

**A Case Study of Building Cross-Cultural Pragmatic Awareness
in English: A Comparative Analysis from Two Narratives by a
German and a Japanese**

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This thesis is dedicated to my lovely friend Mariko for her cute smile, encouragement, and endless friendship.

1. Abstract

The current case study investigates English pragmatic understanding and their beliefs when using English by analyzing the narratives of the two contrastive people. The data was originally collected in a larger study which has been investigating how advanced English users with other foreign language learning experiences shape their awareness of English pragmatics. In this case study, two comparative participants' data was extracted and compared from the analysis of narratives. Two participants are; a German native who has lived in Japan for two years, and a Japanese native who studied abroad in Germany for a year. Both of them are fluent in English, German, and Japanese and their second language is English. The interviews were carried out based on the answers to the questionnaire which included questions asking about their academic backgrounds and three situational response tests (DCT: Discourse completion tasks) that tested how they would respond to three specific situations. In the interview part, the reasoning behind the answers to DCT, their general perception of their language use, their educational backgrounds etc. were asked in depth.

The results show that the way they use English and English pragmatic understanding are likely to be affected by their interactional experiences in Japan/Germany and their identities that were built through their life experiences. Also, they seem to take a good balance among their preference that is affected by their personas and desired linguistic/cultural behaviour in their home country as well as in foreign countries. These findings ultimately could lead to an implication that multilinguals' pragmatic understanding might be built through the similar process and similar factors and they might share a parallel mindset when using English in cross-cultural settings.

2. Introduction

In the century of globalisation, people are getting closer and closer. The more this trend grows, the more people are willing to connect. English, now as one of the main common languages, is something small school kids as well as adults are expected to learn. The spread of the language itself

can be even seen as an “inextricable part of the globalisation.” (Kuppens, 2013, p.327)

At the same time, because of the great spread of English, English supremacy, native speakerism, discrimination, racism, have also emerged, which have been leading people to discuss, argue, and possibly open up a rift among people who communicate while using the “same” language, English, in intercultural communication. (Jackson, 2020, pp144-166.) Therefore, especially in the global age, there seems to be freedom to express what they are thinking, a peaceful atmosphere that allows others to be themselves without forcing or expecting people to behave in the way native speakers do as suggested by Cenoz (2007). That being said, there is also a need for communicators to be able to converse effectively, here pragmatic knowledge should come in. These two aspects - being the way they are while using a foreign language and following norms that should be unconsciously shared - should be highly valued to be investigated. As Buchard (2011) also insisted, there is importance that “learners forming oriented opinions (pragmatic awareness)” is analyzed. (p. 76)

Being stood from L2 pragmatics needs, cross-cultural communicators’ awareness and how it affects their conversational actions have not been studied that much as yet. The knowledge gap was found between L2 pragmatic knowledge/awareness owned by successful foreign language communicators and actual cross-cultural communicative actions that are taken. It is expected that this research reveal that point.

3. Literature Review

3.1. The definitions of the key terms and research trends in cross-cultural pragmatics research

3.1.1. L2 pragmatics as cross-cultural pragmatics and the review of its research

Cross-cultural pragmatics has been advocated from the research area of second pragmatics. The very origin of L2 pragmatics is the idea of "communicative competence" suggested by Hymes (1972). Developing on his idea since then, many scholars have built theoretical models, such as Canal and Swain (1980). After that researchers such as Leech and Thomas (1983) developed the idea of pragmatic language use into two, pragmlinguistic aspect and sociopragmatic aspect. The former explains the grammatical and functional aspects in languages, whilst the latter deals with how languages socially work. As Taguchi (2017) stated, although there are varied definitions of

pragmatics, it always interplays among “linguistic forms, context of use, and social actions.” (p.1) This definition will be referred to in the current study, too.

From the early 21st century, there were more studies including teaching and learning L2 pragmatics and concerning intercultural, interlanguage, and cross-cultural pragmatics. One of the earliest researches regarding cross-cultural pragmatics was Cross-Cultural Speech Act Realization Project (CCSARP) done by Blum-Kalka, House, and Kasper (1989). This study investigated how non-native speakers made request forms and compared the differences with that of native speakers. One of the highlighted results was that non-natives used more indirect forms and downgraders than native speakers did. In the research related to teaching/learning pragmatics as well, there has been a trend of comparing non-native English learners' pragmatic development and its practice and those of native speakers as Cohen published his book named “Learning pragmatics from native and nonnative language teachers” in 2018. Along with the original trend still going, the new trend that touches on L2 “users” (not “learners”) pragmatic awareness with multilingual and translingual practice has gradually emerged, such as “multicompetence” by Cook (1990). “Multicompetence” explains how bilingual people possess different uses and choice of their language from that of monolinguals. After that Murahata (2016) indicated that bilinguals should have a different pragmatic cognition that could lead Ulrike (2017) to apply this theory to multilingual education and she suggested the possibility of them possessing a unique understanding of languages, too. L2 pragmatics research, so far, developed many other different ideas and has been gradually applied to multilinguals' pragmatics.

3.1.2. Definition of culture and cross-cultural communication in English

Culture is such a complex idea that there are varied definitions. Keesings's (1974) definition of culture cited in Gudykunst and Lee (2003) is:

“Culture, a system of competence shared in its broad and deeper principles, and varying between individuals in its specialities, is not all of what an individual knows and thinks and feels about his [or her] world.” (p.8)

According to Kawar (2012), culture is “the inherited value, concepts, and ways of living in which

are shaped by people of the same social group.”

Considering these two definitions, “culture” can be defined as something which is not necessarily nation-specific but could include individual varieties with community or group specificities. Based on this, the definition of “cross-cultural communication” suggested by Kulina (2022) might be suitable for the current study:

“communication including dialogue, non-verbal communications or any other sort of interactions among people from different cultural backgrounds”

From these, in this study, culture is defined as something which is not limited to nations but to individual levels with no ignorance of specificities that are shared in each social group or community. And, the place where people with different individual cultures gather and communicate, this type of communication is to be called “cross-cultural communication.”

3.2. Language users' pragmatic awareness and its development

Before considering the factors for building their awareness, the first question might be, where peoples' languages and its awareness exist? Answering this, one definition of “language awareness” from Heinlich’s study (2011) might be one of the well-explained ones.

“To begin with, just like other concepts, languages exist in people’s cognition, interpretation, expression, categorization, or in identification. Therefore, languages exist in each speaker’s mind rather than in the world. [...] Therefore, a language only exists in people’s cognition, so in most cases, there is always disunity, or there is also contradiction. In fact, the question - What is Language?- does not have the ubiquitous validity.” (Heinlich, 2011, author’s translation, p257-258)

Following this idea, it can be said that pragmatic awareness also exists in each individual’s mind because pragmatics should be and develop in the place where language exists. To investigate how they look, there must be a need to focus on each person and their ideas. One of the huge factors suggested so far should be “pragmatic transfer.” “Pragmatic transfer” happens when L2 learners copy their L1 norms into their L2 use pragmalinguistically and sociopragmatically. Wijiyanto

(2016) tested request forms by Javanese learners of English and English native speakers and how they would differ. He found that they mistakenly transferred their L1 norms especially polite use of 'yes' pragmalinguistically. McConachy (2019) examined how Japanese learners of English understand "sumimasen" for expressing gratitude and for apologising. He concluded that L2 learners do not necessarily catch L2 cultural norms but rather pragmatic awareness- especially sociopragmatic awareness is largely affected by their L1 norms. These two studies show that L1 norms should affect their L2 use. In non-verbal communication as well, there is similar transfer. On the other hand, the opposite direction (L2 to L1) of transfer exists. Krause-Ono (2004) studied how Japanese learners of German and German learners of Japanese would transfer their L1 norms each when backchanneling. She found that German learners of Japanese transferred the frequency of nodding when listening to their interlocutors speaking to their conversational styles in their L1, but this could not be seen in the counterpart.

Thus far, several studies have researched about the correlation of L1 and its effect on L2; L2 and its effect on L1. However, in the recent trend of learning more than foreign languages (Special Eurobarometer 386, 2012) and translingual practice newly coming, drawing a line between L1 and L2 or considering language use as a code-switching style might sound a bit old-fashioned. That said, there are some related studies already out. One of the earliest researches by Jessner (2003) considered the multilingual linguistic system as a dynamic and tried to relate language attrition and language acquisition, which successfully implicate the importance of considering the balance between the linguistic systems that multilinguals possess in their mind.

Also, Cenoz (2007) insisted as below:

"In the case of multilingualism it is even more important to consider that there is interaction between the languages a multilingual speaker uses and that learning of an additional language can have an effect on the other languages."

Yet, these were not strongly connected to pragmatic language use and understanding by multilinguals. In addition, McConachy (2019) insisted on the importance of examining second language pragmatics as something that can be analysed from the lens of multilingualism. Considering three scholars' arguments over a decade, it might imply that there are not that many studies that investigated

pragmatic awareness from the lens of multilingual practice yet.

4. Research Question

The last section covered the definitions of the key terms and the historical review of L2 pragmatics research and then looked at pragmatic awareness and the factors behind it. Some of the previous studies suggested pragmatic transfer in both directions could be a factor in building their pragmatic awareness. However, there is still a huge room for bridging multilingual/translingual dynamics and pragmatic awareness. Therefore, this thesis tries to reveal these two things shown below in research questions.

RQ1. How do multilinguals understand and be aware of pragmatics in English?

RQ2. What are the key factors behind their awareness and how have they built their awareness?

5. Methodology

5.1. Participants

The researcher asked two advanced English users personally to join the survey. The first one is a German male with a good proficiency level in English as his second language with Japanese and Spanish as his foreign languages. He has lived in Japan for two years to finish his master's. (hereinafter called as P1). The second one is a Japanese female with a high proficiency level of English as her second language and German as her second foreign language and she has lived in Germany for a year to study abroad. (hereinafter called P2). Both of them use English, Japanese, and German at some level in their daily lives.

This research is hoped to reveal how successful multilinguals build their pragmatic awareness and how they utilise in cross-cultural communication as said, they are supposed to possess English level to some extent or possibly high. That said, as Cook, Basseri, Kasai, Sasaki, & Takahashi (2006) stated, it should be tough to spot “advanced English users”. In their study, the following definition was applied and the current study also followed this:

“[...]we will prefer whenever possible to use the term ‘L2 user’ for people who know and use second language, irrespective of how advanced they may be. [...] self-determined L2 users of English are invited to the present survey.”

By calling for two multilingual speakers who share the same foreign language knowledge and similar studying abroad experiences, this study is designed to see similarities or differences in their development in pragmatic awareness.

5.2. Instruments

A questionnaire (see Appendix 1) was used by doing semi-structured interviews. Before doing the interview, the participants were asked to answer twenty-one questions including their personal information, such as their gender; age; their first language and acquired foreign languages; their current English use and former English educational backgrounds; and three situational responses (DCT, Discourse Completion Task). DCT is one of the instruments frequently used in pragmatics and discourse analysis research. In DCT, the participants are shown some specific conversational situations and are asked to answer how they would respond to them (Culpeper, Mackay, & Taguchi, 2018). In the current study, all three conversational settings were situations which generally would make people feel uncomfortable to communicate, such as requesting something to someone superior to you. After answering the questionnaire, follow-up interviews were conducted. One was conducted via Zoom and the other was done face-to-face. For data analysis, Otter AI was used for transcribing and Grounded Theory Approach was applied for coding and analyzing. (Creswell, 2002). The extracted parts from interviews; the list of codes and their definitions; and the coding log are in Appendix 2.

5.3. Procedure

The participants were first asked to read the research introduction and asked to sign to show their agreement. (Information for participants and Consent forms are in Appendix 3.) After the submission and confirmation, a questionnaire was sent to them and they answered. After that, they were invited to join semi-structured interviews. The average length of each interview was around 40 minutes. The recording data was transcribed by Otter AI shortly after each interview and the

transcriptions were double-checked by the researcher for its readability. Then, the data has been analyzed by coding and categorising with the reference of Creswell, 2002; & Gurbrium & Holstein, 2002. In the following sections, some parts of the quotations from the transcripts are bolded. Those parts have been bolded for emphasis as they strongly support the key findings of this study. Square brackets are used when repetitions and false starts were deleted by the researcher for clarity and readability.

6. Results and Discussion

In this part, results from DCT and interviews will be reported and discussed. The data could be analyzed from distinctive three dimensions: the effect of English education in classrooms; the effect outside of classrooms including living in foreign countries and cross-cultural communication; and their personas on their English pragmatic awareness. Three dimensions are divided into sections below and will be explained in detail.

6.1. English education in classrooms and their pragmatic awareness

Both of them have been learning English for more than ten years, however, both of them agreed that English education in their home countries was not practical. They seem to have a negative impression of their inland English education to some extent. This is shown in the following statements from their interview.

Researcher: So do you think that English, what you learned from your English education in Japan didn't practically work?

*P2: Yeah, **not practical at all**. Just almost reading and writing. (P2)*

*P1: [...] I did learn a lot through it. But **it was not enough to be conversational in English**.*

R: Okay, so you didn't, you felt you didn't learn some practical things in conversation?

*P1: **Just not enough**. Like it's a good base. But once like, after school, I went to Australia. And it was possible, it was okay to speak with people. But I understood that I was missing a lot. Especially practical training. So, of course, we did writing and reading and we also did practical language*

*in school. But **I think this would have needed to be more.*** (P1)

Also, both of them realised something was lacking in English education in classrooms as they got involved in cross-cultural communications or sometimes miscommunications with native English speakers.

*“I have one example. But this, like, my behaviour didn't come from my school. But more **from media that I watched.** And there was like one series in which they would be like, they will use the word ‘pathetic’. So I thought, I assumed that this word might not be as strong. And then, on some kind of event or party, I was with a friend. And I was just like, it was very relaxed situation. And also, not in a serious way, I told her that she is pathetic. And she didn't took it nicely at all. Like, she did not like to hear that. And I directly after I apologized, and also explained where it came from, like from the series. And like, I also I think I said it in a more like, joking way, like not being serious. But still, this had a very strong impact on her.”* (P1)

In addition, P2 talked about her relatives' backgrounds, which also seemed to have affected her pragmatic realisations and been a model of her English for years.

R: *“Did you have some chances to interact with people in English while developing your English skills? [...] And if yes, do you think your experiences had an effect on your polite behavior?”*

P2: *Yes, because **my uncle came from the United Kingdom.** And also like, lots of my mother's friends are returnees from the States or like from England and stuff. So[...] I had many opportunities, chances to interact with people in English.”*

R: *Do you think your experiences had an effect on your polite behavior? So you maybe when you interact with people, [...] you might want to be polite?*

P2: *Yeah, **by using “would” and “could”**, “if it would be better if you would brah brah brah”, or like “it would be appreciated...”[...] that **English form is what I've learned from my antie[...]**, **I think had an effect, like big effect on how I behaved when I tried to behave politely.*** (P2)

As shown above, although they agreed that they could learn English grammar and writing in

classrooms, English education itself both in Germany and Japan was not seen positively. This perception toward English education in their home countries can be supported by some studies that deal with English education and learners' perceptions in ELF countries, indicating the struggles or problems that might happen and its outcomes in ELF classrooms. (Broughton, Brumfit, Flavell, Hill, & Pincas, 1987; Doğançay-Aktuna & Hardman, 2018; & Hibatullah, 2019) Rather than in classrooms, they seemed to build their pragmatic understanding and its aspect in English through experiencing pragmatic failures just as P1 in cross-cultural communications or from relative's backgrounds as P2.

In the next section, what they picked up outside of classrooms and how they built their pragmatic awareness will be discussed.

6.2. Cultural norms and pragmatic awareness

6.2.1. Effects of their L1 cultural norms on their English pragmatic awareness

Some previous studies show that L2 users are likely to transfer their L1 norms when using L2 sociopragmatically and pragmalinguistically. (Shimizu, 2019; & McConachy, 2019). However, in the current study, this point was not found greatly; rather, they seem to have other factors which will be discussed in the following sections. That being said, regarding their mindset toward their English use and choice, in P2's case for example, there was a slight effect of her L1 on her L2. She agreed that she would consciously mix the ideas of how people in Japan normally would behave as well as how she would talk to native English speakers.

*“When I was trying to write my answer, I was wondering like if I like, in what way **I would try to write my email to my English professor or like to American professor, but at the same time I thought I'm expected to be polite as much as the way Japanese do.**” (P2)*

Her idea also was unconsciously reflected in her answer to the situational response in DCT where she had to point out mistakes that her boss made. Her answer was:

“Hi, Mr./Ms...., **I am sorry** for interrupting your business, but I've got something important to tell you about the presentation slides that you made. I thought it **would** look a bit better, **if you changed**

the topic name of the slide 4, so that the audiences can understand clearer, what you are trying to say. But was there another meaning for it? If so, **I'm sorry**, please forget what I've just said."

As shown above, she started her remark with an apologetic statement, "I am sorry" and then by using one of the conventional request forms, she seemed to show her humble attitude toward her boss when pointing out the mistake. Then finally she opened the possibility that she misunderstood something and stated "I am sorry" again. She added an explanation for her choice in the questionnaire.

*"I tried not to be rude, not to be arrogant to my boss. **Since the person who I was talking to was someone whose status is higher than mine, I tried not to be bossy, not make his/her face lose, if there was someone around us. If it had been possible, I would've never wanted to mention his/her mistakes, [...]."*** (P2)

Here, she mentioned "face." In many Asian countries, such as Japan and China, keeping someone's face is highly valued especially when there are differences in societal status and age. (Ting-Toomey, & G. Oetzel, 2005.) Considering this point where she mentioned "face", it can be said that she unconsciously follows Japanese norms in that there is a possibility of causing face threats when deciding on what and how to convey information in English. However, still, there was no significant L1 transfer to their L2 use. Rather, there were seemingly greater factors which will be explained in the following sections.

6.2.2. Effects of learning and using L3 on their English pragmatic awareness

Both agreed that they changed how they chose words in English through learning and using their L3- German for P1 and Japanese for P2.

Researcher: Do you think your answer (to the DCT) would change if you only know English as your foreign language?

*P1: I think yes. [...] I would say this is like, a lot of **it comes from what I learned how different people use languages, I think a lot of it comes from culture** as well. So because my longest*

*day abroad was in Japan, this is often my example. But I would say through the Japanese culture and language and how people use English **I've gotten more polite in my English, and as well.***
(P1)

Another Japanese impact on his English use was understanding different nuances that could exist between Japanese and English. When communicating in English with Japanese, he tried to spot where the word choice came from and understand the nuance. He used one example of understanding the difference in nuance between 'maybe' and the Japanese word '*tabun*' as in:

*"[...] for my time in Japan, once I realized more about how Japanese works, [...] once I knew some phrases that people use, and I hear them speaking English, is sometimes **can imagine what Japanese sentence comes from.** [...] I understand more what is actually meant. [...] So like, for one example, maybe like the word '*tabun*' in Japanese. You can say many things with that, right? And I would say like, often, it doesn't mean 'maybe', but it means more like 'probably' or 'definitely'. So when Japanese speakers would say the word 'maybe' in English, I would better understand that it probably comes from the word '*tabun*' in Japanese, **and then make sense of it differently.**"* (P1)

The similar perception toward their English use- they think their English has been affected by their third language- was seen also in P2's answer to the DCT: situation 2 where the participants had to tell his/her friend who recently experienced heartbreak and cried that s/he has to go to work. P2's response was:

"I just really don't want to go, I don't want to leave you alone, because if I were you, I would like someone to be here for myself too. But it's really an important job that I can't pass today. I am so sorry, but **it will be done by 18:00**, so I'll come back to you as soon as it ends. Let me be by your side after that and let me hear how you feel. You can say everything you feel/you want to say to me.
(P2)

In her response, she told her friend the exact time when she can come to him/her, which is one of the German cultural effects that she experienced in her English use. In Germany, according to her

narrative and House, 2010, being straight and adding detailed information is considered polite behaviour. Also, Ehreke, Hess, Weis, & Axhausen (2014) and Dubernet & Axhausen (2019) mentioned in their studies, time should be highly respected in any environment, such as transportation or work in Germany. She reflected on her response adding an explanation in the interview.

*"[...]like, **when exactly.** I told her [or] him when I can... I will come back by 18. **This is very German.**"*

*"German people are[...] more straightforward than English natives I guess. [...] They like whenever they ask somebody to do something they always like directly ask them because it's considered to be like **really polite in their society.**" (P2)*

This can also be supported by P1's remarks when he was talking about desired behaviour in Germany.

*"I would say in Germany [...] people[...] prepare the person for what they actually want to say. Or maybe they don't even say it and, like, just give hints on what they might mean. And I also think that this might be the case in other countries too where you don't clearly say what you mean [to] make it more soft. And in my background, like in my culture, people would notice that a person doesn't clearly say what they mean. And they don't like that. They think it's more, it's even more respectful of [...] the person's feelings or especially time to [...] say things clearly. I think [...] **we value effective communication, which is like [...] saying exactly what you want to say, like being precise. And using less words, and less time,** I think these are values in my culture." (P1)*

As shown above, P2 seems to have learnt what kind of behaviour preferred in Germany and that practice affected her English use. In addition, P1 talked about his alternate mindset that he got through foreign language learning, stated below:

*"I would think that like different cultures or **knowing different cultures, changes the way you speak, because you understand that the pragmatics are different.** [...]Like there is a connection I will change the way I use the language for pragmatics because my knowledge of cultural differences."*

"[...]there is no one best way to speak a language, but it always depends on your surroundings. And maybe like, like I get a more open mindset about it. And that it's like I see it now more as a tool to communicate and less as like a set rule of things and like this is how you do it. [...] I changed my focus from like speaking interact correctly to communicating effectively." (P1)

As Kinginger (2005) and Shively (2010) stated in their studies, knowing cultural differences and differences in how pragmatics works in the language and culture can open their mind to any possibilities that they might face in cross-cultural settings. Considering this point, P1 seemed to open his mindset as a multilingual. Also, it can be said that having the open mindset to any possible language use is a need to communicate effectively in cross-cultural settings.

6.2.3. Persona and pragmatic awareness

So far, examples of desired behaviour in each country; and how they tried to apply it to their English use were mainly discussed. Even though there are general cultural norms in each country, there should also be differences in how they would like to be perceived in a setting through using language (Taguchi & Roever, 2017). In the current study, too, how they would love to present themselves was seen from the response to a situation in DCT where P2 had to disagree with a proposal that her junior made. As shown below,

"I don't think taking out a loan is a wrong decision, but **why don't we** taking the other idea into consideration at the same time? For example, I came up with *bra bra bra*. Though I know many of you guys have already been down with that, **I would be very appreciated, if** you consider once again, which is the best for us. **Thank you.**" (P2)

Her remark started with showing sympathy by saying "I don't think ...is a wrong choice", and suggesting by saying "Why don't we...?" not disagreeing straightly. Then, she showed her understanding that some of her juniors would feel uncomfortable with her advice followed by requesting by using one of the polite conventional forms- [It ("I" used in her remark) would be if (past)]. The end of her remark was showing gratitude possibly for them listening to her suggestion. Some studies show that there is a Japanese culture in which people are expected to behave nicely

and respectfully to elderly people and people are relatively allowed to suggest or advise straightforwardly to juniors. (Pizziconi, 2003., & Liu, 2014.) However, when comparing P2's other response to the situation where she had to point out mistakes her boss made shown already in 5.2.1, there is seemingly no difference in her choosing words, such as the frequency of using hedge words or showing a moderate attitude. She added an explanation of that in the interview part.

*"I think maybe the most of Japanese people said like to younger people they would not really try to (direct?) yeah. Like they do to older people for **I don't discriminate**. You know from my perspective, I don't think it's good to change your behavior depending on the interlocutors so **I don't I wouldn't dare to change my.. to... even though the person is younger than me and I think it's a bit uncommon for Japanese people.**" (P2)*

She also mentioned Japanese society in which people are expected to use 'keigo', a special respectful form of Japanese, to seniors.

*"it's okay for me to use 'keigo' or like it's really uncomfortable for me to start like I have to change my opinion depending on who I'm talking to [...] we sometimes all like often have to make up our thoughts like our true opinions to make older people feel better, like superior than us (yeah) **that's what I hate the most in our society.**" (P2)*

From her talking, her belief in making polite remarks regardless of the different societal status or age can be seen as well from the following part, too.

"when I asked something to the something that I don't really want to do to other people can make them feel kind of low, (it's) not good. And I think it would be better to use "would" and "could" to make myself look lower than them I guess." (P2)

*"I.. I want to make it look like **"I'm doing this doing that. But I really don't want to do that. Actually."** Kind of, you know. "I really, really refrain from doing this but I can't (help with it)." kind of nuance that I want to make with "I'm sorry." I'm [...] very casually using "I'm sorry" and "would", as well." (P2)*

Similar things could be mentioned in P1's case, too. When he was asked the reasoning behind the answers to each situation in DCT, he mentioned when he would feel comfortable and uncomfortable as he needed to convey information.

*"I would say I feel more comfortable in an environment where I can say things like clearly with everybody being okay. So I would say, **I myself would feel more comfortable with speaking directly. But only if my environment allows that. So if not, I would feel uncomfortable with saying things directly because I know they would not like it. But also, I will feel uncomfortable with saying it indirectly. Because that's like, I don't like it that way.**" (P1)*

In Germany, as some studies referred to in the previous sections, telling information precisely, clearly, and straightforwardly is preferred. (Refer to section 5.2.1 where ideal polite behaviour in Germany was mentioned in detail). Partially he would follow it but only when he acknowledged everyone being okay with his attitude, otherwise, he would feel uncomfortable being direct.

Considering all the things mentioned and analyzed above, they are willing to follow what they feel is right when choosing words in English. To sum up, their characteristics and beliefs in choosing words should be one of the greatest factors of their pragmatic awareness, too.

7. Conclusion, Limitations for the Current Study, and A Suggestion for Future Research

There are three key findings from this case study.

1. Cross-cultural English pragmatic awareness has not been built through language education in classrooms but rather outside of the classrooms, such as interactional experiences and relative's backgrounds.
2. Their cross-cultural English pragmatic awareness has been affected by their L1 norms, ideal L2 self, and L3 linguistic and cultural norms.
3. They seem to try to take a good balance among L1 norms, acquired cultural norms and

foreign language use, and their personality to present their behaviour or impression politely and keep harmony with people around them.

Since the form of this study is a case study, only two narratives were analysed. Although interesting reflectional findings were able to be seen, conceptualising their pragmatic awareness and generalising key factors behind their awareness could not be fully done with the small number of data. Therefore, in conclusion, these findings would be better to be left as hypotheses and future studies could develop these findings into theories with more detailed information and with more multilingual participants who can communicate effectively in cross-cultural settings.

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Appendix 1: Questions in the questionnaire

Section 1: Background Information

- 1.1 This study is for participants whose first language is not English that self-identify as advanced English users. Would you describe your English proficiency as advanced?
- 1.2 How many years have you learnt English?

1.3 If you have any standard English test scores or certificates (TOEIC, TOEFL, EIKEN etc) please list them here. Note: This is not required as "proof" of your level. Skip this question if it is not applicable.

1.4 This study is for participants have studied English and at least one other foreign language. Which foreign languages other than English have you studied? Write each language here and how many years you have studied it.

1.5 What is your first language?

Note: If you think you have more than one "first language", write more than one here

1.6 What is your gender?

1.7 How old are you?

1.8 Are you currently a student?

Section 2: Studying and Using English

2.1 In which situations do you use English?

2.2 Where did you mainly learn English?

2.3 Are you still learning English now?

2.4 If yes, where do you learn English?

2.5 I think what I learnt in my English classes was useful for cross-cultural communication in English.

2.6 I think what I learnt by studying other foreign languages was useful for cross-cultural communication in English.

Section 3: Situational Responses

In the following situations, what would you say? Please write a response in English using quotation marks (" "). Try not to overthink it and write what comes naturally to you.

Example situation: You are a new university exchange student and were absent from the last class. You need information about the homework from a classmate.

Example response: "Hey, can you give me a sec? I wasn't in the last class and would like to make up for that. If you don't mind, can you show me your notes and tell me about the homework we should work on by the next class?"

3.1 Situation 1: You found some mistakes that your boss made in very important presentation slides. You would like to ask him/her to make some changes.

Please write what you would say in this situation.

3.2 Please explain what influenced you in choosing what to write in the previous question. For example, the relationship with the other person, your/their perceived cultural norms, etc.

3.3 Situation 2: Your friend experienced his/her first heartbreak and is crying now. You want to be with him/her but you have to go to work right now.

3.4 Please explain what influenced you in choosing what to write in the previous question. For example, the relationship with the other person, your/their perceived cultural norms, etc.

Please write what you would say in this situation.

3.5 Situation 3: You are the captain of a club that does not have enough money. Many club members want take out a loan, but you believe that the proposal is a mistake. You express your disagreement at the meeting. Please write what you would say in this situation.

3.6 Please explain what influenced you in choosing what to write in the previous question. For example, the relationship with the other person, your/their perceived cultural norms, etc.

3.7 Please reflect on how you thought when you answered the three questions above.

Did you consider how to say it in your first language before thinking how to say it in English?

Appendix 2: Coding Log (example)

Discourse Completion Task and reasoning comment on the questionnaire, researcher's comments

Situation 1: You found some mistakes that your boss made in very important presentation slides. You would like to ask him/her to make some changes.

P2: Hi, Mr./Ms... I am sorry for interrupting your business, (apology) but I've got something important to tell you about the presentation slides that you made. I thought it would look a bit better, if you changed the topic name of the slide 4, so that the audiences can understand clearer, what you are trying to say. But was there another meaning for it? If so, I'm sorry (apology), please forget what I've just said.

(P2 I tried **not to be rude, not to be arrogant** to my boss. Since the person who I was talking to was someone whose **status** is higher than mine, I tried **not to be bossy**, not make his/her **face lose**, if there was someone around us. If it had been possible, I would've never wanted to mention his/her mistakes, especially if the person has much pride.)

P1: "Excuse me, Mr. XX, if I may ask a question (request) I found this part of the last slide interesting and wondered how you came to that result or whether it might (hedge word) have been by accident"

(P1 I think my answer reflects a mix between my own European cultural background and my time studying in Japan. In Germany, I would relatively clearly address the mistake while being open to the option that I am wrong. In Japan, I would probably not even finish the sentence and stop after "wondered" or "result".)

Situation 2: Your friend experienced his/her first heartbreak and is crying now. You want to be with him/her but you have to go to work right now.

Please write what you would say in this situation.

P2 I just really don't want to go, I don't want to leave you alone, because if I were you, I would like someone to be here for myself too (showing empathy)

Saki Araki
introduction starting with apology

Saki Araki
It seems to try to sound is softer

Saki Araki
keywords: face, status, rude, arrogant, bossy,
- tries to keep the relationship between people
- social status seems to be so important

Saki Araki
introduction starting with request

Saki Araki
apology->information->possibility of misunderstanding->apology

request-> information-> possibility of misunderstanding

Saki Araki
-reflection and comparison of his cultural background and acquired cultural norms
-tried to state himself in between, merged mindsets

Saki Araki
interview data (P2)
did you consider how do you say it in your first language before thinking how to say it in English and you said "I am not sure, I thought of it mostly in Japanese and English but certainly in German as well, Especially where does German come in?" when considering the answers

M: Three. That three one. I just really don't want to go. I don't want to leave you alone because if I were you I would like someone to be here for myself too. Like when exactly NE? I told her like him when I can. I will come back by 18. But This is very German.

R: Okay. So you mean you felt the need to tell the exact time when you can come back? Yes.

- The researcher asked her when she feels her languages are mixed especially when does she feel that her German comes in as while using English.
(Her politeness seems to be affected by German cultural norms: telling the exact time specifically is expected)

but in P1's answer he didn't seem to be so.

Saki Araki
showing empathy->apology->suggestion
showing empathy->checking his/her mental feeling->suggestion

pathy). But it's really an important job that I can't pass today. I am so sorry (apology), but it will be done by 18:00, so I'll come back to you as soon as it ends. Let me be by your side after that and let me hear how you feel. You can say everything you feel/you want to say to me.

I tried to emphasize that I am here for my friend. Although I unfortunately had to tell her/him that I have to go to work, I told at the same time that I will come back after work. I told her/him the exact time to come back, so that she/he doesn't have to feel (by when should she/he endure pain). Also, I wanted to make sure that I am here for her/him by telling "let me hear how she/he feels".

P1 "I am so sorry for your situation and I want to be here for you when you need me (showing sympathy). I need to leave now if I want to arrive at work in time. Being a few minutes late won't be a problem so I can stay now for a bit, and I can come back after work right away. You think you will be okay? If you need me now I will stay and tell my work I am sick."

I tried to let my friend know how much they mean to me and that I want to help them. At the same time, I am trying to communicate my own needs so that we find a good situation together. **This is my personal choice because I think open and honest communication is the best way for any relationship.** But I know that many cultures, including the one I grew up with, rather would not talk so much about their own needs and either say they will stay or say they cannot stay. Both would not be my honest truth, so I'd choose to say what I actually feel and I think after time passes my friend will understand me more and accept that behavior.

Situation 3: You are the captain of a club that does not have enough money. Many club members want take out a loan, but you believe that the proposal is a mistake. You express your disagreement at the meeting.

P2 I don't think taking out a loan is a wrong decision, (showing sympathy) but why don't we taking the other idea into consideration at the same time (suggestion)? For example, I came up with bra bra bra (suggestion). Though I

Saki Araki
He explains "what is honest for him" here; follows his belief, there is no correlation to cultural stuff?

Saki Araki
showing sympathy-> suggestion-> showing sympathy-> polite request-> gratitude

showing sympathy->disagreement->reasoning for disagreement-> suggestion->staying back and being moderate-> disagreement

In Japanese participant's answer there is no "disagreement statement" she also mentioned it in the interview as in :

like when I asked something to the something that I don't really want to do to other people can make them feel kind of low in the not good. And I think it would be better to use "would" and "could" to make myself look lower than then I guess.

R: Oh, yeah. Okay.

M: I. I want to make it look like "I'm doing this doing that. But I really don't want to do that. Actually." Kind of, you know. "I really, really refrain from doing this but I can't help with it). " kind of nuance that I want to make with "I'm sorry." (Okay, okay.) I'm casually very casually using "I'm sorry" and "would", as well.

ion in English. So, but your English maybe has been based on what you have learnt.
Is it is it correct?↵

P2: Umm. It's partially correct. But I think this is difficult I guess like why I speak like this English because like I have had company with English natives at the same generation I downloaded some language communication apps on my smartphone and communicate I tried to communicate with lots of English native slash European people who can really, currently speak English.↵

Araki Saki
English learning outside of classrooms ↵

R: Okay, so, outside of the classroom you have learned that you ever learned English and English use more than inside a classroom.↵

P2: In terms of practical English communication.↵

R: Do you have any experiences that you faced miscommunication in English?↵

P2: I sometimes feel that the way English natives talk or like European people who speak English as a second language too, is too strong for me.↵

Araki Saki
perception for English spoken by natives/European ↵

R: So, even when when they when they use English, their English sounds harsh?↵

P2: harsh harsh. What they are trying to say is like pretty normal for them. The way they talk in their language is for me, like as a Japanese native, like mother, nah, native person it sounds kind of a bit cold, harsh, strict sometimes.↵

R: And do you think that your English is based on your Japanese feelings or, like the mindset of being Japanese native?↵

P2: 50 percent.↵

R: What is about 50 percent, the rest of 50 percent?↵

P2: because sometimes I can't really say... ah the rest of the rest of it, ? but I have what I've learned from the communication with German people. German people are more people more straightforward than English natives I guess. They never use a **** or something like that. They like whenever they ask somebody to do something they always like directly ask them because it's considered to be like really polite and in their society. So they say like "Kannst du etwas machen?", "can you do that for me?" Literally that yeah, I sometimes do that as well in English. And sometimes I say like really straightforward which British people don't really do with their English so... I am not for that I disagree with that. Like just straightforwardly I use terms which that German people use with their English.↵

Araki Saki
Her English comes from living experiences in Germany. German people are straightforward when asking something to someone and when she does it with her English, she doesn't feel good, because her English is based on British English which is generally considered polite.↵

R: okay, I'm interested in your English using in Germany when you are in Germany and you when you have to use English with people did you feel that your English becomes more it became more harsh?

P2: Harsh, straightforward, like really, really direct and also very detailed. So much information in one sentence, just not ordinary for British people. They sum up with their thoughts in one sentence very clearly which is uncommon (recordings failed.)

R: Do you feel you change your linguistic behavior when you use English? According to the places where you are? Yes. So maybe in Japan Your English is softer, they become softer?

P2: [softer and ambiguous, more ambiguous. Sometimes I can't say what I really want to say in front of Japanese people in English, even in English as well. For example, I take I'm taking business communication classes and when it comes to me talking to my American teacher I can speak English very very fluently. Non stop English but like with my group, right? I can't speak English it's very weird but I can't I can't say what I really want to say and what I'm really thinking about in my head because I think I may be it might be in a harsher for them]

R: So is it is it because you really want to be polite to them or some other reason?

P2: That's true that's true but like all of that I strongly worried if it hurt(s) my Japanese people.

R: But you didn't think that kind of thing in Germany or so?

P2: NO. NEVER.

R: not you already knew that they don't they don't get hurt.

P2: No. Because saying it straight to their face is politeness in German.

R: Okay. So how about with for example with your French friend?

P2: With my French friend? Ah straightforward.

R: How about with with your British friends or family members?

P2: [is different (ah different) Yeah. [I often use good polite form.]

Araki Saki

Her linguistic behaviour in English changes depending on with whom she is talking. With Japanese her English becomes soft and sometimes feels her not being able to convey what she wants to say. With German, her English becomes harsher considering German cultural norms in which people are expected to be direct and detailed.

Araki Saki

but with British people, her English becomes in a middle of English with German and English with Japanese.

Appendix 3: Participant's Consent Form

A Study of Advanced English Users' Pragmatic Awareness

Participant Consent Form

I voluntarily agree to participate in this research study. I have understood and consent to the following:

- I agree to be interviewed about cross-linguistic and cross-cultural pragmatic awareness of advanced English users. The interview is expected to last approximately 20 minutes.
- I understand this form does not compel me to complete an interview and I can decide to withdraw before or during the interview.
- I understand that I can withdraw permission to use my interview data by contacting the researcher by email. In this case, my data will be deleted.
- I have had the purpose and nature of the study explained to me in writing and I have had the opportunity to ask questions about the study.
- I agree to my interview being recorded on a smartphone if I am interviewed face-to-face or on Zoom if I am interviewed online. Before recording begins on Zoom, my video camera will be switched off (if it was on at the start of the call) and my name will be changed to a code name to protect my privacy.
- I understand that all information I provide for this study will be treated confidentially.
- I understand that in any report on the results of this research my identity will remain anonymous. This will be done by changing my name and disguising any details of my interview which may reveal my identity or the identity of people I speak about.
- I understand that disguised extracts from my interview may be quoted in a graduation thesis and academic presentations/articles.
- I understand that I will not benefit financially from participating in this research.

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Participant's name (print): _____

Participant's signature: _____

Date: _____

