

Difficulties in Speaking English and Perceptions of Accents
*A Comparative Study of Finnish and Japanese Adult
Learners of English*

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Tiivistelmä – Abstract				
<p>The English language has an important standing in global communication, hence both oral and written English skills are essential around the world. However, to many, speaking English seems to be a very challenging task. Since the aim of English education is not only to develop knowledge of grammar and written skills but also to teach oral English skills, this problem needs to be studied in order to remedy the situation. The aim of this study was to discover if adult learners of English experience problems in speaking English, and if so, what types of problems and why. In addition, especially in Finland, the interest in English language media has become stronger, hence it was an additional aim to learn if this has created pressure for English studies and for what type of accent the learner should have.</p> <p>The problems experienced in studying English as a foreign or second language have been studied somewhat, but the problems that Finnish and Japanese learners, in particular, experience in speaking English should be studied more. In this study, these problems were analysed according to second language acquisition theory, and the factors affecting them were categorised in line with Moyer's (2004) classification. Previous research on attitudes towards speaking English and English accents, for example Leppänen <i>et al.</i> (2009), was a background for comparison in discussing the results, as was Garant's (2008) study that compared Finnish and Japanese English educational systems.</p> <p>The data consists of interviews of Finnish and Japanese adult learners of English. A comparison of Finland and Japan was seen as useful because of their differences in education systems and contacts with the English language. The interviews were conducted with qualitative a methodology, and the questions touched upon previous and current English studies, problems experienced in speaking English, and attitudes towards English accents. In the analysis mainly qualitative methods were used, but quantitative methods were also used in the presentation of data.</p> <p>Both Finns and Japanese saw speaking English as difficult. Reasons for this were, for example, their previous education that had been too grammar oriented and theoretical, a late onset of learning, a fear of errors, a lack of practice and experience, and social pressure. Overall, the factors that create problems were instruction and input related, social and neurological. Accent was also an affecting factor: the standard models of English had a strong standing in the attitudes of the informants, and the Finnish and the Japanese accents of English were disliked. The informants with a higher education had stricter attitudes towards English accents. The difference between the two countries was that Finns were more aware of English accents and wanted to speak in a British accent more often. The Japanese had considerable difficulty with listening comprehension, which also affected speech. The reasons were <i>e.g.</i> a lack of overall study of foreign languages and the current education system. Recognising the problems benefits both the students and the teachers, and, based on the results, more practical and functional communication skills should be emphasised in English education in order to attain better active oral skills. In addition, accents should be discussed more in the classroom in order to make the attitudes more lenient.</p>				
Avainsanat – Keywords				
Oral proficiency, accent attitudes, difficulties, Finland, Japan, adult learners				

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Tiivistelmä – Abstract				
<p>Englannin kieli on nykypäivänä tärkeässä asemassa kulttuurienvälisessä viestinnässä, ja siksi sen suullinen sekä kirjallinen osaaminen on tärkeää ympäri maailmaa. Monille englannin kielen puhuminen tuntuu kuitenkin olevan erittäin haastavaa, ja koska englannin kielen opetuksen päämääränä on kieliopin ja kirjallisten taitojen lisäksi suullisten kielitaitojen kehittäminen, on asiaa syytä tutkia tilanteen parantamiseksi. Tutkimuksen päämääränä oli selvittää kokevatko aikuisopiskelijat englannin puhumisessa ongelmia, ja jos, niin millaisia ja miksi. Lisäksi nykypäivänä etenkin Suomessa englanninkielisen median kiinnostus on kasvanut ja tämä tutkimus oli myös kiinnostunut selvittämään, onko tämä suuntaus luonut paineita englannin kielen opiskeluun ja siihen, millaisella aksentilla englantia pitäisi puhua.</p> <p>Englannin kieltä vieraana tai toisena kielenä oppivien opiskelijoiden puhumiseen liittyviä ongelmia on tutkittu jonkin verran, mutta etenkin suomalaisten ja japanilaisten englannin kielen puhumisessa koettuja ongelmia pitäisi tutkia lisää. Tässä tutkimuksessa näitä ongelmia on analysoitu toisen kielen oppimisen teorian avulla, ja ongelmiin vaikuttavia syitä kategorisoitu Moyerin (2004) luokittelun avulla. Aikaisempi tutkimus asenteista englannin kielen puhumista ja aksentteja kohtaan, esim. Leppänen <i>et al.</i> (2009), on toiminut vertailupohjana tulosten käsittelyssä, kuten myös Garant:n (2008) vertaileva tutkimus Suomen ja Japanin koulutusjärjestelmien eroista.</p> <p>Tämän tutkimuksen aineisto koostuu suomalaisten ja japanilaisten aikuisopiskelijoiden haastatteluista. Suomen ja Japanin vertailu nähtiin hyödyllisenä niiden koulutusjärjestelmien ja englannin kieleen liittyvien taustojen vuoksi. Haastattelut on toteutettu laadullisin menetelmin, ja kysymykset koskivat englannin kielen aikaisempaa ja tämänhetkistä opiskelua, puhumisessa koettuja ongelmia ja aksentteihin liittyviä asenteita. Haastattelujen analysoinnissa on käytetty pääasiassa laadullisia menetelmiä, mutta aineiston esittelyyn on käytetty myös tilastollisia menetelmiä.</p> <p>Sekä suomalaiset että japanilaiset kokivat englannin puhumisen keskimäärin haastavaksi. Syitä tähän oli mm. liian kielioppipainotteinen aikaisempi opetus, myöhäinen opiskelun aloitusikä, virheitteiden pelko, harjoituksen ja kokemuksen puute, ja sosiaalinen paine. Kaikenkaikkiaan syyt olivat opetuksellisia, sosiaalisia ja neurologisia. Aksentti vaikutti myös asiaan: standardienglannin asema oli vahva haastattavien asenteissa, eikä suomalaisesta tai japanilaisesta englannin kielen aksentista pidetty. Korkeammin koulutetuilla oli selkeästi tiukemmat asenteet aksenttia kohtaan. Maiden ero näkyi siinä, että suomalaiset olivat tietoisempia englannin kielen aksenteista ja halusivat myös puhua enemmän brittiläisittäin. Japanilaisilla puhumiseen vaikutti myös se, että kuullunymmärtäminen oli hyvin haastavaa. Syinä oli mm. yleinen vieraitten kielten opiskelun puute ja nykyinen koulutusjärjestelmä. Ongelmien tiedostamisesta on hyötyä sekä opiskelijoille että opettajille, ja koulutusta pitäisikin tulosten perusteella kehittää enemmän käytännöllisempiä viestintätaitoja harjoitettavaksi, mikäli parempia aktiivisia puhevalmiuksia halutaan saavuttaa. Myös aksentteihin liittyvien paineiden huomioimisesta opetuksessa olisi hyötyä.</p>				
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1. INTRODUCTION

A 51-year-old Finnish learner of English says that speaking English is a difficult task: he understands the language and knows a lot about its grammar and lexicon, but when he has to speak, he seems to be at a loss for words. This is a problem that other people have noticed as well. For example, according to Tatham and Morton (2006: 273) many people report that they can understand a language but they cannot speak it. There are also other countries where people experience the same phenomenon, for example in the Japanese context it seems that many people have difficulties in speaking English.

This is clearly a problem, because the aim of English language education is to provide learners with the capabilities to understand the language and the ability to both write and speak it. If learners are not able to speak English, this aim has not been fully achieved. Thus, it is necessary to study this issue in order to discover if people indeed have problems with speaking, and if they do what kind of problems and why. Of course, not all learners struggle with speaking. However, since there are some people who do have problems with speaking, there is good reason to research the matter. More insight into this might be able to help develop the teaching of English speech production and thus the abilities of English learners.

This study attempts to acquire useful information about this problem by analyzing interviews conducted with Finnish and Japanese adult learners of English. Adult learners were chosen, because they are more likely to have experience of using English outside of school for a longer period of time. The aims are to discover whether the informants experience difficulties in speaking English and if their accent has anything to do with this. Accent will be a special interest of this study, because, based on recent findings (*e.g.* Leppänen *et.al.*, 2001), Finnish learners have interesting

attitudes towards the Finnish English accent: only a few of the informants reported that they liked the Finnish accent of English, for instance. English accent related issues have raised interest around the world, because of the growing status of English as a global tool of communication, which is why accent attitudes might also be a reason for problems experienced in speaking English. Many Japanese learners also seem to find the Japanese accent of English unpleasant. However, because of the different status of English in Europe and in Asia, Finland and Japan are an interesting pair for comparison, especially so because of the globally growing position of English and its effect on L2 learning, English varieties, and accent attitudes.

Finnish and Japanese adult learners of English will be compared in order to provide this study with more objective information about SLA in different countries, and moreover, because Finland and Japan seem to have many qualities in common in relation to speaking English (refer to the next chapter). The hypotheses of this study are that both Finnish and Japanese adult learners of English experience difficulties, such as stress, in speaking English, and that part of this is due to their accent.

This work will discuss several issues that are related to second language learning and speech production. Firstly, Finland and Japan will be compared as English language learning contexts in order to explain the choice of these two for the comparative study. Secondly, the theoretical framework will be discussed in two parts: the areas of second language acquisition that are closely related to oral language proficiency, and then the main factors that affect English speech production. Then the methods of this study will be discussed, the results introduced, and lastly, the results will be discussed in relation to the theories used in this study.

2. WHY COMPARE FINLAND AND JAPAN?

Finland and Japan might seem an unlikely choice for comparison, but are actually a good pair for it, because they appear to have some cultural similarities, such as basically homogenous populations (see Garant, 1997: 15), languages not related to English and a high tolerance for silence as an important part of their communicational systems (Garant, 1997: 15; Tanaka, 1990). There are, of course, regional differences, minorities and sub-cultures in both countries, which can influence a comparison (Garant, 1997: 15). Japan has a larger population and there are cultural and other differences as well, but when it comes to English education and use there seem to be many similarities. There are, for example, institutional similarities, such as post-World War II centralized education, equal opportunity for education and almost universal access to English education (Garant, 1997: 16; Nikki, 1992; Takala, 1993). Garant (*ibid.*) also says that there has been more autonomy for planning in language education in both countries at the local level since 1992. The earlier English education in Finland about 40 years ago focused strongly on grammatical and literary aspects of English, similarly to the earlier English education in Japan. The difference is, however, that the English education in Japan still remains very grammar oriented. This also makes the comparison interesting, as it is possible to compare the effect of change in the Finnish education system on the language learner.

Another phenomenon that makes comparing these countries interesting is the interest that Japan (and other countries as well) has been showing toward the Finnish education system. It seems to be considered highly effective, whereas, for example, the Japanese SL education system seems to be under quite a lot of criticism. It has to be taken into account, however, that the present study concentrates on adult learners, and that in Finland SL education has developed quite a lot after that. There have been previous studies other than Garant (1997) that compare Japan and Finland, such as Widen (1987), but these have not compared educational similarities or use of English (Garant,

1997: 16). Huhtala and Koivisto (1997a; 1997b; 1997c), on the other hand, have studied the development of Finnish academic studies in relation to Japan, but did not focus on English education specifically.

Another factor that has to be kept in mind while making a comparative analysis about Japan and Finland is, as Garant (1997: 67) explains, that Japan is a monolingual country, unlike Finland with its two national languages. However, only a minor group of people in Finland speak Swedish as a mother tongue, and the others learn it at school. Both Finland and Japan have very high literacy rate, and they both follow the 6-3-3 basic education system (*ibid.*). The American influence in Japan has been strong, and after WWII the schools were re-designed based on American ideas. Foreign influence seems to have been important to the Finnish educational system as well (Garant, 1997: 65), and in English education the British influence seems to have been quite strong in past years. Finns study approximately 2.5 languages at school (Takala, 1993), but in Japan English is virtually the only foreign language offered (Garrett, 1997). However, Garant mentions (1997: 66) that the new JET program's¹ aim is to bring native speakers to Japanese classrooms in order to encourage English speaking. One reason is that many English teachers in Japan cannot speak English (Garant, 1997: 67).

Garant (1997) has conducted a study pretty similar to the present one, comparing the English of Finns and the English of Japanese people, but it has an emphasis on the educational cultures of these countries, whereas this study is more interested in the learners and their experiences in speaking English. Furthermore, it studied young learners, whereas this study is interested in adult language learners. Garant's study (1997) has some very useful data, however. For instance, Garant (1997: 6) writes that in the Japanese context communication was an expressed goal in the education,

¹ The Japan Exchange and Teaching (JET) Program attempts to acquaint the Japanese population with foreigners by face-to-face interaction, because to many Japan seems too isolated and closed to international communities (McConnell, 1999: ix).

but entrance exams were a major motivational factor, whereas in the Finnish context test taking was a minor factor and communication paramount. This we can notice by reading the following sections on Finnish and Japanese English educations, and the table below.

Table 1. *Reasons for studying English in Japan and Finland*

TABLE 6.1 Reasons For Studying English (%)¹⁵

	Japan	Finland
Why do you study English?		
High school entrance tests	61%	
Matriculation examination		16%
junior high school tests	54%	33%
To speak	49%	84%
To understand	48%	85%
To travel to foreign countries	42%	66%
To talk to foreigners	46%	66%
To listen to English music	26%	51%
To watch English movies	26%	56%
To read books, magazines	19%	40%
Other:		
I like English	1%	
Use computer		1 student
Pen pals		1 student
Talk to English father		1 student
Because I have to		1 student

(Garant, 1997: 121)

This table also shows that nowadays in Finland popular culture and developing overall language skills are more important for motivation than tests. This is an interesting point for the present study, because as will be further explained in 3.3.1 and 3.3.2 Finnish education was more grammar and test oriented in the 1960s, when the Finnish informants of this study attended English lessons at school. Thus, it was similar to current and past Japanese English instruction. It is interesting to see if the present English instruction, which is supposedly more encouraging, has changed the adult learners' attitudes and motivation to English learning. It may be presumed that it offers a new type of influence on English learning and attitudes towards speaking English, as opposed to the earlier Finnish methods and Japanese methods, and so makes speaking easier.

Garant (1997: 6) also says that there are similarities in educational details as well, for example that in both countries, the teaching methods, lesson segmentation and interaction were influenced by textbook design, curriculum goals and cultural factors. In Finland, teaching was more centered on the learner, which was more conducive to communicative language teaching, whereas Japanese teaching methods were more teacher centered and concentrated on test training and structural teaching approaches (Garant, 1997: 6). He also (*ibid.*) maintains that the Finnish TEFL (teaching English as a foreign language) methods seem successful in establishing communication in the classroom, which would be useful in other environments as well, such as Japan. English oral proficiency in Japan is considered less than satisfactory by many sources and language professionals concur that it is less problematic to communicate with Finnish ESL learners than Japanese ESL learners (Garant, 1997: 17-18). Garant (1997: 17) also maintains that TOEFL² test results show that there are profound differences in English proficiency between Finland and Japan. However, it seems that TOEFL is a lot more popular in Japan than in Finland, and it may be that in Finland only students who are very interested in English and wish to pursue studies or a career abroad take this test.

Also, the results of the study on Japanese and Finnish English education conducted by Garant (1997: 219) showed that the Finnish English textbooks seemed to support communicativeness more than the Japanese ones, which seemed to have a tendency to emphasize grammar. Other results (Garant, 1997: 220) were that Finns watched more English TV programs, had talked more with foreigners, saw communication as more important than Japanese learners, and had been abroad more. Garant (1997: 223) maintains that the Finnish setting seemed more effective in promoting communicative competence, whereas in Japan the traditional structural approach seemed to be held

² TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language) is among the best-known examinations to test English proficiency (Alderson & Hamp-Lyons, 1996).

in high appreciation. The Finnish mentality in education seemed to be more communicative and to emphasize life-long learning (*ibid.*). In Japan, face-consciousness seemed to be an important matter in the classroom, which had to do with Japan's collectivist culture (Hofstede, 1986), in other words group mentality (*ibid.*). Both had some traits of a collectivist culture, for instance Finnish teachers were also concerned about the face of the students or public image of the students and made sure no one was humiliated in the classroom (*ibid.*). However, with respect to teacher and student hierarchy, in Finland the power distance is weak, which means that there is quite a lot of two-way communication in the classroom, and the teacher emphasizes learner autonomy (*ibid.*). In Japan there seemed to be a strong power distance pattern, which means that classes were teacher-oriented, there was not so much two-way communication, and learners were dependent on the teacher (Garant, 1997: 226). Garant (1997: 227) also notes that failure was a minor incident in Finland, whereas in Japan it was a severe blow to the student's self image. There was solidarity in the classroom both in Finland and in Japan, but the Japanese students seemed more modest (*ibid.*).

Garant (1997: 229) mentions that while it has been said that the Japanese and Finnish communication strategies highly resemble each other (Widen, 1985), the results of the study by Garant (1997: 229–230) showed that they were different. The Japanese classroom was more in order and the students would be less independent in the classroom, although in the Finnish context the students would similarly usually speak only when called by the teacher. Also, the politeness strategies were different: Finnish social hierarchy emphasized team spirit, whereas Japan showed more deference politeness strategies (*ibid.*). More information about the respective education systems will be given in 3.3.1. and 3.3.2.

3. SECOND LANGUAGE ACQUISITION

In trying to find out why Finnish and Japanese adult learners of English might experience difficulties, such as loss of words, frustration, anxiety, pronunciation problems *etc.*, in speaking English, it is essential to think about speech and phonology in relation to second language learning. Thus, second language acquisition is an important field in this study. Theory from speech production will also be used to briefly describe the speech process. The theory section will discuss speech production and also other areas of linguistics, speech perception, universals and markedness, and language anxiety, which might help to explain the factors that contribute to difficulties in speaking an L2, and then the factors that might cause difficulties in speech production for adult learners of English. The factors that will be discussed in this study more closely include maturational constraints *i.e.* age, individual factors, instruction and input, social factors, and accent in speaking.

Research on second language acquisition (SLA) is, of course, an important source of knowledge for this research because it offers explanations for how one learns to speak a second language (SL), and more importantly, what type of factors influence the learning process. According to Hansen Edwards & Zampini (2006: 6), the key constructs that have shaped L2 phonology research and pedagogy are transfer, universals or markedness, the critical period hypothesis, and variation. These will be discussed in this study: transfer in relation to accent in 5.3.2, the critical period hypothesis in 3.1, variation in 3.2., and universals and markedness in 2.3. In this chapter, speech production, speech perception, universals and markedness, and language anxiety will be discussed in relation to SLA.

3.1. Speech production

Firstly, it is important to think about speech and what type of a process it is. Speech production research is a field of linguistics that concentrates on this issue: it has to do with both physical and cognitive processes of producing speech. However, most research in speech production seems to concentrate on the physical level. Tatham and Morton (2006: xvi) write that there are problems in speech modelling, and this explains why there is less data on the cognitive processes of speech production:

- - - there is no serious empirical basis yet for characterising with any degree of certainty the pre-motor stages of speech production. We assume a physical input – something we call the ‘utterance plan’, and this is a physical copy of the abstract output from prior cognitive or phonological processing. But we have no experimental evidence for the exact nature of this plan – other than that it somehow reflects earlier cognitive processes.

Tatham and Morton (2006: 173) present a model of speech production that incorporates the physical level of speech production as well as the cognitive level. They maintain that there are two planes of speech production: the static level, which refers to the knowledge base of language, where utterance plans are made, and the dynamic level, which is procedural and operates with instantiations of utterances. Other researchers have similar theories that categorize two layers of speech production, for example Habermas’s (1971) double structure of sentence, which includes the performative sentence and the underlying propositional sentence. These two levels of speech production might become useful in explaining why some learners experience difficulties in speaking; for example, whether pronunciation difficulties are due to the plan or the attempt to execute it. In the case of the adult learner, who reported having problems with speaking English despite his knowledge of it, it might give some insight into what kind of processes he goes through when he speaks English, or attempts to speak it.

3.2. Speech perception

There are also other areas of linguistics that might help discover the reasons for speech difficulties in SLA, such as speech perception. This might be a useful field, because, for example, a learner's first language (L1) may affect the way he or she perceives a second language (L2). Thus, speech perception might help us explain why people do not notice the difference between certain L2 sounds, which, then again, might be the reason why the learner has difficulties in producing these sounds. So, speech perception and production are closely linked to each other, as Tatham & Morton (2006) observe. There are also other researchers, who have claimed that speech perception and speech production have a lot to do with each other, for example, Best (1994).

Hancin-Bhatt (2008: 120) maintains that another observation in the field of second language speech perception has been that L2 perceptual abilities do not match L2 production abilities (cf., Flege, 1993 for a review). Hancin-Bhatt continues:

In perception, listeners attend to acoustic phonetic features of sounds to identify them, while in production, talkers produce specific articulatory configurations to distinguish sounds from each other. Generally, there is evidence that L2 learners can have highly accurate perceptual abilities, but relatively inaccurate production ones. Alternatively, L2 learner production abilities can be more target-like than their perceptual abilities at certain levels of the phonology. Not only do perception and production require different primitives, but they also can have a differential rate of development - - -

(Hancin-Bhatt, 2008: 120)

This is the problem that some learners, for example the adult learner in the very beginning of this paper, experience with English. Another issue that may result in higher perceptual than productive abilities is, as Odisho (2003: 13) writes, the difference between sensory memory and long-term memory. For example, in learning sounds of an L2 one has to hear a sound at least in passing for it to be registered in sensory memory, but in order to retrieve and produce a sound of the L2, it has to be consolidated in the long-term memory through rehearsal (*ibid.*). Thus, it is not surprising that some learners experience inadequacy in active production of an L2 as compared to passive recognition tasks.

Researchers also talk about perceptual categories, for example Best's (1995) Perceptual Assimilation Model and Ioup (2008: 50) explain that the native-language perceptual categories are fixed in language learners' phonological systems. As a result, the sounds in the L2 will be perceived through the L1 categories, based on similarities between the L1 categories and the novel sounds, which will make it harder for the learners to perceive new sounds, and thus harder to produce them correctly (Ioup, 2008: 50; Hansen Edwards & Zampini, 2006: 3). Furthermore, the new L2 sounds will be difficult because of their perceived, but false, similarity to the L1 sounds (*op.cit.*). There are also other influential L2 speech perception theories, such as Flege's (1995) Speech Learning Model. Based on the previous citations (Best, 1995; Ioup, 2008; Hancin-Bhatt, 2008), it seems that there is disagreement in the field of speech perception, as to whether speech production and speech perception are closely knit or quite independent from each other. However, speech perception is useful for the topic of this study.

3.3. Universals and markedness

Universals and markedness are central theories in SLA. Universals refer to a type of language instinct that people have coded in their brains, and thus, according to the universal grammar theory, there are certain similarities between languages (Eckman, 1977). These similarities may make language learning easier. Very much in connection to this theory, markedness is also essential in SLA theory. The idea behind the markedness theory is that there are binary oppositions between certain linguistic representations, for instance in phonology nasalized and oral vowels (Eckman, 2008). They are not simply polar opposites, however, but instead one member is assumed to be privileged and has a wider distribution, both within and across languages (*ibid.*). The more widely distributed counterpart is designated as unmarked, which means it is simpler, more basic and more

natural than the other, which is called marked (*ibid.*). For instance voiceless obstruents and oral vowels are unmarked as opposed to voiced obstruents and nasalized vowels (*ibid.*).

According to the Markedness Differential Hypothesis the areas in the target language (TL) that are different from L1 and more marked as well will be especially difficult for the language learner (Altenberg & Vago, 1983). So, markedness, or the lack of distinction between the TL marked qualities in L1, may also be a reason for negative transfer (see transfer in 3.5.) in, for example, pronunciation (Lovett, 2009; Yavas, 2005). According to Lovett (2009: 22–36), it has been noted that the Markedness Principle plays a vital role in the difficulties that L2 English speakers encounter in pronunciation, and found in her study on Korean SL learners of English that the complicated structures of English language syllables with /l/ and /r/ sounds make pronunciation difficult for the learners. Japanese learners have similar problems with these sounds. Thus, a more detailed future study on the respective pronunciation related difficulties for Finnish and Japanese learners might give more insight into speech related problems.

3.4. Language anxiety

Language anxiety research, developed by Horwitz (1986), might also be able to offer some useful data on what type of things could have a negative influence on speech production, because language anxiety researchers have studied how language anxiety affects language learning and use. Researchers, teachers and even learners have been interested in knowing whether anxiety might inhibit language learning (Horwitz, 2001: 112). Anxiety is “the subjective feeling of tension, apprehension, nervousness, and worry associated with an arousal of the autonomic nervous system” (Spielberger, 1983: 1). Horwitz (2001: 113) maintains that it is intuitive to many people that anxiety affects language learning and that it is logical because it has been found to interfere with many

types of learning. Psychologists distinguish several categories of anxiety, and typically trait anxiety is differentiated from state anxiety (Spielberger, 1983). Trait anxiety is thought of as a relatively stable personality characteristic, whereas state anxiety is seen as a response to a particular anxiety-provoking stimulus such as an important test (Spielberger, 1983). Horwitz (2001: 113) explains that “the term situation-specific anxiety has been used to emphasize the persistent and multi-faceted nature of some anxieties” (e.g. MacIntyre & Gardner, 1991a), an example of which is public speaking. Horwitz (2001: 113) alleges that language anxiety is another example of situation-specific anxiety.

Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope (1986) proposed that a situation-specific anxiety, Foreign Language Anxiety, was the reason for students’ negative emotional reactions to language learning, and that this anxiety’s origin is inherent inauthenticity associated with immature second language communicative abilities. Horwitz (2001: 114) adds that adult learners are in an especially challenging and anxiety provoking situation, because speaking in a foreign language requires reverting to more restricted communication strategies (this will be further discussed in 3.1). This might increase language anxiety. Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope (1986) presented a Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale that measured classroom anxiety, and Horwitz (2001: 114) writes that many studies that have used this scale have found a significant negative correlation between scale and measures of SL achievement, typically in final grades. Steinberg and Horwitz (1986) found that students experimented using more elaborate and personal utterances when they were in a learning situation that was supposed to make them relaxed (Horwitz, 2001: 115). However, the anxious and non-anxious students displayed equal levels of overall oral fluency (*ibid.*). Thus, it is debatable whether language anxiety is directly connected to oral fluency.

Another study by Kim (1998) on Asian English learning context found different results: there were similarly significant negative relationships between the anxiety scale and grades, but the students were found to be less anxious in reading classes as opposed to conversation classes (Horwitz, 2001: 116). As Horwitz (2001: 116) writes, this study appears to support teachers' and students' feelings that language classes which require oral communication are more anxiety-provoking than traditional classes. Aydin (1999), as cited by Horwitz (2001), on the other hand, found that students saw their anxiety as a result of personal concerns, for example negative self-assessment of learning ability and high personal expectations, and also exercises like speaking in front of the class.

According to Horwitz (2001: 119), there is proof that classroom atmosphere rather than specific activities may decrease students' anxiety (*e.g.* Palacios, 1998). Palacios (1998) found that perceived teacher support had a strong correlation with the students' feelings of anxiety (Horwitz, 2001: 119). Teacher support was defined as the help and friendship the teacher was said to offer the students (*ibid.*).

Horwitz (2001: 121–122) notes that anxious learners simply have difficulty displaying the language competence they have attained, and if this is the case, language anxiety research may be a useful tool in explaining differential success in language learning and understanding frustration and discomfort in SLA. However, it is debatable whether language anxiety might affect speech production as such, or if it might be rather a symptom than the cause of the problems, because it is closely connected with, for example, social factors like fear of disrespect that might cause speech difficulties. The challenge is to determine the extent to which anxiety is a cause rather than a result of poor language learning or learning environments (Horwitz, 2001: 118).

4. FACTORS THAT AFFECT SPEECH PRODUCTION

There are several factors that might contribute to experiencing problems in speech production, such as age, personality, social environment and instruction. Individual variation is a feature of SLA and should thus be taken into account when talking about L2 phonology acquisition. This study will take special interest in how accent might affect speech production, because it seems to be very influential: for example, a study by Leppänen et al. (2009: 58) found that Finnish people rarely like the Finnish English accent, and also that older people seem to have more difficulties with English than younger people, which might be connected to pronunciation difficulties and embarrassment, for example (Leppänen *et al.*, 2009: 82).

The factors connected to speech production in this study will be divided into categories based on Moyer's classification of factors that affect language learning. Moyer's classification is adapted from Schumann's (1979) acculturation model, which will also be used in the analysis of the current study's results. Schumann studied L2 learners residing in the target language (TL) country, and his acculturation model concentrates on social factors that affected the learners' integration into the TL culture. Moyer's classification includes other factors besides social factors, which is why it will be used in categorizing the results of this study. Schumann's acculturation model (1979) consists of *social distance* and *psychological distance*: the former refers to how the learners experience themselves as part of the TL culture and social groups, whereas the latter includes matters such as language shock, culture shock, motivation and ego permeability, which were included in affective and personality factors in Moyer's classification (2004).

Moyer (2004:15) adapts Schumann's (1978) classification of different factors that affect language learning into five categories:

- 1) neurological factors

- 2) affective and personality factors
- 3) cognitive and aptitude factors
- 4) instruction and input factors
- 5) social factors

Firstly, neurological factors have to do with lateralization, *i.e.* maturational constraints (Moyer, 2004: 15). Affective and personality factors include motivation, ego permeability, tolerance for ambiguity, sensitivity to rejection and self-esteem, extroversion and introversion and culture shock (*ibid.*). Cognitive and aptitude factors include cognitive maturity and processes, strategies and styles, intelligence, interference from L1 and field dependence and independence (*ibid.*). Affective and personality factors and cognitive and aptitude factors will be discussed together in 3.2. Individual factors, because due to the nature of this study cognitive factors cannot be analyzed in detail, and thus there will not be detailed information on it. Instruction and input factors, then again, have to do with teacher and class dynamics and reaction to feedback, curriculum, intensity and duration of instruction, and saliency (*ibid.*). Finally, social factors are group or community level factors, such as status, assimilation and acculturation, preservation of ethnic and cultural identity, type of community, attitudes toward target language group and intended length of residence, and personal level factors, such as transition anxiety, social strategies and linguistic shock (Moyer, 2004:15).

Moyer's classification will be useful for this research in discussing the results, because it is based on Schumann's (1978) earlier study on immigrant second language learners, and Moyer (2004) has also studied second language learners. The classification is thus based on empirical knowledge, and seems to cover the factors that influence SLA quite well. This study concentrates especially on accent, which has to do with neurological factors, and cognitive and aptitude factors, for instance.

However, it is also connected to attitudes (affective and personality factors) and social factors, which is why accent will be discussed separately, in 3.5.

4.1. Neurological factors

Age has been discussed a great deal in SLA, and is related to neurological factors. There has been disagreement on age factors, for example on Lenneberg's Critical Period Hypothesis (1967), since Krashen (1975), for instance, stated that cerebral specialization occurs earlier than Lenneberg had concluded. However, many researchers have attained results that emphasize the influence of age in phonology (Moyer, 2004: 7). The reason why age is discussed here is that according to many studies, for example Flege, Yeni-Komshian, and Liu (1999), Munro (1993), and Altenberg (2005), age and accent are especially closely connected: it is more difficult for late onset L2 learners to learn how to pronounce a foreign language because of maturational constraints (see the next paragraph), and so they are, for example, more likely to have strong Finnish or Japanese accents than early onset learners. In earlier studies, learners have been divided into late and early onset learners according to their age. For example, Thornburgh & Ryalls (1998) separated these two into groups depending on whether they had started the TL studies before or after the age of 12. The importance of the onset of learning was first stated in Lenneberg's Critical Period Hypothesis (1967), the key argument of which was that there is a certain age in which people learn languages more easily, but after that new languages become harder to learn. Also, Flege, MacKay and Meador (1999), for example, have stated, based on their studies, that younger age is better for learning new languages. Despite the debate on the critical period, it still remains a viable hypothesis as a concept for explaining the aspects of SLA.

According to Lenneberg (1967), lateralization refers to the assignment of specific functions to either the right or the left hemisphere. After this the brain becomes less flexible and language acquisition becomes more difficult (Lenneberg, 1967). Lateralization also has to do with speech perception:

For adults who lack active language-learning experience with a non-L1, especially the stimulus language, the pattern of nonnative speech perception is relatively well-established: functional monolinguals have notable difficulty categorizing and discriminating many phonetic contrasts from unfamiliar languages - - -

(Best & Tyler, 2007: 16)

In addition to difficulties in producing sounds, the difficulty in seeing the differences between sounds is also a reason why learners might have problems with speaking. Age influences language acquisition also in the sense that with age learners might have negative experiences about language learning, which then again might cause language anxiety (MacIntyre & Gardner 1991). Leppänen *et al.* (2009) found that older Finns are more ashamed of their English skills than younger Finns and that they do not use English actively and still see it as a foreign language, contrary to younger people. So, using English seems to cause more pressure for older learners.

According to Ioup (2008: 44), an important question is whether age influences pronunciation more than other language ability areas, and several studies have tried to solve this question, for example Flege, Yeni-Komshian, and Liu (1999) studied the L2 English of 240 native speakers of Korean with varying ages of arrival in the US. Native-speakers were asked to rate their accents and the level of the learners' morphosyntax through a grammaticality judgment test. Results were that only the scores for degree of accent were completely dependent on the age of arrival. Morphosyntax scores were influenced by other factors in addition to age; both the amount of education the Korean subjects had received and the degree to which they used the L2 were significant variables (Ioup, 2008: 44). Flege (1991) and Thornburgh & Ryalls (1998) also studied this matter, and the latter studied early and late Spanish and English bilinguals on English pronunciation. Both of them got results that showed that age was the most important factor in the ability to produce native English sounds (Ioup, 2008: 46). Thus, it seems that age, in other words the time of the onset of English

learning, is a significant variable in pronunciation ability. Of course it has to be noted that the informants of this study grew up in an English speaking environment, and as such it is not completely applicable to my study. However, it supports the critical period hypothesis in relation to accent. Furthermore, Hansen Edwards & Zampini (2008:5) point out that

- - - while adult language learners may perfect their syntax and other domains of language, it is highly improbable (though possible in some extreme cases) for their L2 pronunciation to become indistinguishable from a native-speaker if L2 learning begins later in life. While questions of when the optimal period for L2 learning starts to decline and why such a period exists have not been answered, L2 researchers commonly believe that few adult L2 learners will attain the L2 pronunciation of a native-speaker.

Thus, it is a problem if adult learners are expected to speak native-like English, or even if they think that this is expected of them, because it is not a realistic, or at least not an easy goal.

Speech perception also has to do with age. For example, according to Flege's model (1995), as cited by Hansen Edwards & Zampini (2008: 6), even if learners do begin to perceive the L2 with L1 perceptual categories, these categories can be changed towards the L2 if they acquire more experience. However, with age it becomes harder to create new categories; children might be able to create new L2 perceptual categories, and so produce the L2 sounds, but older learners may not be able to achieve this (Hansen Edwards & Zampini, 2008: 6).

There has, of course, also been criticism regarding whether the Critical Period Hypothesis actually is valid, because some individuals can perfect their accent to near native (Ioup, 2006: 53). This individual variation questions the certainty of this theory. However, there have been a lot of studies that have shown that age is a determining factor in SL phonology, and thus it is discussed in this study. It still has to be kept in mind that this does not apply to every learner.

Piri (2002: 14) writes that it is possible for adult learners to learn languages if they have motivation, in other words, if the language is deemed important for one's career or personal or other reasons.

Piri (2002: 15) notes that if the employer requires a language certificate or there are people who speak foreign languages at work, motivation might be higher. Piri (2002: 15) also notes that even the best language instruction at school cannot provide the learners with all the necessary language skills and this is why further education is needed as well. According to Piri (*ibid.*), adult learners are more challenging for a teacher, because they are more critical towards their own learning results, they want quick results, and they tend to prefer old ways of learning, although they like new methods. As Piri (2002: 15) writes, teaching methods some decades ago were not so productive. This is a problem, because

Important factors influencing language learning include the overall success in educational studies, linguistic talent, motivation, the degree of similarity between languages, the number and quality of learning opportunities available and taken, the quality of teaching, and the level of requirements in tests taken.

(ibid.)

Piri (2002: 15) mentions that different kind of opportunities profit adult language learning, for example internships, cooperation, intensive courses or information about adult education centre courses. In the European context, the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages* and *the European Language Portfolio* make it possible to compare adults' language skills, as do different kinds of language tests and certificates (*ibid.*).

Härmälä *et al.* (2010: 60) explain that one of the main motivational reasons for adults to join an English language course is the growing internationalization of work-life, which requires strong knowledge of foreign languages. Mostly English is studied because of employment opportunities (Härmälä *et al.*, 2010: 63). Härmälä *et al.* also conducted a study examining Finnish adult learners' English skills and whether they correspond with their previous education. In explaining the results they used skill levels from 1 to 6, where 1 is the lowest and 6 the highest. Of the learners with a middle level degree 72% possessed level 3 skills, which means they can handle everyday language situations independently, and among the learners with a high level degree 83% possessed level 5 skills, which means fluent, versatile and clear language use (Härmälä *et al.*, 2010: 64). They also

discovered that the higher the education, the more the learners used English: 40% of the learners with a mid-level degree used English a couple of times a month, and 60% of the learners with a high-level degree used English at least once a week at work (Härmälä *et al.*, 2010: 65). From their findings, Härmälä *et al.* (2010: 68) concluded that most adult learners have language skills that are comparable to their degree. Judging from this it may be inferred that learners with lower education have fewer chances of using English in their everyday-lives, and thus face more challenges in practicing their oral skills, which then again might make it more difficult to start speaking English when they have the chance.

4.2. Individual variation

Ioup (2008: 51) writes that there is a lot of individual variation in L2 phonological acquisition. Although it has been said (for example, critical period theorists: Lenneberg, 1967 *etc.*) that children are better learners, some individual adults may outperform early onset learners, and some early learners might have unusual difficulty in learning the L2 (Ioup, 2008: 53). Personality, motivation, attitude, and many other factors influence language learning, and it also has an impact if the learner has a strict self-critical attitude towards language learning or whether (s)he is open-minded toward other cultures and languages or not. Cognitive factors might also be an influential factor in speech difficulties.

Ioup (2008: 53) argues that, overall, it seems that “one of the most important individual variables in adult L2 is the learners’ ability to accurately produce the phonology of another language”, and that there are several studies that imply this (*e.g.* Ioup, Boustagui, El Tigi, & Moselle, 1994; Novoa, Fein, & Obler, 1988; Schneiderman & Desmarais, 1988). In addition, Purcell and Suter (1980) maintain that the aptitude for oral mimicry is the second most important factor (after L1) that

determines a learner's pronunciation accuracy. Talented learners seem to have higher perceptual abilities than others (Ioup, 2008: 53).

Also, as Schumann wrote in his acculturation model (1979), psychological distance related factors such as language shock, culture shock, motivation and ego permeability affect language learning. Moyer (2004) later categorized these into affective and personality factors. With language shock Schumann (1978: 166) refers to the anxiety a learner experiences when using the L2, for example the fear of appearing comical or the feeling of losing one's own identity, and adds that this is common for adults, not children. Then again, culture shock refers to the situation in which commonly perceived and understood signs and symbols of communication do not work in the new culture, and can cause loneliness, anger, frustration and self-questioning of competence (*op.cit.*). With ego permeability Schumann refers to the learner's perception of whether they have rigid or flexible boundaries between the L2 and the L1 (*op.cit.*). There are, of course, other individual factors to consider, such as personality, cognitive style and aptitude factors *etc.*

4.3. Instruction and input

Instruction and input in a foreign language have a significant effect on language learning, which is why I shall now discuss English education in Finland and English education in Japan.

4.3.1. English education in Finland

Sajavaara (2005: 1) states that foreign languages are an essential part of education in Finland, on every level from preschool to adult education (see also Takala & Sajavaara, 1998), and that the fact

that Finland has two national languages has at least somehow influenced the popularity of studying foreign languages. Sajavaara (2005: 2) also maintains that being able to communicate in foreign languages might be essential in being able to proceed in one's career in Finland.

Taavitsainen *et al.* (2003: 3) note that nowadays *Global English*, *World English* and *International English* are established terms of worldwide use (cf. Crystal, 1997; McArthur, 1998), and a more recent term, *Euro-English*, is being used to refer to European people from different language backgrounds, using English as the *lingua franca* of communication (e.g. Jenkins *et al.*, 2001; McCluskey, 2002; Truchot, 2002). Taavitsainen *et al.* (2003: 3) write that English has a strong position as the *lingua franca* of international communication in Finland, and that this is proven not only by English speaking staff at service counters and tourist venues, but also by the fact that English has also become a part of the everyday lives of Finns who are not actively involved in international affairs. Taavitsainen *et al.* (2003: 5) emphasize that English can be heard every day through audio-visual mass media and popular culture, and furthermore, that TV programs and news items have authentic voices and subtitles instead of dubbing. Taavitsainen *et al.* (*ibid.*) note that English has become an integral part of many people's everyday life, which can be seen in their manner of speech through code-switching, which is common in youth language and includes various catch phrases and fillers like (*So what? Who knows? OK ... about ...*). Taavitsainen *et al.* (*ibid.*) continue that English terms are also frequent in the speech of professionals from many different fields, and that IT jargon is a well known example of this. English phrases have begun appearing in newspaper language as well (*ibid.*).

According to Taavitsainen *et al.* (2003: 6), despite the stereotypical conception of Finns being silent in character, international communication and foreign language studies are valued in Finland, and in comparison with many other European countries, Finns are eager to learn foreign languages.

Taavitsainen *et al.* (*ibid.*) add that according to a national Adult Education Survey carried out in 1995, 72 per cent of the adult population in Finland claimed that they could speak at least one foreign language (*i.e.* a language other than their mother tongue); the percentage was higher among women (77) than men (67). Among younger people the percentage was higher (96% of the population aged 18–24), whereas the figure among the population aged 55–64 was only 41 (*ibid.*). Taavitsainen *et al.* (2003: 6) note that the further people have continued their education, the more likely they are to have at least a somewhat fluent command of at least more than one foreign language. Taavitsainen *et al.* (*ibid.*) continue that English is the commonest foreign language among Finns and that according to the 1995 survey, 66 per cent of Finns spoke at least some English; today an even higher percentage can safely be assumed.

When asked to assess the level of their proficiency, 32 per cent of the respondents claimed to have a good command of English: two per cent claimed a near-native command, eleven per cent could use the language fluently in public situations (*e.g.* representing their company or organisation), and a further 19 per cent said they could cope well in practical situations.

(ibid.)

Almost all the people asked in the study also considered English to be the most important foreign language, the next ones being German and Swedish, and after that French and Russian (*ibid.*).

Taavitsainen *et al.* (2003: 4) write that for EFL speakers there is no local model of English, although the speakers' English accents and patterns of error may reflect characteristics of their L1, and that competence varies from native or near native to poor. However, they (*ibid.*) also maintain that in northern countries the use of English as a tool of intranational communication, *e.g.* in professional discourse and higher education, is increasing greatly, and that these countries seem to be shifting from EFL towards L2 status. Taavitsainen *et al.* (*ibid.*) allege that

The main distinction between a fluent EFL speaker and L2 speaker depends on whether English is used within the speaker's community (country, family) and thus forms a part of the speaker's identity repertoire; it is a question of identity, a speaker's judgment of his/her own self.

So, it seems that the status of English in Finland is not a straightforward matter, since it is changing and may even be becoming an integral part of English learners' identities.

According to Piri (2001: 102), foreign language education in Finland started in the time of the Finnish autonomy in the 19th century, with Russian. In the 1960s it was possible to start foreign language studies in the first year of Grammar school, the 8-year school that one entered after four years of compulsory education (Piri, 2001: 114). The first foreign language was usually English or German, and in practice everyone studied Finnish and Swedish at school. In the 1960s, in other words around 10 years before the time when the informants of this study attended basic education, it was decided that foreign languages should be taught to students, which made systematic foreign language instruction possible (Piri, 2001: 114–115). According to Piri's (2001: 116) data about the distribution of subjects in folk school, the percentage of foreign language instruction of the overall instruction was 20.

Sajavaara (2005: 2) explains that former foreign language instruction has been criticized for not providing the learners with oral language proficiency. Learned language skills were mainly literal and translation skills, and oral skills were learned only after coming into contact with people who spoke the language, after leaving school. The aim of foreign language education was to develop and civilize the student (Clark, 1987: 90), and in practice it meant memorizing, analyzing, categorizing, and being able to make conclusions (Sajavaara, 2005: 2–3). Instruction was based on culturally valued texts and their analysis (*ibid.*). In the 1980s the students' personal perspectives became more important in setting the aims for language instruction (Sajavaara, 2005: 3).

According to the Finnish national board of education (2012), the key words of the current Finnish education policy are quality, efficiency, equity and internationalization. Finnish children start their primary school at the age of seven and they study at least two foreign languages during their compulsory school education (Taavitsainen *et al.*, 2003: 6). Most start their first foreign language at the beginning of their third year, at the age of nine, some even earlier, and many start their second

foreign language as an optional choice at ten or eleven (*ibid.*). In many schools it is possible to study up to four foreign languages during comprehensive school education, which includes studying the other national language, Swedish, as a compulsory subject (*ibid.*). Taavitsainen *et al.* (*ibid.*) make a point that in 2000–01, 98 per cent of secondary school pupils learned English, which reflects the recognition of the position of English in the present-day world. There are also schools that offer tuition in other subjects, for example biology, in a foreign language, mostly in English, and English is widely being used as the language of science (*ibid.*).

Basic education is governed by the Basic Education Act (628/1998) and Basic Education Decree (852/1998) and the Government Decree on the General National Objectives and Distribution of Lesson Hours in Basic Education (1435/2001[J1]) (Finnish national board of Education, 2012). In the curriculum designed for compulsory education in Finland, the aim for English education is that until the end of compulsory education, the 9th grade, the student would learn to understand the main thoughts and some details of a heard or read, clear text containing general knowledge (Opetushallitus, curriculum 2004). The student should also be able to handle even a slightly challenging unofficial conversations and, orally or in writing, to tell about everyday things with a little detail (*ibid.*). They should also be able to tell some main differences between different variants of English, become acquainted with the target culture, to communicate and act in the target culture in an acceptable way in normal everyday situations, and to understand how values are culture dependant (*ibid.*). In compulsory education, the students have about 600 hours of English lessons, which is about 1,5/2h per week (Opetushallitus 2001).

Suomalaisessa englannin kielen opetuksessa ihanteellisena mallina ja tavoitteena on tähän saakka useimmiten käytetty britti ja/tai amerikanenglannin niin sanottua standardisoitua muotoa, joka on kodifioitu lukuisissa oppaissa, sanakirjoissa ja oppimateriaaleissa. Tästä mallista poikkeamista on pidetty virheenä ja esimerkiksi vahvan aksentin ilmenemistä epätoivottavana tai jopa nolona.

The ideal model and goal of the Finnish English language teaching has so far mostly used British and / or American so-called standardized form, which has been codified in numerous books, dictionaries and learning materials. Deviations from this model have been regarded as a defect, for example a strong accent occurrence as undesirable or even embarrassing.

(Taavitsainen *et al.*, 2003: 10)

In Finland, as reported above, English education in Finland seems to include quite a few strict attitudes and expectations toward the so-called correct model of English. This can be seen, for example, in public media, as politicians and other people who are visible in the media, such as athletes, seem to often be criticized if they are not able to communicate in English in the so-called correct way. Taavitsainen *et al.* (2003: 10) exemplify that the Finnish prime minister, who was appointed after the general elections in 2003, was severely criticized in the media for not being as fluent in English as was expected. They (*ibid.*) note that another issue that has to do with speaking English, is ‘Finglish’, the Finnish accent and interference of the mother tongue. Also, Tankero English³ seems to be a term often used to describe Finnish characteristics in speaking English. As they say (*ibid.*), the native speaker norm of English still seems to be very strong, judging from these issues. However, the status of English is changing, and as it is being recognized more and more as an international language, the attitudes might become more tolerant as well (*ibid.*). Still, many Finns are made fun of because of their English:

For example, Finnish racing-car drivers’ accents are parodied widely. From an EFL point of view, however, the ‘Mika Häkkinen accent’ seems to have a liberating effect, as it shows that it is possible to be truly international and successful even if one doesn’t meet the native-speaker standard in English. On the other hand, for an L1 audience the effect may be very different: for example, Kimi Räikkönen, the other well-known Finnish formula driver, was said by the British press to sound like a robot.

(Taavitsainen *et al.*, 2003:10)

Taavitsainen *et al.* (2003: 10) also maintain that well-educated younger Finns do not necessarily include the Finnish language as an important part of their own identity, but that at the same time there might be strong emotions connected to globalization and defending the Finnish language. Taavitsainen *et al.* (*ibid.*) write that there is a common consensus in Finland that it is essential to master English so that one can be part of the international world. However, Taavitsainen *et al.* (2003: 10) note that one's mother tongue is highly important to one's identity, which should be taken into consideration when becoming part of the international community.

³ The term comes from a Finnish politician, Ahti Karjalainen, who was known for his heavy accent of English. He had pronounced the word *dangerous* as /tankerous/, and later on people started to refer to a heavy accented Finnish pronunciation of English, English that is pronounced like Finnish, as tankero English.

4.3.2. English education in Japan

According to Kitao *et al.* (1995: 3), English education is very important in Japan, and it is offered in more than 99% of junior highs and high schools. Kitao *et al.* (*op.cit.*) add that almost all students study English although it is an elective subject. University degrees require a foreign language, which for most people is English, many people attend optional English conversation schools and many companies offer their employees English courses in order to improve their business related English skills (*ibid.*).

According to Kitao *et al.* (1995: 3), there are many reasons why Japanese people study English, such as learning from the outside world, being able to express themselves to people from other countries, to explain Japanese culture and customs, and so on. In addition, the close relationship with the US has influenced the growing interest in English, as well as the position of English as an international tool of communication (*ibid.*).

English education began in Japan in 1853, but a system for English education was established in the 1890s (Kitao *et al.*, 1995: 4). At that time it was a compulsory subject in middle and higher secondary schools, the teachers were mainly native English speakers, and many developed good language skills in English (*ibid.*). After that foreign books and teachers were replaced by Japanese ones (*ibid.*). Shortly before and during World War II study of English was discouraged because it was seen as the “enemy language”, but of course now it is widely studied all over Japan (*ibid.*).

English education at different school levels varies quite a lot. There are less than 1% of elementary schools that offer English education, and so most Japanese students start English studies at the age of twelve when they enter junior high school (Kitao *et al.*, 1995: 5). It is not compulsory, but since

it is often a decisive factor in high school and university entrance examinations, almost all students take it (Kitao *et al.*, 1995: 5; Kumabe, 1978). Kitao *et al.* (1995: 5) add that many students also attend *jukus*, which are pretty much the equivalent to “cram” schools. Public schools offer three hours of English per week, and the content is dictated by the Ministry of Education’s Course of Study (*ibid.*).

According to the Course of Study, the purpose of English education is to give students a practical command of written and spoken English and to promote understanding of the cultural and social backgrounds of English-speaking people. It is also intended to help students develop individuality and social, civic, and vocational competence, and to understand the democratic heritage, since democracy developed, to an important extent, in English-speaking countries (Kimizuka, 1968). The Course of Study prescribes what sounds, sentence patterns, words, and grammatical categories are to be taught in junior high English classes each year. For example, up to 1,050 words can be taught in junior high school, and a list of 490 words must be taught. The Course of Study also dictates which aspects of culture, geography, history, and so on, should be included. It also supplies specific activities for developing different skills (Imura, 1978).

(Kitao *et al.* 1995: 6)

As described above, English education aims at both written and spoken skills as well as cultural knowledge, but in practice it seems that spoken skills are not practiced as much as written skills.

English education in high schools is controlled by the same guidelines, and on this level, a maximum of 1,900 words may be introduced (Monbusho, 1979; Kitao *et al.* 1995: 7). Public high schools offer 4 hours of English per week (*ibid.*). Kitao *et al.* note that high school English education is heavily influenced by the content of university entrance examinations, and that there is a large gap between the level of English in the third year of junior high and the first year of high school (*ibid.*). Kitao *et al.* (1995: 14) explain that

University entrance examinations usually include sections on translation from English into Japanese, reading passages with questions on the content, and items where students must choose the correct word to fill in the blank, to test knowledge of grammar, as well as questions on points of prescriptive grammar, often hair-splitting points. Some questions are so difficult and tricky that even native English speakers have difficulty answering them (Ogasawara, 1983). The entrance examinations do not emphasize English as it is actually used but rather “grammar book English”. Most examinations do not require performance in English. Even translation items put more emphasis on understanding the nuances of grammar, rather than on the ability to express oneself in English (Kumabe, 1978). Only a very few entrance examinations include sections that test students’ ability in aural English. Entrance examinations require considerable knowledge about English, but offer little or no opportunity to demonstrate ability to perform in English.

Thus, it seems that students, who aim to do well in university entrance examinations, may be highly skilled in grammatical aspects of English. However, as stated above, the examinations do not

include the performance level of language use, and so the students might be skilled in grammar or writing, but they might not be able to communicate in English, or take part in a discussion, for instance. Since the aim of English education as stated in the Course of Study is for the students to acquire practical skills in writing and speaking, this seems to be a problem.

According to Kitao *et al.* (1995: 9–16), it seems that English classes in Japan tend to be very literally oriented, concentrating on grammar. Of course, as Kitao *et al.* (1995: 16) note, private school English education is different from public school English education, and on the whole, private schools often have more hours of English per week than do public schools. They typically offer five to six hours of reading and one to two hours of conversation (*ibid.*). These kind of classes might make it easier for the students to acquire better understanding of the English language, as the normal public school classes are very large (about 40 students per class), and so there is not much room for private instruction even if there was a need for this (Kitao *et al.*, 1995: 10). According to Kitao *et al.* (1995: 18), at the university level students are required to take two foreign languages, mostly English, and French or German. Most university classes are reading classes including translation exercises (*ibid.*). Thus, judging by this statement, even university students do not seem to acquire much practice in conversational skills at lectures.

Even the process of hiring new English teachers seems to put more emphasis on theoretical knowledge than actual performance in the language:

In order to be hired, a graduate who has received a teaching certificate must also pass a prefectural or municipal hiring examination. Several times more graduates receive certificates than are hired to teach. Hiring examinations also emphasize theoretical knowledge rather than performance.

(Kitao *et al.*, 1995: 19)

Thus, it seems that there are quite a few challenges for English education in Japan. Not only that the students experience difficulties in speaking English, but also that many of them do not seem interested in English or even dislike it as a subject (*ibid.*). In a study that investigated Japanese students' motivation to learn English (Brown, 2004: 4), a major part of the informants said that they

did not think English is fun, interesting, or a means to express their personality. The majority also disagreed with the claim 'I like English', and few people wanted a job that needed English skills.

Japanese students seem to experience difficulties with English, but according to recent studies in Japan (Chiba, 2007; Nakahira, 2007), it seems that student exchange to English speaking countries becomes highly beneficial to Japanese students and their English skills. Chiba (2007) reports that junior college students, who had been in student exchange in Canada for two months, had acquired better listening skills and self-esteem in the skill than before the exchange. Nakahira (2007), on the other hand, reports that Japanese students who had been on a 6 week exchange in an English speaking country had acquired better willingness to communicate, regardless of whether the speaking partner was a native or a non-native English speaker. Asano (n.y., 249–250) also studied Japanese students and their oral skills of English and found in a questionnaire that the area in which Japanese students felt themselves most weak when asked about English skills was speaking. However, they said that this was the area they wanted to improve the most (*ibid.*). They had said only 12.8% of their English class exercises had been conversation exercises (*ibid.*).

More to the subject of the present study, adult learner level English education seems to be somewhat different from the Finnish adult learner level English education. In comparison to Finland, it seems that Japanese adults, who are interested in improving their English, often attend private lessons or lessons with only a few students than the type of adult education centre classes that the Finnish informants of this study attended. The Finnish adult education centre classes tend to have more people, about 10 to 15 people, and so they are slightly different from these private lessons that the Japanese informants attended. Of course, there are also many culture centers and programs, where Japanese adults can learn English in larger groups. About half of the Japanese informants in this study attended these type of lessons.

There are several terms that are closely linked to English use in Japan and seem to have an influence on English speaking as well: 'wasei-eigo' and 'katakanaeigo'. Wasei-eigo means word borrowing from English (Miller, 1997: 123). There are many types of borrowings from English in the Japanese language. However, wasei-eigo has been called gairaigo, because wasei-eigo words are not loanwords, actually, but foreign lexemes manipulated or consciously invented in Japan (Miller, 1986; Stanlaw, 1988) and they have been called “pseudo English” (Quackenbush, 1974), “Japan-made English” (Miller, 1986) or “English inspired vocabulary items” (Stanlaw, 1988). Miller (1997: 125) explains that these words can be fashioned, for example, by combining two words in a novel way, creating a new word or concept, such as *shimboru māku* シンボルマーク 'symbol mark', which has the meaning of company logo.

Many wasei-eigo words are combinations of Japanese morphemes and English morphemes, and are thus called hybrids (Quackenbush, 1974), for example *burando shōhin* ブランド商品 ‘brand goods’ (Miller, 1997: 126). Wasei-eigo seems to be, however, disliked by many, for example Kin (1985) calls it *konketsu-go*, mongrel language. It has been debated that it was created by advertising copyrights (Horiuchi, 1963) who thought it to be trendy, but some (*e.g.* Higa, 1979) say that scholars and other professionals produce these pseudo loanwords. Miller (1997: 130) says, however, that wasei-eigo has its communicational use but also a social meaning in Japan.

Katakana English is used to refer to a large collection of loanwords from English into Japanese, which can also be useful in language acquisition. Chujo *et al.* (2004: 2) write that although these words are now a part of the Japanese language, most of the original sounds, grammar, and meaning have been changed (Brown & Williams, 1985), for instance 'purin' for 'pudding'. Chujo *et al.* (2004: 3) continue that quite a few foreign words are reported to be found in elementary school children's

vocabulary (Yoshimura, 2003), and are found to contribute to building Japanese college students' awareness or greater familiarity with English words (Brown & Williams, 1985).

These terms imply that there are certain stereotypes about Japanese English usage in Japan and possibly abroad as well. Similarly to the Finnish term Tankero English³ these stereotypes might add pressure to using English in conversation. In addition, they show that there are social stereotypes and behaviour patterns connected to the terms and English usage in Japan.

4.4. Social factors

Social factors also greatly affect speaking, accent and the attitude towards one's own accent, and so sociolinguistics has been important in explaining variation in L2 phonology (Hansen Edwards, 2008: 251). Language learning is not only a process of learning new knowledge, it is also a process of acquiring symbolic elements of a different ethnolinguistic community (Gardner, 1979: 193). Also, as Hansen Edwards (2008: 251) mentions, people are not only passive recipients of the target language, and so there are social variables that influence speaking as well, for instance peer pressure or other social dynamics. People around the learner affect the way he sees himself as a user of the language. This includes people from the same language group as well as people who speak the target language as a first or a second language (Moyer, 2004). Moyer (2004: 4), for example, mentions that the target language community's expectations of non-native speaker assimilation may have a significant role in learning a language. Moyer (*op.cit.*) also asserts that interaction is very important in SLA. However, if the learner does not feel comfortable with the people he could practice the language with, interaction might become difficult.

Hansen Edwards & Zampini (2008: 251) state that “variation in production is typically systematic and may be due, in part, to social marking due to gender, identity, accommodation to the interactant, and the linguistic environment, *etc.*” Thus, as Hansen Edwards & Zampini (2008: 251) explain, the reason for the differences between the TL and the TL produced by the learner might be due to the learner trying to speak a non-standard variety of the language or wanting to talk a certain variety with the interlocutor. So, as Dowd, Zuengler, and Berkowitz (1990) have argued, the way people perform the TL may be socially conditioned (Hansen Edwards & Zampini, 2008: 251). In addition, as Hansen Edwards & Zampini (2008: 251) write, this questions how much of people’s FL/L2 performance is due to their skills as language learners, and how much is due to how they construct their identity in the language.

Fear of not being understood, for instance because of one’s accent, might also cause anxiety and prevent the learner from speaking (Horwitz *et al.*, 1986: 127–128). Horwitz, as cited by Tiihonen (2010), also maintains that as adults typically see themselves as reasonably intelligent, socially adept and socio-culturally skilful individuals, having to communicate in a foreign language limits one’s communicative choices. Lightbown & Spada (1993: 42), as cited by Moyer (2004), assert that children are often praised for their efforts, but adults are often “embarrassed by their lack of mastery of the language and they may develop a sense of inadequacy after experiences of frustration in trying to say exactly what they mean”. Additionally, Munro (2008: 195) points out that an accent may trigger foreigner talk from native speakers (Varonis & Gass 1982), the point of which is to enhance communication. However, for some learners this might emphasize the feeling of not being on the same level with the native speakers, which may be a status related issue for some. Social embarrassment and frustration might thus prevent adult learners from speaking a FL. Then again, this way they might not practice speaking and it might become all the more difficult.

Zuengler (1988: 34) states that “pronunciation is a domain within which one’s identity is expressed”. Hansen Edwards (2008: 257) reports that in L2 phonology, social identity has been studied through the use and acquisition of certain sounds and their variants, and how they function as social markers of identity (*e.g.*, Gatbonton, 1975; Lybeck, 2002; Thompson, 1991). For example, certain sounds may have nationalistic meaning. Gatbonton *et al.* (2009: 173) talk about how this *ethnological affiliation* may cause language learners to hold back from talking too much like a member of a different language group, because of a strong sense of affiliation to their primary ethnological group. Studies that support this are, for example, Gatbondon (1975) and Labov (1972). Gatbonton’s (1975) studied French-Canadian learners of English, and how their use of interdental fricatives was a means of expressing one’s identity or nationality: non-nationalistic informants used the English dental fricative more than the nationalistic informants. However, based on the present author’s interviews with adult learners of English, for instance, it seems that Finnish adult learners of English often do not want other people to notice their nationality when speaking English. This raises a lot of questions, for example, why this is and whether Finns do not have a strong sense of nationality.

Another example of research that has studied social identity in connection to SLA is Moyer’s (2004) study, which focused on immigrants in Germany. One of the results was that confidence in using the L2 was closely related to how the informants managed to develop social contacts with German speakers and also how they managed to create a viable L2 identity, which was difficult for some of them. Then again, acquiring more confidence made them feel more like they were part of the L2 culture (Moyer, 2004).

Thus, social networks are an important factor in SLA. Hansen Edwards (2008: 258) writes that *social network theory* (cf. Milroy & Milroy, 1992) presents the three types of network structures that a language learner might have. These three network structures are:

exchange networks made up of ties with family and close friends, interactive networks constructed of ties with acquaintances, and passive networks that consist of physically distant ties

(Lybeck, 2002: 176)

Lybeck notes that learners who have exchange networks are socially and psychologically less distanced from the L2 culture, and so they will learn the L2 a lot more easily than learners that only have interactive or passive networks (2002: 176). He also says that people who are in contact with exchange networks are more open to language variation and will likely use the same variety as their exchange network. For most Finnish and Japanese adult learners of English social connections with English speakers are likely quite rare, and if there are any English language networks, they most likely consist of acquaintances or passive networks. It is possible to hear a lot of English in Finland, for example through the media, but the chances of speaking English are quite rare, similarly to Japan, as very few learners seem to want to practice speaking with their Finnish speaking friends. This brings us back to social identity: as Moyer noticed, developing contacts with the target language community helped in creating an L2 identity. So, because of the lack of English speaking networks, Finnish and Japanese learners may not have a clear idea of who they should be or how they should act when speaking English.

4.5. Accent

Accent is a common term to describe the way in which a person pronounces a language, and because languages always have to be pronounced when speaking, everybody has an accent (Andersson & Trudgill, 1990: 127). However, the term *accent* sometimes seems to be used to describe accents that differ from the standard variety, and confused with intelligibility or comprehensibility (Ladefoged, 2005: 2; Munro, 2008: 196-197). As Munro (2008: 193) writes, non-

native speakers of English are often easily recognized because of their pronunciation, and in many cases their specific L1 backgrounds can be identified, even in casual conversations. Munro (2008: 195) continues that at the segmental level, accented speech can be noticed, for example, by the omission or insertion of phones, the substitution of one phone for another, or the production of phonemes that differ from native-like phones.

Furthermore, accent is something every language learner brings to the table with him or her, and, as Munro (2008: 193) maintains, an example of how L1 affects L2. As Hansen Edwards & Zampini (2008: 6) state, it is necessary to think whether an accent, for example, is a result of a certain task, a speech style or the view of the interlocutor, or a feature of competence. Ioup (2008: 53) says that other variables than age that influence pronunciation ability include the amount of L2 use (Flege, Yeni-Komshian & Liu, 1999), length of residence in the L2 environment (Flege, Bohn & Jang, 1997; Purcell & Suter, 1980), target language input (Flege & Liu, 2001), instruction or training (Bongaerts, Planken, & Schils, 1995; Elliott, 1995b; Moyer, 1999), attitude (Moyer, 1999, 2004; Purcell & Suter, 1980), the cognitive variables of field independence and right hemispheric specialization (Elliott, 1995a, b), and social identity (Hansen Edwards, 2008).

Accent is a part of SLA that raises a lot of discussion: there are standards for pronunciation, but very few second language learners seem to be able to achieve them perfectly. Lately, many researchers have questioned the need for SL learners to speak in a so-called perfect accent, since a foreign-accent-free pronunciation is not necessary in communicating in English (Munro, 2008: 194). Now that English is widely used as a medium of communication between different groups of people, who do not speak English as their native language, some of these non-native speakers even feel that it is easier to understand a non-native accent of English than the native one (*ibid.*). Accent is discussed here in relation to L2 speech production, because it seems to raise a lot of different

opinions and, more importantly, it seems that especially Finnish English learners and some Japanese learners are quite concerned about their English accents.

Hansen Edwards (2008: 255) writes that the results of the early studies in SL phonology indicate that the amount of L2 use may not greatly affect the L2 accent: whereas Suter (1976), as cited by Hansen Edwards (*op.cit.*), found that the amount of L2 conversation at work and/or school predicted pronunciation accuracy third best (after native language and how concerned the speaker was about her/his pronunciation), Purcell and Suter (1980) reanalysed this and found that L2 use was no longer important in predicting what the L2 accent was like. In addition to these studies, research by Thompson (1991) and Flege and Fletcher (1992) also found that the amount of L2 use had no significance (Hansen Edwards, 2008: 255). An exception is a study by Moyer (2004), who studied L2 learners of German. Moyer's study (2004) focused on twenty-five immigrants, who lived in Berlin, were all advanced speakers of German, had different ages, and had stayed in Germany for different lengths of time. Moyer's (2004) results were that the amount of spoken interaction in German with native speakers correlated with how the speakers' accents were rated by native speakers of German.

The amount of L1 use has also been studied in relation to L2 accent: as Ioup (2008: 52) points out, many studies indicate that the amount of L1 use does not influence L2 pronunciation ability in late learners, but that with early learners it does (Bohn & Flege, 1992; Flege, Frieda & Nozawa, 1997; Flege & MacKay, 2004; Flege, MacKay, & Meador, 1999; Flege, MacKay, & Piske, 2002; Flege, Schirru, & MacKay, 2003; Guion, Flege, & Loftin, 2000). Hansen Edwards (2008: 256) points out that there is, however, also a study that shows that L1 use influences both groups: Flege, Frieda and Nozawa (1997) studied Italian immigrants and found out that although both low and high users of Italian had foreign accents, the latter group had a more detectable Italian accent of English. Of

course, these studies had to do with immigrants, whereas this study focuses on learners, who are in a different setting for language learning, which makes it somewhat different. However, the amount of L2 and L1 use should be considered in this context, too. Age affects pronunciation ability, as concluded in 3.1., and so it is connected to accent as well as other factors discussed in this study. Next transfer, and then accent attitudes will be discussed in more depth.

4.5.1. Transfer and accent

Transfer is also an influencing factor in one's accent, because many studies show that a foreign accent is due to the transfer of L1 sounds to the L2, for example (*e.g.* Broselow, 1984; Altenberg, 2005), and because, as Hansen Edwards & Zampini (2008: 2) write, it has significant influence on SL acquisition, especially in phonology. This is called negative transfer, because it might affect intelligibility. According to Lovett (2008: 22), negative transfer refers to the type of transfer that causes the speaker to mispronounce words or have a foreign accent. One of the reasons for this is that the L1 may not contain similar sounds to the TL, and so the TL sounds might be replaced by L1 sounds (Yavas, 2005). This may also be connected to markedness, as discussed earlier in 2.3. (*ibid.*). However, because of the current position of English as a medium of ESL/EFL communities, it should be questioned whether the type of transfer that causes the learner to have a foreign accent in the TL but does not affect intelligibility should be called negative.

Ioup (2008: 43) says that it is possible to draw the conclusion, based on research that has studied late onset learners' L2 accent (*e.g.* Broselow, 1984; Munro, 1993), that people who have started learning an L2 later on in their lives will be likely to have L1 features in their L2 pronunciation. These features or sounds that do not correspond to the L2 sounds may be somewhere between the

L1 and the L2 sounds (Ioup, 2008: 43). Thus, transfer may be a greater problem for late onset learners.

4.5.2. Accent attitudes

Eagly & Chaiken (1993: 1), as cited by Schwarz *et al.* (2001), define attitudes as “a psychological tendency that is expressed by evaluating a particular entity with some degree of favor or disfavor”. Schwarz *et al.* (2001: 436) add that attitudes are a hypothetical construct that was invented by researchers to account for a body of phenomena, which we cannot observe directly but infer them from individuals’ self-reports and behavior. Accordingly, the processes underlying self-reports of attitudes are also important in analyzing the nature of attitudes (*ibid.*).

A Finnish English teacher, an informant of this study, who was asked about his adult English learners’ skills and views of speaking English, has said:

- (1) Aikuiset kokevat, että jos ääntäminen ei suju juuri "manchesteriläisittäin" niin sitten se on ns. "väärin". Tämä ajattelutapa on aika syvällä monella.
- Adults feel that if you cannot pronounce English ”the Manchester way”, then it is “wrong”. This view is quite deep rooted in many of them.
- (Teacher informant 1)

Based on this, it seems that at least some Finnish adult learners would rather like to speak in a British-like accent of English and that the Finnish accent of English might be seen as merely incorrect, or that this is what their teacher thinks they feel. Either way, this might create pressure when speaking English. Garrett (2010: 5) poses a valid question: why do people love certain accents and hate others? It is usually argued that it is either because of their inherent sound qualities (‘inherent value hypothesis’), or their social connotations (‘imposed norm hypothesis’)(*ibid.*). Of these hypotheses the latter is the generally held view (*ibid.*). So, what type of social connotations does the British English accent, for instance, or the Finnish or the Japanese accent of English have?

Finnish people indeed seem to prefer certain accents of English over others. This was found in the study by Leppänen *et al.* (2009), where informants were asked to describe their feelings towards a Finn, who speaks fluent and native-like English, a Finn, who speaks fluent English with a Finnish accent, and a Finn, who speaks stammering English. 53.8% reported that they admire a native-like speaker, 28.5% admire a fluent speaker with a Finnish accent, and 13.8% admired the stammering speaker for trying. Most informants felt compassionate towards the stammering speaker or thought the attempt was comical. Based on this, it seems to be difficult to achieve other people's admiration by speaking English with a Finnish accent, and so some people might want to avoid speaking English in order to avoid embarrassment. It is only understandable that these high goals or expectations, in other words attempts to achieve a native-like accent, might cause some people frustration.

On the other hand, according to Chiba *et al.* (2007), Japanese learners seem to prefer the American accent, possibly because of Japanese relations between the USA. Chiba *et al.* (*ibid.*) found in their study of attitudes toward English accents that learners with more instrumental motivation toward language learning were more positive toward non-native accents of English, than learners with less instrumental motivation. Other factors that affected attitudes toward English accents were respect toward indigenous languages and familiarity with different varieties of English accents (*ibid.*). On the other hand, McKenzie (2008) also studied Japanese university students (558 students) and their attitudes toward English accents, and found that although there was a particularly favourable attitude toward BrE and AmE in terms of status, the informants expressed feeling greater solidarity with a speaker of heavily Japanese accented English. McKenzie (*ibid.*) found that important factors in determining accent attitudes in this context were gender, self-perceived proficiency in English, exposure to English and evaluations of varieties of Japanese.

Garrett (2010: 7) states that attitudes towards language, both positive and negative, are often influenced by the process of standardization in languages: standard varieties often emerge in languages, for example Standard British English. Milroy (2007: 133) argues that

language attitudes are then dominated by powerful ideological positions that are largely based on the supposed existence of this standard form, and these, taken together, can be said to constitute the standard language ideology or “ideology of the standard language”

(Milroy, 2007: 133)

To Milroy (*op.cit.*), this means uniformity and invariance of language. Milroy (*op.cit.*) also points out that standard language emphasizes correctness, which is then, as Preston (1996) notes, reinforced by authority. For example, standard language is codified in dictionaries, grammar books, and spread through educational systems, and further reinforced by awarding prestige or stigma to language forms (Garrett, 2010: 7). Preston (1996) states that contrarily, devaluing some forms makes people view them as non-standard or substandard, and therefore less prestigious. It does indeed seem that in both Finland and Japan the standard forms of English are looked up to and appreciated quite highly. This “standard language ideology“ seems to have spread through the media and education, and people seem to award stigma to standard varieties of English, for example by praising Finnish learners who are able to speak English with a near-native accent (Garrett, 2010: 7).

Martin (2003: 79) theorizes that the legitimacy of social structures, such as language practices or political groupings, can be conceptualized into horizontal and vertical axes. Horizontally, a structure, *e.g.* a language variety, is reinforced by the local community at a non-governmental level, for example by awarding values and recognition (*ibid.*). Then again, vertically, it is reinforced if the government recognizes it, for example if it fits their values (*ibid.*). These two axes can be used in analyzing the reasons behind accent attitudes and the standard language ideology. In Finland, Standard English varieties are legitimized by both horizontal axes, such as individual people who prefer standard varieties, and vertical axes, such as the education system. In Japan, similar

constructions seem to be applicable to English language standard varieties, although the sense of solidarity seems to differ from the Finnish context.

An example on how accent attitudes influence people's daily lives was pointed out by Hernandez (1993: n.p.): according to him many immigrants come to the US and are fluent in English, but even so seek speech therapists and tutors in order to reduce their accents. The same has happened in Britain (Morris, 1999). As Hernandez's article (1993) shows, ridicule about accents often hurts people's self-esteem, and makes people want to get rid of them, in order to fit in, or to escape discrimination.

Fielding & Evered's (1980) study on accent is another interesting example of how accent attitudes affect people: in the study an interview, in which a patient is at a doctor's appointment and describes his symptoms, was evaluated by the participants of the study. The patient spoke either RP *i.e.* received pronunciation ("the accent that has been used as the standard in phoneticians' description of the pronunciation of British English for centuries" (Roach, 2013)) or a south-west England rural accent, the symptoms implied a heart disorder, and the patient experienced anxiety, tension and relationship problems, and used a lot of alcohol. According to Garrett (2010: 134–135), the RP speaker's symptoms were diagnosed as more likely to be psychosomatic than the rural English speaker's. The RP speaker was also evaluated as having more sophisticated vocabulary and using better grammar, although the audio-recorded texts were identical for both guises (cf. Stewart *et al.*, 1985; Levin *et al.*, 1994; Boyd, 2002). Thus, it seems that accent related attitudes may affect in perceiving someone's use of vocabulary or grammar, for instance, in a better light if the speaker has a certain accent. This also seems to be the case with Finnish politicians, for example: some, who are fluent in English or use quite advanced sentence structures, but speak in a Finnish accent of

English, are often not appreciated as much as others, who have an accent that is closer to a native accent.

So, where do these attitudes come from? According to Tesser (1993), as cited by Garrett (2010: 22), attitudes might be partly due to hereditary factors; both genetic inheritance and social environment influence attitudes, but also experience, social environment, and other people's behaviour creates attitudes. Attitudes come from many sources: parents, teachers, media *etc.* (Garrett, 2010: 22). For example, instruction and teachers' attitudes may influence one's accent or create accent related pressure. As Hansen Edwards & Zampini (2008: 2) point out, removing "bad habits", in other words incorrect pronunciation, has been a quite widespread goal in SL education. However, if taken to extreme, it might cause harm to the learners, creating pressure and anxiety in speaking the L2, since changing accents is a very difficult process.

As mentioned before, one source of attitudes towards the English language or the Finnish accent of English might be the status of English in Finland and in Japan: it is awarded quite a lot of recognition as an international tool of communication. It is also not uncommon to hear Finns (or others) say that the level of Finnish English education and the overall level in Finns' English skills is pretty high. According to Haarmann (1984), the stereotype features of the English language are high quality, international appreciation, confidence, practical use, and practical lifestyle. The two first of these at least seem to fit the general view of English in Finland. The conceptions about Japanese English learners, on the other hand, have been contrary to these as commonly they have been said to have trouble with English or weak communicative abilities, although English is appreciated in Japan as a global tool of communication (*e.g.* McVeigh, 2002; Nakata, 2006: 166). High quality and international appreciation seem like words that can cause pressure in English

learning – do SL learners also have to achieve these in their English skills? Then again, for Japanese learners the doubts some people might have of their English skills may also be a source of pressure.

A language learner's attitude towards their own accent can be a cause for speech difficulties and anxiety. Finnish people, especially, seem to have quite a negative image of the Finnish accent of English. For example, it is not uncommon to hear Finnish people criticizing Finnish politicians' accents. This criticism might make it harder for learners to start practicing their speech. Moreover, in the study by Leppänen *et al.* (2009: 56) only 7% of the informants considered the Finnish accent of English to be the most pleasant accent, whereas 39.6% preferred British English and 35.9% American English. This shows that Finns strongly favour native accents of English over the Finnish one, which, of course, creates pressure for the learner. This can also cause confusion, if teachers greatly favour native-like accents, but themselves speak with a non-native accent. In Japan, the English pedagogy has traditionally heavily favoured native (AmE/BrE) models, which can create insecurities among the Japanese English teachers if they consider their accent inferior to native English accents (Matsuda, 2009; Garrett, 2010: 26). Also, the learners seem to appreciate the native varieties more than non-native ones.

Modiano (2009: 64–65), in fact, challenges the native speaker model, because according to him it can be disadvantageous for learner identity to reach for an identity other than the learner's own. Instead he would promote teaching that enhances the European identity and function in global use (*ibid.*). Although there are studies that have concluded that strongly foreign-accented speech tends to irritate native speakers (*e.g.* Scheuer, 2005: 115–117), there have also been signs of non-native speakers being less tolerant to strongly accented speech than native speakers (Munro, 2008: 212). One reason for this might be the fact that a heavy accent might affect intelligibility. However, this might also be a result of the favouritism toward the native speaker model, which might be another

source of pressure for English learning. Then again, in Finland English does not have an official status and thus there is no variety that could be labelled Finnish English, in other words a local model of English (Garrett, 2010: 28). The same applies to Japan. Therefore it is logical that the model for English learning is found in standard varieties.

5. METHODS AND DATA

The aim of the study is to find out if adult learners experience problems, for example with pronunciation, in speaking English, and if they do, what kind of difficulties there are and why. Furthermore, this study takes an interest in how accent affects English oral production. This is to be achieved by interviewing adult learners and their teacher both in Finland and Japan, and thus acquiring information about the learners and their speech. The students will be referred to as informants and the teachers separately as teacher informants. A couple of teachers will be interviewed in order to acquire information about the contents of the English classes and the skills of the learners.

The interview questions (see the appendix) concern mainly the informants' views toward

1. their background, for instance, in education
2. their own speech and use of English
3. the difficulties experienced in speaking English
4. the role of other people in speaking, and
5. the Finnish or Japanese accent of English

Related to accent issues, the informants will also be asked about “tankero English” and “wasei-eigo”. In Finland, the former term seems to come up very often when people talk about speaking English, particularly when assessing Finnish politicians' speech. In Japan, there are also terms (wasei-eigo, katakana-english) associated with the use of English in Japan. It is a case of interest, whether these terms are actively used among English learners, and whether they have an influence on learners in some way. At least in Finland the term tankero English seems to have stigma. This could be studied in more depth in another study. The interview questions are available in the appendix.

The interview is structured, but the interviewees can speak pretty freely about their experiences as the order of the questions will be altered when needed. The last question in the interview is open ended. The quantitative study by Leppänen *et al.* (2009) inspired some of the questions because of its interesting results in accent attitudes and speech-related questions. In the analysis of the interviews, the results will be categorized according to Moyer's classification, and compared with the results of the study by Leppänen *et al.* (2009).

The Finnish data comes from interviews with adult learners of English at the South Karelian adult education centre AKTIVA (presently called Sampo *i.e.* the vocational institute of Saimaa⁴). Nineteen 20 to 30 minute interviews were conducted at AKTIVA, and the interviewees' teacher was also interviewed, in an attempt to acquire more objective information about their speech, their attitudes towards accents, and the type of education they get at AKTIVA. There is also data from interviews with adult learners of English who studied at the South Karelian community college (Etelä-Karjalan kansalaisopisto), the community college of the Joensuu area (Joensuun seudun kansalaisopisto), and PKKY (Pohjois-Karjalan Koulutuskuntayhtymä: North Karelian municipal education and training consortium).

The Japanese data comes from students who studied with private teachers in the Kyoto and Osaka area, informants who participated in English communication oriented classes at a culture centre in Kyoto, informants who studied independently and were contacted via Kyoto Prefectural Culture Centre's and Kyoto city international foundation's message boards or via other learners, and informants who studied in REC program at Ryukoku University. The interviews were recorded and then transcribed. A private English teacher was also interviewed for additional information about the students.

⁴The translation by the writer. Sampo was called AKTIVA at the time when the interviews were made.

Nine of the Finnish AKTIVA informants were attending a discussion course and the other ten AKTIVA informants were attending a course that includes grammar, listening and discussion. The South Karelian and North Karelian adult education centre informants were attending courses that included grammar, reading, listening and discussion, and a couple of them attended a course with only discussion practise. PKKY students attended further vocational education and their English courses were mainly revision and work related English. However, there was a difference between these courses, because at AKTIVA the courses utilize language studios, where the students use microphones and headphones in speaking to each other. The students' teacher mentioned that this is a useful method, because he can control the discussion by choosing suitable partners for the students. Some informants also mentioned that they liked this, because it did not feel so distressing to start talking when one did not see the partner's face. In their speech exercises, according to the teacher, they usually had to explain words, differences between two pictures or talk freely or according to a topic with a partner or a group.

About half of the Japanese informants attended private discussion classes with a native English teacher and they reported practising pronunciation, for example, with the teacher, and receiving grammar instruction when it was needed based on conversation practice. Their speech exercise was mainly free conversation, for example about events in their life and around the world. Another eight of the informants attended a basic grammar revision course with conversation practice at Kyoto culture centre, a couple of the others attended grammar and discussion courses at the Kyoto open university, eight attended REC English courses with native English teachers, and the others reported studying English independently from books.

The reasons for selecting the Kyoto-Osaka area for finding informants were mainly practical and financial, but also the location away from the capital city influenced the decision. The Finnish

informants lived in non-capital area that had its own dialect, and the Kyoto-Osaka area fits this, although Osaka city is much larger than Joensuu or Lappeenranta. However, Japanese cities are larger than Finnish cities in general, so the goal was relational similarity.

The methods used in the analysis of this data are mainly qualitative. Although this study tries to answer its research questions by analysing the acquired data qualitatively, it also utilizes quantitative methods in presenting some of the data in figures. Thus, the data can be compared with the results of the study by Leppänen *et al.* (2009), at least to some extent. Due to the qualitative nature of the interview, the presentation of the data in quantitative form was at times problematic, but an overall picture can be examined in the graphs. Also, because of the open quality of some interview questions some figures were especially difficult to present, which is why in some figures one informant might have several answers in different categories, for example in Figure 3. they might have answered in my free time, at work, and abroad.

The informants remained anonymous. Initial contact with the informants was different in Finland and in Japan. In Finland, the schools that were mentioned above were contacted, and teachers were consulted for permission to inquire for possible informants and to conduct the interviews, in most cases at the school. In Japan, the present writer was introduced to private English teachers by another teacher, and first the teachers asked the students for permission for the interview. Also, notices about the study were posted on Kyoto prefectural international centre and Kyoto international community house internet messaging board.

The environment of the interviews was kept as uniform for all the interviews as possible. The interviews were conducted individually (or in pairs), mainly after English classes or during them, in a separate classroom or a room located near the classroom. Other places that were used were public

spaces, such as libraries, international centres or study halls. These spaces were quiet enough for an interview, and no outsiders were listening to the conversation. The interview itself was conducted in as uniform a pattern as was possible, keeping the order of the questions the same when possible, but trying to keep a conversational style to help the informants relax, and changing the order of the questions when necessary, for example, when the theme in question was touched upon before the actual question. Some additional questions were also made when necessary, for instance to attain a clearer understanding of a term used, such as “messy” English or inquiring for reasons for a certain answer. The informants and the teachers were always asked for permission to record the interview.

Of course, when analysing the data, it has to be acknowledged that there are some variables that might affect the interviewees’ answers. Firstly, the interview is quite personal, and some might not want to answer all the questions completely truthfully: a case in point is the question concerning the interviewees’ desire to speak English in a certain way, and also the questions concerning social relations. Secondly, some of the questions, for example the ones dealing with accents, were quite difficult for the interviewees to answer, which might have an effect on the results. In addition, when considering the Japanese interviews, the interviewer's (the present writer's) Japanese language skills might not have been refined enough to grasp some subtle messages or cultural connections that might have arisen during the interviews. There are, of course, also other things that might affect the results, such as the interviewer, the environment and the interviewee’s personality. These variables have to be considered while examining the results.

Also, it has to be kept in mind that most of the informants of this study have voluntarily participated in English courses. A few of the Finnish informants had obligatory English courses as a part of their curriculum that they had decided to take voluntarily. However, English was not the main interest for these informants. Furthermore, over ten of the Finns and about half of the Japanese informants

participated in courses that emphasized spoken English. Thus, it can be presumed that the informants of this study are at least somewhat motivated to study English and that they do not find it unpleasant. So, they might not have as much problems with speaking English as other Finns or Japanese of their age group. However, they are good informants for this study, because they have motivation: because of this they might be able to provide informative and interesting answers to the interview questions. In addition, they have come to the courses to learn or revise their English, and the reasons why they have decided to participate in these courses may be of interest to this study. Next, some background information about the informants will be presented.

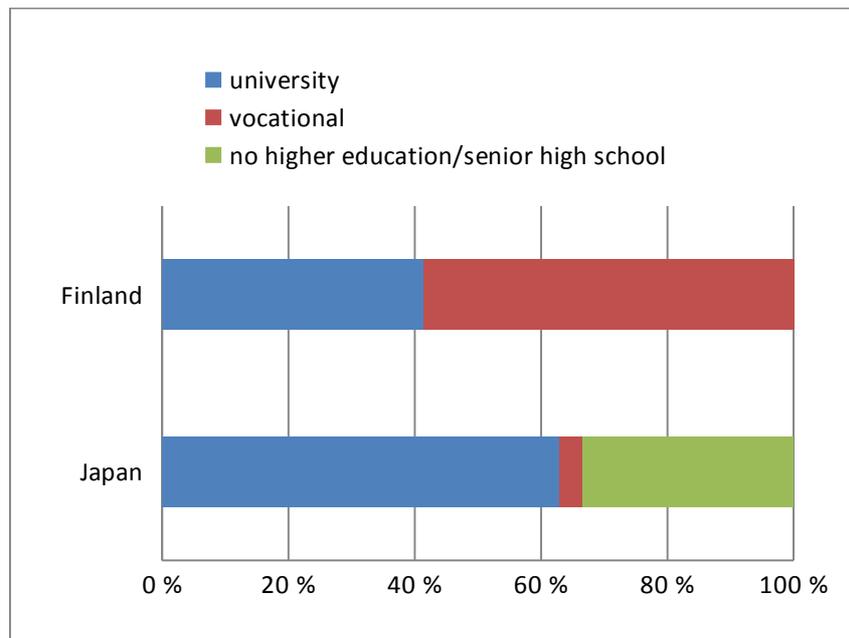


Figure 1. *Educational background: Finland and Japan.*

The participants of this study were all, except for the teachers, adult learners of English, who wanted to develop their English skills or maintain them, which is why they attended English courses or studied independently. The ages of the informants varied from 40 to 62. The overall average age was 53.6 years. the Finns' 50.9 and Japanese informants' 56.5. There were 29 Finns and 27 Japanese among the informants, nine of the Finns and six of the Japanese were men. A little under half of the Finns and a little over 60% of the Japanese had a university education. Many of the Japanese had no

higher education. 13 of the Finns and five of the Japanese had lived their lives or childhood in the countryside and the rest in the city. Most of the Finns' parents had had a vocational education, had been self-taught, or had been farmers or housewives. A couple of the parents had had a university education. The Japanese informants' parents had mostly had a university education or no higher education, a couple had had a vocational one. Almost all of the Finnish informants had begun learning English in the third grade. The Japanese informants had started English studies in junior high school around the age of 12–13.

6. RESULTS

Overall, the informants had many interesting experiences and opinions about speaking English. The results will be discussed in several sections that have to do with different topics: English and other FL use, English education, speaking in one's mother tongue, the difficult parts in speaking English, experiences from speaking, circumstances of speaking, other people in speaking, and accent attitudes.

6.1. English and other FL use

Firstly, the informants were asked when and where they use English in their daily lives.

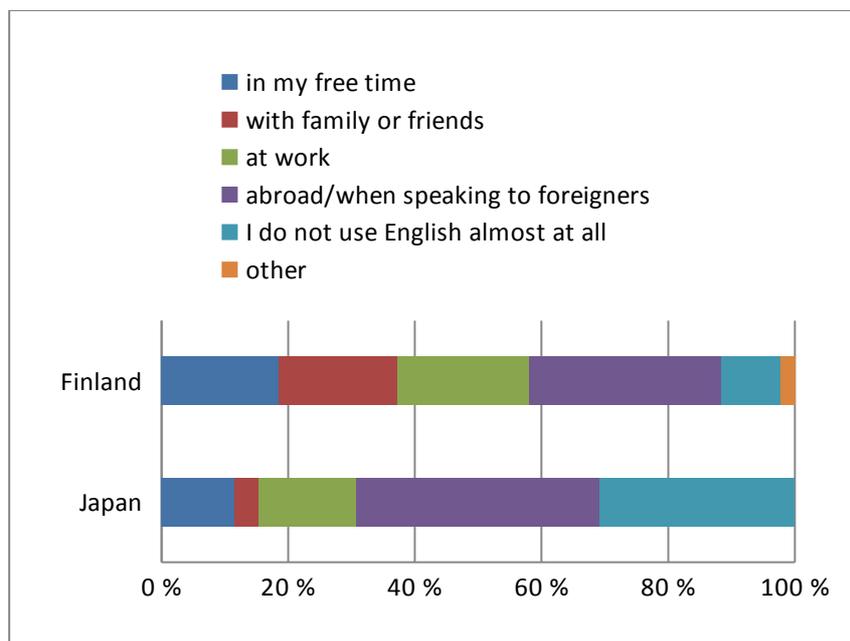


Figure 2. *When and where do you use English?*

In this graph one informant may have had several answers, which means that, for example, one informant may have answered “in my free time” and “at work”, and they would have been categorized as one answer for “in my free time” and one answer for “at work” (this was the case with some of the other figures as well). Quite many informants from both groups said that they used

English in class or when studying at home, but in this question the main interest was English use outside of class, which is why these answers were not included. “In my free time” included entertainment related use of English, and “abroad/when speaking to foreigners” were both included into one category because of the two categories’ similar nature: both had to do with tourism, mostly.

Finns used English mainly in their free time, with family and/or friends, at work and abroad and/or when speaking to foreigners. Many informants used reported watching movies or TV-series in English and maybe also avoiding reading the subtitles in order to practice their English skills. Many of them also reported listening to music or reading books in English. Quite many informants had relatives or friends with whom they spoke English, and quite many also needed English at work. Many informants reported that they needed English when traveling, and some had also lived abroad.

Over 30% of the Japanese informants reported that they did not use a lot of English outside the classroom or did not use it at all. Quite many needed English at work, and some watched English movies or listened to English music, but very few needed English with their family and/or friends. Many informants reported that they travelled quite a lot and needed English at that time, but several of them said that their children spoke English for them when abroad, or that tour travel did not require English skills. Especially with the Japanese informants using English with foreigners had to do with tourists in their home area. They reported needing English for guidance.

The greatest difference between the Finnish informants and the Japanese informants was that whereas most of the former group reported using English at least in some way outside of class, over 30% of the latter group reported not using English (almost) at all outside of class. There were only three informants among the Finns who said that they did not use English almost at all. Also, how the informants used English in their free-time and how they used English with their family or

friends showed a gap between the Finnish group and the Japanese group: Finns used English more in their free time (books, movies, internet, music), and whereas very few of the Japanese informants used English with friends or family, almost 20% of the Finns needed it to communicate with their friends and/or relatives. Those who needed English with their family or friends (both Japanese and Finns) had foreign relatives, practiced English with family for fun, or had lived abroad for a longer time and thus made contacts with whom they needed English.

The informants were asked whether they were able to speak any other foreign languages besides English.

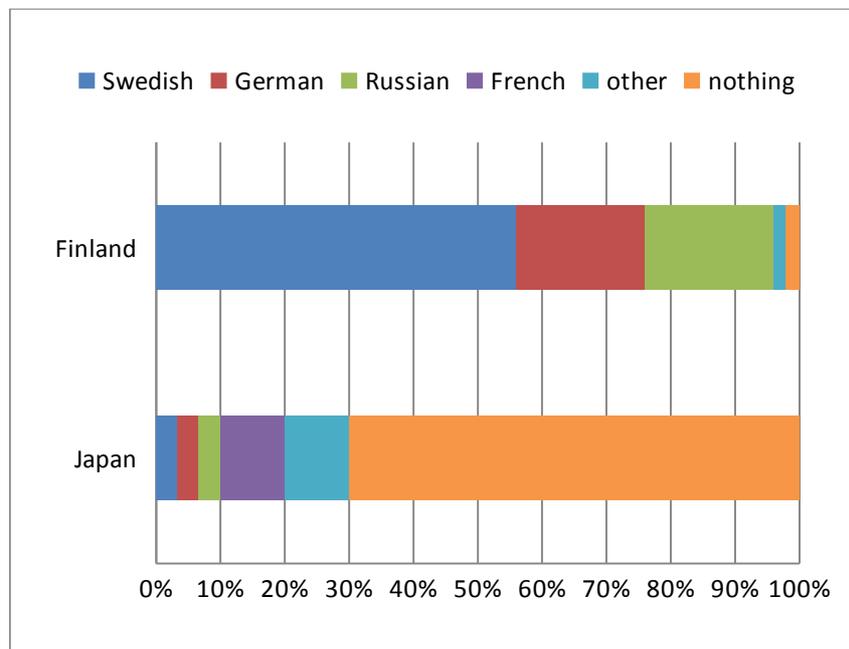


Figure 3. *Do you speak other foreign languages besides English?*

Almost 60% of the Finns reported having Swedish skills, and about 20% German and 20% Russian. Other languages reported were Indonesian, and very few reported having no other FL skills. Japanese informants mostly reported having no other language skills, but those who knew other FL, reported having learnt a bit of French, and a couple a bit of Swedish, German or Russian. Other languages mentioned were Chinese, Korean and Italian.

There was a considerable difference between the two informant groups, because about 70% of the Japanese informants reported that they knew no other foreign language besides English. However, almost all of the Finnish informants mentioned that they could speak at least one other foreign language besides English: all of them had learned at least Swedish, since all Finns learn it at school. About half of them had learned only English and Swedish, but the other half had also learned Russian, German or both. Based on the discussions with the Japanese informants it seems that although English is seen as an important part of education, there is very little other foreign language instruction in Japanese schools. Whether the reason for this difference lies behind the respective locations of these countries, their education systems or histories, remains a point for debate at present time.

6.2. English education

The informants were asked about their previous and present English education. Many of the Finnish informants thought that they had had a fairly good education in English, but most critiqued their school English, for example that sometimes the level of teaching had been varying, which had affected learning, and that sometimes there had been too many different teachers, which had resulted in an uneven education. However, the main complaint that almost all the informants had regarding their education in English was that it had been very strict. The teaching methods had been different than they are today: they had studied English mainly by reading the textbook, translating sentences, and studying grammar. The informants maintained that they had not done a lot of speech exercises or none at all and that making errors had been a grave matter, which made speaking quite distressing. For example, one informant reported:

- (2) A: Eli oli hankalaa ku pelkäs virheitä?
 B: Joo, se oli nimenomaan se oli iso ongelma ja nimenomaan miun ikäpolvelle se et ois pitäny osata kaikki just täsmälleen ennen ku sanoo.

A: So the fear of making errors made it difficult?

B: Yes, that was exactly the big problem, and especially for my age group that you should have known everything precisely before saying it.

(Finland, informant 5)

Many participants said that the fear of making mistakes or errors had prevented them from speaking. One of them mentioned that because of the fear of making errors she had stopped speaking English for 30 years. However, many (AKTIVA students) reported that after coming to the English course they had started speaking and by the time of the interview felt that speaking English had become easier.

The Japanese informants reported having quite similar experiences, although their views of their previous education at the high-school level were not as positive as the Finns': many of them reported that English classes had been very strict and almost only based on reading a book, studying grammar and sometimes translating sentences from Japanese to English. Similarly to the Finnish informants, they also reported that there had been almost no speech practice at all, which had made it very difficult to speak English. Many of them felt that they had to think about how to construct a sentence without errors before speaking, which made conversation difficult. Many said that their high-school English had been of no help at all:

- (3) 中学校から始まった英語については、あまり役に立ってるとは思いません。コミュニケーションが目的だけど、そういうふうになってなくて、試験のための勉強一生懸命しました。

I do not think that the English studies that started in junior high school were very helpful. Communication's the goal, but it didn't become like that, instead we studied very hard for tests.

(Japan, informant 22)

- (4) 中学高校は1970だったけど、日本人の先生が普通で、すごく難しい文法で、使えないものだという気がしました。それではつまらなかった。今の教材を見てもっと使えるようなもの。

High school was in 1970, but Japanese [English] teachers were common, we studied very difficult grammar, and I felt they were only things one can't use. So it was boring. When looking at current learning materials they seem more usable.

(Japan, informant 19)

One other informant reported that as a child she had attended English education that had been very different from the normal Japanese English education. She had practiced speaking and listening a

lot, listened to a cassette tape and repeated aloud. After that she had entered the Japanese education system, and because of the reading-and-writing based classes speaking had become very difficult. Another interesting point was that many of the informants reported that even their teacher could not speak English, or was able to speak very little of it.

6.3. Speaking in one's mother tongue

The informants were asked what kind of speakers they were in their mother tongue.

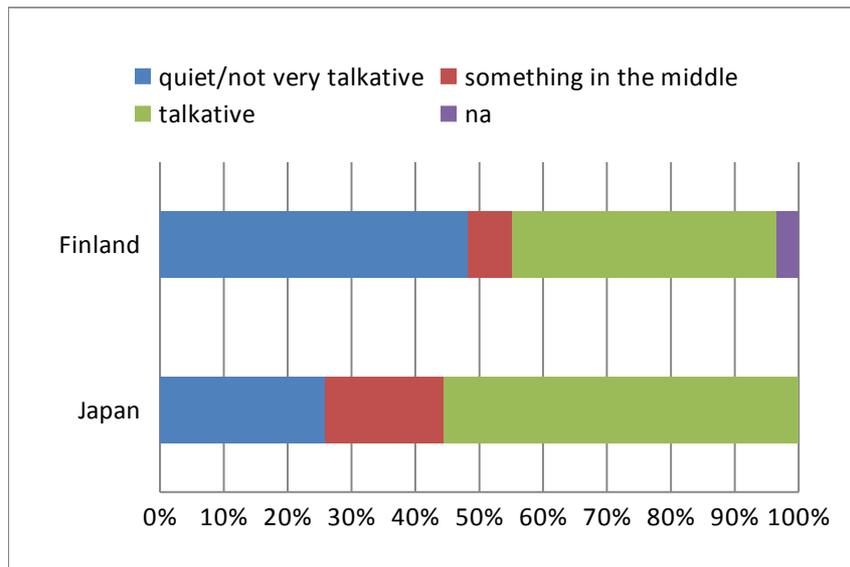


Figure 4. *What kind of a speaker are you in your mother tongue?*

As for the Finnish informants, about 40% considered themselves talkative and fast, but more saw themselves as more silent, slow or thoughtful, and the others were somewhere in between. As for the Japanese, however, more than half saw themselves as talkative and only about 25% as quiet or not very talkative. It has to be noted, though, that a slightly higher percentage of the Japanese informants were women, which might have an effect on this result.

Some reported that they did not consider their speech skills in their mother tongue to be a great factor in determining their speech skills in English. However, some talkative informants from both groups said that they were quite talkative in English, too, and some reported that their shyness in their mother tongue also affected their English. Some informants mentioned that they felt that their quietness or shyness made it harder to speak English, for example, because in group situations it was harder to start to speak or stand one's ground in order to acquire turns to speak. Many of the Japanese informants saw their talkativeness or quietness as being directly in connection to their English speaking abilities. However, there were also some informants, who said that their personality was different when speaking English than when speaking Japanese:

- (5) 真面目な日は凄くしゃべれないんです。やけっぱちしっていますか？凄くハイテンションの時、ヘシテーションの時はしゃべれないんです。日本人の性格になっちゃうとしゃべれないです。普通はしゃべりかけないです。でも、もし頭はちょっと、ちょっとクレイジーになったらいい。言葉をしゃべることっておしゃべりが好きな方が多い。しゃべることの内容は関係ないです。

I do not speak at all on diligent days. Do you know the word self-abandonment? At the time of very high tension, when I hesitate I don't speak at all. When I end up thinking like a Japanese I won't speak. I don't usually start talking to someone. But if my head should become a bit, a bit crazy it's good. When it comes to speaking [foreign] languages people who love speaking do it a lot. It doesn't matter what the topic is.

(Japan, informant 25)

So, it seems that speaking EFL might also require acquiring personality or behavior features that differ from one's L1 culture or personality.

6.4. Difficult parts of speaking English

The questions that were closely connected with difficulties in English speech production were whether speaking English was difficult, whether it was enjoyable, whether pronunciation of English was difficult, and whether speaking was more difficult than writing or listening comprehension. Firstly, the informants were asked about whether they saw speaking English as difficult or not.

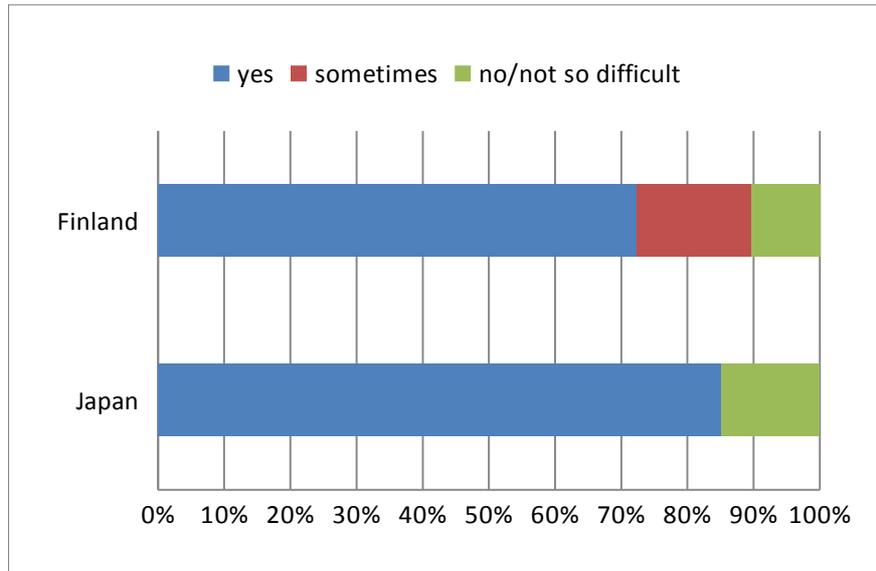


Figure 5. *Is speaking English difficult?*

Almost 90% of the Finnish informants reported that speaking English was either difficult or sometimes difficult. Some informants said that it was not so difficult and many of them mentioned that it had been a lot harder before. What they saw as difficult was remembering words and the fact that one cannot express oneself fully in English. For example, one Finnish informant explained that he could not say what he wants to say, but instead he had to say what he could say in English, which was very problematic at times. Other difficult aspects of speaking in English were, for example, making sense of English (syntax, grammar, vocabulary), remembering the tenses, the word order, making a sentence, grammar, not daring to open one's mouth, making mistakes, lack of practice, the fact that one has to think a lot, and that one has to translate sentences from Finnish into English before speaking. According to one Finnish teacher, the students' difficulties in speaking had to do with having pauses in their speech and not knowing enough words. According to him their pronunciation could also be developed further. One informant mentioned that he has a type of "English dyslexia" (Finland, informant 2), which had to do with not being able to construe English. Another informant explained how he had problems with remembering words, which created pauses in his speech or stopped it completely:

- (6) A: Onks Englannin puhuminen hankalaa?
 B: Hankalaahan se on, edelleen, ei enää niin hankalaa ku se oli.

A: Mikä on hankalaa?

B: Kaikista hankalinta ettei muista sanoja, rakenteet on sieltä kouluajalta aika hyvin mielessä, mutku ei muista sanoja, sitten takertuu siihen yhteen sanaan eikä lähe kiertämään sitä vaikka pitäis antaa olla ettei jää siihen. Ihan samanlain tässä kuuntelussa takertuu yhteen sanaan ni menee kymmenen seuraavaa ohi.

A: Is speaking English difficult?

B: It's difficult, still, not as difficult as it was before.

A: What's difficult?

B: What's most difficult is that I can't remember the words, I remember the structures pretty well from my school time, but I can't remember the words, then I fixate on this one word and don't get past it although I should let it go so that it doesn't end there. It's just the same with listening: I fixate on one word and miss the next ten.

(Finland, informant 5)

Furthermore, almost all of the Finns thought that when they spoke English they had to think more and they were slower. Many Finnish informants said that sometimes speaking English made them feel stupid or impaired:

(7)

A: Onks se hankalaa?

B: On, sit tulee sellaisia tärkeitä asioita joita haluis selittää mutta sanat loppuu, mut se on ärsyttävää, että sitä niinku kuulostaa pikkulapselta, ku puhuu vierasta kieltä, niinku että ei voi ottaa vakavasti koska se ei varmaankaan... tulee vähän tyhmä olo.

A: Is it difficult?

B: It is, and there are some important things that you want to explain but the words run out, but it's annoying that you like sound like a little child, when you speak a foreign language, like you can't be taken seriously because it most likely doesn't... makes you feel a bit stupid.

(Finland, informant 1)

This had to do with not being able to say what was intended or the loss of words.

Also most of the Japanese informants saw speaking English as difficult. The reasons were mostly similar to the Finnish informants, for example not knowing enough words, fear of errors, overthinking grammar, having to translate sentences before speaking them which made speech slow, and lack of practice. However, differently to the Finnish informants, many Japanese informants reported having trouble with English because of the differences between Japanese and English way of thinking. This meant, for example that the logic and word order in the languages was different. For instance, some said that the use of subject words in English was problematic at times, because Japanese sentences do not often have them. Some also mentioned that they were concerned about manners in speaking English, for example what kind of phrases or words are polite and suitable for specific contexts. Many said that speaking English required a lot of courage, and that they felt

nervous before speaking. Many informants also reported that they had studied very hard for entrance exams, but after them the English vocabulary became harder to remember:

- (8) あのう、高校の入学試験の前一番多い勉強してるから、そのごろ、まあ、単語の数六千ぐらい、そのときは覚えてるけれども、入ってしまうと、だんだん忘れてしまう。そして書いてあったのは読めるけれども、あのう、でもくちからはその単語が出てこないし、しゃべられないし。

Well, before high school entrance exams one studies the most, and at that time, umm, the amount of vocabulary is about 6000, at that time one remembers it, but after getting into high school, gradually one forgets. And I can read what's written down, but, umm, but the vocabulary just doesn't come out of my mouth and I just can't speak.

(Japan, informant 4)

Many seemed to be concerned about making errors when speaking or not being understood. One explained that he did not want to have experiences like this:

- (9) うん、ミスするの思い出はしたくない。強すぎる。べつに、馬鹿になるのがどちでもいいんだけど、皆に笑われてもいいけど、なにも意味しないと言われることは好まない。

Yes, I don't want to have memories of making errors. They're too strong. I don't really mind if I look stupid, it's ok if I'm laughed at, but I don't like it if I'm told that what I say doesn't make any sense.

(Japan, informant 4)

The difference between the Japanese and the Finnish informants was that a bigger percentage of the Japanese reported having very basic English speaking skills, which meant they did not have much experience, if almost at all, and reported only wanting to be able to have a basic conversation in English. This is why many of them could not describe the difficulties they might experience when speaking English with detail. However, the main difficulty was the same: retrieving words from memory in a conversation was seen as very difficult.

When comparing the two countries, the results were a bit surprising. This is because the percentage of Japanese informants who reported speaking English as not so difficult was slightly higher than that of the Finnish informants. This is surprising because many of the Japanese informants reported having very basic conversation skills, whereas most of the Finnish informants, according to the teacher, were able to have a quite advanced conversation. The difference was not great, but the

reasons were interesting: many Japanese informants reported having trouble especially with listening comprehension, and compared to that speaking was seen as easier because they were able to decide the flow of the conversation themselves. Most Japanese informants reported having trouble with listening comprehension, and many said they were not able to understand anything of an English conversation, for example in a TV-series.

Another question was whether speaking English was enjoyable or not.

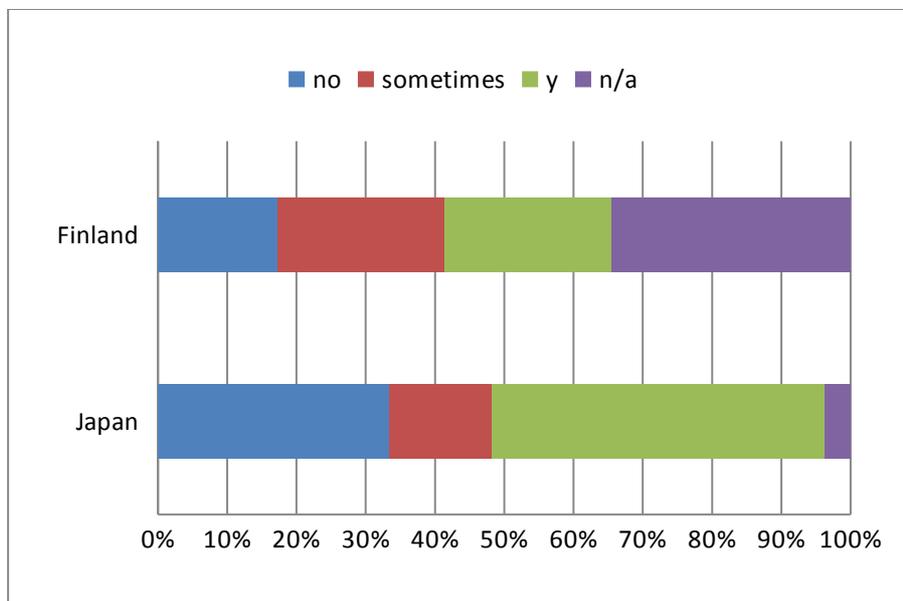


Figure 6. *Is speaking fun?*

About 25% of the Finns felt that they enjoyed speaking English, but about 18% of them felt that speaking English was not fun and about 25% said that it was fun when it went well, but when they did not remember words or when they made mistakes or stuttered it was not enjoyable. Some also said that in Finland it was not fun but when traveling it was, and some mentioned that it was not fun with native English speakers. This shows that the informants might still be quite concerned about speaking correctly or that there is some pressure, frustration or other negative feelings connected to speaking English.

A much higher percentage of the Japanese saw speaking English as enjoyable, although also the percentage of "no" answers was higher. The Japanese said that it was fun when they had the chance to speak to foreigners and learn about different cultures. Some said it was not enjoyable, because it was so difficult to speak English. Some of these informants seemed to be concerned about grammar and correctness, whereas at least some of the informants who stated that speaking was fun seemed to not mind as much even if they made errors. It is a point of interest that the Japanese saw speaking English as fun more often than the Finns, since the Finns seemed to possess language skills that allowed a more versatile conversation.

The informants were asked if they experienced difficulty with pronunciation.

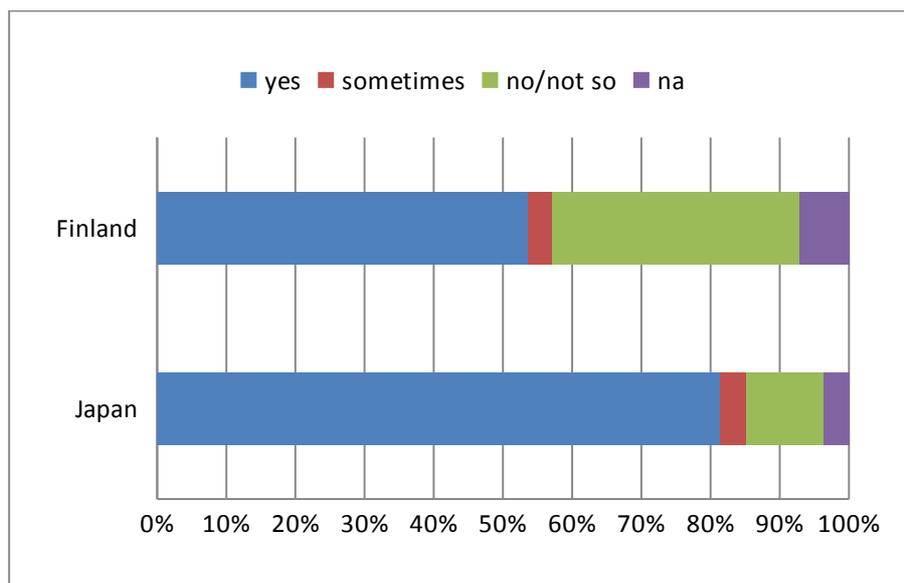


Figure 7. *Is English pronunciation difficult?*

Over 50% of the Finns saw English pronunciation as difficult, and almost 40% saw pronunciation as fairly easy. Finns reported that they had practiced pronunciation a little in their current English classes and somewhat earlier in school. Informants who reported having trouble with pronunciation said, for example, that they did not know how to pronounce some words, that no matter how many times they practiced they could not pronounce specific words, or that they could not hear the difference between some sounds. For example, one Finnish informant reported that she did not

know how to pronounce English, and one informant said that he could never pronounce some words right. However, mainly the Finnish informants said that they could hear the difference between sounds but not produce it.

A notably higher percentage of the Japanese informants reported having problems with pronunciation or saw it as difficult. Furthermore, only about 10% of the informants reported that pronunciation was not difficult. Most said that hearing the difference between some sounds or words was difficult for them. The problems were also with production. Many said that the sounds of the English language were very different from the Japanese language sounds, for example /l/ and /r/, which made English pronunciation very difficult for them.

When comparing the two, almost all the participants saw English pronunciation as difficult or somewhat/sometimes difficult. Most thought that some words are difficult to pronounce, some thought English pronunciation was terribly difficult, and many informants said that their tongue “gets twisted” when they try to pronounce certain words. Especially for the Japanese informants listening comprehension seemed to be problematic, which also affected production. So, all in all the difficulties with speaking had to do with both production and perception.

The informants were also asked if speaking English was more difficult than writing it, or listening or reading it. As for the Finns overall, the majority saw speaking English as most difficult. A few of them felt that listening comprehension was more difficult than speaking, because there were so many difficult accents and dialects that they did not understand. They said that in this kind of a situation it was easier to speak than to try to understand the difficult speech. On the other hand, most of the informants saw listening comprehension as easier, but many informants also saw writing as easier than speaking. The most common reason for this was that when writing allows

time to think and consider, unlike speaking. On the other hand, the Japanese group, as mentioned before, saw listening comprehension as most difficult. They explained that the English conversation was often too fast and that they could not understand English speech. Many of them also mentioned that it was more difficult to understand native English speakers than English SL speakers. Many reasoned that Japan is an island, which is why there is not a lot of exposure to other languages, and that might be why it is difficult for them to comprehend the flow of English.

6.5. Experiences from speaking

The informants were asked about their experiences from speaking English.

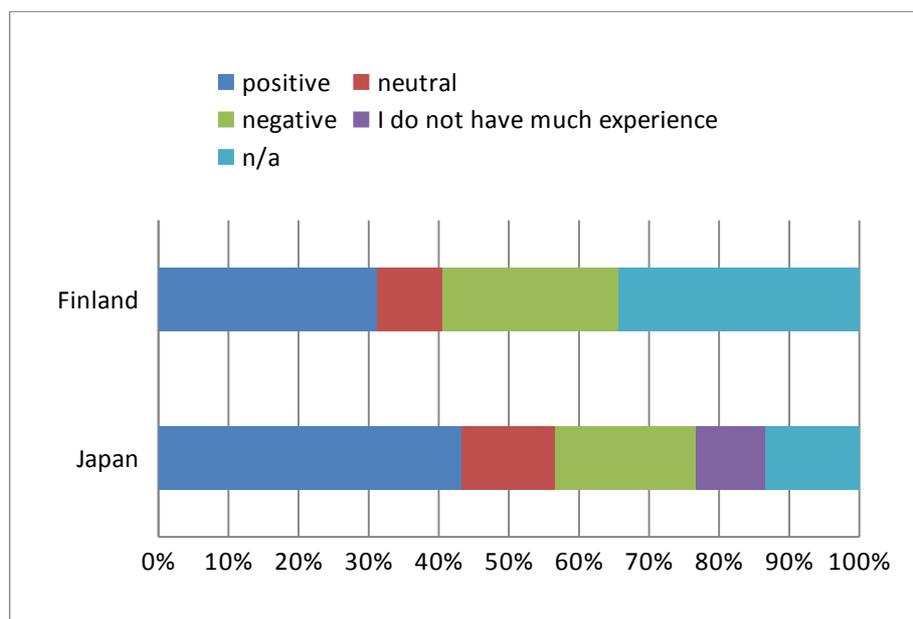


Figure 8. *What kind of experiences do you have from speaking English?*

About 30% of the Finnish informants said that they had positive experiences from speaking English: for example, they had received praise from their family, friends, foreigners *etc.*, and they had been able to communicate in English. Then again, there were also many negative experiences from speaking English. For example, some had been teased by family members, because of their

skills in English, sometimes it had been difficult to say the appropriate word or phrase, or they had felt stupid, and so on. One Finnish informant told about his experience from speaking English abroad:

(10) B: --- mä olin Turkissa käymässä ja yritin turkkilaisten kanssa puhua ni sit mun opiskelijakollega totes et' hei en mä ymmärrä yhtään mitä sä sanot'. Aattelin et no nii ehkä on parempi etten yritä ees puhua niille turkkilaisille ni vielä huonompi, et tuli semmonen tunne et tästä [sic] niinku saa ku yrittää et se jopa se kollega sano et tästä ei tuu mitään.

B: --- I was visiting Turkey and tried to speak with Turks and then my student colleague said that 'hey, I can't understand what you're saying at all'. I thought that well then maybe it's better that I don't even try to talk to those Turks then all the worse, I got the feeling that this is what you get for trying that even that colleague said that this isn't working at all.

(Finland, informant 2)

Although the informants had had some negative experiences, like frustration in the example above, from speaking English, some of them also felt that speaking was quite fun and that were able to perform quite well. All of the Finnish informants, except for a couple, thought that support from other people, such as their teacher, was important in learning English, and thus in speaking it.

The Japanese informants had mostly positive experiences and some negative ones. It is notable that although the Japanese informants had not spoken very much English, some of them still mentioned a memorable experience of helping a foreigner find a tourist location, for example. Mostly the positive experiences mentioned were from helping a tourist or being able to communicate with a foreigner in Japan or abroad and learning about other cultures. Some of them also had negative experiences, for example experiencing a language barrier, experiencing how low their level of English was, or having gotten unpleasant attention from other Japanese people. In fact, quite many informants mentioned that other Japanese people might see it as boasting if one spoke English in Japan. For example, one informant explained that when she had used English at her work place in order to communicate a little with foreign customers, she had been told by other Japanese that one ought not to speak English in Japan.

The Japanese and Finnish group differed from each other in the sense that the Japanese informants reported having more positive experiences from speaking, which was surprising, because they had reported having very little or almost no experience of speaking English outside class. This might be due to the fact that there are more tourists in the Kyoto-Osaka area than in the Joensuu-Lappeenranta area. However, a high percentage of the Finns had reported travelling quite a lot. Thus, it remains a subject of debate as to why the Japanese informants evaluated their experiences from speaking more positively. At least it seems that the Finnish informants might have been more strict toward their own English production and thus reported more negative experiences.

6.6. Circumstances of speaking

The informants were asked if there were any situations in which they felt that speaking English was particularly difficult.

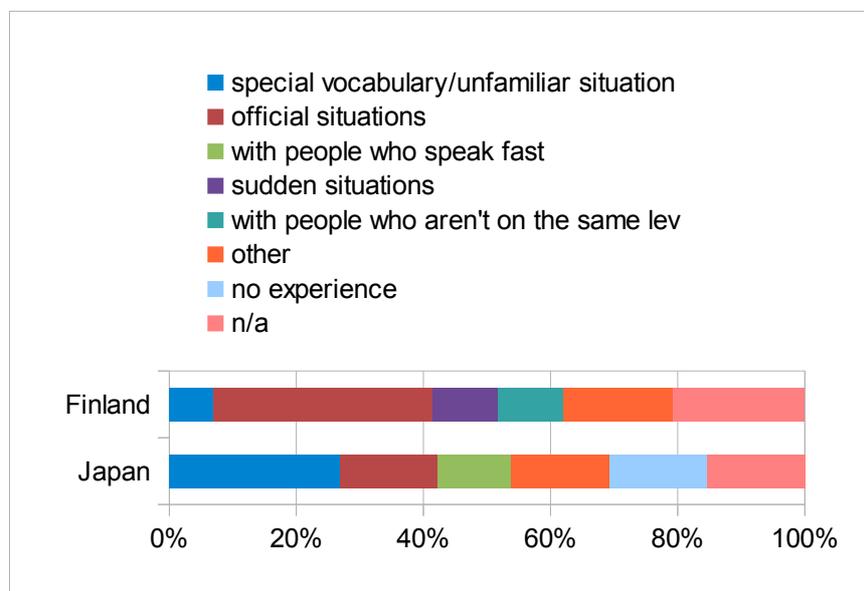


Figure 8. *Is speaking English particularly difficult in some circumstances?*

Special vocabulary/unfamiliar situation includes situations in which one has to speak difficult English, use special vocabulary or talk about an unfamiliar or special field. Official situations

include meetings *etc.*, but also situations in which one has to speak in front of many people, situations in which there is a critic present or the classroom.

Finnish mostly thought that speaking English was harder in official situations, but also in the classroom or a place where a critic is present, situations where one needs special vocabulary, in sudden situations, and when speaking with people who are not on the same level. Other situations included situations in which one has to speak with friends, when having to speak with native speakers of English, and when traveling. The amount of informants who could or would not answer the question was also quite high.

The Japanese group most often reported having trouble with special vocabulary, official situations, had no experience or gave no answer. Also, speaking with people who talk fast was seen as difficult by some. Other answers were "with strangers", "when the other has a thick accent", "when communication does not work" and "on the phone". The last was mentioned, because speaking on the phone prevents one from using body language or seeing the speaker's facial expressions.

Overall, difficult circumstances for speaking English were quite dependent on the person, although there were some similarities. The categories "special vocabulary/unfamiliar situation" and "official situations" seemed to have quite similar meanings, because one might need special vocabulary in meetings or such. These situations were seen as more stressful, for example because of a critical audience. Overall, talking about everyday things was seen as easy, and having to seem professional and working with special vocabulary was seen as difficult. Based on the data, it seems that the informants were often concerned about seeming professional, and thought English skills would be directly related to how professionally or convincingly they were able to present themselves. Many informants, more so the Finnish group, mentioned that it is easier to speak English with a non-

native speaker of English than with a native speaker, because they feel that they were at the same level with the SL speaker. For example, in the following extracts the informants talk about how it is easier to talk to people who speak English as a second language.

- (11) Samalla lähtötasolla, just niin, jokaisella on oma aksenttinsa --- me ollaan sit niinku samalla tasolla.
At the same starting level, that's right, everyone has their own accent, --- we are, like, at the same level.
(Finland, informant 7)
- (12) Kyllä monet kollegatkin on sanoneet että tällaisissa maissa missä englantia puhutaan äidinkielenä on hankalinta olla kun ne puhuu sitä liian hyvin.
Many colleagues have said that it's the hardest thing to be in the kind of countries where English is spoken as the native language, because they speak it too well.
(Finland, informant 11)

6.7. Other people in speaking

The informants were asked how they felt that others see them when they speak English.

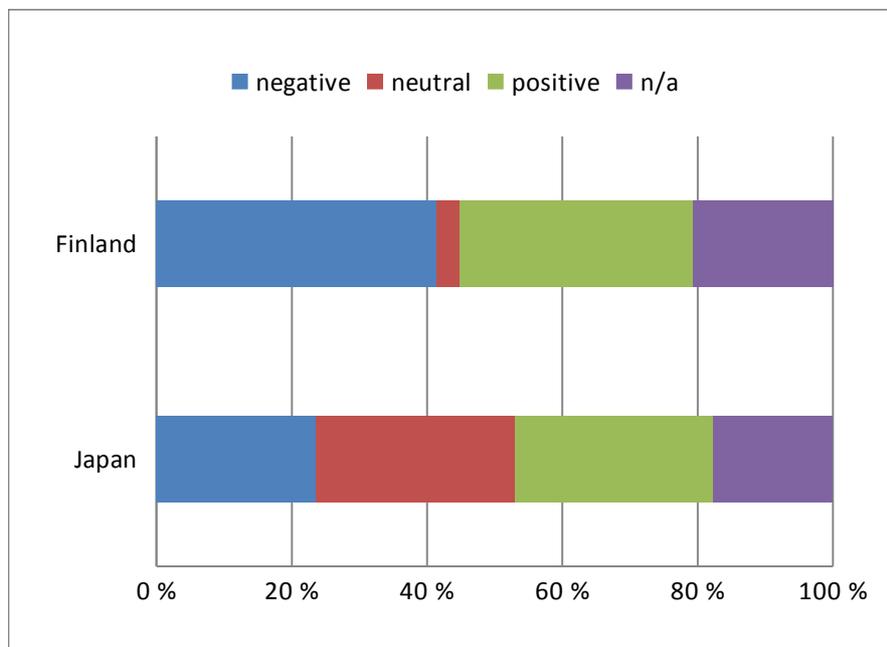


Figure 9. *How do you feel others see you when you speak English?*

There were various answers, but altogether over 40% of the Finnish group's answers were negative. About 35% were positive. When asked how other people react to them when they speak English,

some Finnish informants said that others had praised them, but there were also some negative experiences, such as having thought perhaps others were not taking them seriously, or the kind of experiences shown in the examples above (*e.g.* example 4). Some also said that their children tended to correct them, for example say, “You’re not supposed to pronounce it like that” (Informant 10). This was not seen as a negative thing, mostly, because the informant in this case, for instance, felt that the children are supposed to know these things better since the level of English education has improved. She did mention, however, that despite this comment the children were not willing to speak English abroad.

The Japanese group had more positive and neutral answers. Many said others would find it amazing even if they spoke only a little bit of English in their presence. For example:

- (13) A: 英語を話したら他人にどのように思われていると思いますか？
 B: んー、結構凄いと思われていると思う。しゃべれないという人が沢山いて、凄いなと思われていると思う。
- A: What do you think other people think of you when you speak English?
 B: Umm... I think they find it pretty amazing. There are a lot of people who can't speak, so I think they find it impressive.

(Japan, informant 1)

Japanese informants had similar negative experiences to Finns, but they did not report being corrected by their children. A couple reported, however, that other Japanese people had told them that one ought to only speak Japanese in Japan. Some also said they were worried about seeming like they were boasting with their English skills. However, mostly they reported not having thought about how other people might react to their English.

Finns seemed to mind other people more than Japanese, but the surprising detail was that although many Japanese informants reported having very little English speaking ability, many of them reported that others would find their English amazing, whereas only a couple of Finns reported others had flattered them. Thus, it seems that in Finland it is more often expected than in Japan that people can speak English, which is why flattering might be more uncommon. In Japan it still seems

that people think it rare that Japanese adults possess good or any English oral proficiency, and this is why Japanese people might draw attention to themselves by speaking English in public. With respect to the Finns, the positive opinions that other people might have of their English oral skills seemed to be sympathy ("I'm on the same level", "He's trying!") or acceptance ("He's speech is intelligible enough"). Overall, many informants said that they did not care what other people thought of them when they spoke English. On the other hand, relatives', friends' and other people's attitudes seemed to have influenced many of them.

6.8. Accent attitudes

The informants were asked several questions related to English language oral proficiency and accent: teachers' attitudes toward English accent, their own attitudes toward their native accent of English and their attitude toward various English accents in general.

6.8.1. Teachers' attitudes

The informants were asked about their past and current teachers' attitudes toward different accents in order to find out if their background had affected their own opinions about accents.

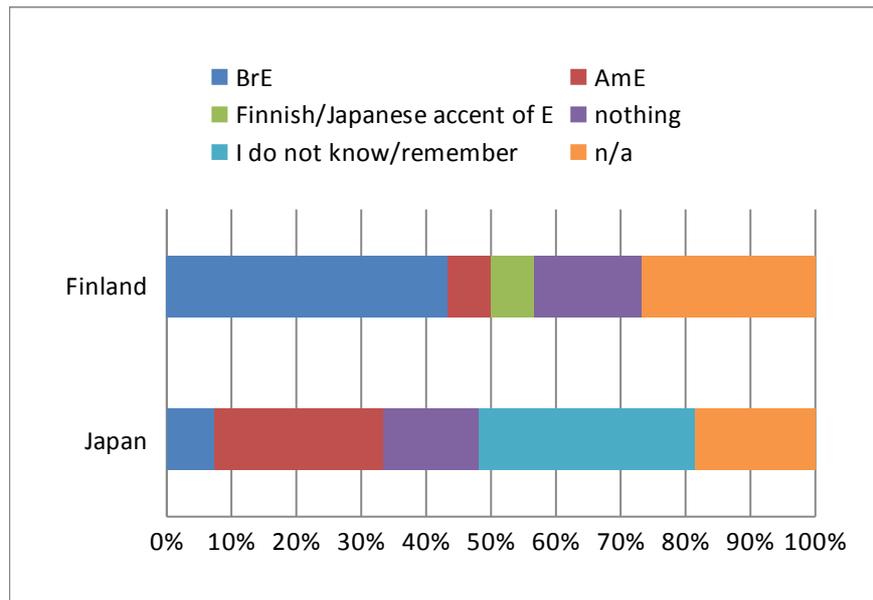


Figure 10. *Which accent have your teachers favoured?*

The categories for this figure are somewhat problematic, because "nothing" seemed to, at least in some cases, mean that the teacher had favored a Finnish or Japanese accent of English. Also, the informants had trouble remembering their past teachers' preferences, and some informants had a vague conception of accent in general.

A couple of the Finnish informants reported that their teacher had favored the Finnish accent of English, but mostly it had been the British accent of English. Many informants maintained that the teachers themselves had had a British accent or a mixture of the Finnish and the British accents. A couple reported they had had a Finnish accent. However, many informants could not remember whether their teachers had favoured a particular English accent or what kind of an accent they had had, since so much time had passed. According to the Finnish informants, their teachers had not said anything negative about the Finnish accent: they had corrected the students' pronunciation, but in the informants' opinion it did not have a lot to do with the Finnish accent. All the negative attitudes toward the Finnish accent that the informants had encountered had come from other sources, such as relatives or friends. For example:

(14) A: Ei mitään negatiivista?

B: Ei paitsi mun serkku joka ope, ”kauhee ku sanot noin”

A: Miltä se tuntu?

B: No ehä se nyt ku se on serkku, mut kyl seki nyt masentaa et...

A: Ni et ei sais puhua suomalaisel aksentilla?

B: Nii

A: Not anything negative?

B: No, except my cousin who's a teacher, "it's horrible when you say it like that"

A: How did it feel?

B: Well, it wasn't so bad because she's my cousin, but it does bring me down too that...

A: That you shouldn't talk in a Finnish accent?

B: Yes

(Finland, informant 4)

- (15) Vaimo sekä nuori tytär aina piikittelee mua englannista, millä tavalla mä puhun, kai se johtuu siitä et se on semmosta tankeroenglantia, ja sit jos unohtelee jotain sanoja ni kai se sit aiheuttaa hauskuutta.

My wife and my young daughter always pick on me about my English, the way I speak, I guess it's because it's a kind of Tankero English, and then if I forget some words then I guess it's funny.

(Finland, informant 2)

On the other hand, the Japanese group reported mostly that they did not remember if their teacher had favoured a particular accent, and when they did, they mostly reported (less than 30%) that their teachers had favoured the American accent. Many said that their teachers had not talked about accents or that their teachers had not been able to speak English at all. Then again, later many of them had had native English speakers as teachers, but many of them had not paid much attention to accents either. Some said they would have wanted them to. One informant said a past native English teacher had strongly favored their own variety of English, which had been unpleasant to some students, because they felt they were Japanese and thus could not learn to speak that way.

Based on the answers, there had been some inconsistency between the teacher favouring the British or American accent and actually having one, but not a great deal. It also seems that the Japanese group was less aware of different accents of English in general, more so because many seemed to be unsure of what was meant by accent. The reason why the Japanese group had less information about accents is very likely the problem of having had teachers who did not know how to speak English, and also the scarceness of English exposure. Because of this, of course, spoken English became a

challenge, as many of the informants reported, and there must not have been any room to consider accents:

- (16) A: 何か特別なアクセントを習ったほうがいいと先生に言われましたか?
 B: まったく、先生も全然英語しゃべれないから。。。いまはアメリカの先生だから、発音を教えてくれた。習ったほうがいいとはいわないけど。。。言わない

A: Did your teacher tell you you should learn a particular accent of English?

B: Not at all, because even the teacher couldn't speak English at all... Now I have an American teacher, and so he taught me pronunciation. He doesn't say that I should learn, but... doesn't say it.

(Japan, informant 1)

- (17) ぼくらの先生は留学して、一年間、行ったことあって、初めてアメリカへ留学するとすごいすごい。一年間、自分の娘はイギリスいたり、ニュージーランドいたり、それで話せるようになるかっていったら、あまり対して、大変だね。私たちの学校のときは行ったことあるという人が少なくて。。。戦争の後にはアメリカから沢山人が来て、日本が負けたよね、兵隊さんは、来ると、英語の先生しか話できないと、英語らしい発音をしてくださいって。先生、ガスガスって言ってたけど、分らんかった。ガスりんといわなかった

Our teacher had been an exchange student, had gone for one year, When someone goes to America for student exchange for the first time, everyone's like 'amazing, amazing'. For one year, my daughter went to England and New Zealand and when talking about whether she learned to speak with that, not much. It's hard, right. Back when we went to high school there weren't a lot of people who'd gone [abroad for student exchange]... after the war a lot of people from America came, Japan had lost you know, when the soldiers came, and when only the English teachers were able to speak English, they said please make your pronunciation more English. Our teacher said "gasu gasu", but they didn't understand. 'Cause the teacher didn't say "gasoline".

(Japan, informant 4)

6.8.2. Feelings towards one's own speech

In order to find out how they felt about their own speech, the informants were asked what they thought their English was like, how they would like to speak English, and how they felt about the Finnish or the Japanese accent of English. Firstly, the informants were asked what they thought their English sounded like.

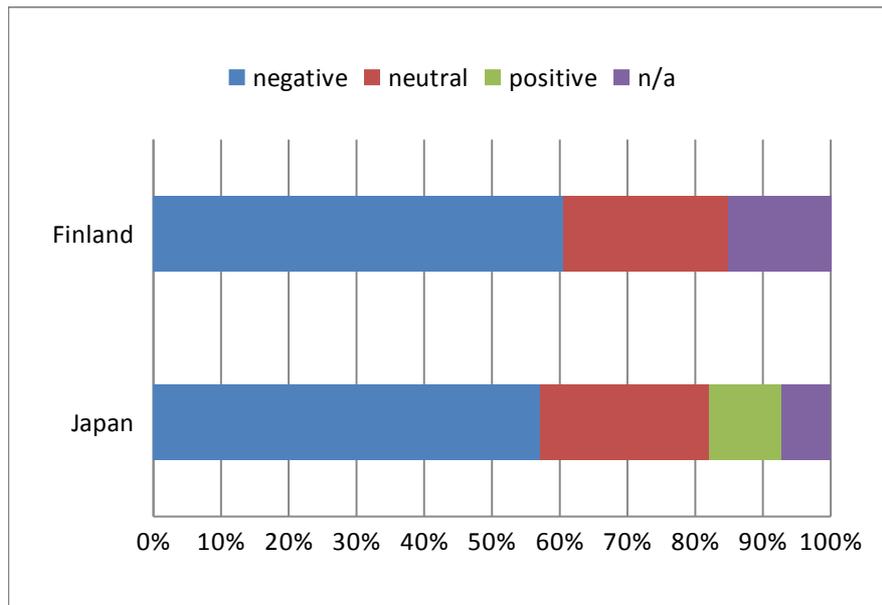


Figure 11. *What do you think your English sounds like?*

The Finns described their own English mostly with words of negative character, and some of neutral character, such as "unclear muttering", "terrible", "monotonous", "stupid", "comical", "unsure", or "tankero". Some of the Finnish informants thought that when they spoke English, they sounded quite Finnish or had a Finnish accent of English. A teacher of a certain group of informants said that all of them sounded Finnish. Many of the students, however, did not say that they felt this was a negative feature.

The Japanese group also described their own English with mostly negatively or neutrally toned words, such as "uncool", "bad", "impossible", or said "I can't do it at all" or "I'm no good". Mostly they said that they would not like to hear themselves speak English, or that their English sounded embarrassing. Some said they sounded Japanese. A couple had positive things to say about their English, such as "ok" or "intelligible" or "I'm sure it's very good".

Overall both groups described their English in quite negative tone. However, some seemed to not mind even if they thought their English was slightly rudimentary. Of course, it is difficult to say

how much the fact that the informants described their English in negative tone affected their oral skills and willingness to speak, but at least it seems that many might have lacked confidence in their oral English skills.

Secondly, the informants were asked how they would like to be able to speak English.

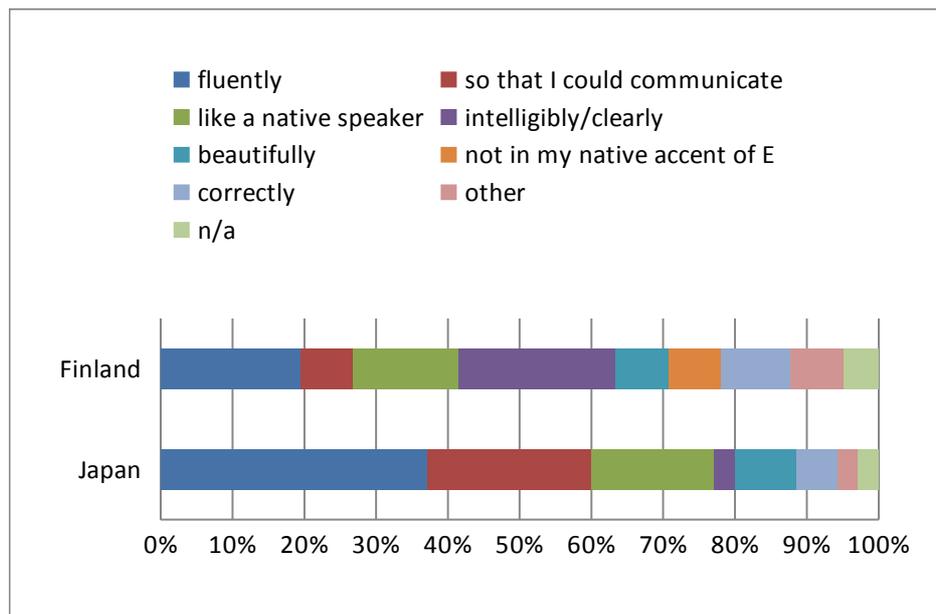


Figure 12. *How would you like to speak English?*

There were various answers: fluently, for example, includes wanting to speak quickly, easily or fluently. Correctly includes wanting to speak grammatically, without errors, correctly or wanting to pronounce correctly.

Finns mostly wanted to be able to speak fluently, intelligibly or like a native speaker. In the Finns' case, this meant BrE. Also, one of the teachers had said that in his opinion all the informants would like to achieve the British accent. Some said that they would like to sound Finnish or that it was allowed to sound Finnish. However, a couple mentioned specifically that they did not want to sound Finnish. One said, for instance, that if he had a job that required fluent English skills, he would not like to sound very Finnish. Other answers included wanting to be able to speak English

convincingly. Most Japanese informants wanted to learn to speak English fluently or so that they could communicate even if making errors, but also beautifully or like a native speaker. Other answers included "so that others would find my English amazing".

Although mostly both groups wanted to be able to speak English fluently or clearly in order to be able to have a conversation, many of them wanted to be able to speak native-like English or so-called "beautiful" English. Finns mentioned BrE many times, whereas Japanese informants mostly did not specify the kind of accent they wanted to learn.

The informants were also asked about their feelings toward their native pronunciation of the English language.

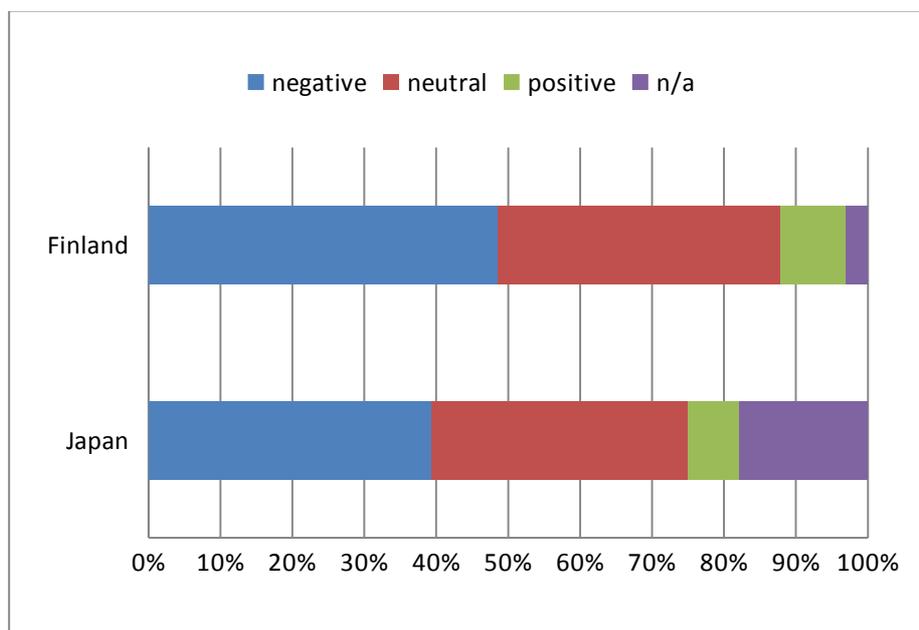


Figure 13. *What do you think of the Finnish/Japanese accent of English?*

The Finnish participants had quite different opinions on the Finnish accent, but mostly they were negative or neutral of nature. Many of them thought that it was "stiff", "not so pleasant to the ear", "rough", "comical", "stupid", "tankero", that it sounded like stuttering or that it was not very

“pure”. One informant talked about how he would like to sound less Finnish because of work situations:

- (18) A: onks se noloa (suomalaisella aksentilla puhuminen)?
 B: ei nyt noloa, mut ihmiset haluaa sopeutua massaan, että minä suomesta ja mullon tällasta tyhmää englantia, et liike-englantia puhutaan silleen (ei suomalaisella aksentilla).

A: Is it embarrassing (speaking with a Finnish accent)?

B: Well not embarrassing, but people want to become one with the crowd, like I'm from Finland and I have this kind of stupid English, one speaks business English like that (not with a Finnish accent).

(Finland, informant 2)

Some thought that the Finnish accent was “a good accent”, “just fine”, or “normal”. However, in some cases the opinions seemed a bit mixed, because *e.g.* one informant said that the Finnish accent was “ok” but had earlier said that it was “stupid”.

The Japanese group reported mostly that they did not like the Japanese accent of English, that it could not be helped or that they were a little concerned whether foreigners would understand it. For some it seemed to remind them of their own struggle with English, which might have been one reason for it being unpleasant. Some felt it was not “proper” English and they wanted to speak in a more native-like accent:

- (19) A: 日本人っぽいアクセントどう思いますか？
 B: 好きじゃないかな。好きではない。
 A: 为什么呢？
 B: なんかあのう、んー、なんか、なんか嫌。日本人っぽい英語。確かに。なんか、凄いの、なんていうの、自分もその、凄いのから、だから嫌なのかな。

A: What do you think of the Japanese accent of English?

B: I don't like it I think. I don't like it.

A: Why is that?

B: Well it's like, umm... it's somehow, somehow unpleasant. Japan-like English. Definitely. Somehow, really, how should I say it, I, too, understand it [the feeling], that's why it's unpleasant.

(Japan, informant 1)

- (20) A: 日本人っぽいアクセントどう思いますか？
 B: そういう慣れてないな、いつも。
 A: なんでだと思いますか？
 B: 本当の英語を話すようになりたいなと思いました、いつも。

A: What do you think of the Japanese accent of English?

B: I've never grown accustomed to something like that.

A: Why do you think that is?

B: I've always thought I really want to learn to speak real English.

(Japan, informant 8)

In comparison both groups had mostly negative or neutral opinions on their native accent of English. They felt it did not sound good, was not convincing, or were worried it might be unintelligible. The informants who had positive opinions on it thought that their native accent of English was fairly good and did not bother them. There were also a couple informants who saw their accent as a means of expressing nationality. In both groups, many informants thought that it was okay to speak in a Finnish or Japanese accent of English if one was able to communicate otherwise, or they said that being able to deliver a message was the most important thing.

6.8.3. Tankero English and Wasei-eigo

The participants were asked if they knew the term “tankero English” (in Finland) and “wasei-eigo” (in Japan). About 80% of the Finnish informants were familiar with the term tankero English, and many of them thought that it is a descriptive term for the way Finns or Finnish politicians usually pronounce English. However, many mentioned that it is not descriptive of the Finns’ English accent anymore, because they said it had improved over time and felt that young people are very skilled English speakers nowadays. Some of them thought that they were themselves tankero English speakers, and one thought that if one spoke tankero English, one ought to develop his or her English, especially when going abroad. One informant thought that there was some shared sense of shame connected to the term, one said that it sounded terrible, and one maintained that there were a lot of tankero English speakers in Finland, but that they were “different level tankero speakers”. None of the informants said, however, that the term caused them pressure in learning English. Some said that it might cause pressure to some learners, but very likely only to adult learners.

Many informants felt that it would be better if Finnish politicians, like Halonen or Ahtisaari, spoke better English, and that many politicians' accents sounded stupid or funny.

(21) B: Kuulostaa vähän huvittavalta se joittenki poliitikkojen aksenttilausuminen, mut jos ne tulee ymmärretyks, ni mikäs siinä --- . Ois maan imagon kannalta hyvä jos kaikki puhus niinku Stubb. Jotkut tulee kuitenkin tankeroenglannillakin toimeen

B: Sounds a bit amusing, the accented pronunciation of some politicians, but if they're understood, why not ---. It would be good for the country's image if everyone talked like Stubb. Some will, however, get along with tankero English as well.

(Finland, informant 7)

However, four of the informants said that they should not speak in a more British or American accent and that the Finnish accent was okay as long as one was understood, or that the Finnish accent of English was a part of being Finnish. Some said that it was great that they spoke English to begin with. Reasons for wanting the politicians to develop their English were, for example, that it would benefit them, that people would understand them more easily, or that it would not be a great struggle to adopt a more British accent.

Most Japanese informants knew the term *wasei-eigo*, but very few the term *jinglish*. Of course, the nature of *wasei-eigo* is very different to tankero English, but nevertheless it seems to be linked to English use and its problems in Japan. Many informants alleged that many Japanese people nowadays used *wasei-eigo* or *katakana-english* as English, ignoring the fact that it is actually Japan-made English and not necessarily intelligible to English speakers. Many said that it was not wrong to use *wasei-eigo*, but were worried that people would use it as English with foreigners and not be understood. This is why they felt a clear distinction should be made. Overall, the term did not seem to have similar social stigma as tankero English in Finland, and did not have a connection with Japanese politicians. Some informants felt that people representing Japan, such as politicians or athletes, should have better English skills, but this topic was not discussed much.

6.8.4. Liked and disliked accents

The informants were asked whether there were English accents that they particularly liked or that they did not like. The accents that the informants reported liking were:

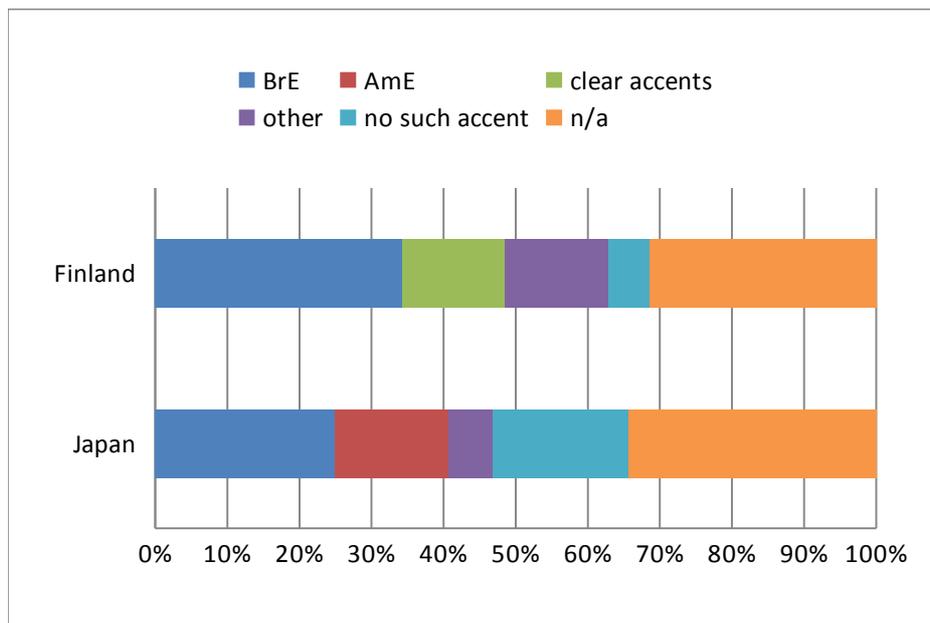


Figure 14. *Which accent(s) of English do you like?*

As for the Finns, the British accent was mentioned most often. Some said that they preferred “clear” accents, and some other accents besides BrE were also mentioned. These were the Australian accent, the Italian, the Indonesian and the Finnish accent of English. Many of the informants could not name a favourite accent. One of the Finnish informants thought that the English spoken in old James Bond movies was easy to understand:

(22) B: --- James Bondit nää vanhat, siinä on puhdasta englantia.

B: --- James Bonds these old ones, they have pure English.

(Finland, informant 9)

As for the Japanese group, interestingly they too seemed to favor the British accent most of all. This was interesting because the Japanese English education system has favoured AmE, which also, according to the informants, was most common in their school English. AmE was mentioned as a

pleasant accent as well, but less than BrE. Mostly, however, the Japanese informants could not name a favourite accent, or said they had no favourite accent. A couple of times, for example, AmE was seen as easy to understand and reported as pleasant:

- (23) スターの人でも英語の、ちゃんと英語をしゃべる先生をつけて、きちんとした英語話のように、訓練すると聞いて、ああ、そうなんだと。やっぱりー、ああゆう俳優さんはせりふが大事じゃないですか。だからイタリア人的なアメリカ人とか、だったら、イタリア的な英語じゃなくて、アメリカ人的な英語をしゃべるように訓練するって聞いて、ああ、そうなんだと。だから、私も、もちろんその、アメリカ人が発音する英語をゆっくりと、しゃべてくれれば、一番聞きやすいと思います。

[Movie] Stars' English, in order to speak English properly they get a teacher, and they train to speak English properly, I heard, and was like, oh, that's right. As expected, of course those kind of actors' lines are important, right? That's why when I heard that Italian Americans or like that, won't like to speak Italian-like English, but instead train to speak American-style English, I was like oh, I see. 'Cause I too, of course, can understand best when others speak the kind of English that Americans usually pronounce.

(Japan, informant 8)

It seems that the understanding of what a "good" or intelligible English accent is was often somewhat mixed with the media world.

An interesting issue was that although Japanese English education was AmE oriented and Finnish education BrE oriented, both groups favoured BrE over AmE. Finns reported having accent preferences more often than Japanese, and mentioned more various accents. BrE and AmE seemed to have a firm standing. The Finnish informants' favourite accents were, first and foremost, accents that were clear and easy to understand, whereas Japanese informants did not have a lot to say about this matter.

The informants were also asked if they disliked any particular accents.

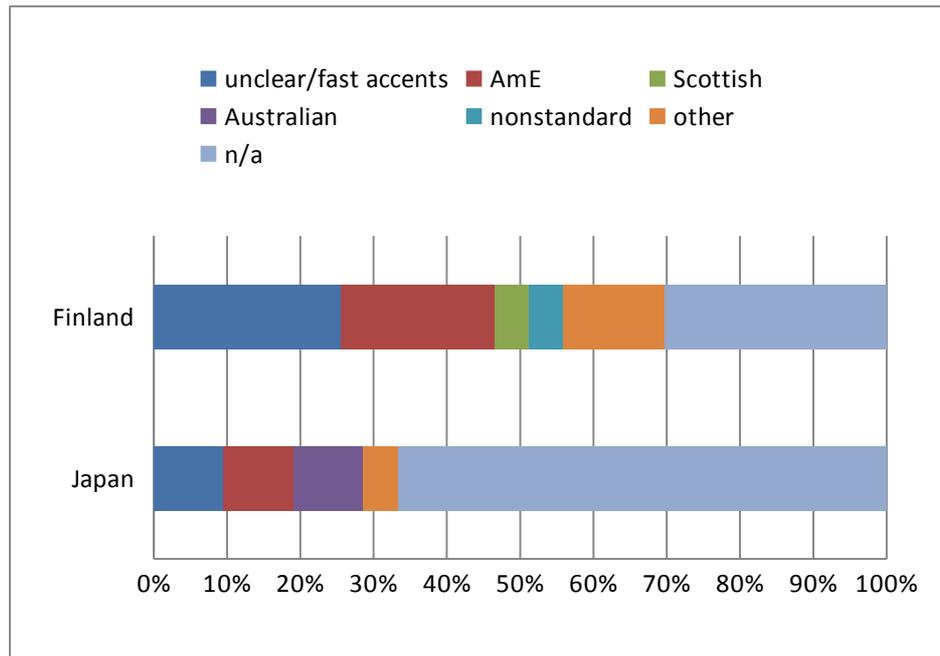


Figure 15. *Which accent(s) do you dislike?*

When discussing particular accents the informants did not like very much, the Finnish group mentioned AmE most often. Mostly the single accents that were mentioned seemed to depend on the person and their experiences, for example from trips. Accents that were described as unpleasant were mostly rural accents and accents that were experienced as difficult to understand, broad or unclear. These were, *e.g.* the American accent, the Welsh accent, the Irish accent, the Scottish accent, the Southern (Texas) accent, Cockney, and the Japanese and the Chinese accents. Mostly, the Japanese informants could not name an accent they disliked, and some said they did not dislike any accent. They reported disliking accents that were unclear or “fast”, and some mentioned AmE and some Australian English.

When asking which accents they did not like that much, the greatest difference between the Japanese and the Finnish group was that the Japanese informants mostly did not or could not give an answer. This might be again due to the lack of awareness when it comes to accents, as Finns seemed to know quite a lot about accents contrarily to the Japanese. Overall the accents that were mentioned were accents that were experienced as fast or unclear.

7. DISCUSSION

The aim of this study was to discover whether adult learners of English in Finland and Japan experience difficulties in speaking English and if so, what kind of difficulties and why. Accent related factors that might make speaking more difficult were of special interest. According to the results adult learners of English in both Finland and Japan experienced difficulties in speaking English, such as embarrassment, problems with vocabulary, memory, grammar and so on. The reasons for these problems included different factors, such as age related factors, some individual factors, instruction and input factors, social factors, and accent related factors. Overall, quite many (about 40% of the Finns said they liked speaking or sometimes liked it, and the respective percentage for the Japanese was 60) informants had a pretty good attitude towards speaking English, and many of them felt that it did not matter if one made mistakes as long as one was understood. This attitude had clearly been influenced by the teacher's supportive attitude, at least for the AKTIVA students. A supportive and somewhat more lenient attitude toward making mistakes or errors was important in encouraging the learners to speak and in improving their self-esteem in speaking.

Moyer's classification (2004) is useful when analysing the results of this study, because, overall, the informants reported mostly neurological, instruction and input factors and social factors as causes for their possible difficulties in speaking English. The neurological factors had to do with maturational constraints and pronunciation, which were explained earlier. Instruction had played an important part in most of the informants' English speech, because it had been really strict and the fear of errors had made speaking a lot more difficult for many of the informants, and social factors also had an influence in oral production.

There were several types of problems experienced in speaking English. For Finns, these were mainly the feeling of embarrassment, fear of making errors, problems with memorization and recollection, and problems with oral production, pronunciation and accent. For the Japanese, the main problems seemed to be listening comprehension related problems, which then again also affected conversation and oral skills. Lack of experience and also similar problems that Finns had with embarrassment, fear of making errors, recollection and pronunciation had an affect on their spoken English. They did not, however, seem to have as many problems, or were not as concerned about their English accent as the Finns. The differences between the Japanese and the English language seemed to create a problem, for example word order, and also culture dependant manners, such as staying silent in situations in which English speakers would speak. Overall, one of the main problems for both groups seemed to be a lack of practice and confidence.

Schumann's (1979) views on language and culture shock apply to this study, as learning to speak English seemed somewhat a similar process to experiencing culture shock: the speaking process over a long term was like the culture shock process, where first one experiences excitement, then insecurity realizing one's ignorance, then denial, but then understanding, realization and acceptance. For many the process included studying grammar and vocabulary, but also learning how to recollect words from memory and to use conversational English, accepting one's shortcomings as a non-native speaker, and also realizing the main function of English as a tool for communication and setting goals that one can achieve. However, in a FL English learning environment it might be difficult to acquire enough experience to develop one's confidence in the target language, and the FL learning environment also has its own stigmas and opinions of the TL, towards which one might be conditioned in time. This is why some learners might not be able to progress from one phase of language learning and, thus, also fail in acquiring the confidence to use the language. For many, one of the reasons behind the problems with speaking English seemed to be the position of English in

their society and their peer groups: speaking English had become more of a performance than a means of communication.

This study was able to uncover some interesting opinions and experiences related to speaking English. However, there were issues that could have been studied more, such as how the informants speak in actuality or what kind of pronunciation problems they encounter, *e.g.* if the informants are able to distinguish between certain sounds or minimal pairs and if they are able to pronounce them. There is, of course, always the question of whether the interviewer or the informants themselves were able to analyse certain things accurately, or if the informants answered all the questions honestly. This especially, because there was some confusion in the answers, for example concerning the attitudes towards accents. Also, there could have been more detailed information on the difficulties involving speaking and it might also have been interesting to interview learners who have more difficulties with speaking English. However, interviewing slightly more confident learners was also interesting, and it provided the study with useful information on how they have overcome their earlier insecurity, which could be useful for future English education.

Next the results will be analysed by categorizing them into main factors that seemed to affect the informants' oral skills in English. Using Moyer's (2004) classification, they will be discussed in separate sections: neurological factors, individual factors, instruction and input factors, and social factors. However, many of these factors were intertwined, which made the classification somewhat problematic at times. Accent attitudes were a special interest of this study, which is why they will be discussed separately. They are connected to at least most of the factors in Moyer's (2004) classification, which is why they will not be discussed under one category.

7.1. Neurological factors

Neurological factors, *i.e.* maturational constraints, seemed to be one of the main reasons for experiencing problems in speaking English. Age can be, in some cases, closely connected to accent, which is why this category was especially interesting for this study. Talking about both the Finns and the Japanese, age factors arose at a couple of points in this study. Firstly, the problems with memorization and recollection might be at least partly due to maturational constraints, as many informants reported having problems with recollecting words and grammar when speaking English. Especially the Japanese informants had started their English studies quite late (junior high school level), and they had concentrated on literary aspects of the language, which is why their literary English skills were more developed, but active oral production seemed difficult. Not starting to rehearse active oral skills at the critical age for language acquisition might make it a lot harder to acquire them later in life, and later the threshold for starting speech practice might become even harder to overcome.

Secondly, pronunciation seemed to be difficult for almost everyone, and many were concerned about their accent. The problems with pronunciation seemed to be related to neurological factors, especially because of the type of English education both groups had received. A relatively late onset of English studies was arguably another important reason for pronunciation problems. For example, there was one Finnish informant who had not started to study English in the third grade, unlike the others, which might have had an impact on her accent. She reported that she sounded quite stiff when she talked and was envious of her colleagues who spoke with a British accent. She mentioned, though, that the Finnish English accent felt somehow comforting to her, because she felt that if others could speak with a Finnish accent she could speak with one too. As was stated earlier, the critical age period is especially important for learning to pronounce sounds that are different from

one's mother tongue. As explained in Best's (1995) Perceptual Assimilation Model, late learning onset will likely affect the perception of FL sounds. The results of this study support this, as the Japanese informants had started English studies later than the Finns and had considerably more difficulty with listening comprehension. In addition, the phonetic systems of the languages of both groups are very similar (with the exception of a lack of /l/ and /r/ distinction in Japanese, for instance), which is why it is unlikely that the features of the Japanese language would make English listening comprehension more difficult.

7.2. Individual factors

There were some individual factors that seemed to affect English speech production. However, overall individual factors, such as cognitive styles, were difficult to notice and analyze in this type of a study, and it would require more study to acquire more information on them. Firstly, personality seemed to have some effect on speech production skills for both groups. Some informants maintained that it was easier for them to speak English because they were talkative in their mother tongue as well, whereas people who considered themselves as more quiet often said that it was a factor in speaking English, because they had to think more and were quite careful when speaking. Also, cognitive factors may be an important factor in experienced problems with speaking English, as many informants mentioned having trouble with remembering words and grammar, or making sense of sentence structures in English *etc.* However, cognitive factors are very hard to analyse in this study, and it would require more study to determine the importance of the effect of these factors on oral skills.

Especially among the Finnish group, and in some cases among the Japanese, some informants seemed to possess more highly developed listening comprehension skills than speech production

skills. Habermas's (1971) terms, propositional sentence and performative sentence, are useful in analysing these results. One learner, for example, reported that sometimes when she spoke, she had an idea of the correct sentence, but when she said it out loud, it became something different:

- (24) A: Onko kivaa puhua?
 B: Nyt on, mut ei ollu aiemmin.
 A: Miksi?
 B: Johtuen siitä sillosesta tyylistä et se oli ihan kauheeta oli ruotsikin siitä mut se oli kannustava se ope, silloin ei aateltu et tulee ymmärretyks.
 A: Aiheuttiko se paineita?
 B: Onhan se aiheuttanu sen että oli 30 v väli että mut nyt sitten kun on sukulaisia jotka ei puhu suomea.
 A: Eli on pakko?
 B: Niin. oon ollu 1,5 vuotta kävin yksityisopetuksessa, et aikasemmin en avannu suutani.
 A: Minkä takia?
 B: Virheitten. Ja sit ku ajattelee et näin se menee mut sit sanoo jotain ihan kauheeta. Ääntäminen on vieläkin kauheeta.
- A: Is it fun to speak?
 B: It is now, but it wasn't before.
 A: Why?
 B: Because of the style back then 'cause it was just horrible, Swedish was too but the teacher was supportive, we didn't think about being understood back then.
 A: Did that create pressure?
 B: Well it has caused that I had a 30-year pause but now then when I have relatives who don't speak Finnish.
 A: So it is a must?
 B: Yes. I've had private teaching for 1.5 years, earlier I didn't open my mouth.
 A: Why?
 B: Because of the errors. And when you think that this is how it goes but then you say something totally horrible. Pronunciation is still horrible.

(Finland, informant 4)

There seemed to be some type of a propositional sentence that the informant had, but the performative sentence turned out quite different from the propositional one. This caused frustration in speech production and prevented the learner from speaking. Some informants also reported having difficulties with perceiving the differences between some English sounds or words, but they also reported having problems with producing some sounds, so it is difficult to say whether the former, the latter, or both played the largest role. This would require more study. Of course, when analyzing the Japanese informants' results, it has to be taken into consideration that listening comprehension was a great problem for many. Although many answered that both perceiving the difference between sounds and producing sounds was difficult, there were also some who distinguished between the two. However, this distinction is more useful in analysing the results of

the Finnish learners. This is because for the Finnish group the difference between the level of listening comprehension skills and speech production skills was greater.

There was also some indication of language anxiety among both groups: one informant, for example, said that speaking had earlier caused him anxiety and prevented him from speaking. However, many informants said that although they had been anxious about speaking English earlier, they were not anymore. This anxiety had had to do with the fear of making mistakes or errors, most of all. Some were still anxious about making errors.

7.3. Instruction and input factors

Instruction and input had highly affected the informants' English oral skills. The main areas in question were previous and current education, overall English input, the difference between age groups in both countries when it comes to English exposure, and the exposure to foreign languages in general. Firstly, both the Finnish group and the Japanese group had received a similar teacher-oriented English education that had concentrated on literary skills, grammar and translation, and practised oral skills very little, if at all. Both groups seemed unsatisfied with their education and experienced that the lack of speech practice was one of the main reasons for their problems with speaking English. Also, the strictness of their previous education seemed to have affected their oral skills: many said they were afraid of making errors and when thinking of sentences to say out loud they often thought of the teacher's red pencil correcting them. The problem seemed to be unfamiliarity with active speech production, and thinking that one has to speak like one writes. This is logical since the informants had mostly practised writing and translation, but can be a problem if speech production becomes written language production that is only spoken aloud after translation from the L1. Of course, in beginner stages this is normal, but most of the informants of this study

had studied English, at least in junior high school, for several years. As many of the informants had not studied English for a long time after school, it has to be kept in mind that having a long gap in English education and practice of course makes speaking more difficult. However, in this case often the informants had not acquired a good basis for spoken language skills at school.

However, for many of the Finns, their current English study group had succeeded in improving their confidence in their English speech skills and their readiness to speak. Instrumental motivation was the key for this development; informants who had adopted the idea of success in delivering the message or communication being the most important element in speaking English seemed to be more relaxed about speaking and did not mind errors as much. This was also the case for some of the Japanese, but most seemed to be still quite insecure about their English speech skills. Literary skills seemed much more developed than speech skills, for example one informant reported that she wrote texts in English for her work but could not speak a lot of English. The present writer observed that also at the University level many Japanese students had very highly developed textual English skills but many could or would not speak much English.

Secondly, input was also an important factor in determining how oral English skills had developed. There seemed to be a great difference between the Finnish and the Japanese group in how much English input they (had) received. Both groups seemed to be at least somewhat exposed to the English language through the media, but the Japanese much less than the Finns. Some Japanese informants said that one cannot acquire much English language input in Japan, since Japan is quite isolated from other countries geographically. Finns seemed to use English language media a lot more and seemed more comfortable with it than the Japanese. Some Japanese informants were very interested in English language media, but others seemed to find it hard to follow and did not seem to be connected to it in their daily lives. This is interesting, because both countries have English

language cinema and music etc. available. However, Japanese TV seems to have mainly Japanese language TV-programs even now, and Japanese popular culture seems to have a firmer standing in Japan than Finnish popular culture in Finland, which often seems to only coexist or even be overshadowed by English popular culture and media. Japanese popular culture is, in fact, highly popular even outside of Japan, and even many of current Japanese youths do not seem to watch a lot of English language TV. Although the American influence seems to have been, and still is, powerful in Japan, Finns seem to be more exposed to English language culture and media. This seems to be the overall tendency in European, especially in Nordic countries nowadays. Whereas English language media in Finland is rarely dubbed, the Japanese have both dubbed and subtitled English language media, in television it is quite often dubbed. In movie theatres, the films tend to be in the original language with subtitles.

Thirdly, many Finnish informants compared themselves with young learners. Many informants reported that their children were much better at English. The informants explained that all the children's games and movies *etc.* were in English, and their children received more English input from a younger age than their parents had. This means that it is probably easier for the children to perceive and produce English sounds, because they have been exposed to English earlier. The adult learners of this study had studied English by reading school books, and according to many of them, there had not been nearly as many English TV-series, movies, games, *etc.* in Finland then as there are now. So, it is likely that adult learners experience more difficulty with pronunciation than younger learners because of the difference in exposure. Although the informants heard more English now than when they were children, because of maturational constraints it might be very difficult for them to acquire, for example, a British or American accent anymore. As Best & Tyler (2007: 16) maintain, a lack of active language learning experience with English can cause a pattern of non-native speech perception and thus non-native pronunciation.

The Japanese informants also mentioned young Japanese quite often. They mentioned that young people nowadays had more possibilities for exchange student experiences, which made them more open and willing to speak, as well as better at English. One university student told the present writer that she had gone to America and had had to start speaking English because there was no other way to communicate. This had been how she had learned to speak English, not through English education in Japan. Also, among the informants the ones that had lived abroad seemed to have a different attitude towards speaking English. They saw English as a means of communication and were not as concerned about making errors, and had also more often studied another foreign language. Surprisingly, the difference between the Finnish informants who had lived abroad and those who had not was not as distinct as with the Japanese informants.

Finally, foreign language input in general also seemed to be an important factor. With only one exception, all Finns had studied other languages besides English as well, many of them more than one other language, whereas most of the Japanese informants had studied no other foreign languages besides English. This seemed to have resulted in more highly developed listening comprehension skills for the Finns, and, respectively, may have been the main reason for the listening comprehension problems that the Japanese had. The Japanese had not only commenced their English studies later than the Finns, but also did not study any other or very little other foreign languages, and were not often exposed to foreign languages in their daily lives. Of course, Japan's geographical position might be a reason for this.

7.4. Social factors

Social factors, as well, seemed to be important for the informants in speaking English: support from friends or family or teachers was seen as important and according to some informants helped to build-up motivation. In fact, negative feedback had resulted in embarrassment and prevented some from speaking English for a long time. The fact that many of the participants reported that they would rather speak with non-native speakers than native speakers of English shows that sympathy or similarity with the listener made speaking easier. As cited in the theory section, according to Horwitz *et al.* (1986: 127-128), the fear of not being understood, for instance because of accent, or the fear of seeming stupid might cause anxiety, which might prevent the learner from speaking. This shows in some interviews, for example:

(25) B: --- niinku totesin se ei oo suomalaisympäristös niin luontevaa, mutta täällä (kurssilla) ihmiset ottaa silleen yhdenvertasesti, ja sillen siin ei tuu sitä tunnetta et vaikka oon sanonu et oon surkee tässä ni sit on sanonu että kyllä me ymmärrettiin ja asiat meni hyvin mut sit taas semmonen vieraampi ympäristö kotimaisessa ympäristössä ni sit voi tulla semmonen paine et Mika (nimi muutettu) on hiljaa.

B: --- as I said it's not so natural in a Finnish environment, but here (on the course) people take it, like, equally, and then there won't that feeling that although I've said that I suck at this then they've said that we understood you and things went well but then again the kind of more unfamiliar environment in the domestic environment then there might be the kind of pressure that Mika (the name has been changed) shuts up.

(Finland, informant 2)

This probably has to do with social factors and feedback, too, as in the example where the informant had tried to talk English in Turkey. Thus, social embarrassment can affect people's speech. It seems that intelligence is a highly valued attribute in current society, and thus it is no wonder that non-native speakers of English are concerned about seeming stupid, especially when one has achieved a certain status as a member of the society. The fact that some of the informants did not want to speak English with a Finnish accent at work or when one had to seem qualified also infers that the Finnish accent does not have the type of prestige that the British accent, for instance, has. Some informants also seemed to be somewhat concerned about what other people thought of

them and their English skills. As one informant maintained, it also seems that people do not have many chances to practice speaking English, but when they suddenly have to speak English at work it might be quite confusing.

Social pressure seemed to make speaking English difficult for both the Finns and the Japanese. Many who possessed a high end position in a company, were visible to other people through their work, or those who needed English in their work seemed to be more concerned about their spoken English than others. Fluency and accent seemed to be important in creating a professional work image. Whereas among the Finns there seemed to be no great difference between the answers based on gender, among the Japanese it seemed that for men the relationship between English and work related professional image was somewhat more important than for the women. This is logical, because even now in Japan women are often housewives and men breadwinners for the family. Another interesting matter was that in Japan even beginner's English skills had some social prestige. Even very basic conversation performed in English would have raised amazement and admiration among other Japanese. However, this could also separate one from the group, and so create peer pressure. In fact, one informant said that in junior high school she had made her English sound more Japanese, because she had not wanted to be different from everyone else as she might have been bullied. Another Japanese informant explained that when she had spoken English to a customer, another Japanese had told her that she was supposed to only speak Japanese in Japan.

7.5. Accent attitudes

Accent attitudes were also a source of problems in English speech production. The favouritism towards native varieties, especially BrE, and in some cases AmE, and then again the strict attitudes toward the Finnish and the Japanese accents of English seemed to create unrealistic goals for

English learning. Mostly, the informants did not say directly that they thought speaking English was difficult because of having been concerned about their accent. However, many of them had strict attitudes toward their own accent, wanted to speak more fluently and have a more beautiful or native-like accent, and reported having trouble with pronunciation. These accent attitudes seemed to have been reinforced by both vertical and horizontal axes of social structures.

In Leppänen *et al.* (2009), accent attitudes were connected to education: people with a higher education, for example, admired native accents most often (Leppänen *et al.*, 2009: 64). In this study, there was a similar tendency when comparing the informants based on their education: most of the informants who said that the British accent was their favourite had a university background. Many of these people also wanted to sound (slightly) more British. A couple of the ones who had a university background mentioned that it would be good to sound more British or less Finnish if one had a job that required good English skills, or that the Finnish accent might prevent them from sounding professional.

According to the Finns, there had been strong favouritism towards the British accent in their previous education, which then again very likely had affected at least some of their attitudes, since many of them favoured the British accent. Similarly to Leppänen *et al.* (2009), Finns reported admiration for the British accent, for example, but not as much for the Finnish accent. However, unlike the majority in the study of Leppänen *et al.* (2009), a couple also liked the Finnish accent and some seemed to admire people who were able to at least speak English. Many of the informants, then again, said that the Finnish accent was stupid, clumsy *etc.* Teachers had often preferred BrE, but according to the informants had not openly said anything negative about the Finnish accent of English. Then again, some teachers had preferred BrE but had not spoken it themselves. This type of favouritism might make one prefer some accent over the other without even noticing it, but might

be confusing if the teacher could not produce the accent either. Many said that the philosophy from their earlier education had been “if you cannot pronounce correctly, it is better to stay silent”.

Also, the informants’ opinions on Finnish politicians’ accents are rather interesting, because they are quite strict, but then again, the informants’ reported that this discussion concerning politicians’ accents does not create pressure for them as speakers of English. These type of high expectations seem to indicate that there actually is some type of pressure connected to English accent and image, and that it has an impact on learners of English, because otherwise the politicians’ accents would probably not be under discussion that often. At least, it seems that when it comes to seeming professional or convincing, many feel that having a Finnish accent of English is not profitable. Some of the informants thought it would not require a lot of effort for the politicians to acquire the British accent, for instance, when in fact it is very difficult. Thus, it seems that many informants were under the false impression about how difficult it is to learn to speak English in a native-like accent, which again might be a reason for pressure. Moreover, many people seem to think that Finns are generally very good at English, and even some of the informants mentioned this. This can also create pressure for English learning, especially if goals or expectations are too high.

The fact that some informants referred to British English or a native accent as “pure” is also interesting, as it infers that the Finnish accent of English possesses an “impure” quality. These attitudes seem to be quite unconscious at times, which might explain some of the contradictory answers. Also, Finnish people might not yet have a very strong sense of nationality internationally, as many of the informants, for instance, did not want to sound Finnish. This might have something to do with accent attitudes. Overall, Garrett’s (2010) and Fielding & Evered’s (1980) observations on how quite strong preconceptions might be made based on an accent seem to apply to this study,

too, as distinguishing between a near-native pronunciation and good overall language skills seemed somewhat difficult.

The Japanese informants were not as aware of different accents of English as Finns, and often had only a vague idea of what accent meant. Some knew more about accents and had clearer opinions of what type of accents they liked and did not like. These were mostly informants with a higher education, a higher position, those who had studied English as their major, those who had lived abroad or those who were otherwise connected to the English speaking world, for instance had an interest in English popular culture. Regardless, even some informants who did not have a lot of information about accents reported preferring BrE.

The Japanese informants' attitudes had likely been influenced by their previous educations that had favoured BrE or AmE, opinions of friends or family, the media or the country they had lived in. Similarly to the Finnish informants, the Japanese also seemed to often dislike their L1 type of English accent and even be ashamed of it or their own accent. This seemed to often be related to the common idea that Japanese people have trouble with speaking English. An English accent seemed to be connected to creating a professional status, as with the Finns. Many Japanese informants said that they were concerned about whether they would be understood when they spoke English, for example because of their heavy accented speech. This also had to do with *wasei-eigo* and *katakana-English*, which according to the informants are nowadays used too much as proper English without understanding that they are only Japan-made English that English speakers might not understand.

In Leppänen *et al.* (2009), it was found that older Finnish people were more ashamed of their English skills than younger people. Some of the informants in the present study said that they sounded horrible, but many informants did not seem to be ashamed of their skills in English.

However, it has to be considered that the informants had begun optional English courses and reported that the teaching had been really supportive, which had motivated them and made them feel that they were better at English. Consequently, this might be different with other Finnish adults.

This study only studied adult learners, which is why a differentiation cannot be made between adult learners and younger learners. However, the connection between education, age and accent attitudes makes further study in both the Finnish and the Japanese context very interesting. This is because younger Finnish people will likely have more negative attitudes towards the Finnish accent of English, and might feel more pressured to have a so-called near-native accent, since there is a lot of English input in Finland and since they are supposed to be very good performers of English. The case might be somewhat similar in Japan, as young people seem to be more connected to the English speaking world than the informants of this study. However, the scope seems to be different from Finland. It would be logical, because after receiving a lot of input and good education the expectations for their skills in English are higher, and there might also be more pressure. So, if youngsters have more negative attitudes towards the Finnish accent, as in Leppänen *et al.* (2009), (or the Japanese accent of English in Japan) it might be because of the high expectations and the preconception of speaking with a Finnish accent not matching these expectations. This, of course, has to do with the adult learners, too, although on a different scale. These possible expectations are problematic, because it is very difficult to achieve a native-like accent. Furthermore, a non-native learner of English may speak with a Finnish accent, but still be very skilled in using the language. However, as mentioned before, they do not receive as much appreciation as a Finn who speaks with a native-like accent.

It must also be considered that there is a difference between the school environment and spoken language: it seems that at school the informants had striven for very accurate, controlled and

flawless English skills. This is very different from spoken language, which is often spontaneous, a little chaotic, unplanned and also full of mistakes and errors (even when speaking one's native language). However, if learners feel like they should speak like they write, it is obviously a problem. Furthermore, the school environment seems to support a very negative attitude towards errors, although the situation has improved since the childhood of the present study's informants. Contrarily, in the Japanese context it seems that peer pressure works against having a native-like accent, since the Japanese accent of English had been a unifying factor for students.

8. CONCLUSION

The aims of this study were to discover if adult learners of English experience problems in speaking English and if so, why, and what type of attitudes they have towards accents and how these attitudes influence their English speech. A lot of useful and interesting material, including answers to these research questions, was collected through the interviews, many of the results being similar to previous research and some answers raising more questions. Overall, both the Finns and the Japanese saw speaking English as difficult. It seems that the challenge of teaching English to adults is that they still have the idea that it is a very negative matter if you make a mistake or an error, and that you will be penalized. These views come from earlier education. The main factors that influenced the informants' speech were social, instruction & input and neurological factors. It also seemed that accent related issues created some type of pressure and difficulty in speaking English.

There were many interesting contradictory opinions on accents. It is difficult to say whether accent attitudes are one of the most important factors in causing people pressure when speaking English. However, as it seems that many Finns have some negative attitudes towards the Finnish accent of English, and Japanese toward the Japanese accent of English, this is likely to affect speaking English in some way. The native-speaker norm had a firm status as the correct model for English production, which very likely was a source of pressure, especially if the norm is favoured but not produced successfully. People with higher education had more knowledge of English in general and also about different English accents, but were also stricter towards their own accent and their native pronunciation of English, and wanted to speak in a native-like accent, often in BrE. In addition, people in high positions and people who needed English in their work had stricter attitudes toward English accents and often believed that their English accent was directly relatable to their expertise, skill and credence. Overall, Finns seemed stricter towards their own English skills.

When comparing Finnish and Japanese learners, it was notable that later onset of English studies resulted in poorer listening comprehension skills for the Japanese, which was reinforced by a lack of overall FL studies. Input factors also distinguished the two: in Finland, frequent exposure to English and other FL seemed to improve perception skills. This, however, resulted in stricter accent related attitudes and a stronger native-accent preference. Both groups seemed to have few active exchange networks to practise English with, the Japanese more so than the Finns. An overly literary-oriented education was a unifying factor and a source of problems. Social pressure affected English oral production as well, as it created embarrassment when speaking in a heavy accent, but in Japan was also a reason to resort to a heavy Japanese accent of English. The feeling of being on the same level with the speaking partner was seen as important. Cultural differences were a difficulty for the Japanese, but not so much for the Finnish informants.

Especially in Finland, English speech skills seemed to often be seen as more of a performance that proves the speaker's English proficiency, than a means of communication. In a world of global Englishes, the status of English is shifting, which can create pressure for English learners. Through recognition of non-native accents as capable tools of communication, attitudes towards non-native accents have become more lenient, which, hopefully, is the course for English education in Finland and Japan as well.

Future directions for research in this area would be to study younger learners as well, because they are allegedly more immersed in the English language media, but, I would claim, have also stricter attitudes and expectations towards their English skills and accent, which very likely creates pressure when speaking English. As English education has not changed in Japan as much as in Finland, continuing the comparison would also offer a chance to evaluate the respective education systems

and its effects. The gender distribution could have been better, and this study could have studied the oral proficiency of its informants in a more objective way, which might, together with the subjective reports, have offered better insight into the topic. This is also a possible future area for research. Also, the topic of this study was quite broad, but it will hopefully work as a starting point for further research.

This study found many reasons as to why both Japanese and Finnish learners experienced difficulties when speaking English, and these results may be useful both in and out of the classroom. Of course, it helps if the learners recognize what areas of speaking they have problems with. However, it is also important for the teacher to recognize these difficulties and the attitudes towards speaking English and English accents, so that they can plan exercises that will help the learners overcome these problems. Based on the results of this study, the functionality of the English language and communicational skills should be emphasized more in the classroom, as there is a high risk for English competence to remain very theoretical. Especially in the Japanese context, English education should change from being theoretical to more practical, in order to enhance communicative skills. Also, it seems that accent related topics should be discussed in the classroom to decrease accent related pressure and negative attitudes. This is a problematic task, of course, because these attitudes are very deep-rooted. However, future research may develop practical methods to help in this respect. Since it seems that breaking the native-speaker ideal or at least questioning it might be advantageous in this case, it might benefit the learners to make them aware of the fact that native English speakers have trouble when speaking foreign languages as well, but are able to communicate despite the errors. In this way attitudes towards speaking may be improved, and learners may be able to acquire better self-esteem and routines in speaking, through practice.

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APPENDIX 1. Interview questions: Finland.

Tausta

1. Ikä:
2. Sukupuoli:
3. Kaupungista/maalta:
4. Äidinkieli:
5. Ammatti:
6. Koulutus:
7. Vanhempien koulutus ja ammatti:
8. Mitä opiskelet aikuiskoulutuskeskuksella? Miksi?
9. Mitä kieliä osaat?
10. Millainen puhuja olet omalla äidinkielelläsi? Mitä esim. läheisesi/opettajasi ovat sanoneet? Oletko hidas vai nopea puhuja, mietkö aina huolellisesti mitä sanot, puhutko paljon?

Englannin opetus

1. Kuinka kauan olet opiskellut englantia?
2. Mitä mieltä olet englannin opiskelusta?
3. Millaisia englannin opettajia/opetusta sinulla on ollut?
4. Onko englannin kurseillasi harjoiteltu puhumista? Miten?
5. Ovatko englanninopettajasi mielestäsi suosineet jotakin tiettyä tapaa puhua, esim. amerikkalainen aksentti?
 - i. Mitä?
 - ii. Puhuivatko he itse sillä tavalla?
6. Miten englanninopettajasi ovat suhtautuneet suomalaiseen aksenttiin?

Englannin käyttäminen

1. Käytätkö paljon englannin kieltä? Miten/Missä? Puhutko sitä paljon?
2. Tarvitsetko työssäsi englantia? Mihin?
3. Onko perhepiirissäsi käytetty paljon englantia?
4. Oletko asunut ulkomailla tai matkustellut paljon?
5. Puhutko englantia mielelläsi?
6. Millaisia kokemuksia sinulla on englannin puhumisesta? Positiivisia/negatiivisia?
7. Onko englannin ymmärtäminen mielestäsi hankalaa? (kuunteleminen, lukeminen)
8. Onko englannin puhuminen mielestäsi hankalaa?
 - i. Miksi?
 - ii. Onko englannin kielen sanoja esim. vaikea ääntää? Miksi (vaikea kuulla eroa/vaikea tuottaa)?
 - iii. Missä tilanteissa se on erityisen hankalaa? Onko sen puhuminen jossain tilanteessa helpompaa?
9. Miltä kuulostat mielestäsi kun puhut englantia?
10. Miten luulet että muut suhtautuvat sinuun, kun puhut englantia?
 - i. Onko suomalaisten ja englantia äidinkielenään puhuvien suhtautumisessa puhumiseesi mielestäsi jotain eroja?
11. Miten haluaisit heidän ajattelevan?
12. Miten haluaisit puhua englantia?
13. Pidätkö jostain, esim. brittiläisestä englannista, enemmän kuin muista aksenteista?
14. Mistä aksentista pidät?

15. Mistä aksentista et pidä?
16. Mitä mieltä olet suomalaisesta tavasta puhua englantia (esim. Ahti Karjalainen, Martti Ahtisaari)?
17. Oletko kuullut termin ”tankeroenglanti”? Mitä mieltä olet siitä?
18. Mikä auttaisi sinua puhumaan englantia?

Background

1. Age:
2. Gender:
3. Urban/rural background:
4. Mother Tongue:
5. Occupation:
6. Education:
7. Parents' education and occupation:
8. What do you study at the adult education center? Why?
9. What languages do you speak?
10. What kind of a speaker are you in your own language? E.g. what have people close to you/your teachers said? Are you a fast or a slow speaker, do you think carefully before speaking, do you talk a lot?

English education

1. How long have you studied English?
2. How do you feel about studying English?
3. What kind of English teachers/education have you had?
4. Have you rehearsed speaking in English on your English courses? How?
5. Do you think that your English teachers have favoured a particular way of speaking/accent, for example an American accent?
 - i. Which accent?
 - ii. Did they have the accent themselves?
6. What kind of feelings have your teachers had towards the Finnish English accent?

Use of English

1. Do you use English a lot? How/Where? Do you speak it a lot?
2. Do you need English at work? What for?
3. Have you used/do you use English with your family?
4. Have you ever lived abroad or do you travel a lot?
5. Do you speak English with pleasure?
6. What kind of experiences do you have on speaking English? Positive/negative?
7. Is English difficult to understand? (Listening, reading)
8. Is speaking English difficult?
 - i. Why?
 - ii. Are the English words difficult to pronounce, for example? Why (hearing the difference between sounds is difficult/it is difficult to produce sounds)?
 - iii. Is it particularly difficult in some circumstances? Or easier?
9. What do you think you sound like when you speak English?
10. How do you think others see you when you speak English?

i. Are there differences between the attitudes of Finnish English speakers and native English speakers?

11. How would you like them to see you?
12. How would you like to speak English?
13. Do you like some accent, e.g. British English, more than other accents?
14. What accent do you like?
15. What accent do you dislike?
16. How do you feel about the Finnish accent (e.g. Ahti Karjalainen, Martti Ahtisaari)?
17. Do you know the term "tankeroenglanti"? What do you think about it?
18. What could help you in speaking English?

APPENDIX 2. Interview questions: Japan.

履歴

1. 年齢：
2. 性別：
3. ご出身：
3. 母国語：
4. 職業：
5. 学歴：
6. あなたのお父様とお母様の卒業大学をお尋ねしてもよろしいですか？またよろしければ、専攻科目もよろしくお願ひします。
6. 今は英語を勉強していますか？どこで？なんで英語を勉強していますか？
7. 何語を話せますか？
8. 自分の母語で話すときはたくさん話しますか？例えば、話す前沢山考えなければなりませんか？早く話しますか？話すときシャイですか？

英語教育

1. どのくらい英語を勉強しましたか？
2. 英語を勉強することについてどう思いますか？
3. これまでの英語の教育と教師はどうでしたか？
4. 英語の授業で英語を話す練習をしましたか？どうやって練習しましたか？
5. これまでの英語教師は特別な抑揚を習ったほうがいいと言いましたか？例えば、アメリカ英語のアクセントとかイギリス英語のアクセントで話したらいいと言われましたか？
 - I. どのアクセントでしたか？
 - II. 教師も自分自身そのアクセントで話しましたか？
6. 教師は日本人っぽいアクセントをどう思いましたか？

英語の使用

1. 英語はたくさん使いますか？どのように/どこで？英語をたくさん話しますか？
2. 仕事で英語が必要ですか？なんでですか？
3. ご家族と英語を使いますか、あるいは使いましたか？
4. 海外に住んだことがありますか？旅行は沢山しますか？
5. 英語を話すのは楽しいですか？
6. 英語を話すのは、どのような経験がありますか？いい経験ですか、あまりよくない経験ですか？
7. 英語を理解するのは難しいですか？（聴解、読解）
8. 英語を話すのは難しいですか？
 - I. なんでですか？
 - II. 英語の言葉の発音は難しいですか？なんでだと思いますか（聞いて音を区別するのが難しいですか、あるいは音を出すのが難しいですか？）

III. 話す時特に難しいと思うことがありますか？あるいは簡単なの。

9. 自分が英語を話したらどんな感じだと思えますか？

10. 英語を話すときに他人にどのように思われていると思えますか？

I. ネイティブな人と英語を話すときとネイティブじゃない人とか日本人と英語を話すときは何か違いますか？

11. 他人にどう思われるようになりたいですか？

12. どのように英語を話せるようになりたいですか？

13. 何か他のアクセントより好きなアクセントがありますか？たとえばイギリス英語、アメリカ英語とか。どこのアクセントが好きですか？

15. 好きじゃないアクセントがありますか？

16. 日本人っぽい英語のアクセントはどう思えますか？（たとえば政治家の英語のアクセント）

17. 和製英語ということを知っていますか？それはどう思えますか？的確ですか、日本人の英語のイメージとして。

18. 英語を話す練習にとって何か役に立つことがありますか？

Background

1. Age:
2. Gender:
3. Urban/rural background:
4. Mother Tongue:
5. Occupation:
6. Education:
7. Parents' education and occupation:
8. What do you study at the adult education center? Why?⁵
9. What languages do you speak?
10. What kind of a speaker are you in your own language? E.g. what have people close to you/your teachers said? Are you a fast or a slow speaker, do you think carefully before speaking, do you talk a lot?

English education

1. How long have you studied English?
2. How do you feel about studying English?
3. What kind of English teachers/education have you had?
4. Have you rehearsed speaking in English on your English courses? How?
5. Do you think that your English teachers have favoured a particular way of speaking/accent, for example an American accent?
 - i. Which accent?
 - ii. Did they have the accent themselves?
6. What kind of feelings have your teachers had towards the Japanese English accent?

Use of English

1. Do you use English a lot? How/Where? Do you speak it a lot?

⁵ Only adult education centre or other centre learners

2. Do you need English at work? What for?
3. Have you used/do you use English with your family?
4. Have you ever lived abroad or do you travel a lot?
5. Do you speak English with pleasure?
6. What kind of experiences do you have on speaking English? Positive/negative?
7. Is English difficult to understand? (Listening, reading)
8. Is speaking English difficult?
 - i. Why?
 - ii. Are the English words difficult to pronounce, for example? Why (hearing the difference between sounds is difficult/it is difficult to produce sounds)?
 - iii. Is it particularly difficult in some circumstances? Or easier?
9. What do you think you sound like when you speak English?
10. How do you think others see you when you speak English?
 - i. Are there differences between the attitudes of Japanese English speakers and native English speakers?
11. How would you like them to see you?
12. How would you like to speak English?
13. Do you like some accent, e.g. British English, more than other accents? Which accent do you like?
14. What accent do you dislike?
15. How do you feel about the Japanese English accent (e.g. politicians)
16. Do you know the term "wasei-eigo"? What do you think about it? Is it fitting?
17. What could help you in speaking English?

APPENDIX 3. The teacher's interview questions.

1. Ikä:
 2. Sukupuoli:
 3. Koulutus:
 4. Osaatko arvioida haastatteluun osallistuneiden oppilaittesi puhekykyjä?
 - i. Onko heillä hankaluuksia puhumisessa? Millaisia? Mistä luulisit niiden johtuvan?
 - ii. Puhuvatko he mielellään?
 5. Liittyykö englannin opetukseen puheharjoituksia?
 - i. Minkälaisia?
 - ii. Kuinka paljon?
 6. Miten suhtaudut erilaisiin englannin kielen aksentteihin?
 - i. Suositko jotakin tiettyä aksenttia?
 - ii. Mitä mieltä olet suomalaisesta aksentista?
 - iii. Onko englannin tunneilla käsitelty erilaisia aksentteja? Miten?
 7. Miten luulet opiskelijoiden suhtautuvan aksentteihin?
 - i. Millaisena he pitävät suomalaista aksenttia?
 - ii. Miten he suhtautuvat toisiinsa puhujina?
-
1. Age:
 2. Gender:
 3. Education:
 4. What kind of English speakers are the students who took part in the interview?
 - i. Do they have problems with speaking? What kind of problems? Why do you think they have these problems?
 - ii. Do they like speaking?
 5. Do you use speech exercises on your English courses?
 - i. What type of exercises?
 - ii. How much?
 6. How do you feel about different English accents?
 - i. Do you have a favourite accent?
 - ii. How do you feel about the Finnish accent?
 - iii. Have you dealt with different accents on your English courses? How?
 7. How do you think your students feel about different accents?
 - i. What do they think of the Finnish English accent?
 - ii. What kind of attitudes do they have towards each other as speakers?
 8. How do you think your students feel about different accents?
 - i. What do they think of the Finnish English accent?
 - ii. What kind of attitudes do they have towards each other as speakers?

APPENDIX 4. Interview sample.

(A = interviewer, B = interviewee)

A: Saanko kysyä ikää?

B: Pitää miettiä... 53.

A: Mikä sie oot ammatiltas?

B: Niitä on aika monta... täl hetkel oon yrittäjä, mutta oon ammatiltani diplomi-insinööri, rakennusarkkitehti, opettaja ja sitton vielä vähän muutakin.

A: Missä opiskelit?

B: Lappeenrannassa, ammatilliseks opettajaks Hämeenlinnassa.

A: Mitäs siun vanhemmat on tehny työkseen?

B: Ne on ollu terästehtaalla töissä, isä on kuollu ja äiti eläkkeellä, molemmat työntekijän tehtävissä. Ne on työssäänoppineet, ei mitään ammattikoulutusta.

A: Ootko eläny enimmäkseen maalla vai kaupungissa?

B: Kaupungissa

A: Opiskeletko mitään muuta ku englantia täällä?

B: En mitään muuta.

A: Miksi enkku?

B: Se oikeestaan johtuu siitä, että siitä on 30 vuotta ku on viimeks englantia opiskellu, yliopistossa oli yks lyhyt kurssi, mutta ajattelin että pitäis tätä puhekieltä kehittää. Vaimo sekä nuori tytär aina piikittelee mua englannista, millä tavalla mä puhun, kai se johtuu siitä et se on semmosta tankeroenglantia, ja sit jos unohtelee jotain sanoja ni kai se sit aiheuttaa hauskuutta.

A: Miltä se tuntuu?

B: No se on hyväntahtost tietysti, mut kyl se siin mieles tietysti pitää paikkansa. En mä sitä silleen ota henkilökohtasesti, mutta sitä pitää kehittää, jos lähipiiri huomaa, mut oon kuullu ulkopuolisilta että osaan kuitenkin kohtuu hyvin, että pitäis saada sujuvammaksi puhe, vielä tekemistä riittää, ja kuitenkin sitä englannin kieltä tarvitsee. Tulis käytettyä jos sellaisiin tilanteisiin joutuis tai pääsis tai menis, mutta yritän hyödyntää, en usko että kellään se puhekieli niin täydellistä olis ettei vaatimattomammallakin kielitaidolla pärjäis, tärkeint et tulee ymmärretyks.

A: Aiheuttaaks se sit paineita siulle?

B: No kyl mä siin mieles nään siinä paineita et nuorethan menee miust heittämällä ohi, ja sit tietysti ne jotka on miun ikäluokkaa joilla oli mahdollisuus olla vaihdossa ni sit on parempi kielitaito, pitää yrittää nyt vanhemmalla iällä paikata. Kai siin sit voi olla sitä taustaa et mä yritän paikata sitä vaatimattomuutta nuoruusiällä nyt vanhempana ja todistaa itelle että osaan, silleen itsetuntoa ja itsetuntemusta, et on jaksanu ja pystynyt opiskelemaan.

A: Onks täällä ollu kannustava ilmapiiri?

B: On siinä mielessä ollu, et mähän opiskelin yliopistolla 2004-2006 et kyl vaimo antaa henkistä tukea, että ei tietenkään tehtävissä mut. Otin opintovapaata. Elinikänen oppiminen on tullu siihen opettajuuteen liittyen, et se on tällanen ammatillinen asia, mutta myös itsensä kehittämisen asia.

A: Osaatko muita kieliä ku suomea ja englantia?

B: Ruotsia, se on se välttävästi samoin saksaa, ne on ne peruskielet, tietys ranska ois voinu olla, mut sit ois pitäny olla kielilinjalla, mä olin matikkalinjalla.

A: Millon alatit ekan kerran opiskelemaan englantia? Kolmannella?

B: Kansakoulussa... todennäkösesti. Muistan et kieli oli uusi ja ihmeellinen, mä olin aika hyvä, mut sit ku tuln lukion ni sit innostus lakkas, en jaksanu viedä eteenpäin etenään enkkua.

A: Mistä luulet et se johtu?

B: Luulen että kun oli erittäin mukava opettaja keskikoulussa ni sit ku tuli lukioon ni ois pitäny itse ottaa asioista selvää, muistan et harmitti kovasti, kirjoitin Bn englannista, oisin halunnu et se ois ollu paljon parempi. Tietysti mä jossain vaiheessa pyrin jopa Ruotsii opiskelemaan, mut he koki että...

A: May I inquire your age?

B: I have to think ... 53.

A: What's your occupation?

B: There are quite a few of them... right now I'm an entrepreneur, but I'm an engineer, a building architect, and a teacher by profession and there's also a little bit more.

A: Where did you study?

B: In Lappeenranta, and in Hämeenlinna to be a vocational teacher.

A: What have your parents done for a living?

B: They have worked at a steel mill, my father's dead and my mother's retired, both of them employees. They were self-taught, no training.

A: Have you lived mostly in the country or in the city?

B: The city

A: Are you studying anything besides English here?

B: No.

A: Why English?

B: Actually, it's because it has been 30 years since I last studied English, at the University there was one short course, but I thought that I should develop my spoken language. My wife and my young daughter always tease me because of my English, the way I speak, I guess it's because it's the kind of Tankero English, and then if I forget some words then I guess it's funny.

A: How does it feel?

B: Well, they have good intentions, of course, but it is true, in a sense, of course. I don't take that stuff personally, but it needs to be developed if the people close to me notice it, but I've heard from outsiders that I can speak reasonably well, I should strive for more fluent speech, still plenty to do, and yet one needs the English language. I'd use it if I ended up in such situations, but I'm trying to make the best of it. I don't think that there's anyone whose speech is so perfect that one couldn't get by with simpler language skills. The most important thing is that you're understood.

A: Does it cause you pressure?

B: Well, yeah, in the sense that youngsters are way better than me, and then of course the ones who are of my age group who had the opportunity to be exchange students have better language skills. I have to try to mend the situation now that I'm older. My background might be a factor in the sense that I'm trying to mend the modest skills I had when I was younger now that I'm older, to prove myself that I can do it, like self-esteem and self-awareness, that I was able to study.

A: Has the atmosphere been supportive here?

B: Yeah, I mean, I studied at the University from 2004 to 2006, and my wife does back me up emotionally, obviously not with exercises, but anyway. I took a study leave. It's been life-long learning when it comes to teaching. So it is like a professional thing, but also a self-improvement thing.

A: Do you know other languages besides Finnish and English?

B: Swedish, tolerably, and also German, they're the languages that one usually studies, French, of course, could've been one, but then I'd have had to have been in the language group, I was in the math group.

A: When did you first begin learning English? The third grade?

B: Primary school... probably. I remember that the language was new and wonderful, I was pretty good at it, but then I began high school and then my enthusiasm dropped, I didn't have the motivation to carry on, particularly with English.

A: What do you think was the reason for this?

B: I think that because I had a very nice teacher in middle school and then when I started college I would've had to find out about things myself, I remember that I was really disappointed, I got a B for English, I would've wanted it to have been much better. Then, of course

FINNISH SUMMARY

Johdanto

Englannin kielellä on kasvava ja tärkeä asema kansainvälisessä viestinnässä. Siksi sekä kirjalliset että suulliset englannin kielen taidot ovat tärkeitä. Suullisten taitojen harjoittelu tuntuu kuitenkin jäävän usein vähemmälle luokkahuoneissa, ja puhuminen tuntuu olevan hyvin vaikeaa monille. Englannin kielen puhetaitojen saavuttaminen on kirjallisten taitojen ohella toinen opetussuunnitelman tärkeistä päämääristä, mutta koska se monesti tuntuu jäävän saavuttamatta, on asiaa tutkittava. Tämän tutkimuksen päämääränä oli selvittää kokevatko suomalaiset ja japanilaiset aikuisopiskelijat hankaluuksia englannin kielen puhumisessa, ja jos näin on, millaisia ongelmia koetaan ja miksi. Lisäksi, englannin kielen kasvava asema globaalisti arvostettuna kielenä on tuntunut kasvattavan tietoisuutta ja myös paineita siihen, miten englantia pitäisi puhua oikein. Tämä tutkimus kiinnittää erityistä huomiota siihen, millainen vaikutus omalla aksentilla ja omilla asenteilla englannin kielen aksentteja kohtaan on englannin kielen puhumiseen. Tulosten perusteella koulutusta, asenteita ja tietoisuutta voitaisiin toivottavasti parantaa.

Aikuisopiskelijoiden valinta tutkimuksen tietolähteeksi oli se, että aikuisopiskelijoilla olisi todennäköisemmin enemmän kokemusta englannin kielen puhetaitojen käyttämisestä koulun ulkopuolella, arkielämässä, perheen kanssa tai töissä, sillä kouluajoista on jo aikaa. Aikaisemmat opetusmenetelmät ja nykyisen kurssin menetelmät olivat myös mielenkiintoinen vertailukohde. Syyt suomalaisten ja japanilaisten aikuisopiskelijoiden vertailulle olivat maiden erot koulutuksellisissa taustoissa ja englannin kielen asemassa yhteiskunnassa. Englannin kielen koulutus oli haastateltavien kouluajoina ollut erittäin kielioppi- ja opettajakeskeistä molemmissa maissa, mutta toisaalta Suomessa englannin kielen opetus on muuttunut oppilaslähtöisemmäksi. Japanissa tilanne on pysynyt kohtuullisen samanlaisena, ja siksi tämän eron vaikutus oppilaisiin on mielenkiintoinen

tutkimuksen kohde. Lisäksi englannin kielen asema on hyvin erilainen Suomessa ja Japanissa: suomalaisille englannin kieli on muuttumassa yhä olennaisemmaksi osaksi arkipäivää mm. englanninkielisen median takia, ja kuten monissa muissa skandinaavisissa maissa, tutkijoiden mukaan myös suomessa englannin kielen asema on muuttumassa vieraasta kielestä jopa toiseksi kieleksi. Japanissa englannin kielellä ei ole yhtä vahvaa asemaa. Toisaalta maiden välillä on hyvin paljon samankaltaisuuksia, mm. kulttuurisia samankaltaisuuksia, kuten pitkälti homogeeninen väestö, kielet joilla ei ole suoraa suhdetta englannin kieleen, ja hiljaisuuden hyväksyminen tärkeäksi osaksi kommunikaatiota. Lisäksi mailla on koulutuksellisia yhtäläisyyksiä, esimerkiksi autonomia suunnittelussa. Nämä yhtäläisyydet auttavat maiden vertailussa.

Teoria

Toisen kielen oppimisen teoria oli tärkeä pohja tälle tutkimukselle. Toisen kielen oppimiseen liittyvät tärkeimmät teoriat, toisin sanoen kriittinen periodi, universaalit ja tunnusmerkkisyys, transfer ja variaatio tulevat esiin tutkimuksessa: kriittinen periodi ikään ja neurologisiin osatekijöihin liittyen, transfer aksentin yhteydessä ja variaatio yksilöllisissä osatekijöissä, mutta kaikki ovat myös hyvin paljon kytköksissä toisiinsa.

Aiempi tutkimus englannin puhumiseen, englantia koskeviin asenteisiin ja Suomi-Japani vertailuun liittyen oli myös tärkeä tietolähde tutkimukselle. Leppänen *et al.* (2009) ovat tutkineet suomalaisten kokemuksia omasta englannin kielen taidon tasosta ja englantia koskevista asenteista tilastollisin menetelmin, ja siksi tämä tutkimus oli tärkeä vertailukohde. Garant (1997) on tehnyt tutkimuksen Suomen ja Japanin englannin kielen opetusta ja oppilaiden motivaatiota vertaillen, ja sen vuoksi myös tämä tutkimus oli tärkeä tietolähde. Garant:n (1997) tutkimus keskittyi kuitenkin enemmän koulutuksellisiin kulttuureihin, ja on siksi tutkimuksena erilainen. Garant (1997) on tutkinut mm.

oppilaiden motivaatiota englannin kielen opiskeluun, ja havainnut, että suomalaisille medioiden ymmärtäminen ja kommunikointi oli tärkeä motivaation lähde, kun taas japanilaisille oppilaille kokeissa pärjääminen oli tärkein päämäärä. Japanilaiset opiskelijat eivät myöskään kokeneet englannin opiskelua hauskaksi. Garant (1997) myös huomioi että suomalaisen koulutuskulttuurin oppilaskeskeisempi malli oli antoisampi oppimiselle.

Toisen kielen oppimisen teorian osa-alueista myös puheen tuottamiseen ja havaitsemiseen liittyvä teoria oli tärkeää tutkimukselle. Puheprosessia ei ole tutkittu tarpeeksi, jotta voitaisiin sanoa mitä tapahtuu puheen esimotorisilla tasoilla. Tatham ja Morton (2006) ja Habermas (1971) ovat kuitenkin esittäneet puheen tuottamisen mallit, jotka erottavat toisistaan staattisen tason ja dynaamisen tason, tai ehdotuksellisen ja esityksellisen tason, kuten Habermas asian esittää. Puheen tuottamisessa olisi siis tärkeää huomioida sen kaksi tasoa, puhetta edeltävä suunnitelmavaihe ja varsinainen puhe. Näiden tasojen avulla voidaan huomioida, sijaitsevatko puhumiseen liittyvät ongelmat suunnitelmassa vai esittämisessä. Puheen havaitsemiseen liittyvä teoria on myös tärkeää, koska se liittyy hyvin läheisesti puheen tuottamiseen. Syy tähän on se, että oppijan äidinkieli vaikuttaa siihen, miten opittava kieli havainnoidaan. Jos opittavaa kielen havaitsemisessa on ongelmia, on loogisesti myös puheen tuottaminen hankalaa. Tutkijat, esim. Hancin-Bhatt (2008) ovat myös huomanneet, että havaitsemiseen liittyvät taidot voivat olla hyvin eri tasolla kuin puheen tuottamiseen liittyvät taidot. Monilla oppijoilla on huomattu olevan paljon kehittyneemmät kuullunymmärtämistäidot, esimerkiksi. Tämä liittyy läheisesti tämän tutkimuksen aiheeseen. Odisho (2003) huomauttaakin, että passiivinen ymmärtäminen vaatii vähemmän harjoitusta kuin aktiivinen tuottaminen, joka vaatii systemaattista toistoa.

Universaalit ja tunnusmerkkisyys voivat myös liittyä puheessa koettaviin ongelmiin. Kielellinen vaisto voi auttaa puhumista, mutta toisaalta jos opiskeltavassa vieraassa kielessä on

tunnusmerkkisiä piirteitä, joita äidinkielessä ei ole, voi oppiminen hankaloitua. Vieraan kielen käyttämiseen liittyvää pelkoa (language anxiety) käsittelevä tutkimus, jota Horwitz (2001) on kehittänyt, voi myös auttaa selittämään englannin kielen puhumisessa koettavia ongelmia. Horwitz (2001) on ehdottanut, että oppijat saattavat kokea vieraan kielen opiskeluun liittyvää, erityistä vieraan kielen jännitystä, joka aiheuttaa negatiivisia jännityksen tunteita ja vaikeuttaa puhumista.

Schumannin tutkimuksen, joka koski kohdekielimaassa oleskelevia toisen kielen oppijoita, perusteella kehitelty Moyerin (2004) klassifikaatio toisen kielen oppimiseen vaikuttavista osatekijöistä on toiminut pohjana englannin kielen puhumisen vaikeuksiin vaikuttavien osatekijöiden luokittelussa. Nämä osatekijät ovat:

1. neurologiset osatekijät
2. affektiiviset ja persoonaan liittyvät osatekijät
3. kognitiiviset ja taidolliset osatekijät
4. koulutukseen ja altistumiseen liittyvät osatekijät ja
5. sosiaaliset osatekijät

Neurologiset osatekijät viittaavat ikään ja sen vaikutukseen kielenoppimisessa. Lennebergin (1967) Kriittisen periodin hypoteesin mukaan kielenoppimisessa iällä on tärkeä merkitys, koska nuorena kieliä oppii helpommin, kun taas tietyn iän jälkeen vieraiden kielten oppiminen vaikeutuu. Tätä teoriaa on kritisoitu ja kyseenalaistettu, mutta monet tutkijat (Flege, Yeni-Komshian & Liu, 1999; Flege, 1991; Thornburgh & Ryalls, 1998) ovat huomanneet, että erityisesti vieraan kielen ääntämisen oppimisessa oppimisen aloitusiällä on todella suuri merkitys. Koska tämä tutkimus on erityisesti kiinnostunut aksentin vaikutuksesta puhumiseen, siis ääntämisestä, kriittiseen ikään liittyvä teoria on tärkeä. Kohdat 2 ja 3 käsiteltiin yhdessä nimellä yksilölliset osatekijät, sillä tämä tutkimus käytti laadullisia haastatteluja tiedonsaamiseen, mikä tarkoittaa sitä, että tiedot perustuvat haastateltavien raportteihin. Niiden perusteella oli vaikea saada paljon tietoa haastateltavien

persoonasta ja taidoista, eikä tämä tutkimus toisaalta myöskään keskittynyt tähän osa-alueeseen, koska muut osatekijät tuntuivat nousevan useammin esille, ja tutkimuksen aihe oli muutenkin laaja. Kuitenkin, yksilöllisiin tekijöihin lukeutuu persoonaan liittyviä tekijöitä, kuten avoimuus muille kulttuureille, alttius jännitykselle, motivaatio ja asenne, joilla tuntui olevan ainakin jonkin verran merkitystä puhumisessa. Asenne on tärkeässä osassa aksentteihin liittyvissä osatekijöissä, ja niistä puhutaan enemmän aksenttia koskevassa osassa tutkimusta.

Koulutukseen ja altistumiseen liittyvät osatekijät tulivat hyvin vahvasti esille tuloksissa ja olivat siis myös tärkeä osa teoriaa. Kuten jo mainittu, Suomessa ja Japanissa on vallinnut hyvin samankaltainen, opettajakeskeinen koulutus, mutta Suomessa se on siirtynyt kohti oppilaskeskeisempää mallia, ja Englanti on tärkeässä asemassa. Suomalaiset opiskelevat myös yleisesti paljon vieraita kieliä, kun taas Japanissa vieraita kieliä ei opiskella kovin paljon. Taavitsainen *et al.* (2003) mainitsevat, että Suomessa on kuitenkin paljon negatiivisia asenteita vahvasti suomalaisella aksentilla puhuttua Englantia kohtaan, esimerkiksi termi '*Finglish*' on esimerkki tällaisista asenteista. Myös '*tankeroenglanti*' on termi, jota kuulee usein käytettävän vahvasta suomalaisesta korostuksesta puhuttaessa, ja se kuvaakin suomalaisten asenteita Englannin kielen aksentteja kohtaan. Suomalaiset aloittavat Englannin opiskelun aikaisemmin kuin japanilaiset, jotka aloittavat Englanninopinnot yleensä vasta 12–13 -vuotiaina. Englanninopetus Japanissa on yhä todella kirjallisesti painottunutta ja keskittyy vahvasti kielioppiin, eikä puhumista harjoiteta paljon, vaikka puhetaitojen saavuttaminen onkin yksi opetussuunnitelman päämäärinä. Suomalaisen englanninkielen taitoja tunnutaan yleisesti kehuttavan maailmalla, kun taas japanilaisilla käsitetään usein olevan hankaluuksia Englannin kanssa. Tämä voi aiheuttaa paineita puhumiseen. Japanissa Englannin kielen puhumiseen liittyviä, yleisesti kuultavia termejä ovat '*wasei-eigo*' ja '*katakana-english*'. Ne liittyvät Englannista tulleisiin, Japanin kielessä käytettäviin

lainasanoihin, joita sitten monet oppijat saattavat käyttää englantia puhuttaessa, luullen niiden olevan ymmärrettävää englantia.

Sosiaaliset osatekijät ovat myös tärkeitä, koska kielenoppimisessa on tärkeää myös sosiaalinen ryhmä, joka vahvistaa ja kannustaa oppimista, ja uuden etnolingvistisen yhteisön symbolisten elementtien oppiminen. Sosiaalinen dynamiikka ja vertaispaine voivat aiheuttaa ongelmia puhumiselle, ja sosiaalinen status ja sosiaalinen identiteetti ovat tärkeitä oppijalle. Ongelmia voi myös aiheuttaa kielen vaihto- tai interaktiivisten verkostojen puute verkostojen rajautuessa vain passiivisiin.

Aksentteihin liittyvät asenteet olivat tärkeä mielenkiinnonkohde tässä tutkimuksessa, ja mm. Garrett:n (2010) kieleen ja asenteisiin liittyvää teoriaa hyödynnettiin tulosten analysoinnissa. Aksentti on tärkeä osa identiteettiä, mutta voi myös aiheuttaa ongelmia puhumiselle, jos oppija kokee, että vierasta kieltä tulisi puhua kuin äidinkielen puhuja. Nykyään englannin kielen varianteista on puhuttu paljon, ja standardienglannin malli on kyseenalaistettu, koska englantia käytetään paljon kulttuurienvälisessä kommunikaatiossa, jossa ei pitäisi olla tarvetta amerikkalaisen tai brittiläisen aksentin oppimiselle, kunhan viesti vain välittyy. Vieraskielinen aksentti voi johtua transferilmiöstä tai myöhäisestä opintojen alkuiästä. Standardimallia vahvistavat sosiaaliset instituutiot ja rakenteet, mm. koulutus ja media. Englannin asema yhteiskunnassa myös vaikuttaa asenteeseen, esim. Suomessa englannin kielen osaamiseen liitetään Haarmannin (1984) mukaan käsitteet 'korkea laatu' ja 'itseluottamus'. Etenkin Suomessa, mutta myös Japanissa, asenteet vahvaa äidinkielen värittämää ääntämystä kohtaan ovat kuitenkin hyvin negatiivisia, ja brittiläistä ääntämystä arvostetaan eniten myös suomalaisilla ja japanilaisilla puhujilla, mikä varmasti aiheuttaa paineita puhumiseen. Tämä voi kertoa siitä, että englannin kielen puhumisessa koetaan paineita, esimerkiksi korkeiden odotusten vuoksi.

Metodit

Tutkimuksessa hyödynnettiin laadullisia metodeja, ja datan esittämiseen osittain myös määrällisiä metodeja. Tämä oli ajoittain ongelmallista, sillä kysymykset olivat hyvin avoimia, mikä johti erilaisiin vastauksiin, joitten kategorisoiminen ei ollut yksiselitteistä. Kuvaajissa pyrittiin kuitenkin antamaan yleinen kuva tuloksista ja vastausten yleisestä luonteesta. Joissakin kuvaajissa yksi haastateltava saattoi antaa useamman eri vastauksen, esimerkiksi kysymykseen 'missä/milloin käytät englantia?'. Yhteensä haastattelut tehtiin 29 suomalaisen ja 27 japanilaisen kanssa. Miesten lukumäärä naisiin suhteutettuna olisi voinut olla korkeampi, mutta englannin aikuisopiskelijoiden naisvaltaisuuden ja haastateltavien löytämisessä koettujen ongelmien vuoksi jouduttiin tyytymään naisvaltaiseen otantaan. Koulutustausta jakautui suomalaisilla prosentuaalisesti n.40-60 yliopiston ja ammatillisen koulutuksen välillä, mutta japanilaisilla oli lähinnä joko yliopistokoulutus tai ei lainkaan peruskoulutusta korkeampaa koulutusta. Ammatillinen koulutus on harvinaisempi Japanissa, joten tämä ei ollut yllätys. Haastateltavat opiskelivat haastatteluhetkellä aikuiskoulutuskeskuksilla tai kansalaisopistoilla, japanilaisilla oli usein yksityistunteja englantia äidinkielenään puhuvien opettajien kanssa, itsenäistä opiskelua ja kulttuurikeskusten kursseja.

Tulokset

Haastattelujen perusteella havaittiin, että suurin osa sekä suomalaisista että japanilaisista koki englannin puhumisen hankalaksi. Myös ääntäminen oli hankalaa, ja virheiden tekeminen pelotti monia, etenkin aikaisemman, tiukan koulutuksen takia. Virallisissa tilanteissa ja tilanteissa, joissa tarvitaan erikoista sanastoa puhuminen koettiin hankalimpana, muuten englannin puhumista ajatellen hankalat tilanteet olivat hyvin yksilöllisiä. Suomalaisille puhuminen oli englannin kielen

taitojen osa-alueista hankalinta, ja kirjallinen tuottaminen oli helpompaa, koska se salli aikaa miettiä. Japanilaisille kuullunymmärtäminen oli hankalinta, mikä vaikutti myös puhumiseen. Sosiaaliset tekijät olivat myös tärkeitä: muiden kannustus ja mielipiteet vaikuttavat siihen, kuinka oma itsetunto englannin kielen puhujana kehittyi. Sosiaalinen stigma, esimerkiksi aksentteihin liittyen, tuntui aiheuttavan paineita, vaikka monet eivät sanoneetkaan sitä suoraan: esimerkiksi suomalaiset eivät halunneet kansainvälisessä kontekstissa leimautua suomalaiseksi vaikkapa vahvan, suomalaistyyllisen ääntämyksen perusteella. Toisaalta japanilaiset eivät haluaisi erottua massasta liian englantilaisella aksentilla, sillä sosiaalinen vertaispaine tuntui olevan tiukkaa, ainakin muutamille; ryhmästä erottuminen nähtiin usein negatiivisena. Aksenttiasenteet olivat ongelman osatekijä, sillä ne olivat hyvin tiukkoja: omaan puheeseen ja oman kansan englannin kielen aksenttiin kohdistuvat asenteet olivat erittäin negatiivisia. Standardimallia, toisin sanoen amerikanenglantia ja brittienglantia suosittiin vahvasti. Etenkin korkeasti koulutetut halusivat puhua syntyperäisellä, tai sitä muistuttavalla aksentilla, ja ongelma oli että tällaisen aksentin saavuttamista ei nähty erityisen hankalana, vaikka se on tosiasiallisesti erittäin haastavaa.

Suomalaiset ilmoittivat käyttävänsä englantia enemmän kuin japanilaiset. Kaikenkaikkiaan molemmat ryhmät käyttivät englantia eniten ulkomailla tai turistien kanssa kotimaassa, mutta myös vapaa-ajalla (esim. lukiessa, TV:tä tai elokuvia katsellessa tai internetissä), perheen tai ystävien kanssa ja töissä käytettiin englantia. Suomalaiset käyttivät englantia enemmän kaikissa näistä kategorioista, mutta erityisesti perheen tai ystävien kanssa enemmän kuin japanilaiset. n. 30% japanilaisista ilmoitti käyttävänsä hyvin vähän tai ei ollenkaan englantia luokan ulkopuolella. Oma persoona tai oma puheliaisuus vaikutti useiden mielestä siihen, kuinka helppoa tai vaikeaa englannin puhuminen oli. Suomalaiset luonnehtivat itseään useammin hiljaiseksi kuin japanilaiset, millä saattaisi olla yhteys kriittisyyteen tai epävarmuuteen omia puhetaitoja kohtaan. Englannin

puhumisesta oli sekä positiivisia että negatiivisia kokemuksia. Erityisesti suomalaisten joukossa monet näkivät muiden ihmisten suhtautuvan omaan englannin kielen puhumiseen negatiivisesti.

Ikä, eli neurologiset osatekijät myös vaikuttivat englannin kielen puhumiseen: oppimisen alkuaika oli tärkeä ja erotti suomalaiset ja japanilaiset toisistaan. Tämä näkyi siinä, että hyvin todennäköisesti osittain sen vuoksi, että japanilaiset olivat aloittaneet englannin opintonsa myöhemmin kuin suomalaiset, heille kuullunymmärtäminen oli erittäin hankalaa. Suomalaisille kuullunymmärtäminen ei ollut yhtä suuri ongelma, ja taidot olivat opettajien kuvailujen perusteella arvioitaessa paremmat. Myös altistuminen englannin kielelle oli tärkeä osatekijä: suomalaiset altistuivat enemmän englanninkieliselle medialle arkipäiväisessä elämässä, japanilaiset vähemmän. Japanissa englanninkielinen media on usein dubattu (vaikka myös toisinaan tekstitetty), eikä se ole yhtä näkyvässä asemassa kuin Suomessa. Koulutus oli myös tärkeä ongelmien lähde. Aikaisempi koulutus Suomessa oli ollut erittäin kielioppipainotteista ja opettajakeskeistä, kuten myös japanissa. Puhumista ei oltu harjoiteltu paljon, jos ollenkaan, mikä oli tehnyt puhumisesta erittäin haastavaa. Nykyinen englanninkielen opetus Suomessa on muuttunut paljon oppilaskeskeisemmäksi, mikä tarkoittaa käytännössä sitä, että puheharjoituksiakin tehdään, ja tämä auttoi myös monia aikuisopiskelijoita nykyisellä kurssilla. Japanissa tilanne ei ole muuttunut, mikä varmasti vaikuttaa asiaan. Toisaalta äidinkielenään englantia puhuvat yksityisopettajat harjoittivat paljon enemmän kommunikointiin tarvittavia taitoja, mikä tuntui olevan hyödyllistä japanilaisille aikuisopiskelijoille. Myös yleinen vieraiden kielten opiskelun puute oli Japanilaisilla hyvin todennäköinen syy ongelmiin englannin kielen kuullunymmärtämisessä ja siten myös puhumisessa.

Standardienglannin aksentteja suosittiin: erityisesti suomalaiset, mutta myös japanilaiset pitivät brittienglantilaista aksenttia miellyttävimpänä, ja monet halusivat oppia puhumaan tällaisella aksentilla tai omien sanojensa mukaan kauniisti, sujuvasti, tai ymmärrettävästi. Japanilaisista

muutamat mainitsivat myös amerikanenglannin miellyttävimpänä aksenttina. Sekä suomalaiset että japanilaiset pitivät oman äidinkiellensä värittämää vahvaa englannin kielen aksenttia epämiellyttävänä, ja oma englanti kuulosti moen korvaan epämiellyttävältä tai kankealta. Standardienglannin aksentteja tunnuttiin arvostettavan mm. niiden sosiaalisten merkitysten takia: erityisesti Suomessa ne liittyivät ammattitaitoiseen ja asialliseen imagoon, kun taas vahva, oman äidinkielen värittävä aksentti tuntui useille antavan päinvastaisen kuvan. Yleisesti epämiellyttävinä aksentteina pidettiin vaikeaselkoisia aksentteja, mutta yksittäisistä useimmin etenkin suomalaisilla nousi esiin amerikkalaisen englannin aksentti.

Pohdinta

Kaikenkaikkiaan esille tulleet ongelmien pääasialliset syyt liittyivät koulutustaustaan ja altistumiseen, sosiaalisiin osatekijöihin ja neurologisiin osatekijöihin. Molemmilla ryhmillä aikaisempi englannin opetus oli vaikuttanut negatiivisesti englannin puhetaitoihin, sillä puhumista ei oltu harjoiteltu ja virheiden tekeminen oltiin nähty erittäin negatiivisena asiana. Myös aikaisempien opettajien asenteet eri aksentteja kohtaan olivat vaikuttaneet ainakin jossain määrin haastateltavien omiin asenteisiin, sillä suomalaiset suosivat erityisesti brittiläistä aksenttia, jota aiemmat opettajatkin olivat suosineet. Japanilaisilla opettajat olivat suosineet amerikkalaista aksenttia, ja siitä pidettiin jonkin verran, mutta kuitenkin useammin suosittiin brittiläistä aksenttia opettajien asenteista huolimatta. Standardienglannin malli tuntui olevan vahva, ja oman äidinkielen vahvasti värittämää aksenttia kohtaan oli tiukkoja asenteita, jotka voivat hyvinkin aiheuttaa paineita puhumiseen. Monille haastateltaville, etenkin suomalaiselle ryhmälle, nykyisestä englannin opetusta tuntui kuitenkin olleen paljon hyötyä englannin puhumista ajatellen, sillä kommunikatiivista puolta ja funktionalisuutta painottaneet opettajat olivat saaneet rohkaistua oppilaitaan mm. korostamalla ettei virheiden tekeminen haitannut jos viesti välittyi.

Englannin kielen asemalla, opintojen aloitusajalla, ja yleisellä vieraiden kielten altistumistasolla oli merkitys raportoitujen englannin kielen taitojen ja puhumisen kanssa koettujen ongelmien kanssa, sillä aikainen opintojen aloitus sekä suurempi altistuminen englannille ja yleisesti vieraille kielille tuntui parantavan kuullunymmärtämiskykyjä ja siten myös valmiuksia puhua. Kuitenkin, korkeampi koulutus korotti myös odotuksia ja tiukensi asenteita esim. aksentteja kohtaan, ja erityisesti suomalaisilla syntyperäistä englannin kielen puhujaa jäljittelevä aksentti oli tärkeä, esimerkiksi asiantuntevan kuvan luomisessa. Tähän vaikutti todennäköisesti myös englannin kielen näkyvämpi asema Suomessa. Monelle englannin kielen puhuminen tuntui olevan pikemminkin esiintymistä kuin kommunikointia, mikä saattoi aiheuttaa paineita.

Nykyään englannin ollessa yhä tärkeämpi kansainvälisen viestinnän väline ympäri maailmaa, erilaisia aksentteja tutkitaan enemmän ja niihin aletaan suhtautua suopeammin. Tällaisten asenteiden tuominen luokkahuoneeseen olisi tärkeää opiskelijoiden puhumisvalmiuksien parantamisessa. Tulevaisuudessa voitaisiin tutkia myös nuorempia opiskelijoita, sillä todennäköisesti ainakin nuoremmilla suomalaisilla, mahdollisesti myös japanilaisilla, on paremmat tiedot englannista, mutta myös tiukemmat asenteet aksentteja ja omia kielitaitoja kohtaan. Koulutuksen oppilaskeskeisemmäksi muuttuneita metodeja ja niiden vaikutusta olisi myös hyvä arvioida tällä tavoin. Myös objektiivisempi data opiskelijoiden kyvyistä auttaisi tutkimusta.

Tämän tutkimuksen tuloksista olisi hyötyä sekä luokkahuoneessa että sen ulkopuolella, sillä ongelmien tiedostamisesta on hyötyä opettajalle harjoitusten laatimisessa, mutta myös oppijalle itsearviointissa ja käytännön harjoittelussa. Käytännöllisempiä ja kielen funktionaalisuutta korostavia harjoituksia tulisi tuoda enemmän luokkahuoneeseen, sillä monelta puuttuvat puheharjoitusmahdollisuudet arkielämästä. Myös aksenttiasenteita pitäisi ottaa huomioon

opetuksessa niiden poistamiseksi tai lieventämiseksi. Eri aksenteista pitäisi puhua, etenkin omasta äidinkielisestä korostuksesta, mutta myös siitä, etteivät myöskään englantia äidinkielenään puhuvat omaa ns. täydellistä aksenttia opiskelemissaan vieraissa kielissä. Käytännön metodeja voisi kehittää tulevissa tutkimuksissa.