

Language discussion 3: Language User Profiles

Agreeing on working language(s).

Agree on working language(s) ahead of the discussion. Make sure that everyone may use a language that allows them to express their opinions relatively easily. You can also agree on the use of **language coordinators** or voluntary interpreters in advance so that everyone can understand and be understood.

Working objectives

Discuss objectives that best suit your work community. Here are some suggestions:

- Participants understand their role in the language learning process and recognise their wishes, needs and feelings related to language learning and use.
- The discussion increases acceptance and permissive attitudes towards language learning and making mistakes, and strengthens the psychological safety of the work community.

Introduction to the topic

1 What languages do you know or would like to know?

Everyone draws a language flower, listing in its petals all the languages where they have active or passive proficiency, that they know even a little, or they have studied in the past. The petals should come in different sizes according to which language you are most and least proficient in, which language you prefer to use or avoid, and which language you like and which you do not. You can also illustrate your language proficiency level or personal attitude towards a given language using colours. You can draw leaves on the stem, listing languages that you do not know but would like to. Instead of a flower, you can also draw e.g. a language map or a language hand if you like.

Look at your language flower and think:

What motivates you to learn language? What reduces your motivation? What languages would you like to learn? Why? What prevents you from learning? What helps you learn the language? What would you need to learn the language? In learning which language could you support others? How do you feel about making mistakes? How do you feel about speaking a language that is not your native language?

Exchange thoughts first in pairs and then with the group.

Look at your language flower and think:

- What motivates you to learn language?
- What reduces your motivation?
- What languages would you like to learn? Why?
- What prevents you from learning?
- What helps you learn the language?
- What would you need to learn the language?
- In learning which language could you support others?
- How do you feel about making mistakes?
- How do you feel about speaking a language that is not your native language?

Exchange thoughts first in pairs and then with the group.

Compile on a flip chart the languages that your work community speaks and knows. Include languages that you would like to learn and that someone could teach others. Also compile motivating factors and requirements for language learning.

2 Profiles

Introduce the **international** and **Finnish-speaking employee language profiles** using the Kielibuusti website or the [Monikielisen työyhteisön opas](#) guidebook.

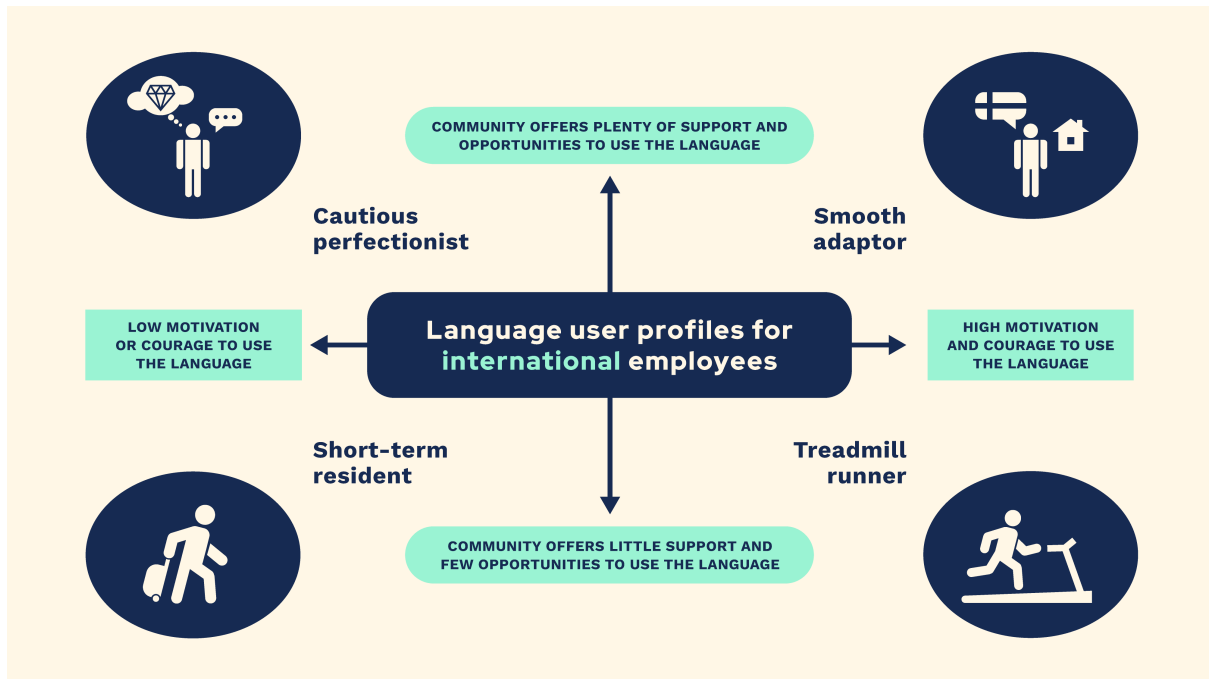


Image: Jenni Lintumäki.

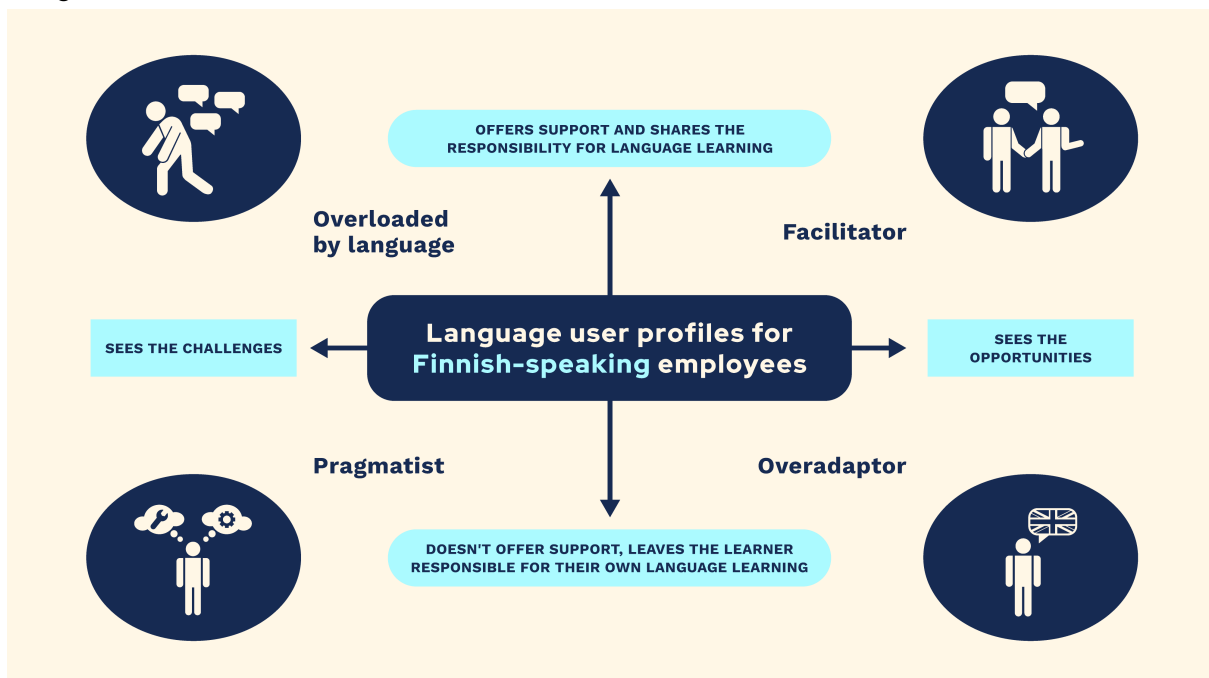


Image: Jenni Lintumäki.

Joint work

Reflect on international employees' language profiles:

What thoughts do these profiles evoke? In which profiles can you recognise yourself or your colleagues? How do you switch between profiles according to language and scenario? Which profile would you like to change for yourself? What needs to happen for your profile to change? What kind of support do you need to improve your language proficiency?

Reflect on Finnish-speaking employees' language profiles:

What thoughts do these profiles evoke? In which profiles can you recognise yourself or your colleagues? How do you switch between profiles according to language and scenario? Which profile would you like to change? What needs to happen for your profile to change? What kind of support do you need to improve your language proficiency? What kind of support could you provide to improve your colleague's language proficiency?

Add to your language flower by including profiles that you represent in different languages.

Reflect on the use of languages at work:

- How does your workplace treat cautious perfectionists? How about treadmill runners? Or short-term residents? How are the skills and knowledge of smooth adaptors utilised?
- What issues related to language use prevent you from performing well at work? Which language would you like to use more, but are unable to?
- What is the most natural language for you to express enthusiasm, new ideas, critical observations or comments?
- How does your workplace treat feelings related to different language choices?
- How does your workplace treat language learning, mistakes and Finnish spoken differently?
- How does your workplace treat individuals overloaded by language? How about pragmatists and overadaptors? How are the knowledge and skills of the facilitator utilised?
- Which language is the most natural choice for discussing difficult situations, uncertainty, or critique in the work community?
- How does the workplace treat using a language not understood by everybody?
- What would you like to change about language learning or language use?

Discuss first in pairs or in small groups, then with the entire group. Pay special attention to the things you would like to change.

Summary: Proposals for agreements and measures

Collect on the flipboard issues related to language use, language learning or language learning support that the work community would like to change. Select three most important changes. Afterwards, everyone reflects on how they could adapt their behaviour to facilitate change.

Personal objectives are recorded and reviewed later in one-on-one discussions with the supervisor.

Work community objectives are recorded and the supervisor creates a proposal on how plans can be put into practice in the organisation. What kind of support is needed from management? Are new structures or teams needed? Should some job descriptions change? What kind of financial resources are needed? Also agree on the schedule for the changes.