Why Do Second-Language Learners Misunderstand Conversational Implicatures?

Mariko YOSHIDA (Graduate School of Foreign Studies, Sophia University)

This paper reports on an exploratory experiment on interpretation of conversational implicatures in light of discovering possible causes of its misinterpretation in a second language. In the experiment, six candidate elements were investigated as potential risks: misunderstanding of lexical meanings (MEANING), lack of knowledge of the target language’s culture (CULTURE), lack of hearer’s ability to read contextual relativity (CONTEXT), unawareness of the pragmatic function or meaning (FUNCTION), misunderstanding the meanings in negative forms (NEG), and overall proficiency of the learner. In order to reveal the effect of MEANING, an original instrument was developed for the purpose of measuring perception of six scalar expressions: few, several, good, excellent, easy and difficult. This instrument was combined with an implicature test based on a format implemented by Bouton (1988), in which all test items were designed to incorporate one of the six expressions. Participants were 40 native speakers of American English and 40 Japanese intermediate learners of English. The experiment results suggest that lack of knowledge of cultural norms, differences in pragmatic function or meaning between the target language and native language, and learner proficiency interfere with learners’ inference of conversational implicatures.

Key words: conversational implicature, indirect message, scalar expression, pragmatic competence, interlanguage pragmatics

なぜ第二言語学習者は会話の含意を汲み取れないのか

吉田麻里子（上智大学大学院外国語学研究科）

本研究は、第二言語において学習者が会話の含意の解釈を誤る原因を探求したものである。アメリカ人英語母語話者、日本人中上級英語学習者、各40名を対象に、正しい解釈の妨げとなっている可能性のある6つの要因（語彙の意味解釈の誤り、文化に関する知識の不足、文脈を読み解く能力の不足、語用論的な意味や機能に関する知識の不足、否定形での意味の誤解、英語の総合的運用能力）について調査を行った。まず、予備実験において、6つの要因のひとつである語彙の意味解釈の影響を調べ、尺度表現の意味の解釈を測る独自のテストを開発し、few, several, good, excellent, easy, difficultの6表現について学習者と母語話者の間に解釈の差があるのか検証した。続いて本実験では、この独自のテストをBouton (1988)で用いられた含意テスト（implicature test）と組み合わせることにより、学習者による含意の誤解がどのような原因で起こっているのかを明らかにした。実験の結果、学習者の含意の理解を妨げていたのは総合的運用能力に加え、文化的知識の不足と、日英語間の語用論的な意味や機能の不一致に関する知識の不足であることが判明した。

キーワード：会話の含意、間接的表現、尺度表現、語用論的能力、中間言語語用論

1. Introduction

In cross-cultural communication, inferring a speaker’s intentions can be a daunting task. As we so often expect our counterparts to infer not just what is said, but also what is meant, the lack of such pragmatic skill carries the risk of bringing an entire conversation into disarray. Compre-
hending indirect messages such as conversational implicature (CI) is often a challenge to second-language (L2) learners, as in addition to understanding their grammatical forms, CI requires hearer's pragmatic competence to recognize the speaker's true intention.

Previous studies have proved that non-native speakers' (NNS) ability to interpret CI is inferior to that of native speakers (NS) (e.g., Bouton, 1988; 1994a; Roever, 2006). However, it is still unclear why this is so, as the same NNS are clearly capable of handling them in their native language (L1). The present study attempts to explore the causes of misinterpretation of CI in English as L2 through an original test taken by Japanese learners of intermediate level. Pedagogical implication derived from the test results on how CI should be instructed in L2 classrooms is also suggested in the later section of this paper.

2. Background

2.1 Decoding of Conversational Implicatures

CI is an interpretive procedure used for making sense of "what is going on" (Ellis, 1992, p. 95), and as Green states, it is by no means a special way of communication but "an absolutely unremarkable and mundane conversational strategy" (Green, 1996, p. 94). The following excerpt (1) from a movie The Usual Suspects is just one of the many examples verifying its casual appearances in communication.

(1)
Kujan: You know a dealer named Ruby Deemer, Verbal?
Verbal: You know a religious guy named John Paul?

The Usual Suspects (1995)

Kujan is a police officer interviewing Verbal about a notorious drug dealer named Ruby Deemer. Verbal's response appears to be unrelated to the question which he was asked, at least on the literal level. In order to decipher the meaning of Verbal's comment, Kujan must go through a series of inferences and his flow of logic can partially be explained by Grice's Cooperative Principle (Grice, 1989). The Cooperative Principle states that speakers generally assume that their conversation partners will be cooperative: truthful, relevant, succinct, and clear. When a speaker violates one or more of the four maxims (quantity, quality, relation and manner), the speaker is inviting the hearer to infer the meaning behind his or her words. In this case, Verbal is flouting the maxim of relation ("make your contribution in accordance with the context"). The former Catholic Pope, here referred to as "a religious guy named John Paul", is a very well-known person in Western society. Verbal is thus inferring that he does know a dealer called Ruby Deemer and further hints with sarcasm that it is a stupid question to ask because everyone knows him, just as everyone knows the Pope.

Although the Cooperative Principle is a strong theory to explain the inferred meanings of many CI, it cannot account for every form of implicature, especially in cross-cultural communication. For one, CI such as the above cannot be explained by the Cooperative Principle alone as the knowledge about the Catholic Church and its leader is crucial for its interpretation. In addition to cultural knowledge, insensitivity to language-specific styles can in some cases become a barrier to correctly understanding CI (see Wierzbicka, 1991 for further examples of implicatures specific to cultural contexts).

2.2 Interpreting Conversational Implicatures in L2

In an explorative study in comparing NS and NNS ability to understand CI, Bouton (1988) compared the ability to interpret implicatures by 28 American NS of English and 436 international students at the University of Illinois using an implicature test. This test consisted of 33 questions, in which a description of a situation is followed by a corresponding dialogue. The characters expressed a message through the use of implicature. Subjects were to read the description and choose the intended meaning from four given choices. The conclusion from this study was that NNS reached the same interpretation as the NS only 79% of the time. When the seven different NNS cultural groups were compared, the way they interpreted the implicatures was found to vary significantly between certain cultural background groups (e.g., between Japanese and Germans). Bouton longitu-
Finally examined improvement in understanding implicatures by following up with the participants in this study (1994a). By re-testing the participants at different timings after arrival to the U.S., he found that natural progress is slow to come and NNS reached the native-like level only after 4–7 years of residence.

Bouton’s series of studies (1988, 1994a, 1994b, 1996, 1999), however, are limited to learners in English as a Second Language (ESL) environment. If it is true that it takes ESL learners over 4 years to reach the native-like interpretation, learners in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) environment are even less likely to be skilled in interpreting implicatures as their exposure to English is often more limited.

While Bouton and other researchers such as Keenan (1976) and Murray (2011) assume that learners’ misinterpretations are due to the difference of cultural background or the length of exposure, some scholars such as Taguchi (2005) and Roever (2006) suggest that learners’ limited proficiency is the cause of their inaccuracy. For instance, Roever (2006) who recreated Bouton’s implicature test as a part of web-based test to measure learners’ ability in pragmalinguistics, argues that when EFL students are included in the test subject, “exposure is nearly irrelevant, and proficiency is the over-riding factor” (Roever, 2006, p. 249). Nonetheless, the notion of ‘proficiency’ is so broad and vague that it does not tell us much from a pedagogical point of view.

Thus far, the fundamental question of why L2 learners struggle in interpreting CI is still unsolved. We remain uncertain as to what kind of knowledge or experience, or which type of language proficiency is crucial to processing inferential description in a second language. The present study aims to fill the gap in this area of interlanguage pragmatics by exploring the causes of misinterpretation of CI in English as an L2.

2.3 Teachability of Conversational Implicatures

Although CI is a form of communication that habitually arises in natural speech, it is not explicitly taught in most classrooms. ESL textbook materials introduce relatively few examples of CI, and very few implement it explicitly (Bouton, 1996). In order to speed up the time-consuming process of natural acquisition, some researchers have attempted to assess the teachability of CI in L2 classrooms. The results were conflicted. Whereas Bouton (1999) and Kubota (1995) concluded that formal instruction designed to develop implicature skills is effective, Murray’s experiment suggest that explicit instruction may yield only limited effects (2011). To date, pedagogy of CI instruction is still at its infancy.

3. Developing the Test

In this study, an implicature test was chosen as the main test material, as this method has already been established and applied by earlier studies (Bouton, 1988; Roever, 2006; Murray, 2011). Since the main purpose of the study is to identify the cause of misinterpretation of implicatures, every component of the test but the dialog was given in the participant’s L1, Japanese, as an added precondition. This procedure, although not applied in the preceding studies, was crucial for our objective. It would otherwise be impossible to determine that it was indeed the implicature that was misunderstood, and not the situational explanation or the list of given choices. This also played an effective role in reducing the burden on the participants of reading long texts in a non-proficient language.

3.1 Possible Causes of Misinterpretation

Previous studies on CI have examined cultural differences (Keenan, 1976; Bouton, 1988) and proficiency (Taguchi, 2005; Roever, 2006) as causes of misinterpretation. As discussed above, ‘proficiency’ usually refers to an overall ability of a learner’s language skills. In order to discover precisely which of the skills are interfering with the learners’ comprehension, we have broken ‘proficiency’ down into more specific competences.

Language competence in Bachman and Palmer’s model (Bachman & Palmer, 1982, pp. 449–451) is comprised of ‘grammatical competence’, ‘pragmatic competence’ and ‘sociolinguistic competence’. Of the three categories, Bachman and Palmer state that pragmatic competence is the ability to express and comprehend messages, and includes three subtraits: vocabulary, cohesion, and organization or coherence (Bachman & Palmer, 1982, p. 450). In other words, for learners to comprehend implied meanings, they must have sufficient knowledge of
vocabulary, cohesion and rhetorical organization as well as the capacity for implementing them. In this study, errors that are related to pragmatic proficiency were subdivided into two categories as MEANING (vocabulary related) and CONTEXT (organizational).

Considering the intricate nature of implicated messages in cross-cultural communication, two more possible candidates were added to our investigation: FUNCTION and NEG. FUNCTION refers to the understanding of pragmatic function or meaning that a word or phrase carries beyond literal boundaries. As these parameters may differ between languages, contrasting connotations can be derived from the same expression when it is literally translated (Kawate-Mierzejewska, 2009, p. 199). Finally, NEG refers to the comprehension of meaning in negative forms. Each of the six categories will be discussed in more detail with examples in the following section.

3.2 Six Categories as Possible Causes of Misinterpretation

3.2.1 Misconception of lexical meaning (MEANING)

CI, unlike conventional implicatures, requires the hearer to go through a series of inferences based on principles that the other speaker is using (Ellis, 1992, p. 95). However, NNS must first struggle to understand the literal meaning of the utterance itself before making any inferences. Implicatures such as in (2) may be incomprehensible if the lexical meaning of certain vocabulary is misunderstood.

(2)
A: How did you like the hotel in Moscow that you stayed in?
B: The fact that the shower was lukewarm sums up my opinion.

The speaker’s most likely evaluation of the hotel in question is “not good”, but if the hearer had an inaccurate understanding of the degree of “hotness” in the word lukewarm (e.g., perceived the condition as “similar to hot”), then the message that the speaker is intending to convey may be lost. Therefore it is possible that the misconception of lexical meaning may lead learners to incorrect interpretations of CI.

3.2.2 Lack of knowledge of the target language’s culture (CULTURE)

Keenan (1976) and Bouton (1988) write that Grice’s maxims may be implemented differently from one society to another, and this discordance could cause individuals from one culture to misinterpret implicatures used by those from the other. Their account is partially confirmed by Bouton’s study, in which seven cultural groups all significantly differed from American NS, and also differed between some cultural groups. Some types of CI presuppose a certain cultural knowledge that is shared in that society. By lacking this knowledge, a hearer may well slip past the speaker’s true message. For instance, if a conversation such as (3) occurred in the U.S., most people who have basic knowledge of the American calendar will interpret the assistant’s response as a refusal, or at least a display of discontent.

(3)
Boss: Jeanie, can you come in tomorrow for several hours?
Assistant: Several hours on the Fourth of July?

However, to those who do not know that the Fourth of July is a federal holiday in the U.S., it will be difficult to assess the assistant’s meaning.

In this category, we examine cultural background knowledge that may influence learners’ inference. Note that this category does not include linguistic or pragmatic differences which will be discussed as FUNCTION in 3.2.4 below.

3.2.3 Lack of hearer’s ability to read contextual relations (CONTEXT)

The competence to read organizational relationship in a context, is not a measure of a learner’s competence of that language, but relates to the cognitive ability of each individual. Most people are capable of reading the context or the anterior-posterior relationship in conversation and infer the message conveyed, at least in their L1 or in a language that he or she has a high proficiency in. Here, the term ‘context’ does not include the knowledge of certain cultural information, as they are inspected separately in the CULTURE category described above. Thus, this category deals with items such as the short discourse in (4).
(4) Emily and Mike are teachers at a university talking about an international student named Taro.

Emily: I’m thinking of hiring Taro as an assistant. You know him, right?

Mike: Yeah, I do. He attended my seminar last year.

Emily: What’s he like?

Mike: Well, he’s an extremely hard working student. He’s really punctual, has an excellent memory and he’s also a superb singer.

Emily: How about his English?

Mike: Well, his English is good.

If Mike had not praised Taro’s capacities with emphatic expressions such as ‘extremely’, ‘really’, ‘excellent’ and ‘superb’, his assessment of Taro’s English ability being ‘good’ would have been more literal. It is only in relation to the preceding discourse that Emily realizes Taro’s English may not be as good as his other abilities, and perhaps just mediocre. This type of CI that requires certain attention to context is not exclusive to English, as the same effect occurs in Japanese. The question remains as to whether learners’ competence in their native language can be inherited to a language with relatively low proficiency.

3.2.4 Lack of understanding in pragmatic function/meaning of an expression (FUNCTION)

It may be easy for learners to imagine that every language is unique and that no pairs of languages overlap each other completely, both in terms of pragmatic meaning of expression and their function in communication. From a learner’s point of view, confusion could occur from a misalignment of lexical meanings or non-equivalent pragmatic functions between L1 and L2. A typical example of such disparity in English and Japanese is presented in (5).

(5) Customer: Can you take me to the station in 15 minutes?

Cab Driver: It’ll be difficult to get there in 15 minutes.

Most NS of English will agree that the meaning of the scalar expression difficult in this context should be taken literally; possible but not easy. The most direct translation for difficult in Japanese would be “muzukashii”. However, when this phrase is used in certain contexts (e.g., in response to a request or an inquiry) messages that are conveyed are quite distinct between the two languages. Japanese speakers normally use the phrase “muzukashii desu” (‘it’s difficult’) as a denial or a refusal in responses to a request (Adler, 1997). If the given response in such situations is “muzukashii desu”, collocutors will most likely take its meaning as ‘impossible’. Hence in dialogues such as (5), it is possible for Japanese learners to transfer their norm and take the driver’s comment as a denial. When understanding of the pragmatic meaning or function of an utterance is inadequate, there is a risk of the speaker’s intention being misunderstood.

3.2.5 Misunderstanding the meanings in negative forms (NEG)

Negation is one of the functions in language that is universal (Dahl, 1979) and single negation is said to have a universal function (Swart, 2010, p. 6). Take (6) for example:

(6) People with grudges against him are not few in number.

This sentence is not merely a negation of the proposition ‘people with grudges against him are few’, but it infers that ‘in fact a lot of people have grudges against him’. The universality of negation indicates that the same phenomenon is observed in other languages, including Japanese. Therefore if Japanese learners succeed by adapting their norm in L1, they are likely to read the intended meaning without difficulties. If for some reason learners failed to do so in English, their interpretation might go awry.

3.2.6 Overall proficiency

This category is distinct from others as it is not a specific item but incorporates many skills. Its effect on inference will be observed through comparison of the test results and Test of English for International Communication (TOEIC) scores of each learner. Although the results from this category will not give us any insights as to the
cause of misinterpretation, it will still provide further confirmation on the degree of influence that has been suggested in earlier studies (Taguchi, 2005; Roever, 2006). In addition, the investigation of correlation between proficiency and perception of scalar expression (discussed in 3.3 below) is an unexplored field of second language acquisition.

3.3 Scalar Expression and Implicature

In order to investigate the degree of difference between CI interpretations by NS and NNS, we have attempted to translate perception of lexical meaning into numerical terms. Previous studies have not developed such a measure, at least to the knowledge of the author, so the present study uses numerical judgments of scalar expressions for this purpose.

The expressions that we deal with must belong to a universal concept existing in most languages. Terms such as few, difficult and good are commonly found and used frequently in many natural languages (Bach, 1995). As the participants in the experiment are intermediate learners, adopting materials that are too advanced is not practical. The expressions listed above are reasonably basic, and thus taught and learned at the primary stage of English education. Another advantage of using rudimentary vocabulary is that learners are already used to encountering them in classrooms, so their frequent appearance in the test will not appear as suspicious. The expressions must have enough flexibility to be reproduced as CI in many different items in the test, and scalars fit this purpose nicely. A pilot test was conducted in advance to confirm its adoptability in the experiment.

3.4 Pilot Test

A pilot experiment testing 17 scalar expressions was conducted to see whether differences exist between NS and NNS in the lexical understandings of scalar expressions (a sample test item presented in (7)). Twelve NS of American English and 57 Japanese learners of English participated in the test, and were asked to select one number that best describes the given statement.

(7) [A] If there were total number of 10 students, how many students do you think actually came?

Example: Three students came.
0 - 1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5 - 6 - 7 - 8 - 9 - 10

All of the students came.
0 - 1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5 - 6 - 7 - 8 - 9 - 10

None of the students came.
0 - 1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5 - 6 - 7 - 8 - 9 - 10

Half of the students came.
0 - 1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5 - 6 - 7 - 8 - 9 - 10

Most of the students came.
0 - 1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5 - 6 - 7 - 8 - 9 - 10

Few of the students came.
0 - 1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5 - 6 - 7 - 8 - 9 - 10

Many of the students came.
0 - 1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5 - 6 - 7 - 8 - 9 - 10

The numerical data obtained in the test was compared using Mann-Whitney's U test to determine if there are any differences in the lexical perception between groups. In 3 scalar items out of 17 items, the perceptions of NNS differed from those of NS to a statistically significant degree (p<.1, in the case of this study); few (p=.001), often (p=.059) and always (p=.079). This result suggests that there is a possible risk of L2 learners misinterpreting CI due to differing judgments of scalars.

4. Method

4.1 Materials

To investigate the cause of misunderstanding in CI by intermediate EFL learners, we produced a questionnaire focusing on five elements (MEANING, CULTURE, CONTEXT, FUNCTION and NEG). The questionnaire consisted of two sections: Section 1 investigates the reception of scalar expressions, and Section 2 tests the understanding of CI. In Section 1, six scalar expressions were tested: few, several, good, excellent, easy and difficult, and the format of Section 1 succeeded that of the earlier pilot study. The scalar items used in Section 1 reappear in Section 2 to investigate the relation between reception of scalar expressions and the understanding of implicatures (MEANING). The six scalar items were used in each of the implicature questions that are related to the four categories of possible causes besides MEANING (i.e., CULTURE, CONTEXT, FUNCTION and NEG). In other words, the four categories
contained questions using the six different scalar items which brought the total number of questions in Section 2 to 24. The question items in Section 2 were newly constructed based on the questionnaire format developed by Bouton (1988), in which a brief situational explanation is followed by a short dialogue, and four interpretations are listed for the participants to choose from. For example, (8) is an excerpt from Section 2 using the scalar expression easy, testing the CONTEXT category.

(8) Q2 Jane’s uncle, Terry, is a professional magician. When Terry visited Jane's house, he showed her an amazing card trick. Jane was very impressed by the trick and felt that she wanted to become a magician as well.

Jane: Uncle Terry, I wanna be a magician too.

Is it easy to learn these tricks?

Terry: Is it easy to cure cancer?

Which message did Uncle Terry want to convey?

(a) It’s easy to learn the tricks.
(b) It's not easy to learn the tricks.
(c) It depends on the person learning.
(d) Uncle Terry is undergoing treatment for cancer so he doesn’t know if he can teach Kelly the tricks.

It should be noted that in the present study, the category MEANING refers to the “degree within a scale” that is tested in Section 1 and not to the other entries of meanings that the word might possess. For example, good can be listed amongst a scale such as <superb, outstanding, excellent … good, okay> where the degree of “goodness” decreases toward the right of the list. If participants failed to reach a native-like perception of where good lies in this scale and also fail to infer a CI that incorporates good, then we regard that as evidence of lexical misunderstanding affecting their inference.

The content including dialogues and possible interpretations of the questionnaire for this study was originally developed and revised with the consultation of six NS of American English to create naturalistic English CI. Items were then shuffled into a random order to avoid participants’ conjecture as to the purpose of this study.

4.2 Participants

The questionnaire was administered to two groups of participants. The first group (JE) comprised 40 NS of Japanese, and the second group (AE) 40 NS of American English. All members of the JE group had received formal English instruction in Japan for 7-8 years, and none had lived in an English-speaking country for more than one month. Their TOEIC scores ranged from 470 to 845, which all lie within the Communicative Proficiency Levels B and C stated by Educational Testing Service (ETS).

For the JE group, all descriptions except for the target dialogue including the situational explanation, question and the list of choices were given in Japanese in order to avoid misunderstandings unrelated to the purpose of this study. In addition, Japanese translation of some vocabulary in the target dialogue which may be unfamiliar to lower intermediate learners were described at the end of the target dialogue. The test given to the AE group was written in English. The first draft was written in Japanese, translated to English, and then back-translated to Japanese by different bilingual speakers of English and Japanese. No time restriction was set to either group.

5. Results and Discussion

5.1 Perception of Scalar Items

Firstly, the 0 to 10 scale evaluation values of the six scalar expressions from Section 1 were tested by a Mann-Whitney’s U test to compare the medians of the AE and JE groups (Table 1).

With four items (few, several, easy and difficult), the mean score of the two groups differed to a statistically significant degree: few (p<.01), several (p<.01), easy (p<.05) and difficult (p<.01). Replicating the results of the pilot study, learners’ perception of lexical meaning in some items did not match the NS’s view. For few, the AE group’s average was 3.63, whereas the JE group’s average was only 1.90. Furthermore, both groups’ standard deviations were lower than other test items (AE: 0.77, JE: 0.81). It seems that while meaning of few is relatively straightforward to NS of English, the misperception of few being “fewer” than natives think is widespread amongst Japanese learners. Similar phenomena were observed in the
other two scalar expressions; JE thought several is fewer than AE think, and perceived easy as “less easy” than the AE’s impressions. For difficult, it seems, JE have judged it to be more challenging than what AE perceived.

5.2 Overall Test Result of Conversational Implicature Interpretation

In Section 2, the overall performance of interpreting CI was examined by first designating the option most supported by the AE group as the correct answer. Then, all the tests by both groups were marked and statistically analyzed. The mean score percentage of AE and JE groups were 74.69% and 55.83%, respectively, and on average, members of the JE group reached the AE’s most favored interpretation only 55% of the time (Table 2).

When the results attained from these two groups were analyzed by Mann–Whitney’s U test, the difference in scores between the two groups was statistically significant to a 1% level (Table 3). Hence AE’s ability to understand CI exceeded that of JE’s showing concurrence with the earlier studies (e.g., Bouton, 1988). In order to examine the individual items in more detail, accuracy rates for each question were observed (Table 4).

| Table 1. Summary of Perception on the Scalar Expression by AE and JE |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Scalar item              | Mean | Standard deviation | Comparison of AE and JE (U Test) |
|                          | AE   | JE   | AE | JE | p   |
| few                      | 3.63 | 1.90 | 0.77 | 0.81 | .0000 | **p<.01 |
| several                  | 6.60 | 4.95 | 1.10 | 1.32 | .0000 | **p<.01 |
| good                     | 6.93 | 7.18 | 0.97 | 0.93 | .2030 | |
| excellent                | 9.50 | 9.68 | 0.60 | 0.62 | .1000 | |
| easy                     | 9.37 | 8.80 | 0.85 | 1.38 | .0497 | *p<.05 |
| difficult                | 5.03 | 3.40 | 1.46 | 1.26 | .0000 | **p<.01 |

| Table 2. Summary of the Overall Test Results in Section 2 |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
|                          | AE   | JE   |
| n                        | 40   | 40   |
| Mean                     | 17.93| 13.40|
| Accuracy rate            | 74.69%| 55.83%|
| Standard Deviation       | 2.85 | 2.30 |
| Minimum score            | 12   | 9    |
| Maximum score            | 24   | 18   |

| Table 3. Mann–Whitney’s U Test of Overall Scores by AE and JE |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|
|                          | U   | U'   | Z   | p  | Z(0.975) |
|                          | 180 | 1420 | -5.966 | **0.000 | 1.960 |

No biases related to a particular scalar expression were apparent in the AE group, indicating that the NS did not find CI difficult to understand because they contained a certain scalar expression. For the JE group, the accuracy rate was widely distributed between 10-95%, but interestingly, its distribution patterns did not always resemble that of the AE group. For instance, AE reached 100% agreement in Q14, but only 25% of JE chose the same interpretation. We can surmise from this result that JE’s performance was not simply a substandard version of AE’s, but exhibits a unique pattern. Therefore by uncovering the source of the discrepancy, we may be able to identify the reason why NNS suffer in interpreting CI.

5.3 Causes of Misinterpretation

5.3.1 MEANING as the cause of misinterpretation

The following procedure was taken prior to our final statistical analysis. Participants in JE group were further divided into two groups: native-like (NL) and non-native-like (NNL) for all six scalar expressions, according to their responses in Section 1. If their evaluation of the scalar expression ranged within ±1 standard deviation from the mean score of AE, they were grouped into NL. The rest of the JE participants, whose evaluation lay outside this range, were placed into the NNL.
Table 4. Result of Section 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Q</th>
<th>Scalar</th>
<th>Essence of content</th>
<th>AE</th>
<th>JE</th>
<th>Exact probability test</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CULTURE</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>several</td>
<td>Several hours on the Fourth of July?</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>*p = .000 **(p &lt; .01)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>good</td>
<td>He's a good choice if you're looking for someone serious.</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>*p = .000 **(p &lt; .01)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>22</td>
<td>excellent</td>
<td>Go and find the number for that excellent Chinese take-out.</td>
<td>68%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>*p = .002 **(p &lt; .01)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>21</td>
<td>difficult</td>
<td>It's difficult to avoid the sun in the Bahamas.</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>*p = .004 **(p &lt; .01)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>9</td>
<td>easy</td>
<td>Yeah, and finding a respectable car salesman is easy.</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>90%</td>
<td>*p = .731</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>13</td>
<td>few</td>
<td>Few health insurances are flawless.</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>*p = .883</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CONTEXT</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>good</td>
<td>He's...very hard working...really punctual...excellent memory/His English is good.</td>
<td>65%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>*p = .020 **(p &lt; .05)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>12</td>
<td>excellent</td>
<td>I think his choice of font is excellent.</td>
<td>73%</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>*p = .193</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>24</td>
<td>several</td>
<td>I read several books on Biology this week.</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>90%</td>
<td>*p = .382</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>11</td>
<td>difficult</td>
<td>Do dolphins think swimming is difficult?</td>
<td>88%</td>
<td>95%</td>
<td>*p = .815</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>easy</td>
<td>Is it easy to cure cancer?</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>93%</td>
<td>*p = .820</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>18</td>
<td>few</td>
<td>Um... few people showed interest.</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>*p = .100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FUNCTION</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>good</td>
<td>You could cut down on sweets, and walking is good.</td>
<td>58%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>*p = .011 **(p &lt; .05)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>15</td>
<td>difficult</td>
<td>It'll be difficult to get there in 15 minutes.</td>
<td>93%</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>*p = .048 **(p &lt; .05)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>20</td>
<td>excellent</td>
<td>It's good, isn't it?/Yeah, it's excellent.</td>
<td>83%</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>*p = .049 **(p &lt; .05)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>17</td>
<td>easy</td>
<td>I was the kind of kid that always did things the easy way.</td>
<td>83%</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>*p = .049 **(p &lt; .05)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>19</td>
<td>several</td>
<td>Several of them were DUI.</td>
<td>58%</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>*p = .188</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>10</td>
<td>few</td>
<td>I was given few chances to play on the field.</td>
<td>90%</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>*p = .716</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NEG</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>good</td>
<td>Cutting trees for our convenience isn't good for the environment.</td>
<td>78%</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>*p = .272</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
<td>easy</td>
<td>It's not easy to play baseball and golf at the same time.</td>
<td>65%</td>
<td>85%</td>
<td>*p = .366</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6</td>
<td>difficult</td>
<td>With enough resources, it's not difficult to achieve.</td>
<td>73%</td>
<td>85%</td>
<td>*p = .615</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>excellent</td>
<td>Was it good?/It wasn't excellent.</td>
<td>73%</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>*p = .000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
<td>few</td>
<td>People with grudges are not few in number.</td>
<td>85%</td>
<td>88%</td>
<td>*p = .000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7</td>
<td>several</td>
<td>You're not several feet from it.</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>*p = .100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
group. This was done in order to confirm whether the understanding (or misunderstanding) of lexical meanings has affected JE's performance on interpreting the corresponding CI. The number of correct answers given by both NL and NNL groups in Section 2 was then statistically compared, using an exact probability test with unequal population rate. In four questions including Q19 (several of them were DUI), Q16 (walking is good) and Q23 (his English is good), the effect of misinterpretation of the scalar expression was observed (Table 5).

One example of the items that proved to be affected by MEANING is described in (9):

(9) Q16 Emma has gained some weight recently and is asking her friend Amy for advice.
Emma: How can I lose weight?
Amy: You could cut down on sweets, and walking is good.
In Amy's opinion, how much effect would walking have on Emma's weight?
(a) Walking is a very effective way to lose weight.
(b) Walking is an effective way to lose weight.
(c) Walking would have some effect on her weight.
(d) Walking would have a small effect on her weight.

The result for this item was that 35% of NL chose (c), “walking would have some effect”, which was the most supported interpretation by AE; whereas, no one from the NNL group reached the same conclusion. Instead, 53% of NNL chose (b) walking is effective, and 47% thought (a) walking is very effective. The average of NL and NNL in Section 1 for good was 6.74 and 7.76, respectively (AE's average = 6.93, SD = 0.97). Most of the NNL group answered the meaning of good as ‘better than what AE think’. Therefore it is understandable that the NNL group chose (a) and (b), which appreciates the impact of walking more highly than the native's more moderate evaluation of (c) walking would have some effect on her weight. The NL group, who took the lexical meaning of good in a more native-like manner, was more successful in calculating the intended nuance of the implication.

In sum, four items were observed to be misunderstood due to the misinterpretation of lexical meaning. However, in the majority of the items, the perception of scalar items did not seem to affect the interpretation of CI. Considering the wide gap between AE and JE in the overall ability to interpret CI, the reason why JE's score fell substantially below AE's is not sufficiently explained by the lexical misconception of scalar expressions. This result indicates that apart from a few corner cases, intermediate learners' knowledge of the precise lexical meaning is not a major factor in reading implicatures correctly. Further tests were conducted on the JE data in order to explore other possibilities.

5.3.2 Fortes and weaknesses

In preparation for the analysis of individual categories, AE and JE data were assessed on whether either or both groups had particular strengths or weaknesses in certain categories. The number of correct answers in each category was analyzed through a non-parametric Kruskal-Wallis test (Table 6).

Analysis showed that the data from the AE group presented no distinct bias in the distribution of scores by categories. We can assume that the accuracy of the AE group did not depend on category types; AE did not find a particular category more difficult or easier than others. In con-
Table 6. Comparison of Accuracy by Category Types

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Number of category</th>
<th>$\chi^2 (0.95)$</th>
<th>$\chi^2 (0.9)$</th>
<th>H</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AE</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7.815</td>
<td>6.251</td>
<td>0.333</td>
<td>.954</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JE</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7.815</td>
<td>6.251</td>
<td>6.649</td>
<td>.084*(.05&lt;p&lt;.1)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*df*=degree of freedom

In contrast, JE group’s performance differed moderately (*p*=.084), depending on the type of implicature given.

5.3.3 Tracking down JE’s weak and strong categories

To study which items JE found particularly difficult, the total number of correct answers by JE was compared with that of AE, using the exact probability test (Table 4). The performance of JE was essentially the same as AE in CONTEXT and NEG type implicatures. Apart from one item, AE and JE scores on these types did not differ significantly. Learners’ ability to interpret CI in these two categories was as good as the natives. By contrast, the JE group found many of the items in CULTURE and FUNCTION to be difficult to interpret. In these two categories, four out of six items showed JE’s interpretations to be statistically different from that of AE’s.

5.3.4 CULTURE

The results in questions concerning CULTURE were diverse and complicated in two ways: consensus amongst the AE group, and JE’s performance in comparison with AE’s. In the AE group, the disparity between high consensus items and low consensus items in CULTURE was wider than in any other categories. In three out of six questions, less than 70% of the participants agreed to one answer (Q1, Q13 and Q22), but on items Q9 and Q14, all AE participants presented a unified interpretation. Even when this relative inconsistency within AE is taken into account, however, the responses of AE and JE strikingly contradict each other in the items that presented statistical difference. The conflict between AE and JE was salient in Q14 (10), which was one of the items that were most highly agreed on by AE.

(10) Q14 Jeanie works for an accounting firm and

her boss is asking her if she can come to work tomorrow.

Boss: Jeanie, can you come in tomorrow for several hours?

Jeanie: Several hours on the 4th of July?

Which is closest to the message Jeanie is trying to convey?

(a) She didn’t hear the question well, so she’s confirming the date.

(b) She’s confirming the amount of time she would have to work.

(c) She has accepted the request and is repeating the details for confirmation.

(d) She is expressing her reluctance towards the idea.

One hundred percent of AE agreed on (d), “she is expressing her reluctance”, but only 25% of JE took Jeanie’s message as such. Instead, 38% viewed it as acceptance and confirmation (c) and 30% as confirmation (b). This is most likely due to lack of knowledge of the Independence Day, as previously discussed in 3.2.2.

JE also struggled with more general differences in cultural expectations, as indicated through conflicting interpretations of Q21, listed as (11) below.

(11) Q21 Katy and Beth are college friends. They are back in school after a long summer break and Beth spotted Katy on campus.

Beth: Hey Katy, you’ve got quite a tan! What did you do?

Katy: Oh, it’s difficult to avoid the sun in the Bahamas.

What did Katy do over the summer?

(a) Katy went to the Bahamas but is complaining about her sun burns.

(b) Katy went to the Bahamas and tried to avoid
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getting tan, but couldn’t.
(c) Katy went to the Bahamas and is pleased that she got a nice tan.
(d) Katy didn’t go to the Bahamas.

Katy’s behavior was understood as (c) by 75% of AE who believed she was expressing how she enjoyed going to the Bahamas and getting a nice tan, whereas only 28% of JE took the same view. Rather, the majority (70%) adapted the literal meaning of difficult, and thought that (b) Katy had tried avoiding the sun during her stay at the Bahamas. This is most likely due to the fact that in Japanese culture, the damage that ultraviolet radiation induces to health and skin is taken very seriously, and young Japanese women especially prefer to avoid a suntan. It is also probable that the JE participants did not have a clear idea as to what kind of place the Bahamas are and therefore found it difficult to infer the purpose of Katy’s trip.

In total, four out of six items in the CULTURE category were misinterpreted by JE. This test result confirms the views of Keenan (1976) and Bouton (1988) that lacking associating knowledge of the target language’s culture is a potential obstacle to the correct interpretation of CI. It is also important to note that they perceived the whole meaning of the implicature incorrectly rather than just the degree of the speaker’s intention. In real interaction, this could lead to more serious miscommunication than simply misunderstanding the extent of what the speaker intended to say.

5.3.5 CONTEXT

The JE group performed well in the CONTEXT category. There was no remarkable difference in the distribution of choices except for Q23, which has already been discussed under the influence of the misperception of good (c.f. 5.3.1). JE were successful in adapting their ability to read the contextual relation in L1 to L2. Learners correctly understood the implicatures throughout this category, despite the fact that their perception of scalar expressions were in some cases imprecise.

5.3.6 FUNCTION

In this category, JE responded differently from AE on items good (Q16), excellent (Q20), easy (Q17), and difficult (Q15). Whereas Q16 (walking is good) was affected by overestimating the expression good (c.f. 5.3.1), no such influence was determined to the other three items through analysis. One of those items, Q15 (12), is possibly related to conveying the L1 pattern in the use of “muzukashii” (literal translation of ‘difficult’).

(12) Q15 James overslept on the day of an important job interview and is asking a cab driver if he can make it to the interview on time. He only has 15 minutes to get to the interview.

James: Can you take me there in 15 minutes?
Driver: It'll be difficult to get there in 15 minutes.

Which is closest to the message that the driver is trying to convey?
(a) The driver can’t guarantee they’ll arrive on time.
(b) Predicting how long it will take to get there is impossible.
(c) It’s impossible to take James there in 15 minutes.
(d) There’s no chance they’ll get there in 15 minutes, so the driver doesn’t want James to enter his cab.

Most AE (93%) interpreted the taxi driver’s comment as (a); an evasive tactic saying there is no guarantee they will arrive on time as James has requested. However, only 53% of JE agreed with AE, and as much as 45% of them took it as a refusal, denying any possibility that they will arrive in time; (c) it’s impossible to take James there in 15 minutes. This is what the comment would mean if it were literally translated into Japanese “muzukashii desu” (c.f. 3.2). JE who misunderstood the intention of the cab driver as a denial may have inappropriately transferred their Japanese norm to English.

It was also found that semantic misalignment in English and Japanese can interfere in interpreting CI, as portrayed in JE’s reaction to Q17 (13).

(13) Q17 Richard, a college student, is talking with his roommate Henry about what kind of kids they were.
Henry: So what were you like when you were a kid?
Richard: I was the kind of kid that always did things the easy way.
What was Richard like as a child?
(a) He was always care-free.
(b) He was always cheerful.
(c) He was able to succeed without much effort.
(d) He never liked to work hard.

Richard’s childhood was perceived as ‘a kid that never liked to work hard’ by 83% of AE. The expression *easy* incorporates “an easy job or way of life” (Longman Language Activator), but this is not so in the Japanese counterparts “yasashii” or “kantan na”. In Japanese, there exists another word “raku na” that refers to such a meaning (Kenkyusha’s New Japanese–English Dictionary; Entry 1 “an easy life”). Only 45% of JE seemed to be aware of this sense of *easy*, and successfully adapted the knowledge in the computation of the implicature. The remaining 55% of JE incorporated the other lexical entries of *easy* that they knew and guessed what Richard meant (a) 20%, (b) 13% and (c) 23%.

From these results, it seems apparent that pragmatic functions or meanings can affect learner’s interpretation of CI.

5.3.7 NEG

Just as in CONTEXT, there was no significant difference in the distribution of answers in the NEG category. As we discovered in 5.3.1, the effect of understanding scalar expressions was not present either. This leads us to the conclusion that in this category, JE were successful in inferring implications even in cases where they misunderstood the meaning of scalar expressions.

5.4 Correlation with Overall Proficiency

The present study tested Japanese learners of intermediate to upper-intermediate level of communicative competence. To observe the relationship between the results of the test and language proficiency, additional analyses were conducted.

5.4.1 Relation with the perception of scalar expressions

To examine whether a relationship between the learners’ general communicative proficiency in English represented by their TOEIC score and accuracy in the perception of lexical meaning of the scalar expressions exists, the following procedure was taken. The data obtained from Section 1 by the NL group (whose perception of scalar items were within ±1 standard deviation from AE mean) and the NNL group (whose perception was outside ±1 standard deviation) were compared with their TOEIC scores by a non-parametric Mann–Whitney’s U test. For all six scalar expressions, JE’s accuracy of perception was not related to their TOEIC scores. It can be concluded that participants’ communicative proficiency in English did not matter when it came to whether they understood the expressions correctly or not. This suggests that this particular type of lexical knowledge is not modified as their proficiency improves.

5.4.2 Correlation with the overall test result

A Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient was computed to assess the linear relationship between JE participant’s TOEIC scores and their test scores from Section 2. JE’s implicature assessment and TOEIC result proved to be correlated \( r = .400, n = 40, p < .01 \) confirming that language proficiency does have some degree of positive correlation with the ability to understand CI. This result is compatible with earlier findings (Taguchi, 2005; Roever, 2006), but it must be noted that the degree of correlation was somewhat moderate \( r = .400 \). Modest correlation suggests that although proficiency cannot be ruled out as an isolated factor, neither is it the case that the learners’ overall proficiency in a language alone determines their ability to interpret CI in that language.

6. Conclusion

The present study revealed that significant differences exist in the perception of scalar expressions and CI between Japanese intermediate learners of English and NS of American English. In addition, it also revealed an impediment that Japanese learners are facing in terms of scalar expressions. The analysis of the data from Section 1 confirmed that JE’s interpretation on some scalar expressions (*few, several, easy* and *difficult*) differed from that of the natives to a statistically significant level. Furthermore, their accuracy...
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did not correlate to their overall proficiency represented by TOEIC scores. Acquiring accurate knowledge of the scalar expressions, it seems, is an independent issue from general proficiency in English. This finding is indispensable, as it suggests that even relatively advanced Japanese learners may face the risk of misunderstanding the intended messages, not only in complex language formats such as implicatures, but also in simple sentences.

Nevertheless, the test results in Section 2 indicated that this difference in the perception of scalar expressions is not the main cause of misinterpreting implicatures. By testing the other five possible causes of misinterpretation, we found that the lack of knowledge in cultural norms and the pragmatic meaning or function of the target language interfere with learners' computation of the intended meaning. The learner's overall proficiency also affected their ability to interpret CI to a certain extent, but the degree of correlation was somewhat moderate. For negative or context-related implicatures, learners' performance was nearly equal to that of NS, which implies that each individual's ability to read context can be carried onto and applied appropriately in other languages as well. From what we know, intermediate learners already have the implicit understanding in regard to the essence of the logical mechanism of CI.

7. Limitations

There are issues in this study which remain unresolved. First, some of the items in Section 2 of the questionnaire gained low consensus even amongst the AE group. In this study, those items were nevertheless treated as the NS's choice for the sake of expediency. There are multiple factors that may have contributed to this discrepancy. It is possible that the format of some questions may have lacked clarity or were problematic, or the context itself was a controversial matter unsuited for our purpose. Although we cannot expect every NS to agree on a single interpretation in all contexts, it may have been inappropriate to treat items with low native concordance equivalently with the higher concordance items.

Second, the method that has been developed for this study has its own limitations. It has been difficult to treat items with significant difference in multiple categories. In this study, one item (Q16) showed statistically significant values in the perception of meaning and also in the categorical analysis of FUNCTION. In this case, though both factors may have been the cause of misinterpretation, it is difficult to determine which of the two acted as the main culprit.

8. Pedagogical Implications

8.1 Lexical Understanding of Scalar Expressions

The test results displayed pronounced disparity in the perception of basic scalar expressions between Japanese intermediate learners of English and NS. Although the analysis suggested that the knowledge of the lexical meaning of vocabulary is not necessarily a crucial factor in the understanding of CI, it seems problematic to leave them as is. Japanese EFL students usually start receiving English education from the age of 10–12 (12 years old in the case of the subjects of this study), and most of the basic scalar expressions that we have investigated in this study are taught at a very early stage. Presumptions appear to have been made during this preliminary period, and remained unmodified over the years. Comparison with TOEIC scores also suggests that their reception does not naturally improve along with general proficiency, at least in EFL environments. Steps should be taken not only to explicitly mention the more native-like measures of scalars at the point of introduction, but also to give reminders of its native-like meanings from time to time.

8.2 Instructing Conversational Implicatures

Up to this date, the teaching of CI appears to receive scant attention in ESL/EFL classrooms (Armstrong, 2007, p. 77). However, as long as it remains a prevalent conversational strategy, the effort to search for pedagogical implementation should not be abandoned. Although there have been a limited number of attempts to teach CI (Kubota, 1995; Bouton, 1999; Blight, 2002; Taguchi, 2005; Armstrong, 2007; Murray, 2011), those that exist mostly agree that explicit instruction is beneficial to learners. The approaches that have tak-
en place or proposed by preceding studies seem to fall into two categories: explicit explanation of Gricean theory and less formalized approaches.

Theoretical approaches typically involve introduction of the Gricean theory, along with explanations and activities on logical reasoning of how and why the implicated message is derived. Kubota (1995), Bouton (1999), Blight (2002) and Murray (2011) implemented this method with mixed results. While Bouton (1999) argues that instruction was effective, Kubota reports that its impact was limited as no subjects gained the ability to make pragmatic generalizations about new items (Kubota, 1995, p. 29). In Murray (2011), participants also failed to consistently reach native-like interpretations, despite six hours of intensive teaching.

Proposals from a non-theoretical perspective are offered by Taguchi (2005) and Armstrong (2007). Taguchi suggests that instruction and practices that exercise learners’ inferential skills such as holistic analysis of the implicatures should be introduced in classrooms to promote their awareness of indirect communication (Taguchi, 2005, p. 558). Armstrong proposes that even low proficiency learners can be candidates for CI instruction. She suggests that learners’ CI skills could be cultivated by transforming textbook conversations into implicature-bearing interactions and introducing consciousness-raising activities such as paraphrasing practices (Armstrong, 2007, pp. 91-92).

Findings from the present study suggest that the theoretical approach might be questionable. The learners’ accuracy level in the CONTEXT category gives us a strong indication that learners already had an implicit understanding of the logical mechanism of CI. For this reason, it would be rather redundant to give them further lectures on how implicatures work in theory. The current test data indicate that knowledge of the target language’s culture and realization of the language-specific pragmatic meaning or function are critical for native-like computation of implicatures. Therefore it may be more worthwhile to allocate the time to explicitly present the specific characteristics of CI in pragmatic usage, using examples of dialogues like the ones used in Section 2 of this study or from authentic language. Fortunately for teachers, concepts like the function of “it’s difficult” and cultural practices (sun tanning, the Independence Day, etc.) is the kind of knowledge that can be taught to students with relative ease. In reality, teaching students the whole list of semantic or pragmatic differences between L1 and L2 is impossible. However, students’ insight could still be triggered by introducing several examples. Through cultivating the recognition that pragmatic meaning can differ in intercultural communication, successful results can be expected not only in the presented items but also on new items through general application of the knowledge. By reaching higher awareness in the broader pragmatic differences between L1 and L2, students may also see improvements in overall proficiency in the target language.

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References


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Entries from dictionaries:


Movie transcript:
The Usual Suspects is available on DVD from Paramount Pictures

(2013年5月7日受付)
(2014年1月6日修正版受付)
(2014年1月25日掲載決定)