

The pragmatic competence of Finnish and Japanese learners of English: a  
comparative study with emphasis on the effect of cultural differences

Miro Laaksonen

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Faculty of Humanities

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This thesis studies the pragmatic competence of Finnish and Japanese English learners. The pragmatic competence of the learners in the two countries were compared for the implications the differences might have for teaching of pragmatic competence. In addition, the thesis investigated the effect cultural distance might have on pragmatic competence, as Japan and Finland have different cultural distances to the target language country of Great Britain.

The subjects of this study consisted of two groups, a group of 64 first year upper secondary school English learners from Finland and a group of 69 first year high school English learners from Japan. The pragmatic competence of these two groups of learners was assessed with a multiple choice test of pragmatic competence which was adapted from two pre-existing test batteries. The test scores and the answers of the two groups were contrasted with each other in order to establish differences between the two groups of learners. The correlation of the scores in contrast to the countries' cultural distance from Great Britain was also assessed in order to investigate the effect cultural distance might have on the pragmatic competence.

The study found that there were significant differences between the pragmatic competence of Finnish and Japanese learners, with Finnish learners achieving significantly higher scores in the test of pragmatic competence. This was true with both pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic competence. The study also found that cultural distance correlated negatively with pragmatic competence, meaning that higher cultural distance to the target language country negatively affected pragmatic competence.

The results appear to have implications for teaching of pragmatic competence as Japanese students achieved significantly lower scores for pragmatic competence and previous studies have established that classroom instruction can be effective for teaching of pragmatic competence. Future studies could investigate what kind of differences in the curricula or teaching methods between Finland and Japan could have caused these differences. In addition, as cultural distance appears to have a role in the development of pragmatic competence, assessing how large role it has in contrast to other possible explaining factors could be done more accurately in a future study.

Key words: pragmatics, pragmatic competence, English as a foreign language, second language acquisition, cultural distance

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# 1 Introduction

The language competence of a language learner consists of various factors such as vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation, and pragmatic competence, and all of these need to be considered when teaching a foreign language. While all these factors are important, the focus of this study is on the pragmatic competence, which will be introduced and defined in the following section. In short, however, pragmatic competence consists of knowledge necessary for performing various functions of language, and knowledge for performing those functions of language appropriately depending on the context (Bachman 1990, 90). Pragmatic competence then has an integral role in natural native-like language use, and it is an important aspect of overall language competence.

Teaching a foreign language is affected by various factors, one of these being the context where the language is being taught. Teaching a language in a second language context within the country where the target language is spoken differs from teaching that language as a foreign language in another country. Cultural distance, a concept introduced by Hofstede (2001), is also a factor that plays a role in this. The closer the country of the language learner's origin is culturally to the target language country, the easier it might be for the learner to adapt to the cultural norms of the target language country. Such cultural norms play a role in pragmatic competence, and research by for example Rafieyan (2016) has indicated that cultural distance affects learners' pragmatic competence. This will also be investigated in the present study. Cultural distance is of course not the only factor affecting language learning in different countries, and various other factors such as the first languages of the language learners, language policies, and teaching curricula within any country can also affect language learning within any single country.

In order to investigate the effects of these different teaching contexts on the pragmatic competence of language students, this study aims to quantitatively compare the pragmatic competence of Finnish and Japanese upper secondary school or high school learners of English. Finland and Japan are likely significantly different contexts for learning English and the different cultural distances to the target language community make it reasonable to expect that there might be differences in the pragmatic competence of the participants of the study. The main research questions of this study are:

- 1) Are there differences in the pragmatic competence of Finnish and Japanese learners of English, and if so, what kind of differences are there?
- 2) How does cultural distance affect the pragmatic competence of Finnish and Japanese learners of English?

The study aims to answer these questions through a comparative study conducted to both Finnish and Japanese learners, and with quantitative research methods used to assess the results. Statistical methods will be used to assess whether the results of the study are statistically significant, and whether cultural distance correlates with possible differences in the results. To the best of my knowledge, the pragmatic competence of Finnish and Japanese learners of English has not been compared in previous research, and the very different language learning contexts of these two countries make this an interesting comparison. In addition, Finland appears to be a country where learners often achieve a very high level of English proficiency, whereas in Japan the English proficiency level appears to be relatively low. This is backed by the EF English Proficiency Index (2018) data which ranked Finland as having the eighth highest English proficiency and Japan as having only 49th highest English proficiency out of 88 countries in the data set. Finland appears to be significantly more successful than Japan in teaching of English, which makes the differences between the countries worth studying. Establishing differences in the pragmatic competence of Finnish and Japanese learners could for example have implications for the way the teaching of pragmatic competence could be improved in Japan. In addition, the number of studies that have investigated the effect of cultural distance on pragmatic competence also appears to be relatively small, and investigating factors such as cultural distance is important for the purpose of improving the teaching of pragmatic competence in for example classroom settings as they might have implications for language teaching. Contrasting culturally different countries such as Finland and Japan makes studying cultural distance possible in this study.

Next in the following section the theoretical background of this study will be introduced, followed by introducing the subjects and the methodology of the study. After this, the results of the study will be presented. The results and their implications will then

be discussed together with the limitations of the study. This is then followed by the concluding section of the study.

## 2 Pragmatics

Teaching foreign languages includes many important aspects of the target language, such as vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation, and pragmatic competence. Pragmatic competence is an integral part of language learning and while vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation are perhaps the most easily noticeable aspects of language competence, pragmatic competence is also necessary if the goal is to achieve natural or native-like use of any language.

To understand pragmatic competence, it is important to define what is meant by pragmatics. Pragmatics is however a relatively new field in linguistics and there are no clear overarching definitions for it. Leech (1983, 1) notes that in the 1960's pragmatics was rarely discussed by linguists and according to him it was treated as a "rag-bag into which recalcitrant data could be conveniently stuffed". However, according to Leech (1983, 1), by 1980's many would argue that understanding pragmatics was necessary for understanding the nature of language. Allott (2010, 1) writes that while there is some agreement regarding pragmatics being about speaker meaning and the ways people communicate, some theorists see pragmatics as the study of language use in general. Furthermore, some see it as the study of communication, and still others see it as a way to study language via its communicative function.

Thomas (1995, 2) writes that meaning in use or meaning in context were the most common definitions for pragmatics in the early 1980s. Although these definitions can be accurate enough, they can also be too general, as for example the study of semantics can also be considered to include meaning in use or meaning in context. Thomas (1995, 21–22) considers two kinds of aspects of pragmatics, speaker meaning and utterance interpretations, but argues that speaker meaning as a definition focuses too much on the speaker while utterance interpretation as a definition focuses too much on the listener. Instead of relying on these definitions, Thomas (1995, 22) defines pragmatics as *meaning in interaction* and argues that this takes into account how meaning is not something inherent in the words alone or something produced only by the speaker or the hearer. Thomas (ibid.) considers making meaning to be a dynamic process which involves aspects such as the negotiation of meaning between the speaker and the hearer of the utterance, the context of the utterance, and the potential meanings the utterance can carry.

Similar to Thomas, Peccei (1999, 1) also acknowledges the similarities between semantics and pragmatics and the debate within linguistics to determine the dividing line between the two disciplines. Peccei (1999, 1) argues that semantics focuses on meaning coming from purely linguistic knowledge while pragmatics focuses on aspects of meaning that rely on knowledge about the physical and social world and that cannot be understood with purely linguistic knowledge. Thomas (1995, 22) points out the context of utterance as something that affects the negotiation of meaning in the interaction between speaker and hearer, while Peccei (1999, 1) focuses on what is needed to interpret the meaning from that context. An interaction between any speaker and hearer, or any people communicating with each other through different mediums, is never without any context from the surrounding world, and therefore knowledge about the physical and social world is necessary for interpreting the pragmatic meaning in interaction. Peccei's definition of pragmatics is chosen as the second definition of pragmatics for this study as it complements the definition given by Thomas earlier. To further complement the definition of pragmatics, one more definition by Yule (2010) will be introduced next.

Yule (2010, 128) defines pragmatics as “the study of ‘invisible’ meaning, or how we recognize what is meant even when it isn't actually said or written.” According to Yule (2010, 128), speakers in interaction have to rely on assumptions and expectations shared with the listener, and investigating these shared assumptions gives us information about the invisible meanings in interaction. Yule (2010, 129–130) also notes the different kinds of context that exist in interaction, separating context into linguistic context and physical context. According to Yule (2010, 129–130), surrounding words can be used to interpret the meaning of the word based on its linguistic context while the physical context is used to interpret the meanings of the words based on their physical location in the world. However, unlike Peccei (1999, 1), Yule does not make a distinction between knowledge of physical and social worlds. Inclusion of linguistic context in pragmatics is also noteworthy as for example Peccei (1999, 1) appears to consider linguistic context as part of the field of semantics. In contrast, Yule (2010, 112) sees semantics as the study of the meaning of words, phrases, and sentences according to what they conventionally mean rather than what an individual speaker might intend to mean with them in the particular utterance, Yule's view of pragmatics takes into account both the interaction and the wider context of the

interaction, and unlike definitions given earlier, it includes linguistic context as part of pragmatics, complementing the earlier definitions.

The definitions for pragmatics given by Thomas (1995, 22), Peccei (1999, 1) and Yule (2010, 128) include somewhat different aspects of pragmatics, but they can therefore be seen as complementing each other. Considering all three definitions for pragmatics is useful here as it gives us a wider, more complete picture of the field.

## **2.1 Aspects of Pragmatics**

In order to test pragmatic competence of language learners, it is important to consider the different aspects of pragmatics. These aspects will be introduced in this section, starting with speech acts, and followed by, implicatures, routines, and politeness.

### **2.1.1 Speech Acts**

In 1969 Searle (1969, 16) suggested that speaking a language takes the form of performing a *speech act*, and that these speech acts include acts such as making statements, giving commands, asking questions, and making promises. According to Searle (ibid.), all communications involve linguistic acts and speech acts are the basic units for linguistic communications. This makes speech acts an important object of study in the field of pragmatics. According to Yule (2010, 133), speech acts allow us to usually know how the speaker intends the message to be interpreted as we can usually recognise the type of action, or a speech act, the speaker performs with the utterance. Searle (1969, 24) separates these actions performed with utterances to *utterance acts*, *propositional acts*, and *illocutionary acts*. Utterance acts include uttering words, morphemes, and sentences, propositional acts include referring and predicating, and illocutionary acts include acts such as stating, questioning, commanding, and promising (Searle 1969, 24). Searle (ibid.) also clarifies that these acts are not performed separately but happen simultaneously within an utterance. This means that one speech act can perform multiple different actions. Unlike Searle, Austin (1962, 94–101) separates speech acts into *locutionary*, *illocutionary*, *perlocutionary acts*. According to Austin (1962, 94), performing a locutionary act is the act of saying something,

an illocutionary is the “performance of an act *in* saying something” (Austin 1962, 99), and a perlocutionary act is an act that causes an effect on the hearer by saying something (Austin 1962, 101). Speech acts can also be separated into direct and indirect speech acts. Searle (1975, 60) defines indirect speech acts as speech acts in which one illocutionary speech act is performed indirectly by performing another. For example, a statement like “It sure is hot in here” can be an indirect speech act if it is used as an indirect request to open the window in a room.

Speech acts are also relevant while looking at the pragmatic competence of foreign language learners, as the frequency or the usage of different speech acts can vary between different languages and cultures. Wierzbicka (1985, 145–178) for example provides a wide range of examples of how speech acts differ between English and Polish languages in acts such as giving advice, making requests, using tag questions, using exclamations, and expressing opinions. Like Wierzbicka, Deguchi (2012, 593–598) highlights some of the differences in speech acts between English and Japanese languages. As an example, Deguchi (2012, 594) discusses how the phrase “It is terribly cold in this room” in English can either be used as a declarative statement or as a request to make the room warmer. However, in Japanese a similar declarative statement would be “Kono heya-wa sugoku samui” while turning the utterance into a request requires adding either the article “ne”, which indicates seeking confirmation or agreement from the hearer, or the article “yo”, which indicates intention to inform the hearer, to the end of the utterance in order for the utterance to be interpreted as a request (ibid.).

### **2.1.2 Implicatures**

In 1975 Grice (1975, 43–44) presented the concepts of *implicature*, something a speaker can say that is intended to imply something else, and *implicatum*, what is being implied by the utterance. Some implicatures can be conventional in that the conventional meaning of the words can be used to determine what is being implicated (Grice 1975, 44–45). However, some implicatures are unconventional, and Grice (1975, 45) introduces a class of nonconventional implicatures called *conversational implicatures*, which according to Grice (ibid.) are “essentially connected with certain general features of discourse.” According to

Grice (1975, 45), participants in a conversation are expected to follow certain conversational principles, which Grice calls the *cooperative principle*. Cooperative principle consists of categories or maxims, which are *Quantity*, *Quality*, *Relation*, and *Manner* (ibid.). As described by Grice (1975, 45–46), according to the maxim of Quantity the contribution to the conversation should be as informative as is required but not more informative than is necessary. According to the maxim of Quality you should not say what you believe is false or what you lack adequate evidence for. According to the maxim of Relation one should be relevant to the conversation. Finally, according to the maxim of Manner one should avoid obscurity and ambiguity while being brief and orderly. As Grice (1975, 49) writes, these maxims are connected to the cooperative principle and to the conversational implicatures. The participants in a conversation can fail to fulfil a maxim in different ways such as by violating or flouting a maxim, and when this happens, the hearer has to interpret what has been said with the expectation that the speaker is still observing the cooperative principle. A situation like this can then generate a conversational implicature (ibid.). In order to be understood, conversational implicature relies on meaning of the words, cooperative principle and its maxims, the context of the utterance, other background knowledge, and the supposed fact that all the relevant items listed are available to both participants of the exchange (Grice 1975, 50).

Bouton (1994a, 98) divides conversational implicatures into those that are in some sense formulaic and those that are idiosyncratic in that they depend on the specific context of the utterance. Formulaic implicatures follow a routinised pattern and do not rely as much on the context of the utterance, while idiosyncratic implicatures require using background knowledge and context of the utterance to interpret their meaning. In his study, Bouton (1994a, 99) found formulaic implicatures more difficult for the non-native speakers and during the residence in an English-speaking university in the United States, the students who had spent 17 months in the campus had yet to master formulaic implicatures that they struggled with when they first arrived at the university. However, teaching conversational implicatures to learners of English as a foreign language appears to be effective. Bouton (1994a, 106) found that formal instruction designed to improve students' ability to understand formulaic implicatures was effective in improving those skills. In addition, in a study by Kubota (1995, 35–67) examining conversational implicatures with Japanese

university students of English as a foreign language, teaching conversational implicatures to Japanese learners of English as a foreign language was found to be effective.

### **2.1.3 Routines**

According to Coulmas (1979, 239) routines or routine formulae are expressions which are closely tied to different types of recurring social situations. They provide means for mastering such social situations in a manner that is considered acceptable according to the target language norms, and therefore they carry significant social meaning (ibid.). Mastering such routines is therefore important for learning to speak the target language naturally according to the target language norms. Coulmas (ibid.) ties the routine formulae closely together with pragmatics, as according to Coulmas a contrastive pragmatic approach is necessary for a proper analysis and translation of such routines. An example of such routine would be the phrase you would be expected to say when you are introduced to a person you have not met before, “nice to meet you”.

Taguchi (2013) studied the effect of the experience of having studied abroad on L2 English learners’ ability to use routines. The participants of the study included 64 Japanese students in an English-medium university in Japan who were separated in three groups, a low proficiency group and two high proficiency groups, one of which had study abroad experience of at least one year in the U.S. Taguchi (2013, 117) reports that the students with experience of studying abroad were better at producing routines more appropriately according to the target language norms. In addition, when the participants had no experience of studying abroad, the higher and lower proficiency groups had similar scores for appropriateness, which suggests that just proficiency is not necessarily enough for native-like production of routines in the target language (ibid.). This suggests that the competence in production of routines is related to familiarity or closeness to the cultural norms of the target language.

### **2.1.4 Politeness**

Grice's (1975) theory suggests that speakers aim for cooperation in conversation. Brown and Levinson (1987) expanded this by discussing politeness as something participants in a conversation aim to maintain by following specific rules and strategies of maintaining politeness within the language in question. These strategies according to Brown and Levinson (1987, 2) are *positive politeness*, *negative politeness*, and *off-record politeness*, and they are tied to social determinants such as the relationship between the participants of the conversation and the possible offensiveness in the content of the interaction. However, in order to explain these politeness strategies, it is necessary to first introduce the concepts of *face* and *face-threatening acts*.

Face, according to Brown and Levinson (1987, 61), refers to “something that is emotionally invested, and that can be lost, maintained, or enhanced, and must be constantly attended to in interaction” It is derived from the English phrase of “losing face” when the person is for example embarrassed or humiliated, and usually in interaction people cooperate to maintain each other's face (ibid.). The person's face consists of *negative face* and *positive face* (Brown and Levinson 1987, 62). The negative face refers to the person's want to have their actions unimpeded by others, while the positive face refers to person's want to have their wants be desirable to at least some other people (ibid.). According to Brown and Levinson (1987, 65), there are certain kind of acts that then threaten the face of the addressee and/or the speaker by contradicting the face wants of the person, and these are called face-threatening acts, or FTAs. FTAs can threaten either the person's negative face by potentially indicating that the speaker is not going to avoid impeding the hearer's freedom of action, or the positive face by potentially indicating that the speaker is not interested in the wants or the feelings of the hearer (Brown and Levinson 1987, 65–66). According to Brown and Levinson (1987, 67–68), in addition to possibly threatening the hearer's face, FTAs can also threaten the speaker's face by the speaker threatening their negative face by for example expressing thanks or humbling their own face. Similarly, the speaker's positive face can be threatened by for example apologising, which implies that the speaker regrets the prior FTA and thereby damaging their own face to some extent. FTAs can also overlap as they can potentially threaten both the negative and positive face (Brown and Levinson 1987, 67).

As mentioned earlier, Brown and Levinson (1987, 2) introduced the concepts of positive politeness, negative politeness, and off-record politeness as strategies of politeness. According to Brown and Levinson (1987, 101), positive politeness is redress directed to the addressee's positive face or the desire to have their wants be considered desirable by others, and this is achieved by showing the speaker's wants are similar to the wants of the addressee. Positive politeness consists of three main strategies, which are claiming common ground, conveying that the speaker and the hearer are co-operators, and fulfilling the hearer's wants (Brown and Levinson 1987, 102). Negative politeness on the other hand is redress directed to the addressee's negative face, which is achieved by complying with the addressee's want to have their freedom of action unhindered and their attention unimpeded (Brown and Levinson 1987, 128). Brown and Levinson (1987, 131) list five main strategies for negative politeness: being direct, not presuming or assuming to know the hearer's wants, not coercing the hearing, communicating the speaker's want to not impinge on the hearer, and redressing other wants of the hearer. The third group of politeness strategies, off-record utterances, are according to Brown and Levinson (1987, 211) communicative acts done in a way that makes it not possible to attribute only one clear communicative intention to the act, and it is up to the addressee to interpret how the utterance should be interpreted. This can be achieved by breaking the Gricean Maxims introduced earlier, and the two main off-record strategies are inviting conversational implicatures by violating the maxims of Quantity, Quality, or Relevance, and being vague or ambiguous by violating the maxim of Manner (Brown and Levinson 1987, 214).

Three social factors, according to Brown and Levinson (1987, 15), are crucial in determining the level of politeness of an utterance between a speaker and the hearer: relative power of hearer over the speaker, the social distance between the speaker and the hearer, and the level of imposition in doing the FTA. Brown and Levinson (1987, 15–16) also acknowledge the existence of cultural differences in politeness, and although according to them the social factors mentioned can subsume most culturally specific social determinants, they are not perfect for covering all possible cultural differences in politeness. These cultural differences can also affect the learning of rules of politeness within the target language during language learning. For example, Walkinshaw (2007, 288) found in his study of intermediate level Japanese learners of English (JLEs) that JLEs preferred to

disagree with their power-equal peers, and they were reluctant to do so with authority figures such as teachers, which according to Walkinshaw, can explain the JLEs reluctance to express disagreement in language classrooms. Japanese learners of English were also more reluctant to use new more complex but potentially face-threatening strategies of expressing disagreement with teachers or tutors (Walkinshaw 2007, 289). Because of this, Walkinshaw (2007, 289) suggests that “[g]iven this, it is possible that JLEs were hindered in learning disagreement speech acts by their reluctance to rehearse/use them in the presence of power-unequal figures [...] such as teachers and tutors.” Nevertheless, learning to express disagreement is a relevant part of learning the strategies of politeness and pragmatic rules of the target language.

### **2.1.5 Cross-cultural Pragmatics**

As defined by Yule (1996, 87), cross-cultural pragmatics is the study of differences in expectations based on cultural schemata. In order to understand how meaning is constructed by speakers with different cultures and different native languages, it is necessary to understand that this may greatly differ from the way meaning is constructed by English speakers (Yule 1996, 87–88). Yule (1996, 88) writes that studies have revealed that we speak with what Yule calls a pragmatic accent, which refers to aspects of our speech which indicate what we assume is communicated without being said. According to Yule (1996, 88–89), understanding what characterises the pragmatic accent is necessary for developing capability for cross-cultural communication.

Thomas (1983, 91) introduces the term *pragmatic failure* under cross-cultural pragmatics. According to Thomas (ibid.), pragmatic failures are cross-cultural in that they are not restricted to interactions between native and non-native speakers, but can happen in communication between any two people with different linguistic or cultural backgrounds. Thomas (1983, 91) defines pragmatic failure as failing to understand what is meant by what is said, and it can consist of either pragmalinguistic or sociopragmatic failures. Pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic competence are discussed further under pragmatic competence in the following section, but according to Thomas (1983, 99), pragmalinguistic failures are failures that are the result of inappropriate transfer from the speaker’s native

language to the target language due to pragmatic force being expressed systematically differently in the native language of the speaker than it is in the target language, so they are mainly a linguistic problem. Sociopragmatic failures, on the other, hand are caused by cross-culturally differences in what is appropriate linguistic behaviour in a given context (Thomas 1983, 99). It is also worth acknowledging that it can sometimes be difficult to differentiate pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic failures. According to Röver (2005, 5), pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic competences are closely related to each other as language use is always contextual and both of them are involved in producing and understanding speech. In addition, performance data do not necessarily show whether a pragmatic failure was caused by a pragmalinguistic or a sociopragmatic failure and the same pragmatic failure could be caused by non-target like encoding or non-target like understanding of the social context (ibid.).

It is also worth mentioning that pragmatically inappropriate utterances could also be caused by limited grammatical ability in the target language. Ishihara and Cohen (2014, 80) argue that grammatical ability and pragmatic ability are not necessarily tied together and it is possible for a learner to produce utterances that are grammatically accurate but pragmatically inappropriate, or vice versa. However, this does not mean that these two abilities are completely separate, and learners are likely able to understand utterances that use grammar they understand or produce utterances within their grammatical ability better than they could understand or produce utterances that require grammar beyond their abilities (ibid.). Therefore all pragmatically inappropriate utterances or interpretations of utterances are not necessarily always caused by inappropriate transfer or cross-cultural differences in linguistic behaviour.

Finnish and English languages for example have both similarities and differences in the way their imperative, interrogative, and declarative sentences can be formed, as described by Markkanen (1985, 35–37). Finnish for example has two forms of the imperative, with plural form being more formal and politer, while English has only one, but adding emphasis or mitigating the force of the imperative is possible in both languages, although the exact devices used to do this are different (Markkanen 1985, 35). Markkanen (1985, 37) concludes that the languages have lot of similarity in the way direct speech acts are realised, although in each language there is at least one sentence type that is not used in

the other. However, according to Markkanen, most of these differences are due to different grammatical structures of the two languages. Markkanen (1985, 38) argues that these similarities seem to support universality of the strategies used in the expression of at least the directive speech acts.

Wierzbicka (1985, 145–178) in her paper, discussed earlier in the speech acts section, similarly provided a wide range of examples of how speech acts differ between English and Polish. Contrary to Markkanen's (1985, 38) argument for universalities in speech acts, Wierzbicka (1985, 172) also criticises earlier existing literature on speech acts and authors such as Grice and Searle for frequently treating English conversational strategies as universal logic or universal rules of politeness. Further examples of speech acts differing between languages include Deguchi (2012, 593–598) discussed earlier in the speech acts section. Meaning can be constructed in variety of different ways in different languages and cultures, so norms of English conversational strategies should not be treated as universal in order to understand cross-cultural pragmatics and achieve successful cross-cultural communication.

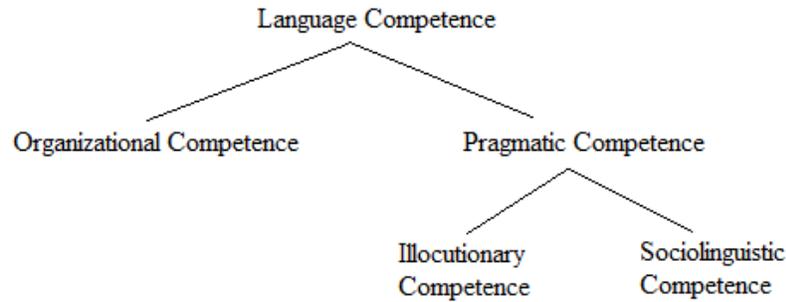
## **2.2 Pragmatic competence**

Pragmatic competence is an important aspect of any language learner's ability to communicate in the said language. According to Bachman (1990, 90), the concept of pragmatic competence consists of knowledge of pragmatic conventions for performing functions of language and knowledge of sociolinguistic conventions for performing those functions of language appropriately depending on the context. Bachman's pragmatic competence follows earlier studies in communicative competence and has similarities to communicative competence introduced by Hymes (1972, 269–293), so Hymes's communicative competence will be introduced before looking at the Bachman's framework. Hymes (1972, 282) considers competence to be the most general term for the capabilities of a person, and it relies on both knowledge and the ability to use that knowledge. Communicative competence, according to Hymes (1972, 284–286), consists of knowing whether something is formally possible, whether something is feasible, whether something is appropriate, and whether something is done. Whether something is formally possible

refers to if it is grammatically acceptable. Whether something is feasible refers to if it is available to be produced when considering psycholinguistic factors such as memory limitations of perception. Whether something is appropriate refers to if it is appropriate within the context. Whether something is done refers to if the utterance is something that occurs within the language (ibid.). Hymes was influenced by Chomsky and expanded on his views. Chomsky (1965, 4) made a distinction between competence and performance. Chomsky defined competence as the speaker's or the hearer's knowledge of the language, and performance as the actual use of the language in real situations, and according to Chomsky, performance cannot directly reflect competence in real world situations (ibid.).

Pragmatic competence as introduced by Bachman is part of Bachman's framework of communicative language ability, which includes three components: *language competence*, *strategic competence*, and *psychophysiological mechanisms* (Bachman 1990, 84). According to Bachman (1990, 81), his framework is consistent with Hymes (1972) and other earlier work with communicative competence. Language competence consists of *organizational competence* and *pragmatic competence* (Bachman 1990, 87), as can be seen in Figure 1. Organizational competence includes abilities involved in the formal structure of the language, such as in producing or recognising grammatically correct sentences, and it consists of grammatical and textual competence (ibid.). Pragmatic competence, which is the main focus here, consists of *illocutionary competence* and *sociolinguistic competence* (ibid.), will be introduced more thoroughly later. Strategic competence in Bachman's (1990, 84) framework refers to "the mental capacity for implementing the components of language competence in contextualized communicative language use", while psychophysiological mechanisms refer to the neurological and psychological mechanisms used to produce language (ibid.).

**Figure 1** Components of Bachman’s Language Competence (Bachman 1990, 87).



According to Bachman (1990, 92), *illocutionary competence*, which was an aspect of pragmatic competence, is used to express an utterance to be taken with the desired illocutionary force, and to interpret illocutionary forces of other utterances. This is tied closely to the concept of speech acts introduced by Searle (1969, 16). Searle (1969, 24) argued that speech acts consist of utterance acts, propositional acts, and illocutionary acts, and according to Austin (1962, 94), illocutionary acts refer to the performance of an act in the act of saying the utterance by the illocutionary force the utterance carries. Illocutionary competence is used to assign the desired illocutionary force to an utterance (Bachman 1990, 92). Language can be used to express a wide range of different functions such as, ideational, manipulative, instrumental, regulatory, interactional, heuristic, and imaginative functions, as introduced by Bachman (1990, 92–94). It is illocutionary competence that is used to use language to express these functions (ibid.). According to Bachman (1990, 94), *sociolinguistic competence* on the other hand is “the sensitivity to, or control of the conventions of language use that are determined by the features of the specific language use context.” While illocutionary competence is used to express a wide range of different functions of language, how this is done can vary greatly from one context to next (ibid.). According to Bachman (1990, 95–97), sociolinguistic competence consists of the sensitivity to differences in dialect or variety, sensitivity to differences in register, sensitivity to naturalness, and the ability to interpret cultural references and figures of speech. Illocutionary competence and sociolinguistic competence are the basis of pragmatic competence in Bachman’s framework.

Bachman's framework of pragmatic competence parallels Leech's (1983, 10) term of general pragmatics. Leech (1983, 10–11), similarly to Thomas (1983, 99), separates pragmatics into *pragmalinguistics* and *socio-pragmatics*. Pragmalinguistics, according to Leech (1983, 11), is the study of more linguistic aspects of pragmatics which consider resources that any given language has for conveying particular illocutions, and it is related to grammar. Socio-pragmatics on the other hand refers to sociological aspects of pragmatics which considers language in different social situations (Leech 1983, 10). Others such as Barron (2003, 10) and Bialystok (1993, 43) have also given definitions for pragmatic competences. Barron (2003, 10) defines pragmatic competence as “knowledge of the linguistic resources available in a given language for realising particular illocutions, knowledge of the sequential aspects of speech acts and finally, knowledge of the appropriate contextual use of the particular languages’ linguistic resources.” Bialystok (1993, 43) defines pragmatic competence as follows:

Pragmatic competence entails a variety of abilities concerned with the use and interpretation of language in contexts. It includes speakers’ ability to use language for different purposes – to request, to instruct, to effect change. It includes listeners’ ability to get past the language and understand the speaker’s real intentions, especially when these intentions are not directly conveyed in the forms – indirect requests, irony and sarcasm are examples. It includes command of the rules by which utterances are strung together to create discourse.  
(Bialystok 1993, 43)

All three of these definitions have similarities with Bachman's framework of pragmatic competence in that they include a more linguistic aspect of pragmatic competence and a more contextual or sociocultural aspect of pragmatic competence.

### **3 Interlanguage Pragmatics**

*Interlanguage pragmatics*, according to Yule (1996, 88), is the study of communicative behaviour of non-native speakers (NNSs) of any language using that language to communicate. Kasper and Schmidt (1996, 150) expand the definition by defining interlanguage pragmatics as “the study of the development and use of strategies for linguistic action by non-native speakers”, including the development of pragmatic abilities in a second or foreign language within interlanguage pragmatics. According to Kasper and Schmidt, great majority of previous studies had focused on how non-native speakers’ pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic knowledge differs from that of native speakers, criticising the lack of focus on the development of pragmatic knowledge (ibid.). Kasper and Schmidt argue that this is different from other fields of second language study which primarily focus on acquisition of interlanguage knowledge (ibid.). This section will start with theoretical models for pragmatic development, then move to suggested developmental patterns for pragmatic development, and finish with discussing cultural distance and its role in pragmatic development.

#### **3.1 Theoretical Models for Pragmatic Development**

Acculturation model is a model of second-language acquisition first suggested by Schumann, who argues that two groups of variables, social factors and affective factors in second language acquisition (SLA) both fall under the variable of *acculturation* (Schumann 1986, 379). Acculturation, according Schumann (1986, 379), refers to “the social and psychological integration of the learner with the target language (TL) group.” Schumann (ibid.) also argues that “any learner can be placed on a continuum that ranges from social and psychological distance to social and psychological proximity with speakers of the TL”, and according to Schumann the degree of acculturation is a significant predictor for how well the learner can acquire the second language (ibid.). Social factors of acculturation in Schumann’s model include power relations such as dominance, nondominance, or subordination, integration strategies such assimilation, acculturation, or preservation, and

factors such as enclosure, cohesiveness, size, congruence, attitude, and intended length of residence in the target language (Schumann 1986, 380–381). Affective factors of acculturation include factors such as language shock, cultural shock, motivation, and ego-permeability (Schumann 1986, 382–384). Acculturation model could be used for predicting pragmatic development. Schmidt (1983) conducted a longitudinal study 33-year-old native Japanese speaker, Wes, who had moved from Tokyo to Honolulu in Hawaii, and according to Schmidt (1983, 169) factors such as low social distance and positive attitudes towards the target language community had significant benefits for Wes's communicative competence but had very little effect on his grammatical competence. Acculturation model would have predicted that Wes would have also developed a higher degree of grammatical competence, but Kasper & Rose (2002, 19) on the other hand point out that while it was not the original goal of Schmidt's study, the high communicative competence that Wes achieved could demonstrate the acculturation model's value for predicting or explaining pragmatic development.

Another model that has been used to explain pragmatic development is Schmidt's (1993) noticing hypothesis. According to Schmidt (1993, 23), it is possible to hold significant amount of pragmatic knowledge implicitly without being able to explain the rules behind that, but this does not explain how this knowledge was acquired. Schmidt (1993, 27) argues that "linguistic forms can serve as intake for language learning only if they are noticed by learners." Schmidt (1993, 26) uses the word *noticing* to refer to mentally registering the occurrence of any event, as opposed to *understanding*, which Schmidt uses to also include recognising the principle, rule, or the pattern of the event. According to Schmidt (1993, 27), understanding the linguistic forms in the input is helpful, but this is not necessary as long as the attention is focused in the way that they are noticed. Schmidt (1993, 35) argues that what might be learned from unattended processing is insignificant, and that attention to the input is required for learning. Regarding pragmatics, Schmidt (ibid.) writes that attention to aspects such as linguistic forms, functional meaning, and relevant contextual features of the input are necessary for learning of pragmatic conventions in a second language.

Schmidt (1993, 29–31) provided lot of anecdotal evidence for the relationship between noticing and understanding about pragmatics and what is learned. Schmidt (ibid.)

cites his experiences from his stays in Brazil and Thailand and gives examples of how he learned pragmatic features of Brazilian Portuguese and Thai conversations after noticing them in his interactions. Leow (2000) provides more concrete evidence that supports Schmidt's noticing theory. Leow investigated the effects of awareness on 32 adult second or foreign language learners of Spanish and the study focused on the subsequent intake and written production of targeted Spanish morphological forms (Leow 2000, 557). Qualitative analysis of the subjects revealed that 16 participants fulfilled the criterion of awareness by for example providing reports of being aware of the target forms, while the other 16 participants did not (Leow 2000, 565). Quantitative analysis of the results of the tasks of the study revealed that there was a significant increase in both recognition and written production of the target forms after exposure for the aware group, but for the unaware group the mean scores before and after exposure showed no difference (Leow 2000, 568). This supports Schmidt's noticing hypothesis.

Another influential theory within interlanguage pragmatics is Bialystok's (1993) two-dimensional model. Kasper and Rose (2002, 22) note that Bialystok's two-dimensional model and Schmidt's noticing hypothesis complement each other as they are concerned with different phases of the second language learning process. This is why both of them are worth considering here. According to Kasper and Rose (2002, 21), the noticing hypothesis considers the initial input selection, while the two-dimensional model aims to explain the development of knowledge that is available from the point of view of analysis of knowledge and control of processing. The two-dimensional model is based on two cognitive components, analysis of knowledge and control of processing (Bialystok 1993, 47). Analysis of knowledge consists of making mental representations of a domain of knowledge more explicit by analysing the learner's implicit knowledge of that domain (Bialystok 1993, 48). According to Bialystok (*ibid.*), this explicitness is not necessary for language use by younger children as explicit access to rules of language is not necessary for communication, but once those rules of language are analysed, that knowledge can be used for language functions that were not possible with just the implicit representations of those rules of language. In other words, gaining explicit knowledge of the rules of language enables the learner to use the language in ways that were not previously possible. Control of processing on the other hand is, according to Bialystok (1993, 48), the process in which

attention is controlled towards information that is relevant and appropriate for the situation. In order to process language effectively, it is necessary to be able to focus your attention to the relevant information without being distracted by irrelevant or misleading cues in the language input (ibid.).

According to Bialystok (1993, 52), when adult second language learners begin learning the pragmatic structure of a new language, they begin at the second or formal level of representation and attempt to develop a symbolic representation of that pragmatic system. As adult learners have already mastered pragmatic rules of their first language, they can already have explicit formal categories for concepts such as pragmatic markers like politeness terms of the second language, and what adult language learners need to do is to master the relation between those concepts and contexts that are appropriate to the target language (Bialystok 1993, 52–53). Bialystok (1993, 53) also acknowledges that languages can have culturally specific forms and rules so achieving pragmatic competence can involve learning new forms and organising implicit knowledge into completely new explicit categories for adult learners too.

Support for Bialystok's two-dimensional model within the field of interlanguage pragmatics is given by Hassal (2003) who conducted a study on how Australian adult learners of Indonesian used requests in everyday situations when compared to native speakers. Hassal (2003, 1909–1918) found that learners favoured want statements (e.g. "I want to buy an envelope") and hint statements (e.g. stating "I don't have a pen" when the person would like to borrow one) over native speakers, favoured different modal verbs to perform indirect requests, and rarely used imperatives. Hassal (2003, 1918–1921) argues that the differences in performing requests, the choices of modal verbs, and the differences in performing imperatives are likely due to L1 transfer of Australian English. Hassal (2003, 1923) also argues in favour of Bialystok's two-dimensional as follows:

The study also has implications for development of pragmatic competence. By demonstrating an important role for successful transfer of L1 knowledge, it strengthens a claim of Bialystok's (1993) [...] that for adult L2 learners, the task of learning pragmatic knowledge is already largely accomplished, such that the most important task facing them is the development of control over attention in selecting knowledge.

(Hassal 2003, 1923)

The major role of L1 transfer in explaining the results of Hassal's (2003) study appears to support Bialystok's two-dimensional model.

Sociocultural theory, which has its origins in the works of a Russian psychologist Lev Vygotsky who lived in 1930s, has also been influential in interlanguage pragmatics. According to the theory, humans use cultural artifacts to regulate, monitor, or control their behaviour, while also creating new cultural artifacts for this purpose (Lantolf, Thorne, and Poehner 2015, 207). According Lantolf, Thorne, and Poehner this means that "developmental processes take place through participation in cultural, linguistic, and historically formed settings such as family life, peer group interaction, and in institutional contexts like schooling, organized social activities, and work places" (ibid.). In other words, social interaction is learning happening through interacting with surrounding social contexts. Frawley and Lantolf (1984) were some of the earliest researchers who applied Vygotsky's ideas to the study of second language acquisition. Frawley and Lantolf (1984, 147) argue that control of speech is task-related and not just developmental, what is stressful or difficult for someone may not be so for someone else, and therefore all speakers do not for example produce pragmatic speech the same way in the same circumstances. These individual differences go past whether the individual is a native or a second language speaker, and therefore it is not necessarily possible to predict the performance of an individual in a given task (ibid.).

According to Kasper and Rose (2002, 36), adapting sociocultural theory to pragmatic development in second language learning has multiple methodological implications. In sociocultural theory the research activities are inherently related to the contexts where they take place, in sociocultural second language research settings such as authentic classrooms are used in place of research contexts such as research laboratories (ibid.). Social interaction is closely tied to learning in sociocultural theory so focus should be on the kinds of interaction in which learners participate (ibid.). Lastly, according to Kasper and Rose (2002, 36), sociocultural studies are often designed to either be longitudinal, or the researcher should attempt to take the prior second language learning experiences of the learners into account. Shea (1994, 380), who analysed English conversations of Japanese advanced second language speakers with native English speakers,

found that the participants had highly different conversations despite involving non-native Japanese speakers of English with similar linguistic proficiency. According to Shea (1994, 380–381), his data remind us of how culture is not one single construct where all members of it adopt similar values and maintain uniform beliefs, there can be great diversity within any single culture or speech community, and focusing on just cultural differences might not be sufficient to explain the results in second language research.

### **3.2 Developmental Patterns in Interlanguage Pragmatics**

According to Kasper and Schmidt (1996, 159), interlanguage pragmatics does not have a clear order of acquisition comparable to morphosyntax, and the way the creative pragmatic ability develops over time is unclear. Kasper and Rose (2002, 118–157) discuss various studies of pragmatic comprehension and pragmatic and discourse ability in attempt to identify developmental patterns, but acknowledge that the evidence for developmental patterns in pragmatic comprehension is still insufficient (Kasper and Rose 2002, 124). Evidence for developmental patterns in pragmatic and discourse ability on the other hand has been more comprehensive (Kasper and Rose 2002, 125). A brief overview of some of the relevant studies will follow in the following paragraphs.

Starting with studies looking at pragmatic comprehension, Bouton (1988) conducted a multiple-choice implicature test to 436 non-native speakers of English entering the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign. According to Bouton (1988, 195), the study found a significant difference in the way native and non-native speakers interpreted the implicatures on the test, and when the non-native speakers were separated to six different culturally defined subgroups, these groups showed significant differences to both native speakers and other groups of non-native speakers, indicating that cultural background might have an important role in understanding implicatures. Bouton (1994b) conducted a follow-up study four and half years later with the same test battery as previously to the students who had participate in the first test, although out of 436 students only 30 were available for the follow-up study. Bouton (1994b, 161) found that in the follow-up study four and half years later, there no longer were statistically significant differences in the performances of non-native and native speakers in their performance. Furthermore,

according to Bouton (1994b, 161–163), the original study had found systematic difficulties in the ability of non-native speakers to understand specific implicatures such as understated criticism and implicatures involving a sequence of events, but four and half years later these previously difficult implicatures were no longer challenging for the non-native speakers in the study. Bouton (1994b, 164–165) had also conducted a separate study with a modified version of the same implicatures test to a new group of non-native students, and then 17 months later conducted the same test to a random sample of 34 subjects from that group. The comparison of results found improvement in the students' ability to interpret the implicatures after the 17 months, but the students still showed significantly different performance to native speakers (Bouton 1994b, 165).

According to Kasper and Rose (2002, 121), Bouton's findings suggest a possible developmental sequence in the understanding of implicature, but Bouton would have needed to be able to make interim observations in his studies in order to directly provide evidence for the developmental process. Bouton's studies however do suggest that with enough time in a suitable native speaker context of the target language, such as an American university campus in his studies, the non-native speakers can achieve native or near-native ability in understanding implicatures.

Taguchi (2007) has conducted a more contemporary study of the development of pragmatic comprehension, examining 20 native speakers and 92 Japanese college learners of English. The participants took a computerised listening task with short dialogues followed by yes or no question that tested whether the participants understood the speaker's intention in the dialogue (Taguchi 2007, 321). The same task was then repeated after the end of a 7-week intensive English course (Taguchi 2007, 324). Taguchi (2007, 326) reports that the test scores showed significant increase in the scores before and after the 7-week period, indicating a significant gain in accuracy. Response times were also faster, indicating improvement in the processing speed of the participants, but while statistically significant, the effect size for this was smaller than for accuracy (*ibid.*). Taguchi (2007, 328) argues that the findings suggest that exposure to the target language context or culture is not the only factor which contributes to the pragmatic development of a language learner. The study showed improvement of pragmatic comprehension ability without exposure to the target language context and culture, implying that this is not necessary for improvement in

pragmatic comprehension (*ibid.*). The study also found that the learners' comprehension of indirect refusals was faster and more accurate than it was for indirect opinions, although improvement was observed for both (Taguchi 2007, 329). According to Taguchi (*ibid.*), expressions for indirect refusals are more routinised and conventional than for indirect requests, and this implies a developmental pattern where the comprehension of less conventional indirect expressions such as indirect opinions in the study takes longer to develop than it does for more routine conventional indirect expressions. Later study by Taguchi (2011) which compared pragmatic comprehension of Japanese learners of English based on whether the participants had experience in studying abroad or not had similar results, supporting the previous findings. Taguchi (2011, 926–927) reports that indirect refusals were easiest and fastest to comprehend, whereas comprehension of nonconventional implicatures was the most difficult for all groups in the study.

As written by Kasper and Rose (2002, 125), development of pragmatic and discourse ability has been a more popular research topic than pragmatic comprehension, and some of those studies will be introduced here. According to Kasper and Rose (2002, 125), “[m]ost of the studies in this category reveal a marked tendency for learners to rely on unanalysed formulae and repetition in the earliest stages of development, which gradually gives way to an expansion of the pragmatic repertoire characterized by analysed, productive language use.” Such studies include Schmidt’s (1983) previously discussed longitudinal study of a 33-year-old Japanese speaker, Wes, who had move to Honolulu, Hawaii. According to Schmidt (1983, 157–159), early recordings of Wes’s English were choppy, had only brief narratives, and were lacking in detail, but in the later recordings Wes displayed much more expressive well-formed narratives that were easier to comprehend (*ibid.*).

Ellis (1992) conducted a longitudinal study of two child learners of English as a foreign language, J and R, placed in a language unit designed to provide initial English instruction in order to the prepare the students for a transfer to local secondary schools in London (Ellis 1992, 7). The study aimed to investigate how the two learners’ ability to perform the illocutionary act of requests developed over the period of two years (Ellis 1992, 4). Data were obtained by a researcher who regularly visited the classrooms and made both paper-and-pencil and audio records of the utterances of the learners (Ellis 1992, 8). Ellis

(1992, 11) found that at first J produced requests without verbs, although the majority of J's requests contained a verb, and all R's requests were initially without verbs. However, as Ellis (*ibid.*) reports, "[b]y the end of the second term both learners were able to use a variety of lexical verbs in their requests and increasingly also included a lexicalized object." According to Ellis (1992, 18), by the end of the study both learners had acquired a range of different linguistic devices for performing different requests, which include mood derivable requests, want statements, query preparatory requests, and strong hints. The learners had moved from unanalysed formulaic expressions to more analysed and productive language use.

Ohta (2001) conducted a longitudinal study of two American learners of Japanese as a foreign language, researching the development of Japanese expressions of acknowledgement. Based on her data, Ohta (2001, 117) suggested a developmental path for the acquisition of expressions of acknowledgment and alignment. In first stage students use preformulated questions and do not naturally use expressions of acknowledgment or alignment (*ibid.*). In the second stage students start to use the follow-up turns for expressions of acknowledgment by for example repetition, but Japanese minimal expressions of acknowledgment such as "hai" ("yes") are rare (*ibid.*). In the third stage students start using the phrase "aa soo desu ka" ("oh really?"), and the occasional use "hai" continues (*ibid.*). In the fourth stage students use "aa soo desu ka" more naturally without being prompted by the teacher, and keep using "hai" together with other similar expressions (*ibid.*). In the fifth stage students start to spontaneously use expressions of alignment and use minimal expressions such as "hai" more frequently. Finally, in the sixth stage students start to appropriately use different expressions of acknowledgment and spontaneously used expressions of alignment gain more lexical variety (Ohta 2001, 117). Ohta's suggested developmental path that starts from unanalysed routine expressions and moves to more analysed and productive use of language has similarities with the results of earlier studies in languages other than Japanese, such as the study by Ellis (1992).

Achiba (2002) conducted a 17-month longitudinal study investigating the development of request in English. The subject of the study was Achiba's daughter Yao, who was a native Japanese speaker and had moved to Australia at the age of seven (Achiba 2002, 28). Data consisted of video taped conversations between the subject, her peers, one

teenager, and one adult, and the data were supplemented with a diary (Achiba 2002, 29–30). According to Achiba (2002, 172–173), over the 17-month period Yao’s requests developed from initially formulaic and routinised forms to ones that became progressively more differentiated, and in the last stages of the study Yao had gained a significant repertoire for indirect strategies for requests.

Achiba (2002, 178–184) suggested a developmental profile or pattern for the development of requests consisting of four phases. In the Phase I Yao used all of the different types of strategies for requests but the linguistic forms were limited and formulaic expressions such as routines or patterns were mainly used (Achiba 2002, 178). In Phase II “the formulaic use of English that characterised Phase I was dramatically reduced, and Yao began to make more extensive use of the forms that had emerged in Phase I, employing a wider range of lexical items and spontaneously produced longer sentences” (Achiba 2002, 179). In Phase III there was significant pragmatic expansion and Yao started using many new forms such as “you should” and “shall we” to make requests (Achiba 2002, 180–181). Obligation statements such as “you have to” and “you should” also appeared in Phase III, and Yao had started to show more metalinguistic awareness (*ibid.*). Finally, in the Phase IV Yao’s ability to use indirect strategies to express herself improved significantly and she started using now forms of these strategies (Achiba 2002, 182–183). The frequencies of forms that had appeared in previous phases also increased in the Phase IV, and there were qualitative changes in Yao’s use of hints to perform requests (*ibid.*).

The final study discussed here is about the effects of classroom instruction on pragmatic development. Taguchi, Naganuma, and Budding (2015) conducted a study of 23 first-semester students in an intensive English as a second language program, investigating the effects of instruction on naturalistic patterns of pragmatic development. The study focused on the mitigated preparatory forms of the speech act of requests, and data were collected three times, before the instruction period in April, immediately after the instruction period in July, and later after the instruction period in December (Taguchi, Naganuma, and Budding 2015, 8–10). The study found that at the beginning of the study the students were not able to use the target forms, but after the instruction period their production rate increased to 97.8%, which indicated that nearly all of the students were able to use the target form, and the target forms remained in 70% of their production four

months after the instruction (Taguchi, Naganuma, and Budding 2015, 11). This was compared with data Taguchi had collected previously with students of same university who had had comparable curricula but no explicit instruction for the specific target form of the study (Taguchi, Naganuma, and Budding 2015, 7–8). The students in the original data had the production rate of almost zero for the target form, which highlights the important role of instruction in acquiring the target form in the 2015 study (Taguchi, Naganuma, and Budding 2015, 11).

The studies introduced here suggest somewhat similar developmental patterns where initial stages are predominated by more routine and formulaic expressions, these routine expressions become more analysed with time while new forms and expressions enter the learner's language use, and the learners start inhibiting more analysed and productive language use with a wider range of different forms. It is worth mentioning that many of the studies of pragmatic and discourse ability were done in foreign language contexts where the learners were also exposed to the sociocultural context of the target language, which likely contributes to the acquisition.

### **3.3 Pragmatic Competence and Cultural Distance**

The concept of cultural distance has its origins in the field of psychology. Cultural Distance is based on Hofstede's (2001, 29) cultural dimensions, which are *power distance*, *uncertainty avoidance*, *individualism versus collectivism*, *masculinity versus femininity*, and *long-term versus short-term orientation*. Power distance refers to how the society deals with the problem of human inequality, such as differences in status. Uncertainty avoidance refers to the level of stress in a society caused by uncertainties in the future. Individualism versus collectivism refers to the level of integration of individuals into larger groups. Masculinity versus femininity refers to division of roles between men and women and for example how the values of men and women differ in the same jobs. Finally, long-term versus short-term orientation refers to the extent in which people choose to focus on future or the present (Hofstede 2001, 29). According to Kogut and Singh (1988, 422–423), cultural distance between two countries or cultures can be calculated based on the degree the two countries or cultures differ on Hofstede's cultural dimensions, and based on this

Morosini, Shane, and Singh (1998, 139) define it as “the degree to which the cultural norms in one country are different from those in another country.”

Cultural distance to the target language community can also affect pragmatic competence. Rafieyan (2016) studied the effect of cultural distance on pragmatic competence by conducting a study of 52 students in an English education university in Japan. 24 of the participants of the study were German and 28 were South Korean (Rafieyan 2016, 26). These two countries were chosen due to their different cultural distance to Great Britain as the target language country, with Germans being cultural much closer to British than South Koreans were (*ibid.*). All participants were considered to have roughly equally high English language proficiency as they had passed the requirements to study in the university, and data were collected with a pragmatic comprehension test and a discourse completion task (Rafieyan 2016, 26–27). The study found significant differences in the performance of two groups, with German students having higher mean scores for both the pragmatic comprehension and the pragmatic production test (Rafieyan 2016, 28). According to Rafieyan (2016, 29), differences in cultural distance explained 12 percent of variance in pragmatic comprehension ability scores and 30 percent in pragmatic production ability scores, which was evaluated with effect size statistics using Partial Eta Squared. Rafieyan’s study indicates that cultural distance can play a statistically significant difference in pragmatic competence, which makes considering cultural distance relevant for this study.

As cultural distance can play a role in pragmatic competence, for the purpose of this paper it is necessary to establish the cultural distances of Finland and Japan to the target language country of Great Britain. Hofstede (2001, 500) provides data based on his previous IBM (The International Business Machines Corporation) survey data which ranks various countries based on their index scores for Hofstede’s five cultural dimensions. Table 1 provides the scores and ranks for the countries relevant for this study.

**Table 1** Index Scores and Ranks of Finland, Japan, and Great Britain adapted from Hofstede’s (2001, 500) IBM survey data

Country	Power Distance: Index	Rank	Uncertainty Avoidance: Index	Rank	Individualism /Collectivism: Index	Rank	Masculinity /Femininity: Index	Rank	Long-/Short-Term Orientation: Index	Rank
Finland	33	46	59	31-32	63	17	26	47	41	14
Japan	54	33	92	7	46	22-23	95	1	80	4
Great Britain	35	42-44	35	47-48	89	3	66	9-10	25	28-29

Based on Hofstede’s data provided in Table 1, Finland is much closer to Great Britain in power distance than Japan, with Finland having the index score of 33, Great Britain having 35, and Japan having 54. With uncertainty avoidance, individualism/collectivism, and long-/short-term orientation index scores and ranks Finland is not as close to Great Britain as it was with power distance, but it is still closer to Great Britain in these cultural dimension than Japan is. The only cultural dimension where Japan is close to Great Britain than Finland is masculinity/femininity, where Japan’s index score was 95, Great Britain’s 66, and Finland’s 22. The dimension refers to how the values of men and women in the same jobs differ, with values of men and women in same jobs differing more in countries that have higher masculinity indexes (Hofstede 2001, 279). Nevertheless, Finland being culturally closer to Great Britain than Japan is in four of the five cultural dimensions implies that Japan is culturally more distant than Finland to the target language community of this study. Kogut and Singh (1998, 422) provide a formula for assessing the overall cultural distance index scores algebraically. Kogut and Singh’s formula was designed for four cultural dimensions as their study did not include the long-/short-term orientation index, so the formula was slightly altered to be used together with Hofstede’s data used in the present study as follows:

$$CD_j = \sum_{i=1}^5 \{(I_{ij} - I_{iu})^2 / V_i\} / 5$$

In the formula  $I_{ij}$  stands for the index score of the  $i$ th cultural dimension of the  $j$  country,  $V_i$  stands for the variance of the index of the cultural dimension, and  $CD_j$  is the overall cultural distance index score of the  $j$  country contrasted with the target country  $u$ .

Using the formula, overall cultural distance index scores of 1.47 for Finland and 3.63 for Japan were assessed when contrasted with the target country of Great Britain based on Hofstede's (2001, 500) IBM survey data. This indicates that Japan is culturally more distant than Finland to the target country of Great Britain when all of the five cultural dimensions by Hofstede are taken into consideration. Assessing Hofstede's cultural dimensions numerically and assessing a single numerical score for overall cultural distance however do have downsides. Assessing complex phenomena such as cultural dimensions or cultural distance with single numerical values hides individuals and wide range of possible individual variation that could be found within any culture. It is also possible that Finland or Japan could be culturally closer to other English speaking countries such as United States or Australia. Fortunately based on Hofstede's (2001, 500) data, English-speaking countries such as Great Britain, United States, and Australia were culturally relatively similar. In the individualism/collectivism dimension for example, United States, Australia, and Great Britain were the most, second most, and third most individualist countries in the entire data set. This framework was chosen for this study as it makes it possible to assess cultural distance statistically by using quantitative research methods.

## **4 Material and Methods**

The methodology and the subjects of this study will be introduced in this section. The aim of the study was to investigate the possible differences in the pragmatic competences of Finnish and Japanese learners of English, and whether cultural distance has a role in the possible differences in pragmatic competence. The research questions of the study were as follows:

- 1) Are there differences in the pragmatic competence of Finnish and Japanese learners of English, and if so, what kind of differences are there?
- 2) How does cultural distance affect the pragmatic competence of Finnish and Japanese learners of English?

As an initial hypothesis, Finnish students are expected to show higher pragmatic competence due to Finland's closer cultural proximity to the target language culture as such effects in pragmatic competence have been observed by for example Rafieyan (2016). Cultural distance is therefore expected to correlate with higher pragmatic competence. This section will go into detail on how this was researched. At first, the subjects of the study will be introduced, followed by the research methodology of the study. Following this, the process of conducting the research will be described, and finally the statistical methods used for assessing the data will be discussed.

### **4.1 Test Subjects**

The subjects for this study consisted of two groups, a first year upper secondary school group from Finland, and a first year high school group from Japan. Both of these grades represent the tenth years of the respective education systems. The Finnish upper secondary school was located in Southwest Finland and the Japanese high school was located in the island and prefecture of Hokkaido. The Finnish upper secondary school followed the Finnish national core curriculum (Finnish National Agency for Education 2016a) and the Japanese high school followed the Japanese national curriculum (MEXT 2009). The

Finnish group consisted of 64 students and the Japanese group consisted of 69 students. Background information about the age, native language, and at what age they started learning English was collected, but the names or genders of the students were not. This was done to preserve the anonymity of the students, which was considered highly important in order to keep the data collection as ethical as possible as the students in both groups were minors in their respective countries. In addition, as the students were minors, the guardians of the students were informed about the study and the test. Furthermore, as this study is not investigating gender differences, collecting information about the gender of the participants was not seen as necessary.

Japanese participants were mostly 15 or 16 years old with one participant who was 14, and the average age of the Japanese group was 15.5. Likewise, the Finnish participants were also mostly 15 or 16, but with one participant who was 17, and the average age of the group was 15.9. The average age when the participants started studying English was 9.99 for the Japanese group and 8.56 for the Finnish group, so the Finnish participants on average had started studying English a year and a half earlier. All of the participants in the Japanese group reported Japanese as their native language. In the Finnish group 60 out of 64 participants reported Finnish as their native language. Out of the remaining participants one reported Finnish and Russian, one reported Finnish and English, one reported Persian, and one reported Arabic. However, as the vast majority of the students reported Finnish as their native language or one of the two native languages, and the data were collected from a Finnish speaking high school that requires a high Finnish competence from those with other native languages, it is reasonable to treat the Finnish data as consisting of Finnish speakers for the purpose of this study. Alternatively, the four students who reported other native languages could have been excluded from the study and not taken into account in the results, which would have guaranteed the homogeneity of the participants, but because these participants live and obtain their high school education in a Finnish speaking environment, excluding these students from the study was not seen as necessary. In addition, their answers to the test and their total scores which ranged from 13 to 14 did not differ in any significant way to the answers of the other participants in the Finnish group or the average total score of 13.109.

## 4.2 Measures of Pragmatic Competence

Testing language competence is not a simple task. Bachman (1990, 111) acknowledges that the test performance of the subjects is affected by the methods that are used to test performance, and different individuals can perform differently with different tests. A test subject might be good at performing in oral tests such as interview while being poor at cloze tests, multiple-choice tests, or essays, whereas someone else might be more comfortable with cloze or multiple-choice tests while finding tasks such as oral interviews difficult (*ibid.*). It is therefore impossible to design a test using a single testing method that would also be equally suitable for every single participant in a study.

Possible data collection methods for testing pragmatic development in a second language include spoken interaction such as authentic discourse, elicited conversation, or role play, questionnaires such as discourse completion tasks, multiple-choice tasks, and scaled-response questionnaires, and either oral or written self-reports such as interviews, diaries, or verbal protocols (Kasper and Rose 2002, 79). Spoken interactions have the benefit of making it possible to examine a wide range of different features of discourse and letting the researcher directly observe the language feature or features that are being studied (*ibid.*). Oral or written self-reports which are more open-ended and inclusive are, according to Kasper and Rose (2002, 103), the most suitable for exploratory research goals as opposed to more well-defined research topics where questionnaires might be more suitable. Finally, questionnaires by their nature restrict the kind of questions that can be researched, and they are not suitable for many features of pragmatics specific to oral interaction, such as dynamics or turn taking in a conversation (Kasper and Rose 2002, 89). However, according to Kasper and Rose (2002, 89–90), questionnaires are the most commonly used types of data in interlanguage pragmatics and while they are often treated as an “easy” method of collecting data, a well-developed questionnaire can be an effective way to collect data, and once the questionnaire has been developed, data collection can be done relatively quickly. This study will also use a questionnaire as its method of data collection and the further benefits of doing this will be discussed in the following paragraph.

Due to many practical constraints, designing a long comprehensive test covering multiple different test methods was not possible for this study, and due to these practical

constraints and strengths questionnaires have, questionnaire consisting of multiple-choice test items was chosen as the data collection method for this study. Multiple-choice tests have been used to test pragmatic skills in previous studies. As discussed earlier, Bouton (1988) conducted a multiple-choice implicature test to 436 non-native speakers to study the subjects' comprehension of conversational implicatures. Bouton (1988, 1995) found using multiple-choice questions to be an effective test method, and argues that the results of the study also indicated that multiple-choice tests can be effective tools for studying pragmatic comprehension. In addition to this, multiple-choice questions make it possible to analyse the results of the test quantitatively, making it possible to assess differences between groups, statistical correlations, or statistical significance of the test results. This makes it possible to answer both the first and the second research question of this study as those are concerned with differences between the participant groups, and this is one of the reasons multiple-choice questions were chosen for the test used in this study.

According to Bachman (1990, 90), pragmatic competence consists of knowledge of pragmatic conventions necessary for performing the desired functions of language, and knowledge of sociolinguistic conventions for performing these functions appropriately according to the context. This is why it is necessary for the test of pragmatic competence used for this study to measure both of these aspects of pragmatic competence. Because of this, the test in this study will be compiled from two different already existing test batteries measuring different aspects of pragmatic competence.

Röver (2005) has designed an assessment battery for ESL pragmatics consisting of sections for implicatures, routines, and speech acts. The sections for implicatures and routines both consist of 12 multiple choice test items (*ibid.*). For the speech act section Röver (2005, 130–138) provides two versions, one with multiple choice test items similar to other sections, and one where the test participant has to fill in a blank in a short written conversation between two people in natural conversational English. Röver (2005) conducted assessments of the validity of the test battery and found the reliability and the standard error of the full test battery to be satisfactory (Röver 2005, 72). Roever (2006, 247; Roever and Röver are used interchangeably depending on which spelling the publication uses) argues that reliability is necessary for inferences made from the test results to be valid. According to Roever (2006, 247), the subcomponents of

pragmalinguistics measured in the test, implicatures, routines, and speech acts, were considered inter-related, and the factor analysis and the intersection correlation coefficients confirmed that all three components of the test battery were moderately correlated. Additionally, according to Röver (2005, 75), domain experts, native speakers of English, and non-native speakers all agreed that the test battery measures pragmatic knowledge.

In addition to Röver's (2005) test battery, Hudson, Detmer and Brown's (1995) test battery for measuring cross-cultural pragmatics is used as a part of the test of pragmatic competence used for this study. Hudson, Detmer and Brown developed various measures for cross-cultural pragmatics with a series a pilot tests done with both native English speakers and non-native English speakers who were native Japanese speakers. Analysis of data and feedback received from the pilot tests were used to revise the measures. Multiple-choice test items given by Hudson, Detmer and Brown (1995, 107–130) were chosen to be adapted to use in this study. Test items from Hudson, Detmer and Brown's test were chosen to be included in order to take sociopragmatic competence into account in the test, and by doing that, to achieve a more comprehensive measure of pragmatic competence.

As mentioned earlier, practicality was an important factor when planning the test of pragmatic competence used for this study. Roever (2006, 249–250) writes that the goal of Roever's test battery was to “elicit a maximum of construct-related information with a minimum of resource use”, so this goal of practicality was one of the reasons parts of Roever's test were chosen for this study. Eliciting construct-related information with a minimum resource use also applies to the Hudson, Detmer and Brown's test items, and the choice of using multiple-choice questions in general.

Roever (2006, 250) argues that in order to obtain information about the abilities of test takers, it is important for the test to contain a sufficient number of items around the ability levels of the test takers. Because the test takers of this study come from different countries, cultures, and education systems, it is difficult to estimate their exact ability levels in advance, and for this reason it was important to attempt to include test items of varying difficulty levels in the test of this study. It is, however, possible that the questions of the test were either too difficult or too easy to some of the participant groups or individual participants within the groups. Accurately assessing the level of pragmatic competence of

the participants was not possible prior to designing and conducting the test of the study, and as it is possible the pragmatic competence of different groups of participants could vary greatly, conducting a pilot version of the test with only one of the groups could still have led to test either too difficult or too easy for the other group. Due to practical issues in collecting data from Japan, there were no resources for conducting a pilot test with the first year Japanese high school participants of the study, so a pilot test for both of the groups was not possible. Röver's statistical assessment of the validity of the test battery, and Hudson, Detmer and Brown's extensive piloting process support the claim that the individual questions of the test measure what they are meant to measure, but there could still be other issues in the final version of the test of this study, and this is something that needs to be acknowledged when discussing the results.

The final version of the test, which can be seen in the appendix, consists of 15 multiple-choice questions, one example question, and three background questions about the participants age, their native language, and when they started studying English. The test lasted approximately fifteen minutes with some participants finishing the test faster than others. The background questions were in Finnish for Finnish participants and in Japanese for Japanese participants. Ideally the test would have been longer for more accurate and comprehensive test results, but it was necessary to keep it relatively short due to practical constraints when collecting the data. Although the test items are multiple-choice questions, they can take some time to answer as reading and understanding the situation described in each test item can take time, especially if the participant's overall English reading competence is not high. The first nine test items of the test are adapted from the Röver's (2005) test battery. There are three questions for each section of Röver's test battery, which cover implicatures, routines, and speech acts. The questions were formatted like in the following example (adapted from Röver 2005, 124).

### **Example 1**

**3:** Maria and Frank are working on a class project together, but they won't be able to finish it by the deadline (締め切り).

Maria: "Do you think Dr. Gibson is going to lower our grade if we hand it in late?"

Frank: “Do fish swim?”

*What does Frank probably mean?*

1. He thinks they should change the topic of their project.
2. He thinks their grade will not be affected.
3. He did not understand Maria’s question.
4. He thinks they will get a lower grade.

The participants were instructed to circle the right answer. As the purpose of the test was not to measure the participants’ vocabulary skills, translations in either Finnish or Japanese were also provided for some of the potentially more difficult content words, especially if they were key words important to understanding the context of the test item. I provided both the Finnish and the Japanese translations, and the Japanese translations were checked by the local Japanese teacher of English who assisted with collecting the data in Japan. Some words were also underlined to assist understanding the test questions, as shown in Example 1.

Following the implicature, routine, and speech act sections, the last six test items were adapted from the Hudson, Detmer and Brown’s (1995) test battery to cover the sociopragmatic part of the test. The question format was similar to questions from Röver’s test battery, as can be seen from the following example (adapted from Hudson, Detmer and Brown 1995, 125).

### **Example 2**

**14:** You are shopping in a department store. You need to buy some envelopes (封筒), but cannot find them. You see a salesclerk (店員) nearby.

1. “Excuse me. I need to buy some envelopes to send some letters. Where can I find them?”
2. “Excuse me! Show me the envelopes.”
3. “Excuse me, where are the envelopes?”

The participants were instructed to circle the answer they thought was the most suitable for the situation described in the test item. It is important to note that there were necessarily no

clear right or wrong answer for the questions in the sociopragmatics section. Instead, the questions consisted of two distractors and a response that would be the most natural for a native English speaker in each situation. This makes it possible to see whether the conversational strategies of the participants would match those of native speakers in the contexts described in the test items.

One of the reasons why the test was split to test items from Röver's test battery and test items from Hudson, Detmer, and Brown's test battery was to divide the test of pragmatic competence into pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic parts of the test. This division is however not necessarily clear-cut as pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic competence are closely related to each other, as discussed earlier in the section 2.1.5. For example, Röver's section of the test aims to focus on pragmalinguistic competence, but it is possible that a wrong answer to one of the test items from Röver's test battery could still be caused by cross-cultural differences in appropriate linguistic behaviour in the context described in the test item, and it is not possible to distinguish which type of pragmatic failure was behind the answer from just the answers alone. It is therefore important to note that this division to pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic parts is not perfect when discussing the results of the test.

Some of the test items were slightly modified for the purpose of this study. The question 14 of the test for example had the word "drug store" and not "department store" in the original test item by Hudson, Detmer and Brown (1995, 125). The change to a more generic type of store was made because the test item is about buying envelopes and a drug store is not a place where you would usually buy envelopes in either a Finnish or a Japanese context and knowing this is not relevant to what the test item is aiming to measure. Similarly, in the question 15 "lead teacher for your grade" was changed to "principal" as the concept of a lead teacher of a specific grade of a school might not be familiar to the participants of the test.

### **4.3 Conducting the Study**

Due to geographical limitations, the process of conducting the tests slightly differed between the two groups. The test was first conducted with the Japanese group in early November of 2018, and later with the Finnish group in early December.

In order to conduct the test of pragmatic competence in Japan, I had contacted a Japanese teacher who taught English in a Japanese high school, and who had agreed to help with conducting the study. Before conducting the test, the test was sent to the Japanese teacher for the purpose of discussing possible questions or concerns regarding conducting the test. The test had its instructions written in English, but according to the teacher it would be better to give them in Japanese as they could be potentially be difficult to understand for some of the participants. Giving the instructions in the native language of the participants was not an issue as the test does not aim to measure the reading or listening comprehension of the participants, so it was agreed that the instructions in the test would remain in English, but the teacher would give the instructions to the class in Japanese while conducting the test. To keep the test situations as similar as possible with both groups, the instructions were also given in Finnish when conducting the study with the Finnish group. The teacher conducting the study in Japan was also instructed that the students taking the test should not worry about always choosing what the correct answer would be, especially as the sociopragmatic part of the test does not necessarily contain absolutely correct answers, and the students should focus on choosing answers that they believe to be the most natural ones. As the participants were minors, the teacher had informed the guardians of the students about the test. The students were also informed that participation to the study is voluntary. The test of pragmatic competence was conducted by the local teacher during two English classes for two groups of first year students, totalling in 69 participants, and once the tests had been conducted, the data was compiled and sent to me.

After the Japanese data had been collected, I arranged the date for collecting the Finnish data with a Finnish teacher of English in a Finnish upper secondary school. Because the Japanese data were collected first, I was able to adjust the test situation in Finland to match the test situation in Japan as closely as possible to increase the reliability of the study. As with the Japanese data, the test was conducted during two English classes for two groups of first year students, totalling in 64 participants. As the participants were minors, the teacher informed the guardians of the students of the classes about the study

and that they could inform the teacher if they did not want their child to participate. Students were also informed that participating in the study was completely voluntary. The test was conducted by me, and as mentioned earlier, the introductions were given in Finnish to keep the situation as similar to the Japanese group as possible. Similarly, the students were instructed that they should not worry about always choosing what the correct answer would be and that they should choose the answers they felt to be the most natural ones. The test lasted approximately 15 minutes. After the tests were conducted to all of the groups, the answer data was transcribed to Excel.

#### **4.4 Statistical Methods**

As discussed earlier, using a multiple-choice questionnaire as a data collection method for this study makes it possible to analyse the data quantitatively. Quantitative research methods through statistical measurements make it possible to produce results that are reliable, replicable, and generalizable (Dörnyei 2007, 34). As a downside quantitative methods tend to work with averages, so they can hide variety or individuality within the subjects and similar results can be obtained from different underlying factors or processes (Dörnyei 2007, 35). Nevertheless, especially thanks to modern statistical computer software, quantitative methods are also relatively quick and do not require as large time investments, so they are the most suitable for assessing large numbers of data.

The data for this study were assessed with statistical methods using Microsoft Excel 2016 and IBM SPSS Statistics 24. The questionnaire answers for each question, total scores, and total scores of each section of the test were first entered to Excel for each of the groups. The mean and median scores were calculated for total scores and scores for each of the subsections for both of the groups, followed by assessing variability in the answers. After this, whether these scores had statistically significant differences between the groups was assessed using the Mann-Whitney U test. The Mann-Whitney U test was used because according to the Shapiro-Wilk test the Finnish data were not normally distributed and therefore a t-test could not have been used.

After this, in order to answer the second research question of the study, “How does cultural distance affect the pragmatic competence of Finnish and Japanese learners of

English?”, possible correlations between the cultural distance index scores of Finnish and Japanese groups and the total scores of the test of pragmatic competence were investigated. The method of assessing the cultural distance index scores for the Finnish and Japanese groups was introduced earlier in the section 3.3 when discussing cultural distance. In short, cultural distance index scores were assessed by using Hofstede’s (2001, 500) IBM survey data and a mathematical formula provided by Kogut and Singh (1988, 422) for this purpose. Based on Hofstede’s data, overall cultural distance index scores of 1.47 for Finland and 3.63 for Japan were assessed in contrast to the target country of Great Britain. This indicates that Japan is culturally more distant than Finland to the target language community of this study. The correlation between the cultural distance index scores and the pragmatic competence of the participants was assessed with Pearson’s correlation coefficient using SPSS. According to Dörnyei (2007, 224): “Correlation coefficients can be calculated when one or both variables are dichotomous (i.e. have only two values, for example, ‘gender’); fortunately, we do not need to worry about this because SPSS automatically adjusts the calculation accordingly.” The cultural distance index score variable of this study has only two values, so this had to be taken into account, but as SPSS adjusts the calculation of correlation accordingly this was seen as suitable method for this study. The results of the study will be presented next in the following sections.

## **5 Results**

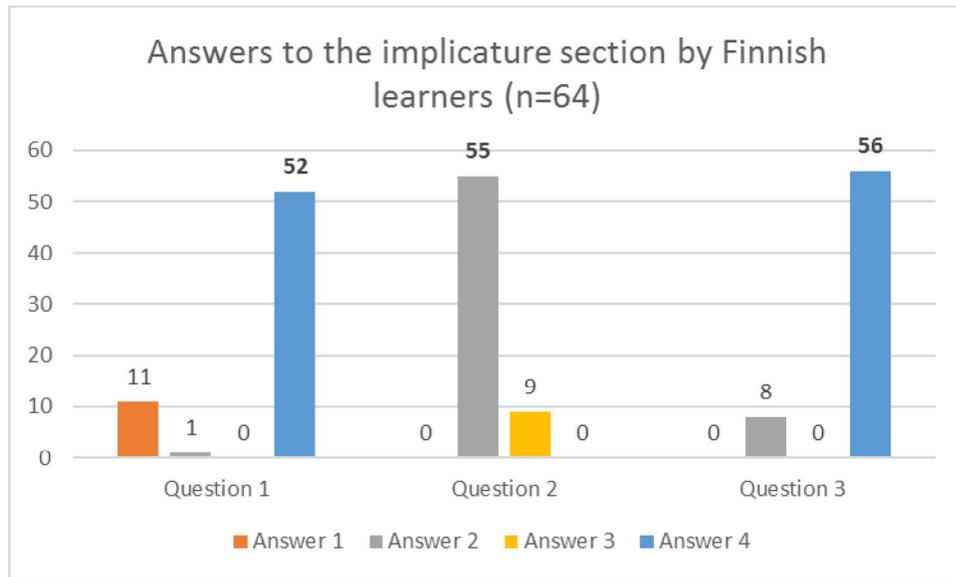
The results of the study will be presented in this section using statistical methods. First, results of each of the sub sections of the test of pragmatic competence will be presented, starting with sections for implicatures, routines, and speech acts based on Röver's (2005) test battery, and followed by the sociopragmatic section based on Hudson, Detmer and Brown's (1995) test battery. After this, the overall scores and the result of assessing the correlations of the scores with cultural distance will be presented.

### **5.1 Pragmalinguistics**

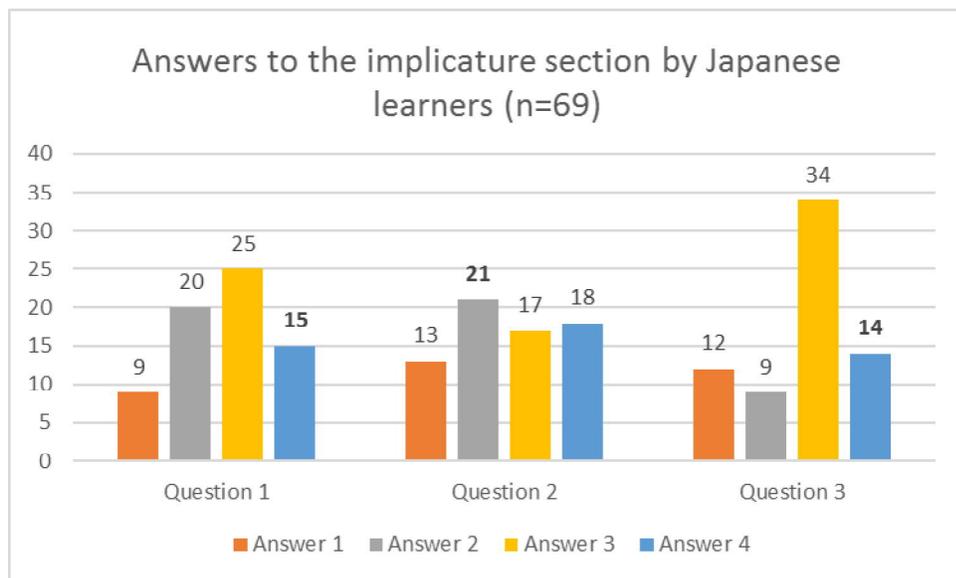
This subsection will present the results from the first part of the test of pragmatic competence of the study, which aimed to test the pragmalinguistic knowledge of the participants by covering the questions based on Röver's (2005) test battery concerning implicatures, routines, and speech acts. The answers of both the Finnish and the Japanese group will be presented separately to show what kind of differences in the answering frequencies there were within the groups, and following that, differences between the groups will be discussed. This section of the test included nine questions separated into three subsections, and the results of each will be presented in order. Each question had four answer choices, one of which was considered to be the most natural or correct answer to each of the questions.

The following two figures will show how Finnish and Japanese learners answered to the first three questions of the test of pragmatic competence of this study, concerning the use of implicatures. For the specific questions, see the appendix. The correct answers to questions 1, 2, and 3 were answers 4, 2, and 4 respectively. The correct answers have their number of answers bolded in the figures.

**Figure 2** Answers to the implicature section by Finnish learners (n=64)



**Figure 3** Answers to the implicature section by Japanese learners (n=69)



As can be seen from Figures 2 and 3, there were significant differences in how the Finnish and Japanese learners answered the questions related to the use of implicatures. With Finnish learners 81% of the participants chose the correct answers for Question 1, 86% for Question 2, and 88% for Question 3 (n=64). With Japanese learners 22% of the participants chose the correct answer for Question 1, 30% for Question 2, and 20% for Question 3

(n=69). Quite notably, especially in Question 1 and Question 3 a larger number of Japanese learners chose a specific distractor over the correct answer. In Question 1 36% of the Japanese participants chose answer 3 while only 22% answered the correct answer, and in Question 3 49% of the participants chose answer 3 while only 20% chose the correct answer.

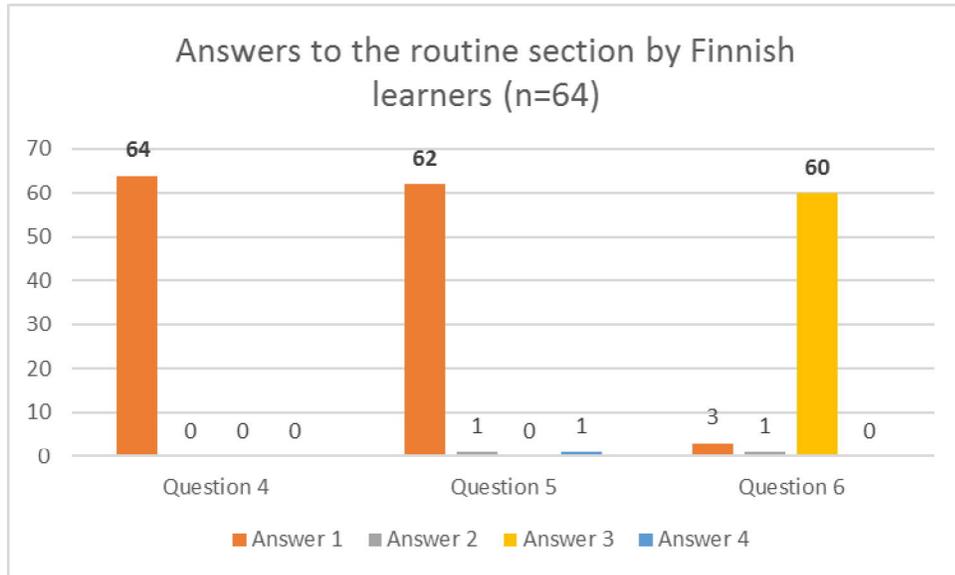
Question 3 described a situation where two people were discussing a class project. One of the people, Maria, asked if their grades would be lowered if they handed the project late, and the other person, Frank, replied: “Do fish swim?” What Frank did with the utterance was flouting one of the Grice’s maxims of cooperative principle, Maxim of Relation, discussed earlier in the section 2.1.2. The listener or the person answering the test item would have needed to interpret that Frank flouted the maxim on purpose and that replying with a question that has an obvious answer (do fish swim?) was Frank’s way of saying that he thinks that their grade would obviously get lowered. Japanese participants of the study struggled to interpret the meaning of flouting the Maxim of Relation and 49% of the Japanese group interpreted that Frank’s question about whether fish swim meant that he did not understand Maria’s question. Question 1 also reflects this difficulty of interpreting the meaning when the Maxim of Relation is flouted. The question describes a situation where two people, John and Hilda, are having lunch and John asks how Hilda’s job search is coming along, to which Hilda answers “This curry is really good.” Hilda was flouting the Maxim of Relation to imply that she wants to change the subject or does not want to talk about it. However, the majority or 36% of the Japanese participants chose the incorrect interpretation of “She just found a job” while only 22% chose the correct interpretation of “Her job search is not going very well.”

For the three questions concerning implicatures, the average score of the Finnish participants was 2.547 and the average score of the Japanese participants was 0.72. This difference was statistically significant ( $N = 133$ ,  $U = 237.50$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ).

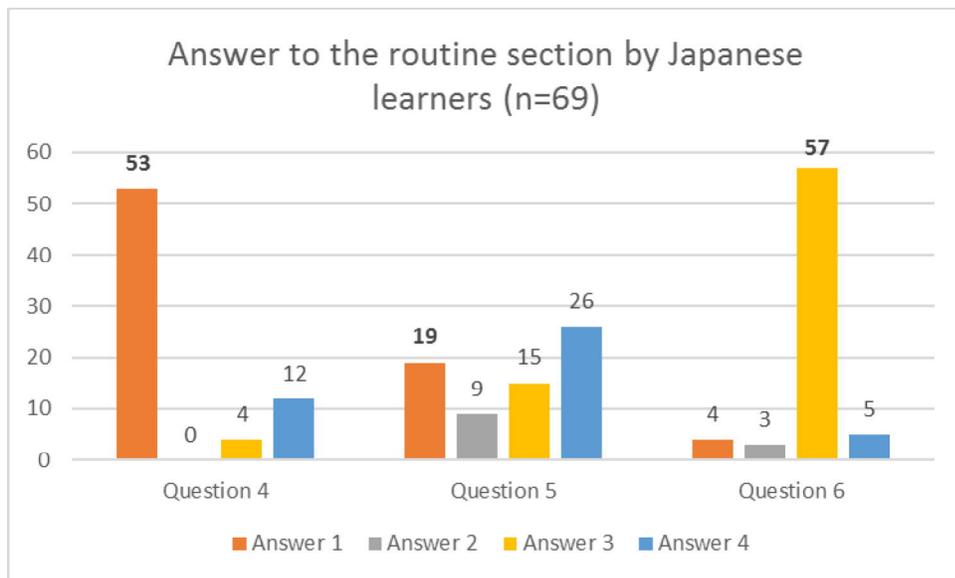
The next three questions, also based on Röver’s (2005) test battery, concerned routines. As can be seen from Figures 4 and 5, these three questions proved to be easier than the ones concerning implicatures for both of the groups. However, it is worth acknowledging that especially due to relatively small number of questions in each subsection, this could also be due to the difficulty of the questions in the routines

subsection being lower rather than due to routines in general being easier than implicatures. The correct answers to questions 4, 5, and 6 were answers 1, 1, and 3 respectively.

**Figure 4** Answer to the routine section by Finnish learners (n=64)



**Figure 5** Answer to the routine section by Japanese learners (n=69)

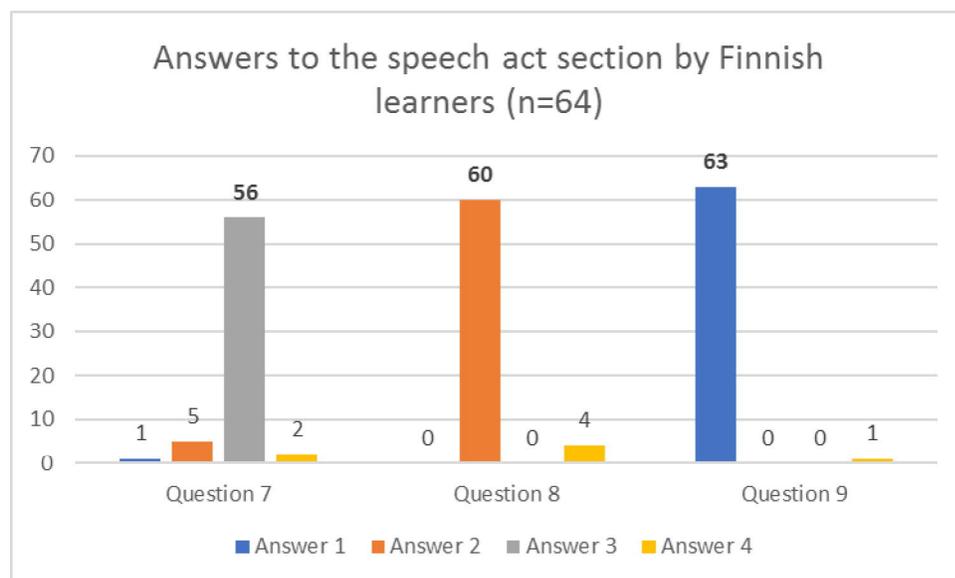


With Finnish learners 100% of the participants answered the correct answer for Question 4, 97% for Question 5, and 94% for Question 6 (n=64). With Japanese learners 77% of the

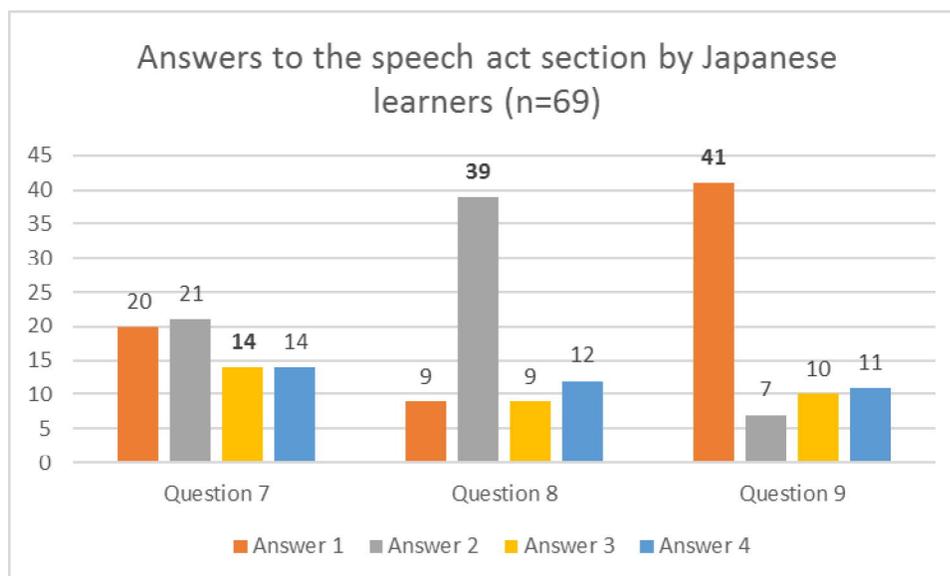
participants answered the correct answer for Question 4, 28% for Question 5, and 83% for Question 6 (n=69). The subsection overall proved to be easier than the implicature section for both of the groups, but Question 5 proved to still be difficult for Japanese learners while this was not the case for Finnish learners. The difficulty in Question 5 might be caused by negative transfer. The answer number 1, which was the correct answer, was “Here you go” and the answer number 4, which was the most often picked answer by Japanese learners was “Please”. A Japanese phrase which could be used in the situation described in the question would be “douzo”, which could be translated as both “please” or “here you go” depending on the context, but the roughly equivalent Finnish phrase “ole hyvä” would only be translated to “here you go”. For the three questions concerning routines, the average score of the Finnish participants was 2.906 and the average score of the Japanese participants was 1.87. This difference was statistically significant (N = 133, U = 534,  $p < 0.01$ ).

The last three questions in the test of pragmatic competence that were adapted from Röver’s (2005) test battery concerned speech acts and the correct answers to questions 7, 8, and 9 were answers 3, 2, and 1 respectively. As can be seen from the following two figures, especially to Japanese learners the questions concerning speech acts were slightly easier to the participants than the questions concerning implicatures.

**Figure 6** Answers to the speech act section by Finnish learners (n=64)



**Figure 7** Answers to the speech act section by Japanese learners (n=69)



With Finnish learners 88% of the participants answered the correct answer for Question 7, 94% for Question 8, and 98% for Question 9 (n=64). With Japanese learners 20% of the participants answered the correct answer for Question 7, 57% for Question 8, and 59% for Question 9 (n=69). In both Finnish and Japanese groups majority of the participants chose the correct answer choices for Questions 8 and 9, but Question 7 proved to be more difficult for Japanese learners. This could be due to choosing the correct answer in Question 7 requiring the participant to know the correct level of politeness required for the situation described in the question, while such knowledge of rules of politeness within the target language are not as important in Questions 8 and 9. Questions 8 and 9 provide other contextual clues for choosing the most suitable answer for the situation. The situation in Question 7 describes a college student talking to their teacher, so the differences in power distance when compared to the target language culture could also affect the difficulty of the question. As can be seen from Hofstede's (2001, 500) IBM survey data introduced in Table 1 in the section 3.3, Finland is quite close to target language country of Great Britain with Power Distance Index score of 33 compared to 35, while Japan has the Power Distance Index score 54, placing it further from the target language country. These differences in power distance could also explain the difficulty of Question 7 for Japanese learners. For the

three questions concerning speech acts, the average score of the Finnish participants was 2.797 and the average score of the Japanese participants was 1.36. This difference was statistically significant ( $N = 133$ ,  $U = 383.50$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ).

The average total score for the whole section of the test measuring implicatures, routines, and speech acts was 8.25 with the standard deviation of 0.992 for the Finnish group and 3.94 with the standard deviation of 1.423 for the Japanese group. Total score for the Finnish group ranged from 5 to 9 and the total score for the Japanese group ranged from 1 to 6. A score of 1 was given for each correct or most native-like answer, with the maximum score of the section being 9. Finnish learners in the study did on average better than the Japanese learners on this part of the test, and the difference between the Finnish ( $M = 8.25$ ,  $SD = 0.992$ ) and Japanese ( $M = 3.94$ ,  $SD = 1.423$ ) ( $N = 133$ ,  $U = 50.00$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ) groups was statistically significant, which was assessed with the Mann-Whitney U test. With the average score of 2.547 for the Finnish group and 0.72 for the Japanese group the questions concerning implicatures turned out to be the most difficult ones for both participant groups of the study. The questions concerning speech acts were the second most difficult with the average score of 2.797 for the Finnish group and 1.36 for the Japanese group. Finally, the questions concerning routines were the easiest for both of the groups with the average score 2.906 for the Finnish group and 1.87 for the Japanese group.

## **5.2 Sociopragmatics**

This subsection will present the results from the second part of the test of pragmatic competence of the test, which focused on sociopragmatic competence, covering the questions based on Hudson, Detmer and Brown's (1995) test battery for measuring cross-cultural pragmatics. The answers of both the Finnish and the Japanese group will be presented separately to show what kind of differences in the answering frequencies there were within the groups, and following that, differences between the groups will be discussed.

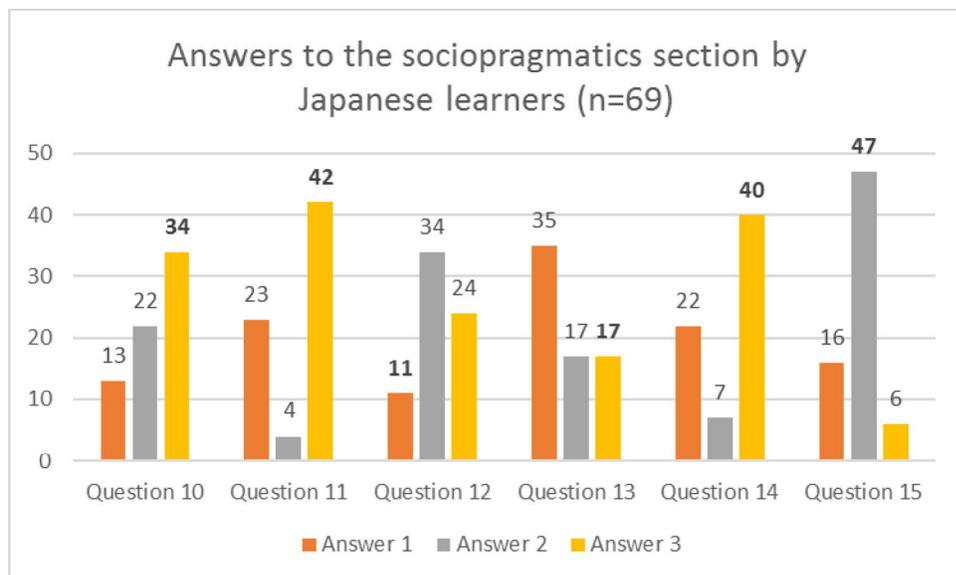
The sociopragmatic section of the test included six questions, each of which had three answer choices. In the sociopragmatic section of the test the questions did not have just one absolute correct answer, but one of the answers always corresponded to a response

that would have been the most natural for a native speaker. The two other answer choices were alternative strategies to the situation that would not have been considered as natural as the most natural answer by native speakers. The most native-like response in Question 10 was the answer 3, in Question 11 it was 3, in Question 12 it was 1, in Question 13 it was 3, in Question 14 it was 3, and in Question 15 it was 2.

**Figure 8** Answers to the sociopragmatics section by Finnish learners (n=64)



**Figure 9** Answers to the sociopragmatics section by Japanese learners (n=69)



As can be seen from the Figures 9 and 10, Finnish participants of the study in general chose the most native-like responses more often than the Japanese participants did. With Finnish participants 100% of the participants chose the most native-like response for Question 10, 92% for Question 11, 56% for Question 12, 83% for Question 13, 58% for Question 14, and 97% for Question 15 (n=64). With Japanese participants 49% chose the most native-like response for Question 10, 61% for Question 11, 16% for Question 12, 25% for Question 13, 58% for Question 14, and 68% for Question 15.

Most participants in the Finnish group chose the most native-like responses in all of the questions, but in the Japanese group more participants chose one of the distractors in questions 10, 12, and 13. Questions 10, 12, 13 were the most difficult questions for the Japanese participants, while questions 12, 13 and 14 were the most difficult for the Finnish participants. Also quite notably, in questions 12 and 13 more Japanese participants chose one of the distractors over the native-like response, with 49% or 34 of the participants choosing answer 2 in Question 12, and 51% or 35 of the participants choosing answer 1 in Question 13.

It is also notable that while Question 12 was also relatively difficult for the Finnish group, the distractor that caused that difficulty was different. While 49% or 34 of the Japanese participants chose the answer 2 and 35% or 24 of the participants chose the answer 3 in Question 12, with Finnish participants 42% or 27 of the participants chose the answer 3 in the same question, and only one Finnish participant chose the answer 2. Hudson, Detmer, and Brown (1995, 55) provide classifications for different distractors in the test items, and in Question 12 the distractor answer 2 was a direct strategy while the distractor answer 3 was an overly polite strategy. Therefore both the direct strategy and the polite strategy distracted Japanese participants from the most native-like response, while with Finnish participants only the polite strategy did so.

In Question 13 the most native-like response was the answer 3, but only 25% or 17 participants in the Japanese group chose it, with 51% or 35 of the participants choosing the answer 1, and other 17 participants choosing the answer 2. Answer 2 was a direct strategy, so like before, some of the Japanese participants chose the direct strategy over the politer native-like responses. However most participants in the Japanese group chose the answer 1,

which was also polite, but featured a strategy that was odd when compared to native speaker norms in the situation, as it could be considered to be breaking the Maxim of Quantity introduced earlier in the section 2.1.2. Question 14 was relatively difficult for both the Finnish and the Japanese groups, but here the distractor that caused difficulties was the same for both of the groups. While 58% or 37 of the Finnish participants and 58% or 40 of the Japanese participants chose the most native-like response, 42% or 27 of the Finnish participants and 32% or 22 of the Japanese participants chose the answer 1, which was a non-native strategy that was odd when compared to the native speaker norms, and like in Question 13, could be considered to be breaking the Maxim of Quantity. In addition, 10% or 7 of the Japanese participants chose the answer 2, which was a direct strategy, while none of the Finnish participants did so, but the number was relatively small for the Japanese group too.

It is also notable that Question 10 was relatively difficult for the Japanese participants while every participant in the Finnish group chose the most native-like response for the question. In Question 10 49% or 34 of the Japanese participants chose the most native-like response, but 32% or 22 chose the answer 2, which was a direct strategy, and 19% or 13 of the participants chose the answer 1, which was a non-native strategy that could be considered to break the Maxim of Relation. Question 11 was also relatively easy for the Finnish participants, and 61% or 42 of the Japanese participants also chose the most native-like response for the situation. However 33% or 23 of the Japanese participants chose the answer 1, which was a non-native strategy that could be considered to be breaking the Maxim of Quantity, and 6% or 4 of the participants chose the answer 2, which was a direct strategy. Possible explaining factors for these differences in the chosen strategies between the Finnish and Japanese groups will be discussed in the discussion section after the results.

Finally, the average total score for the sociopragmatic section of the test was 4.859 with the standard deviation of 0.87 for the Finnish group and 2.609 with the standard deviation of 1.416 for the Japanese group. The total score of the Finnish group ranged from 3 to 6 and the total score of the Japanese group ranged from 0 to 6. A score of 1 was given for each answer that was the most native-like from the three answer choices, with the maximum score of the section being 6. Finnish learners in the study did on average better

than the Japanese learners on this part of the test, and the difference between the Finnish ( $M = 4.859$ ,  $SD = 0.87$ ) and Japanese ( $M = 2.609$ ,  $SD = 1.416$ ) ( $N = 133$ ,  $U = 449.00$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) groups was statistically significant.

### **5.3 Total Scores and Cultural Distance**

Finally, this subsection of the results section will look at the Finnish and the Japanese group's total scores on the test of pragmatic competence. The total scores of the groups will also be contrasted with the cultural distance index scores assigned for Finland and Japan earlier in the section 3.3 when contrasted with the target language country of Great Britain. This will be done by looking at how the cultural distance index scores correlate with the total scores of the participants of this study by using Pearson correlation efficient with IBM SPSS Statistics 24. The correlation of the total scores with the age when the participants had started studying English was also tested using Pearson correlation coefficient as the Finnish group's lower average starting age of studying English could be an explaining factor for the results.

Average total scores of the two groups were 13.109 with the standard deviation of 1.261 for the Finnish group and 6.551 with the standard deviation of 2.279 for the Japanese group. The maximum total score of the test was 15. The total score of the Finnish group ranged from 10 to 15 and the total score of the Japanese group ranged from 1 to 12. The difference between the Finnish group ( $M = 13.109$ ,  $SD = 1.261$ ) and the Japanese group ( $M = 6.551$ ,  $SD = 2.279$ ) ( $N = 133$ ,  $U = 31.50$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) was statistically significant, so on average the Finnish group did better than the Japanese group on the test of pragmatic competence in this study. The higher standard deviation of the Japanese group indicates that there were more variation in the pragmatic competence of the learners within the group, but the lower standard deviation of the Finnish group could be due Finnish learners in the study finding the test easier and on average scoring very high scores. A more difficult test better designed to measure the competence of the Finnish group could have shown more variation within the competence of the participants.

The average age when the participants started studying English was 9.99 for the Japanese group and 8.56 for the Finnish group. Testing the correlation of the starting age of

studying English with the total scores showed statistically significant negative correlation with the starting age and the total scores ( $r = -0.365$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ). This indicates that lower starting age correlated with higher pragmatic competence in the test of this study, and therefore lower starting age for studying English is one explaining factor for the results of this study.

As discussed in the section 3.3, when contrasted with the target language country of Great Britain, the overall cultural distance index score of 1.47 was assigned for Finland and 3.63 was assigned Japan based on Hofstede's (2001, 500) IBM survey data. The correlation between the cultural distance index scores was assessed with Pearson correlation coefficient using IBM SPSS Statistics 24. An analysis using Pearson's correlation coefficient showed that there was statistically significant negative correlation between the participants' total score in the test of pragmatic competence and the cultural distance index score of the participants' home countries ( $r = -0.871$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ). This indicates that higher cultural distance to the target language country correlated with lower scores in the test of pragmatic competence, which supports the earlier hypothesis for the second research question of this study. Finnish participants of the study scored higher on the test of pragmatic competence used for this study which correlated with Finland being culturally closer than Japan to the target language country. While the Finnish group's lower starting age of studying English also correlated with the Finnish group's higher average total score, the effect size was larger for correlation with cultural distance ( $r = -0.871$  in contrast to  $r = -0.365$ ). Higher cultural distance to the target language country or culture seems to then negatively affect pragmatic competence within that target language.

## **6 Discussion**

The results of the test of pragmatic competence were presented in the previous section of this thesis, and this section will discuss how those results answer the research questions of this study. The research questions of this study were:

- 1) Are there differences in the pragmatic competence of Finnish and Japanese learners of English, and if so, what kind of differences are there?
- 2) How does cultural distance affect the pragmatic competence of Finnish and Japanese learners of English?

The section will begin by discussing how the results answer the two research questions the study, starting with the first research question and after that moving to the second research question. The results and findings will also be compared with previous research on pragmatic competence. Finally, implications of the results and the problems and limitations of this study will be discussed.

### **6.1 Differences in the Pragmatic Competence**

Starting with the first research question, the results showed statistically significant major differences in the pragmatic competence of the Finnish and Japanese first year upper secondary school or high school students. The average total score of the Finnish group was 13.109 or 87.39% from the maximum score of 15 and the score of the Japanese group was 6.551 or 43.57% from the maximum score for the test of pragmatic competence used for this study, indicating significantly higher overall pragmatic competence for the Finnish participants of this study. The average age when the participants started studying English was 9.99 for the Japanese group and 8.56 for the Finnish group, and the lower starting age correlated with a higher total score from the test of this study ( $r = -0.365$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ). Therefore the starting age of studying English is one explaining factor for the results of this

study. Amaki (2008, 54) writes that Japanese students were required to take English in both middle school and high school prior to 2011, and in 2011, English language classes were added to the curriculum for the 5th and 6th grades of primary schools. The data of this study were collected in 2018 so according to the curriculum, most Japanese participants of this study would have likely started studying English in the 5th of grade of primary school. On the other hand, according to the Finnish national curriculum for basic education (Finnish National Agency for Education 2016b), primary school students usually start studying their first foreign language, which is usually English, in the 3rd grade of primary school, which explains why on average Finnish participants of the study had started studying English earlier than the Japanese participants. It is of course possible that individual participants started studying English somewhere else, and such variation in starting ages can be seen from ages the participants of this study had reported.

For the first part of the test, based on Röver's (2005) test battery focusing on pragmalinguistics, the score of the Finnish group was 8.25 or 91.67% from the maximum score of 9, and the score of the Japanese group was 3.94 or 43.78% from the maximum score. For the second part of the test, based on Hudson, Detmer, and Brown's (1995) test battery focusing on sociopragmatics, the score of the Finnish group was 4.859 or 80.98% from the maximum score of 6 and the score of the Japanese group was 2.61 or 43.5% from the maximum score. For the Japanese group both the more pragmalinguistic and more sociopragmatic parts of the test turned out to be almost equally difficult with only 0.28% difference in the average scores of the two sections. On the other hand, for the Finnish group the more sociopragmatic part of the test turned out to be somewhat more difficult than the more pragmalinguistic part of the test, although the score was still significantly higher than the score of the Japanese group. This could indicate that mastering sociopragmatic competence takes longer than mastering pragmalinguistic competence in higher levels of pragmatic competence while in lower proficiency levels both the pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic competence are equally difficult. However, it is important to note that, as argued by Ishihara and Cohen (2014, 80), while this is not necessarily case and the lower pragmatic competence of the Japanese participants does not necessarily reflect lower grammatical competence in English, it is possible that lower grammatical ability of the Japanese participants could have caused difficulties in answering

or interpreting the test items. In order to investigate whether this was the case, a study which measures both pragmatic and grammatical abilities and investigates their correlation would have been necessary. It is also important to note that as discussed earlier in sections 2.1.5 and 4.2 and argued by Röver (2005, 5), the division to pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic sections is not perfectly clear-cut. Therefore, even though the sociopragmatic section of the test was slightly more difficult for the Finnish participants, it is not necessarily possible to state that the sociopragmatic competence in general would be worse than the pragmalinguistic competence of the Finnish participants.

Looking at the subsections and the test items more closely reveals additional differences between the Finnish and the Japanese groups. As reported at the end of the section 5.1, the questions concerning implicatures were the most difficult ones for both the Finnish and the Japanese group, although the score of the Finnish group was still significantly higher than the score of the Japanese group. It is however important to note that with the small amount of questions in each of the subsections of the test, differences between the difficulty of the subsections could simply be due to the difficulty of the specific questions and not due to for example implicatures in general being more difficult than routines or speech acts for the participants. However, previous studies have found similar results, as for example Taguchi (2011, 926–927) found the comprehension of nonconventional implicatures to be the most difficult for all of the different proficiency groups of the Japanese participants of the study. In two of the three test items concerning implicatures the majority of the Japanese participants chose an answer other than the correct or most native like interpretation for the test item. Both of the test items featured a situation where the Maxim of Relation based on Grice's (1975) cooperative principle was flouted and interpreting the meaning of the flouted maxim was required for interpreting the meaning of the utterance. Japanese participants of the study had difficulties interpreting the meanings of these utterances while the Finnish participants did not have such difficulties. The way implicatures are constructed in Japanese differ greatly from how they are constructed in native English conversation, which can be an explaining factor for the Japanese participants' difficulty of interpreting English implicatures in the test of this study. For a detailed analysis of how some implicatures are constructed in Japanese, see e.g. Haugh (2008).

The three following questions considering routines on the other hand were the easiest ones out of the three subsections of the first part of the test for both the Finnish and the Japanese group. Over 90% of the Finnish participants chose the correct answer choice for all three questions, and most of the Japanese participants chose the correct answer choice for questions 4 and 6. Only the Question 5 was challenging for the Japanese participants. Only 28% of the Japanese participants chose the correct answer choice, number 1, in Question 5 while 38% chose a specific wrong answer choice, number 4, over it. As discussed earlier in the section 5.1 of the Results section, the difficulty in this specific question appears to come from inappropriate transfer from Japanese language, as the Japanese phrase that would have been used in the situation of the test item could be interpreted to mean both the answer choice 1 or the answer choice 4, and this is not the case in Finnish. The difficulty behind question 5 for the Japanese group appears to then be due to a pragmalinguistic failure, which this part of the test a path in which learners aimed to focus on. Routines being easier than implicatures is also supported by previous studies such as Taguchi's (2011) study discussed in the previous paragraph. Taguchi's (2011, 922–923) study found that routines were easier than nonconventional implicatures for all of the participant groups of the study. This seems to also be compatible with developmental patterns suggested by Ellis (1992), Ohta (2001), and Achiba (2002), discussed earlier in the section 3.2. The developmental patterns suggest start from unanalysed more routine expressions and gradually move to more analysed and productive use of language, which might explain why routines in general were easier to the participants of this study.

The final three questions of the part of the test focusing on pragmalinguistics focused on speech acts. The questions focusing on speech acts were easier than the questions focusing on implicatures but harder than the questions focusing on routines for both of the participant groups. Like with previous subsections, most Finnish participants chose the correct or most native like answer choices out of the four possible answer choices, and the average score of the Finnish group was significantly higher than the average group of the Japanese group for the subsection. Most Japanese participants also chose the correct answers for questions 8 and 9, but Question 7 turned out to be more difficult with only 20% choosing the correct answer choice, number 3, and more participants choosing answer choices 1 or 2 over the correct answer. As discussed earlier in the Results section, this

could be due to Question 7 requiring choosing the correct level of politeness when talking to a teacher of a college or university class. As discussed in the section 2.1.1, Walkinshaw (2007, 288–289) found that Japanese learners of English were reluctant to express disagreement with teachers in language classrooms, which also hindered learning of such speech acts in English. Hofstede's (2001, 500) IBM survey data also suggests that Finland is relatively close to the target language culture of Great Britain in power distance, whereas Japan is further than Finland from Great Britain. These factors might explain why the Japanese participants had trouble choosing the correct answer in Question 7 specifically while Finnish participants did not. Japanese speech acts in general can also differ notably in the way they are formed from English speech acts, as discussed earlier in section 2.1.1. For example, Deguchi (2012, 593–598) introduces some of the differences that Japanese and English speech acts can have. Markkanen (1985, 38) on the other hand argues that Finnish and English have lot of similarities in their direct speech acts, and what differences there are are due to different grammatical structures. It could be that these similarities made the section concerning speech acts easier for the Finnish participants of this study.

As mentioned earlier in this section, the sociopragmatic part of the test was also significantly easier for the Finnish participants, although the section was slightly more difficult than the pragmalinguistic part, while for the Japanese participants both of the sections were equally difficult. As previously, looking at the specific questions more closely revealed additional differences between the groups. In Question 12 for example, the Japanese participants were distracted by two distractor answer choices over the most native-like choice, one of which represented a more direct strategy, and one of which represented a politer strategy. The Finnish participants were only distracted by the politer strategy. The classifications for the distractor test items were provided by Hudson, Detmer, and Brown (1995, 55). Similarly in Question 13 Japanese participants were distracted by the two distractors, one of which was, like before, a direct strategy, while the other one was a polite strategy that would have been odd according to native speaker norms and which broke the Maxim of Quantity. Most of the Finnish participants on the other hand were not distracted by the distractors in the question. In Question 14 most of the participants in both groups chose the most native-like response, and the main distractor that caused difficulty, which was odd according to native speaker norms and could be considered to break the

Maxim of Quantity, was the same for both of the groups. Questions 10 and 11 were not challenging for the Finnish participants, but in both of the questions a significant number of Japanese participants chose one of the distractors. In Question 10 the distractors that caused difficulty were a more direct strategy and a non-native strategy breaking the Maxim of Relation, and in Question 11 the main distractor that caused difficulty was a non-native strategy breaking the Maxim of Quantity.

Overall, it appears that when compared to the Finnish participants, the Japanese participants of the study had more trouble with the directness of responses, which is consistent with what Hudson, Detmer, and Brown (1995, 54) reported regarding their pilot testing with Japanese test subjects. In addition, the amount of information that should be included in the responses to the situations described in the test items appeared to be difficult for the Japanese participants, which was shown by difficulty with distractors where the Maxim of Quantity was flouted or broken. The data do not offer clear explanations for these differences, but as the overall sociopragmatic competence of the Japanese group was significantly lower than the sociopragmatic competence of the Finnish group, it is possible that these differences were caused mainly by the lower sociopragmatic competence. The difficulty with the directness of responses due to lower pragmatic competence in general appears to be consistent with for example Achiba's (2002, 178–184) suggested pattern of development for requests in second language English, discussed earlier in the section 3.2. Achiba separated the development of requests to four phases, and the indirect strategies for expressing requests appeared only at stage four. Questions 11 and 12 of the sociopragmatic section were also about requests. Finally, it is not clear whether these differences in answering patterns would be present if the sociopragmatic competence of the two participant groups of the test was closer to each other.

The goal of this subsection was to discuss how the results of this study answer the first research question of the study. The results of the study revealed that the overall pragmatic competence of the Finnish participants of the study was higher than the pragmatic competence of the Japanese participants. This was true with both the pragmalinguistic and the sociopragmatic section of the test. For the Finnish group the sociopragmatic section was slightly more difficult than the pragmalinguistic section, while for the Japanese group the two sections were equally difficult. This means that the Finnish

participants were better at both the more linguistic and the more cultural aspects of pragmatic competence, although for the Finnish participants the more cultural aspects were slightly more difficult than the more linguistic aspects while such differences were not present with the Japanese participants. The subsections of the pragmalinguistic section, which focused on implicatures, routines, and speech acts showed that the Japanese participants had significantly more trouble than the Finnish participants in each of these subsections. The implicature subsection turned out to be the most difficult subsection, followed by speech acts, and the routines were the easiest of the subsections. This was the case with both Finnish and Japanese participants. Looking at the test items in more detail showed that choosing the correct or most suitable level of politeness or directness for an utterance was also more difficult for the Japanese group, and the Japanese group also had difficulty with questions where the Maxim of Relation or the Maxim of Quantity based on Grice's cooperative principle were flouted. It is however not clear whether these differences in the types of test items that were difficult for the participants would remain if the overall pragmatic competence of the two participants groups had been closer to each other.

## **6.2 The Effect of Cultural Distance on Pragmatic Competence**

Moving to the second research question, analysis of the total scores of the participant groups using Pearson's correlation coefficient showed that the total scores had significant negative correlation with the overall cultural distance index scores based on Hofstede's (2001, 500) IBM survey data. Finland's lower cultural distance to the target language country correlated with higher scores for the test of pragmatic competence while Japan's higher cultural distance correlated with lower scores. This means that lower cultural distance in contrast to the target language country correlated with higher overall pragmatic competence, which supports the earlier hypothesis for the second research question. The effect size of the correlation of cultural distance was also significantly higher than it was for the starting age of studying English.

It is however also important to note that the overall cultural distance index score is by no means a perfect measurement without limitations or downsides. These limitations

will be discussed in more detail in the next subsection, but assessing complex phenomena such as cultural distance with just a single numerical value hides wide range of individual variation within any culture and various other factors that could cause differences between the countries in the study. However, this result is also supported by previous research such as Rafieyan's (2016) study which investigated the effect of cultural distance on the pragmatic competence of German and South Korean learners of English. The study found higher mean scores for the pragmatic comprehension and production of the German students, and according to Rafieyan (2016, 29), 12 percent of variance in pragmatic comprehension and 30 percent in pragmatic production was explained by cultural distance. This further supports that the higher cultural distance to the target language country or culture negatively affects the pragmatic competence of the learners of that target language.

Schumann's (1986) acculturation model, discussed in the section 3.1, could partly explain why lower cultural distance benefits pragmatic competence. The model predicts that those who can integrate socially and psychologically to the target language group or the culture can acquire the target language more effectively. Study by Schmidt (1983) suggested that this was not necessarily the case with grammatical development, but the model appeared to predict pragmatic development. It is likely that lower cultural distance between the language learner's home country and the country of the target language also makes it easier for the language learner to integrate socially and psychologically to the target language culture. Similarly to the acculturation model, sociocultural theory, also discussed earlier in the section 3.1, could explain the effect of cultural distance on pragmatic competence. Lantolf, Thorne, and Poehner (2015, 207), argued that learning happens through interaction with the surrounding social context and participation in various cultural and linguistic setting. Lower cultural distance to the target language culture likely makes it easier for the learner to interact with sociocultural contexts that would benefit language learning. However, Frawley and Lantolf (1984, 147) also stressed the importance of individual differences in pragmatic development from the perspective of sociocultural theory, which will be discussed in the following subsection.

### **6.3 Limitations of the Study and the Implications of the Results**

The previous two subsections discussed how the results answered the research questions of this study. Following this, it is important to acknowledge various limitations of the study and discuss what kind of implications the results of the study might have.

As mentioned earlier, using the cultural distance index score as a single numerical value oversimplifies inherently highly complex phenomena like cultural distance, which consists of various different cultural dimensions, and hides the wide range of individual variation and cultural differences that can exist within a single country or culture. People living in Hokkaido in Japan, where the data of this study were collected, might not be culturally identical to people living for example in Tokyo, and such differences might exist within Finland too. Shea (1994, 380–381) also argued that the data from his study showed how culture is not only one single construct and that there can be great individual variation and diversity within any single culture. It is also worth mentioning that Hofstede's IBM survey data which Hofstede used to assess cultural index scores for the different cultural dimensions were collected between 1967 and 1973 (Hofstede 2001, 41). It is possible that there have been changes within the cultures of the relevant countries since then, but there does not appear to be more present suitable data available in such a wide scale. In addition, it was necessary to choose a single target language country in order to establish the cultural distance to that country, which was Great Britain for the purpose of this study. However, especially in the case of languages such as English, there could be other target countries and cultures the learners might have, and the study was not able to take those into account. Fortunately, as discussed earlier in the section 3.3, based on Hofstede's (2001, 500) data countries such as Great Britain, United States, and Australia were culturally relatively similar. The method was chosen for this study as it makes it possible to quantitatively assess such complex phenomena through statistical methods, and studying the effect of cultural distance on pragmatic competence is important for the implications it might have for language teaching. However, it is important to consider these limitations when considering the results. Cultural distance appears to have a role in the development of pragmatic competence, but it alone is not sufficient for explaining all of the differences in the pragmatic competence of any two groups of learners.

Assessing a simple numerical value to represent overall cultural distance for the two countries in the study and relying solely on that hides various other factors that could explain differences between the countries. One such factor would be the starting age of studying English, which varied between the participants. This was also found to negatively correlate with pragmatic competence, meaning that those who started studying English earlier obtained higher scores from the test of this study, but the effect size of this was lower than it was for cultural distance. However, the study was not able to take into account other possible explaining factors such as differences in the curricula, grammatical competence of the learners, teaching methods within the classes, or the amount of opportunities the learners have for actually using English, so it is not clear how large role factors such as these would have for explaining the differences between the participant groups. For example, Amaki (2008, 62) reports that the oral English proficiency of many English teachers in Japan is often low and therefore many teacher in Japan tend to rely excessively on Japanese during English language classrooms. This is also something that might affect the pragmatic competence of the participants, and in order to study the effect of cultural distance on pragmatic competence in more detail, a more comprehensive study which would control these other possible explaining factors would be necessary. This study was able to consider the participants' starting age of studying English, but not being able to take other such relevant factors into account reduces the internal validity of the finding regarding the role of cultural distance. The goal in this study was to establish whether cultural distance has an effect on pragmatic competence and the methods of the study were suitable for achieving this, but future studies would be needed for assessing the extent of the effect cultural distance had on pragmatic competence..

In addition to limitations concerning cultural distance, the results of the study would have been more reliable with a longer test of pragmatic competence. The length of the test was kept at around 15 minutes with 15 test items due to practical concerns when collecting the data, but as a result the specific subsections of the test consisted of only a small number of test items, making the results less reliable. It is for example possible that a difficulty of a specific test item could have been caused by the overall difficulty of the test item and not by a specific characteristic of it, such as focusing on implicatures. This could be addressed with a larger number of test items with varying difficulty levels. In addition, this study

attempted to compare participants with roughly similar level of English proficiency by having participants from the same or equivalent grade of the school system of the country. However, as these are different countries with different curricula, first year high school or upper secondary schools students in Japan and Finland do not necessarily have similar English proficiency levels. Finding participants whose overall English proficiency levels could on some more reliable metric be estimated to be closer to each other could reveal more about the differences precisely in pragmatic competence.

In addition, Frawley and Lantolf (1984, 147) stressed that control of speech is task-related, not just developmental, different tasks can be difficult for different people, and that such difficulties go past whether someone is a native or a second language speaker, which means that it is not always possible to predict an individual's performance in a given task. This means that certain participants could have struggled with the kind of test items used for this study but could have exhibited higher pragmatic competence in different kind of tasks such as in spoken interaction. This study was not able incorporate multiple different test tasks such as spoken interaction due to various practical limitations, which would have increased the external validity of the results, and a more comprehensive study with various different test methods would have given a more comprehensive picture of the pragmatic competence of different participants of the study. However, as discussed in the section 4.2, assessments of the validity of the test battery conducted for Röver's test battery (Röver 2005, 72; Roever 2006, 247) and the piloting process of Hudson, Detmer and Brown (1995) both support that the test items in the test of pragmatic competence of this study measure what the test items were designed to measure. The focus of this study was to establish possible differences in the pragmatic competence of Finnish and Japanese learners of English, and while more comprehensive future studies could give more detailed information about such differences, the methods of this study were suitable for establishing and identifying some of the differences between the learner groups.

The study found the overall pragmatic competence of the Finnish participants to be significantly higher than the overall pragmatic competence of the Japanese participants, which is important as this could have significant implications for language teaching, especially in Japan. Finland appears to be more successful than Japan in teaching pragmatic competence, so teaching methods used in Finland could potentially be used to improve the

teaching of pragmatic competence in Japan. As pragmatic competence is an important aspect of overall language competence, it would be beneficial to find ways to improve pragmatic competence of Japanese learners of English. Japan might be at disadvantage due to relatively small number of opportunities English learners in Japan have for interacting with native speakers of the language, but as a result of her study, Taguchi (2007, 328) suggests that exposure to the target language context or culture is not necessary for improving pragmatic comprehension. In addition, various studies support the effectiveness of classroom instruction for improving pragmatic competence. In his study, Bouton (1994a, 106) found formal instruction designed to improve the learners' ability to understand formulaic implicatures effective for improving those skills. Similarly, Kubota (1995, 35–67) found teaching conversational implicatures to be effective in a study examining the conversational implicatures of Japanese university students learning English as a foreign language. Finally, Taguchi, Naganuma, and Budding (2015) investigated the effect of classroom instruction on pragmatic development, focusing on mitigated preparatory forms of the speech act of requests, and found explicit instruction to be effective for learning the target form. The data of the study were compared with a previous study with students who had comparable curricula but no explicit instruction for the specific target form, and those students had production rate of almost zero for the said target form, highlighting the effectiveness of classroom introduction (Taguchi, Naganuma, and Budding 2015, 11).

As classroom introduction appears to be beneficial for the development of pragmatic competence, increasing its role in school curricula could be recommended for increasing the pragmatic competence of the students. Possible differences in the national curricula or teaching methods between Finnish and Japanese school systems that could help to explain the higher pragmatic competence of the Finnish learners could be examined in a future study in order to find specific ways the teaching of pragmatic competence in Japan could be improved. In addition, this study identified some specific weak points in the pragmatic competence of the Japanese participants, such as choosing the most natural level of politeness or directness for an utterance, and such specific weak points could be addressed with targeted classroom instruction. Further studies could be used to identify such specific weak points in a more comprehensive manner. It is also not clear whether Finnish and Japanese learners would have such notable differences in other aspects of

language competence, such as in grammatical competence. Differences between these learner groups are not necessarily as major in other aspects of language competence, and this could be investigated in a future study.

The study also found that higher cultural distance can negatively affect pragmatic competence, which supports the result of the earlier study by Rafieyan (2016) and further establishes the connection cultural distance has to pragmatic competence. Trying to increase the opportunities that learners have for interacting with the target language culture might help to address this, but addressing higher cultural distance directly is not as simple as increasing classroom instruction, nor would it necessarily be realistic or even desirable. Fortunately, as classroom instruction appears to be effective for teaching pragmatic competence, it can likely be used to address at least some of the difficulties potentially caused by cultural distance. In addition, teaching cross-cultural communication could also be effective for addressing these issues. As discussed earlier in the section 2.1.5, Yule (1996, 88–89) uses the word pragmatic accent to describe the aspects of speech which show what is communicated without being said, and argues that understanding what characterises pragmatic accent is necessary for cross-cultural communication. Promoting cross-cultural communication and discussing what kind of cross-cultural differences might cause pragmatic failures during classroom teaching could be effective for alleviating difficulties caused by cultural distance.

## 7 Conclusion

Pragmatic competence is an important aspect of overall language competence as it affects how effectively and naturally the learner can communicate in the target language. It can also be affected by a wide range of different factors. This study aimed to identify some of these factors and find ways the teaching of pragmatic competence could be improved by comparing the English pragmatic competence of first year upper secondary school or high school students from two countries, Finland and Japan. The pragmatic competence of these two participant groups was also contrasted with cultural distance the home countries of the participants had to the target language country of Great Britain to investigate what kind of role cultural distance has in the pragmatic competence of language learners. To the best of my knowledge, the pragmatic competence of Finnish and Japanese learners of English has not been previously compared, and the number of studies investigating the relationship between cultural distance and pragmatic competence appears to be relatively small. Establishing differences in the pragmatic competence of Finnish and Japanese learners might have implications for teaching of English in Japan as Finland appears to be more successful than Japan in teaching of English and the teaching methods used in Finland could be useful for improving English education in Japan, which made the differences between the two countries worth studying. In addition, comparing two culturally significantly different countries such as Finland and Japan made studying cultural distance possible in this study. Establishing the effect of cultural distance on pragmatic competence was also worth studying as it could have significant implications for teaching.

The present study found the pragmatic competence of the Finnish participants to be higher than it was for the Japanese participants, and this difference was statistically significant. This was the case in the pragmalinguistic part of the test of this study focusing on implicatures, routines, and speech acts, and in the sociopragmatic part of the test, which means that the Finnish participants were better at both the more linguistic and cultural aspects of pragmatic competence. Within the pragmalinguistic part, the implicature subsection was the most difficult subsection for both of the participant groups while the routine section was the easiest subsection. The study also identified some of the specific difficulties the Japanese participants had with the test of pragmatic competence used for

this study, such as choosing the correct or most suitable level of politeness or directness for an utterance. Identifying such weak spots in pragmatic competence of a specific group of learners could be used to improve the teaching or support the learning of pragmatic competence in the future, and for this purpose more comprehensive and detailed future studies would be recommended. Cultural distance was also found to negatively correlate with the pragmatic competence of the participants of this study, indicating that higher cultural distance to the target language country can lower the pragmatic competence of the learners of that language.

Perhaps the two most major limitations of this study were the relatively short length of the test of pragmatic competence, and using one single numerical value for overall cultural distance. The relatively short length of the test of pragmatic competence in this study made it difficult to get reliable information about possible difficulties in specific kind of test items and differences between the subsections. This is why more comprehensive future studies would be recommended for revealing which aspects of pragmatic competence are the most difficult for the learner groups within those studies. Assessing complex phenomena such as overall cultural distance with a single number on the other hand can oversimplify the concept by hiding the wide range of individual variation that can exist within the culture. In addition, using it as the main explaining factor for the differences in this study can hide various other possible explaining factors that could explain the differences in the pragmatic competence of the two participant groups. Therefore, as mentioned in the discussion section, in order to study the effect of cultural distance on pragmatic competence in more detail, a more comprehensive study which would control these other possible explaining factors would be recommended.

Despite these limitations, what this study showed was that the pragmatic competence of Finnish first year upper secondary school students was significantly higher than the pragmatic competence of Japanese first year high school students, and that cultural distance was one of the explaining factors for these differences. Based on classroom instruction appearing to have an effect on pragmatic competence, it appears probable that differences in curricula and teaching methods is also a significant factor behind these differences, but investigating this would require a study focusing on the differences between teaching methods and curricula of these two countries. Pragmatic competence has

an important role in learning to communicate in the target language, so identifying factors that can affect the development of pragmatic competence, identifying aspects of pragmatic competence that are difficult for a particular group of learners, and finding ways the teaching of pragmatic skills could be improved is important for improving language teaching and supporting learning in the future. Future studies should then focus on identifying other factors that are behind the differences in pragmatic competence of any two different groups of language learners, and attempt to more comprehensively identify specific weaknesses or difficulties the learners in these groups might have in their pragmatic competence. Future studies could also investigate whether the differences between the learner groups would be as significant with other aspects of language competence, and whether cultural distance affects these other aspects of language competence as much as it affects pragmatic competence.

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## Appendix 1

### Test of Pragmatic Competence:

Background questions:

Kuinka vanha olet: \_\_\_\_\_

Minkä ikäisenä aloitit englannin opiskelun: \_\_\_\_\_

Mikä on äidinkielesi: \_\_\_\_\_

#### Part 1: Implicatures

*This section of the test tests how well you understand what people mean when they speak indirectly. In each test item, a situation will be described and one of the people in situation will say something. In each situation you will be asked what the person probably means.*

*Circle the answer you think is the best from the four answer choices below. Please choose an answer even if you are not sure it is the right one.*

An example (esimerkki):

Jay is waiting for the light to change so he can cross the street when a woman approaches him and says: "Excuse me, do you know where the train station is?"

*What does the woman probably mean?*

1. She is asking for directions.
2. She is testing Jay's knowledge of the town.
3. She is looking for a taxi.
4. She isn't sure if the light is green.

**1:** Hilda is looking for a new job. She's having lunch with her friend John.

John: "So how's the job search coming along?"

Hilda: "This curry is really good."

*What does Hilda probably mean?*

1. She is very close to finding a job.
2. She is no longer looking for a job.
3. She just found a job.
4. Her job search is not going very well.

**2:** Jane notices that her co-worker Sam is dirty all over, has holes in his pants, and has scratches on his face and hands.

Jane: "What happened to you?"

Sam: "I rode my bike to work."

What does Sam probably mean?

1. Today he finally got some exercise biking.
2. He hurt himself biking.
3. It's hard to get to work without a car.
4. He enjoys biking.

**3:** Maria and Frank are working on a class project together, but they won't be able to finish it by the deadline (*määräaikaan mennessä*).

Maria: "Do you think Dr. Gibson is going to lower our grade if we hand it in late?"

Frank: "Do fish swim?"

What does Frank probably mean?

1. He thinks they should change the topic of their project.
2. He thinks their grade will not be affected.
3. He did not understand Maria's question.
4. He thinks they will get a lower grade.

## Part 2: Routines

*This section tests how much you know about language use in specific situations. In each item, a situation will be described, and you will be asked what one of the people would probably say in the situation.*

**4:** Jack was introduced (*esiteltiin*) to Jamal by a friend. They are shaking hands.

What would Jack probably say?

1. "Nice to meet you."
2. "Good to run into you."
3. "Happy to find you."
4. "Glad to see you."

**5:** Carrie has done some shopping at a grocery store (*ruokakaupassa*). The man at the cash register (*kassalla*) has just finished packing her groceries and gives her the bags.

What would the man probably say?

1. "Here you go."

2. "There they are."
3. "All yours."
4. "Please."

**6:** Sam is having dinner at a friend's house. His friend offers him more food, but Sam is full and couldn't possibly eat another bite.

*What would Sam probably say?*

1. "No, thanks, I've finished it."
2. "No, thanks, I've eaten."
3. "No, thanks, I'm full."
4. "No, thanks, I've done it."

### Part 3: Speech acts

*This section tests if you know how people express themselves in everyday conversation. In each item, you will see a short conversation between two people. You will be asked what one of the people probably said.*

*Circle the answer you think is the best from the four answer choices below. Try to make the answer suit the reply after the answer choices. Please choose an answer even if you are not sure it is the right one.*

**7:** Jerry is a first-year college student (*yliopisto-opiskelija*) who is taking a German class. He thinks that his teacher Sylvia speaks too fast in class. He goes to talk to her after a class.

*What would Jerry probably say? Make sure your choice fits the situation and Sylvia's answer.*

- Jerry:
1. "I cannot understand you because you speak too fast. Please speak more slowly."
  2. "I think you should speak more slowly in class. You are speaking very fast."
  3. "I was wondering if you could slow down a little. I have a hard time following you."
  4. "I think you speak too fast, so I can't understand you."

Sylvia: "I'm sorry but I think it's important for you to follow speech at a normal speed."

**8:** Sally is supposed to meet her friend Jack at her house at 5:30 pm, but there was a problem at the office and she got home at 5:45 pm. Jack is waiting on her doorstep (*ovensuulla*). Sally goes to talk to him and says:

*What would Sally probably say? Make sure your choice fits the situation and Jack's answer:*

- Sally:
1. "Sorry, I know I'm late, I had a problem at the office."

2. "Sorry, I got held up at the office. Have you been waiting long?"
3. "I got stuck at the office. Sorry to keep you waiting."
4. "Hey Jack. How long have you been here? I'm late because I had a problem at the office."

Jack: "No, not very long. I just got here."

**9:** Jill needs some help moving a heavy old desk and a large wooden bookshelf out of her room. She runs into her housemate Fred.

Jill: "Fred, could you help me move my desk and my bookshelf?"

*What would Fred probably say? Make sure your choice fits the situation and Jill's answer.*

- Fred:
1. "Well, actually I'm busy now, but how about tonight?"
  2. "I am sorry. I have to go to my parent's house now."
  3. "It is too heavy to move it by myself. Maybe we can get some help later."
  4. "Of course. I'd be happy to give you a hand with that."

Jill: "Sure, tonight is great if you can't do it now. Thanks so much, Fred."

#### Part 4: Sociopragmatics

*This section will have six questions, each introducing a situation where you would have to use English. Each situation will have three possible responses you could make.*

*Circle the response you think is the best for the situation. Please choose an answer even if you are not sure it is the right one.*

**10:** You live in a large apartment building. You are leaving to go to work. On your way out, you meet your next door neighbour (*naapuri*), whom you haven't seen for a long time.

1. "Hello. That's a nice shirt. Where did you get it? How much did it cost?"
2. "Nice to meet you. Tell me where you are going. How is your family?"
3. "Good morning, Bob. How have you been? We haven't talked for weeks!"

**11:** You are on an airplane. It is dinner time. The flight attendant (*lentoemäntä* tai *stuertti*) sets your food on your tray. You need a napkin.

1. "Excuse me, I seem to be missing a napkin. Could you give me one?"
2. "Excuse me! Give me a napkin."
3. "Excuse me, could I have a napkin please?"

**12:** You work in a restaurant. You have just taken a customer's order and are ready to leave the table. The customer is still holding the menu and you need it.

1. "Excuse me, are you finished with that?"
2. "Excuse me, would you give me that menu? I need it."
3. "Excuse me. If it's not too much trouble could I please take your menu?"

**13:** You work as a travel agent in a large department store. You are helping a customer at your desk. The customer gets out a packet of bubble-gum (*purukumi*), takes a piece, and offers you a piece. You do not like bubble-gum.

1. "Thank you, but I'm not allowed to have anything while on duty."
2. "No. I don't want any."
3. "No, thank you."

**14:** You are shopping in a department store. You need to buy some envelopes (*kirjekuoria*), but cannot find them. You see a salesclerk (*myyjä*) nearby.

1. "Excuse me. I need to buy some envelopes to send some letters. Where can I find them?"
2. "Excuse me! Show me the envelopes."
3. "Excuse me, where are the envelopes?"

**15:** You teach in a small school. You have a meeting with the principal (*rehtori*) at two o'clock today. When you show up at the meeting it is a few minutes after two.

1. "Sorry to be late. But it is no big deal."
2. "Sorry I'm late."
3. "Hi!"

## Appendix 2

### Test of Pragmatic Competence:

Background questions:

あなたは何歳ですか: \_\_\_\_\_

何歳英語の勉強を始めましたか: \_\_\_\_\_

あなたの母語はなんですか: \_\_\_\_\_

#### Part 1: Implicatures

*This section of the test tests how well you understand what people mean when they speak indirectly. In each test item, a situation will be described and one of the people in the situation will say something. In each situation you will be asked what the person probably means.*

*Circle the answer you think is the best from the four answer choices below. Please choose an answer even if you are not sure it is the right one.*

#### An example (例):

Jay is waiting for the light to change so he can cross the street when a woman approaches him and says: "Excuse me, do you know where the train station is?"

What does the woman probably mean?

1. She is asking for directions.
2. She is testing Jay's knowledge of the town.
3. She is looking for a taxi.
4. She isn't sure if the light is green.

**1:** Hilda is looking for a new job. She's having lunch with her friend John.

John: "So how's the job search (仕事探し) coming along?"

Hilda: "This curry is really good."

What does Hilda probably mean?

1. She is very close to finding a job.
2. She is no longer looking for a job.
3. She just found a job.

4. Her job search is not going very well.

**2:** Jane notices that her co-worker Sam is dirty all over, has holes in his pants, and has scratches on his face and hands.

Jane: "What happened to you?"

Sam: "I rode my bike to work."

*What does Sam probably mean?*

1. Today he finally got some exercise biking.
2. He hurt himself biking.
3. It's hard to get to work without a car.
4. He enjoys biking.

**3:** Maria and Frank are working on a class project together, but they won't be able to finish it by the deadline (締め切り).

Maria: "Do you think Dr. Gibson is going to lower our grade if we hand it in late?"

Frank: "Do fish swim?"

*What does Frank probably mean?*

1. He thinks they should change the topic of their project.
2. He thinks their grade will not be affected.
3. He did not understand Maria's question.
4. He thinks they will get a lower grade.

## Part 2: Routines

*This section tests how much you know about language use in specific situations. In each item, a situation will be described, and you will be asked what one of the people would probably say in the situation.*

*Circle the answer you think is the best from the four answer choices below. Please choose an answer even if you are not sure it is the right one.*

**4:** Jack was introduced (紹介された) to Jamal by a friend. They are shaking hands.

*What would Jack probably say?*

1. "Nice to meet you."
2. "Good to run into you."

3. "Happy to find you."
4. "Glad to see you."

**5:** Carrie has done some shopping at a grocery store (スーパー). The man at the cash register (レジ) has just finished packing her groceries and gives her the bags.

*What would the man probably say?*

1. "Here you go."
2. "There they are."
3. "All yours."
4. "Please."

**6:** Sam is having dinner at a friend's house. His friend offers him more food, but Sam is full and couldn't possibly eat another bite.

*What would Sam probably say?*

1. "No, thanks, I've finished it."
2. "No, thanks, I've eaten."
3. "No, thanks, I'm full."
4. "No, thanks, I've done it."

### Part 3: Speech acts

*This section tests if you know how people express themselves in everyday conversation. In each item, you will see a short conversation between two people. You will be asked what one of the people probably said.*

*Circle the answer you think is the best from the four answer choices below. Try to make the answer suit the reply after the answer choices. Please choose an answer even if you are not sure it is the right one.*

**7:** Jerry is a first-year college student (大学生) who is taking a German class. He thinks that his teacher Sylvia speaks too fast in class. He goes to talk to her after a class.

*What would Jerry probably say? Make sure your choice fits the situation and Sylvia's answer.*

- Jerry:
1. "I cannot understand you because you speak too fast. Please speak more slowly."
  2. "I think you should speak more slowly in class. You are speaking very fast."
  3. "I was wondering if you could slow down a little. I have a hard time following you."

4. "I think you speak too fast, so I can't understand you."

Sylvia: "I'm sorry but I think it's important for you to follow speech at a normal speed."

**8:** Sally is supposed to meet her friend Jack at her house at 5:30 pm, but there was a problem at the office and she got home at 5:45 pm. Jack is waiting on her doorstep (玄関口). Sally goes to talk to him and says:

*What would Sally probably say? Make sure your choice fits the situation and Jack's answer:*

- Sally:
1. "Sorry, I know I'm late, I had a problem at the office."
  2. "Sorry, I got held up at the office. Have you been waiting long?"
  3. "I got stuck at the office. Sorry to keep you waiting."
  4. "Hey Jack. How long have you been here? I'm late because I had a problem at the office."

Jack: "No, not very long. I just got here."

**9:** Jill needs some help moving a heavy desk and a large bookshelf out of her room. She runs into her housemate Fred.

Jill: "Fred, could you help me move my desk and my bookshelf?"

*What would Fred probably say? Make sure your choice fits the situation and Jill's answer.*

- Fred:
1. "Well, actually I'm busy now, but how about tonight?"
  2. "I am sorry. I have to go to my parent's house now."
  3. "It is too heavy to move it by myself. Maybe we can get some help later."
  4. "Of course. I'd be happy to give you a hand with that."

Jill: "Sure, tonight is great if you can't do it now. Thanks so much, Fred."

#### Part 4: Sociopragmatics

*This section will have six questions, each introducing a situation where you would have to use English. Each situation will have three possible responses you could make.*

*Circle the response you think is the best and most natural for the situation. There are necessarily no right or wrong answers so please choose the answer you think is the best one.*

**10:** You live in a large apartment building. You are leaving to go to work. On your way out, you meet your next door neighbour (隣人), whom you haven't seen for a long time.

1. "Hello. That's a nice shirt. Where did you get it? How much did it cost?"

2. "Nice to meet you. Tell me where you are going. How is your family?"
3. "Good morning, Bob. How have you been? We haven't talked for weeks!"

**11:** You are on an airplane. It is dinner time. The flight attendant (フライトアテンダント) sets your food on your tray. You need a napkin.

1. "Excuse me, I seem to be missing a napkin. Could you give me one?"
2. "Excuse me! Give me a napkin."
3. "Excuse me, could I have a napkin please?"

**12:** You work in a restaurant. You have just taken a customer's order and are ready to leave the table. The customer is still holding the menu and you need it.

1. "Excuse me, are you finished with that?"
2. "Excuse me, would you give me that menu? I need it."
3. "Excuse me. If it's not too much trouble could I please take your menu?"

**13:** You work as a travel agent in a large department store. You are helping a customer at your desk. The customer gets out a packet of bubble-gum (ガム), takes a piece, and offers you a piece. You do not like bubble-gum.

1. "Thank you, but I'm not allowed to have anything while on duty."
2. "No. I don't want any."
3. "No, thank you."

**14:** You are shopping in a department store. You need to buy some envelopes (封筒), but cannot find them. You see a salesclerk (店員) nearby.

1. "Excuse me. I need to buy some envelopes to send some letters. Where can I find them?"
2. "Excuse me! Show me the envelopes."
3. "Excuse me, where are the envelopes?"

**15:** You teach in a small school. You have a meeting with the principal (校長) at two o'clock today. When you show up at the meeting it is a few minutes after two.

1. "Sorry to be late. But it is no big deal."
2. "Sorry I'm late."
3. "Hi!"

## Appendix 3: Finnish Summary

### Johdanto

Kielen oppijan kielitaito koostuu monesta eri tekijästä, joten vieraan kielen oppiminen tai omaksuminen vaatii monen kielen osa-alueen hallintaa. Näihin tekijöihin kuuluu muun muassa sanasto, kielioppi, ääntäminen ja pragmaattinen kompetenssi. Kielen oppimisen kannalta kaikki nämä tekijät ovat tärkeitä, mutta tämä tutkielma keskittyy juuri pragmaattiseen kompetenssiin, joka viittaa tietoon, jota tarvitaan kielen eri funktioiden hallitsemiseen ja näiden funktioiden käyttöön luonnollisesti ja asianomaisesti kontekstista riippuen. Pragmaattinen kompetenssi määritetään tarkemmin johdantoa seuraavassa teoriaosuudessa.

Moni eri tekijä kuten oppijoiden äidinkieli, maa jossa kieltä opetetaan, maiden kielipolitiikka sekä opetussuunnitelmat vaikuttavat myös kielen oppimiseen. Kielten opetus riippuu kontekstista, jossa kieltä opetetaan, joten esimerkiksi opetusmaalla voi olla suuri vaikutus kielten opetukseen. Yksi tähän vaikuttava tekijä on Hofsteden (2001) esittämä konsepti kulttuurisesta etäisyydestä, joka viittaa siihen, kuinka kulttuurisesti etäinen tai erilainen maa on johonkin toiseen maan verrattuna. Kulttuurinen etäisyys näyttää vaikuttavan myös kielten oppimiseen ja esimerkiksi Rafieyanin (2016) tutkimuksen mukaan kulttuurinen etäisyys kohdekielen maahan vaikuttaa oppijoiden pragmaattiseen kompetenssiin.

Koska maa, jossa kieltä opetetaan, näyttää vaikuttavan merkittävästi kielen oppimiseen, tämän tutkielman tavoitteena on selvittää, miten suomalaisten ja japanilaisten lukiotason ensimmäisen luokan englannin kielen pragmaattinen kompetenssi eroaa toisistaan. Suomessa ja Japanissa on merkittävästi erilaiset oppimiskontekstit englannin kielelle. Samalla tutkielma pyrkii myös selvittävään, onko kulttuurisella etäisyydellä vaikutusta suomalaisten ja japanilaisten pragmaattiseen kompetenssiin, sillä Suomella ja Japanilla on merkittävästi eroava kulttuurillinen etäisyys kohdekielen kotimaahan, joka on tässä tutkielmassa Iso-Britannia.

Tutkielman tutkimuskysymykset ovat:

- 1) Onko suomalaisten ja japanilaisten englannin oppijoiden pragmaattisissa taidoissa eroja ja jos näin, minkälaisia nämä erot ovat?
- 2) Kuinka kulttuurinen etäisyys vaikuttaa suomalaisten ja japanilaisten englannin oppijoiden pragmaattisiin taitoihin

Tutkielma pyrkii vastaamaan näihin kysymyksiin seuraavissa kappaleissa.

### **Tutkielman teoreettinen tausta**

Pragmatiikka on suhteellisen uusi lingvistiikan ala, ja eri tutkijat ovat esittäneet pragmatiikalle eri määritelmiä. Thomas (1995, 22) määrittelee pragmatiikan merkityksenä vuorovaikutuksessa ja kirjoittaa merkitysten luomisen kielessä olevan dynaaminen prosessi, johon vaikuttavat sekä puhuja, kuulija että konteksti. Peccei (1999, 1) taas määrittelee pragmatiikan kielen merkityksen niinä osina, jotka vaativat tietoa fyysisestä ja sosiaalisesta ympäristöstä ja jota ei voi ymmärtää pelkästään puhtaasti lingvistisellä tiedolla. Peccein mukaan interaktioilla on aina jonkinlainen konteksti, jolla on vaikutus interaktioon, ja tämän kontekstin ymmärtäminen on välttämätön interaktion pragmaattisen merkityksen ymmärtämiseen. Yule (2010, 128) taas määrittelee pragmatiikan ”näkymättömän” merkityksen tutkimuksena tarkoittaen sitä, kuinka kielestä ymmärretään myös ne merkitykset joita ei ole suoraan sanottu tai kirjoitettu. Yulen mukaan sanojen merkityksen voi tulkita sitä ympäröivistä sanoista lingvistisen kontekstin mukaan sekä fyysisen kontekstin mukaan sen perusteella, minkälaisessa ympäröivässä kontekstissa sanoja on käytetty. Thomaksen, Peccein ja Yulen pragmatiikan määritelmät valittiin tätä tutkielmaa varten, sillä ne täydentävät toisiaan ja näiden kolmen määritelmän huomioon ottaminen antaa laajemman ja kattavamman kuvan pragmatiikasta.

Pragmatiikkaan sisältyy monia eri aspekteja kuten puheaktit, implikaatiot, rutiniit ja kohteliaisuus. Näillä kaikilla on osa tämän tutkielman pragmaattisia taitoja mittaavassa kokeessa. Puheaktit ovat Searlen (1969, 16) esittämä konsepti siitä, kuinka puhuttu kieli sisältää aina jonkinlaisia toimituksia tai funktioita kuten toteamuksen tekemisen, käskyn antamisen, kysymyksen kysymisen tai lupauksen tekemisen. Searlen mukaan puheaktit ovat

perusyksikkö kaikelle lingvistikalle kommunikaatiolle ja tästä johtuen ne ovat tärkeä osa pragmatiikkaa. Puheaktit voi myös jakaa suoriin ja epäsuoriin puheakteihin, joista epäsuora puheakti tarkoittaa lausahdusta, jolla pyritään suorittamaan jokin funktio epäsuorasti ilmaisemalla jokin toinen funktio (Searle 1975, 60).

Implikatuurit ovat Gricen (1975) konsepti siitä, kuinka puhujat tai kielen käyttäjät sanovat jotain ilmaistakseen jotain muuta, kuin mitä lausahduksessa ilmaistiin suoraan. Gricen (1975, 45) mukaan vuoropuhelun osallistujien odotetaan seuraavan keskustelun periaatteita, jotka koostuvat keskustelumaksiimeista. Näihin periaatteisiin tai maksimeihin kuuluu määrän periaate, laadun periaate, yhtenäisyyden periaate ja tavan periaate, ja Gricen mukaan vuoropuhelun tai keskustelun osallistujat tulkitsevat mitä keskustelussa tarkoitetaan sillä perusteella, kuinka näitä periaatteita noudatetaan tai mahdollisesti, millä tavalla niitä rikotaan. Implikaaturien tulkinta perustuu sekä Gricen keskustelun periaatteeseen että sanojen merkitykseen, lausahduksen kontekstiin sekä muuhun taustatietoon (Grice 1975, 50).

Rutiinit ovat Coulmasin (1979, 239) mukaan kaavamaisia ilmaisuja, jotka toistuvat tietyissä sosiaalisissa tilanteissa. Niillä on täten tärkeä osuus luonnollisesti erilaisissa sosiaalisissa tilanteissa toimimaan oppimisessa. Kohteliaisuus taas viittaa siihen, miten kohteliaisuutta ilmaistaan ja pyritään ylläpitämään kielessä erilaisten strategioiden avulla. Brownin ja Levinsonin (1987, 15–16) mukaan kulttuurierot vaikuttavat myös kohteliaisuuden ilmaisuun ja voivat vaikuttaa kohteliaisuussääntöjen ilmaisuun vieraisissa kielissä. Pragmatiikkaan kuuluu myös kulttuurien välinen pragmatiikka, mikä viittaa merkityksen ilmaisutapojen erojen tutkimiseen eri kielten ja kulttuurien välillä. Tämä tutkielma tutkii suomalaisten ja japanilaisten englannin oppijoiden pragmaattisia taitoja, joten kulttuurien välinen pragmatiikka on olennainen osa tutkielmaa.

Pragmaattinen kompetenssi tai pragmaattiset taidot viittaavat Bachmanin (1990, 90) mukaan tietoon pragmaattisista konventioista eri kielen funktioiden ilmaisuun sekä tietoon sociolingvistikista konventioista, joita tarvitaan näiden funktioiden ilmaisuun asianmukaisesti ja luonnollisesti kontekstin mukaan. Bachman jakaa pragmaattisen kompetenssin illokutionaariseen kompetenssiin ja sociolingvistiseen kompetenssiin, joista illokutionaarinen kompetenssi viittaa kykyyn ilmaista lausahduksella haluttua illokutionaarista aktia eli funktiota, jota lausahduksella halutaan ilmaista. Sociolingvistinen

kompetenssi koostuu sensitiivisyydestä erilaisia dialekteja, rekistereitä ja luonnollisuutta kohtaan sekä kyvystä tulkita kulttuurillisia viittauksia ja kielikuvia.

Välikielen pragmaatiikka viittaa Yulen (1996, 88) mukaan ei-natiivipuhujien kommunikatiivisen käyttäytymisen tutkimiseen vierasta kieltä puhuessa. Kasper ja Schmidt (1996, 150) laajentavat määritystä sisältämään ei-natiivipuhujien kielellisen kehityksen ja lingvististen strategioiden tutkimuksen. Pragmaattiset taidot ovat myös osa tätä, ja tämä on olennaista myös tälle tutkielmalle, sillä tutkielma tutkii juuri ei-natiivipuhujien pragmaattisia taitoja. Pragmaattisen taidon kehitykselle on esitetty erinäisiä teoreettisia malleja ja kehityspolkuja. Näihin teoreettisiin malleihin kuuluu muun muassa Schumannin (1986) akkulturaatiomalli, Schmidtin (1993) huomaamisen hypoteesi, Bialystokin (1993) kaksiulotteinen malli sekä sosiokulttuurinen teoria, jonka muun muassa Frawley ja Lantolf (1984) sovelsivat kielten oppimiseen. Tutkijat kuten Ellis (1992), Ohta (2001) sekä Achiba (2002) ovat taas esittäneet kehityspolkuja eri pragmaatiikan yksittäisille osa-alueille, ja vaikka kattavaa kehityspolun mallia pragmaattisille taidoille ei näytä olevan, esitetyistä kehityspoluista voi nähdä tendenssin, jossa oppiminen alkaa analysoimattomista kaavamaisista ilmaisuista, jotka vaiheittain myöhemmin kehittyvät enemmän analysoiduksi ja produktiivisemmaksi kielenkäytöksi.

Kulttuurinen etäisyys, joka on toinen olennainen osa tätä tutkielmaa, perustuu Hofsteden (2001, 29) esittämään ajatukseen kulttuurien ulottuvuuksista. Hofstede esitti kulttuurien eroavan eri kulttuurien ulottuvuuksien mukaan, joihin kuuluu valtaetäisyys, yksilökeskeisyys vs. yhteisöllisyys, maskuliinisuus vs. feminiinisyys, epävarmuuden välttäminen vs. epävarmuuden sietäminen sekä aikaorientaatio. Kulttuurinen etäisyys eri maiden välillä voidaan taas Kogutin ja Singhin (1988, 422–423) mukaan laskea Hofsteden kulttuurien ulottuvuuksien perusteella ja viittaa siihen kuinka kulttuuriset normit eroavat eri maiden välillä. Tämän, Hofsteden IBM kyselydatan sekä Kogutin ja Singhin esittämän kaavan perusteella Japanin määriteltiin olevan Suomea kulttuurisesti etäisempi tutkielman kohdemaata Iso-Britanniaa kohtaan. Rafieyanin (2016) tutkimuksen mukaan kulttuurisella etäisyydellä näyttäisi olevan vaikutus pragmaattiseen kompetenssiin.

## **Tutkielman metodit**

Tämä tutkielma pyrkii vertaamaan suomalaisten ja japanilaisten englannin kielen pragmaattisia taitoja. Tätä varten tutkimuksen osallistajat ovat 64 suomalaista sekä 69 japanilaista lukiotason ensimmäisen vuosiluokan englannin opiskelijaa. Suomalaisten osallistujien iän keskiarvo oli 15,9 ja japanilaisten osallistujien 15,5.

Pragmaattisia taitoja mittaamista varten tutkielmassa hyödynnetään kahta eri pragmaattisia taitoja mittaavaa testiä, jotka ovat kehittäneet Röver (2005) sekä Hudson, Detmer ja Brown (1995). Röverin testi keskittyy enemmän pragmalingvistiikkaan, ja tämän tutkielman pragmaattisia taitoja mittaavan testin kolme ensimmäistä osaa, jotka keskittyvät implikatuureihin, rutiineihin sekä puhetekoihin, ovat adaptoitu Röverin koekysymyksistä. Hudsonin, Detmerin ja Brownin testi taas keskittyy sosiopragmatiikkaan, joten tutkielman pragmaattisia taitoja mittaavan testin viimeinen osa on adaptoitu Hudsonin, Detmerin ja Brownin koekysymyksistä. Tutkielman pragmaattisia taitoja mittaava testi koostuu 15 monivalintakysymyksestä, joissa kuvataan jonkinlainen tilanne jossa kaksi henkilöä kommunikoi toistensa kanssa, ja vastaajan pitää valita joko tilanteeseen sopivin ja luonnollisin vastausvaihtoehto tai tulkinta siitä, mitä yksi tilanteen henkilöistä tarkoitti. Vastausvaihtoehdot sisältävät yhden vastauksen, joka on ”oikea” tai luonnollisin vastausvaihtoehto ja tyypillinen natiivipuhujille sekä kaksi tai kolme ”väärää” epäluonnollisempaa vastausvaihtoehtoa.

Pragmaattisia kokeita mittaava testi pidettiin kahdessa eri erässä. Kokeen pitämistä varten Japanissa otin yhteyttä paikalliseen japanilaiseen englannin kielen opettajaan, joka tarjoutui auttamaan testin pitämisessä. Lähetin testin suomesta japaniin ohjeistuksen kanssa, jonka jälkeen paikallinen opettaja piti testin kahdelle luokalle englannintuntien aikana. Tämän jälkeen vastaukset lähetettiin minulle. Seuraavaksi otin yhteyttä suomalaiseseen englannin kielen opettajaan, ja menin pitämään saman testin suomalaisille oppilaille.

Pragmaattisia taitoja mittaavan testin pitämisen jälkeen vastaukset kopioitiin Exceliin, jotta testin tuloksia voisi analysoida kvantitatiivisten tutkimusmenetelmien avulla. Vastaukset eivät seuranneet normaalijakaumaa, joten mahdollisten vastausuloseurojen tilastollisten merkitsevyyksien ryhmien välillä määrittämiseksi käytettiin Mann-Whitney U testiä. Kulttuurisen etäisyyden ja pragmaattisten taitojen mahdollisen korrelaation selvittämiseksi Kogutin ja Singhin kaavan sekä Hofsteden datan avulla määritettyjä Suomen ja Japanin kulttuurisen etäisyyden arvoja verrattiin tutkielman pragmaattisia taitoja

mittaavan testin tuloksiin Pearsonin korrelaatiokertoimen avulla SPSS Statistics 24 ohjelmalla.

### **Tutkimustulokset**

Tutkielman pragmaattisia taitoja mittaavan testin tulokset näyttivät tilastollisesti merkittäviä eroja suomalaisten ja japanilaisten lukion ensimmäisen vuosiluokan opiskelijoiden välillä. Suomalaisten osallistujien testituloksen keskiarvo oli 13,109 ja keskihajonta 1,261, kun taas japanilaisten osallistujien testituloksen keskiarvo oli 6,551 ja keskihajonta 2,279. Täysi pistemäärä testissä oli 15. Testin pragmalingvistiikkaan keskittyvän osuuden testituloksen keskiarvo oli suomalaisilla osallistujilla 8,25 ja keskihajonta 0,992, kun taas japanilaisten osallistujien tuloksen keskiarvo oli 3,94 ja keskihajonta 1,423. Osuudesta oli mahdollista saada enintään 9 pistettä. Pragmalingvistiikkaan keskittyvä osuus oli jaettu testissä implikaatuureihin, rutiineihin sekä puhetekoihin. Implikaaturiosuuden keskiarvo oli 2,547 suomalaisilla ja 0,72 japanilaisilla osallistujilla, rutiiniosuuden keskiarvo oli 2,906 suomalaisilla ja 1,87 japanilaisilla osallistujilla ja puheteke-osuuden keskiarvo oli 2,797 suomalaisilla ja 1,36 japanilaisilla osallistujilla. Jokaisesta osuudesta oli mahdollista saada 3 pistettä. Implikaatuurit olivat vaikein osuus ja rutiinit helpoin osuus molemmille osallistujaryhmille. Testin pragmalingvistiikkaan keskittyvää osuutta seurasi sosiopragmatiikkaan keskittyvä osuus, jonka keskiarvo oli suomalaisilla osallistujilla 4,859 ja keskihajonta 0,87 ja japanilaisilla osallistujilla 2,609 ja keskihajonta 1,416. Osuudesta oli mahdollista saada enintään 6 pistettä. Kaikki tuloserot olivat tilastollisesti merkittäviä, ja tutkimuksen suomalaiset osallistujat osoittivat korkeampia pragmaattisia taitoja jokaisessa tutkimuksen pragmaattisia taitoja mittaavan testin osa-alueessa.

Testin osa-alueiden sekä kysymysten tarkempi tarkastelu toi esille myös tarkempia eroja pragmaattisissa taidoissa. Suomalaiset osallistujat saivat parempia tuloksia sekä testin pragmalingvistiikkaan että sosiopragmatiikkaan keskittyvissä osuuksissa, mutta sosiopragmatiikkaosuus oli suomalaisille hieman vaikeampi kuin pragmalingvistiikkaan keskittyvä osuus. Japanilaisille osallistujille molemmat osuudet olivat vaikeampia, mutta osuuksien välillä ei näkynyt vaikeuseroja. Testin kysymyksien tarkempi analysointi taas

näytti, että japanilaisille osallistujille tietyt englannin kielen tavat ilmaista merkityksiä olivat erityisen hankalia. Näihin hankaluuksiin kuului kuinka suorasanaisia tai kohteliaita joidenkin vastausten kuuluisi olla, ja kuinka paljon informaatiota vastauksessa tulisi olla, mikä tuli esille kysymystilanteissa joissa rikottiin Gricen maksiimeihin kuuluvaa määrän periaatetta. Tilanteet joissa rikottiin Gricen yhtenäisyyden periaatetta olivat myös hankalia japanilaisille osallistujille. Tutkimuksen tuloksista ei kuitenkaan tule esille selkeitä selityksiä näiden hankaluuksien syille.

Hofsteden datan sekä Kogutin ja Singhin esittämän kaavan perusteella kulttuurisen etäisyyden arvon Iso-Britanniaan verrattuna laskettiin olevan Suomelle 1,47 ja Japanille 3,63, joka tarkoittaa sitä, että Japani on kulttuurisesti etäisempi Iso-Britanniaa kohtaan kuin Suomi. Kulttuurisen etäisyyden arvojen vertaaminen tutkimuksen osallistujien pragmaattisia taitoja mittaavan testin tuloksiin Pearsonin korrelaatiokertoimen avulla näytti kulttuurisen etäisyyden korreloivan negatiivisesti pragmaattisten taitojen kanssa. Tämän perusteella kulttuurinen etäisyys näyttäisi vaikuttavan negatiivisesti kielten oppijoiden pragmaattisiin taitoihin.

Tutkimuksen mukaan suomalaisten lukiotason englannin oppijoiden pragmaattiset taidot olivat selkeästi japanilaisia oppijoita korkeammalla. Muun muassa Taguchin (2007), Boutonin (1994a), Kubotan (1995) sekä Taguchin, Naguman ja Buddingin (2015) tutkimukset ovat kuitenkin osoittaneet, että luokkahuoneopetuksella on vaikutus myös pragmaattisiin taitoihin, ja täten opetusmenetelmiä tai opetussuunnitelmaa parantamalla japanilaisten oppijoiden pragmaattisten taitojen parantaminen näyttäisi olevan mahdollista. Kulttuurisen etäisyyden vaikutukseen on vaikeampi vaikuttaa, mutta edellisten tutkimusten perusteella korkean kulttuurisen etäisyyden vaikutusta voisi olla mahdollista ehkäistä juuri luokkahuoneopetuksella. Kulttuurien välisen kommunikaation opetus voisi myös auttaa kulttuurisen etäisyyden vaikutuksen ehkäisyssä. Lisäksi tutkimus löysi tiettyjä pragmaattisten taitojen osa-alueita, jotka näyttivät olevan haastavia juuri japanilaisille englannin oppijoille. Vastaavien haastavien osa-alueiden huomioon ottaminen pragmaattisten taitojen opetuksessa saattaisi myös edistää pragmaattisten taitojen opetusta.

Tutkimuksen metodeissa on kuitenkin myös ongelmia jotka tulee ottaa huomioon tuloksia käsitellessä. Kulttuurinen etäisyys on hyvin monipuolinen käsite, joka koostuu monesta eri kulttuurin osa-alueesta sekä piilottaa huomattavan määrän yksilöllistä vaihtelua

mitä maan sisällä voi esiintyä. Tästä johtuen yhden numerollisen arvon määrittäminen kulttuuriselle etäisyydelle yksinkertaistaa käsitteen, joka on todellisuudessa paljon monipuolisempi. Metodia käytettiin kuitenkin tutkielmassa, jotta kulttuurista etäisyyttä olisi mahdollista analysoida kvantitatiivisesti. Tämän lisäksi tutkimus ei kyennyt kontrolloimaan kaikkia muita tekijöitä, jotka kulttuurillisen etäisyyden lisäksi voivat vaikuttaa pragmaattisiin taitoihin. Tutkimuksen pragmaattisia taitoja mittaava testi koostui myös yksinomaan monivalintakysymyksistä, ja tarkemman tiedon saaminen osallistujien pragmaattisista taidoista olisi vaatinut monipuolisemman testin, jossa mitattaisiin pragmaattisia taitoja lukuisilla eri metodeilla. Tutkimuksen testi olisi voinut myös olla pidempi. Monipuolisempi tai pidempi testi ei kuitenkaan ollut mahdollinen käytännön syistä tässä tutkimuksessa.

### **Johtopäätökset**

Tutkimuksen tulosten mukaan suomalaisten lukiotason englannin oppijoiden pragmaattiset taidot olivat huomattavasti japanilaisten oppijoiden pragmaattisia taitoja korkeammalla. Pragmaattisilla taidoilla on merkittävä osa opittavan vieraan kielen hallitsemisessa, joten tämä tulos on merkittävä kielen opetuksen kehittämisen kannalta japanissa. Tästä johtuen ehdottaisin, että tulevaisuudessa tutkimuksissa tutkittaisiin tarkemmin mitkä opetusmenetelmät ovat tehokkaita pragmaattisten taitojen opetuksessa Suomessa, ja miten näitä voisi hyödyntää muissa maissa. Tulevaisuudessa tutkimuksissa voisi myös analysoida tarkemmin pragmaattisten taitojen osa-alueita, jotka olivat esimerkiksi japanilaisille oppijoille vaikeita, jotta nämä vaikeammat osa-alueet voitaisiin ottaa huomioon kielten opetuksessa.

Tutkimuksen mukaan kulttuurisella etäisyydellä oli myös vaikutus pragmaattisiin taitoihin. Tutkimus ei kuitenkaan kyennyt kontrolloimaan kaikkia muita tekijöitä, jotka saattavat vaikuttaa tutkimuksen osallistujien pragmaattisiin taitoihin. Tästä johtuen tulevaisuudessa kulttuurisen etäisyyden tutkimuksissa voisi pyrkiä kontrolloimaan mahdollisimman paljon muita vaikuttavia tekijöitä, jotta kulttuurisen etäisyyden vaikutuksesta pragmaattisiin taitoihin saataisiin tarkempaa tietoa.