts from chapter 4, and some excerpts from the interviewed that was referenced but not portrayed in the actual chapter. This was done in order to better discuss the findings, as well as to make this interesting discussion more comprehensible to the reader.

### 5.2 Discussion Question 1

The question of how long the subjects had been working for their current company was posed as an introduction for the subjects. It was meant as a conversation starter and a way of answering something that needed little to no reflection. It was also one of the delimitations for this thesis, that the subjects had to have worked within their current company for minimum one year. As the questions are heavily based on issues concerning their work and working environment, it had made little sense to ask someone who had just started and were not integrated in the working environment at their company. The seniority in years among the subjects, were; S1 - 13 years, S2 - 1.5 years , S3 - 1.5 years, S4 - 2 years, S5 - 2.5 years. In return, this shows that although S1 had the longest employment in the company, the other four subjects had worked for their company for over one year, and it was reasonable to think that they were properly integrated at their work-place, giving more credibility to the rest of their answers in these interviews.

### 5.3 Discussion Question 2

When asking about what their work mainly consisted of, the idea was to establish a form of work identity. Similar to question 1, it was intended as a disarming way to starting a conversation when asking them to formulate themselves about what their work consisted of, or what their main tasks in their job were. Even though the main questions were conducted in advance, it would be easier to categorize the subjects and perhaps ask some different questions or some useful follow-up questions. Because Socarraz-Novoa (2015) managed to integrate herself into the working environment and had a chance to observe the subjects before the interviews, she had an opportunity to ask questions based on her observations. As this was not possible in this thesis due to Covid-19, the closest way to establish some form of identity and ask further follow-up questions was to ask some loose questions in the beginning.

S1 was the only one who described herself as a manager, and as in charge of a group and a project. S2 had a divided position onshore and offshore. This was important for further questions because he was the only subject who worked this way and therefor provided valuable insight in some of the later questions about language and communication. S3 identified himself as a ‘project engineer’ but admitted that his official title was ‘associate technical professional’. This can interpret S3 as an individual who would rather be identified with the Norwegian description, than the English one. He also communicated with multiple departments and people within his company. S4 and S5 both identified their title as ‘piping engineer’. The fact that both of them worked for different companies also provided valuable information when it came to feelings, attitudes and general comparisons of a somewhat similar workplace: Both in structure but also with regards to communication and English language use. One can also see the first instances of code-switching, when S5 uses the English words; “detail engineering”, “survey” and “as built”. S5 seems to be using these for describing the different work processes he is involved in:

S5: It is very varied. We have a horizontal organization where we follow a project from A to Z a lot of the times and are often involved in large parts of a project. I do not just sit and make a certain type of technical drawings. It is everything from a study face, “detail engineering” (CS), “survey” (CS), instalment and also an “as built” (CS) face.

**I: What do you do at work this week?**

S5: Right now, I am sitting with “as built” (CS). It is called “as built” (CS) (A5, L7-16).

This shows how only by explaining what his work is in general or on one specific day, that code-switching could happen frequently when discussing work or progression of work to co-workers, project leaders, managers, or customers. In this specific instance it is of course uttered to the interviewer, but it is reasonable that similar conversations would take place several places in the actual workplace.

#### 5.4 Discussion question 3

The intention behind this question about general communication in the workplace was to make the subjects interpret it themselves, to allow for a broader range of answers than a specific or narrow question would have done. In other words, that the answers were interpreted in different directions had a very intended function. It would hopefully give valuable insight into what the different subjects considered noteworthy about communication. S1 explained how around 80 percent of all communication was mediated in English, but most of the communication towards the Norwegian Petroleum Safety Authority was mediated in English. An important finding that S1 provided was how the company handled communication in meetings with regards to foreign workers with a different language than Norwegian. If there were people who did not speak Norwegian involved in a meeting, the meeting would take place in English, even if it was just one person. This was explained as what the Norwegians did:

S1: Most of the communication is through meetings, but also a lot on email. Our communication is primarily in English. There are a lot of Spaniards here. If there are conversations in a meeting room where we are only Norwegians, we speak

Norwegian, but if there is one with a foreign background, UK, USA, Venezuela or Madrid, we do not [speak Norwegian] (A1, L28-31).

She later pointed out that the Spanish employees at the office would do the same: If there were one person who did not speak Spanish, the meeting would take place in English. This is important because it explains how code-switching occurred in a work situation. It was understandable in the interview with S1 that this was something that everyone in the office would do, as an act of politeness. S2, who had a divided position onshore and offshore explains how language differed in these places. The quantity of English was much more prominent onshore at the office, while it was almost only Norwegian communication offshore. S2 points at two reasons for this: (1) The number of foreign language speakers were higher at the office onshore than it was offshore, (2) the workers onshore were more proficient in English than those who worked offshore, and this could in return be as a result of a higher degree of English representation within the engineering program at the university.

If one looks at Hiss's (2017) study on multilingualism among a divided workforce of miners in the northern parts of Norway in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, there were similarities in the divided workforce. There was a great number of multilinguals among the mine workers. It is however not likely that this was a result of higher education, as most of the mine workers here were farmers, reindeer herders and fishers. Multilingualism was mostly regulated by mobility, actual contacts and practical needs (Hiss, 2017: 700). S5 explained how the official work language at the workplace was English, especially within his piping-team. It is mentioned that much of S5's company communicated mostly in Norwegian with a Norwegian customer. S5 was not sure why they wanted all documentation and most of the communication in Norwegian. This will be brought up again in question 4 and 5 where there are similarities between S4, S5 and S2 on communication in Norwegian.

## 5.5 Discussion Question 4

This question was intended to show what kind of languages, nationalities and cultures that existed both among the workforces and, in return, with regards to communication and code-switching. The most interesting findings with regards to this question was however not an

answer which directly answered the question. S4 mentioned that most of the people he communicated were his coworkers in the workplace, some of these were from Britain, India, and the Philippines, and were given citizenship if they would work for the company. In contrast to Hiss's (2017) study where the workers were a product of the Norwegian government's assimilation policies, the foreign workers that S4 mentions were a necessity for his company in a time where shortage of laborer was a fact. He also mentions a customer who wanted all communication to be mediated in Norwegian. Because all companies are anonymized, this could not be shown just by reading the transcriptions, but the 'customer' which S5 referred to in the previous question was the same customer/company as S4 mentioned here. It needs to be noted that S4 and S5 worked for different companies, but both described themselves as 'piping engineers'. This Norwegian customer had a demand that all documentation and communication needed to be in Norwegian. The reason for this was not known to either S4 or S5 but will be given a greater context in question 5 where S2 gives a narrative to this.

#### 4.6 Discussion Question 5

When asking the subjects about how much of the written work-material they guessed were in English and how much was in Norwegian, the intention was to learn something about the quantity of English versus Norwegian at work. S1 mentioned that 80 percent of communication were in English, but she did not specify how much of this that was written communication with regards to work-material. S3 mentioned around 90 percent English written work-material and S4 would estimate around 50 percent English. Two important findings in this section were from the answers from S2 and S3. S2 mentioned that a lot of the written work-material offshore was mainly Norwegian with a large number of English words. He gives an example of several English words that were integrated in in procedures and documentation; 'elevator', 'top drive', 'pipe', 'pipe deck' and 'conveyer' (A2, L166-172).

S2: Yes, "elevator" (CS) is a lifting equipment that hangs from the "top drive" (CS). The "top drive" (CS) is really the drilling machine. But when we have to lift "pipe" (CS) and drive that down the whole, there is an "elevator" (CS) who grips the "pipe" (CS) either when we are pulling up or driving it down. Another equipment that we use

is a “conveyer” (CS). That is a feeding drill that we lay from “pipe” (CS) towards “pipe deck” (CS) (A2, L168-172).

First and foremost, this gives another instance where code-switching occurred in written material at the workplace. It can also provide some context for S4 in question 5 and S5 in question 3. They both mentioned the customer who wanted documentation on equipment and general communication to be mediated in Norwegian. A hypothesis could be that the equipment that S2 was part of working with and installing offshore had similarities to the piping equipment that S4 and S5 worked with onshore. Given that most of the communication and workers that S2 describes offshore were Norwegian, it would be natural that important equipment, procedures and plans were written in Norwegian with regards to health and safety measures. This was however not verified by either of the subjects.

#### 4.6 Discussion question 6

Asking about conversations to co-workers with a foreign background was a wide question and provided many different answers. The question was asked with the purpose of detecting differences in language when they talked about something that concerned their private life and something that was work-related. Socarraz-Novoa (2015) did this in her research, but seeing as she identified this as a part of her observation before the actual interviews it had to be done a bit differently here. Hopefully, the subjects would be able to describe their conversations for the interviewer. S2 and S4 both mentioned that some of the foreign colleagues at their work enjoyed when they were spoken to in Norwegian. S4 do not categorize this as work-related or private talk, but it is understood by the context that he refers to general conversations. He also mentions that he sometimes used some English words to help them.

S5 alluded to something similar when he mentioned that foreign colleagues sometimes sat together with him and some other Norwegians in the lunchroom. The foreign workers preferred that they spoke in Norwegian so they could get practice and learn the language. This tells that code-switching is used as a language resource among some of the foreign workers, given that some of them explicitly asked to have conversations in Norwegian in order to learn the language. The fact that S5 mentions that he sometimes uttered some English words also

shows how using instances of code-switching is viable to progress conversations when it was needed by the foreign speakers, and perhaps by S4 as well. The latter is not mentioned by S4 whether he used English words as a resource of his own.

## 5.8 Discussion question 7

If and how English could pose as a barrier for the subjects were asked to make them reflect on which part of language and communication that could be difficult or they had problems with. In this way, it could be possible to identify some commonalities between the subjects. All of the subjects, except for S5, explicitly mentioned that although they did not perceive English to be a barrier, they sometimes experienced difficulties finding the right words in conversations. S1 points out that she sometimes did not want to have a conversation if it was a lot of difficult words that she had to translate into English, but it was not necessarily technical, work-related terms that were the problem but rather if something was very detailed in general (A1-L93-105). S2 also mentioned that some words or expressions was difficult to translate into English, and that he sometimes had to search a little further for those words. S3 pointed out that he did not always find the right words in conversations, and this could lead to mumbling.

In an example from when S4 was on a company trip to USA (A3, L291-300) he had problems with some technical terms that was new to him. The problem was not really the terms themselves, but rather that he did not have anyone there to ask in Norwegian. S4 did also admit that he did not always remember the words, but adds that this could happen in Norwegian as well. Sometimes S5 had some problems understanding his boss, because he talked with a deep British accent. S5 also mentioned that his boss had previously worked a long time 'on the floor' which in this context is understood to be a blue-collar worker, and that there could be difficulties in keeping up with that kind of conversations.

The importance here is what about their English language use that the subjects found difficult. Structuring conversations and sometimes feeling inadequate to use English in certain situations were something is to be uttered in a very detailed manner. What S5 refers to is in close link to what could be defined as a form of jargon and can in some cases elicit some negative feelings in the case of not understanding the meaning (Jones 2011: 3). This is important because it tells us that code-switching in certain situations can be a challenging task that is not always perceived as a single positive action.

## 5.9 Discussion question 8

If the subjects had difficulties with regards to English usage, they were asked about what kind of aids or tools they would use. This question was asked in order to see what kinds of aids were most reliable and what the subjects depended on when using English as a form of communication. All of the subjects, except for S4 were asked this question. All of them answered that they would use Google or in some instances Google Translate or Clue to find words or phrases that they were uncertain of. S3 viewed his co-workers as a resource or a tool in order to get explanations of English words. He did not think he had ever experienced that none of his coworkers could help him with English words or phrases. This is an example of how widely used digital tools were for the subjects but although all of them refers to this as viable help when it is regarding written communication or work material, S1 pointed out that it was not that easy to look at words online if he was in the middle of a conversation or a meeting (A2, L277-291).

From this, we can gather that while code-switching is mostly seen as a viable tool itself in terms of communication with foreign workers, there are, however, also challenges when attending certain arenas where code-switching occurs if there is little to no availability of tools which provide aid. Later, while discussing question 13, there will be mentions of certain measures taken by companies themselves to aid workers who need either extra material or guidance in switching to another language. While these measures are not always provided, and are often tied to the economic situation of the company, the aids themselves are described in a positive manner by the subjects.

## 5.9 Discussion question 9

Whether the subjects had received any official procedures on whether to communicate with regards to Norwegian or English, was asked to see if there were any instructions or frames that the subjects had to navigate within with regards to communication in a work-related setting. None of the subjects had received explicit orders from superiors regarding language and communication, except from S4 and S5 who primarily had to communicate with their main customer in Norwegian. S1 pointed out that as her team had changed dynamically, the

communication would change alongside it. When she first started at the company, the team consisted predominantly of Norwegians, and communication would mostly be Norwegian. As the demography within her company had changed, the language usage had changed with it. She also mentioned that one of the general changes in the staff at her workplace was that Americans and Canadians had been exchanged with other foreign workers who were less proficient in English, and that this had led to less pressure for S1 when she was speaking English at work.

S2 mentioned that he sometimes used Norwegian to some of his foreign coworkers to help them improve their Norwegian. He mentioned an example with a British colleague, who according to S2, liked this activity. This shares a high degree of similarities as the instances mentioned by S4 and S5 in question 6. This shows how code-switching occurs and that it can function for the benefit of language learning. S3 verified how it was important to portray his company in a professional manner. He also states that he would answer written material, such as emails, in the same language as he had received. He also mentioned that even though he knew the recipient was Norwegian, he would sometimes write that email in English. This could happen if he thought that email would be forwarded to someone who might not know Norwegian, and spare the original recipient the task of translating these emails. This instance could perhaps be seen as an act of kindness but is perhaps better described as a way of increasing efficiency in communication.

If the communication process would affect future work for S3, it would probably be desirable that efficient and correct communication would be carried out, and that no information was lost in translation. As Mondada (2007) argues for the practical use of code-switching to show participation frameworks, this is arguably applicable not only in talk-in-interactions but also in written communication as shown with S3. If emails were sent in Norwegian but received in English, would that be as to say that the email not only was ready to be forwarded, but perhaps expected to be forwarded? Unfortunately, there was not a follow up question to this, so explicit data was non-existing.

### 5.11 Discussion question 10

The subjects were asked if they sometimes switched between Norwegian and English when it came to work-related communication. This question was asked for the purpose of seeing in

which contexts code-switching would occur among the subjects and perhaps if it was perceived as a resource, or potentially an obstacle. S1 mentioned how she would switch from Norwegian to English if Spanish coworkers would join a conversation. She expressed that they could not be excluded from conversations. She admitted that if something were too specific to articulate in English, she would let the Spanish workers know, and announce that she had to say the following in Norwegian. This was a procedure done by the Spanish workers as well. The part where code-switching was used when a Spanish colleague joined in has some similarities to what Socarraz-Novoa (2015) classifies as ‘face-saving’. This is an act that not only displays a social gesture, but also acknowledges others’ identities. As S1 also mentions that the Spanish workers could not be excluded and the fact that this act was done in return by the Spanish workers, this can be perceived as a shared respect for each other or an acknowledgment of each other’s languages, as well as recognizing that overcoming challenges in communication is a shared effort.

S2 and S5 both mentions code-switching with regards to foreign workers leaving a conversation. S2 said that if there was an ongoing English conversation and the only person who did not speak Norwegian left the table, there could often be a ‘lag’ where the remaining participants would keep the conversation going in English before switching to Norwegian. S5 mentioned that this often happened in meetings, and it was not before someone pointed out that they were only Norwegians left that they switched to Norwegian. This delay could last between 5-10 minutes. It was not given that the meetings were just going to switch to Norwegian when there was no use for English. This showed how sometimes, unconsciously, that switch did not automatically happen before it was pointed out after some time had passed, perhaps reflecting both the Norwegian workers’ English-language proficiency, as well as a recognition of English as a useful lingua franca that needs to be practiced and maintained.

This is also interesting due to its implications for how code-switching can be perceived among the workers. One could, in other words, argue that the delay or ‘lag’ showcases a positive attitude towards code-switching among the workers. If it were highly uncomfortable or required a lot of effort to continue the conversation in a foreign language, this ‘lag’ would likely get pointed out quickly after the foreign workers left the conversation. As pointed out by S2 and S5, the conversation continued for quite some time, and thus indicates that code-switching does not necessarily correlate to something negative or uncomfortable. It is important to note that this may not indicate that this is a general result for everyone in such an environment. It is, however, a valuable observation which is important to note in the

discussion of how code-switching is perceived.

### 5.12 Discussion question 11

When the subjects were asked about whether they felt pride or joy when talking to people within the oil and gas business, the purpose was to detect some form of motivation or willingness to communicate information about their work. S1, S3, and S5 said, in some form, that it depends on whom they are talking to. S1 was proud of the work she did, but if the recipients were not acquainted with the business, she would not talk about it because they would not understand it. S5 enjoyed conversations about his work with someone who also worked within the business, and stated that even though they had different jobs, they still had much more in common with regards to work than what he had with others. S3 pointed out that it was more fun talking to others within the same business, because it was very difficult explaining to outsiders what he did in his job. He makes a reference to this at the very beginning of the interview:

**I: What is a cutting stick ?**

S3: So when you are going down the hole and you get stuck, you want to get loose. If you do not have the opportunity to get either up or down, you can place enough weight on the tool so that you cut enough sticks with the right amount of force. You can then get free from our tool, and pull yourself up again.

**I: When you say the “tool” (CS), what is that ?**

S3: It is a bit hard to explain. The “tool” (CS) is the tool we use to drive “liner” (CS), which again is large steel pipes that expands within already existing steel pipes that are already down in the well. Inside those, we have a tool which are enabling us to expand the steel, and also helps us get loose if we get stuck (A3, L45-57).

As seen in the excerpt above, the number of English words and technical terms can be confusing for people who does not work with this kind of equipment. Explaining what the different components did was difficult for S3 and almost not understandable for the interviewer. Even though it is not related to risk in this instance, it could arguably be applied

to risk management in instances where there are uncertainties in the terminology that could lead to it. S3 later in the interview pointed out that they had a ‘toolbox talk’, which was a pre-job meeting where they went through procedures and equipment before the job started (A3, L173-176). Some of the largest risks with regarding to language use in the workplace is the unawareness of the speakers in how language functions for processing and conveying information. The best way to create and increase this awareness is, according to Condamines (2010: 43) to discuss them during meetings. The importance of this is how for instance new workers within this business establish an understanding for the specific terminology of their job and within their specific field, including English-language use in general, but also specific jargon and professional terminology.

Another implication from this result is that code-switching itself is not the source of discomfort for workers within this field. Rather, it is related to who the receiver of information is when one is giving information related to the work. While the terminology might take some time to learn when first starting in this line of work, other workers use the same terminology and understand its meaning. Code-switching is therefore a useful tool, or a viable resource in that regard. What S3 is specifically referring to is the use of that same terminology in relation to people who have no understanding of that terminology at all.

### 5.13 Discussion question 12

This question shares some similarities with the previous question and provided some similar but still insightful answers. The question was asked with the purpose of making the subjects reflect on the difficulties in communication with people outside the oil and gas industry, and if they could pinpoint some of those challenges. The subjects displayed different instances and arenas of this, but a commonality was that the words and expressions specific to their job was hard to put into context when explaining to outsiders. S2 explains the difficulties in telling his girlfriend what he has done in the course of a job or a day at work:

S2: I understand what you mean, but I do not really feel it that way. If I am trying to explain someone what I do offshore, and they do not work within that field, I would rather wish that they knew something about it, because then it would be easier to

explain. If they know the name of equipment or processes, and know what it is about, it is much easier to discuss what you are actually doing, and what you have done on this [offshore] trip. It would be much easier to explain the challenges that occurred and have a good conversation about it. So, no. It is not a good feeling to know something that someone else do not know, because the starting point is so different. For instance, when I am telling my girlfriend what we have done that [offshore] trip or that day, there is often so much background and explanations required for her to understand the setting. I would rather wish that she knew what it was all about (A3, L399-408).

The difficulties S2 had when explaining his work to his girlfriend was related to language and the challenges with explaining equipment and processes. The indication of this is that the professional terminology and technicalities of S2's work are too difficult to explain for outsiders. It was not mentioned that it was regarding the specific use of English, but it is reasonable to include the English words and expressions used in S2's job as factor for making his explanations more difficult for his girlfriend, and in general for people outside of his business. For S3 the troubles would be similar. He pointed out that the basics of his job was simple, but it was complex when something was detailed:

S3: A lot of what is going on is very complex so it can be hard to get to know it if you have not seen it for yourself. So, it is very difficult to get to know if someone just tells you; "hi, I am putting three thousand meters of steel pipes down the ground". And if they ask you how ? Only with the help of conversation I believe it is hard to give a thorough explanation of how it works (A3, L396-400).

Language in itself was not enough to explain the details of S3's work to outsiders. The basics were easy enough, but if the conversation progressed, he believed it would be too difficult to give a thorough explanation into the specifics of his job. These instances display how language sometimes could be a barrier and a social challenge, and it tells us that language and perhaps code-switching may not always be perceived as a resource in every situation. In addition, it places the source of discomfort on the professional terminology, and not the actual

usage of code-switching *within* the workplace and between workers who are communicating information to each other.

#### 5.14 Discussion question 13

The intention behind this question was to create a context for the subjects' working environment with regards to foreign workers and how the company facilitated their stay with regards to language challenges. S1 did not mention any specific measures from the company but said that it was an official requirement or criteria that they knew English. S2 also did not know about some special measures that his company had done but noted that both himself and the coworkers needed to make foreign colleagues feel included in conversations and make them a part of the team. This was not specifically written down as requirements but seemed to be measures taken by the workers themselves to ensure a healthy and inclusive environment. Interestingly enough, this again implies that code-switching in the workplace has a positive connotation to it. When such measures are instigated by the workers themselves, it indicates that code-switching is viewed as being a viable resource in the workplace. It is not only a viable resource for the company, who gains a more inclusive work environment for their employees, but also for the workers themselves. It also places the occurrences of code-switching not only in meetings and formal arrangements. Instead, it indicates that it happens organically in less formal interactions as well.

S3 and S4 mentioned that their companies had or previously had social measures for the foreign workers. S3 mentioned that although this was for all of the new workers in the company, it was a good way to socialize and get to know the other employees. S4 knew that his company previously had some language courses that foreign workers in the company could participate in, but due to difficult financial times, these offers had been removed. Even though S4's company had to remove those courses, it is important to note that those measures were taken by the company to ensure a healthy environment. In the case that inclusion does not happen organically between workers themselves, these measures ensure another layer to the safety and security of those workers who may not feel comfortable code-switching when they begin their work. In all fairness, to be socially inclusive in the workplace was important for all the subjects. Although only two of the subjects mentioned concrete measures from the company, it seemed to be important that everyone in the company were included in some

form. A form of responsibility in inclusion of foreign workers seemed to be of high importance to the subjects. Again, the idea of code-switching was both seen as a positive occurrence during their work, and as a viable resource. Even though this may not be the case every time, as seen in the previous question, the overall impression from the answers provided to the interviewer regarding this particular question puts code-switching as a necessary and important feature of their workplace.

#### 5.15 Discussion question 14

This question was asked in order to see how the subjects regarded themselves in terms of English skills. As the subjects were asked to range themselves on a scale from 1-10 it would be interesting to compare their answers with what results that may have been on the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR-scale). Due mostly to the scale and scope of this thesis, however, a detailed comparison was unfortunately not viable. However, while it was impossible to make concrete statements on the subjects' proficiency level with regards to the CEFR-scale, it is however possible and credible that all of the subjects were at least on a B1 level that states that these speakers:

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 & ambitions and briefly give reasons and explanations for opinions and plans. (Council of Europe, 2020)

The subjects were asked to range themselves on a scale from 1-10, where 1 was 'unable to understand almost anything in English' and 10 was 'English on the same fluent level as Norwegian'. The answers that the different subjects stated are listed in the following order: Subject: written assessment-oral assessment. S1: 8-7, S2: 7 - 9, S3: 7 - 7, S4: 9 - 9, S5: 7 - 7. As all of the subjects ranked themselves as a 7 and above both with regards to written and oral proficiency it is likely that this result would reflect English-language skills at a B1 level minimum.

Throughout the interviews all of the subjects had described or explained how they have (1) been able to understand and narrate familiar matters with regards to work, (2) described experiences and events (3) and explained opinions or plans. All of the subjects have given quite detailed descriptions of their work, what tasks they do and whom they communicate with. They have provided descriptions of situations, experiences and have stated opinions and plans both with regards to private life and work-related topics. The topic in this question is not directly related to the research questions, but it does create a foundation to say that all of the subject were regarded as reliable with regards to a basic level of English skills.

## 6. Conclusion

This thesis has looked at different aspects of code-switching among oil industry workers based out of Rogaland in Norway. The subjects participating in the interviews have all volunteered to be a part of this project. All of the subject are Norwegian citizens, born in Norway and has Norwegian as their first language. They work for companies that primarily deal with different parts of the oil and gas industry, and their physical workplace is located in Rogaland. Their work also includes offshore trips for planning, in regard to maintenance and upgrades. This data provided by the subjects' interviews has created much of the foundation for enabling the results and this conclusion. As many of the questions in this thesis were open ended, it led to insightful conversations and reflections on different topics that were not always specific or necessary to the particular question being asked. However, these reflections contributed valuable nuance and personal reflections, that allow for greater insight into how professional terminology and jargon affect the interview subjects' personal and professional lives. The process of transcribing and translating Norwegian into English can potentially have led to some misunderstandings, and some things may potentially have been lost in translation. The difficult part of transcribing and translating interviews is to capture small and subtle instances of humor, irony, body language and general emotions. It is especially difficult when translating into another language where references, words and phrases do not always reflect the actual setting, utterance or meaning that was initially intended. The research questions that were to be answered in this thesis were the following three:

- 1.) Where does code-switching occur in the workplace?
- 2.) How is code-switching perceived among the workers?
- 3.) How is it possible to view code-switching as a viable resource within the workplace?

The questions that the subjects from the interviews answered were created with the intention of enabling and facilitating free speech, and general reflections. On question 1 and 2, the subjects were asked for how long they had been working in the company and what their main tasks in their job was. The question provided an answer from S5 were he displayed multiple instances of code-switching by explaining what he did in his job in general. These instances are believed to occur just as likely within his workplace as they did in this interview. It would be likely that S5 sometimes discussed progression and technical details regarding his ongoing

work with bosses, other colleagues, or customers. As these English terms occurred in the interview, it is likely that they occurred in the workplace as well. On question 3, there are some important findings with regards to how and why code-switching occurred at work. It also provided context for statements made by two of the subjects in question 4 and 5. S1 explains how code-switching occurred in meetings with foreign workers. Both Norwegian and foreign workers would switch to, or use, English as the main language in meetings if there were workers with different first languages present. It was understood that this was done as an act of politeness by everyone. S2 told how language differed from when he worked onshore versus offshore. The amount of English communication and English speakers was higher onshore than offshore. Offshore, much of the communication and written material such as procedures, technical drawings, and job descriptions were written in Norwegian with a high degree of English words. S2 points to this being because of a higher number of Norwegian language speakers. S4 and S5 both mention a Norwegian customer which they do a lot of work for. As this customer required Norwegian-language communication and documentation of all the products, it is reasonable to assume that the situation S2 describes offshore, with a high amount Norwegian written material combined with a majority of Norwegian workers are closely linked with the written work material that is being used offshore on the Norwegian continental shelf. This gives the context for much of the Norwegian-language work material produced by S4 and S5, who both dealt with the same Norwegian customer. This in return shows that the entirety of the oil-and gas industry from Rogaland does not have the same procedures and wiggle-room for English communication but that code-switching occurs with regards to technical English words being used in primarily Norwegian work-material.

S2 and S4 mention in question 6 how they sometimes talk with foreign colleagues in Norwegian, even though they normally communicated with the subjects in English. This was described by the subjects as being both educational and fun for the foreign workers and the subjects. S2 and S4 sometimes used English words to help their foreign colleagues. These instances portray a picture of code-switching as a positive resource at the work place. Not only as a resource for the foreign workers but also as a way of social inclusion for both Norwegian and foreign language speakers. In question 7 it is pointed out that English was not perceived as a barrier for the subjects, but there were instances where it could be challenging. The most normal occasions were when something detailed was to be explained, and some of the subjects had troubles finding the right words in English. Although this does not show code-switching in particular, it reflected a general difference with regards to English-language

communication in the workplace. In question 9 it is demonstrated how written communication could change not only because of the recipient, but also with the further notion that information could be forwarded to a wider use and to a different audience. This act of translating especially emails into English was perceived by S3 as an act of efficiency and kindness. This gesture, although subtle, could be viewed as a way of showing how that message was intentionally or unintentionally expected to be forwarded and in some parts backs some of Mondada's (2007) research on code-switching as a navigation speak, or in this case written communication. In question 10, one observes how instances of direct code-switching at work happened on several occasions. With regards to meetings, one would always adjust the language according to the person who did not know the primary language of the meeting. The meeting would then take place in English. S1 mentions how this is done not only by the Norwegians, but also with the Spanish workers at her company, reflecting a common and mutual approach to this challenge. S2 and S5 detected how a delay in switching back to Norwegian could occur if the participant who did not speak Norwegian left the meeting. Although this instance would be perceived as amusing and comical to S5, it also reflects a certain degree of comfortableness and unawareness of English usage in meetings. If it were highly uncomfortable to speak English, it is reasonable to assume that switching back to Norwegian in these situations would happen much quicker. In question 11 and 12, one sees how it is enjoyable for the subjects to talk with others about their line of work, but that it could be challenging to outsiders of this industry. To put it in other words, code-switching was seen as a resource when speaking to others within the same industry. They understood much of the professional terminology and could actively participate in conversations. People who were not acquainted with that line of business had troubles not only with the professional terminology. This shows how it was not necessarily the code-switching that created the problem and difficulties, but rather the terminology in itself. Facilitating for foreign workers was important to the subjects. Although only two of the subjects mention how their company had taken measures for accommodating foreign workers, all of them agreed to a form of personal responsibility in including and facilitating for their colleagues. The last question provides a more reliable view of the subjects' proficiency and credibility, as it shows that all of the subjects perceived themselves as capable and proficient in their use of English.

As a summary of these findings, we have seen that code-switching occurred in many instances of the working environment for the subjects: Lunchrooms, meetings, written work material, and general conversations both about work but also about their personal lives. This is

especially reflected in connection to foreign colleagues and as a major part of a multilingual working environment, employing English as a highly useful and valuable lingua franca. The general findings in this thesis is that code-switching is perceived and used in a positive and constructive manner among the workers in oil and gas related workplaces. It was used not only for the sake of work-related conversations, but also as part of social measures and language learning processes. It is, based on these arguments, reasonable to perceive code-switching as a viable and valuable resource within an oil and gas industry working environment.

As this thesis falls under the branch of sociolinguistics it gives valuable insight on the meaning and occurrences of code-switching in a multicultural and multilingual workplace. Future research undertaken in the scope of this specific thesis could look at language attitudes compared to proficiency, employing the CEFR-scale in a more detailed manner, in order to provide a more complete impression. Broader research of multicultural and multilingual workplaces should look closer into similar work environments to the oil and gas industry (an industry that employs a relatively large percentage of foreign-language workers) , but research should also attempt to draw interrogatory lines to other industries. This could provide deeply interesting perspectives on how work and personal identities are navigated within spheres where code-switching is prevalent. Additionally, where this thesis has focused on – and interviewed – specifically native Norwegian workers, it would be interesting to view foreign workers' views on multilingualism and code-switching within the same industry. This potential comparison could provide useful insight and information on how code-switching is perceived from a foreign workers's point of view, in what within Norway is considered a vital national industry, existing in a global work environment and job market.

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# Appendices

## Introductory Appendix

### List of Conventions

I= Interviewer.

S= Subject.

?= Rise in intonation (not necessarily a question).

(COMPANY)= A company or name of a place which is to be anonymous.

(CS)= The previous word or utterance in quotation marks “..” was spoken in English.

(EAB)= The previous word or utterance in quotation marks “..” was an English abbreviation by the subject or interviewer.

(NAB)= The previous word or utterance in quotation marks “..” was a Norwegian abbreviation by the subject or interviewer.

(NAME)= The name of an individual who is to be anonymous.

(NOR) = Norwegian word in quotation marks “..” that there is no good translation for in English, but an approximate translation has been tried. The part behind the slash in quotation marks is the approximate translation.

(TRANS) The word or expression in quotation marks divided with a slash needs to be showed in Norwegian in order to make sense. The part behind the slash is Norwegian.

### Interviews

The interviews were conducted in Norwegian. Afterwards they were translated and transcribed in English. It was unrealistic to believe that the subjects would be as sufficient in English as in Norwegian given that all the subjects were Norwegian citizens, and that their answers would be limited to what they had been in Norwegian. The only words or phrases in English are the ones marked with CS in quotation marks. These were spoken in English by the subjects or the interviewer. This way it was possible to determine when someone switched between Norwegian and English. The list of conventions at the beginning was developed by the interviewer.

- 1.) Hvor lenge har du jobbet i dette selskapet? ***How long have you worked for this company?***
- 2.) Hva er det jobben din i hovedsak går ut på? ***What are your main tasks in this job?***
- 3.) Hvordan vil du beskrive kommunikasjonen her på arbeidsplassen? ***How would you describe the general communication in this workplace?***
- 4.) Kan du fortelle litt om hvilke mennesker du daglig kommuniserer med når det kommer til arbeidsrelatert kommunikasjon? ***Can you say a little bit about what kind of people you daily communicate with when it comes to work-related communications?***
- 5.) Hvis du skal gjette, hvor mye av det skriftlige jobbmaterialet du går gjennom er på norsk, og hvor mye er på engelsk? ***If you are to guess, how much of the written work material you go through is in Norwegian and how much is in English?***
- 6.) Hvis du snakker med kollegaer med utenlandsk bakgrunn, kan du beskrive hvordan den samtalen er for deg? Er det noen forskjeller i språket hvis dere snakker om noe som er jobbrelatert og noe som angår privatliv? ***If you are speaking to colleagues with a foreign background, can you describe how that conversation is to you? Are there any differences in the language if you talk about something that is work-related or something that concerns your private life?***
- 7.) Føler du at engelsk kan være en barriere? I så fall hvordan? ***Do you feel like English can be a barrier? If that is the case, how?***
- 8.) Hvilke hjelpemidler bruker du hvis det er ord, uttrykk eller generelle vanskeligheter med språket (engelsk) du må finne ut av? ***Which tools do you use if there are words, phrases or general difficulties regarding the language (English) you have to work out?***
- 9.) Har du fått noen spesifikk innføring i hvordan du skal konversere med tanke på norsk eller engelsk via. F. eks mail, telefon? ***Have you gotten any notions on how to communicate with regards to Norwegian or English, for instance via mail or telephone?***
- 10.) Opplever du at du av og til bytter mellom norsk og engelsk når du kommuniserer med andre i jobbsammenheng? ***Do you sometimes experience that you switch between Norwegian and English in a work-related setting?***
- 11.) Føler du noen form for stolthet når du snakker med andre mennesker i olje og gassbransjen om noe som er jobbrelatert? ***Do you feel some form of pride when you talk to other people within the oil and gas industry?***

- 12.) Tror du det kan være vanskelig for andre som ikke er kjent med din bransje å henge med på samtaler som omhandler ditt arbeid? Har du noen eksempler? ***Do you believe it could be difficult for people who are not acquainted with your line of work to follow conversations that are related to the specifics of your job? Do you have any examples?***
- 13.) Føler du at arbeidsplassen din tilrettelegger for kollegaer med flerspråklig bakgrunn? ***Do you feel like your employers facilitates for colleagues with a multilingual background?***
- 14.) Hvordan vil du rangere dine totale ferdigheter innenfor muntlig og skriftlig engelsk på en skala fra 1-10? 1 er uforstående til det aller meste, 10 er engelsk på lik linje som Norsk. Kan du utdype svaret ditt? ***How would you range your proficiency in oral and written English on a scale from 1-10? 1 is unable to understand almost everything, 10 is English on the same level as Norwegian. Can you elaborate on your answer?***

## Appendix 1

Age: 42

Gender: Female

Place of birth: Haugesund

**\*Establishing consent for the interview.**

**I: You can start if you want to ? (Q1)**

S: Yes, I have worked in (COMPANY) since 2007. Earlier we were (COMPANY) so we were bought by a Spanish company. I have been working with health and safety and operations “offshore” (CS). I have been working with projects since 2016. Now, I am in charge of the rig located in (PLACE). That being the restructuring and preparation for operations. I can talk a little bit about the company ?

**I: Sure, if you want to ? (Q1)**

S: It is a Spanish company with a Spanish culture. The company that I started in was a Canadian company, so there were two very different cultures. Especially for us who were familiar with a Canadian culture. It is a large company, worldwide I think it is around 27000 employees. Here in Stavanger we are around 250 employees. We operate on (PLACE) and some other “subsea” (CS) fields. My main job is to lead a “team” (CS), both internally here but also towards (COMPANY) and (COMPANY). Those are the once who are going to operate out there, on behalf of us.

**I: Do you cooperate a lot with the other companies then ? (Q2)**

S: Yes. But we are the real operator, so we are the end customer. (COMPANY) does the modifications, and (COMPANY) is also operating out there, and we are the operator who oversees that they do what they are supposed to. I run a team here of around 15 people, but I also have some supporting functions.

**I: How would you describe the general communication in this workplace ? (Q3)**

S: Most of the communication is through meetings, but also a lot on email. Our communication is primarily in English. There are a lot of Spaniards here. If there are

conversations in a meeting room where we are only Norwegians, we speak Norwegian, but if there is one with a foreign background, UK, USA, Venezuela or Madrid we do not. We have a lot of nationalities, from Asia to USA. We also have a lot of “expats” (CS) here.

**I: What are “Expats” (CS) ? (Q3)**

S: They send people from the main office, because they wish that we should get experience from the different organizations within (COMPANY). There are also several Norwegians who have traveled abroad, and maybe work there for two or four years.

**I: So it is within your company, but from different offices ? (Q3)**

S: Yes. Some work in Madrid, some in Vietnam, Houston or UK, and they often have contracts on two or four years.

**I: Have you done this ? (Q3)**

S: Yes, for a little while. In 2009 I was working from the main office in Canada. I might do it again once I am done with this project. I think it is very interesting to learn from other cultures, from an organizational point of view. We, as Norwegians, often think that we are the best in the world, but we are not.

**I: So you feel there is a lot to learn from the others ? (Q3)**

S: Yes, there is a lot to learn. This company works in a lot of corrupt countries, especially in Latin America where you have Venezuela, Colombia, Brazil. It is not the same as being here in safe, little Norway. But with regards to communication, there are meetings, some emails.

General information is mediated via email. There are some phone calls, of course. Sometimes you walk around and ask people, so it is a little bit of everything. I would say it is about 80 percent English, but say the Spaniards are sitting for themselves in a meeting, they speak Spanish, so it is the same as us. If we are four Norwegians in meeting, we speak Norwegian. All formal information is in English. When it comes to the Petroleum Safety Authority Norway, or other public institutions, it is in Norwegian. It sometimes depends on what we are applying for, but it is mainly in Norwegian.

**I: So everything that has to do with the Norwegian government is in Norwegian ? (Q3)**

S: Yes. If you look at the rig that I work with, there are a lot of Danish workers. There we use to official languages, English and Scandinavian.

**I: How do you feel it was when you started here ? Were there any guidelines or rules on how to communicate with regards to language? (Q9)**

S: I think it was more “learn as you go” (CS) and who you worked with. The “team” (CS) changes dynamically, so it is different from when I started to what it is today. Workers begin and workers quit. If you get more Spaniards or more Norwegians, it will be thereafter. Since I started in 2007 and until today, there have been major changes. When I started there were only Norwegians here, and when I talked to all those offshore everything was in Norwegian, because there were no foreigners. Today there are a lot of foreigners on the team, and it is therefore more natural that the communication is in English.

**I: Do you feel like that was an abrupt transition ? Or was it natural ? (Q9)**

S: I think it was kind of natural. I feel like it is easier now than what it used to be. Back then, there were Americans and Canadians, who are pretty good in English. They expected more, so you were often more insecure in conversations. Also, we did not use English that much. Now

that there are foreigners who are not that sufficient in English, it is easier to speak without thinking too much about it. On the other hand, I know that the Americans and the Canadians think we speak very good English, even though we do not believe it ourselves. They do not have two languages, but we do. I do not think it has gotten any worse. I think we, and other companies, have gotten more international than we were 15 years ago. That way both the language and the communication changes.

**I: Do you ever feel that English can be a barrier for you ? (Q7)**

S: Sometimes, maybe. If there is something that is very detailed. I am not afraid of speaking English, but sometimes you do not bother to have that kind of conversation at work, because you think; what are all those words in English ? Maybe you hold back a bit. It does not happen often, but it will take too much effort to say it in English.

**I: In these cases, is it the technical terms that are hard ?**

S: No, because we use the technical terms just as much in English as we do in Norwegian. So, we use the English words for pumps or “down-hole safety valve” (CS) “Down-hole safety valve/nedi hulls ventil” (TRANS). So, we use those English terms even though we are speaking Norwegian. It is almost weird to say the Norwegian words for those terms.

**I: What is a “down-hole safety valve” (CS) ?**

S: It is the lowest valve we got to secure the well. Offshore we have Christmas trees, but we do not say that, we say “Christmas trees” (CS). I do not say pipes, I say “piping” (CS) even though we speak Norwegian. There are a lot of those terms, and I think that is something that especially relates to the offshore industry. I think that is because of the generation from Ekofisk. There were a lot of Americans who imprinted those terms when they started, and you can not make them Norwegian, but I think that is ok. For me it would be unnatural to use the

Norwegian words, because I do not think I know what they are in Norwegian. I know some of them like pipes and “pipes” (CS) and cables and “cables” (CS). So when I speak Norwegian I use those English words.

**I: You mentioned “Christmas trees” (CS) ? What are those ?**

S: Christmas trees are those who stands upon the wells offshore. The secure you from the flood that comes from the reservoirs. You have valves, and then you have a big Christmas tree, or “christmas tree” (CS). So that secures us from getting a “blow out” (CS). I do not know what you would call that in Norwegian.

**I: A “blow out/utblåsning” (TRANS) maybe ?**

S: Yes, there you see. I did not know. So it is not like a traditional christmas tree, although we decorate that as well.

**I: Do you sometimes feel like you switch between Norwegian and English when you talk with people at work ? Say it is in the lunchroom for instance do you feel your language is different if you talk about something concerning your private life than if you talk about something that is work-related ? (Q10)**

S: It depends on who is sitting around the table. If there are five Norwegians, you would speak Norwegian. If a Spaniard then sits down next to me, we switch to English.

**I: You would do that in the breakroom as well ?**

S: Yes. You can not exclude them, so you switch. Sometimes I say; “I have to say this in Norwegian” (CS). Because maybe it is something specific and I can only articulate it in Norwegian. That does not only apply to me, that is just the way it is. The Spaniards do it to. They say that they have to say it in Spanish. But then they let us now that they have to explain this in Spanish. But like I mentioned, this is a very international company, so it is probably different depending on the oil company. It is probably different depending on the departments as well. On my project there are a lot of foreigners. The finance department only consists of Norwegians, so they might have another culture. All the meetings and communication there is in Norwegian. It varies from the different departments.

**I: If you are to write an email, and you are struggling to find the words, how do you solve that ? (Q8)**

S: In a “worst case scenario” (CS) I would go to Google Translate or Clue if there is a word I can not remember. In general I try to take my time and do it right, and maybe rephrase it if it is necessary. Sometimes you have to make sure it that the recipient understands what you mean.

**I: If it is orally ? Do feel that it is hard to find the right words sometimes ?**

S: Sometimes. But there is always another word you can use instead. I think it is easier now with the Spaniards then it was when the Americans. The Spaniards are not that sufficient in English either, so they do like us and explain it differently if there are confusions. But I have to say that almost everyone here speaks English very good. Now, I have spoken English in every meeting, every day, but of course I am not perfect, and I do not think I will ever be.

**I: Do you ever feel some sort of pride when you talk to somebody about your job ? (Q11)**

S: Here internally ?

**I: Internally or in a private setting.**

S: Yes, I would say so.

**I: Do you think that is because it something that you have for yourselves ? If you are talking with someone from another company for instance, do you think it is fun to talk about ?**

S: It depends on who I am talking with. Birds of a feather flock together. If you are sitting around a table and no one else has knowledge about the oil-industry, I do not bother talking to much about it. If someone asks me about my job, of course I answer. But if I am sitting at a table with some girlfriends who works in grocery stores and do not have any relations to the oil industry, they do not know what it is about. So I do not feel a need to talk about it. But if it is the other way around and there are many nurses sitting around a table and talking about that stuff, speaking that specific language, I can not follow, I just do not understand it. I think that is natural. If I am sitting with coworkers and that kind of people, that is mainly what we talk about. I do not think we have much more to talk about other than what we have done together. But I am proud of the work that we do. I think nurses, doctors or teacher are proud of what they do.

**I: Yes, taking pride of you own occupation ?**

S: Yes, I think so. You have to be, or else you need to find something else to do.

**I: I guess we have talked a bit about this, but do you think it can be difficult for people who are not acquainted with your line of work to follow conversations that are related to the specifics of your job ? Do you have any examples maybe ? (Q12)**

S: With regards to English ?

**I: It can also be Norwegian. I am thinking more about the specifics of your work ?**

S: Yes, that happens a lot. We often have multidisciplinary meetings. There is more than one discipline within one meeting. So, it is not sure that the nurse in that meeting understands what I am saying about welding, and then we sometimes have to explain it a bit different. But it not always necessary that she understands it either. The important thing is that the intended recipient understands it. Things happen really fast and we do not always have time for everyone to understand everything.

**I: You mentioned that you have a nurse here. Do you experience her to be more interested than if it was a nurse who you were friends with ? Or that you mainly had a social connection with ?**

S: Yes, definitely. The nurses here work within the oil business and “offshore” (CS), but my nurse friend who works at the hospital does not know anything about it. The do not have that experience and that training. Our nurses work “offshore” (CS) and they are trained for it.

**I: Do you feel that your employer facilitates for people with a multilingual background ?  
(Q13)**

S: Yes, absolutely. There are no differences between us.

**I: So you think it is ok to work here, even though you are from Brazil or Spain ?**

S: There is one criteria. You have to know English. They do not send people from Spain if they do not have any “basic knowledge” (CS) in English. They do not send someone from China who does not have speak English at all. That is not possible.

**I: Is that an official criteria ?**

S: Yes. They have to know English. If not, they will not get employed. That has something to do with safety as well. People on standby have to speak Norwegian, it is not enough with only English. Also, you do not get to work in Norway if you do not know basic Norwegian. I have a colleague with a wife here. She is a doctor, and I am sure she would do an excellent job with that, but she cannot get employment because she does not know Norwegian. In that case it is alright because they are soon moving back to Spain where she will get her old job back. It is kind of the same here. You have to know English or Norwegian. If you speak Norwegian but English and visa versa you can still get a job in this company. That is the difference.

**I: How would you range your proficiency in oral and written English on a scale from 1-10? 1 is unable to understand almost everything, 10 is English on the same level as Norwegian. Can you elaborate on your answer? (Q14)**

S: I would say maybe 8 in written English, and perhaps 7 with regards to oral English. I think I am better in writing. I rarely get insecure, but if I am writing in English, I have more time to look things up and get it done properly.

**I: For how long have you been learning English?**

S: I am 42 now, and I guess I started in first grade, although probably not as much as the first graders have now. So around 35 years maybe?

**I: Thank you for participating.**

## Appendix 2

Age: 26

Gender: Male

Place of birth: Oslo

**\*Establishing consent for the interview.**

**I: Can you tell us where you work and for how long you have been working there ? (Q1)**

S: Yes, I work in a drilling contractor firm that is called (COMPANY). I have been working there for 1,5 years. I work a little at the office, with the costumer, and I also work a portion of the time “offshore” (CS).

**I: Ok. When you say customer, what do you mean ?**

S: Then I mean the costumer, those who have hired us, (COMPANY) to execute a drilling on the installation that the operator owns or controls.

**I: Can you tell us what the work that you do mainly consists of ? (Q2)**

S: Yes. When I sit at the office, some of the time goes to plan future operations, and that being in collaboration with the customer and what they want to do. For my part it is important to make sure necessary equipment is sent out to the installation, to execute these operations. There is the planning part and also some work with “HMS” (NAB) to maintain a high safety standard. We take care of rapports that comes from the “offshore” (CS) department, and follow up if that is needed. When I am “offshore” (CS) the work is much more operational, and consists of maintaining an efficient and secure drift. Efficient and secure operation would actually be more accurate to say.

**I: Would you say you have a divided position then? You are both “offshore” (CS) and “onshore” (CS) ?**

S: Yes, that is correct. In reality I am more of a planner on land for future operations and then go out and execute those operations. Of course, in a team or a drilling “crew” (CS). But I do not work consequently as a planner because that is a full time position, so it is only a partly in

between. But it is of course fun to plan a job or an operation and then be able to execute it afterwards.

**I: Ok, so when you are out, there is a possibility that you are executing that explicit job you have planned ?**

S: Yes, that is correct.

**I: Is it always that way ?**

S: No, it depends on several things.

**I: Ok. When you are “offshore” (CS) then ? Are you at the same place every time ?**

S: Now, it is mainly that way. Previous I was in something called the resource “pool”. There I was sent around on different installations where there was a need. But now I am in a permanent drilling “crew” (CS).

**I: Ok, so now you are following that crew. I see. Can you describe how you feel the communication is at work ? (Q3)**

S: That is very varied, and there is a pretty big difference between land and “offshore” (CS). By that I mean that “on shore” (CS) and “offshore” (CS) are two very different places when it comes to communication. When I am at the office on land, very much of the communication is in English, primarily because there is a lot of people at the office that do not speak Norwegian or are not that fluent in Norwegian, so it is easier to communicate in English ? At the same time, those who speak Norwegian at the office are more sufficient in English than those who are “offshore” (CS). That has probably to do with their relation to education, I would think.

**I: Ok, what do you think with regards to that ? Can you elaborate ?**

S: I work towards a lot of engineers at the office. And at the engineering study at the university there is a lot of lectures and subjects that are carried out in English. You get used to speaking English, you get used to read English, and you get used to solve tasks in English. Meanwhile “offshore” (CS) almost everyone speaks Norwegian, it is usually not many English-speaking people that do not speak Norwegian. If then there is someone who does not speak Norwegian, I think that the language quickly becomes a barrier. It becomes difficult to communicate properly.

**I: Do you feel that for yourself ? If you think about your own abilities, does your mindset become a bit different when you are “offshore” (CS) or in that position ? Because you are an engineer and much of your education, as you mentioned, have been carried out in English ?**

S: Both yes and no.

**I: It is a difficult question to reflect on, and there is not necessarily a good answer.**

S: I do not feel that I change or behave different, or speak different when I am “offshore” instead of at the office. There is maybe a fraction more informal or jokingly talk “offshore” than there is at the office. But I think the reason for that is that there is a different working environment, and one communicates more than at the office. There are a lot of meetings and stuff at the office as well, but there is also a lot of time alone behind the computer and then there is not that much time for talking. When I am “offshore” (CS) the talk goes on continuously. So maybe I change a bit, because there is a different working environment.

**I: When you are offshore. Do you sometimes work side by side with someone who speaks another language?**

S: Sometimes. There is usually one a Scottish person who understands a bit Norwegian, but the communication ought to be in English. I have been in a situation where there was this person, I do not remember if he was Scottish, but he had a broad accent which was very difficult to understand. If it was Scottish or Irish I do not know, but it was hard to understand.

**I: Ok, but he was somewhere from UK then ?**

S: Yes, he was from UK. It was the first time he was on the Norwegian continental shelf. So he did not understand any Norwegian at all. I would not say that it became a barrier, but it was a challenge. So I had to focus more, and maybe ask one more time. The focus on affirmative communication was very important, so we did not misunderstand what was said to each other. Except from that it is usually very all right. But I see that there are several out there who do not possess very good English skills, and maybe they do not have problems with communication, because we usually understand each other, if you use some body language, a little Norwegian and some English.

**I: Is that with regards to work related talk, or is that in the breakroom ?**

S: No, then it is work related talk. But what I mean is that it usually just sorts itself out. But there are perhaps a lot who hang back a little, if we think about speaking English, because they are not comfortable with it, and then maybe it is a barrier. If there is a crew consisting of ten people for instance, and if one of those only speaks English, I think there would be several others on that “crew” (CS) who would feel a bit uncomfortable. It is probably easier for them to speak with someone who can speak Norwegian, because it would probably be a little barrier, if they have to speak in English.

**I: If you are either on land or water and you are speaking loosely in the break room and a person who does not speak Norwegian is there. How do you solve that situation ?**

S: What I would feel in that situation ?

**I: Yes, feel or react ?**

S: It is very varied. Some of us are very quick to switch into English, and include those who does not speak Norwegian in the conversation. But there are also those who does not think about that at all, or chooses to not do it, and continue the conversation in Norwegian. But there I can spot some differences when it comes to “offshore versus onshore” (CS). In the office, if there is lunch and we are having a conversation in Norwegian and someone who only speaks English sits down by the table, the conversation usually switches naturally into English immediately.

**I: Ok, and you would not say that occurs that often “offshore” (CS) ?**

S: No, I think there is a difference there. But maybe one can ask oneself the question, is that because there is a higher percentage of English speaking workers in the office opposed to “offshore” (CS) ?

**I: Would you say that is the case ?**

S: Yes, there is definitely a higher percentage who does not speak Norwegian “onshore” (CS) versus “offshore” (CS).

**I: If you are to guess, how is division between Norwegians and foreigners “offshore versus onshore” (CS) ?**

S: If I am to guess at those installations I have been to, it would probably also vary with regards to the operating company, I would think one in twenty or one in thirty who one have to communicate primarily in English with.

**I: Not more than that “offshore” (CS) ?**

S: No, maybe two or three percent who does not speak Norwegian. But in the office, I would guess around fifteen or twenty percent maybe.

**I: Ok, so around there maybe ?**

S: Yes, I think so.

**I: This is also approximately, but the written work material that you go through; mails, contracts or papers etc. how much would you think is in English and how much in Norwegian ? (Q5)**

S: Everything relating to documentation, procedures that I see “offshore” (CS) is in Norwegian. Mainly everything out there is written in Norwegian. Of course, with an extreme amount of English or American words. Equipment that we use with regards to drilling usually comes from USA, and therefore it is very American.

**I: Do you have any examples that you can think of ?**

S: Yes, “elevator” (CS) is a lifting equipment that hangs from the “top drive” (CS). The “top drive” (CS) is really the drilling machine. But when we have to lift “pipe” (CS) and drive that down the whole, there is an “elevator” (CS) who grips the “pipe” (CS) either when we are

pulling up or driving it down. Another equipment that we use is a “conveyer” (CS). That is a feeding drill that we lay from “pipe” (CS) towards “pipe deck” (CS).

**I: Ok ? What is “pipe deck” (CS) understood to be ?**

S: “Pipe deck” (CS) is the area outside the drilling tower. This is an area to store general load, but primarily “pipe” (CS) different pipes that is supposed to be on “pipe deck” (CS). So when we are driving pipes down the well the “pipes” (CS) from “pipe deck” (CS) is used. They are placed on the “conveyer” (CS) which is a kind of feeding drill, we then drive that in the drilling tower or drilling deck, and put that in the “elevator” (CS). The piece of pipe clicks around and is lifted by the “elevator” (CS). After this it is placed upon the “stick-up” (CS), that is the part of the “pipe” (CS) which sticks up over the drilling deck that we are supposed to connect to make the pipe longer and then enables us to get further down the well. I realize that this is very detailed.

**I: Yes, it is very detailed, but that is completely fine.**

S: So, “elevator, top drive, conveyer, shaker” (CS).

**I: What is a “shaker” (CS) ?**

S: As a part of the circulation system, we often pump directly down the string and then up and out of “annulus” (NOR) that is the large circular space outside, and then it goes over the “shakers” (CS). They are kind of “screens” (CS) or woven plates with very small holes that goes through them. So they pull out dirt and mud, typically stones and clay. So if we are drilling for instance we do not want to pump down the dirt we are pulling out, so it kind of separates it. The “shaker” (CS) is a large machine with “screens” (CS) where the “flow” (CS) goes over and then shakes, hence the word “shaker” (CS). So basically it is like separating something. It is the same concept. It is a giant separator which shakes, so you only get what you want through.

**I: Ok. The way you are describing the processes now, it is probably very clear for you, right ? Would you say that the other Norwegians who work there, do you feel that they use the same jargon ?**

S: There is definitely a jargon, yes. I remember my first trip “offshore” (CS). I did not understand a single thing, or basically nothing. Because there are so many words and expressions that are being used which you do not have a possibility to know in advance. A lot of it at least. So it does not really make sense. You can not make sense of it, it least that was the way it was for me. It took a long time before I understood what my superior told me to do. In the beginning I needed an explanation for almost everything.

**I: When you work on land ? Do you experience the same situations, where you feel the same level of English words ? Are someone struggling more than others ? Maybe you have an advantage because you work “offshore” (CS) as well, and you have a basic understanding of what is being said ?**

S: Yes, I would definitely say it is a big advantage to have traveled a bit “offshore” (CS) and have worked with the equipment that is being used. When you are sitting at the office and are planning for operations. One thing is seeing things in pictures and having explained what it is called. To be out there and seeing it physically, seeing how big or how small it actually is, seeing how it is used and how it functions practically. I would absolutely say that is an advantage. I first started “offshore” (CS) and then I started on land, but if it had been the other way around, it would have taken much longer time for me to learn all those words and expressions, because I would not have had any brackets to hang all those words and expressions on. But to answer your question; we often use the same words and expressions, or that jargon “onshore” and “offshore” because it has the same names, and it is often English or American expressions. It is probably a bit more detail oriented out there. There is more knowledge on multiple support systems which are participating in the main operation. So maybe some more words and expressions “offshore” (CS) than on land. But it is very similar. Those words and expressions that are being used “offshore” (CS) are also used on land. So everyone knows what we are talking about whether on land or sea.

**I: So with regards to competence, you would not say that someone are struggling to understand each other? Are someone struggling with communication “onshore” (CS) if they are communicating with someone “offshore” (CS) ?**

S: Yes, that can happen. But it goes both ways I feel. When it comes to more specific and technical details, some of those on land does not quite manage to capture exactly what the deal is. But if there are words and phrases that are not being used that often “offshore” (CS), for instance some systems or something organizational that those “offshore” are not that used to, there can be some issues there as well. But I do not know enough about that to say it explicitly.

**I: I understand, but you do not know any instances where there are expressions, being Norwegian or English where it has been unknown to those on land or at sea ?**

S: No, not that I can recollect. Or, I know that it has happened to me several times. People have mentioned some things, and then I have thought; What is that ? And then I have asked what it was, or what they meant by that ? But if there are meetings, you generally sit alongside others. It is rarely one to one in these meetings. So you have pretty wide support, both “onshore” (CS) and “offshore” (CS) to help each other.

**I: Do you feel that English can be barrier to you ? (Q7)**

S: It can definitely happen that I need some more time to think things over sometimes. If I am supposed to answer a question in English and I am struggling to find the right words, that can happen. But that is generally, if it is on or of work. I speak best Norwegian, and then it is easier to maintain a conversation and easier to express oneself when one is speaking Norwegian versus English. I sometimes have to search a little further to find words or expressions when I communicate in English. But I would not say that it is a barrier in that way. But I know that it can be a barrier for others.

**I: Would you think there are some groups that that this is a larger problem or challenge for ?**

S: On a general basis, a lot of those who work with drilling typically comes from the countryside or small communities. When you are from a city you hear English a lot more often, I would guess. If you come from a small place where you do not speak any English, or that English you do know derives from TV-Shows or film. Or maybe you do not have had the same education as others. If you have not been exposed to it the same way, maybe it becomes a barrier. But I do not think it is any special group, but I can imagine that maybe age plays a part. Those who have grown up over the last couple of years are more familiar with it. They have iPad, PC, TV, they watch Tv-shows. I think we hear and speak much more English. We are more international than the generation above us.

**I: If you are having troubles formulating yourself, say “onshore” ? That being emails, meetings or written communication. How do you solve that? (Q8)**

S: If it is a meeting or a conversation it is not that easy to just look it up. I think it is all about understanding each other. Try to maybe use another word, or maybe try to say it in Norwegian. Maybe they understand that Norwegian word and then understand the context. But if it is an email that I am writing, it is very easy to just use Google Translate to find singular words.

**I: Ok, so when it comes to writing you would use those types of aids ?**

S: Yes, especially Google translate if I am stuck. Because if it is writing you have the necessary time to think, or to look it up. It is very rarely that I am writing an email in English, and I use a Norwegian word and put it in parenthesis or brackets. Because then you have the time to formulate yourself.

**I: So you feel you have the time to do it properly ?**

S: Yes, but if something has a nickname in Norwegian and you can not find a suitable word in English, then perhaps I would write it in Norwegian.

**I: Have you gotten any work description, procedure or introduction to how you have to converse in mails, telephones meetings, etc. Are there any rules with regards to language usage ? (Q9)**

S: To be honest, I have not “nilest” (NOR)/”read the contract up and down” when it comes to personal relations, but I think that if you get an email in English, you have to answer in English. If someone starts a conversation in English, you answer in English. But there are some of the workers who are trying to learn Norwegian, and then I think it is ok to challenge them a little. So, sometimes if they speak English to me, I sometimes respond in Norwegian. That way I can challenge them to speak Norwegian. That happens, and they think it is fun.

**I: Ok, but then you know they are a part of the game, or that they understand what is going on ?**

S: Yes, of course. It is not supposed to be too uncomfortable. A little uncomfortable is ok, but they have to want to do it or participate as well.

**I: Are there someone that you do it with consequently ? Who likes the challenge ?**

S: Yes, there is. It is probably not suitable for everyone, but those who have expressed that they want to learn Norwegian, gone to language courses etc. For them it is a golden opportunity. And to learn a language you have to speak in that language. You have to hear that language, and you have to write it.

**I: Are there any typical nationalities ? Or are there all sorts of people ?**

S: It could be anyone. I do not feel that some nationalities are more willing to learn than others.

**I: Do you have any examples that you can remember concretely ?**

S: Yes, there is one from England who has lived in Norway for about 1.5 years. He has taken some Norwegian language courses, but he does not speak it on a regular basis. He usually speaks English. With him I sometimes switch to Norwegian, to challenge him a bit. He thinks that is nice. I think it is nice as well.

**I: Ok, so that is a thing that you two do sometimes ?**

S: Yes, we do. But when I went to University, there were a lot of international students from Iran, Japan, China and Africa etc. I do not feel that there has been any noticeable difference from where they are from. But it depends on them, and how their future plans are. Because if they want to continue living in Norway, or get a job in Norway, they are often more willing to learn Norwegian than if they are only here to study and are going back to their home afterwards. And I understand that. So maybe there is a difference there.

**I: I know we have talked a bit about this previously now, but do you sometimes feel that you switch between Norwegian and English in, for instance, the same sentence while you are speaking with others? Either with other Norwegians or someone with another nationality ? (Q10)**

S: Not that often, but I have noticed that sometimes when a conversation has started in English and if that one person who spoke English has left the conversation or the room, the conversation has continued in English even if we could switch to Norwegian. It probably

took a couple of minutes before someone said that we might as well could speak Norwegian. And then we switched to Norwegian. But that it is a “lag” (CS) there, I definitely feel. That has happened on several occasions.

**I: Do you feel that was more natural ? To keep the conversation going in English ?**

S: I do not know. Maybe you are well into the conversation that you are not really thinking about that you are speaking English. When the moment comes where you have the opportunity to switch over to Norwegian, you probably do not think about it, before after a while. Why are we speaking English now ? We might as well speak Norwegian ? That has happened a couple of times. But I rarely feel it happening in the middle of a sentence. It would probably have to be if there are words or expressions, or that you can not manage to express oneself in English, that you have to say it in Norwegian. And sometimes there are someone in that group that knows what it is called in English and can help that person who does not know Norwegian. Or sometimes the person who does not know Norwegian actually understands that Norwegian word or expression. I think it is all about making yourself understandable.

**I: If you are talking with someone about work related talk ? That can be people in your own workplace or others within the same business, do you feel some sense of pride when you are talking about your work ? (Q11)**

S: Well, I am proud of the work that I do. I feel that the work I do has a purpose. A purpose for me, but also a purpose in general. I am proud of the position I have and the work I do. I have no problem recommending that kind of work to others because I think it is great. The oil industry has not gotten a lot of positive publicity the last couple of years.

**I: In social settings, do you think that others who does not know much about your line of work have problems understanding you ? Say you are sitting with a mixed table. You, some others within the oil and gas business and someone who works with something**

**completely different. Do you think it is hard for those people to participate in or understand your conversation ? (Q12)**

S: Yes, I think that is challenging. Like I said previously, there are so many words and expressions you only use out there, or in that business. No one else uses them. At least not with the same meaning. So being able to discuss what you do at work can be challenging with outsiders. That is especially amplified if you have two or three who work within that business, and two or three who do not. If we are talking for instance about drilling, we proceed to a detail-oriented conversation. Then I think it is worse for those who has no prior knowledge. So, I would say it is challenging and demanding to explain what I do. Principally it is ok to explain, but the minute you are talking about sub-operations, how things are done and what the equipment is called, that is when the problems occur. You might say that you drill some holes and drive some pipes down to produce some oil and gas. So, the concept is pretty easy, but it is everything around that is hard.

**I: Are there some times or situations that you feel good about knowing something that the others does not know ? If you are in a conversation.**

S: I understand what you mean, but I do not really feel it that way. If I am trying to explain someone what I do offshore, and they do not work within that field, I would rather wish that they knew something about it, because then it would be easier to explain. If they know the name of equipment or processes, and know what it is about, it is much easier to discuss what you are actually doing, and what you have done this trip. It would be much easier to explain what challenges that occurred and have a good conversation about it. So, no. It is not a good feeling to know something that someone else do not, because the starting point is so different. For instance, when I am telling my girlfriend what we have done that trip or that day, it is often so much background and explanations for her to understand the setting. I would rather wish that she knew what it was all about. But it is always good to be asked a question that you know the answer to. If someone asks a question to a group of people, and you are the one who knows the answer, you get a good feeling.

**I: Ok, so you value that excitement or happiness ?**

S: The fact that I knew the answer or could solve that problem ? Definitely. So, it is a good feeling but I do not think that much about it. I do not think it would make me feel better if it was in a group rather than I dialogue.

**I: Do you observe that your employer facilitates for foreign workers ? (Q13)**

S: That is a good question.

**I: If that is the case; how ? And if not, how could it be better ?**

S: I do not really know. I have not been in situation where I have thought about it. The company I work for is an international company, but where I work the majority are Norwegians, or at least speak Norwegian. So those I meet “offshore” (CS) or on land who does not speak Norwegian are mainly from different companies. Because I work together with many different companies when I am out there, but also when I am on land.

**I: So a lot of those you work with are not necessarily from your own company ?**

S: No, so exactly how my company deals with that part, I am not really sure of.

**I: Ok, but if you think about the environment at your work. Do you feel that as coworkers, you are a part of that facilitating process ?**

S: I think we are the most important part of that process. Of making people who do not speak Norwegian feel as a part of the group. And like I said earlier, there are more workers at the office than out there who switches to English. The threshold for switching to English is a bit

higher “offshore” (CS). But at the same time, there are a lot fewer that speaks English “offshore” (CS). At least which I have met. So, it is not as relevant out there. If you are not willing to speak English at the office, you have a problem. There are so many meetings and so many mails in English, so you are kind of forced to do it. But “offshore” (CS), those who speaks English are one of a few. So, it is not relevant, but still important. Even if it just one who does not speak Norwegian, you still have to contribute to him, or her feeling included in the conversation.

**I: Have you ever experienced that while you are communicating with someone in a work related situation, you have had a different perception of a word or an expression, and that has led to complications in the working process ?**

S: No, I do not think so. If there have been doubts about understanding something, I always ask an extra time or I get confirmed that everyone see the same picture. That extremely important with regards to what we are doing “offshore” (CS), but also at the office when we are planning it. Everyone has to see the same picture and the same risks. That way nobody makes mistakes and everyone understands the operation. The consequences of making mistakes can be very large, and even if the possibility is small the risk can be high. There have been situations where we are to solve a task, and there have not been properly discussed exactly how we are going to do it. Then one might have some different perceptions on how to do it. Then we might think, why did we do it that way, we could have done this or that.

**I: Is it the process that is unclear then ? Or can it be the work description or the phrasing ? Different interpretations ?**

S: Often several roads lead to Rome. There are several ways to solve a work task or operation. Based on different experiences, it is more about making your way inside the team. The importance of knowing how this crew works together. How to solve and distribute tasks as a team, so that you do not have different perceptions on how it should be done. But there it is a

lot of pre-work conversations, or “toolbox talk” (CS) as we call it. There we talk together and discuss the task before we go through with it.

**I: What did you call that ? “Toolbox talk” (CS) ?**

S: Yes, “toolbox talk” (CS) or a pre work conversation.

**I: Ok, does that happen right before task is to be done ?**

S: A pre work conversation can happen right before, or some time before. It depends on what operation we are supposed to do. But it can be everything from a small job to a more comprehensive one. In a prework conversation, there is mainly one person who leads the conversation, where the operation is walked through, and the crew comes with input on how we can solve it the best possible way, and what risks that are connected to those tasks or that job. Maybe provide some compensating measures that can reduce the risks. So it is to make the operation more efficient and safer. If we do not do it, maybe everyone have had their own separate understanding on how to execute their task. So that is a tool we often use “offshore” (CS) to make sure everyone is on the same page. There is also something called “stop job” (CS).

**I: “Stop job” (CS) ? What is that ?**

S: If something happens that have not been covered in the pre work conversation, that the something changes. Then one stops the job and discuss if there any new risks that have occurred based on the situational change. Is there something else we need to think about ? The method we planned in the pre work conversation did not work, so we have to make a new plan.

**I: So that is while the job is going on ?**

S: Yes, it can be. So that is a tool we use often.

**I: Is there a high threshold to yell “stop job” (CS) ?**

S: No, the threshold is not high in those situations. You get encouraged to do it if something changes, or the plan did not go as it was supposed to.

**I: How would you range your proficiency in oral and written English on a scale from 1-10? 1 is unable to understand almost everything, 10 is English on the same level as Norwegian. Can you elaborate on your answer?**

S: That is difficult. I think I am better at speaking than I am in writing. Perhaps 7 when it comes to writing and maybe 9 in oral English. I know that there are some words and expressions that I am not always sure of, but in general I would think I am pretty competent.

**I: For how long have you been learning English?**

S: How long at school do you mean?

**I: Yes, or in general.**

S: Ok, maybe around 20 years then. But I have not practiced it actively in all those years.

**I: Alright, thank you for participating.**

## Appendix 3

Age: 33

Gender: Male

Place of birth: Oslo

**\*Establishing consent for the interview.**

**I: What do you work with and how long have you been working with it ? (Q1)**

S: I work in (Company) as a project engineer, or my official title “associate technical professional” (CS). I have been working there for around 1,5 year.

**I: So that is the official title of your position ?**

S: Yes it is. So we work with wells, planning, building “tools” (CS) and executing operations “offshore” (CS) for different customers within Norwegian oil and gas.

**I: Ok, but your job ? What primarily do you do ? And can you mention the name of your title one more time ?**

S: “Associate technical professional” (CS) is the official title.

**I: Have you ever had to present the title in Norwegian ?**

S: I think it is a bit hard to translate, so I usually just say project engineer. Because that is really what it is.

**I: Ok, I see. But when you arrive at work what is it that you do ? (Q2)**

S: A normal day is for instance planning of future operations. That means a lot of contact with the customer I am working towards, which is drilling engineers from that company. I get drilling data from them, and then I plan what kind of equipment we are going to use in the well within our line of work. I also do simulations to verify that the equipment can be used, that it can withstand the powers and the pressure it is being exposed to. After that I often make some reports out of the results of those simulations and send that to the drilling engineer. I also

have some responsibility in overseeing the process in the workshop, making sure that they are where they are supposed to be in the process of building the equipment. I also have some part in the process of mobilizing the equipment to the platforms.

**I: So you are really a part of the whole picture then ? Or at least large pieces of it ?**

S: Large pieces of the picture, at least until it is sent “offshore” (CS). And if we have “offshore” (CS) operations on what I call my wells, I would also be a contact person for the “offshore” (CS) workers if they have questions relating to the work that is being done.

**I: Is it mainly the work you are in charge of then ? Or is it primarily the equipment ?**

S: In charge of correct usage of the equipment, but not the building process. I tell the people in the workshop how the equipment is supposed to be built and how many cutting sticks they are supposed to use in that specific “tool” (CS).

**I: What is a cutting stick ?**

S: So when you are going down the hole and you get stuck, you want to get loose. If you do not have the opportunity to get either up or down, you can place enough weight on the tool so that you cut enough sticks with the right amount of force. You can then get free from our tool, and pull yourself up again.

**I: When you say the “tool” (CS), what is that ?**

S: It is a bit hard to explain. The “tool” (CS) is the tool we use to drive “liner” (CS), which again is large steel pipes that expands within already existing steel pipes that are already down in the well. Inside those, we have a tool which are enabling us to expand the steel, and also helps us get loose if we get stuck.

**I: Ok, so that is a particular tool then ?**

S: Yes.

**I: How would you describe the communication at your workplace ? How and when you interact with others in your job ? (Q3)**

S: I have my “team” (CS) which consists of different engineers and coordinators. The coordinators have the main responsibility to order external equipment and the general responsibility for that equipment and getting it “offshore” (CS). So, within our group there is obviously a lot of talking “face to face” (CS). With others it is often a lot of emails. We have quite a few communication channels; email, Skype, Teams and telephone. Those are the ones we use the most.

**I: In terms of quantum, do you interact mostly with those at the office ? Or is it more outgoing towards “offshore” (CS) ? Like with jobs you mentioned earlier ?**

S: It depends on what is going on, but mainly it is within the office. Talking with each other, verifying and coming to agreements.

**I: What kind of people do you talk to on a regular basis ? (Q4)**

S: Some of the interactions are administrative, but during a workday I talk with everyone, from those who build the different “tools” (CS) in the workshop, the leader of the workshop, other engineers, the coordinators and also a technical guide who is located in our building, he can help us with a lot of stuff. There are also some outgoing conversations towards the customer we are working for, especially the drilling engineers. So it is a broad spectrum of people you have to relate to during a workday.

**I: Who of those do you recon you speak the most with ?**

S: That would be the other engineers on the same “team” (CS) as me.

**I: How many people are on that team ?**

S: We are three engineers.

**I: So you work close together ?**

S: We work close together, and we also sit together. All three of us.

**I: Ok, so you physically sit together all three ?**

S: Yes.

**I: This will be an estimate, but how much of the written work material that you deal with on a daily basis will you say is in English and how much is in Norwegian ? (Q5)**

S: I would guess at least 90 percent is English.

**I: Really, it is that high ?**

S: Yes, because all of the rapports are in English, mainly all communication through mail is in English. We also have other bilinguals here and with the costumer. Everything regarding

simulating programs is in English. Even the Office package is in English to make it as easy as possible when we are producing something.

**I: Ok, so even the software is in English ?**

S: Yes, everything.

**I: If you are emailing someone within your team ? Are they Norwegians as well ?**

S: There is one Norwegian and one from Algeria, but he is currently learning Norwegian and understands Norwegian, so he asks us to write in Norwegian, so he can learn.

**I: Ok, has he specifically asked you to do that ?**

S: Yes, he says, just speak and write Norwegian to me. So we try to do that, but if we need some rapid decisions, things are too hard to explain or it takes some time, we often just switch to English, because it takes less time.

**I: So that is more efficient towards him ? In order to save time ?**

S: Yes.

**I: How would you describe his English skills ?**

S: He is very fluid in English. He has worked all over the world for about 20 years, with English as the main language for communication. So it is a simple and efficient way to get good answers if you speak English.

**I: If you are speaking English with colleagues, how do you feel that conversation is for you ? How comfortable are you there ? (Q6)**

S: How comfortable I am with speaking English as a language in the workplace ?

**I: Yes.**

S: I think it is ok. I was a little unaccustomed to it in the beginning.

**I: When you started at your job?**

S: Yes, when I started, but I got the hang of it pretty fast. In the whole business, I think everyone uses a lot of English words and expressions which are unknown at the beginning, but when you then get the hang of it you sort of see the connection. You pick up words and expressions, and it is easier to communicate. I think it is important to have a little bag with words and expressions if you are to communicate well with others. At least on a technical level with the others at work.

**I: So, did you feel that was some of the hardest about that job ? Like what are they talking about now ?**

S: Yes, definitely. When I was sitting in meetings, and stuff like that, my mentor told me to write down everything I was unsure of, so we could go through it afterwards and he could explain to me what it meant. So, for the first meetings my lists were pretty long.

**I: So there were a lot of words ?**

S: There were a lot of words and terms which does not necessarily gives any meaning in the beginning, but once you get to understand them, it makes sense.

**I: Can you remember something you thought of at the time ?**

S: We have the classical “toolbox talk” (CS) which basically is a pre job meeting, where you go through procedures or things that needs to be done before you start the actual job. There are also a lot of expressions that we use internally in the office. “Hook load” (CS), “J slot” (CS).

**I: What are those ? Do you think you could manage to explain them in Norwegian ?**

S: In Norwegian. On an “offshore rig” (CS) you have a hook, if you can imagine, hanging from the tallest mast. All the weight you are putting down the well hangs from that hook. And that weight is then your “hook load” (CS). “J slot” (CS) is really an element in the equipment that we use. It is one of the ways we can get loose if we are stuck. So it is really just a track which is formed like a -j, and you have to manipulate the string to get your “tool” (CS) to get into that track, and then get out. So, if you get into the -j and then up again you are theoretically free and you can pull out. So everything down in the well can be left as it is, and everything above the well can lifted up.

**I: The words and expressions you use at the office to communicate with the workers there ? Do you use them as well towards the customer ?**

S: Yes, we use the same words and expressions in the office as we would with the customer. There, the employees mostly know what it means. But as you just witnessed, it can be difficult to explain that terminology in Norwegian. I do not know if there are any direct translations at all. In some way I have just accepted that it is called what it is.

**I: If you talk to someone at work, are there anyone who does not know what it is ?  
Everyone understands it ?**

S: Mainly. As long as you are not new in the job, as I was, and had to write down almost everything.

**I: Are there any differences in the language if you talk about something that is work-related versus something that concerns your private life ? In the lunch for instance, do you have a lunchroom where everyone sits together ? (Q6)**

S: Yes, we have a lunchroom and a coffee area where some of us get together, at least a couple of times a day. There we sort of have rule. In the lunchroom and the coffee area you are not allowed to talk about work. So there, all those words and expressions are excluded. Those you can not translate into Norwegian. So, you rather talk about normal stuff. I do not think people do something different rather than talk about different things.

**I: Do you always sit with the same people at lunch ?**

S: No, that varies.

**I: Are the many people with a different nationality in the lunch room ?**

S: Yes, there is quite a few.

**I: If you are sitting at a table, maybe not with the guy from Algeria because he wished to converse in Norwegian, but with someone who does not understand Norwegian that well ? Do you speak English ?**

S: Yes, or at least we try. Especially with those you sit next to or those who sit in front of you, you try to keep it going in English. But sometimes it slips up. Say there is someone at the end of the table who asks you for something in Norwegian, it is more natural to answer them in Norwegian rather than switching into English just so the others can hear what he asked about and what I am choosing to answer. But I think everyone tries to keep it in English, so everyone can participate in the conversation.

**I: So there is a culture for doing it that way ? Are there someone who is worse than others ?**

S: No, it is an unwritten rule that you include the other coworkers, but of course some people are better than others. The worst are maybe those who speak the least English in general. There may be several reasons for that, but maybe they are not that comfortable with speaking English.

**I: Do you feel that is more uncomfortable to speak English in the lunchroom than it is in general ? If you are talking about something work-related ?**

S: That is a hard question.

**I: Yes, it is not always something we think about.**

S: Maybe yes and no. For me it would be most natural to speak Norwegian because I am from Norway. But when I arrive at work, I sort of switch to English pretty fast. I do not go around speaking English with the other Norwegians, but if there is someone there who does not speak Norwegian, I tend to switch pretty fast, and then I do not think more about it. It happens naturally.

**I: If you have a meeting. Skype, Zoom or a physical meeting. Say you are four Norwegians and one foreigner. Do you speak English in that meeting ?**

S: Primarily, yes. But sometimes at the end of the meeting, if someone is pulling a joke or saying something funny, that might be said in Norwegian. But as long as it is work related, you keep it in English. If you are four people in a meeting room and you have meeting with four others who are Norwegian via skype, we often start in English, or we say: hello, we have one person here who speaks English, so we have to take the rest of the meeting in English, starting now. Just to make the others aware from the beginning. That way we are not 15 minutes into the meeting, and one person sits there and have not understood anything, because he or she does not understand Norwegian.

**I: If the person who does not speak Norwegian leaves the meeting ? Do you just switch ?**

S: Often we continue in English without thinking about it, but after a little while it switches naturally to Norwegian. At least when we understand that the remaining participants speak Norwegian, we continue in the meeting in Norwegian.

**I: Do you sometimes feel that English can be a barrier ? If you look away from the period that you started in the business, which you mentioned earlier. (Q7)**

S: Because English is not my mother tongue, my brain sometimes freezes and there is something you can not remember. Then you often think, what was that? And you start to mumble and say “eehh” for a little period. But except from that I do not think it is a barrier. Or, I remember I had some courses in the USA last fall with the company. On the first course there were mostly Americans and Canadians and the guy I traveled with is from Venezuela so he also spoke English. In the beginning there was a transition period. Coming from work where there is a lot of English and some Norwegian and here everything was in English. So, it was a transition at the beginning, but it went pretty fast. Eventually I did not think about it at all. I actually spoke English for a little while when I came home. You get so used to only speaking English.

**I: How quickly do you think it took you to become comfortable with speaking only English down there ?**

S: Maybe a couple of days. And then it loosened up a bit. It gets easier and easier the more you speak, so I would think a couple of days.

**I: If you think about what you said when you were in the USA. Was it the pace that was difficult ?**

S: Not necessarily the pace, because the instructor was from Argentina, so he was not the most fluent in English. But the course was about something that I previously had not dealt with that much, regarding equipment, so there were some new words and expressions. If you are at work, and you are stuck, you can ask someone and you will probably get an answer. Here everyone spoke English, so there were no one to ask. I sort of had to investigate those words myself, and that is why it took a bit more time in the beginning. But when you find the words you can use them the next time.

**I: If you are at work, and you are struggling to find the words or expressions you are looking for, what kind of aids do you use ? (Q8)**

S: First and foremost, I tend to use my colleagues. I will just turn around and ask; hey remind me, what is that called in English ? Often I get a response, and if that person does not now the answer I will just turn another 90 degrees and ask the same question. Often I get what I want, but if not, it is often the good old Google Translate to see what they have to offer. Often you will understand by the suggestion that Google Translate comes with, if it is a good translation or not. Very often we know what it is called, but you just do not remember it. It is sort of like an elimination process.

**I: It is not always correct ?**

S: It is not always a 100 percent, no. So the most practical, in my experience, is to use the people around me. Now I sit with the other engineers, the coordinators and also the chief of the workshop. And I do not think I have experienced that no one knows what a word or an expression is called or means in English.

**I: So there is always help to get from the other coworkers on that area ? That is good. When you first started in this job, do you know if there were any rules or customs on how to communicate ? Emails, telephones, meetings. How is the language supposed to be ? Are there any official guidelines ? (Q9)**

S: Not really. I think there are a lot of unwritten rules. Do not use emojis, do not write a smiley face if you are emailing with a customer. I guess you just have to try to portray the company in the best way possible and show that we are a serious company. On Skype or Teams meetings, within our department there is a lot more wiggle room. There you are allowed to joke around and write emojis, and stuff like that.

**I: Ok, so when it get a bit more unofficial, it is ok ?**

S: If it is something official from our department out towards other departments or especially customers, it is kind of in the cards that you have to act professional.

**I: If you are sending an email, and you know that the recipient is Norwegian, do you send that email in English or Norwegian ?**

S: That kind of depends. I have done both with regards to customers. Because some of those we communicate with at the customer talks English, and then the email is in English. I try to think a bit ahead as well. If the recipient is Norwegian, but I know or think that the email is going to be forwarded within their department, I will write it in English. That way he does not have to translate the message, if it is going to be forwarded. If it is a quick debrief or explanation between me and the recipient, I will write it in Norwegian.

**I: Do you sometimes experience that you switch and say whole sentences in English when you are talking with other Norwegians ? (Q10)**

S: It is rarely whole sentences, but like I mentioned earlier, there are a lot of words and expressions where I am not sure if a good translation in Norwegian actually exists. So, at least at work I would speak Norwegian, but sometimes those English terms pop in.

**I: You mentioned that the breakroom is a place where you do not talk about work, but if there has been a day where a lot has been mediated in English ? Do you sometimes unconsciously bring it with you there ?**

S: Perhaps, but then it might be the opposite of what I mentioned when I was in the USA. If it has been a lot of English, I might have problems finding the right Norwegian word. Then I will say it in English, because that is where my mind is. So that has happened several times.

**I: If you talk with someone who works within the same line of business that you do, can you feel some sort of pride talking about that ? Is it fun to talk about ? (Q11)**

S: I understand what you mean. I think it is cool to talk about, because a lot of what we do within the oil and gas field is exciting, and there is much cool technology. I do however think it is more fun to talk about with others in the same business. Much of what I do is hard to explain to outsiders. It can be really difficult to explain what I actually do. It is like when we started this interview.

**I: I was just thinking about that.**

S: But I think that will be the case if it is outside the oil and gas business as well. My previous work I also thought about that. How are you supposed to compress that to a level where others can understand it ?

**I: Do you notice that when you talk to friends or acquaintances ? If that is in a private and loose setting ?**

S: When enough people have asked what you are working with, you make a very simplified version of what you do. If they are still interested, you can explain it wider. So a simplified version would be that we drive several thousand meters of steel pipes down in the ground, and facilitate for the production of oil. Very briefly, that is what we do. But if someone is interested I will of course explain it in greater length, but very often you will see if the person is keeping up or not.

**I: Do you feel some form of pride when you talk to other people within the oil and gas industry about something that is related to that kind of business ? (Q11)**

S: I do not think about it that much. It is always nice to know stuff, and on some level present yourself that way. That you know something others do not. But I do not like gloat over it.

**I: You have talked a bit about it, but believe it could be difficult for people who are not acquainted with your line of work to follow conversations that is related to the specifics of your job ? (Q12)**

S: Allot of what is going on is very complex so it can be hard to get to know it if you have not seen it for yourself. So, it is very difficult to get to know if someone just tell you; hi, I am putting three thousand meters of steel pipes down the ground. And if they ask you how ? Only with the help of conversation I believe it is hard to give a thorough explanation of how it works.

**I: Did it help you to physically see the equipment you are working with ?**

S: Definitely. Things can be written as good as it gets on paper, but nothing is better than seeing it in real life and being present when it is used.

**I: Do you feel that your employers facilitate for colleagues with a multilingual background ? (Q13)**

S: Yes, I would say so. I think it is in that culture. You are supposed to be inclusive, and like we talked about, if there are someone who speaks English, everybody switches to English. Say you move from Algeria and arrive in Stavanger, never been to Norway before and do not know anyone, we have some social events with different activities you can participate in to get to know people.

**I: So you have that ? Is that something the company is in charge of ?**

S: Yes, the company is in charge of that. They have different activities like golf, volleyball, field hockey, football, handball and hockey. Sometimes they arrange some trips. So, the thought is that you can socialize with others from the same company, and not necessarily just from the same department.

**I: Did that help you when you first started there ? Was it a lower threshold to get in contact with others ?**

S: It is easier to get in touch with someone if you for instance play football with them. It is a bit more natural to do it in a social setting. In a professional working environment, you can feel like you are disturbing them if it is something social, and they might feel like they can not just leave. The social settings are often there to make people get to know each other.

**I: When you started there ? Do you feel it was easier to get in contact with someone at work after you had attended a social event together ?**

S: It is easier to get in touch with someone you have seen before, and they have seen you before. That way you have a face to connect with the person you are writing to. It might be easier to formulate yourself, because you know how that person is. There are also different mentor programs, so everyone gets an appointed mentor who helps you with everything and is your main contact if you have questions about something. So if you are wondering about something he can point you in the right direction or to the right person. That way you get in contact with more than just the others in your department.

**I: How long did you have your mentor ?**

S: It was a sliding transition. After a while you get more independent and created your own network. So, then I could ask one of them, and so on.

**I: How would you range your proficiency in oral and written English on a scale from 1-10? 1 is unable to understand almost everything, 10 is English on the same level as Norwegian. Can you elaborate on your answer?**

S: It could have been better than it is. Maybe 7 with regards to oral skills, and perhaps the same in writing. I think it is approximately the same.

**I: For how long have you been learning English?**

S: If I count from first grade, it would be around 26 or 27 years, I think. Something like that. I do feel that I evolved more during my years at the university.

**I: Thank you for participating.**

## Appendix 4

Age: 27

Gender: Male

Place of birth: Sandnes

**\*Establishing consent for the interview.**

**I: Can you tell a little bit about where you work, and how long you have been working there ? (Q1)**

S: I work in (Company). I have been working there for a little over 2 years. It is an “engineering” (CS) company who does engineering mainly towards the oil sector, so it goes under the definition oil service company.

**I: Can you tell us about what your tasks are in this job ? (Q2)**

S: My title is “piping engineer” (CS) or “piping and layout engineer”. In Norwegian that is piping engineer. My tasks at work are mainly designing and planning piping systems on platforms on what we call “top site” (CS) which means above sea level. A platform consists of an extreme amount of pipes. I work on something we call “KV” (NAB) jobs, I think it stands for “qualitative maintenance jobs/kvalitative vedlikeholdsjobber” (TRANS). These are smaller modifications or repairs of pipes. If there is a rusty pipe, it has to be replaced. There are some different ways to do this. I get measurements of the pipe in order to know how it looks. After this I make designs for new pipes and perhaps get them produced. If this is the case I have to send a job package and instructions for new materials and so on. We usually use Poland, because they are the cheapest. After we get the pipes, we make a job card which explains how to dismantle the old pipes and install the new ones. This includes material lists, designs and health and safety cards. Everything they need to get the job done. In the end, I update the new designs, after it is installed. Sometimes they have changed something while conducting the installation. After all this I put it in the (Company) database.

**I: In the beginning you mentioned that it was pipes above sea level ?**

S: Yes, “top site” (CS). That is what we call it. Our company primarily works with “top site” (CS). If we have to do something that is “subsea” (CS) or under water, it is often in collaboration with other companies who specializes in that.

**I: You primarily work in the office here, but are you sometimes “offshore” (CS) ?**

S: Primarily this is a desk job, but if exiting documentations on systems we are fixing is to deficient, and it is wise to have a physical look at it, I sometimes travel to the platforms and have a look at it. I have been “offshore” (CS) three times in two years, so it is not that much. I measure and take pictures to get an overview of the job so we can solve and execute it.

**I: How would you describe the communication at your workplace ? With regards to emails, telephones and others you might converse with ? (Q3)**

S: We sit in an open office space. I am new to the game so I have a senior by my side who I can ask for help. That is primarily oral, because he sits right next to me. Besides that, we have “lean” (CS) meetings two times a week to keep oneself up to date within the piping discipline.

**I: “Lean” (CS) ? What is that ?**

S: “Lean” is to cut unnecessary nonsense. To keep it as “lean” (CS) as possible. It is one of the modern expressions which are being used. It is with regards to improvement of efficiency. If that is actually the case ? That is a different story. We sit together in the disciplines, although we are together with other disciplines. On the contract which I work with, we have an electronics discipline, “piping” (CS) discipline, structure discipline, instrument discipline and a mechanical discipline. Under mechanical there are also process and “HVAC”. Because everyone sits in an open office space it is easy to go over and physically talk to people. On the computers it is mostly emails, but if you just have a quick question, we also use Skype. In the last period of times we also use Teams. Because of Corona we must have all meetings on Teams. Previously we used meeting rooms. So, there is a lot going on on the computer. Teams, Skype and email. Today we needed assistance from another supplier, and then I just called that guy to clarify things rapidly, so we did not have to send a bunch of emails back and forth. We like to use emails when it comes to business. That way we have it in writing and everything is documented.

**I: If there is an internal meeting with the people at the office ?**

S: Then we usually use Teams. That is a good application. Regular meetings are out now.

**I: Do you think it will come back ? Or will it be like this ?**

S: Partly, I think it will but it has worked very good with Teams so I think that will be used a lot more. That way you can participate, but if there is only a small portion that concerns you, it is possible to do other types of work on the computer while you have Teams in the background. It is much more efficient.

**I: Can you say something about the people you communicate with when it comes to work-related communication ? (Q4)**

S: When the oil industry was at its peak, there was a shortage of labors in Norway, so they recruited a lot of workers from abroad. A lot from India and the Philippines, and they basically received citizenship on arrival. It was a simple way to recruit by giving them citizenship. So even though I work with some people from India, the Philippines and Britain, they are all Norwegians on paper.

**I: Those you work with ?**

S: Everyone has a Norwegian citizenship. Almost everyone has partially learnt Norwegian, but most of prefer to communicate in English. So it is about fifty-fifty, English and Norwegian when it comes to work-related talk.

**I: When you are communicating with the company you mentioned earlier ? Are there someone you communicate in English with, or is everything in Norwegian ?**

S: The main rule is that you talk Norwegian, but we switch fast to English if someone does not speak Norwegian. You always try first in Norwegian and you switch to English if it is necessary.

**I: When it comes to emails and such ?**

S: To (company) the rule is that everything is supposed to be in Norwegian. All documentation which we deliver is supposed to be in Norwegian. That is because it is (company), they are a bit distinct that way. Other operators have other rules, but because we mainly work with (company), everything is supposed to be in Norwegian. The job cards which get sent out to sea, everyone of those should be in Norwegian. Because we have a lot of English-speaking people who work with us, we also have people who translates. Perhaps the engineer produces something in English, then it gets sent to translation, so it comes out in Norwegian.

**I: What do you do with words and expressions in English that are used on a regular basis ? Do those get translated as well ?**

S: No. There is a focus on spelling, but not like that. There are a lot of English loanwords that are being used.

**I: Do you have some examples of that ?**

S: “Piping” (CS) for instance. It means pipes, but we call it “piping” (CS).

**I: During a workday, you talk to the people at work, there are some emails, some telephone calls and meetings ?**

S: The people I talk to are primarily those within the workplace. But say we weld something onto a pipe, and we need conduct a pressure test, to make sure that it is sealed properly. We can not do that part ourselves, because we do not have our own people to do it, so we get another company to conduct that test. Then we get another company to do that test, and you have to communicate with them to get it done. We do not make any products other then the engineering, so everything we install, we have to buy. So that is some of the communication, but for me, it is not that much of that kind in a workday. So most of it is internal. Everything you make gets checked internally, so you are sure you have not forgotten anything, or made some mistakes.

**I: If you are to take a guess, how much of the written work-material is in Norwegian and how much is in English ? (Q5)**

S: I would say fifty-fifty. It varies. Personally, I do not always notice if I am speaking or writing English or Norwegian. Both comes naturally, so it only depends on who you are talking to.

**I: So during a day you would say it is mixed ?**

S: Yes, very mixed.

**I: If you are speaking to colleagues with a foreign background, how do you experience that conversation ? Are there differences in language if you talk to them about something work-related versus something private ? (Q6)**

S: I would not say there are any differences. The communication works fine. Everyone in the company is proficient in English. Like I said earlier, several of them know Norwegian. Sometimes to help them improve, you say it in Norwegian. Sometimes you have to use a little English to help them.

**I: You mentioned some workers from India and the Philippines ?**

S: There are a lot from India and the Philippines, and also some from Britain.

**I: Are there any of those that you feel are more interested in learning Norwegian ?**

S: It depends on the person. The Indians talk Indian amongst themselves, but they have three different languages within their own country, so it is not always they understand each other either. The Filipinos talk their own language among themselves. There is also someone from France, and a little group from Venezuela. You notice that they come together. I have also noticed that when I lived abroad. If there are Norwegians there, you are drawn towards them. You notice that within the company as well. If they are from the same country they come together. We actually had some Russians as well, but they are relatively skilled in Norwegian.

**I: When you say that they come together ? Is that in the lunchroom ?**

S: In the lunchroom, a coffee break perhaps. I think it is easier for them to ask each other for help than ask others.

**I: Do you think that has to do with the culture, or is it the language ?**

S: It may have something to do with the culture, but really I just think it comes naturally.

**I: Is it easier for you to ask someone who is Norwegian, you think ?**

S: Yes it is.

**I: In the lunchroom then ? Are there someone from India or France sitting on your table ? I do not know if you have fixed seating ?**

S: It is sort of the regular tables. We are like the children's table, because we are the youngest. There it is actually only Norwegians.

**I: Say you are a couple of employees talking about something that is work-related or something that concerns the private life and someone with a foreign background happens to join in ?**

S: Then we quickly switch to English. We try to make everyone understand what we are saying.

**I: Are there someone who is less adaptable in that situation you think ?**

S: I think everyone are the same in that way, although you can notice that the oldest Norwegians prefer the meetings and stuff like that to be conducted in Norwegian. But they manage English well enough.

**I: Do you sometimes feel that English can be a barrier for you ? (Q7)**

S: No. I have lived some years abroad, so for me it comes pretty naturally. Of course there are words you do not always remember, but you always manage to express yourself in the end. When it comes to writing I am quick to use Google translate if I get stuck. If it is a rapport, or something like that.

**I: Is it difficult to find the words sometimes ? If you do not have technological aids at hand ?**

S: No. But it can be both ways. Sometimes it is the Norwegian words you do not find, so you have to use English.

**I: Can that be easier ?**

S: Sometimes. It goes both ways.

**I: Have you gotten any notions on how to communicate with regards to Norwegian or English, for instance via email or telephone ? You mentioned that (company) only wants is to be in Norwegian ? (Q9)**

S: I think that it is only that they want it to be in Norwegian. In emails it is a bit self-explanatory. You answer in the same language as the email was written in. If I get an email from (company) in English, I do not answer in Norwegian.

**I: If you were to write an email to someone else, and you were uncertain ?**

S: I would write it in English. It can of course depend on the recipient's name. If it is a typical Norwegian name, you could write it in Norwegian. You have to see the whole picture.

**I: When you started there, did the company set any guidelines on how you are supposed to converse ? (Q9)**

S: We do have a department in Poland which we have close cooperation with, and most of them do not know Norwegian, so there we use English.

**I: Do you feel that their English is proficient ?**

S: Yes, they are good.

**I: We have talked a bit about it, but do you experience yourself switching between Norwegian and English when you talk to others ? Use some of both languages ? (Q10)**

S: Yes, that can happen. If someone joins in who does not speak Norwegian, you quickly switch to English. And there are of course those who are trying to learn Norwegian. We try to push them a bit.

**I: Is that their own wish ?**

S: Someone mentioned that they think we switch to English too fast, and then it is harder for them to practice. I also know some colleagues better than others, and then we have the possibility to joke around a bit. Then I sometimes urge them to speak Norwegian.

**I: Do they enjoy that ?**

S: It is easy to notice. If they do not like it, you switch to English.

**I: Are there a lot you can do that to ? Among the foreign workers ?**

S: Within our “piping” (CS) group we are four Norwegians, two from India, one from the Philippines and one from Britain. Some people have come and gone and some are moved around depending on the project, but right now it is about fifty-fifty. Those “lean” (CS) meetings that I talked about are conducted in English.

**I: Do you feel some form pride when you talk to people about your work ? If it is with others that also work within the oil and gas sector ? (Q11)**

S: Outside of the company then ?

**I: For instance, yes.**

S: No. No particular pride.

**I: Maybe pride is the wrong word. Do you think it is fun to talk about ? (Q11)**

S: Both yes and no. This is not my dream job, but it is a job. I have nice coworkers, and I think that is the best about the job. The tasks are ok, I like to do them. I do not feel any shame about working in the oil business, but I do not see it as something that is better than something else. I do not feel any shame. I do feel there are people who tries to portray it that way. I do not think I am better than others. It is a legit business.

**I: Do you think it is difficult for others who do not work in the oil and gas business to participate in those conversations ? If it is a social setting ? (Q12)**

S: In a professional conversation ?

**I: Not necessarily about a specific topic regarding your job, but say you talk loosely with someone who works in a different company ?**

S: Definitely. There are terminologies we use every day. Take “top site” (CS) ? For me it is a given, but someone who never dealt with it would probably wonder what it means. It is the platform above the sea. You also have “roughneck” and all those terms which are being used out there. You have to be in the game to understand it. There are a lot of words and expressions.

**I: When you first started ? Was it hard to get acquainted ?**

S: It comes pretty fast, but of course you feel a bit blank in the beginning. One of the most important things that I work with is flange. Do you know what a flange is ?

**I: I think of that as sort of a socket maybe ?**

S: It is the ring outside of the pipe with holes in it, so you can connect the pipes.

**I: That is a flange ?**

S: Almost all the work that I do now has to do with flanges, and I had never heard of it before I started here.

**I: Do you feel your employer facilitates for people with a multilingual background ?  
(Q13)**

S: Yes, definitely.

**I: Have they taken any social measures for instance ?**

S: In the glory days they had Norwegian language courses, but it is less of that kind now. It is an international company, so I feel it is ok.

**I: How would you range your proficiency in oral and written English on a scale from 1-10? 1 is unable to understand almost everything, 10 is English on the same level as Norwegian. Can you elaborate on your answer?**

S: I would say I am about 9 in both. I have lived some years abroad, and in USA for one year, so I think my English skills are above average.

**I: For how long have you been learning English?**

S: Actively speaking, I would say that those years abroad made a great difference, but if I count from when I started school, it would be around 21 years.

**I: Thank you for participating.**

## Appendix 5

Age: 28

Gender: Male

Place of birth: Kristiansand

**\*Establishing consent for the interview.**

**I: Can you tell us what you work with, and how long you have been doing this ? (Q1)**

S: I work as a “piping engineer” (CS) in (company). I have been working there for approximately 2,5 years. We have a contract with (company) where we do maintenance and modifications of ten of their platforms. So I am on a team who works on that contract.

**I: What are your tasks in this job ? On a daily basis ? (Q2)**

S: It is very varied. We have a horizontal organization where we follow a project from A to Z a lot of the times and are often involved in large parts of a project. I do not just sit and make a certain type of technical drawings. It is everything from a study face, “detail engineering” (CS), “survey” (CS), instalment and also an “as built” (CS) face.

**I: What do you do at work this week ?**

S: Right now, I am sitting with “as built” (CS). It is called “as built” (CS).

**I: Can you explain what “as built” (CS) is ?**

S: That is when we are done with a project, and the 3D model has to be updated, so it can reflect reality. So “as built” (CS).

**I: So it is they way it is actually built ?**

S: Yes.

**I: What part or phase of the job do you enjoy the most ?**

S: The beginning is always the most fun. Then you need to find out about stuff. You have to scramble your brain to find the best solutions. That is also the face when you are out in the field, because you have to map the project and find out how to take on the job.

**I: Where do you have to go then ? Out on a rig ?**

S: Yes, or a platform. Because that is what we work towards.

**I: And what you do out there ? Would that be to map the pipes then ?**

S: Yes. That way we can sit on land and design it and have it prefabricated so it is ready for installation.

**I: How would you describe the communication at the workplace ? Who do you communicate with ? (Q3)**

S: The work language is primary in English. Right now, we are about 30 percent Norwegians who are born in Norway, and the rest are born in other countries. But the main language or the work language is in English. That is within my group with regards to “piping” (CS) towards that contract. With the customer, Norwegian is the language we are supposed to use. When we speak internally in our group about something that is work-related, but also not work-related, we speak English. English is the general work language in the business. The customer has demanded that some documentation must be in Norwegian because it is a Norwegian company.

**I: Is it only that company who has that demand ?**

S: That I am not sure of.

**I: Can you say something about the people you work with ? Those you communicate with on a daily basis ? (Q4)**

S: That will be the people who works with “piping” within the same group as I am, but we sit in a landscape where the whole discipline towards that contract is gathered. So, we talk and cooperate with other disciplines, project leaders and “management” (CS). That is on a daily basis.

**I: Does everyone sit on the same floor ?**

S: The floor we sit on is divided into three parts, where everyone working on the (company) contract is placed within one of those.

**I: You mentioned that you were around 30 percent Norwegians ?**

S: Yes, around that. A quick estimate. In the piping department we are five Norwegians who are born in Norway and have Norwegian as our main language. The rest comes from India, the Philippines and England.

**I: Would you always communicate with them in English ?**

S: A lot of them knows Norwegian, but it is often easier to talk with them in English, because that is the language that they master the best. Also, English is the official working language. Even though the customer wants it in Norwegian, most of the subject terms and the industrial standard is in Norwegian.

**I: If you are to guess, or give an estimate. How much of the written work material is in Norwegian and how much is in English ? (Q5)**

S: Most of the documentation we deliver to the customer is supposed to be in Norwegian with the exception of some very technical drawings, they can be in English.

**I: You can also include for instance emails in this estimate.**

S: It depends on who you are sending the email to. If you send to someone you know does not have Norwegian as their main language, you write it in English. If you know they are Norwegian, you can write it in Norwegian. It depends on the recipient. But it is never wrong to write it in English. That will be ok for everyone.

**I: Do you sometimes write an email in English, even though you know he or she is Norwegian ?**

S: If I know that it is only meant for that person, I will write it in Norwegian. But if I think there is a chance of that email being read by someone I do not know is, I might write it in English. But as mentioned, meetings and documentation towards the customer is supposed to be in Norwegian.

**I: Does not the customer have that much foreign workers ?**

S: I am not exactly sure, but I think it is a principle. There is a division between those who are “onshore” (CS) and “offshore” (CS), both with regards to the customer and us. Those who work on the platforms tend to have a vocational background and are not that sufficient in English. So, when we make documentation on land that they need “offshore”, it is important that we write it in Norwegian so that they understand everything that is written. If it is advanced and technical English, it is not certain that they understand all the subject terms. Among them, the Norwegian technical terms are often deep-rooted. That might be a reason.

**I: You mentioned documentation. Will there not be some words that are difficult to translate ? You mentioned “as built” (CS) ?**

S: I do not know what to use there instead. It is really a revision of a document. It is the last revision we make before handing over the drawings towards the customer. Then we say that this is how it is actually built.

**I: Can that be difficult sometimes ? How do I say or write this in Norwegian ?**

S: It is easier to understand it in Norwegian because all of the subject terms is in English, and that is the universal language. The technical bible within the branch of piping is also written in English. It is called “ASME” (EAB).

**I: What is “ASME” (EAB) ?**

S: I do not know that much about it. It has been a while since I have opened it. It controls “process piping” (CS) which is how things have to be designed. It is kind of a design bible. Design this after these rules, because they have been gathered through a hundred years of experience and testing. Under this again is something called “NORSOK” (NAB). These are the general rules for the Norwegian continental shelf. Everyone who operates on the Norwegian continental shelf must follow these rules. The customer often got their own set of rules beneath “NORSOK” (NAB). These are often stricter rules than “NORSOK” (NAB) because some of the customers wants stricter or more precise rules.

**I: Is “ASME” (EAB) a physical book ?**

S: Yes. It is a standard, so you can order it as a book. It is nice and thick I will tell you.

**I: If you talk to colleagues with a foreign background, can you describe how that conversation is to you ? (Q6)**

S: I feel that the conversation has a good flow, but I have only worked with “piping” (CS) for two years, so that is nothing compared to some of the senior engineers. There are a lot of times they use terms that I do not understand, and that can lead to a stop in the conversation.

**I: How do you deal with that ?**

S: I just have to ask. But sometimes it stops because we are different nationalities, and we think differently, we have different logics. On several occasions I have experienced that we are discussing something where it seems as if we disagree, but really, we are talking about the same solution. We only have different ways of presenting it, we realize afterwards.

**I: Can you think of an example ?**

S: No, I am sorry. Not on the top of my mind. I took a master’s degree, and that was written in English. But sometimes when I talk to Indians or Filipinos, they have their own way of speaking English. I sometimes feel that I have a different pronunciation after I talk with them.

**I: Would you say it affects you ?**

S: Yes, a little bit.

**I: Is it the accent, or the way they speak ?**

S: Both, I would say. Especially pronunciation and sentence structure. If you talk with someone who has a good English, you get better, and if you talk with someone who speaks broken English that will affect you as well.

**I: Are there any differences in the language if you talk about something that is work-related versus something that concerns the private life ? Maybe in the breakroom or at the coffeemaker ? (Q6)**

S: Because we speak English at work, we prefer to speak Norwegian in the breaks. Often, we are mostly Norwegians who sit together. But sometimes English-speaking colleagues joins in as well. Some of them are learning Norwegian, so they actually prefer that we speak Norwegian in the breaks. That way they get practice.

**I: Do they ask if they do not understand or are uncertain ?**

S: No, not really. If we see that they do not quite follow, we sometimes ask them if they understood what was said. Sometimes they ask, but some of them are surprisingly proficient in English I would say. They have learn Norwegian in a short amount of time.

**I: Do you know how long ?**

S: Well, some of them have actually been in Norway a bit longer because they have taken a master's degree here, and then gotten a job.

**I: In the workplace or in general, do you feel that English can be a barrier sometimes ? (Q7)**

S: No, absolutely not. Because my masters degree was written in English, I got very comfortable about it. Especially with talking English. I have also done some "gaming" (CS) in my younger years, so I picked up a few things there as well.

**I: Do you think that has helped you ?**

S: Absolutely.

**I: Have you ever encountered situations where you have thought that this is very complicated, or that you have problems keeping up ? With regards to language.**

S: Yes, but it is usually not because I do not understand the English, it is more the pronunciation of the speaker. Like I mentioned earlier, not all of the Philipians or the Indians have a great pronunciation or sentence structure. Also, my nearest boss is British, like really British. He speaks British, so it a bit “tricky” (CS) to understand sometimes when he speaks really British. Maybe it is not so much the understanding part with him, but more tempo.

**I: Does he talk fast ?**

S: No, not really. I think it is the whole package. He has got a “groggy” (CS) voice, has been smoking for ages, talks really British and he has worked in every part of the “piping” (CS) business. I think it is like that with Norwegians as well. If you have worked on the floor of a factory for forty years, it can be difficult to keep up in the conversation there as well.

**I: Which tools do you use if there are words, phrases or general difficulties you have to work out, when it comes to language ? Maybe some translation ? (Q8)**

S: It is not that often that I need to translate something, but I often use Google. A quick search, to find the meaning of a word.

**I: Do you also use the people around you ?**

S: Yes I do, but that is more to help me with concepts. Like how a technological solution works. If I get a new type of valve that you have not heard the name of. I know it is a valve,

but I do not know which valve it is. It is possible to search for that online, but it is often easier to ask someone for an explanation of why it is built the way it is.

**I: So those kind of questions you would ask for help by a coworker ?**

S: Yes, I think so. But it is rarely I need a translation for a word in Norwegian into English, but there are often new words in English I would like to know the meaning of, not only the translation.

**I: Can you think of an example ? maybe a valve or something like that ?**

S: I can not think of anything right now, but it is typically when I am looking at a split drawing of a valve. I actually remember doing this. Often there are some bubbles marked with numbers, and then there is a list of components right next to the drawing with an explanation of what the components are. There are often a lot of components that you have never heard of, that you might have to search for. But unfortunately I can not remember some examples now.

**I: Then you are maybe not looking for the translation, but rather what that component does ?**

S: Yes, what is the function of it ? It also happens that I need to google some words to check if they are spelled correctly, like “necessary” (CS). That was the last word that I remember I had to spellcheck before sending an email.

**I: To be honest, I do that myself sometimes. If the spellcheck does not edit it. Have you gotten any notions on how to communicate with regards to Norwegian and English ? For instance by email or telephone ? (Q9)**

S: We have not gotten any instructions on how to talk, other than the demand from our customer that most of the documentation needs to be in Norwegian. That is really the only rule. If we had been a department with only Norwegian speakers we might have spoken Norwegian, for all I know. Maybe it is a bit circumstantial that English is the work language, it is because the majority is foreigners. But no, officially we have not gotten any rules.

**I: Are there groups in the lunch-room ? Do those who speak English or share the same nationality sit together ?**

S: That happens frequently. It is a bit natural. When we are working, it is not necessarily your own choice. All of the Pakistani or the Portuguese does not work together. I think it is ok for everyone to get together with those you have much in common with. It is not always like that, but often. And you will see in the cantina, that those who speak the same language or have the same nationality tends to group together. That applies to the Norwegians as well. I think it is something about using the 30 minutes of lunch to not speak English.

**I: Disconnect a bit ?**

S: Yes, I would say so.

**I: Do you sometimes experience that you switch between Norwegian and English when you talk to others at work ? (Q10)**

S: Sometimes I know that they can speak Norwegian even though we are speaking English. It sometimes happens that there are words I do not remember in English, and then I will say those in Norwegian, and they will understand me because they basically know Norwegian. If we are talking about something that is related to Covid, unemployment, layoffs or welfare, we often use the Norwegian words for it, because that is what is written in the media.

“Layoffs/permitteringer” (TRANS) are really “temporary layoffs” (CS) in English, but we just say “layoffs/permitteringer” (TRANS), because you need to look it up to know what that is in

English. So those kinds of words we say in Norwegian. Like “infection control measures/smittevernstiltak” (TRANS) ? Do you know what that is called in English ?

**I: Not on the top of my head, no ?**

S: Exactly.

**I: Ok, so central words, or words of importance you would say in Norwegian ?**

S: Yes, very often. And that might be in conversations that are not directly related to work, because we do talk about other stuff as well.

**I: Yes, I would imagine that.**

S: There is also another classical instance that several of us do. Say there is a meeting where there is one who speaks English, then the meeting usually proceeds in English. If that person has to leave in the middle of the meeting, we often continue to speak English for 5-10 minutes before anyone realizes it. Why do we continue to speak English ? Then we switch to Norwegian.

**I: Does that happen often ?**

S: Yes, it happens frequently. And it is just as embarrassing and funny every time. There are also sometimes that I start speaking English to someone based on their looks, and they answer me in Norwegian. Then we switch to Norwegian. That can be a bit embarrassing as well.

**I: If you are having meetings on Skype or Teams or whatever, do you announce that there is a person who speaks English ?**

S: If there is a doubt, the person who called in for the meeting often asks if we should take it in Norwegian or English. If no one has any objections, it precedes in Norwegian. Those who wants it in English usually lets us know. An exception could be when we have meetings with the customer. Sometimes they override, even though there are English speaking people in the meetings. That is because they have that demand about Norwegian communication. I think it is more of a principle for them, so then the meetings will be in Norwegian. It might be someone on their part that is not that sufficient English maybe. Often there are people working “offshore” (CS) who participates in the meetings. That is maybe one of the reasons why they have that demand.

**I: Have you ever experienced that they have overridden the meeting ?**

S: Yes.

**I: What do they say ?**

S: Often they do not say anything about it, they just start speaking Norwegian. It is not a question what language we are going to use ?

**I: So English is not even on the table ?**

S: No. But it can happen that if a person speaks English, he or she just answers the question in English, if they understood the Norwegian question. But I have never experienced a conflict of what language we were going to use. But as mentioned earlier, a lot of those who prefer speaking English, also know Norwegian. They are not that proficient when it comes to speaking, but they understand most of it. In most instances there are no problems.

**I: Do you feel some sort of pride, joy or excitement when you talk to other people within the oil and gas industry, about something that is work-related ? (Q11)**

S: I can relate to this in a private setting. When I get together with old friends in vacations or holidays. It is very varied what people work with and not that many who work with something oil-related, so it is extra fun to be in attunement with those who does. None of the others would understand much of what I talk about, except for those who work with something related. Is that what you meant ?

**I: I think that was a good answer.**

S: We are mainly doing modifications and maintenance “topside” (CS) on platforms, while she, the one I thought of right now, works with what happens below the surface. Drilling down in the well. Still we have much more in common with regards to work-conversations than we have with others. The others understand nothing about this.

**I: Does it sometimes feel a little good that the others do not understand it ? That fact that you know something that they do not ?**

S: No, that is not very often, I must admit. If it is something that I wish to explain, I try to start at the beginning. If someone is completely inexperienced. But I try not to talk about these things with people who do not understand.

**I: You are on two different levels ?**

S: Yes. Just like I can not talk with someone about marketing and search engine optimisation of web sites. I know what it is, but I can not discuss it any further.

**I: Slim chances for any discussions maybe ?**

S: Yes. It is like; ok, so that is what you do ? Let us not talk anything more about that.

**I: Do you think it is difficult for people who are not acquainted with your line of work to follow conversations that are related to the specifics of your job ? I realize that we sort of discussed that just now. (Q12)**

S: Yes, but that is ok. I think it is easy to be carried away if someone works within the same business, but the others on the table do not necessarily think it is that interesting. Often the conversation comes to a natural end if that happens. But if we are a large majority, say eight people in the same business and two do not, it can be difficult to restrain ourselves.

**I: Can you remember a conversation where you noticed that people were falling out ?**

S: Not one particular, but a pre-party setting is classic. You invite some people from work and a couple friends from other places. The conversation is mainly about work. We quickly forget that the others have major problems keeping up with that conversation.

**I: Do you end that conversation if that happens ?**

S: I try to be aware of it, even though it is easy to be carried away sometimes. The hard part is often to stop the others. We can try to talk about something else, but it does not always work. Quickly people start talking about work again.

**I: Do you feel that your employer facilitates for colleagues with a multilingual background ? (Q13)**

S: I do not know exactly how the company handles that. It is an international business. Our company mainly operates on the Norwegian continental shelf, but the workers are from all

around the world. It has always been like that. It is important to take care of them and facilitate for their work, and I have an impression of that being done, but I do not have any concrete examples of how they do that.

**I: Do you know if there are any social arrangements ? “Off work” (CS) maybe ?**

S: Not that I know of. It has been a little recession since 2014, and those things get less visible or downgraded. I would think it might have been more prominent before 2014. We are a diverse workplace, so we have to take into consideration that we speak different languages and come from different places. If you look away from lunch- or coffee breaks, where we prefer to speak Norwegian, we talk to everybody. If they are English, the conversation is in English, that is just way it is.

**I: That is good enough for everyone ?**

S: Yes, I think so. But, as mentioned, because we are from different places, we often have another way of thinking, another way of structuring our sentences, and another way of pronouncing some words. So, misunderstandings do occur, but you try your best to make yourself understandable. If I am in doubt about something someone said, because of language barriers, I will just ask one more time. It has to do with safety and that the job gets done properly and with quality. It is better to ask one time too much.

**I: How would you range your proficiency in oral and written English on a scale from 1-10? 1 is unable to understand almost everything, 10 is English on the same level as Norwegian. Can you elaborate on your answer?**

S: I think I am pretty average, probably around the general level at the office. Maybe 7 in written and I would say the same with regards to oral skills. 7 in oral skills.

**I: For how long have you been learning English?**

S: Since I started at school I would imagine. I am not really sure. Perhaps around 21 years, maybe 22.

**I: Thank you so much for participating.**