

# A TOO AMBIGUOUS CONCEPT TO BE TAUGHT?

English teachers' notions of pragmatic competence

Master's thesis

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Tiivistelmä – Abstract <p>Tutkielman tarkoituksena oli selvittää englanninopettajien käsityksiä pragmaattisen kompetenssin opettamisesta. Tutkielmassa tutkittiin haastattelujen avulla opettajien ajatuksia pragmaattisen kompetenssin luonteesta, oppijan ominaisuuksista sekä opettajan roolista oppijan pragmaattisen kompetenssin saavuttamisessa. Lisäksi haluttiin selvittää opetetaan pragmaattisia periaatteita luokassa, ja mitä menetelmiä käyttäen. Lopuksi haastateltavilta kysyttiin heidän mielipiteitään pragmaattisen kompetenssin arvioimisesta.</p> <p>Pragmaattinen kompetenssi on suhteellisen uusi tutkimuskohde kielen oppimisen ja opettamisen saralla. Sitä on aiemmissa tutkimuksista tutkittu enimmäkseen oppijoiden näkökulmasta, mistä syystä tähän tutkielmaan kohderyhmäksi valittiin opettajat. Tutkimuksen aineistona oli kuusi puolistrukturoitua teemahaastattelua. Haastateltavat olivat englanninopettajia yläkoulusta, lukiosta ja yliopiston kielikeskuksesta. Haastattelut nauhoitettiin ja litteroitiin, minkä jälkeen aineisto analysoitiin aineistolähtöistä sisällönanalyysia käyttäen.</p> <p>Tutkielman tulokset osoittivat, että opettajat tiesivät käytännön tasolla mitä pragmaattinen kompetenssi tarkoittaa. Heillä oli kuitenkin vaikeuksia nimetä tarkemmin pragmaattisia periaatteita, ja he olivat epävarmoja siitä, miten pragmatiikan opetus voitaisiin tuoda käytännön tasolle luokkatilanteessa. Lisäksi opettajat uskoivat, että vain lahjakkailta oppijoilta on mahdollisuus saavuttaa pragmaattinen kompetenssi ja tällöinkin oppijat yleensä omaksuvat pragmaattisia periaatteita vapaa-ajallaan koulun ulkopuolella. Opettajat eivät kokeneet kaikkea pragmatiikan opettamista tärkeäksi luokassa, sillä he eivät uskoneet, että heikoimmat oppilaat hyötyisivät siitä. Tämän johdosta opettajat käyttivät verrattain vähän eksplisiittisiä opetusmenetelmiä luokassa, ja panostivat enemmän positiivisen evidenssin näyttämiseen, mistä he ajattelivat lahjakkaiden oppijoiden omaksuvan itsenäisesti pragmaattisia periaatteita.</p> <p>Tutkimuksen tuloksista voidaan päätellä, että jos pragmaattisten periaatteiden opetusta halutaan kehittää, opettajille pitäisi antaa enemmän tietoa ja valmiuksia niiden opettamiseen.</p>	
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## 1 INTRODUCTION

The focus of language learning and teaching has traditionally been in grammatically correct language. Languages were often explained through grammar, and more specifically, through Chomskyan transformational generative grammar. However, over the past few years, the importance of communicative language skills that go beyond grammatically correct language use has gained footage in language learning and teaching. It has been argued that the salient features of languages cannot be addressed without knowledge of their social matrix: transformational generative grammar did not constitute an exhaustive enough basis for our understanding of language use (Hymes 2010: 319-320). The concept of communicative competence was created, it referring to the ability to use appropriate language in a given context to accomplish communication goals (Bachman 1991: 81-110). The term communicative competence was specified to consist of sub-competences, one of them being pragmatic competence. The principles of pragmatic competence come from a subfield of linguistics called pragmatics.

There is no unambiguous definition for either pragmatics or pragmatic competence. In the present study, pragmatics refers to a study of meaning in communication (Yule 1996: 3-4; Thomas 1995: 22). Pragmatic competence, in turn, is defined as the ability to understand and use the conventional rules of language and the ability to distinguish what conditions make utterances acceptable and appropriate in a given situation (Bachman 1991: 81-110). Learners who do not possess pragmatic competence frequently recognize structures instead of recognizing functions in language (e.g. Niezgodna and Röver 2001; Bialystok 1993; Bardovi-Harlig 2001). Lack of knowledge of pragmatic principles may lead to a failure in intercultural communication, since languages cannot be translated word-for-word. Languages have idiomatic expressions that carry meanings beyond literal meanings of the words, and learners need to learn pragmatic principles in order to succeed in intercultural communication.

The teaching of pragmatics has been emphasized in foreign language teaching only during the past few years. Previous research on pragmatic competence has mainly focused on learners' production of pragmatic principles or learners' pragmatic comprehension, leaving teachers as the less studied group in learners' acquisition of pragmatic competence (Kasper and Rose 2001: 243). It has been argued that if teachers do not have means to teach pragmatic principles, or only have materials that remain

largely on the level of theory, they will not necessarily be able to help learners to acquire pragmatic competence (Cohen 2012: 34). Therefore, the present study examines the acquisition of pragmatic competence from the viewpoint of the teachers.

The aim of the present study is to examine teachers' notions of pragmatic competence. The study is a descriptive, qualitative study, and the data consists of six individual semi-structured interviews with teachers of English. The data is further analysed for its content. The purpose is to find out how teachers define the nature of pragmatic competence and what kinds of learner characteristics they believe to affect the acquisition of pragmatic competence. Furthermore, the present study seeks to discover what the role of a teacher is in learners' acquisition of pragmatic competence, whether teachers think pragmatic competence is teachable and if yes, what methods can be used to teach it. In addition, the present study tries to answer to the question whether evaluation of pragmatic competence is necessary and if yes, how it could be carried out.

The present study begins with an overview of general pragmatics and pragmatic competence in language learning and teaching. In chapter 2, the definition of pragmatics is introduced and its domain further discussed. In chapter 3, interlanguage pragmatics is explored together with a definition for pragmatic competence and a discussion of its development. In chapter 4, pragmatic competence is examined in a classroom setting: if it is teachable and if some particular methods are more suitable than others for its teaching. In chapter 5, the research design, research questions and methodological choices of the present study are explained. In chapter 6, the findings of the study are reported and in chapter 7 they are further discussed. To conclude the present study, chapter 8 summarises the strength and limitations of the study together with suggestions for further research.

## 2 APPRECIATING PRAGMATICS

In the following chapter, the term pragmatics is described and its domain introduced: what the main issues and theories included in the study of pragmatics are. The key notions in pragmatics are generally accepted to be linguistic concepts of implicature, presupposition, speech acts, reference and inference and deixis. These are explicitly introduced, since without understanding them, it is difficult to consider why and how to teach pragmatics to language learners. All the examples concern English language

pragmatics, as the purpose of the present study is to examine EFL teachers' views on the teaching of pragmatics. Lastly, it is discussed how pragmatics fits into the field of linguistics.

## 2.1 Defining pragmatics

Not all the practitioners of pragmatics see the concept of it the same way. Some linguists regard it as the study of language in general, others as the study of communication, and there are those who consider it as the study of language by the communicative function of a language (Allot 2010: 1). There is some agreement, however, that pragmatics deals with speaker meaning and the way people communicate with each other (Allot 2010: 1). Thus it is considerably safe to note that pragmatics is concerned with how meaning is made in conversation (Yule 1996: 3).

Consequently, pragmatics can be defined as “the study of speaker meaning” (Yule 1996: 3-4). In other words, pragmatics examines what speakers mean by their utterances and how hearers interpret these utterances. More specifically, pragmatics is “the study of the relationships between linguistics forms and the users of those forms” (Yule 1996: 3-4). That is to say that pragmatics is not interested in language as such, but in language use: the relationships between language form and language use. To take the definition a step further, pragmatics can be defined as “meaning in interaction” (Thomas 1995: 22). This view emphasizes that meaning can neither be made of the literal meaning of words used in communication, nor is the meaning produced by the speaker or hearer alone, but making meaning is a dynamic process, in which the speaker and the hearer negotiate meanings throughout the whole communicative situation.

An alternative approach to illustrate the concept of pragmatics is to examine it through rules of use. Pragmatics is, then, considered “the study of language from the point of view of users; especially of the choices they make, the constraints they encounter in using language in social interaction, and the effects their use of language has on the other participants in the act of communication” (Crystal 1991: 271). Consensus among linguists about the final definition of pragmatics remains yet to be reached, and no coherent pragmatic theory has yet been achieved, for such is the variety of topics the theory should manage to account for. However, one noteworthy suggestion characterises pragmatics generally as the study of “the principles and practise of

conversational performance” (Crystal 1991: 271). This suggestion would include all aspects of language use, understanding and appropriateness.

Pragmatics can thus be defined as “the study of communicative actions in its sociocultural context” (Kasper and Rose 2001: 2). The concept communicative action refers to the use of speech acts, such as apologizing, complaining, requesting and complimenting. In communication, participants seek to accomplish various goals, and pragmatics studies the ways they use the language to succeed in accomplishing these goals. A participant may, for instance, choose to use an indirect speech act to soften the communicative act when asking for a favour from another participant.

Pragmatics has been further divided into two components, **sociopragmatics** and **pragmalinguistics** (Leech 1983: 10-11). **Sociopragmatics** refers to the way how different social situations affect language use (Crystal 1991: 271) and how appropriate the linguistic resources are in a given cultural context (Taguchi 2009: 1). Further, sociopragmatics studies “the perceptions underlying participants’ interpretations and performance of communicative actions” (Kasper and Rose 2001: 2). This refers to knowledge about the social context; the weightings of factors such as status or social distance that may affect the choice of linguistic form (Hassall 2008: 73). **Pragmalinguistics**, by contrast, refers to “the resources the person has for conveying communicative acts and relational or interpersonal meanings” (Rose and Kasper 2001: 2). For instance, a person can use either direct or indirect expressions in his or her utterances, or use some other means to soften communication. Moreover, pragmalinguistic knowledge also means knowing about the relationship between literal forms and the pragmatic meanings the forms carry (Hassall 2008: 73). Leech (1983: 11) points out that sociopragmatics is more related to the field of sociology, whereas pragmalinguistics relates to grammatical issues.

The present study espouses the viewpoint adopted from Yule and Thomas, i.e. that pragmatics can be examined as a study of communication and meaning in communication. The reason for this is that pragmatic ability, which is the subject of the present study and a concept that will later be explained in depth, deals with language learners’ ability to use a second or a foreign language in communication in a successful way.

## 2.2 The domain of pragmatics

### 2.2.1 Implicature

How does it happen that a hearer comprehends what is meant from what is said? In conversations utterances frequently carry a meaning which is beyond the literal meaning of the utterance. For example, when a wife declares to her husband *How nice to see your dirty socks on the floor*, she is naturally not implying that she enjoys seeing dirty socks, but that the husband should take his socks to the laundry room. This additional meaning that utterances convey is called **implicature**.

There are two types of implicature: **conventional implicature** and **conversational implicature**. They both convey an additional meaning, beyond the literal meaning of the words, but when the conventional implicature is used, the conveyed meaning is always the same, whereas the meaning the conversational implicature conveys depends on the context of the utterance (Thomas 1995: 57). A good example of the conventional implicature is the English conjunction *but*: it always carries an implicature of contrast, regardless of the context (Yule 1996: 45). For instance: *She is blonde, but very intelligent* or *My dog is angry with strangers, but loves me*. Sarcasm, in contrast, is an example of the conversational implicature. As mentioned in a previous example about dirty socks, sarcasm is highly dependent on context. If, for instance, a friend of ours is very late from our meeting, and we say to him or her *So nice of you to show up*, the context of the situation, i.e. being late, implies that we are furious, not the actual words uttered.

How is it, then, that we understand what is implied? A concept of **cooperative principle** has been introduced with four conversational maxims that explain the mechanisms of interpreting conversational implicature (Thomas 1995: 61-64). The cooperative principle goes as follows:

Make your conversational contribution such as is required, at the stage at which it occurs, by the accepted purpose or direction of the talk exchange in which you are engaged. (Yule 1996: 37)

The idea behind the cooperative principle is that a speaker should provide an expected amount of information and want to cooperate with the other participants in the conversation.

The cooperative principle is elaborated in four sub-principles: **the conversational maxims** (Thomas 1995: 63-64). The four conversational maxims are maxims of **Quantity, Quality, Relation** and **Manner**. The maxim of Quantity suggests that we should make our utterances as informative as is needed, but not more informative than is required. According to the maxim of Quality, we should believe that what we say is the truth. The maxim of Relation simply states: be relevant. And lastly, the maxim of Manner encourages us to avoid obscurity and ambiguity in our expressions. These maxims were created to ease the cooperation of participants in conversation and overcome the problems caused by implicature.

### 2.2.2 Presupposition

In conversations, speakers have assumptions that some information is known to their listeners. For this reason, such information will not be explicitly stated but remains unsaid yet communicated. For instance, when uttering a sentence *Peter's sister is a good dancer*, the speaker is supposedly having the presuppositions that a person called Peter exists and that he has a sister. A **presupposition** can be defined as something the speaker assumes to be true before making an utterance (Yule 1996: 25). Furthermore, presuppositions can be called suggestions whose truth is taken for granted in communication (Delogu 2009: 195).

Presuppositions consist of assumptions or inferences that are implicit in particular linguistic expressions (Cummings 2005: 29-30). For example, in the following sentence *The doctor managed to save the baby's life*, the assumption underlying it is that the doctor *tried* to save the baby's life, for that assumption is implicitly linked to the meaning of the verb *manage*. However, in the sentence *Some students managed to fail the test for a second time*, an assumption cannot be made that the student *tried* on purpose to fail the test. In this case, the assumption that the verb *manage* involves trying something is semantically invalid. Since there seem to be features of presupposition that make it an ambiguous subject of study, it has been examined from two distinctive perspectives: from a semantic perspective and from a pragmatic perspective.

**The semantic perspective** observes how the semantic meaning of a sentence is based on its truth conditions and on particular presupposition triggers (Cummings 2005: 32-35). When studying truth conditions, the focus is on the truth value of the utterance. For

instance, if we say *Hannah's cat is angry*, the sentence can only be true if Hannah actually has a cat (Yule 1996: 26). What is meant by presupposition triggers is that some linguistic expressions trigger a certain presupposition (Cummings 2005: 32-35). For example, the quantifier *all* carries a presupposition of "at least three". If someone utters a sentence *All my feet hurt*, it strikes the hearer as anomalous, since we know that a person can only have two feet. In the same way it sounds bizarre to say *Jamie murdered his aunt by accident*, as the verb *murder* implies a planned action, not something that can happen by an accident.

**The pragmatic perspective**, then, emphasizes that we cannot only concentrate on semantic relations between sentences, but we must also take into account notions such as speaker, hearer, context, mutual knowledge and appropriateness. According to the pragmatic perspective it is of importance to bear in mind that as presuppositions are propositional attitudes, not straightforward semantic relations, it is people that make the presuppositions as opposed to sentences.

### 2.2.3 Speech acts

The pioneer of pragmatics can be said to be a British philosopher J. L. Austin. He was interested in the ways words are used to do different things being the first to introduce speech act theory. His most influential publication *How to do things with words*, published posthumously in 1962, foreshadowed many topics that still today remain of major interest in pragmatics (Thomas 1995: 28-29), and introduced the principles on which the current speech act theory is based.

Austin (1962: 1-11) observed that certain sorts of sentences, such as *I name this ship the Queen Elizabeth*, are designed to do something instead of acting merely as a statement aiming to inform the listener about a fact. Such sentences Austin proposed to be called **performative sentences**, or shortly, **performatives**. According to Austin, the name indicates that the purpose of the utterance is to perform an action rather than simply to report something or stating a fact. Sentences which do seem to act as statements of facts Austin called **constatives**. Austin points out that in order to be able to perform an act by using words, the circumstances and appropriateness must be taken into account. I can only christen a ship if I should be the person appointed to name her, in the same way I

can only pronounce a couple as husband and wife if I should be the priest with the authority to do so.

Austin (1962: 94-131) distinguished three different functions for speech acts: the **locutionary** act, the **illocutionary** act and the **perlocutionary** act. The performance of a locutionary act is the full normal sense of saying something, roughly equivalent to meaning in the traditional sense. Whereas, when we perform an illocutionary act, we perform an act *in* saying something as opposed to *of* saying something: the saying has a certain force in it, for instance warning, ordering, suggesting, promising, etc. This force or intention behind the utterance is called the **illocutionary force**. The same locutionary may have a different illocutionary force in different contexts. For example *What time is it?* could mean that the speaker wishes to hear the time, the speaker is annoyed because the hearer is late, or the speaker implies that the hearer should leave (Thomas 1995: 50). The perlocutionary act, in contrast, is the effect of the illocutionary act on the hearer. It is what we bring about or achieve by saying something: the consequential effects the saying normally produces upon the hearer. For instance, by saying *It's hot in here*, the speaker gets the hearer to open the window without actually making a straightforward request *Would you be so kind and open the window?* These three acts Austin called the three different senses or dimensions of the “use of sentence” or of the “use of language”.

For a performative to function, the circumstances must be appropriate, as mentioned before. The matter of appropriate circumstances Austin called the doctrine of **infelicities** (Austin 1962: 14). There are different felicity conditions in everyday life contexts among ordinary people that are preconditions on speech acts and ensure that the speech act will not be infelicitous (Yule 1996: 50-51). Firstly, there are general conditions, meaning that the language spoken should be understood by both or all the participants. Secondly, there are content conditions. A content condition for a promise, for example, requires that the content of the utterance is about a future event: one cannot make a promise unless there is a possibility that they can fulfil that promise sometime in the future, a promise cannot be fulfilled in the past. Thirdly, utterances have preparatory conditions. This means that when making a promise, for instance, we have two preparatory conditions: the promise cannot be fulfilled by itself without the action of the person who made that promise, and the event has a beneficial effect. Fourthly, there are sincerity conditions, which mean that when making a promise, the person genuinely and

sincerely intends to fulfil the promise. Finally, there is the essential condition, which means that the person to make a promise creates an obligation to carry out the promise. He or she changes his or her state from non-obligation to obligation. Felicity conditions for speech acts are different depending on the nature of the speech act. Here we have examined felicity conditions from the point of view of promises.

#### 2.2.4 Reference and inference

Using a language enables us to refer to objects outside our immediate surroundings. We are capable of discussing objects and topics which are displaced in time and space. This quality that language has, to use words to refer something even though words themselves do not refer to anything language being an agreed symbol system, is called **reference**. The linguistic forms of reference are called referring expressions (Yule 1996: 17-24). Referring expressions can be proper nouns, such as *Paris* or *Oscar Wilde*, definite noun phrases, such as *the actress* or *the teacher*, indefinite noun phrases, such as *a girl* or *a crowded city*, and pronouns, such as *them* or *it*.

For a reference to succeed, the role of **inference** needs be recognized. Since the relationship between words or expressions and entities in the real world is arbitrary, it is the task of the listener to infer correctly the speakers' intended message has when he or she is using a particular referring expression (Yule 1996: 17-24). Consequently, a successful reference must be collaborative in order for the listener to be able to infer what the speaker has in mind.

The concept of inference is often confused with the concept of implicature (see section 2.2.1). To understand the difference, we have to look closely at the words *infer* and *imply*. *To imply* means suggesting or conveying a meaning indirectly by means of language; it is generated intentionally by the speaker, and is or is not understood by the hearer (Thomas 1995: 58-61). Whereas, *to infer*, is to deduce something from evidence. In the case of inference, it is the hearer who produces the inference, not the speaker. A person can understand what has been implied, and yet infer the opposite. For example, a father may say to his son when trying to get the remote control to work "*Strange, I thought I put in new batteries*", when the son blushes and utters "*I did not do anything with them*". In this case the father meant to make a genuine statement of irritation, but

the son, nevertheless, misinterpreted the force of the utterance as an accusation and inferred that he was a suspect.

It is argued that in a significant sense the concept of inference can be said to construct the cornerstone of pragmatics (Cummings 2005: 75). Given that only an addressee with a capacity for inference is capable of deriving implicatures from a speaker's utterance, the lack of this capacity would lead to a failure in communication. If the addressee fails to interpret that the utterance *There's someone on the door* functions as an indirect request to go and answer the door, the speaker by the same token fails to achieve the desired action from the addressee and has to consider alternative means of communication to get the message across.

#### 2.2.5 Deixis

**Deixis** is used in pragmatics to refer to linguistic expressions which are highly sensitive to context (Allot 2010: 54). In other words, deictic items are elements whose linguistically encoded meaning is dependent on context. Personal pronouns, such as *he* and *they*, demonstratives, such as *this* and *that*, and spatiotemporal pronouns such as *here*, *there*, *now* and *then*, are examples of deictic items. Deictic elements make understandable reference only through an indexical connection to an aspect of a speech event (Sidnell 2009:114). To illustrate this, it may be said simply that deixis means "pointing" via language (Yule 1996: 9). Thus, when a friend of yours entrusts you with a strange object and you inquire *What is this?* you are using "pointing" via language, i.e. a **deictic expression**. Deictic expressions are sometimes called **indexicals**.

Furthermore, deixis can also refer to a wider context. When a tour guide explains that a fortress was built during the war, the tourist needs to know something about the history of the area to be able to understand what war the tour guide was referring to. Our understanding often depends on the interpretation of some properties of the extralinguistic context. This reference to a wider context of language is called **discourse deixis** (Cummings 2005: 22). For example, when we say *As mentioned before, the plan did not work out* or *I bet you haven't heard this joke*, we refer to earlier or forthcoming segments of discourse (Levinson 2004: 118). Allot (2010: 55) points out that discourse deixis can be seen almost everywhere and that it is likely that most utterances are deictic in most languages, even before taking into consideration the obvious deictic items such

as pronouns. Deixis is, hence, a much more pervasive feature of languages than is generally acknowledged (Levinson 2004: 97).

We can distinguish four different types of deixis: person deixis, time deixis, place deixis and discourse deixis, which already has been discussed in the previous paragraph. **Person deixis** reflects the various roles participants play in the speech event: speaker, addressee and the other (Levinson 2004: 112). Moreover, markers of relative social status are significant features of person deixis (Cummings 2005: 22). Linguistic expressions may indicate a higher or lower status; for example when talking to a friend we may utter *You wanna a cup of coffee?* whereas when talking to an honorary guest we would rather discreetly ask *Would Sir Robert care for a cup of coffee?*

**Time deixis**, then, is most often encoded in adverbs such as *now* and *then*, and in calendar term such as *yesterday* and *today* (Yule 1996: 14). The interpretations of these expressions are dependable on knowing the relevant utterance time. Consequently, we are not able to know which day *yesterday* refers to, if we do not know what the present day is. Some expressions may even refer to two different times: the expression *then* may refer to both past and future.

Another significant aspect of deixis is verb tense. It is possible that the same tense form refers to different time spans in different contexts. For example, the same past form *could* refers to past in the sentence *I could skate when I was younger*, and to an unlikely, but potential situation in the sentence *I could be in Bermuda, if I had a lot of money*. Verbs can also sometimes function non-deictically (Cummings 2005: 25-26). For instance, in the sentence *A lion is an animal*, the verb *is* expresses timeless semantic relation: lions belong to the category of mammals, which for their part belong to the category of animals. Thus the verb *is* expresses a known fact acting non-deictically and not referring to a certain time span.

As far as **place deixis** is concerned, many of the same parameters apply to it that apply to time deixis. Place deixis, too, can function non-deictically and express a semantic relation, for example, *The library is next to church*, or it can express a deictic relation that is dependent on the location of the speaker *The church is three miles away* (Cummings 2005:26-28). Another example of a deictic relation is the case of adverbs *here* and *there*. *Here* clearly is equivalent to the location of the speaker, whereas *there*

can be defined as “the region which does not include the speaker’s present location” (Sidnell 2009: 118).

### 2.3 Pragmatics in the field of linguistics

For a long period in the field of language study, formal systems of analysis have been holding the attention of linguistics. These systems often derive from mathematics and logic, adopting uncritical rule-governed approaches (Yule 1996: 6; Thomas 1995: 183). The formal approaches, thus, have suggested that what may be a good approach to grammar (the definition of grammar including phonology, morphology, syntax, semantics, etc.), can also be seen as a suitable approach to pragmatics (Thomas 1995: 183). Gradually, it was acknowledged that the meaning of utterances cannot be formally analysed, and incorporating the study of language use into linguistics would be necessary (Leech 1983: 1-5).

Today, pragmatics is a separate field of linguistics with its own theories and methodologies. Pragmatics is interested in issues not addressed by other areas of linguistics, such as meaning in context and dynamic meaning between speaker and hearer (Thomas 1995: 184-185). The closest area to pragmatics is sociolinguistics (Thomas 1995: 185-187). There is some overlapping, but it can roughly be said that sociolinguistics is interested in how social variables, such as gender, ethnicity or social class, affect individual language use, whereas pragmatics focuses on relatively changeable features of an individual. It can be argued that “sociolinguistics tells us what linguistic resources the individual has; pragmatics tells us what he or she does with it” (Thomas 1995: 185).

## 3 INTERLANGUAGE PRAGMATICS

In the following chapter, the term interlanguage pragmatics is introduced in detail. Firstly, the scope of interlanguage pragmatics is illustrated. Secondly, the reader is provided with an in depth discussion of the definition of pragmatic competence, and how it relates to the wider term of communicative competence. Further, a widely used framework for pragmatic competence created by Bachman that illustrates the role of pragmatic competence in a person’s language use is presented. Lastly, the question of how pragmatic competence develops is addressed: whether it develops separately or

hand in hand with grammatical competence and whether pragmalinguistic competence precedes sociopragmatic competence or vice versa.

### 3.1 The scope of interlanguage pragmatics

**Interlanguage pragmatics** means the study of learners' use and acquisition of L2 pragmatic competence (Kasper and Rose 2001: 3). One of the key issues in interlanguage pragmatics is examining misunderstandings between speakers (Yamashita 2008: 203-205). Since values toward some speech acts are not equivalent to another culture, it is acknowledged that pragmatic standards for a country or a culture are not universal. Communication is often met with failure when speakers from different cultural and language backgrounds do not share the same pragmatic standards. Interlanguage pragmatics aims to enhance the knowledge of the development and nature of pragmatic competence and to discover means of improving L2 and foreign language learners' pragmatic competence.

As the term reveals, interlanguage pragmatics has two sides to it: on the one hand it concentrates on interlanguage studies such as morphology, phonology, semantics and syntax. The term interlanguage refers to the type of language produced by second and foreign language learners who are still in the process of learning the language. On the other hand, it examines pragmatics concepts such as sociolinguistic features and the meaning of context (Kasper and Blum-Kulka 1993: 3).

Interlanguage pragmatics has focused mainly on researching speech acts, conversational structure and conversational implicature (Alcón-Soler and Martínez-Flor 2008: 3). Early studies have traditionally concentrated on learners' attribution of illocutionary force and notion of politeness (Kasper and Blum-Kulka 1993: 4). Most of the studies have focused on non-native speakers' development of pragmatic ability, yet there has been discussion if it would be useful to include also native speakers' intercultural styles of communicating under the study of interlanguage pragmatics (Kasper and Blum-Kulka 1993: 3-4).

### 3.2 Pragmatic competence

**Pragmatic competence** belongs under a wider concept of **communicative competence**. The first one to introduce the term communicative competence was a sociolinguistic Hymes, who criticized the Chomskyan transformational generative grammar for not constituting an exhaustive enough basis for our understanding of language use. It was argued by Hymes (2010: 319-321) that the salient features of language cannot be addressed without knowledge of their social matrix. It is not enough only to examine the rules of form and grammaticality yet leave stylistic and social meanings, as well as the diversity of roles among speakers, out of account. It was claimed by Hymes that unless linguists enter into the analysis of communicative acts, they face failure. Ultimately, Chomsky's notion of dichotomy between competence and performance was set aside and the notion of communicative competence was born.

One of the most widely used theoretical frameworks for communicative competence was created by Lyle Bachman (1991: 81-110). Bachman describes communicative competence as “consisting of both knowledge, or competence, and the capacity for implementing, or executing that competence in appropriate, contextualized communicative language use”. In Bachman's model, the different components associated with communicative competence are included under the concept of language competence. The following figure illustrates the organization of language competence.

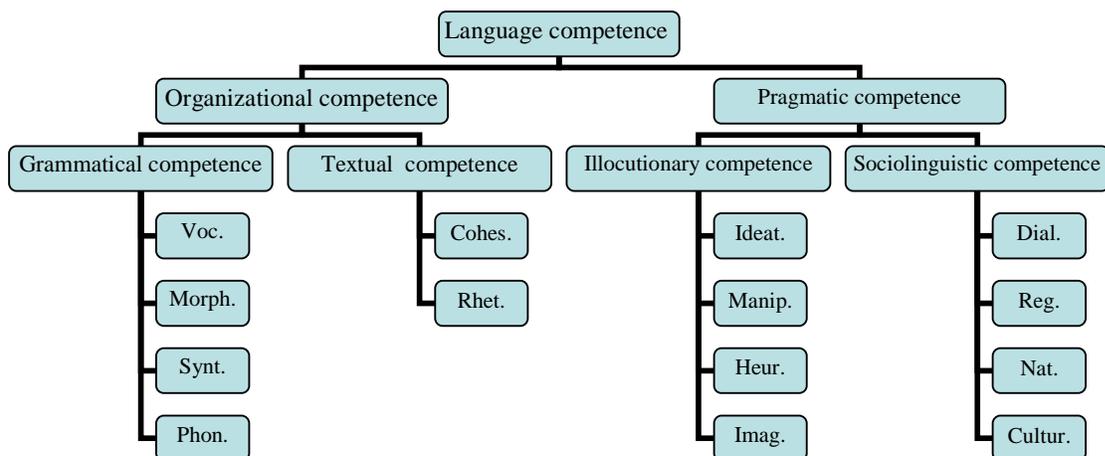


Figure 1. Bachman's (1991) model of language competence.

As shown above, language competence can be divided into organizational competence and pragmatic competence. **Organizational competence** refers to the control of formal structure of language, such as grammatically correct sentences. It is further divided into grammatical competence and textual competence. **Grammatical competence** consists of knowledge of vocabulary, morphology, syntax and phonology. **Textual competence**, in turn, means the knowledge of the conventions for joining utterances together to form a text, either in writing or orally. The ability to understand the rules of cohesion and rhetorical organization are involved in textual competence.

The other component of language competence, pragmatic competence, refers to the ability to understand and use the conventional rules of language and the ability to distinguish what conditions make utterances acceptable and appropriate in a given situation. Pragmatic competence is divided to illocutionary competence and sociolinguistic competence. **Illocutionary competence** refers to the ability to understand the illocutionary force different speech acts carry (see section 2.2.3), i.e. the ability to understand the distinction between form and language use. The ability to perform different speech acts derives from grammatical competence and the general strategies by which a speaker can signal his or her intent in performing an illocutionary act. An example of a strategy can be to perform a request by saying *It's cold in here* to imply that the hearer should close the window.

Under the illocutionary competence Bachman (1991) lists a number of language functions to build a broader framework of functions which can be accomplished through language use. Firstly, the most pervasive function is called the **ideational function**. It means the use of language to express our experiences and feelings, for instance when we are pouring our emotions to a good friend. Secondly, there are **manipulative functions** the purpose of which is to affect the world around us. For instance, we may utter commands or warnings to make people acts as we would wish them to act. Thirdly, the **heuristic function** refers to the use of language to extend our knowledge of the world, commonly occurring in teaching and problem solving. The purpose of this function is often to extend one's knowledge of language itself. Fourthly, there is the **imaginative function** that enables us to use the language for humorous or aesthetic purposes. For example, we can tell jokes, construct fantasies and create metaphors. It is important to notice that these different functions are usually in use simultaneously. As

Bachman explains, a teacher, for instance, may make an assignment (ideational and manipulative functions) in an amusing way (imaginative function).

**Sociolinguistic competence**, in turn, is the sensitivity to the appropriateness of language use in a given context. It refers to the sensitivity to different dialects, and social and regional varieties. Furthermore, it is connected with the sensitivity to differences in style and register in language use, such as choosing the appropriate style of greeting and ending a conversation. It also refers to the sensitivity to naturalness, meaning the ability to formulate utterances which are not only grammatically correct, but also phrased in a “nativelike way”. For example: using informal utterances in informal interaction. To have sufficient sociolinguistic competence also means that one has the ability to interpret cultural references and figures of speech. Some meanings can be culturally specific, and the speaker must have knowledge of the culture to be able to understand the meanings.

### 3.3 The development of pragmatic competence

#### 3.3.1 Pragmatic competence versus grammatical competence

A great deal of interest has raised the inquiry whether pragmatic competence and grammatical competence develop separately or accordingly. A consensus about the matter is yet to be reached, but results of some studies have suggested that without pedagogical intervention foreign language learners may often develop even high grammatical competence in the absence of concomitant pragmatic competence. This is especially the case with EFL learners, who do not encounter the target language on a daily basis outside the classroom (Eslami and Eslami-Rasekh 2008: 193) (see section 4.4). However, since the study of the development of pragmatic competence requires either longitudinal research of a certain group of participants over a prolonged period of time, or cross-sectional research with participants with various levels of language proficiency, the number of studies has been scarce and not enough information on the matter has yet been gained (Rose 2000: 29).

A famous study conducted by Bardovi-Harlig and Dörnyei (1998) found out that pragmatic competence and grammatical competence do indeed develop separately. The scholars examined Hungarian EFL learners’ knowledge of pragmatics by asking them to

rate how severe they considered different kinds of pragmatic and grammatical errors to be. The study showed that the EFL learners rated the violation of grammatical rules more serious than that of pragmatic rules. It was concluded that the grammatically driven foreign language contents lead learners to appreciate grammatical competence more, and as a result their pragmatic competence does not develop in accordance with grammatical competence. It was reported that the learning environment, in this case a foreign language classroom, had an impact on the development of pragmatic competence. In a further study, Bardovi-Harlig (2001) argued in favour of instruction in pragmatics in a foreign language classroom stating that even learners with high grammatical competence may lack necessary pragmatic competence.

A couple of years later, Niezgodna and Röver (2001) replicated the study by Bardovi-Harlig and Dörnyei, this time the EFL learners being Czech. They claimed that even though the results still showed that the FL contents and environment have an impact and may help learners to develop grammatical competence at the expense of pragmatic competence, also learner characteristics are of importance in the development: highly motivated learners who actively searched for pragmatic conventions were able to develop nearly as high pragmatic competence as native speakers of English. These findings seem to suggest that even though EFL learning environments can support the development of the grammatical competence at the expense of pragmatic competence, it does not hinder learners with a high language proficiency and motivation to gain high pragmatic competence.

### 3.3.2 Pragmalinguistic competence versus sociopragmatic competence

In some formulations of communicative competence, pragmatic competence is included under sociolinguistic competence, referring to the ability to know how to use the target language in social interaction. In these frameworks, the area of competence is often divided into two aspects: **appropriateness of meaning** and **appropriateness of form** (Trosborg 1995:11). The appropriateness of meaning is called **sociopragmatic competence**, referring to the ability to judge whether a particular speech act, attitude or proposition is suitable for a given context. The appropriateness of form, then, is called **pragmalinguistic competence**, indicating the linguistic realization of meaning. This can, for instance, concern the extent to which a given meaning, such as attitudes and

propositions, are represented in a form which is suitable for a given sociolinguistic situation.

Research findings seem to suggest two conflicting patterns in the development of these competences: either pragmalinguistic competence precedes sociolinguistic competence or vice versa. Research focusing on the development of pragmatic competence leaves us an incomplete picture of the nature of the relation between pragmalinguistic competence and sociopragmatic competence meaning that until further findings it is unclear how these patterns influence the teaching of pragmatic competence in class.

#### 4 PRAGMATIC COMPETENCE IN THE CLASSROOM

In this chapter pragmatic competence is examined from a pedagogical perspective. First, grounds for instruction in pragmatics are offered to justify why pragmatics should be taught in class. Second, different methods that can be used in teaching pragmatic competence are considered. Furthermore, it is discussed which methods seem to have been the most successful according to recent studies. Third, a few specific areas of pragmatic competence are introduced, namely politeness, direct and indirect speech acts and pragmatic routines. These are some possible pragmatic principles for teachers to teach in class. Lastly, the impacts of EFL classroom setting to the teaching and the development of pragmatic competence are discussed.

##### 4.1 Grounds for instruction in pragmatics

A topic of interest in interlanguage pragmatics is whether pragmatic ability develops without pedagogical intervention. Do learners need instruction in pragmatics in class to gain pragmatic competence or does pragmatic competence develop naturally hand in hand with grammatical competence? It has been shown that even learners with a high grammatical proficiency may possess low pragmatic competence: they differ from native speakers in the production of speech acts, semantic formulas etc. (Bardovi-Harlig 2001: 14). A learner may produce grammatically complex and correct, but pragmatically inappropriate, utterances in their speech failing to understand illocutionary forces of specific speech acts (Niezgoda and Röver 2001: 65). Conversely, learners may be able to produce pragmatically appropriate utterances which still may contain grammatical errors. It has been argued that knowledge of pragmatic rules must be learned,

represented and taught in the same way as the knowledge of formal aspects of the linguistic system, such as grammar, in order for learners to acquire pragmatic competence (Bialystok 1993: 44).

Empirical evidence shows that learners who do not receive specific instruction in pragmatics have noticeably different pragmatic systems than native speakers (Bardovi-Harlig 2001: 29). In the learning of pragmatics in the target language, attention must be paid to linguistic forms, functional meanings and contextual features (Schmidt 1993: 34-36). While incidental and implicit learning are both possible, noticing and consciously paying attention to the relevant features facilitates the learning of pragmatic rules. Simple exposure to appropriate input is unlikely to be sufficient for the acquisition of pragmatic competence, since learners do not necessarily recognize and understand the pragmatic functions of the input and for this reason fail to learn pragmatic rules of the target language. This suggests that in class attention to pragmatic features should be paid to in order for learners to gain pragmatic competence.

Notwithstanding the fact that instruction in pragmatics facilitates the acquisition of pragmatic competence, it is by all means not the only factor determining EFL pragmatic competence. Also the time spent in the target culture, language proficiency and transfer from L1 culture affect the development of pragmatic competence (Bardovi-Harlig 2001: 24-29). Learners who have spent longer periods of time in the target culture tend to use more speech acts favoured by native speakers, and in addition, show more sensitivity towards pragmatic infelicities. Since they have interacted on a daily basis with natives of the target culture, they have begun to place greater importance on knowing the pragmatic rules of the language understanding that there is more to communication than grammatically correct language use.

Furthermore, learners with a high language proficiency often value pragmatic skills more than learners of a lower language proficiency (Hassall 2008: 77-79). The reason for this lies behind learners' cognitive abilities: language learners cannot perform utterances automatically and unconsciously like native speakers, but producing utterances demands a good deal of conscious effort. Thus learners with a low language proficiency are unable to pay much attention to pragmatics, as it takes such an effort to produce a grammatically correct sentence that thinking about pragmatics would lead to a cognitive overload. Consequently, learners with a high language proficiency are able

to produce at least low-level sentences unconsciously, which frees up more processing capacity to be devoted to thinking about pragmatics. Also transfer from L1 culture can either hinder or facilitate gaining pragmatic ability (Bardovi-Harlig 2001: 29). The influence from L1 culture can be negative or positive, depending on how similar or different the home culture is from the target culture.

Although pedagogical intervention is only one factor in the development of pragmatic competence, it is of high importance especially for EFL learners, who do not receive daily exposure to the target language (Bardovi-Harlig 2001: 28). As the empirical evidence shows, instruction in pragmatics is valuable in class, and without it EFL learners do not necessarily acquire pragmatic competence.

#### 4.2 Teaching pragmatics

Not many studies have yet been conducted on what the best way to teach pragmatics is. A great deal of pragmatic knowledge is part of speakers' implicit knowledge and cannot be clearly explained, which sometimes makes the teaching of pragmatic competence challenging (Schmidt 1993: 23). However, studies have shown that instruction in pragmatics has a positive effect on the development of pragmatic competence, and students receiving any kind of instruction outperform those not receiving instructions at all (e.g. Bardovi-Harlig 2001; Rose and Kwai-fun 2001; Takahashi 2001). Even though any kind of instruction is beneficial, the studies suggest that learners receiving deductive / explicit instruction outperform learners receiving inductive / implicit instruction (e.g. Takahashi 2001; Rose and Kwai-fun 2001; Tateyama 2001; Schmidt 1993). It has also been argued that form-focused instruction, for example form-comparison and form-search, facilitate the learning of pragmatic competence (Takahashi 2001: 173). It was, in fact, found that meaning-focused input was less effective than explicit, form focused information.

The availability of relevant input in class is of importance when teaching pragmatics (Bardovi-Harlig 2001: 24-25). However, input in the form of simple exposure to positive evidence is not enough to help learners to develop pragmatic competence (Takahashi 2001: 171-199). While incidental learning is possible and happens to a certain level, directing students' attention to relevant features in the input is highly facilitative in gaining pragmatic competence (Kasper and Blum-Kulka 1993: 19). It has

been argued by Takahashi (2001: 171-199) that input should be enhanced in order to capture learners' attention. Input enhancement facilitates the development of pragmatic competence by directing learners' attention to pragmatic rules of the language. It can mean some form of corrective feedback with or without metalinguistic information, visual or textual modification, such as using bold or italic face, or task manipulation, which directs learners to notice target structures i.e. using focus on form methods.

According to Takahashi (2001: 171-199) the target pragmatic features were most effectively learned when a relatively high degree of input enhancement in class was combined with explicit metapragmatic information. In general, it was found that providing metapragmatic information is most probable to advance learners' pragmatic competence. Metapragmatic information means helping the learner to become aware of the target language pragmatic features, it can happen either explicitly or implicitly. Also another study has (Schmidt 1993: 21-42) argued in favour of awareness raising techniques in teaching pragmatic competence. It was stressed that it is very unlikely that learners incidentally and implicitly learn target language features. According to the study "linguistic forms can serve as intake for language learning only if they are noticed by learners" (Schmidt 1993: 27), and consequently, there is evidence that a relationship exists between what learners notice and understand about target language pragmatics and what they learn.

In conclusion, it can be presumed that in order to most efficiently advance learners pragmatic competence, some kind of explicit instruction needs to be provided in the classroom. While also implicit learning is possible, input enhancing combined with explicit, awareness raising teaching seems to facilitate the learning of pragmatic competence the most.

#### 4.3 Teachable pragmatic principles

Since there are numerous pragmatic rules to teach, from presupposition and deixis to speech acts, it is not relevant, considering the design of the present study, to examine all the possible pragmatic components. Therefore, I have chosen three items which to discuss and which are studied in the present study: politeness, sarcasm and irony and pragmatic routines. These items were chosen because they all require pragmatic competence to be successfully used in interaction.

### 4.3.1 Politeness

Politeness is a term that has proven to be extremely hard to find an all-encompassing definition for. Not only does polite behaviour and language vary from culture to culture, but the rules of politeness are also highly complex and context-based within the same culture (Lakoff 2005: 1). Politeness seems to be more than just preferring indirectness over directness; it is something intrinsic and often an unmarked part of communication. In everyday communication, when people face the choice between clarity and politeness, they most often prefer the latter one; being polite is more important than clarity leading to opt to form roundabout forms. As far as language learning is considered, studies imply that transfer from the mother language often foreshadows the way learners formulate polite utterances in the target language (Abrahamsson 2003: 243). For this reason learners often try and form polite utterance according to the rules of their mother tongue, and as the concept of politeness varies from culture to culture, this might lead learners to form impolite and rude utterance without them even realising it.

Most of us are used to being taught formulaic forms of politeness, such as *please*, *excuse me* and *thank you*. As these are fundamental parts of polite language use, they are often under discussion in EFL classrooms. Yet there is more to politeness. In the field of pragmatics, politeness has been widely studied, since polite language often involves euphemisms and roundabout forms meaning that the message the speaker is trying to convey is often highly dependable on the context in question. Polite language often means breaking the co-operative principle by violating or flouting a maxim (see section 2.2.1) (Goatly 2012: 228). A speaker is violating the maxim when he or she deliberately hides a breach of a maxim from the hearer, as in the following example:

A: *Does your dog bite?*

B: *No.*

*(A bends down to stroke the dog and gets bitten)*

A: *I thought you said your dog didn't bite.*

B: *It's not my dog.* (Goatly 2012: 229)

In the example, the maxim of quality is not strictly broken, as B says something that he or she believes is true about his or her own dog, but does not reveal that he or she is not the owner of the dog in question. Flouting a maxim, then, means an overt breaking a maxim. When a teenage girl announces that *my brother's a real bitch* she does not

expect the hearer to think her brother is a female dog, but to understand that the father has done something to make his daughter angry (Goatly 2012: 229).

Leech (1983: 104-138) introduces a number of politeness maxims: tact, generosity, modesty, agreement and sympathy maxim. He further notes that politeness often occurs between two participants in a conversation, which can be called *self* and *other*, which is essential to bear in mind when examining the maxims. Firstly, we have **the tact maxim** which means minimizing the expression of beliefs which imply cost to other and maximising the expressions of beliefs that imply benefit to other. Basically, it means using indirect, as tactful forms in utterances as possible, for instance, *Could you please give me that book*, instead of *Give me that book*. The tact maxim is probably the one that is most salient for language learners, since it is about basic mitigation of utterance. Secondly, there is **the generosity maxim** suggesting minimizing the expressions of beliefs that imply benefit to self and maximize the expressions of beliefs that imply cost to self. For example, *Could I borrow your bicycle* is more polite an utterance than *You can lend me your bicycle*. Thirdly then, **the approbation maxim** (also so called “**flattery maxim**”) indicating the minimization of expressions of beliefs that imply dispraise for other and maximization of the expressions of beliefs that imply praise of self. According to this maxim, one should avoid saying unpleasant things about other people, for instance, we should say *Thank you for the delicious cake you baked*, even though the cake has not been that tasty.

Fourthly, **the maxim of modesty** meaning that one should minimize the expressions of beliefs that imply praise of self and maximize the expressions of beliefs that imply dispraise of self. For example, I you make a mistake it is perfectly fine to utter *How stupid of me*. But for another person to say *How stupid of you*, when you make a mistake, is highly impolite. One should also minimize praise of self, for example saying *How clever of me!* breaks against the modesty maxims, whereas it is polite to say to another person *How clever of you!*, when they have succeeded. Fifthly, there is **the agreement maxim** suggesting minimizing the expressions of beliefs that imply disagreement between self and other and maximizing the expressions of belief that imply agreement between self and other. Basically, it means that agreeing with someone even vaguely is more polite than directly disagree. And lastly we have **the sympathy maxim** that indicates minimizing the expressions of beliefs that imply antipathy between self and other and maximizing the expressions of beliefs that imply sympathy

between self and other. This refers to expressing beliefs which are negative with regard to the hearer, for instance, *I'm sorry to hear your dog died.*

One of the first and most influential theories of politeness in pragmatics was launched by Levinson and Brown (1987). The politeness theory is based on the assumption that an individual's self-esteem motivates strategies of politeness. According to Brown and Levinson, every adult person has a **face**: "the public self-image that every member wants to claim for himself" (Brown and Levinson 1987: 61). The concept of face can be divided into **negative** and **positive face**. Negative face refers to "the basic claim to territories, personal preserves, rights to non-distraction i.e. freedom of action and freedom from imposition", whereas positive face is "the positive consistent self-image or personality claimed by interactants". It was argued by Brown and Levinson that the concept of face is universal meaning that certain kinds of acts intrinsically threaten face; these acts are called **face-threatening acts** (Brown and Levinson 1987:65-71). The acts can threaten either the positive or the negative face of the interactant and politeness in interaction is based on avoiding these face-threatening acts.

The politeness theory has also been widely criticized. It has, for instance, been argued that it is idealised assuming that there is a so called model speaker whose intentions are stable and formulated before interaction, thus viewing politeness as a stable product (Mills 2003: 89-116). Whereas a more process-oriented model of analysis should be used in which interaction and participants' intentions, and consequently the forms of politeness used, are negotiated throughout the interaction and depended on the context, such as community of practice.

Notwithstanding the theory or model behind politeness the fact is that polite language is not something we are born with, it must be acquired (Watts 2003: 9). This indicates that when learning a foreign language, the forms of politeness must be taught to learners in order for them to be able to formulate polite language in the target language. It can be claimed that polite language and behaviour is fundamental to how we communicate with each: they are at the heart of social interaction (Watts 2003: 29). For learners to succeed in communication it is salient that polite language use is paid attention to in EFL classrooms.

### 4.3.2 Sarcasm and irony

The terms sarcasm and irony are closely related and often mixed and used as synonyms in everyday communication. Yet there is a difference: according to *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary* (2007: 1345) sarcasm is “a way of using words that are the opposite of what you mean in order to be unpleasant to somebody or to make fun of them”, whereas irony means “the amusing or strange aspect of a situation that is very different from what you expect” (Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary 2007: 822). What is similar to both of them, though, is that they are created through conversational implicature (see section 2.2.1), which means that the meaning of the utterance is highly dependent on the context and the meaning that the speaker wants to convey is beyond the literal meaning of the utterance. Language is often used in an ambiguous or incongruent way to create humorous implicature in the given situation (Goatly 2012: 21-23). The listener has to interpret the meaning by using clues from context and non-verbal communication to understand the humour.

Humour, in this case sarcasm and irony, fails if the listener is not able to understand the underlying meaning of the humorous utterance. Language learners tend to opt for the literal meaning of the utterance which can lead to a failure to understand the humour. Furthermore, humour is linked to politeness in the sense that a failure to understand it may threaten the positive face of the teller (see previous section 4.3.1) (Goatly 2012: 244-245). Consequently, since the joke is not understood, the hearer may respond to the humorous utterance by an impolite way threatening now the negative face of the hearer. Moreover, when humour fails, it may mean that the whole communicative situation is met with a failure. For this reason, language learners should be made aware of the basic rules of humour in language use.

### 4.3.3 Pragmatic routines

One aspect of pragmatic competence is mastering pragmatic conversational routines. Some researches place pragmatic routines under the study of vocabulary and under “**institutionalised utterances**” offered by the lexical approach. According to the lexical approach, we use institutionalised utterances that express pragmatic meaning in communication (Lewis 1997: 257). In this sense, it might be said that institutionalised utterances serve the same purpose in communication as pragmatic routines. In the

present study, pragmatic routines and their meaningfulness are categorised under the study of pragmatics instead of the study of vocabulary.

It was argued by Coulmas (1981) that pragmatics should concentrate more on the dynamics of routinized speech, since in communication speakers frequently make use of expressions which have proved to be functionally appropriate. As Coulmas observed, every society has its standardized communication situations in which speakers react in an automatic manner, often using pragmatic idioms. Coulmas (1981: 3) defined routine as “a regular course of procedure; a more or less mechanical or unvarying performance of certain acts or duties”, emphasizing that as far as pragmatics is concerned, routines concern communicative functions and co-operative practice in communication. Pragmatic routines, thus, are a means of guiding learners’ normal participation in social interaction.

Interlanguage pragmatics has not yet paid much attention to pragmatic routines in research. Yet in everyday conversations we are often so used to using lexicalized metaphors, phrasal compounds and speech acts that we have lost an awareness of the meanings of their parts (Goatly 2012: 195-196). For a language learner it might be unclear how to respond naturally to a greeting or how to minimize an apology or a helpful gesture, since native speakers of the target language often use institutionalized pragmatic routines in conversation in these situations. In everyday life speakers often meet communicative situations where adjacency pairs, that is, pairs of speech acts, e.g. greeting-greeting or offer-acceptance, are used (Goatly 2012: 218). These pairs are adjacent in the sense that they are uttered by different persons, ordered as first and second parts and categorized so that a particular first part requires a particular second or range of second parts for a response. For instance, if a speaker utters an apology for accidentally pushing an other person, the other speaker is supposed to offer a minimisation, such as *it's okay, no harm done*, not something else such as an accusation or a greeting. It is of importance to a language learner to learn to use pragmatic routines in order to maintain fluency in communication, since pragmatic routines are frequently used, idiomatic language that serve a purpose of keeping communication smooth and uncomplicated.

#### 4.4 Pragmatic competence in the EFL classroom

It is generally acknowledged that the learning environment influences the rate and outcome of learning, as is the case when comparing ESL and ELF learners, the EFL learning environment being the setting of the present study. Living in the target language culture offers ESL learners countless daily interactions that considerably enhance their awareness of the various ways of communication in the target culture, which in turn promotes the development of pragmatic competence. For an EFL learner the classroom may be the only available setting where he or she is able to familiarize him or her with the target language and its customs and habits (Eslami and Eslami-Rasekh 2008: 193). For EFL learners, the classroom setting is likely to be the only available place to actually produce the language, in writing as well as in speaking. Furthermore, large classes and limited contact hours may act as obstacles to the development of pragmatic competence. Therefore, it is of special importance for EFL teachers to make an effort to give instruction in pragmatics in the classroom to ensure the optimal conditions for facilitating the development of learners' pragmatic competence.

It has been argued that since EFL materials and classes tend to emphasize micro-level grammatical accuracy, learners often develop grammatical competence without the concomitant pragmatic competence (Bardovi-Harlig and Dörnyei 1998: 253-255). The focus in EFL classes is often on grammar instead of pragmatics or other communicative aspects, most of the content in class being greatly test-driven. As a result, according to the study by Bardovi-Harlig and Dörnyei (1998: 13-32) (see section 3.3.1) EFL learners place greater importance on grammatical errors in communication, ignoring pragmatic failures more lightly. As the pedagogical emphasis in an EFL class is often on grammatical competence, it may lead learners to think that grammar is a priority in language learning and they, therefore, sometimes aim to develop their linguistic competence at the expense of other competences.

EFL contexts do not seem to provide learners with sufficient access to appropriate input notwithstanding the fact that the overall outcome of studies point out that instruction in pragmatics is particularly relevant for EFL learners (Alcón-Soler and Martínez-Flor 2008: 3-21). It is claimed that without pragmatic focus, EFL teaching raises learners' metalinguistic awareness but does not support the development of metapragmatic

consciousness, resulting in learners often being incapable of distinguishing between what is appropriate in a given context (Eslami and Eslami-Rasekh 2008: 178-197). By the same token, EFL teaching materials cannot always be counted as reliable sources of pragmatic input, and are, therefore, improbable to result in pragmatic development (Eslami and Eslami-Rasekh 2008: 178-197).

## 5 THE PRESENT STUDY

The following chapter presents the research procedures of the present study, first starting with a discussion of the aims of the study together with the actual research questions. Second, the methodological choices of the study are explored and the principles and advantages of the method are considered. Third, the process of collecting the data is presented, followed by a discussion of the method for analyzing the data. Finally, the participants of the present study are introduced.

### 5.1 Motivating the study and research questions

The aim of the present study is to examine teachers' notions on pragmatic competence. A notion can be defined as "an idea, a belief or an understanding of something" (*Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary* 2007: 1039). The purpose is to find out how teachers define the ambiguous and complex concept of pragmatic competence from their own personal point of view, what they consider their role, as well as learners' role, to be in the acquisition of it and how they experience teaching and evaluating it. As the present study is a descriptive study, the emphasis is on describing the personal experiences of the teachers.

Previous research on pragmatic competence has mainly focused on learners' production on pragmatic principles or learners' pragmatic comprehension, leaving teachers as the less studied group in learners' acquisition of pragmatic competence (Kasper and Rose 2001: 243). Curiously, even though interlanguage pragmatics has gained increased interest in the field of language learning and teaching, the role of the teachers seems to have been forgotten. Whereas learners' ability to acquire pragmatic competence, produce and comprehend pragmatic principles have received interest as subjects of research, teachers' knowledge of pragmatic competence and their ability to teach pragmatic principles have been somewhat neglected. It has been argued that if teachers

do not have tools to teach pragmatic principles, or only have materials that remain largely on the level of theory, they will not necessarily be able to help learners to gain pragmatic competence (Cohen 2012: 34). For this reason, the present study examines the acquisition of pragmatic competence from the viewpoint of the teachers. The aim is to discover how teachers experience their role in helping learners to acquire pragmatic competence and what means, if any at all, they have to teach pragmatic principles.

In research on the teaching of pragmatic principles, attempts have been made to find out if pragmatic competence is teachable, if there are grounds for instruction in pragmatics and if some methods of teaching pragmatics are more efficient than others (Kasper and Rose, 2001: 249-264). Thus far, answers gained from the studies have been mixed. Firstly, because pragmatic competence refers to the capability of mapping form, meaning, function and context all together, this meaning that teaching of it cannot be tied to a specific form, it has been questioned whether pragmatic principles are teachable at all. Some principles seem to be teachable whereas others are not. Secondly, in the research on the benefits of instruction in pragmatics, there is evidence that support the view that learners receiving any instruction outperform those not getting instruction at all in pragmatics (e.g. Bardovi-Harlig 2001; Rose and Kwai-fun 2001; Takahashi 2001). Thirdly, as far as methods of teaching are concerned, the research has concentrated on the debate between explicit and implicit instruction. Even though most studies have shown that explicit instruction seems to benefit learners most, some evidence supporting implicit instruction can also be found (e.g. Takahashi 2001; Rose and Kwai-fun 2001; Tateyama 2001; Schmidt 1993). The present study will seek to discover answers to the same kinds of questions as the previous research, but from the viewpoint of teachers instead of learners. In this way, the present study can bring something new to the field of pragmatics.

The specific research questions which the present study will seek to answer are:

1. What the teachers think pragmatic competence to be?
2. What learner characteristic the teachers believe to influence learners' learning of pragmatic competence?
3. What is the role of the teacher in learners' learning of pragmatic competence?
  - 4a. What the teachers think there is to teach about pragmatic principles?
  - 4b. How to teach these then?

5. What is the role of evaluation in the learning of pragmatic competence according to the teachers?

These questions will be answered by collecting data with the help of semi-structured interviews (see Appendices 1 and 2). Six teachers were interviewed: the interviews were recorded, transcribed and analyzed for their content. When analysing the content, the purpose was to discover common themes concerning the research questions. While the present study is descriptive by its nature, it can also be characterised as a qualitative study, due to the small number of participants and choice of methodology. In the following sections, the methodology and data processing as well as the participants are discussed in detail.

## 5.2 Choice of methodology

The study can be characterized as descriptive qualitative research. A descriptive research aims to discover *what* is happening, instead of explaining *why* something happens, as is the case with hypothesis-testing research (Coolican 2004: 7-8). Whereas hypothesis-testing research tests hypotheses, the purpose of a descriptive study is to gather data about “what is happening out there”. The descriptive research design can be used both in quantitative and qualitative research and it can take many forms. Qualitative data collected by using semi-structured interviews, as was done in the present study, is one example of conducting descriptive qualitative research (Silverman 2005: 45).

Qualitative research serves as a suitable method for the present study since the purpose is to understand and describe participants’ views, which is typical of qualitative research (Tuomi and Sarajärvi 2009: 95-96). In qualitative research, it is believed that the reality is subjective: the reality is socially constructed and everyone experiences it subjectively in their own way (Hirsjärvi and Hurme 2000: 22-27). Qualitative study often examines the participants’ own experiences and meanings they make of these experiences (Patton 2002: 33). In addition, qualitative research design is appropriate because these kinds of designs often tend to work with a smaller number of cases in this way receiving more profound answers (Silverman 2005: 9), as is the purpose of the present study. Conducting a qualitative research is often an ongoing process: it cannot be presented by a linear model, as the different phases of the research, for instance writing literature

review, elaborating and refocusing research question, collecting data and analysing it, are often going on simultaneously (Maxwell 2005: 2). This suits the present study well giving it greater freedom and flexibility in conducting the actual study.

The philosophical view of science behind the research design is called existentialist-phenomenological-hermeneutic philosophy. All qualitative research is inherently based on this philosophy (Metsämuuronen 2008: 13-15). The philosophy is a countermovement to positivism which assumes that the only things worth studying are those that can be observed and measured (Coolican 2004: 220-221). Thus, positivists rely on quantitative research claiming that only statistical data can be of scientific value. According to positivism, there is one single concrete reality, which is the same to all people. Whereas, in qualitative research, most researchers take a constructivist view of knowledge, assuming that every person has a unique construction of the reality, and pointing out that the results do not need to be presented statistically in order to be scientifically significant. The present study is based on the view of constructivism, suggesting that every participant has a slightly different perception of the subject matter and finding out these perceptions and describing them can produce interesting data concerning the role of pragmatic competence in EFL teaching.

### 5.3 Data collection

For the present study a method of interviewing was chosen for data collecting. A semi-structured individual interview served as a feasible method for collecting the data since the purpose of the interviews was to explore themes. Usually, when analysing data collected by a semi-structured interview, the purpose is to find themes that describe the topic in question (Metsämuuronen 2008: 41), as was done in the present study. For this reason semi-structured interviews are often simply called theme interviews. Theme interviews lack the strict order and form of structured interviews giving more freedom to the interviewer, still keeping the focus on the themes chosen for the interview (Hirsjärvi and Hurme 2000: 48). In the interviews, carefully worded open-ended questions were asked allowing the participants the opportunity to respond in their own words and express their personal perspectives. In the answers, different themes were looked for and analysed. One of the strengths of semi-structured interview is its flexibility (Tuomi and Sarajärvi 2009: 73), which allows the participants freely to express their feelings still keeping the focus of the interview within a particular subject

area (Patton 2002: 343). Moreover, semi-structured interview is ideal for obtaining point of views and observation from people who have special knowledge of some field (Tuomi and Sarajärvi 2002: 77), in this case, on teaching English as a foreign language.

The interviews took place individually and the participants were asked the same questions, though not necessarily using the exact same words, to minimize variation among interviewers. Since every participant had a unique, personal viewpoint on pragmatic competence, they addressed different aspects of it in different contexts, and that guided the order of the interview questions. The interviewer also asked additional questions during the interview, for example, asking the participant to specify their answer or to give examples. Furthermore, some of the questions were rephrased to match the nature of each interview, that is to say, the themes in each interview were the same but it depended on the communicative style of the participant how and in what order the questions were asked. All in all, the questions were genuinely open-ended questions to encourage the participants to express their own understanding in their own terms. This way the data deals with the participants' individual experiences and perceptions, which characterizes the nature of qualitative research (Patton: 348).

The questions in the interview were arranged around different themes (see Appendix 2). The idea behind the interview was not to assume that all the teachers value pragmatic competence and teach it, but to find out if the teachers feel pragmatic competence is of value to learners, what the teachers think there is to teach of pragmatic competence, or is there anything, and to see what kinds of methods the teachers think they can use in teaching pragmatic competence. The first theme in the interview was pragmatic competence in general, and the questions dealt with the teachers' perceptions of the competence. They were asked general questions about what they valued in foreign language teaching, what they personally considered the pragmatic competence is and what kind of a role a teacher and a learner have in the acquisition of pragmatic competence. The purpose of the first section was to warm the teachers up and let them express their feelings concerning pragmatic competence.

The three following themes were implicature, sarcasm and politeness. Each of the themes were generally introduced and it was asked if the teacher thought they were something they considered of importance, whether they are teachable, what there is to teach about them, and how they thought these themes could be taught. During these

questions, also the questions from the first general theme were addressed again and offered more thorough opinions of them. It often happened that when the interviewers started to consider the more concrete aspect of teaching pragmatic competence, they also began to see more clearly the whole concept and its implications on the teacher and the learner. The last theme was evaluation, in which the interviewers were let to express their opinion on whether they thought it was necessary to evaluate learners' pragmatic competence and how this could be done.

#### 5.4 Data Processing

The data was analysed using content analysis. The purpose of content analysis is to describe the topic in question and to create a lucid description of it in a reduced and general form (Tuomi and Sarajärvi 2009: 103). With content analysis the data is organised and described and it is for the researcher to decide what kinds of conclusions can be drawn from it. This has sometimes been a matter of criticism against content analysis, since the research may describe the phases of analysis carefully yet not be able to draw conclusions based on it. In qualitative analysis the data can be grouped by types or themes (Eskola 2010: 193). One way to group the data is by types: the researcher constructs the most common types of topics from the data that describe the responses generally. The other way to group is by themes. This means organising the data by themes that are brought up and insightful quotations from the data are presented in the research report for interpretation. In the present study, the focus in the data analysis was on themes.

Content analysis can be conducted from three different grounds: on the basis of the theoretical background, on the basis of the data itself or on the basis of both (Tuomi and Sarajärvi 2009: 95-119). When analysing data on the basis of the theoretical background the process of analysis is based on a certain theory and the research phenomenon is defined according to this theory. This type of analysis is often connected to a deductive mode of analysing. Conducting data on the basis of the data itself means most often using an inductive method and deriving categories from the data as they emerge, categories having not been chosen in advance on the basis of a theory. The last ground means that even though categories are derived from the data the theory guides or helps analysis and the influence of previous knowledge is recognizable from the analysis.

For the present study, the method of content analysis on the basis of data itself was chosen. The analysis was implemented in three phases (Tuomi and Sarajärvi 2009: 109-113). Firstly, the data was reduced by condensing so that information not of relevance to the present study was eliminated. The reduced data was coded in accordance to the research questions by using key words and concepts, these in the present study presenting themselves in the form of themes. Secondly, the data was clustered by going through the key words and concepts grouping them on the basis of their similarities or differences. Key words or concepts that meant the same were connected together as a group and labelled with a suitable name. These groups are the subcategories of the present study. Thirdly, the data was conceptualized i.e. main categories were formed from the subcategories. These main categories formed the findings of the present study (see chapter 6).

## 5.5 Participants

The participants in the present study were six English teachers, five of them currently teaching in Jyväskylä, one teaching in another city in Central Finland. Three of the teachers were basic education teachers in grades 7-9, two of the teachers were upper secondary school teachers and one teacher worked in the University Language Centre. All of the teachers had previous work experience from other levels of education as well.

The participants were contacted via e-mail and asked whether they would care to participate in an interview. The interviews were carried out during October and November in 2012 in the schools the participants teach, except one that was carried out in a coffee shop due to the distant location of the school. Since all the participants were native Finnish speakers, the interviews were conducted in Finnish to give the participants the possibility to truly be able to express their feelings toward the subject without any language barriers. The interviews were recorded and transcribed according to the transcription key below.

/	/	simultaneous speech
interrupted wor-		interruption
...		long pause
(xx), (xx)		unclear speech
((laugh))		comments by the transcriber

Figure 2. Transcription key.

Since the unfamiliarity and ambiguity of the topic of the present study all participants were sent a basic description of the concept of pragmatic competence via e-mail (see Appendix X). In the actual interview, the participants received another copy of the same description which they were able to read through again if they chose to. The participants were promised anonymity meaning that the participants' names or work places would not be published. For this reason, no names will be used in examples in the present study. Thus, when a teacher is referred to, a code of T1, T2, T3, T4, T5 or T6 (teacher number 1, etc.) is used, these code names referring to the order in which the interviews were carried out. However, since it is interesting to know the current working place and occupational history of the participants (grades and years taught), this information is provided in table 1.

<b>Code</b>	<b>Current work place</b>	<b>Work history</b>
<b>T1</b>	University language centre	total 1,5 yrs: University language centre
<b>T2</b>	Basic education, grades 7-9	total 9 yrs: 3 yrs, basic education, grades 1-6 6 yrs, basic education, grades 7-9
<b>T3</b>	Upper secondary school	total 2 yrs: 0,5 yrs, basic education grades 1-6 1,5 yrs, upper secondary school
<b>T4</b>	Upper secondary school	total 13 yrs: mostly, basic education grades 7-9 also, basic education grades 1-6
<b>T5</b>	Basic education, grades 7-9	total 14 yrs: 1yr, basic education, grades 1-6 13 yrs, basic education, grades 7-9
<b>T6</b>	Basic education, grades 7-9	total 5yrs: 1 yr, basic education ,grade 10 4 yrs, basic education grades, 7-9

Table 1. Current work places and work history of the participants

## 6 FINDINGS

In this chapter, the findings of the present study are reported with illustrative quotations from the data. The organization of the chapter follows the order and aims of the research questions of the present study, each section presenting the findings for respective research question. As the present study is a descriptive study by its nature, the emphasis in findings is in the presentation of the spectrum of the different themes. However, since

it is interesting to review how many participants mentioned a certain theme, a reader may find this information in brackets in the summaries that end every section. The themes are introduced by the frequency they were addressed in the interviews. Quotations from the data are presented in Finnish, and English translations can be found in Appendix 3.

### 6.1 The nature of pragmatic competence

This section aims at answering the first research question: What is pragmatic competence according to the teachers? The purpose of the question was to find out the teachers' personal notions of the concept: how they would define it. Since the concept was not so familiar to the teachers, they were provided with a short description of the main features of pragmatic competence (Appendix 1) before they were interviewed. In the interviews, the teachers were asked not to concentrate too much on what was written in the description, but to contemplate what their personal understanding of the concept was. Four themes were addressed in the interviews: an ability to make circumspect decisions, a different mode of thinking and acting, polishing and abstractness.

**An ability to make circumspect decisions** was the first theme addressed in the interviews. It was argued that possessing pragmatic competence means the ability to read context clues i.e. read the participants in a conversation and the overall context of a situation, and in this way the ability to vary one's language in order for it to be appropriate in accordance to these different situations. In example (1) one of the teachers explains how she considers pragmatic competence to be an ability to comprehend what kind of language different contexts require i.e. what is considered to be appropriate in a given context:

*(1) T1: no ehkä mulle ekana tulee mieleen se kielen käyttö siinä oikeessa kontekstissa siinä käytännössä mitä se tilanne vaatii mitä pitää ja mikä siihen sopii [...] osaa niinku vähä lukee sitä tilannetta*

The teacher states in example (1) that one aspect of pragmatic competence is to be able to make circumspect decisions: how one reads the situation and is then able to choose appropriate language use. The ability to read the situation was stressed by other teachers as well. In example (2) one teacher contemplates how it is of salience to understand what is essential in a given situation:

(2) T6: *se et ymmärtää että mikä siinä tilanteessa on niinku olennaista näkee et minkälaisia erilaisia niitä tilanteita niinku on*

The teacher in example (2) argues that pragmatic competence refers to understanding what is essential in a given situation and how different situations often require different kinds of language use. Moreover, comprehension of nuances and language registers were also connected to the ability to make circumspect decisions. In example (3), a teacher comments that the understanding of nuances in a language use is part of being able to operate with the language in different situations:

(3) T4: *no juuri se että tilanteessa ku tilanteessa pystyy tota- pystyy sillä kielellä toimimaan ja ymmärtämään niitä erilaisia sävyjä- sävyjä siinä kielenkäytössä*

According to the teacher in example (3), pragmatic competence means the ability to operate with the language in any given situation and also the understanding of the nuances in language. In addition to the nuances, a concept of language registers was also seen to be part of the ability to make circumspect decisions. As example (4) illustrates, it was mentioned how an ability to make circumspect decision also refers to knowing how different communication situations demand different language registers:

(4) T6: *erilaisia kielenkäyttötilanteita [...] et mitkä on niinku virallisia tilanteita ja mitkä on tämmösiä mitä voi käydä kaverin tai sukulaisen kanssa ja mitä eroo on sillä jos keskustelet vaikka vanhemman sukulaisen kanssa ku jos keskustelet kaverin kanssa*

The teacher in example (4) claims that when one possesses pragmatic competence one understands what the difference between talking to an elderly relative or a friend is: how the language register varies from situation and people to another. Being able to vary between language registers is part of the ability of making circumspect decisions. To sum up, notions that were connected to the ability to make circumspect decisions were the understanding of what is essential in a given situation, i.e. to know how to read the situation and the comprehension of nuances and registers in language use.

**Different mode of thinking and acting** was the second theme addressed in the interviews. Possessing pragmatic competence was linked to the ability to act and speak in a “native-like way”. The teachers argued that the English language enables a different mode of thinking and acting, and when one possesses pragmatic competence, one can communicate in a way that is characteristic of native English speakers’ understanding

the rules of use of the English language. In example (5) a teacher suggests that when a learner has realised that the English language enables a different mode of acting, he or she has succeeded in language learning:

*(5) T3: ehkä siinä vaiheessa niillä on kolikko- kolikko tippunu jos ne on ymmärtäny sen verran että englannin kieli on- mahdollistaa erilaisen käytöksen*

The same teacher discusses in example (6) that as a teacher he stresses to the learners that when doing activities in English they have to put themselves into someone else's shoes to some extent, exaggerate and even act to a degree in order to adopt the rules of language use:

*(6) T3: opettajana painotan sitä että et nyt teijän pitää tavallaan hypätä toisiin saappaisiin et teijän pitää- tämmöistä muuntautumiskykyä testataan teiltä [...] teijän pitää olla sitte vähä semmone kameleontti että et siinä pitää heittäytyä ja liiotella ja vähä näytelläkki*

The teacher in examples (5) and (6) believes that a different way of thinking and acting should be adopted when learning English. When learning a language, it is of importance to understand that when communicating in the target language, one may begin to use dissimilar strategies, for example, formulate more polite sentence structures than one does in Finnish. It was assumed that when a learner has knowledge of pragmatic principles and is capable of communicating in a native-like way, communication goes more smoothly and fluently.

Small talk and politeness were most often connected to the concept of a different mode of thinking and acting. The ability to keep up a conversation by small talk and to formulate polite utterances in English were seen to arise from the knowledge of pragmatic principles, in other words, from the knowledge of how one should use the language in contexts. Every teacher stated that when comparing English with Finnish there are significant differences in how politeness in language use is understood. They contemplated that English has a more roundabout and indirect way of expressing politeness, and that part of pragmatic competence is the knowledge of this different way and understanding of how to use it. For instance, in example (7), a teacher comments on how learners often inquire why in English one has to use a more indirect way of speaking:

*(7) T2: ni sit taas se et englannissa se et sen voi sanoa sen asian sillai niinku ehkä vähän kiertäen et miks ei sitä voi suoraa sit sanoo ni sit et no se kuuluu siihen kieleen*

The teacher explains in example (7) that in English utterances are formulated in a more roundabout way than in Finnish and when learners ask for the reason behind this, she rationalizes that the roundabout way simply is how the English language behaves, the general rules of language use that natives know instinctively but language learners have to learn. In example (8) the same teacher continues discussing the matter with an example of politeness in English. She states that native speakers of English inherently use a different way of forming polite utterances, for the reason that English as a language behaves differently from Finnish:

*(8) T2: että se niinku joissaki tilanteissa niin ne jotka puhuu sitä äidinkielenä ni ne automaattisesti on tosi kohteliaita kun taas suomessa sitte ei välttämättä olla et se ((oppija)) oppis sen et se kuuluu siihen kielenkäyttöön*

As example (8) illustrates, the teachers believe that it is important for learners to realise that the rules of language use differ from language to language. In the present study, it was claimed that English can be considered to be a more polite language than Finnish (see section 6.4) and that learners should understand this and be able to change their own mode of thinking and acting. The ability to do this was connected to the possession of pragmatic competence, that is, learners with fluent pragmatic competence are able to understand that politeness, for instance, is differently expressed in English.

Furthermore, another point that was stressed in the connection with the theme different mode of thinking and acting was small talk. It was argued that the Finnish way of small talk differs from the English way a great deal, and that learners should try and adopt a different way of communicating if they wish to keep up with the flow of conversation. As pragmatic competence was connected to a different mode of thinking and acting, it was contemplated that knowledge of pragmatic principles helps learners to switch to another way of communicating, in this case, a more talkative way of practicing small talk. In example (9), one of the teachers states that since in Finland we do not use small talk so often, one can unintentionally give a rude impression of oneself if one fails to get into the flow of conversation:

(9) T1: *meillä on kuitenkin vähemmän tollasta kulttuuria että vähän tollasta chit chat small talk meininkiä ni ehkä se et sit just jossai ulkomailla saattaa antaa itestään tahtomattaan töykeän kuvan vaikkei sitä millään tavalla- sää hymyilet ja kättelet ja haluaisit tutustua mutta jos sä et sitte pääse siihe mukaa tämmöseen rupatteluun tai semmoseen niin [...] sit se toinen voi saada susa iha väärän kuvan*

The teacher expresses a worry in example (9) about how a Finn may unintentionally act rudely and give the wrong impression of him/her because he or she is not able to practice small talk the way native speakers of English often do. She also points out that even if one tries to be friendly, smiles and shakes hands, the other participants may think it impolite if one remains silent too much. Another teacher addresses the same problem in example (10). She contemplates that learners often question the nature of small talk thinking that it is rather foolish to talk about matters that are of no significance:

(10) T6: *siellä puhutaan säästä ja puhutaan puuta heinää et se niinku kuuluu siihen et oppilaathan yleensä reagoi että et onks iha tyhmää tavallaan niinku puhua asioista millä ei oo niinku mitää väliä tai ei oo niinku mitää merkitystä [...] ku suomalaiset puhuu nii paljon vähemmän ja sillä tavalla nii selkeesti että oppilaat usein kokee sen että se on niinku liikaa jos tarvii koko ajan höpöttää ja sit harjotellaan- harjotellaan sitä miten keskusteleet kohteliaasti ku suomalainenha vaa kuuntelee ku toinen puhuu*

In example (10) the teacher points out that in English-speaking cultures there is a distinctive way of using small talk. In Finland there is a tendency to speak less and in a more straight-forward way, and therefore, learners often question the purpose small talk in English serves. They feel that it is foolish to twaddle continually and talk about matters that are of no significance. In the interviews, it was also acknowledge that not every English-speaking culture has an identical way of practicing small talk. For instance, it was mentioned in example (11) that in Britain it is rather common to use sarcasm (see section 6.4) and in America they often joke around in communication:

(11) T2: *jotku oppilaat sanoo et amerikkalaiset puhuu nii et ne vaa heittää jotai läppää ja niinku et onks siinä mitää järkee et aatellaa liikaa suomessa nii et se pitäis koko ajan et sen puheen viii sitä keskustelua jotenki eteenpäin*

As example (11) shows, learners may not fully understand the purpose of the small talk, but they wonder why, for instance, in America people seem to be joking with each other. The teacher in the example explains that Finnish learners often believe that talking should take matters further in conversation, when small talk in the English

speaking cultures may serve another purpose, such as easing up the atmosphere. To sum up, small talk and politeness were themes that were connected to pragmatic competence, more specifically to the ability to adopt a different mode of thinking and acting when communicating in English. It was argued, that when a learner possesses pragmatic competence, he or she begins to understand that communication can differ in the target culture, and require the learner to change their style of communicating.

**Polishing** was the third theme brought up in the interviews. Pragmatic competence was connected to polished and groomed, even snobbish, language, in the sense that it was argued that pragmatic principles are something that only intelligent and good language learners can learn to use. It was claimed that for most learners it is more important to learn the basics of the language and not necessarily even try to teach them about pragmatic principles. In other words, learning about pragmatic principles was thought to be something that comes at a rather late stage in learning: it was believed that pragmatic principles should and could be learned only after a learner already has advanced to a high level of language proficiency and is intelligent enough to adopt them. In example (12) it is argued that not every learner even can achieve pragmatic competence but it is something of a polishing for talented learners:

*(12) T3: kaikki muu on niin sanottua bonusta että semmosta hifistelyä [...] se on eräänlaista eriyttämistä et se on niille oppilaille jotka on vahvoja- vahvoja ja kielellisesti lahjakkaita ja motivoituneita*

In example (12) the teacher claims that the understanding of pragmatic principles can be called polishing: it is somewhat bonus, even snobbery, and teaching about them can be considered to be certain kind of ability grouping for talented and motivated learners. For most learners, the aim is to learn the basics of the language, how to survive with the language, and thus it can be considered to be more of a bonus if pragmatic competence is gained. Another teacher in example (13) argues in the same way that learning to use pragmatic principles can be seen as fine-tuning and polishing the language skills for those learners who have a good language aptitude:

*(13) T6: jos aatellaa et tietty määrä oppilaista oppii sen ihan sen perusasian mikä on tarkoitus että ehkä se on taas sitte semmosta hienosäätöä mitä voitais ajatella että oppilaat joita niinkun- joilla on hyvä kielitaito ja jotka ymmärtää niinku ne perus asiat*

In both examples it is stated that pragmatic competence refers to polishing language use. It was believed that gaining pragmatic competence is something extra or bonus for

talented learners, and that only when one reaches a high enough level of language proficiency, can they begin to acknowledge pragmatic principles and use them. As the examples show, knowing how to use pragmatic principles was considered as ability grouping for talented and motivated learners. When the basics of the language have been learned, learners can start to concentrate on fine-tuning the language skills that is, learning pragmatic principles.

**Abstractness** was the fourth theme mentioned in the interviews. By abstractness it was meant that the fluent use of pragmatic principles is so merged in the overall communicative competence that it is somewhat ambitious to try and separate it to its own unit. A teacher discusses in example (14) how she sees knowledge of pragmatic principles as an extra tinge in communication, something that cannot be separated from it:

*(14) T1: nään kaiken tommosen semmosena tosi tärkeenä niinku lisämausteena siihen viestintään jotai ei tavallaan siitä viestinnästä voi niinku yrit- niinku erottaa [...] vähän semmonen väliinsujautettu semmonen lisä*

As the teacher in example (14) explores, pragmatic competence is thought to be challenging to separate to its own unit, it is seen to be more as something extra that is blended in the overall communicative competence. As a concept, pragmatic competence is difficult to define since it is perceived to be highly abstract. Another teacher in example (15) states that in a way, pragmatic competence is constantly part of overall language use:

*(15) T2: et se kuuluu koko ajan tavallaan siinä mukana tai pitäis kuulua*

She commented in example (15) that pragmatic competence is not a unit of its own but is, and should be, part of overall language use in communication. In the interviews, the teachers all saw pragmatic competence as something abstract that is blended in the communication as something that could not be separated to its own clear unit.

In short, themes that were brought up in the interviews about the nature of pragmatic competence were the ability to make circumspect decisions, a different mode of thinking and acting, polishing and abstractness. The first theme, the ability to make circumspect decisions, referred to the ability to read contexts clues in communicative

situations: who are you talking too, the formality of the situation etc. (claimed by 6 teachers). It was argued that learners possessing pragmatic competence can take notice of contexts and vary their language use in accordance to it, for instance, by changing language registers. Comprehension of language registers and nuances were connected to the ability to make circumspect decisions. The second theme, a different way of thinking and acting, meant that when communicating in English, one has to adopt a different way of thinking and acting, and often use somewhat different communication strategies than one does in communicating in Finnish (6 teachers). Small talk and politeness were particularly connected to the different way of thinking and acting, since it was argued that the way polite utterances are formulated and small talk practiced differ from the Finnish way a great deal.

By the third theme, polishing, it was meant that learning about pragmatic principles can be considered as polishing the language skills (5 teachers). It was thought that for most learners it is enough to learn the basics of the target language, and these learners will probably never acquire pragmatic competence. However, when a learner is talented and intelligent, he or she may try and learn about pragmatic principles and in this way polish their language. The last theme, abstractness, referred to the notion that the use of pragmatic principles is so merged in overall communication, that the concept of pragmatic competence was considered to be highly difficult to separate from the overall communicative competence (4 teachers). As a concept, pragmatic competence was regarded extremely abstract.

## 6.2 Learner characteristics

The research question number two addressed characteristics which teachers believed to influence learners' ability to acquire pragmatic competence. In the interviews, the teachers were asked if they considered there to be some special characteristics or features that could have an effect on how well a learner was able to acquire pragmatic competence. They were further asked if they thought it to be possible for every learner to acquire pragmatic competence and if not, what the reason underlying it could be. Five themes were brought up in the interviews: language proficiency, intelligence, motivation, subjective experiences and sensitivity and attentiveness to language.

**Language proficiency** was the first theme addressed. High language proficiency was seen to be needed for a learner to be able to move from recognition of structure to recognition of function i.e. understanding meanings beyond literal meanings of sentences. As it takes so much effort and processing time for language learners with low language proficiency to process input and produce even basic utterances, they would suffer from a cognitive overload if they were to try and pay attention to pragmatic rules in language use. Besides, if a learner cannot understand all the words she or he reads or hears it is highly unlikely for him or her to be able to look beyond the literal meanings of sentences. Consequently, what they understand about input is often taken at face value. As a teacher comments on in example (16), learners cannot understand pragmatic meanings if they are not able to comprehend all the words in an utterance or text:

*(16) T4: se kielitaidon taso tietenki vaikuttaa että joku tosiaan jää joku olennainen sana sieltä niinku ymmärtämättä ni sen takia menee joku ohi*

The teacher claims in example (16) that if an essential word is not understood, the whole point of the utterance may be lost by a learner. If learners do not possess wide enough vocabulary in English, they may not be able to pick up pragmatic principles as they do not even understand the literal meaning. In the same way, another teacher in example (17) points out how learners cannot understand jokes, for example, or other meanings that are language bound if they only understand parts of a text:

*(17) T6: jos on vieraalla kielellä ni sillonha se on paljon kiinni siitä että miten paljo se oppilas oikeesti niinku ylipäänsä ymmärtää siitä tekstistä... nii koska eihän hän voi mitää- piilomerkitysethän menee iha ohi jos tota-tai niinku tai vitsit tai tämmöset kieleen sidonnaiset jutut*

As example (17) implies, if learners are not able to understand everything in utterances or texts etc. it does not seem possible for them to manage to infer the “hidden meanings” as pragmatic components often were referred to in the interviews. Moreover, learners with low language proficiency are not necessarily ever to possess good pragmatic competence, as not everyone manages to proceed to the level of fluent enough target language use. Pragmatic competence was seen to be something that only advanced and skilful language learners can obtain (see section 6.1). Consequently, high language proficiency was seen to be among the most salient factors to affect the acquisition of pragmatic competence.

**Intelligence** was the second theme brought up. It was considered that high language proficiency should be combined with intelligence for a successful acquisition of pragmatic competence to happen. High language proficiency alone does not guarantee the development of pragmatic competence, since learners must also be able to successfully read the context as well as the participants in situations to know what kind of language functions appropriately in the given context. For instance, in example (18) it is argued that learners need to be able to do circumspect decisions and be intelligent in order to gain pragmatic competence:

*(18) T3: mä uskon että se vaatii lähtökohtaisesti oppilaalta hyvää tilannetajua ja semmosta öö semmosta niinku tota miks sitä sanottas älyllistä lahjakkuutta tai siis tämmöstä tunteellista lahjakkuutta*

The teacher points out in example (18) that learners need intelligence, specifying it as emotional intelligence, to manage to gain pragmatic competence. In the interviews, it was also pointed out that if a learner is not intelligent enough, she or he may never gain pragmatic competence, and they may not benefit, or necessarily even have to benefit, pragmatics teaching. In example (19), one of the teachers contemplates how each learner advances to a language level that suits their abilities the best, and some learners simply are not able to achieve high enough language proficiency to gain pragmatic competence:

*(19) T5: semmoselle oppilaalle kenelle se kieli on kauheen hankalaa ni en mie usko että niille pystyy sitä hirveesti ((opettamaan)) että niillä on ehkä sitte kuha vaa jollain tavalla tulee ymmärretyks se on ehkä sit semmone et osaa lukee niitä tilanteita ni vielä sit korkeemman kielitaidon alua et kaikki ei sinne pääse*

As it was illustrated in examples (18) and (19), pragmatic competence was seen as something obtainable for good language learners who also are generally intelligent and able to draw conclusions from situations by making intelligent circumspect decisions. It seems that the notion underlying this theme is that not everyone necessarily even benefits from pragmatics teaching, since it only may reach learners with high language proficiency. According to the interviews, gaining pragmatic competence is not possible for weaker students, since high language ability combined with intelligence is needed for its acquisition.

**Motivation** was the third theme raised in the interviews. Motivation was seen to facilitate the development of pragmatic competence of learners, since motivated

learners often seek opportunities to improve their language skills also independently outside class room. English was seen as a language that is easily reachable for everyone in modern society, through media and Internet, and motivated learners utilize the opportunities to hear, read and produce English on their free time. As is shown in example (20), pragmatic principles in language use were seen as something that motivated learners most often learn outside the classroom by watching TV-series or movies without subtitles, reading books in English and surfing and chatting with foreigners in the Internet:

*(20) T5: no tänä päivänä mie väitän et ne jotka on kielestä kiinnostuneita ne oppii suurin osa ihan koulun ulkopuolelta että ne chattailee tuolla ja sellasta ja huomaa pärjäävänsä tai ei pärjäävänsä ja sitte ite kehittää niitä strategioitaan sitte pärjätä erilaisissa tilanteissa*

The teacher in example (20) believes that learners who are interested in the language learn a great deal about pragmatic principles outside school. These learners are then able to reflect on their language use in this way creating strategies to survive in different situations. One teacher gave an example of boys who tend to play computer games or watch TV-series and pick up pragmatic rules from there. As example (21) illustrates, the boys had surprised the teacher in class with their knowledge of some pragmatic principles:

*(21) T2: on esimerkiksi semmosia poikia jotka pelaa paljon netissä pelejä tai käyttää nettiä tai nyt yks semmone poika josta mä olin iha yllättyne et se sano et se kattoo paljon amerikkalaisia jotai tv-sarjoja poliisisarjoja ja muita ja sit se niinku osas sieltä heittää jotai tämmöstä et hei eiks voikki sanoo näin*

Thus, as examples (20) and (21) show, the teachers believed that motivated learners can learn a great deal also outside the classroom. Moreover, in the interviews it was stressed that English is present almost everywhere in the Finnish society making it easily reachable for motivated learners. For instance, it can be read and heard on the radio and TV and used in chats etc. on the Internet. Learners who are interested in the language and motivated to learn are provided with countless learning opportunities. Sometimes learners can show in class that they have learned about pragmatic principles in their free time by saying something that fits well the situation even if they had not had the possibility to learn that pragmatic rule in class.

In the interviews, motivation was divided into intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. Intrinsic motivation means performing something for its own sake to experience pleasure and satisfaction, whereas extrinsic motivation refers to doing something as a means to a separable end, such as receiving a reward or avoiding a punishment (Dörnyei 2011: 23). In the interviews, intrinsic motivation was connected to learners: it was seen more as a characteristic of a learner, whereas extrinsic motivation was connected to the role of the teacher in the acquisition of pragmatic competence in the sense that a teacher can kindle learners' extrinsic motivation. Teachers' role in kindling learners' extrinsic motivation is further discussed in section 6.3. As example (22) shows, intrinsic motivation, specifically, was seen as a factor that facilitates the acquisition of pragmatic competence:

*(22) T5: mie luulen et vaikuttaa yleensä se kiinnostus siihen kieleen ja se et näkee et sillä on itelleen- sillä kielellä on mulle henkilökohtaisesti jotai merkitystä... tänä päivänähä moni sen näkee et ne käyttää sitä tosi paljonki koulun ulkopuolella*

The teacher in example (22) argues that learners who are intrinsically motivated to learn English i.e. who consider that the language itself and its learning to have personal value to themselves, try and pick up pragmatic principles outside the classroom by seeking opportunities to use it. As they are eager to learn how the language works, they pay more attention to language use in different contexts and are often able to draw conclusions based on their own language use as well.

**Learners' own subjective experiences** was the fourth theme discussed. Willingness and courage to use English in real life situations give learners opportunities to subjectively experience how language, more specifically, pragmatic principles behave. It was argued that learners who are not afraid of trying to use the language and making mistakes learn pragmatic principles more easily. As the teacher in example (23) contemplates, these learners experience subjectively what kind of language use works, what is appropriate in which situations, etc., which enhances the learning of pragmatic principles:

*(23) T4: noo varmasti sellanen avoimuus ja rohkeus käyttää sitä kieltä että ei pelkää sitä- ei pelkää sitä tota niinni epäonnistumista taas että rapatessa roiskuu ja niin pois päi että menee rohkeesti tilanteisiin ni kyllähän siinä valitettavasti joskus kantapään kautta saattaa oppia asioita mutta- mutta enemmän siinä kuitenkin oppii ku se että jäät sinne seinän viereen istumaa etkä mee niihi tilanteisii*

As example (23) illustrates, learners who try and use the language, even if it sometimes means making mistakes, gain subjective experiences on how the language behaves in communication. This enhances the acquisition of pragmatic competence. Another teacher mentions in example (24) that one's own experiences can make using the language feel more realistic:

*(24) T1: englannistaki aika monella on jonki näkösiä kokemuksia [...] kyllä varmasti kyl mä uskon että koska se on kuitenkin sitte se tulee ehkä todellisemmaks siellä että kun ite kuulee ja kun ite käyttää tai nii näi ni kyl mä usko et se oma kokemus niinku*

As the teacher comments in example (24), using the language personally can make learning the language feel more real in the sense that the learner realizes that there truly are different patterns and rules in language use, not just grammar. This may encourage learners to pay more attention to pragmatic principles.

Hence, learners' own subjective experiences were seen to influence the acquisition of pragmatic competence since it provides them with first-hand experience on how the language actually works in communication. Learning may often happen through the hard way, through mistakes, but if the learner is too afraid of using the language, he or she misses valuable opportunities to learn about language use.

**Sensitivity and attentiveness to language** use was the fifth theme brought up. The theme referred to learners who are sensitive to language paying inherently a great deal of attention to different aspects of language use and picking up new phrases and principles naturally and partly implicitly. These learners often recognise functions upon structures in language use because of their genuine interest in the language. They inherently suspect to find cultural differences instead of assuming that languages can be translated word for word. The two teachers in examples (25) and (26) both emphasize the importance of attentiveness and sensitivity in the acquisition of pragmatic competence:

*(25) T1: ehkä semmonen miten sen sanois no jollain tavalla ehkä joku tarkkaavaisuus tai niinku että hoksaa niitä tilanteita et hei tähän sopii nyt tää tässä tilanteessa tää ei oo ehkä nyt ok tai semmone et osaa lukee niitä tilanteita ja niinku ja miettiä sitte.. semmonen tietty herkkyyys sille tilanteelle ja niille muille ihmisille ketä siinä on*

(26) T6: *jaa-a no kai nyt kaik- tämmönen ihan yleinen tarkkaavaisuus et he on niinku sen tilanteen tasalla*

The teachers in examples (25) and (26) state that some learners are genuinely attentive and sensitive to situations and people in it i.e. the learners are on top of the situation understanding, for instance, what kind of language register is most suitable for the situation. Since sensitive learners pay more attention to language use, both consciously and unconsciously, they often notice how pragmatic principles of a language behave. In the interviews, sensitivity and attentiveness were connected to authentic language use, for instance, chatting on the Internet, listening to music or watching TV. Learners who encounter authentic language and pay attention to language use can learn a great deal of pragmatic principles through these different activities and thus facilitate their acquisition of pragmatic competence.

To sum up, themes addressed in the interviews concerning learner characteristics that can affect how well a learner acquires pragmatic competence included language proficiency, intelligence, motivation, subjective experiences and sensitivity and attentiveness to language. The first theme, language proficiency seemed to play a crucial role in the acquisition of pragmatic competence: according to the present study, only learners with high language proficiency can obtain fluent pragmatic competence (as claimed by 6 teachers). If a learner never reaches high language proficiency, it is unlikely that he or she is ever to possess pragmatic competence. Learners with low language proficiency cannot “read between the lines” or understand “the hidden meanings” thus translating the language word for word and often taking utterances literally.

Second, intelligence affects the acquisition of pragmatic competence in the same way as the level of language proficiency: only intelligent learners can gain fluent pragmatic competence (6 teachers). Third, motivation influences the acquisition of pragmatic competence in the sense that motivated learners, more specifically intrinsically motivated learners, are more likely to acquire pragmatic competence (4 teachers). Motivated learners seek learning opportunities and often use the language outside school. As English is easily achievable in the Finnish society, it is not difficult to find possibilities to use it. Consequently, learners who willingly rub elbows with the language also learn more about its pragmatic principles.

Fourthly, these subjective experiences that learners gather through using the language outside the school facilitate the acquisition of pragmatic competence (3 teachers). Learners who are not afraid of trying to use language and not afraid of doing mistakes, often learn pragmatic principles through their own subjective experiences. Shy learners not willing to jump into situations may miss these learning opportunities. Fifthly, sensitivity and attentiveness to language guide learners to pick up pragmatic principles from the language use (3 teachers). Some learners inherently pay a great deal of attention to language use, observing how language is used in communication and drawing conclusions. This, naturally, facilitates the acquisition of pragmatic competence.

### 6.3 The role of the teacher

This section aims at answering the third research question: What is the role of a teacher in learners' acquisition of pragmatic competence? The teachers were asked whether they believed that a teacher can influence or facilitate the acquisition, and if yes, how this might happen. Three themes stood out from the interviews: learning opportunities, sensitivity and extrinsic motivation. These will be discussed in this section.

In the interviews, pragmatic competence was considered to be a highly learner-centered phenomenon in the sense that in the very end, it depends on the learners' features and abilities whether they are ever to possess high pragmatic competence (see sections 6.1 and 6.2). This seems to lead to a belief that teachers in general are seen to play a somewhat minor role in the acquisition of pragmatic competence. However, the role of the teachers was not considered negligible in the present study: as the section illustrates, the teachers suggested some means for teachers to try and facilitate the acquisition, even though it was believed that the outcome ultimately lies on the shoulders of the learners.

**Learning opportunities** was the first theme discussed. A teacher has a salient role in providing learners with sufficient opportunities to learn about pragmatic principles. Even though motivated and skilful learners often learn pragmatic principles outside the classroom (see section 6.2), a teacher can attempt to provide learners with opportunities to examine the language in different contexts and include exercises that require using pragmatic principles in lesson plans. It is the responsibility of a teacher to ensure that learners have a sufficient amount of opportunities and appropriate exercises, discussions

or other activities to practice pragmatic principles. Example (27) illustrates appropriately how one teacher speculates that even though a teacher can offer explicit instruction to learners, of most salience is still to simply provide them with chances to learn:

*(27) T1: no totta kai nyt voi aina tarjota jotai teoriaa ja jotai iha eksplisiittisiä fraaseja tai jotai tämmöistä mutta mää ehkä enemmän painottaisin sitä että niitä vaan tuodaan mahollisimman monia semmosia tilanteita sinne luokkaan vaikka että opetellaan vai on se sitte esitelmä tai joku neuvottelutilanne tai tai että ryhmäkeskustelu tai ryhmätyö että tuuaan vaa mahollisimman paljon niitä tilanteita sinne*

As example (27) shows, although providing learners with theory and explicit information is a feasible possibility, providing learning opportunities can still be seen as the primacy. Another teacher stresses the same aspect in example (28):

*(28) T6: no ehkä se että kuinka paljo semmosta tavallaan niinku syötetään oppijalle että miten paljon hän saa tilaisuuksia niinku tavallaan oppia semmosia taitoja että se kai siinä on lähinnä että antaa niitä tilaisuuksia ja nostaa niitä sitte esillekki sieltä että huomaatteko täs on tämmöne*

The former teacher (example 27) did not exclude the possibility of offering explicit instruction and the latter teacher (example 28) pointed out that in class a teacher can highlight pragmatic principles, yet they both stressed that of most importance is to provide learners with a sufficient amount of learning opportunities. The nature of the learning opportunity seemed not to be that significant: what was thought to be most salient was to provide learners with enough possibilities to enhance their understanding and awareness of pragmatic principles and in this way give them a chance to acquire pragmatic competence.

**Sensitivity** was the second theme addressed. Teachers were seen to have a role in giving an impulse for learners to become more sensitive to pragmatic principles in language use. It was argued that learners do not necessarily even realise that language use, for instance politeness rules, vary from language to language, so a teacher can serve as someone who guides learners to evaluate how and when to pay attention to the differences. Teachers can emphasize the importance of learning pragmatic rules providing learners with tools to pick up these differences on their own in their future studies, work etc. As one teacher discusses in example (29), a teacher can try and give an impulse to the sensitivity to pragmatic principles:

(29) T4: *no varmaan just vaan sen herkkyyden herättäminen että- että niinkun osais kiinnittää- tai osaa niinku epäillä eroavaisuuksia kulttuurijutuissa tietyissä paikoissa tai- tai jonkunlainen just semmonen tarkkailu et osais kiinnittää oikeisiin asioihin huomioo että sitte ku menee niinku toiseen kulttuuriin tai- tai on täällä ja tota niinni kommunikoi jonku toisen kanssa että- että huomais ajatella kaikkia niitä asioita mitkä voi vaikuttaa sihe miten asiansa sanoo tai esittää tai mistä asioista se puhuu että koska ei niitä kaikkia voi mitenkää opettaa ni ainaki se että ois jonkunlainen taju siitä että tää ei kaikkialla ole samalla lailla tämä asia tai kaikkialla ei toimita niinku näin ku täällä meillä*

As example (29) illustrates, teachers can help learners to realise that they should be aware of different ways of using language in communication. Learners should understand that when they are using the language they need to pay attention to different factors that affect how utterances are formulated, context for instance. It was thought to be impossible to teach learners all the possible pragmatic principles, and thus the teachers' role was seen more as an adviser on when and where learners should be sensitive to language use. This way, teachers are able to facilitate learners' acquisition of pragmatic competence.

**Extrinsic motivation** was the third theme brought up in the interviews (see definitions for extrinsic and intrinsic motivation in section 6.2). Not every learner has intrinsic motivation to learn pragmatic principles but some learners are content with learning basic ways to use the language to get by. However, as one teacher argues in example (30), a teacher who can inspire learners to learn can also motivate them, at least extrinsically, to learn about pragmatic principles:

(30) T3: *se et mitä opettaja voi tehdä ni on tää ulkonen motivaatio eli saatko innostettua oppilaat oppimaan sihe aiheeseen*

The teacher in example (30) believes that a teacher can inspire learners to study pragmatic principles. A teacher can give a positive picture and emphasize the importance of learning to use language in different contexts, which in turn can result in positive learning results or even in pragmatic competence. The most common means to wake learners' extrinsic motivation in the present study was giving them positive feedback when they had successfully adopted a new pragmatic rule, and showing pragmatic competence in a positive light explaining its usefulness, which was most often done by providing anecdotes and personal examples from real life (will be further discussed in section 6.5.2). Stressing the importance of knowing how a language

behaves in different contexts and situations was seen to motivate learners to pay attention to pragmatic principles.

In short, the three themes addressed in the discussion of the role of a teacher in the acquisition of pragmatic competence were learning opportunities, sensitivity and extrinsic motivation. Teachers were seen to have a salient role in providing learners with a sufficient amount of opportunities that enable them to learn about pragmatic principles (as claimed by 6 teachers). In addition, teachers play a role in guiding learners to be more sensitive to the possible differences in language use between the target language and mother tongue (6 teachers). As it was assumed that it ultimately depends on the learner whether he or she is ever to possess pragmatic competence, it was stressed that teachers' job is to introduce tools and guidelines for learners about pragmatic principles, which they then can adopt and try to use in the future. A teacher was also seen as someone who can increase learners' extrinsic motivation to learn about pragmatic principles with positive feedback and encouragement (3 teachers).

#### 6.4 Teaching pragmatic competence

In this section, the research questions "What there is to teach about pragmatic principles?" and "How to teach them?" are discussed. In the interviews, the teachers were first asked what they thought there was to teach about pragmatic principles, and more specifically, what there was to teach about politeness, sarcasm and pragmatic routines. The teachers were further asked to explain what kinds of methods they might use to teach these. The chapter is divided into two sections the first discussing what the teachers considered to be teachable about pragmatic principles and the second examining how they could be taught.

##### 6.4.1 Teachability

The general question about what there is to teach about pragmatic principles proved to be somewhat problematic to answer. The concept of pragmatic competence was experienced to be so abstract (see section 6.1) and wide that it was felt difficult to limit it to specific skills. In addition, some areas of pragmatics, especially sarcasm and irony, were not included in teachable pragmatic principles at all. As example (31) shows, it

was believed that if a learner cannot understand sarcasm in his/her mother tongue, it is not possible to teach it in a foreign language:

(31) T5: *mut miten esimerkiks semmone oppilas joka ei suomeks ku eihän kaikki tajuu sitä suomeks ((sarkasmi)) ni miten se niinku ei mitää tsäänssiä sitte opettaa*

The teacher in example (31) comments on that if a learner simply has not the required intelligence to comprehend sarcasm even in Finnish, there is no chance to try and teach these principles in a foreign language (see section 6.1). This was the general idea throughout all the interviews. However, some areas of pragmatic competence were considered as teachable after all, and three themes were addressed in the interviews: formulaic forms of politeness, pragmatic routines and cultural conventions.

**Formulaic forms of politeness** was the first theme brought up. Knowing when to use *please, excuse me, thank you* etc. that is, common polite words that are used in a ritual kind of way in everyday communication was considered of importance. *Please* was undoubtedly regarded as the most important politeness word in the interviews. As example (32) illustrates, teachers wished to teach learners about formulaic forms of politeness so that they would become an automatic part of language use:

(32) T2: *että oppilaat muistais että se pitää laittaa se please sinne loppuun tai sanoo excuse me [...] et se jotenki automatisoituu et osataan laittaa se please*

The teacher in example (32) stresses that it would be important for learners to automatically begin to add *please* in the end of a request etc. so that communication would be polite. It was wished that formulaic forms of politeness would ultimately appear in learners' communication naturally without further thinking. Another teacher points out in example (33) that forgetting *please* may give a rude impression of the learner:

(33) T3: *esimerkiks please sanan käyttö ja nämä on keskeisiä kulttuurissa ku kulttuurissa et ei voi mennä sanoo et i want coffee se on sama ku kiroilis suomessa*

The teacher in example (33) observes that forgetting to use *please* in an English-speaking country equals swearing in Finland. It was often mentioned in the interviews that English is regarded as a more polite language. If a learner does not possess a high

language proficiency enough to form roundabout polite utterances using *could/would* etc., it would be important for him/her to at least be able to use *please, excuse me* etc. constantly in communication in order to not to appear impolite. The importance of formulaic politeness expressions was emphasized in every interview and they were seen to be among the most salient topics to teach about pragmatic principles.

**Pragmatic routines** was the second theme discussed. It was regarded as important to teach learners about frequently used expressions that have a standardized role in communication situations. For instance, adjacency pairs in greeting-greeting, offer-acceptance etc. were thought crucial to teach. In example (34), one teacher demonstrates how she tries to explain to learners that even though their answers to reaction exercises might be grammatically correct, they may sound strange in the ears of a native speaker, as they do not belong to the institutionalized utterances used by the community:

(34) T5: ... *vaikka jos nyt kirjassa on joku reagoititehtävä pitää vaikka iha kirjottaakki et mite reagoisit tämmösessä tilanteessa ni sit ku se käyää läpi ja sielt tulee erilaisia versioita oppilaalta ni sit mä yritän sanoo et hei okei kyllähä nyt noinki voi sanoo mut tuskin kukaan sanois että britit nyt vaa sanoo näin how do you do how do you do tai mitä se sitte on*

As example (34) shows, learners do not necessarily know how to use pragmatic routines in the conversation and the teacher feels she should stress that some frequent expressions are almost always used in certain situations. Even sentences that are grammatically correct and seem to fit into the conversation may sound strange simply because they are rarely used in communication by native speakers. Another teacher in example (35) points out how knowing how to react with common expressions may give a more friendly impression of oneself:

(35) T1: *onha se helpompi ehkä itekki sitte reagoida ja tiiät ne tietyt konventiot millä nytte tervehditään ja millo- miten kysytää kuulumisia ja miten niihin vastataa tai näi [...] antaa itestää niinku no jollai tavalla ehkä lähestyttävämmän kuvan jos sä oot siinä jo siinä semmosessa viestinnän semmosessa flowssa mukana*

The teacher in example (35) comments that if learners know how to use pragmatic routines, it is easier for them to get into the flow of communication. The teachers in general acknowledged that it is of salience to teach learners how to use pragmatic routines in order for them to communicate more fluently and smoothly in English. It

was also mentioned in the interviews that work books offer a good variety of activities to practice them, which eases the planning of teachers.

**Cultural conventions** was the third theme discussed. The theme overlaps with both of the previous themes in the sense that it refers to a “native-like communication” with the appropriate pragmatic routines and forms of politeness. The theme was, however, brought up beyond verbal communication since it included also appropriate behaviour in the target country. In the interviews, it was expressed that knowing the habits and values of the foreign culture, for example, what topics are off limits to refer to (money, religion etc.) or how to address other people in different situations is significant. As the teacher in example (36) argues, language competence alone is not enough to guarantee smooth communication for communication consists of aspects beyond grammar:

*(36) T4: ... ja sitte myöski sellaset niinku siihen kuuluu aikalailla kuitenkin tapakulttuurin ymmärtämine ja ja niinku sillee se ei riitä pelkkä kielitaito että että tosiaa siinä pitää ymmärtää miten tietyistä kulttuureista tulevat ihmiset kommunikoi ja heijän ehkä huumorintajuaan jopa tai tai tota niinni sitte kulttuurisidonnaisia sanontoja tai sitte iha käytöstapoja*

In example (36), the teacher ponders how language competence alone does not guarantee successful communication. Knowledge of culture is needed to be capable of communicating fluently, for example, knowledge of customs or people’s general sense of humour. As example (37) illustrates, conventions of a culture was considered important along with knowing what is appropriate and what is not:

*(37) T1: ... kulttuuriin liittyvät tavat ja et miten joku- miten kannattaa ilmasta- miten jossa tietyssä kulttuurissa joku sanotaan mikä on kohteliasta ja mikä sopivaa*

As both the examples (36) and (37) show, communication was connected to a wider concept than merely language, and the teachers claimed that it of importance for learners to know about conveniences and appropriateness in a given culture. Pragmatic principles were connected to knowledge about cultural differences. It was criticized, though, that it is sometimes difficult to try and teach about the cultural values. Teachers do not necessarily have enough knowledge about different cultures, and since the information in books often stays on a rather superficial level, learners may end up lacking deep knowledge of the habits and values of English-speaking cultures.

To sum up, the themes referred as teachable pragmatic principles included formulaic forms of politeness, pragmatic routines and cultural differences. Firstly, formulaic forms of politeness were regarded as a teachable and important aspect of pragmatic principles (as claimed by 6 teachers). Each teacher stressed the importance to know when to use *please, excuse me, thank you* etc. in order to not to appear rude in communication. Secondly, pragmatic routines were a theme that meant the ability to use frequently used expressions in communication (6 teachers). It was argued that to be able to keep up the flow of conversation the knowledge of pragmatic routines is necessary. Thirdly, teaching about cultural conventions was considered teachable and important (6 teachers). It was acknowledged that communication goes beyond language competence; one must know what is appropriate and conventional in a given culture.

#### 6.4.2 Teaching methods

After the teachers had contemplated the teachable aspects of pragmatic principles they were asked to ponder what kinds of methods could be used to teach them. Three themes were addressed in the interviews: positive evidence, implicit instruction and explicit instruction. **Positive evidence** was the first theme brought up in the interviews. It was observed that pragmatic rules, especially rules considering implicature, are often pointed out in the text and explained shortly, but learners are not necessarily asked to practice them in any way. Teachers tended to show learners positive evidence especially in the forms of authentic materials, which were considered ideal for raising learners' awareness. It was argued that the best way to show learners how the language in interaction works is to show them, for instance, TV-series or movies. It was also suggested that implicature in speech acts, for example, could be examined through watching a movie and stopping the movie every once in a while to discuss how the language is used. In addition, even if the teachers would not themselves teach sarcasm, they came with a proposition that by watching funny TV-series, learners may learn about and become more aware of the different kinds of humour.

One means to expose learners to positive evidence was examples: teachers' own language use as an example and examples of real life situations. Each teacher explained that they hoped to set an example of an English speaking person in class. They aimed to use typical forms of politeness, humour and pragmatic routines hoping that learners would through the examples realize how to use the language in communication. In

example (38) one teacher ponders how she believes that her own example may act as positive evidence for learners and they may in this way adopt the rules of language use to their own pragmatic competence:

*(38) T1: tosi paljonha se on siitä ihan niinku opettajan omasta esimerkistä et miten sää siellä ryhmässä toimit ja ite käyttäydyt ja mitä- miten sä sitä kieltä käytät missäkin jutussa [...] omalla esimerkillä koska ne kyllä sitä- kyl mä uskon että ne sieltä tarttuu toki ne voi iha ottaa esillekki jos jostai tämmösestä puhutaan että mi- milloin sanotaan mitäki mutta tota tai mut kyl mä uskon et omalla esimerkillä että nyt niinku aattelee vaikka itteään siellä luokassa*

As example (38) illustrates, the teacher felt strongly that their own example in class raises learners' awareness of pragmatic principles. It was claimed in the interviews that the teachers' goal is to set a good example of an English-speaking person in class. In addition, telling learners real life examples and anecdotes about communication issues was thought to be an effective way to wake learners' awareness. As the teacher in example (39) mentions, learners are eager to hear about real life situations:

*(39) T3: kerrotaan omakohtasia kokemuksia ja oppilaat tykkää anekdooteista huomattavan paljo*

The teacher in example (39) explains that he uses his own experiences as examples for learners. It was discussed in the interviews that teachers' own real life examples may serve as positive evidence of rules of language use. Besides, learner's examples can be used for the same purpose. I was mentioned in the interviews that the teachers encourage learners' to share their experiences in class, so that they become commonly shared knowledge. All in all, it was suggested in the interviews that showing learners positive evidence may help them acquire pragmatic competence.

**Implicit instruction** was the second theme brought up. Reasonably often pragmatic principles would be taught through implicit instruction meaning that learners are provided with input and allowed to draw their own conclusions with only minimal guidance from the teacher. Comparison was undoubtedly the most popular means of teaching implicitly. Especially forms of politeness were regularly taught by comparing the Finnish and English languages. Teachers would show the same expressions in Finnish and English and learners would be asked to try and figure out how the rules of politeness differ between the two languages. As is discussed in example (40), by

comparing the two languages learners may comprehend the different ways of expressing politeness:

*(40) T5: ni tietenki mitä nyt tuli nyt ensimmäisenä tää pleaseen käyttö ja tämmönen mieleen just kohteliaita kommunikointitapoja ja sitä vertailemaa että ehkä suomessa sitä samaa ei välttämättä aina ilmasta sitte samalla tavalla*

As the teacher in example (40) contemplates, politeness was often taught through comparison by letting learners to try and interpret the rules of language use. It was also mentioned that inductive teaching can be used to teach other areas of pragmatic competence as well. Even though none of teachers considered it worthwhile to teach sarcasm, an example was given of a work book exercise teaching sarcasm. In example (41), the teacher explains how in the book there was an extract of a novel by Bill Bryson and learners were asked to figure out how sarcasm was created:

*(41) T4: ... siinä on otettu esiin se tekstin- se on kaunokirjallinen Bill Brysonin tekstikatkelma joka on nimenomaan hyvin tämmönen ironia-kautta sarkasmipitonen [...] että on annettu sieltä kohat että miten nämä niinku nämä- nää tota niinni sanat tai asiat liittyy tähän tekstiin ja miten ne niinku- mikä niissä on sarkasmia*

As example (41) shows, inductive teaching could be used to teach other aspects of pragmatic principles as well, not only forms of politeness. However, most often implicit instruction was used to teach the English forms of politeness.

**Explicit instruction** was the third theme raised in the interviews. Explicit instruction referred to teaching where teachers provide learners with clear explanations and rules about the topic in question. Explicitly taught topics were also practised in class through oral or written exercises. Explicit instruction did not play as a considerable role in teaching methods as, for example, exposing learners to positive evidence. It was believed that intelligent learners pick up pragmatic rules from the positive evidence by themselves and it was not felt worth the effort to even try and teach all the aspects of pragmatic principles to weaker learners. However, in the interviews, it was argued that sometimes explicit instruction too is used in class.

Explicit instruction was most often used to teach pragmatic principles that relate to grammar. In example (42) a teacher describes how she taught polite forms of questions simultaneously with conditional forms:

(42) T2: *ku me nyt ollaa kasien kaa harjoteltu jotai konditionaalialia tai futuuria tai tämmösiä ni sitte sitä et jos siellä on se could tai should tai would nii sitte mitetittii sitä et millon se on kysymys ku joku kysyy et et onks se sitte kysymys aina jos siellä on se could ni sit et no se on kohtelias kysymys että could you give me the pen tai sitte would you give me the pen tai give me the pen ni se että ne niinku ymmärtää se että mites mä nyt sanoisin*

As example (42) illustrates, forms of politeness could be explicitly taught when they were combined with grammar teaching. In the example, polite ways of forming a question were practiced at the same time as the conditional, for the words *could*, *would* and *should* are used in both. Another teacher mentions in example (43) that explicit instruction does not have to be planned, but can be used as topics emerge in class:

(43) T1: *öö no mun mielestä se nii tommosia asioita jos niitä nousee esiin tai huomaa tollasia tilanteita mun mielestä ne voi ihan niinku eksplisiittisesti niihinki niinku tarttua et hei tässon muut tämmönen että että huomasitteko*

In example (43) the teacher points out how explicit instruction can also be used as different pragmatic principles randomly emerge in input or exercises in class. Basically all kinds of principles could be explicitly explained and taught when learners begin to wonder about them. Nonetheless, explicit instruction was mainly connected to teaching polite roundabout expressions, such as requests and questions.

In short, three themes were addressed in the discussion about methods to teach pragmatic principles: positive evidence, implicit instruction and explicit instruction. First, all the teachers stressed that they believed positive evidence was the most salient means for them to teach pragmatic principles (as claimed by 6 teachers). It was argued that showing learners positive evidence, especially in the forms of authentic material, such as TV-series or movies, and examples and anecdotes, enhances their chance to acquire pragmatic competence. Since it was claimed that only intelligent learners can acquire pragmatic competence, deductive teaching was not often thought to be that beneficial, but it was assumed that intelligent learners pick up rules themselves. Second, implicit instruction was often used in the sense that learners were asked to compare expressions between Finnish and English and figure out how the expressions differ, for instance, how polite utterances differ between Finnish and English (4 teachers). Third, explicit instruction was mostly used when grammar is connected to a topic related to a

pragmatic principle (3 teachers). It was also mentioned, that explicit instruction may be used as topics randomly emerge in class.

## 6.5 Evaluation

The last research question examined if the teachers felt that it is necessary to test and evaluate pragmatic competence. The teachers were asked whether they thought it to be necessary to evaluate learners' pragmatic competence and if yes, how it could be carried out. The research question resulted in the most contradictory answers from the teachers: themes both against and in favour of testing and evaluating were brought up. The chapter is, hence, divided into two sections of which the first introduces themes against evaluation and the second those in favour of evaluation. A discussion of the means of evaluation and testing is provided in the second section.

### 6.5.1 Against evaluation

Two themes were addressed against evaluating: unfairness and lack of a suitable method. **Unfairness** was the first theme to be brought up. Since pragmatic competence was seen as something that only skilful learners with high language proficiency can obtain, testing weaker learner of pragmatic principles was considered unfair. The following example (44) illustrates well the teachers' feelings about the unfairness of possible evaluation:

*(44) T3: mut sitte on vaa semmosia oppilaita jotka ei vaa pysty lukemaa rivie välistä ei osaa sitä ni sit se ois vähä niinku epäreilua ja sit se mittais mun mielestä jo vähä eri asiaa kun sitä kielen osaamista*

The teacher in example (44) argues that some learners are never able to gain pragmatic competence, or the so called ability to read between the lines, even in their native language, and for these learners the testing of something that is not achievable would be highly unfair. He also states that at some point it would no longer be a question of testing of language competence, but testing something else, such as the general ability to understand pragmatic principles in communication in any language. Another teacher in example (45) claims similarly that for some learners language learning is such a demanding process that they never fully succeed in it and for this reason the testing of pragmatic competence would be unfair:

*(45) T2: on semmosia oppilaita joille se kieli on hankalaa ja ne ei sitä vaa hiffaa ni sitte ei niitä voi sakottaa siitä et ne ei sitä opi kun taas jotku voi oppia sen niinku helpostikkin ja sitte osaa sitte ite jo käyttää*

The teacher explains in example (45) that as a teacher one cannot demand a learner to be able to learn pragmatic principles if he/she has trouble even with the basics in the language. It could even be seen as a punishment for them to be evaluated for something that they simply are not able to master. Whereas some learners may learn to use pragmatic principles rather easily, others cannot advance beyond the level of operating with the literal meanings of utterances.

Thus, the theme of unfairness referred to the worry that testing would turn out to be unfair in the sense that it could favour skilful learners at the expense of weaker learners. Weaker learners would not have the opportunity to achieve good grades due to their lack of general ability to understand pragmatic principles in any given language. The testing would, therefore, begin to measure something else than one's language skills.

**Lack of a suitable method of evaluating** was the second theme against evaluation. It was discussed that teachers lack an effective means of testing: they were uncertain what the most feasible way of testing and evaluating could be. In example (46) it is commented on how demanding it is to decide when a learner has succeeded in using pragmatic principles correctly:

*(46) T1: aika vaikee sit kuitenkin arvioida et millon se on onnistunu [...] niinku että en tietäs millä sitä lähtis arvioimaan*

The teacher in example (46) feels that it is difficult to judge and measure when and how well learners have succeeded in their learning of pragmatic principles. It was argued that figuring out the best way to evaluate pragmatic skills was too challenging and for this reason it was stated that evaluation was not necessary. One teacher suggested that the time used in testing would be better used with practicing pragmatic principles forgetting testing. Furthermore, as it is mentioned in example (47), evaluation often requires the object of evaluation to be separated into its own unit so that accurate evaluation could be possible. The teachers felt that they lacked the ability to formulate tests that would be able to separate pragmatic principles from overall language use to a unit that could be evaluated:

*(47) T6: nii nii mä en tiedä se on ehkä vähän vaikea ajatella sitä niinku omana juttunaan et miten sitä sit lähettäis arvioimaan*

As the teacher observes in example (47), pragmatic competence was seen as an inseparable part of language competence in the present study (see section 6.1) and she is, therefore, uncertain of how it could be separated to its own unit for evaluation. Since the teachers found it problematic to measure when a learner has succeeded in using pragmatic principles and how to separate pragmatic principles as its own unit for testing, they concluded that they lacked a suitable method for evaluation.

In other words, the themes addressed against evaluation in the interviews were unfairness and lack of a suitable method. The testing and evaluating of pragmatic competence was considered to be unfair to weaker learners who were believed to lack the ability to gain pragmatic competence (as claimed by 6 teachers). If it is assumed that not everyone can operate on the higher level of language use, i.e. read between the lines, even in their mother tongue, it would not be fair to test them about it in a foreign language, since they would always get low grades. Another reason to doubt testing and evaluation was the lack of a suitable method (3 teachers) that would adequately measure learners' knowledge of pragmatic principles. Some of the teachers contemplated that this kind of method has not yet been invented.

#### 6.5.2 In favour of evaluation

The themes addressed in favour of evaluation were scattered and less unanimous. Four themes were brought up in the interviews: oral tests, written tests, informal evaluation and authentic evaluation. **Oral tests** was the first theme discussed in the interviews. Oral tests were seen to serve as a feasible means of testing learners' ability to keep up the flow of conversation, for instance, testing how idiomatically learners react to adjacency pairs. Upper secondary school teachers pointed out that this kind of a test is held in the connection with a voluntary oral course. In the test learners are evaluated partly on the basis on how fluently and idiomatically they are able to respond to certain sayings in English. In example (48), one upper secondary school teacher discusses the nature of the oral test:

*(48) T3: aikasemmin syksyllä pidin työkaverin kanssa suullisia kokeita ja siinä oli siis arviointina se että minkälai- miten sujuvaa se puhumine on ja*

*myös yhtenä- yhtenä tota niin ni mikä yhtenä barometrinä nii sanotusti oli semmone et millä tavalla reagoi toisen puheeseen millä sanasavalinnoilla reagoi esimerkiksi siihen et joku vaikka toivottaa hyvää viikonloppua ni miten idiomaattisesti oikein sä reagoit siihen*

The teacher explains in example (48) that one criterion for evaluation in the test is fluency and idiomaticity. Learners need to be aware of and know how to use pragmatic principles to respond in an appropriate way to adjacency pairs and other common sayings, for instance, how to respond when someone wishes *Have a nice weekend*. Oral tests were mainly seen suitable for testing responding to adjacency pairs and small talk. They were not considered as a means to test and evaluate the ability to understand other aspects of pragmatic principles, for instance, sarcasm, since it would be too advanced for weaker learners and for this reason unfair, as was discussed in the previous section 6.5.1.

**Written tests** were the second theme mentioned in the interviews. Written tests were considered to be suitable for testing and evaluating the ability to vary language registers in accordance to contexts. Written tests, in the form of essays, poems, talks, articles, for instance, often require the writer to pay attention to the context: who is it targeted to, where could it be published etc. A political speech differs a great deal from a speech in a best friend's birthday party, in the same way an e-mail to one's employer differs from an e-mail to a close friend. Written tests could help teachers to evaluate learners' knowledge about pragmatic principles in written communication showing how well learners are able to take notice of the context in question. Example (49) illustrates one teacher's idea of how a written test can serve as a test of learners' ability to take context into consideration:

*(49) T4: ehkä kirjallisessa puolessa liittyy siihen että se aineessa opetetaan että sä- jos sul on kirje ni sun pitää tietyt asiat ottaa huomioon jos sun pitää kirjottaa puhe tietynlaiselle yleisölle onko se sitte syntymäpäiväpuhe vai tota niinni jollekki delegaatiolle vai jossaki poliitikoille ja muuta ni ehkä sellasessa tulee sitä sitte käytyä läpi et rekisteriä ja sitte sitä sitä tota niinni ite tilannetta että miten se huomioidaa siinä kielenkäytössä*

The teacher in example (49) suggests that for instance when writing a speech, learners need to be able to take notice of context in order to write an appropriate speech. In other words, a written test could be suitable for testing and evaluating learners' capability to vary their language in accordance with the context in question. Teachers can evaluate

how well learners can use different language registers in their writing and how well they are able to take notice of contexts, for instance, formality.

**Informal evaluation** was the third theme addressed. It was argued that even though pragmatic principles would not be systematically evaluated by tests or exams, it is still informally constantly evaluated by teachers. Since pragmatic competence is an inseparable part of language use (see section 6.1) teachers can evaluate it continually in class. As the teacher explains in example (50), mastering pragmatic principles is often evident in learners' language use in class, during spoken or written exercises, and teachers are, thus, able to take it into consideration when grading learners:

*(50) T6: kyllähän niitä tavallaan arvioidaankin [...] jos mietitää et kyllähä me vaikka perinteisesti arvioidaan kokeilla jotka on usein kirjallisia niin kyllähän nekin sitä kielitajua niinku hyvin pitkälti mittaa kyllähän sielläki niinku se tavallaan näkyy et ootko sä ymmärtäny sen niinku sen kokonaisuuden siitä hommasta eiköhän se- se tavallaan niinku liippaa siihen mut kyllähä opettaja niinku arvioi koko ajan sitä luokkatilannetta et- et kyllähän niinku tietyllä tapaa mut ehkä se ei oo niin niinku sillai systemaattista*

Even though there would not be particular sections in exams that measure precisely pragmatic principles, the teacher in example (50) claims that it does not imply that evaluation does not take place at all. Teachers tend to evaluate learners' overall language competence constantly in class, and as pragmatic competence is one aspect of learners' language competence, it is a part of the evaluation, even if it were not that systematic. It can be said that pragmatic competence is evaluated informally all the time in class.

**Authentic evaluation** was the last theme brought up. As it is suggested in example (51), an ideal way of evaluating learners' knowledge of pragmatic principles could be authentic evaluation with the help of a native English speaker. A native speaker could talk with learners and at the same time evaluate how well they seem to be using pragmatic principles in their utterances:

*(51) T4: niinku ihanteellisintahan ois heittää sinne joku natiivi sekaan ja jolla ois aikaa kaikkien kanssa niinku keskustella läpi ja kattoo miten ne selviää*

Naturally, this idea of a native speaker evaluator must be taken hypothetically. It would be impossible to arrange a native speaker to every school to test learners' knowledge of

pragmatic principles. Yet, as native speakers have the feel of the language, the instinct knowledge of what kind of language is appropriate in what situation, and what one should respond to different utterances, such as adjacency pairs, they could serve as ideal evaluators of learners' pragmatic competence.

In short, the themes addressed in favour of testing and evaluation were oral tests, written tests, informal evaluation and authentic evaluation. Firstly, oral tests were seen as feasible means of testing communication skills, more specifically, how idiomatically learners are able to use pragmatic routines and respond to adjacency pairs (as claimed by 3 teachers). Secondly, also written tests were considered a possible method of testing and evaluating (3 teachers). With written tests, learners' knowledge of language registers, for instance, formality could be tested in the form of essays, poems, talks, articles etc. Thirdly, it was claimed that learners' pragmatic competence is, in fact, constantly informally evaluated (1 teacher). As teachers continually evaluate learners' actions in class, they naturally also pay attention to learners' ability to use pragmatic principles in their speaking and writing. Fourthly, it was suggested that an ideal method for evaluation would be to have a native speaker of English in class (1 teacher) who could communicate with learners and in this way evaluate their knowledge of pragmatic principles.

## 7 DISCUSSION

The aim of the present study was to examine teachers' notions on pragmatic competence. As the present study was a descriptive study, the purpose was to discover what kinds of personal experiences and notions the teachers have concerning the nature and teaching of pragmatic competence. The present study had five research questions that dealt with the overall nature of pragmatic competence, teachers', as well as learners', role in the acquisition of pragmatic competence, and teaching and evaluating pragmatic competence. The data was collected by using semi-structured interviews which were recorded, transcribed and analyzed for its content. When analysing the content, themes were found that described well teachers' notions on pragmatic competence. These themes were reported in the previous chapter are in this chapter discussed further in terms of information gained through the theoretical background and previous studies on the topic.

The first research question was concerned with the teachers' personal definitions of pragmatic competence. The aim was to discover how the teachers would define the concept in their own words. In the present study, pragmatic competence was described as an ability to understand and use the conventional rules of language and the ability to distinguish what conditions make utterances acceptable and appropriate in a given situation (see section 3.2). In the interviews, the teachers had somewhat similar notions on pragmatic competence as the present study: the most often brought up themes were the ability to make circumspect decisions and different mode of thinking and acting. In addition, polishing and abstractness were themes addressed.

All the teachers argued that pragmatic competence means the ability to read contextual clues in communicative situations and modify one's language use in accordance with the situations. Furthermore, it was claimed that when communicating in English, one has to adopt a different way of thinking and acting, and often use somewhat different communication strategies than one does in communicating in Finnish. These descriptions seem to indicate that the teachers do understand the concept of pragmatic competence. However, pragmatic competence was also perceived as a highly abstract concept that could not be separated from the overall communicative competence: when asked how to more specifically describe pragmatic competence, the teachers still talked about it rather vaguely having difficulties in naming particular pragmatic principles. This implies that the teachers understand the concept on the level of theory, but cannot necessarily bring it to the level of practice in class.

In addition, the teachers argued that pragmatic competence is a highly learner-centred concept that is not for every learner to worry about: it is polishing for intelligent learners with high language proficiency. Even though the teachers stressed the importance to know how to use appropriate language, they at the same time excluded weaker learners from the learning of pragmatic principles. It was believed that mastering pragmatic principles is something extra with which to polish one's language use when high language proficiency has been achieved. This is rather alarming, since as will be discussed in the following paragraph, this means that the teachers will not necessarily even try to teach pragmatic principles to weaker learners.

The second research question dealt with learner characteristics. The purpose was to discover what learner characteristics influence the acquisition of pragmatic competence.

According to the teachers, language proficiency, intelligence, motivation, subjective experiences and sensitivity have a facilitative role in the acquisition of pragmatic competence. As already mentioned above, the teachers contemplated unanimously that intelligent learners with high language proficiency are most likely to learn pragmatic principles, whereas weaker learners will probably never succeed in mastering them.

It has also previously been argued that somewhat high language proficiency is needed for a learner to acquire pragmatic competence (see section 4.1). For example, it has been claimed that learners with low language proficiency are unable to pay attention to the pragmatic principles in communication, since it takes such an effort to produce even basic utterances (Hassall, 2008: 77-79). Learners with low language proficiency simply do not have the cognitive ability to learn pragmatic principles. Further, in the interviews, the teachers pointed out that if a learner only understands some words in a sentence, it is unlikely that he/she will be able to look beyond the literal meaning of the sentence. However, no research has yet proven cast iron that pragmatic principles could not be taught to learners with lower language proficiency, for example beginning learners. As a matter of fact, one current concern of pragmatic research is to discover whether pragmatic principles could also be taught for the beginning learners with lower language proficiency (Kasper and Rose, 2003: 245).

Intrinsic motivation, subjective experiences and sensitivity were also brought up in the interviews. The teachers believed that learners who have experiences of using English abroad or in some other way with native speakers have gained experiences of communicating in English which helps them to understand different aspects of language use. Also previous research has found out that the time spent in the target culture often facilitates the acquisition of pragmatic competence (Bardovi-Harlig 2001: 24-29) (see section 4.1). Learners who have experienced communication personally in the target culture often realize that there is more to communication than grammatically correct sentences and this guides them to take notice of other aspects, such as context, in communication. The teachers also pointed out in the interviews that learners with intrinsic motivation to learn the language also learn pragmatic principles more easily, as they often are eager to try and use the language in a different way in their free time. Moreover, some learners are inherently sensitive to language noticing how it is used in different situations.

The third research question aimed to find out about the role of a teacher in the acquisition of pragmatic competence. As pragmatic competence was thought of as a highly learner-centred phenomenon; something only intelligent learners can acquire and weaker learners cannot, teachers' role was seen to be minor, yet not insignificant. Three themes were addressed in the interviews: learning opportunities, sensitivity and extrinsic motivation. Since it was believed that intelligent learners are able to pick up pragmatic rules on their own, the teachers felt that their most important task was to provide learners with a sufficient amount of learning opportunities to enable them to learn about pragmatic principles. It was pointed out that learners need as much exposure to the language in class as possible. As learners encounter different communicative situations through exposure in class, the most intelligent learners will pick up pragmatic principles along other learning.

Also previous studies have stressed the significance of input: it has been pointed out that the availability of relevant input in class is of importance when teaching pragmatics (Bardovi-Harlig 2001: 24-25) (see section 4.2). However, it seems that input in the form of simple exposure to positive evidence is not enough to help learners to develop pragmatic competence (Takahashi 2001: 171-199). It has been argued that in order for input to become intake for language learning, it has to be actively noticed by learners (Schmidt 1993: 27). The acquisition of pragmatic competence is unlikely to happen if learners do not notice and understand pragmatic principles.

The teachers also pointed out that they have a role in the acquisition of pragmatic competence in guiding learners to be more sensitive to differences in communication between Finnish and English and kindling their extrinsic motivation. Teachers can serve as someone who guides learners to take notice of pragmatic principles so that they understand that communication may have different kinds of rules in English than it has in Finnish. Moreover, teachers can inspire and motivate learners to try and learn pragmatic principles with positive feedback, examples etc. and this way kindle learners' extrinsic motivation.

The fourth research question was divided in two: the first question dealt with the teachability of pragmatic competence and the second with the methods of teaching them. One concern in the research on pragmatics has been whether pragmatic principles are teachable or not. Since pragmatic competence refers to the capability of mapping of

form, meaning, force and context all together, its teaching cannot be tied to a specific form (Kasper and Rose, 2003: 249-264). In the interviews, the teachers argued that pragmatic competence as a concept is highly abstract and cannot necessarily be separated from overall communicative competence. They had difficulties in naming particular pragmatic principles, which naturally reflected in their opinions on teachability. Some pragmatic principles, sarcasm, for example, were excluded from teachable principles. Anyhow, the teachers named three pragmatic principles that they claimed to be teachable in class: formulaic forms of politeness, pragmatic routines and cultural conventions.

The most salient teachable pragmatic principle according to the present study was formulaic forms of politeness. All the teachers emphasized the importance to know how to use formulaic forms of politeness, such as *please*, *excuse me*, *thank you*, which are constantly used in everyday communication in the target cultures. It was argued that even if weaker learners do not learn to form complicated roundabout polite expressions, they still can learn to add formulaic forms of politeness to end sentences. It was hoped that learners would ultimately become so used to these forms that they would appear automatically in communication. Another teachable pragmatic principle that was considered important was pragmatic routines. It was believed that an ability to use these frequently used expressions that have a standardized role in conversation helps learners to keep up with the flow of conversation. Learners may sound strange if they do not use the frequently used expressions when responding to adjacency pairs, for example. In addition, it was claimed that it is salient to teach about cultural conventions. It was pointed out that language competence alone does not guarantee smooth communication, as communication consists of aspects beyond grammar. However, the teachers complained that they did not necessarily have enough knowledge of the target cultures and as information in books stays at rather superficial level, learners may not be able to acquire deep knowledge of the cultural conventions of the target cultures.

Previous research on methods of teaching pragmatic competence has for the main part been a debate between explicit and implicit instruction. This far, the majority of the research seems to support explicit instruction, although, evidence supporting implicit instruction has also been found (Takahashi 2001; Rose and Kwai-fun 2001; Tateyama 2001; Schmidt 1993) (see section 4.2). In the interviews, the teachers addressed three

methods for teaching pragmatic competence: positive evidence, implicit instruction and explicit instruction.

The teachers argued that showing learners positive evidence in the form of authentic material and examples and anecdotes of real life communication situations is the most feasible method for teaching pragmatic principles. Implicit teaching was often used to teach how forms of politeness differ between Finnish and English; learners were asked to compare expressions and explain what kinds of differences could be found. Explicit teaching was the least frequently used method. It was mostly used only when grammar was connected to a certain pragmatic principle, such as the conditional forms *would*, *could* and *should*.

Curiously, whereas previous research emphasizes mostly explicit instruction in teaching pragmatic principles, in the present study it was considered the least valuable method. One reason can be the fact that the teachers did not know how to explicitly teach pragmatic principles. As it was previously mentioned, the teachers described pragmatic competence as a highly abstract concept and they had difficulties in naming particular pragmatic principles. Since they believe that only intelligent learners can acquire pragmatic competence independently, showing positive evidence was considered as the most feasible method for teaching pragmatic competence. It seems that the teachers simply do not have the means to teach the principles.

The fifth research question was concerned with evaluation. If pragmatic principles should be taught in class, how could they be tested and evaluated? The answers could roughly be divided in two: themes against evaluation and themes in favour of evaluation. Themes against evaluation included unfairness and lack of a suitable method. These themes, as well as the previous themes, reflect the teachers' overall notions of pragmatic competence: since it was believed that only intelligent learners can acquire pragmatic competence, it was considered unfair to weaker learners to test something they are never able to acquire. In addition, as the teachers had difficulties in naming particular pragmatic principles, they therefore also had difficulties in figuring out what kind of test could be used to evaluate them. It was further argued that as pragmatic competence is so merged in the overall communication skills, its evaluating would mean evaluating something else than language learning.

Naturally, also suggestions for evaluation were brought up. Themes addressed in favour of evaluation included oral tests, written tests, informal evaluation and authentic evaluation. It was proposed that oral tests could be used to test learners' communication skills, namely how idiomatically learners are able to use pragmatic routines in a conversation and respond to adjacency pairs. Written tests were thought suitable for testing learners' knowledge of language registers. Written tests in the form of essays, poems, talks, articles etc. could measure whether learners know how to modify language in accordance with context. Moreover, it was pointed out that as pragmatic competence is an inseparable part of overall communicative competence, teachers are in fact informally evaluating it. Not necessary with tests, but with observing the learner's language use in class. One interesting suggestion involved evaluation with the help of a native English speaker: a native speaker could communicate with learners in class and this way evaluate how smooth and fluent their use of pragmatic principles is.

In conclusion, the present study showed that teachers do have an idea of the essence of pragmatic competence, but mostly on the level of theory. They have difficulties in naming particular pragmatic principles being uncertain of what pragmatic principles could be taught and by what means. They do teach some principles, such as mechanical formulaic forms of politeness and pragmatic routines, but they rarely do it explicitly, which, according to previous research, has most often proven to be the most efficient way to teach pragmatic principles. In addition, pragmatic competence was perceived as a highly learner-centred concept: it was believed that in the end, only intelligent learners can learn pragmatic principles doing it somewhat without guidance, whereas weaker learners were somewhat excluded from the acquisition of pragmatic competence. It was not considered to be worth the effort to even try and teach more complicated pragmatic principles to weaker learners. Since it was assumed that intelligent learners are able to pick up the rules on their own, it was believed that merely showing positive evidence in class facilitates intelligent learners' acquisition of pragmatic competence the most. In contrast to the previous studies, explicit instruction served only a minor role in teaching. Further, the evaluation of pragmatic competence raised mixed feelings in the teachers. The major issue was that the teachers lacked a suitable means of evaluation, and they were not sure what pragmatic principles could be tested and by what means. Some suggestions were naturally mentioned, but generally the answers concerning evaluation were scattered.

All in all, it seems that as previous research has strongly concentrated on the development of pragmatic competence from the viewpoint of learners, it has been forgotten that teachers may lack the knowledge and competence to teach it. If the teaching of pragmatic principles were to be improved in schools, it would mean that teachers should be made more aware of pragmatic competence and showed how the different principles could be taught. Assuming that teachers are uncertain of the concept and do not know how to teach it, it means that learning it truly relies on the shoulders of learners. This leaves weaker learners in a disadvantaged position leaving the acquisition of pragmatic competence beyond their reach.

## 8 CONCLUSION

To conclude the present study, the strengths and limitations of the study are discussed together with suggestions for further study. Each choice of method brings strengths and limitations to the research process and they need to be carefully taken into considerations when conducting a study. In the present study, data was collected with the help of a semi-structured interview, and in this chapter the challenges the method posed are discussed in detail. In addition, suggestions about how further research could be conducted are considered.

The present study was a descriptive qualitative study. As the purpose was to collect qualitative data which helps to understand and describe participants' personal feelings and experiences, the method of semi-structured interviewing was chosen for data collecting. In qualitative research, it is believed that the reality is subjective: the reality is socially constructed and everyone experiences it subjectively in their own way (Hirsjärvi and Hurme 2000: 22-27). By interviewing, the researcher is able to bring up the participants' personal interpretations of the reality. A semi-structured interview enables participants to freely express their feelings and experiences still keeping the focus of the interview on a particular topic (Patton 2002: 343). Often, when analysing data collected by a semi-structured interview, the purpose is to find themes that describe the topic in question (Metsämuuronen 2008: 41), as was done in the present study. For this reason semi-structured interviews are often simply called theme interviews. Theme interviews lack the strict order and form of structured interviews giving more freedom to the interviewer, still keeping the focus on the themes chosen for the interview (Hirsjärvi and Hurme 2000: 48).

The data of the present study was further analysed for its content. Conducting content analysis means describing the topic in question and creating a lucid description of it in a reduced form (Tuomi and Sarajärvi 2009: 103). In qualitative analysis the data can be grouped by themes or types (Eskola 2010: 193). With types, the researcher constructs the most common types of topics from the data that describe the responses generally. With themes, the data is organised by themes that are addressed and insightful quotations from the data are presented in the research report for interpretation. In the present study, the focus in the data analysis was on themes.

All in all the present study was successful. The chosen method, i.e. a semi-structured interview, proved to be feasible: the aims were fulfilled and research questions responded. Further, the responses captured new information on pragmatic competence. For example, it was found that even though teachers do have an idea of what is meant by pragmatic competence, they were uncertain of it on the level of practice. Teachers have difficulties in knowing what pragmatic principles to teach and how. The teachers who took part in the present study had positive thoughts of the interviews; some of them explained that they agreed to do the interview because of an atypical choice of topic. This also suggests that pragmatic competence was a somewhat new and unfamiliar concept to the teachers.

One limitation of the present study was the ambiguity of the topic. The concept of pragmatic competence is challenging: it is rather a new topic in the field of language learning and teaching and an all encompassing description of it has yet to be achieved. For this reason, the teachers had to be provided with a description of pragmatic competence in advance of the interviews. In the description, the term pragmatic competence was roughly explained together with examples of some pragmatic principles. This description both facilitated and posed challenges to the present study. On the one hand, the interviewer could not have necessarily gained enough information from the teachers without the description, since the concept of pragmatic competence was somewhat unfamiliar to them. The teachers might not have had enough knowledge of the topic to discuss it, so the description served as a suitable means to guarantee that the teachers were able to provide enough information. On the other hand, the description is likely to have influenced the teachers' notions of the concept and guided their descriptions to some extent. Fortunately, all the teachers attempted to explain their notions of pragmatic competence and its teaching in their own words, considering the

topic from the point of their own experiences, which enabled the interviewer to gather information that was personal and not too influenced by the description provided by the interviewer.

Another limitation of the study was the nature of the data collection and analysis. When using the method of interviewing, reliability may be occasionally questioned due to the possibility of the interviewer interpreting the data subjectively (Tuomi and Sarajärvi 2009: 134-137). For example, the interviewer's demographic background and value system may affect the interpretation of the data. However, the nature of qualitative research is, and has always been ambiguous in the sense that the analysis depends on the interpretation of the researcher (Hirsjärvi and Hurme 2000: 151). It can be said that during the research process, interpretations are done in many different phases: the researcher interprets the participants' interpretations and the reader interprets the researcher' interpretations. When reporting the study, the researcher ultimately decides what he/she thinks the most important interpretations are (Kiviniemi 2010: 80-81). Means to guarantee reliability are to use more than one researchers' interpretations or a carefully written research report in which all the phases and methods of the research process are clearly presented (Hirsjärvi and Hurme 2000: 189). In the present study, the reliability has been guaranteed by explaining the research process in detail, introducing methods, participants, etc. together with illustrative quotations from the data.

One risk concerning the reliability of interviewing is that the interviewer prompts the interviewee towards such answers that he/she expects to hear, or that the interviewee responds in a socially approved way. The inter-subjectivity in interaction cannot be entirely avoided in research, since every individual socially constructs and interprets his/her own personal reality (Hirsjärvi and Hurme 2000: 186). It is salient for the researcher to practice interviewing in advance and take active notice of these challenges so that he/she can modify his/her behaviour to be able to overtake these difficulties. In the present study, a pilot interview was conducted in order to practice interviewing.

Even though the method for data collection, a semi-structured interview, posed challenges for the present study as discussed above, it can at the same time be considered a strength of the study. When reliability has been guaranteed and the interviewer has taken notice of his/her own role in the situation, the method of interviewing provides the researcher with personal in depth information from

participants. A semi-structured interview is flexible, since even if the focus is on particular themes the questions do not have to follow a strict order (Hirsjärvi and Hurme 2000: 48). The interviewer is also able to ask for clarifications and more details if felt that responses are at risk of staying on too a superficial level. Interviewing is also suitable when studying a small number of participants and when the topic of the research is somewhat unfamiliar to the participants. In the present study, with semi-structured interviews, the interviewer had a possibility to gather personal, in depth information that could not necessarily have been possible with any other method.

In the future, pragmatic competence from the point of teachers should definitely be studied further. It would be useful to conduct a similar study by using semi-structured interviews to see if the results will follow the same line as the present study. Also, including a few more interviewers, perhaps up to ten interviews, to the study, would enable the researcher to gather somewhat more information on the topic. In addition, as the present study excluded lower basic education teachers (grades 1-6), it would be of interest to interview teachers of beginning learners as well to find out whether they think pragmatic principles could be taught to learners with lower language proficiency. Furthermore, one possibility could also be to conduct a quantitative study, which would enable the use of a larger number of participants all over the country. Even though the answers would not be so in depth, a more generalized overview could be gained of teachers' notions of pragmatic competence.

The results of the present study have provided insights into teachers' notions of pragmatic competence, its nature and its teachability. As the findings have shown, teachers do have an idea of what is meant by pragmatic competence, only they cannot transfer their knowledge to the level of practice in class. Teachers have difficulties in naming specific pragmatic principles and lack tools to teach them. In addition, teachers perceived pragmatic competence as a highly learner-centred concept meaning that only intelligent learners with high language proficiency could acquire it. This would imply that weaker learners were excluded from the acquisition of pragmatic competence. If the teaching of pragmatic principles was to be improved in schools, teachers should be better informed of different pragmatic principles and shown how they can be taught effectively from the first lesson.

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## APPENDIX 1: The description of pragmatic competence

Kielitaito jaetaan usein kahteen eri kompetenssin: **lingvistiseen ja kommunikatiiviseen kompetenssiin**. Lingvistinen kompetenssi tarkoittaa kykyä käyttää kieltä kieliopillisesti oikein, kun taas kommunikatiivinen kompetenssi on kykyä käyttää kieltä tilanteeseen sopivalla tavalla. Tällöin kieliopillinen tarkkuus ei ole itseisarvo, vaan tärkeänä pidetään sitä, että puhuja saa itsensä ymmärretyksi.

**Pragmaattinen kompetenssi** on yksi kommunikatiivisen kompetenssin alakompetenssi. Sillä tarkoitetaan kykyä käyttää ja tulkita kieltä kontekstissa. Siihen sisältyy ajatus, että kieli on väline, jonka avulla voidaan saavuttaa erilaisia asioita, jolloin puhuja kykenee käyttämään kieltä erilaisiin tarkoituksiin: pyytämiseen, neuvomiseen, käskemiseen jne. Siihen sisältyy kuulijan kyky ylittää kirjaimellinen merkitys ja päätyä puhujan todellisten tavoitteiden ymmärtämiseen silloinkin, kun lausuman sisältö on jopa harhaanjohtava, kuten epäsuoria strategioita käytettäessä tai ironia- ja sarkasmitapauksissa. Esimerkiksi, kun vaimo näkee likaisen kodin, hän voi tokaista *”onpa mukavaa nähdä likaisia sukkia lattialla”*, jolloin mies automaattisesti tajuaa, että vaimo ei todellisuudessa ole ilahtunut, vaan pyytää / käskää miestänsä siivoamaan sukat pyykkikoriin. Esimerkkina kielen ironisesta käytöstä voidaan pitää esimerkiksi valheellista kohteliaisuutta, jolloin keskustelun toinen osapuoli voi kaverinsa pieleenmenneen kamppauksen nähdessään todeta ironisesti *”onpas sinulla kaunis kamppaus”*. Tällöin molemmille keskustelun osapuolille on selvää, että lausuhduus tarkoittaa juuri päinvastaista eli rumaa. Iso osa pragmaattista kompetenssia on myös kyky kommunikoida kohteliaasti vieraalla kielellä loukkaamatta vastapuolen tunteita.

Pragmaattisen kompetenssin omaava ihminen osaa muuttaa kieltänsä kohteliaammaksi tarvittaessa, muun muassa käyttämällä epäsuoria kysymyksiä tai vaihtamalla slangisanat kirjakielisemmiksi sanoiksi virallisemmissä tilanteissa. Hyvänä esimerkkinä englannin kielisestä kohteliaisuudesta on myös ilmaisujen *”excuse me”* ja *”please”* hallinta, nämä ovat tärkeitä ilmauksia kohteliaan ja sujuvan kommunikoinnin takaamiseksi.

Pragmaattiseen kompetenssiin kuuluu myös keskustelujen rakentamisen hallinta: miten vieraskielisessä kulttuurissa yleensä keskustelu kulkee eteenpäin, millaisia tyypillisiä sanoja / lausahduksia erilaisissa tilanteissa, kuten tervehdyksissä tai

anteeksiäpyydetessä käytetään ja millainen kielenkäyttö on soveliasta kenenkin kanssa. Esimerkiksi Amerikassa on hyvin tyypillistä nuorison ja nuorten aikuisten kesken vaihtaa tervehdys *"Hey, what's up"*, johon ei ole tarkoitus huikata takaisin kuin *"I'm good"*, ollakseen kohtelias ja taatakseen kommunikoinnin sujuvan jatkumisen. Pragmaattinen kompetenssi siis tarkoittaa yleisesti sitä, miten kielen käyttö vaihtelee erilaisissa tilanteissa ja konteksteissa ja miten kieltä käytetään erilaisiin tarkoituksiin.

## **APPENDIX 2: Schedule of the interview**

Haastattelun kysymyksiin ei ole olemassa oikeita tai vääriä vastauksia, olen ainoastaan kiinnostunut henkilökohtaisista mielipiteistäsi ja tuntemuksistasi! Haastattelu on täysin anonymi, haastateltavien nimiä tai työpaikkoja ei tulla julkistamaan, ja haastatteluja käytetään luottamuksellisesti ainoastaan tämän kyseisen tutkimuksen tekoon.

### **A Pragmaattinen kompetenssi opetuksessa yleensä:**

Mikä sinulle on kielenopetuksessa tärkeää, tarkemmin sanottuna millaisia taitoja haluaisit oppilaiden ensisijaisesti oppivan kun ajatellaan englannin kieltä?

Mitä pragmaattinen kompetenssi sinun oman käsityksesi mukaan tarkoittaa?

Millaisia asioita koet pragmaattisesta kompetenssista olevan opetettavissa oppilaille?

Millaisten asioiden tai oppijan ominaisuuksien voisit ajatella vaikuttavan siihen, kuinka oppilas omaksuu pragmaattisia taitoja?

Millainen on mielestäsi opettajan rooli oppilaan pragmaattisen kompetenssin kehittämisessä?

### **B Implicature:**

Kuinka tärkeää on mielestäsi opettaa oppilaita ottamaan huomioon puheen asiayhteydet eli sen, että puheen kirjaimellinen merkitys ei välttämättä ole se mitä puhuja haluaa välittää?

Osaatko antaa esimerkkejä tällaisista tilanteista, joissa sinun mielestäsi oppilaan olisi hyvä tiedostaa, että se mitä puhuja haluaa välittää, ei ole sama kuin puheen kirjaimellinen merkitys?

Millä tavoin oppilaita voidaan ohjata ottamaan huomioon nämä puheen asiayhteydet?

Missä määrin mielestäsi oppilaita on tarpeen opettaa miten kieltä voidaan käyttää ironiaan ja sarkasmiin?

Miten oppilaita voidaan opettaa erottamaan sarkastiset ja ironiset lausahdukset niin kutsutuista ”normaaleista” lausahduksista?

Millä tavoin oppilaita voidaan itse opettaa käyttämään ironiaa ja sarkasmia?

### **C Speech acts:**

Kuinka tärkeää on mielestäsi opettaa oppilaita huomaamaan, että kieltä käytetään usein jonkin tavoitteen saavuttamiseksi, esimerkiksi pyytämiseen, vaikka puhe ei suoraa pyyntöä sisältäisikään?

Millä tavoin oppilaita voidaan ohjata huomaamaan kielen eri käyttötarkoitukset?

Miten oppilaita voidaan opettaa itse käyttämään kieltä eri tavoin tavoitteiden saavuttamiseksi, esimerkiksi pyytämiseen, käskemiseen tai neuvomiseen?

Kuinka tärkeäksi koet opettaa oppilaita käyttämään erilaisia vakiintuneita sanontoja, esimerkiksi tervehdyksiä ja anteeksipyyntöjä, joita englanninkielisessä jokapäiväisessä kommunikoinnissa varsin usein käytetään?

Millaisia vakiintuneita sanontoja oppilaille voidaan opettaa?

Millä tavoin oppilaita voidaan opettaa käyttämään näitä sanontoja?

#### **D Kohteliaisuus:**

Kuinka tärkeäksi koet opettaa miten puhutaan kohteliaasti englanninkielisissä maissa?

Millaisia englannin kieltä ja kulttuuria koskevia kohteliaisuussääntöjä oppilaille tulisi mielestäsi opettaa?

Millä keinoilla oppilaille voidaan opettaa millainen kielenkäyttö on kohteliasta ja millainen taas epäkohteliasta?

Miten oppilaille voidaan opettaa kuinka pehmentää puhettaan, esimerkiksi millaisia keinoja käskemiseen on perinteisen imperatiivin käytön lisäksi?

#### **E Arviointi:**

Kuinka tarpeelliseksi koet oppilaiden pragmaattisten taitojen arvioinnin?

Millä tavoin pragmaattisia taitoja voidaan mielestäsi arvioida?

### APPENDIX 3: Extracts translated into English

#### 6.1 The nature of pragmatic competence

(1) T1: well what I first think is language use in real context in practice what the situation demands and what you have to- what is appropriate [...] the ability to make circumspect decisions

(2) T6: um not necessarily the culture itself but to be able to understand what is like essential in that given situation... to see what kinds of different situations there can be

(3) T4: well that no matter the situation you can um- you can operate with the language and understand the nuances- nuances in that language use

(4) T6: different kinds of situations to use the language [...] what are like formal situations and what are something that happen with a friend or a relative and what is the difference between when you discuss for example with an elderly relative and if you discuss with a friend

(5) T3: maybe they have somehow succeeded in language learning when they understand that much that English enables a different mode of acting

(6) T3: as a teacher I stress that now you kind of have to put yourself in someone else's shoes that you are kind of tested how to be protean and you have to be a little bit of a chameleon that you have to throw yourself and exaggerate and even act a little

(7) T2: so then again in English you can say things like in a little roundabout way so why can't you say it directly well its part of the language's nature

(8) T2: so that like in some situations those who have English as their mother tongue are automatically very polite whereas in Finland we are not so that they would learn ((learners)) that it is part of the language use

(9) T1: we do have less that kind of culture that like chit chat small talk atmosphere so maybe that when you go abroad you may make a rude impression by accident even though you don't mean- you smile and shake hands and you would like to get to know the other person but you can't get into the flow of conversation or that [...] the other person may get a totally wrong impression of you

(10) T6: they talk about weather in there and talk nonsense so that it's kind of part of it ((communication)) and learners usually react by asking if it is stupid like talking about things that doesn't really matter or have any significance [...] when Finns talk less and in a way clearly so learners often feel that it's too much if you have to twaddle all the time and then we practice- practice how you communicate in a polite way when a Finn just listens when the other one is speaking

(11) T2: some learners say that the Americans when speaking are just joking around and they ((learners)) think that it doesn't really make any sense so here in Finland we think too often that utterances should always further the matter in some way in conversation

(12) T3: everything else is so called bonus like fine-tuning [...] it's certain kind of ability grouping for those learners who are strong- strong and have language aptitude and motivation

(13) T6: if we think that a certain amount of learners learn the basics that they are meant to learn that maybe it is like fine-tuning that could be for learners that like- that have a good language aptitude and can understand the basics

(14) T1: I see everything like that as important like extra tinge to the interaction something that you cannot try- like try to separate from the communication [...] a little extra tinge there

(15) T2: so that it is part of it all the time or should be

## **6.2 Factors influencing learners' acquisition of pragmatic competence**

(16) T4: the level of language proficiency of course affects... if some essential word is not understood you miss the point

(17) T6: of course if it is in a foreign language then it is a lot up to the learner's language proficiency how much she or he understands of the text altogether... yeah because he or she can't- the hidden meanings are lost if you don't- or like jokes and language-bound expressions if she or he doesn't understand them

(18) T3: I believe that per se it requires a good ability to make circumspect decisions from a learner and kind of er kind of well how do you say general intelligence or kind of social intelligence

(19) T5: for a learner to whom the language is very difficult I don't think I can teach much so for them it's more to at least to get understood in some way it is something that you know how to make circumspect decisions so it needs such high language proficiency that not everyone can gain it

(20) T5: well nowadays I would say that those who are interested in the language most of them learn outside the school so that they chat and stuff and realise that they manage and then they improve their strategies by themselves and then they succeed in different kinds of situations

(21) T2: for example there are boys that play lots of computer games or uses the Internet or now one boy that surprised me told me that he watches lots of some American TV-shows and stuff and so he was able to say something and that hey you can say like this right

(22) T5: I think that the overall interest to the language affects that you see that it has some personal value to you... nowadays many realise that they can use it a lot outside the school

(23) T4: well most certainly some kind of openness and courage to use the language so that you are not afraid- not afraid of a failure again that's life and so on, so that you go boldly into situations and yeah unfortunately you sometimes learn things the hard way but- but you still learn more like that than by sitting alone unobtrusively instead of participating in situations

(24) T1: quite many have some kind of experiences of English [...] most certainly yeah I believe that because it becomes maybe more real there so that when you yourself hear and when you use or well yeah so I believe that one's own experience

(25) T1: maybe this kind of how do you put it well kind of maybe attentiveness or observation or like you get those situations like hey in this situation this is appropriate and then in this situation this is not ok so that you are able to read the situations and kind of reflect... a certain kind of sensitivity to the situation and to the people in it

(26) T6: well um I guess all- this general attentiveness so that they are equal to the situation

### **6.3 Teacher's role in the acquisition of pragmatic competence**

(27) T1: well I guess you can always provide with some theory or explicit phrases or something like that but I would stress that bringing as much different kinds of communication situation as one can to class even if it is a presentation or negotiation or group discussion or group work so that one brings there as much of those situations as possible so that it raises ideas that hey this did not work or that this worked

(28) T6: well maybe it is that how much you like feed learners that kind of information that how often he or she gets like opportunities to learn those skills so that it is mostly providing those opportunities and highlighting points like did you notice this

(29) T4: well I guess stirring up that sensitivity so that- so that you know to pay attention- or you know to suspect differences in culture stuff in certain places or- or kind of monitoring so that you know to pay attention to the right things so that when you go to another culture or- or are here and um communicate with someone you- you realise to think about all the things that may affect the way how you say what you say or present or what things the other one is talking about so you can't possibly teach all that stuff so at least the understanding that things are not the same everywhere and not everywhere people act like we do here

(30) T3: what a teacher can do is waking up this extrinsic motivation in other words can you get learners to get excited to learn about the subject

### 6.4.1 Teachable areas of pragmatic competence

(31) T5: but what about for example a learner who doesn't in Finnish because not everyone gets it ((sarcasm)) in Finnish so there is no chance to teach it then

(32) T2: so that learners would remember that it has to be put there the word please or say excuse me [...] so that it comes somehow automatically that you put please there

(33) T3: for example the use of the word please and these are central in any culture so that you can't go and say I want coffee that's like swearing in Finland

(34) T5: ... for example if there is a responding exercise in the work book you might even have to write how to react in this kinds of situation then when we are going through it and learners suggest different versions I try and say that hey ok you can say like that but I doubt that a anyone would say that it's just that the British say how do you do how do you do or whatever we're dealing with

(35) T1: it's easier to respond when you know those certain conventions that are used to greet and when- how to ask news and how to answer them or so [...] you give an impression of yourself that you are maybe a bit easier to start a conversation with if you already are in the flow of conversation

(36) T4: ... and then also like knowing the habits of the culture belongs to it and and like language proficiency alone is not enough that that you really have to understand how people from different cultures communicate and their sense of humour even or or like culture bound sayings or then manners

(37) T1: ... habits of the culture and how some- how should you express- how in some certain cultures some things are said and what is polite and what is appropriate

### 6.4.2 Methods for teaching pragmatic skills

(38) T1: a lot it is up to teachers' like own example like how you operate in the group and behave and what- how you use the language in different cases [...] with your own example because they will- I believe that some things move to learners and of course you can talk about

(39) T3: telling examples from own experience and learners like anecdotes a lot

(40) T5: well what first comes to my mind is the use of please and these kinds of polite ways of communication and comparing that the same thing might not be said in the same way in Finnish

(41) T4: ... an extract of- it is a fictional extract from a book by Bill Bryson which precisely contains irony slash sarcasm [...] so that the items are given like how um er these words or things relate to the text and how do they- what is sarcasm in them

(42) T2: now that we have practiced something like the conditional or future forms with the eight graders if there has been something like could or should or would well then we have thought when it is a question if someone asks so is it always a question if there is could or is it a polite question that could you give me the pen or would you give me the pen or give me the pen so that they understand how to say it

(43) T1: um well I think that things like that if they emerge or you notice those kinds of situations then you can explicitly deal with them so that hey by the way here we have- did you notice

### **6.5.1 Against evaluation**

(44) T3: but there just are learners who can't read between the lines... they don't get it and it would be kind of unfair and I think it would measure something else than language ability

(45) T2: we have these learners for whom the language is difficult and they just don't get it so you can't punish them for not understanding whereas some learners are able to learn these things pretty easily and then they are already able to use them

(46) T1: it is pretty hard to evaluate when it has succeeded [...] like I don't know how to evaluate it

(47) T6: yeah yeah I don't know it's maybe a bit hard to think about as its own unit like how you would evaluate it

### **6.5.2 In favour of evaluation**

(48) T3: earlier this autumn I held spoken exams with a colleague in which the purpose was to evaluate what kind- how fluent the speaking is and also one- one of the so called barometers was the reaction to the speech of the other participant what word- word choices you react with when for example someone wishes you have a nice weekend so how idiomatically you react to that

(49) T4: maybe in the written skills it could relate to the thing that in essays we teach that you- if you have a letter you have to take these certain things into consideration if you have to write a speech to certain kind of an audience whether it is a birthday toast or umm a speech to some delegation or to a politician like that so you go through the register and er the situation self and think how you take notice of it in the language use

(50) T6: but we do evaluate it in a way [...] if we think that even though we traditionally use tests for evaluating which often are written they do also measure language proficiency to a large extend so it can be seen if

you have understood the big picture so yeah it- it kind of goes over it but yeah a teacher does evaluate all the time the situation in class but maybe it's not no that systematic

(51) T4: the most kind of ideal would be to throw a native speaker there among them who would have the time to speak with everyone and evaluate how they manage