

## Abstract

Šimić, Nina. 2005. *Power in business meetings: English as a lingua franca in international telephone converences*. MA thesis, University of Vienna.

This paper focuses on the power relationships between interactants participating in four business meetings which were carried out via telephone conferencing. Since the participants involved in these recorded business meetings consist of a mixed group of NSs and NNSs, it will be illustrated how and if NNSs can be as powerful as they want in such an ELF context.

After the introduction, chapter 2 is concerned with the clarification of some terms. First some characteristics of institutional interaction will be explained and then the emphasis will be placed on the different types of meetings. Moreover, some information about telephone interactions in general will be provided.

Chapter 3 concentrates on some ideas about power. Discourse strategies such as interruptions, questions and silence will be discussed in order to illustrate how power and/or solidarity are created. Afterwards, the role of politeness and mitigation strategies in the workplace will be elucidated. Indeed, the attention will be on aspects of the social identity and social perception because some of the power differences stem from social role relationships.

Chapter 4 presents a description of the theoretical assumptions and the methods of this study. Particular attention will be paid to the social context which helps us to understand human interaction and thus to interpret the data. In addition, details of the company in which the ELF interactions were recorded and also the participants involved will be provided.

The qualitative analysis of the data will be illustrated in chapter 5. Firstly, it will be shown how the participants convey power overtly and secondly, how they try to modify possible threats to the face. The analysis also demonstrates how the NNSs are building teams and as a consequence, are being supportive. Furthermore, it will be exemplified how some of the participants assume power (NSs as well as the NNSs).