

Heini Repo

# **READING COMPREHENSION OF IMPLIED MEANING AND GENDER:**

A study on gender variation in reading comprehension of  
conversational implicatures  
of Finnish EFL speakers

Bachelor's thesis  
Faculty of Information Technology and Communication Sciences  
February 2021

# TIIVISTELMÄ

Heini Repo: READING COMPREHENSION OF IMPLIED MEANING AND GENDER:  
A study on gender variation in reading comprehension of conversational implicatures  
of Finnish EFL speakers

Kandidaatintyö

Tampereen yliopisto

Englannin kieli, kirjallisuus ja kääntäminen

Helmikuu 2021

---

Tämän kandidaatintutkielman aiheena on sukupuolen (gender) vaikutus keskustelupäätelmien (conversational implicatures) englantia vieraana kielenä puhuvien suomalaisten luetunymmärtämiseen. Epäsuoraviestintä on osa ihmisten jokapäiväistä kommunikaatiota. Tehtokas kommunikaatio ei ilmaise kaikkea suoraan, vaan se luottaa keskustelukumppanin kykyyn tulkita se mikä on ilman sanoja ilmaistu. Keskustelupäätelmät ovat epäsuoran viestinnän keino ja ne perustuvat keskustelunperiaatteiden tarkoitukselliseen rikkomiseen epäsuoran viestin tulkin aktivoimiseksi. L2 puhujien keskustelupäätelmien ymmärtämistä onkin jo tutkittu paljon, mutta näissä tutkimuksissa ei ole huomioitu sukupuolen mahdollista vaikutusta keskustelupäätelmien ymmärtämiseen.

Populaarikulttuurissa on kuitenkin jo vuosikymmenten ajan puhuttu miesten ja naisten vaikeuksista ymmärtää toisiaan. Naisten ja miesten keskustelutavat ovatkin olleet tutkimuksen kohteena jo 1970-luvulta lähtien. Nämä tutkimukset ovat kuitenkin jättäneet huomiotta keskustelupäätelmät ja moni näistä tutkimuksista on perustunut tutkijan analyysiin muiden ihmisten keskusteluista. Keskusteluanalyysi on pahimmillaan hyvin subjektiivinen ja siksi objektiiviseen metodiin perustuva tutkimus on tarpeellinen.

Tutkimuksen tarkoituksena on selvittää vaikuttaako koehenkilön sukupuoli hänen tapaansa tulkita englanninkielisiä keskustelupäätelmiä. Tutkimuksen osallistajat olivat suomalaisia korkeakouluopiskelijoita tai korkeakoulusta vastavalmistuneita. Tutkimus toteutettiin Internet-kyselyllä, jossa oli 24 keskustelupäätelmän sisältävää tehtävää ja 36 harhatehtävää. Osallistajat jaettiin ryhmiin heidän itsearvioidun Eurooppalaisen viitekehysten (CEFR) tason ja ilmoitetun sukupuolen mukaan. Heidän vastauksensa keskustelupäätelmä-tehtäviin analysoitiin kiihin neliötestillä (chi-square test of independence).

Testistä saatu p-arvo oli pääosin suurempi kuin 0,05 (5 %), minkä takia nollahypoteesia ei voitu hylätä. Täten tutkimuksen tulokset viittaavat siihen, että sukupuolella ei ole vaikutusta keskustelupäätelmien luetunymmärtämiseen. Tutkimus kuitenkin havaitsi luetunymmärtämisen kohentuvan kielitaidon kehittyessä, mikä tukee monen aikaisemman tutkimuksen tuloksia.

Avainsanat: keskustelumaksiimit, keskustelupäätelmä, sukupuoli, luetunymmärtäminen,

Tämän julkaisun alkuperäisyys on tarkastettu Turnitin OriginalityCheck –ohjelmalla.

# ABSTRACT

Heini Repo: READING COMPREHENSION OF IMPLIED MEANING AND GENDER:

A study on gender variation in reading comprehension of conversational implicatures of Finnish EFL speakers

Bachelor's thesis

Tampere university

English language, literature, and translation

February 2021

---

This thesis studies if the reading comprehension of conversational implicatures is affected by the reader's gender. The human conversation aims for efficiency and therefore speakers often imply things instead of directly expressing them. Conversational implicatures are commonly used to express indirect messages and they have been studied extensively when it comes to EFL/ESL comprehension. However, there do not appear to be any studies that have studied genders' effect on the comprehension of conversational implicatures. In addition, previous research that has studied cross-gender or same-gender talk has often used conversation analysis as their research method, and therefore, a study with a more objective research method is justified. The aim of this study is to discover if the comprehension of conversational implicatures is affected by the participant's gender

The study groups consisted of Finnish male and female EFL higher education (university or university of applied science) students and recently graduated students. The study was conducted through an online questionnaire which included 24 conversational implicature test items and 36 filler items. The participants were divided into groups based on their self-assessed CEFR (Common European Framework of Reference) and self-reported gender. After the participants were divided into groups, their answers to the conversational implicature test items were analyzed with the chi-square test of independence. Because the p-value was higher than 0.05 (5 %) in the majority of the questions the null hypothesis could not be rejected. Therefore, the results of the study would indicate that the gender of the participant made no significant difference in the comprehension of conversational implicatures. However, a difference in comprehension was found between the CEFR levels. The lower the proficiency level was, the less frequently the implicature was detected. This supports the results of many previous studies.

Keywords: Conversational implicature, gender, reading comprehension, EFL,

The originality of this thesis has been checked using the Turnitin OriginalityCheck service.

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

|       |  |    |
|-------|--|----|
| 1.    | INTRODUCTION.....  | 1  |
| 2.    | LITERATURE REVIEW.....                                     | 5  |
| 2.1   | Definition of gender and same-gender talk.....             | 5  |
| 2.2   | Previous research on gender differences.....               | 6  |
| 2.3   | Conversational implicatures.....                           | 8  |
| 2.4   | Previous research on conversational implicatures.....      | 10 |
| 2.5   | Research questions.....                                    | 11 |
| 3.    | METHOD AND MATERIALS.....                                  | 12 |
| 3.1   | The structure of the online questionnaire.....             | 12 |
| 3.2   | Grouping of the participants.....                          | 14 |
| 3.3   | The chi-square test of independence.....                   | 15 |
| 4.    | RESULTS.....   | 17 |
| 4.1   | Participants of the study.....                             | 17 |
| 4.2   | The chi-square test results.....                           | 18 |
| 4.3   | 2x2 chi-square test and the results.....                   | 19 |
| 4.4   | Other figures.....   | 20 |
| 4.4.1 | The response rate to all implicatures.....                 | 20 |
| 4.4.2 | The response rate to different implicature types.....      | 21 |
| 4.4.3 | Quality implicatures.....                                  | 22 |
| 4.4.4 | Quantity implicatures.....                                 | 22 |
| 4.4.5 | Relation implicatures.....                                 | 23 |
| 4.4.6 | Manner implicatures.....                                   | 24 |
| 5.    | DISCUSSION.....  | 25 |
| 5.1   | Differences in the interpretation of the implicatures..... | 25 |

|     |                                   |    |
|-----|-----------------------------------|----|
| 5.2 | Relation implicatures .....       | 26 |
| 5.3 | Manner implicatures .....         | 28 |
| 5.4 | Limitations of the study .....    | 28 |
| 6.  | CONCLUSION .....                  | 30 |
|     | REFERENCES .....                  | 32 |
|     | APPENDIX: THE QUESTIONNAIRE ..... | 34 |

# 1. INTRODUCTION

For decades cross-gender communication has been the interest of several studies in linguistics and other fields. When women entered the world that only men had had access to, people were faced with the problem of gendered talk. It seemed that men and women had different ways of communicating, and that caused misunderstandings in cross-gender communication. This mismatch of unwritten rules of communication intrigued researchers, and several studies were conducted on the differences in communication. The topic has also gained popularity over the years. One book written on the gender differences in communication became so well known by its name that people commonly use it to describe the differences between men and women. *Men are from Mars, Women are from Venus* (Gray, 1992) is a phrase that is used frequently by both men and women. But can the truth be that simple?

No study has proven such difference in origin, but studies (Lakoff 2004, Tannen 1991) have found some of the differences in the ways that men and women communicate when amongst members of their own gender. Males are said to follow a hierarchical style in their conversations, whereas females follow a more co-operative style (Yule 2014, 280). When males and females converse in same-gender communication, problems regarding turn-taking and tag questions are quite sparse. However, problems arrive when the two genders are in communication with each other (Yule 2014, 280). Since both sides are accustomed, but often not aware, to their own ways of communicating, they follow those same rules in the cross-gender talk, which in turn leads to interruptions and misunder-

standings. An example of this situation would be when a woman is communicating an implied message to a man, but the man interprets the message directly. Is this due to an insufficient way of communicating or are men not able to observe the underlying message?

Implied meaning has intrigued researchers for decades and it has been extensively researched by studying implicatures. Implicature is a meaning that is implied with an utterance but not explicitly expressed. An example of implicature would be to say “the frame is nice” when asked for an opinion regarding a painting. By not commenting on the actual painting itself, the speaker is indirectly sending a message that she does not care for the painting. Previous studies on implicatures have focused mainly on the aspect of second language learning. In these studies, the researchers have wanted to discover if there were any differences in comprehension between native and non-native speakers. It has been suggested that language skills play a crucial role in understanding implied meaning. Some studies (e.g., Bouton 1988; Taguchi 2005) seem to support that notion, but could there be an additional factor that affects the comprehension of implicatures? Even though implicatures have been researched extensively, there do not appear to be any studies on the differences of comprehension between females and males. Considering the previously mentioned mismatches in the cross-gender talk, it is justified to suspect that such a difference could exist.

The aim of the present study was to research this gap by studying how accurately adult males and females comprehend conversational implicatures, and if there are any differences in the comprehension of them. The study focused on conversational implicatures since they require contextual and cultural knowledge, unlike the conventional implicature the meaning of which does not vary between different contexts (Grice 1975; Blome-Tillmann 2013). The research was conducted through an online questionnaire with multi-

ple-choice questions. The questions consisted of short conversations in which a conversational implicature is employed. The participant was first asked to interpret the utterance with the conversational implicature within its context, and then to select one option from the given options. These options include a literal interpretation of the utterance, an interpretation of its implied meaning, and a third option. The participants' answers were then divided into two groups, males, and females, after which a group's answers were compared against the other group with a statistical tool called the chi-square test of independence. This would reveal any significant differences in the interpretations that the males and females made. A difference in interpretation could indicate that males and females comprehend conversational implicatures differently and that could be one cause for the communication mismatch.

Comprehending written text is often more difficult than real speech due to the absence of tones, and therefore, in the future also other methods ought to be used to exclude other factors that might affect comprehension. Since Western societies have become less segregated in the past hundred years, women and men now participate in cross-gender conversations in all areas of their lives. To achieve more efficient communication in cross-gender situations, it is important to be able to communicate without many misunderstandings. This study will help to understand more about the gendered talk and the comprehension of implied meaning.

This thesis is divided into six sections: introduction, literature review, method and materials, results, discussion, and conclusion. In the literature review, the previous research on conversational implicatures, and gendered talk are presented. The section of the research questions presents the research questions of the study. In the section on method and materials, the method is explained in detail, and in the results and discussion



sections, the results are analyzed and then further discussed. Finally, in the conclusion, a summary of the study is presented.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

In this section, relevant theory and previous research are presented. The section will begin with the definition of the terms *gender* and same-gender talk. In the next subsection, previous research on gender differences is reported and briefly discussed. Since the study investigates the comprehension of conversational implicatures the next subsection introduces the reader to the theory of conversational implicatures and then to the previous research that has been conducted on comprehension of conversational implicatures. Lastly, the study's research questions are presented in the last subsection of the literature review section.

### 2.1 Definition of gender and same-gender talk

Before discussing the previous research on gender differences, it is crucial to define the word *gender*. This thesis will research the connection between language and gender, not between language and biological sex. *Gender* is a social construct that is separate from the biological sex (Eckert & McConnell-Ginet 2003, 10). In other words, humans are not born with a gender, and it is not something that people have by nature. Sex is a biological categorization that is mainly based on the person's reproductive potential. Gender on the other hand is a social elaboration of that. Gender builds on biological sex, exaggerates differences between sexes, and carries biological differences to areas where they are not relevant (Eckert & McConnell-Ginet 2003, 10). To illustrate, wearing a skirt is seen as feminine behavior even though there is no biological reason for it. Nothing in women's biology dictates that women should wear a dress. Further evidence of gender's social construction is that the rules of correct gender behavior vary between different cultures. While in some

cultures wearing a skirt is seen as feminine behavior, in others, such as Scotland, skirts are also worn by men.

Despite the lack of biological motivation, gender is an inseparable part of people's lives. Often before the baby is even born, the parents begin the gendering process by painting the nursery in girl or boy colors. By the time that the baby is born, it will have a masculine or feminine name and its wardrobe will reflect the biological sex. This gendering will continue throughout the baby's life and will reach all the aspects of its life. A child will learn from others what is appropriate behavior and interests for men and women. In addition, boys and girls will usually spend most of their early years within same-gender groups. In them, they will learn from fellow members the rules of behavior and communication (Yule 2014, 280). According to Yule, humans establish a preference for talking to people of the same gender by the time that they are three years old (2014, 280). Moreover, by the age of five, girls are actively excluded by boys and they comment negatively on boys who socialize with girls. Thus, the social differences begin to grow from an early age. During childhood, girls tend to socialize in smaller groups, often doing activities that are co-operative and establishing reciprocal roles and exchanging them. At the same time, boys socialize in larger groups, participate in competitive activities, and they establish more hierarchical relationships (Yule 2014, 280). This same-gender socialization leads to differences in behavior and in how each gender approaches interaction (Yule 2014, 280).

## **2.2 Previous research on gender differences**

According to Crawford (1995, 23), the search for women's speech began in the 1970s when Robin Lakoff published her article in which she introduced the term women's language to the world. Lakoff (2004) had two main arguments that men and women do not

use the same speaking style and that these differences are due to male dominance.

Lakoff's data consisted mainly of conversations that she had or heard and of language that was used in the media. She then used her intuition to analyze the material she had gathered (Lakoff 2004, 40). This type of data and analysis method have several issues regarding their accuracy and objectivity, which are discussed further in the latter part of this section.

According to Lakoff (2004, 41), the two languages of the genders exist already when children reach the age of ten and have formed same-gender groups. She also argues that women must learn to become fluent in both gender styles and this restricts women's ability to express themselves in male-dominated environments. This might have been true during the time of the original research in the 1970s. However, as society is not as segregated and women have obtained more rights, Lakoff's claim that women would suffer from having to adapt to the men's speech style seems inaccurate.

Lakoff's (2004) claims of women's weaker language provoked protest from others and Lakoff's work became the target for critique that questioned the validity of the evidence for genderlect theory (Littlejohn & Foss 2009, 432). Consequently, other approaches to studying gender differences were born. Deborah Tannen (1991, 47–48) treated the assumed gender differences as "cultural differences" and she believed that people should be aware of them to avoid miscommunications. Like Lakoff (2004), Tannen (1991) analyzed conversations that she had had or had heard. According to Tannen, women are motivated by intimacy, and men are motivated by independence (1991, 26). She further believes that these differences can cause men and women to have a different view of the same situation and this difference of view is a reason for miscommunication in the cross-gender talk (Tannen 1991, 26).

Tannen (1991) includes many descriptions of conversations to illustrate her points, however, the majority of the situations could be interpreted differently, or the supposed gender difference might be due to individual differences. For example, Tannen (1991, 51) describes a conversation where a man complains about being tired and he gets aggravated by the woman's response: "I didn't sleep well either. I never do." because he interpreted it as an attempt to belittle him. Tannen (1991, 51) interprets that the man's reaction is due to the men's desire for independence. However, this misunderstanding might have been due to the man's inability to recognize the woman's implied attempt to relate to him. Depending on the context, mentioning your own troubles might be considered as making the conversation about yourself instead of the conversation partner that might desire the conversation to be about their problem.

Because many factors can affect the assumed differences in speech style, a more objective research method is required. As aforementioned Tannen (1991) analyzes conversations where implied meaning is employed. To investigate whether men and women interpret implied meanings in the same way, a more objective method can be employed with conversational implicatures.

## **2.3 Conversational implicatures**

The theory of conversational implicatures was proposed by H.P. Grice in the late 1960s. He argued that a distinction must be made between what is said and what is implied (Grice 1975). According to Grice (1975, 44), what is said is closely related to the conventional meaning of utterance the speaker has spoken. What is implied, however, is only loosely connected to what was said and therefore according to Grice must be worked out or calculated from the context and other clues that accompany the spoken utterance.

Grice's (1975, 1989) theory of conversational implicatures is based on a principle that Grice identified as the *Cooperative Principle* (CP). This principle is expressed as follows: "Make your conversational contribution such as is required, at the stage at which it occurs, by the accepted purpose or direction of the talk exchange in which you are engaged." (Grice 1975, 26). According to Grice (1975), the CP is the foundation of rational conversation and any interpretation of an utterance presupposes that the speaker is following the CP. Grice (1975, 26–27) further argued that in addition to the CP, the speakers also adhere to four conversational maxims, commonly referred to as Grice's maxims, which are presented in Table 1.

|   |
|---|
| Quantity: Make your contribution as informative as is required. |
| Quality: Do not say what you believe to be false.               |
| Relation: Be relevant.  |
| Manner: Be perspicuous.   |

*Table 1. Grice's maxims (Grice 1975, 26–27)*

According to Grice's (1975, 1989), theories the implicatures can be calculated from the expressed utterance together with the conversational context. Consider the following example:

(1) Peter: Oh no! I have a bad headache.

Emily: Look, the pharmacy is right there!

If Emily's answer is to be taken literally, it does not seem to be relevant to Peter's utterance, and thus would violate the maxim of relevance. However, according to Levinson

(1983, 102), despite the evident violation of the CP, people will interpret Emily's utterance to be cooperative at a non-superficial level, and therefore, they search for a connection between Peter's headache and the pharmacy and thus reach the conclusion that Peter can get medication for his headache from the pharmacy nearby. Because Emily's utterance violates the maxim of relevance, its implicature is identified as relation implicature.

## **2.4 Previous research on conversational implicatures**

L2 speaker's comprehension of conversational implicatures has been studied by many researchers (e.g., Bouton 1988, 1992; Taguchi 2005). Bouton (1988) set out to discover if a person's cultural background affects the comprehension of conversational implicatures and if the comprehension of those implicatures could be measured with a multiple-choice test. The participants of the study were 436 NNS (nonnative speaker) students who were entering the University of Illinois, and a control group of 28 American native speakers (Bouton 1988, 186). The results of the study showed that NNSs interpreted conversational implicatures differently than native speakers (Bouton 1988).

Bouton conducted another study on the topic in 1992 when he wanted to discover whether nonnative speakers could learn to interpret conversational implicatures without receiving any teaching. The study consisted of 30 NNS participants that had been participants in the 1988's study. Bouton (1992, 63–64) discovered that the interpretation of conversational implicatures improved when the NNS stayed in the United States for over four years. However, they did not still always interpret the conversational implicatures in the same way as native speakers. Since the NNSs were from different cultures, a cultural background might have affected the interpretation of the implicatures, which was recognized in Bouton's studies.

Taguchi is one of the other known researchers in the field. She has conducted several studies on conversational implicatures. Taguchi (2005) investigated if the proficiency of L2 speakers affected the accuracy and speed of comprehension of conversational implicatures. The participants of the study consisted of Japanese English college students and native English speakers. Taguchi (2005) discovered that language proficiency affected the accuracy of comprehending conversational implicatures but not on comprehension speed. Moreover, the comprehension speed did not have a significant relationship with accuracy.

Bouton's and Taguchi's work would indicate that language proficiency and culture affect the comprehension of conversational implicatures. However, according to Lakoff (2004) and Tannen (1991), a person's gender affects the way that people produce and comprehend language. Therefore, there seems to be a gap in research of the comprehension of conversational implicatures and nonnative speakers. Moreover, Lakoff's (2004) and Tannen's (1991) methods have left a need for a more objective and structured method to study the issue. Thus, a study on men's and women's comprehension of conversational implicatures was justified.

## **2.5 Research questions**

As can be seen from the previous subsections, a study that would investigate differences in the comprehension of conversational implicatures is justified. Based on the existing gap in research and the results of the aforementioned studies, the study had three research questions which were as follows:

Does gender affect the reading comprehension of conversation implicatures?

Does proficiency affect the comprehension of implicatures?

Are some implicature types harder to comprehend than others?



### **3. METHOD AND MATERIALS**

The study was conducted through an online questionnaire. It was made with Microsoft Forms and was distributed to students through student associations' email lists, Tampere University's intranet, and social media. The participants were students or recently graduated students from universities or universities of applied science in Finland. Higher education students were chosen as the study group because they share similar backgrounds when it comes to education and social status. The responses were analyzed with a chi-square test of independence.

#### **3.1 The structure of the online questionnaire**

The questionnaire was divided into five parts. Part 1 asked for personal information from the participants such as age, gender, native language, and if the participant was an English major. If a participant was a native English speaker or an English major, they might distort the results of the study. The second and third parts of the questionnaire consisted of multiple-choice questions. From those questions, twenty-four questions were the actual test items, and thirty-six questions were filler questions. The filler questions were added to obtain more instinctive responses from the participants and the participants were also advised not to think about the questions for too long. The actual test items presented conversations with some contextual information and the participants were asked to choose an explanation for the meaning of an utterance. To illustrate, (2) presents one of the question items used in the study.

(2) A can not find her phone and needs to know what time it is.

A: "Can you tell me the time?"

B: "Well, the milkman has come."

What does B mean by his reply?

The time now is after the time the milkman usually arrives

B has no idea what time it is

B is letting A know that the milkman has come

The given choices included a choice that recognizes the implicature (+implicature), a literal interpretation of the utterance (-implicature), and a third choice (-implicature). In (2) the +implicature option is *The time now is after the time the milkman usually arrives*. Whereas *B is letting A know that the milkman has come* would be the literal interpretation of B's utterance.

The fourth part of the questionnaire included questions regarding the language skills of the participants. To divide the participants into correct groups, the participants were asked for their Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) English level. Because it was not possible to test the participants' language skills with an official exam, a self-assessment tool was necessary. CEFR was chosen because it is a commonly known system in Finland, it was created by the EU, and it is increasingly used in schools for self-assessment. Therefore, the participants were already familiar with it and most likely have used it before in self-assessment. In case the participants had not evaluated their CEFR level prior to the study, a link to the Council of Europe's self-assessment grid was embedded into the questionnaire. Moreover, the participants were advised to not underestimate their language skills due to modesty.

This section of language skills-related questions was purposefully placed at the end of the questionnaire to not cause insecurities in the participants before they answer the actual test items. If the participants had to evaluate their language skills before answering the questions it might cause them to overthink their answers, and thus they would not be natural or instinctive. The fifth part of the questionnaire asked for the email of the participants in case they wished to participate in the lottery.

### 3.2 Grouping of the participants

All the participants were divided into groups based on their gender and their self-assessed language level. Participants who chose *other* as their gender were not included in the study due to their upbringing being different from cisgender people. A person who was raised as a male but identifies as a woman tends to have a different experience than a cisgender female or male. Therefore, it cannot be known if being transgender or non-binary would affect their answers. However, in future studies, this could be an interesting question to study.

In addition to *others*, participants who chose A1 or A2 were not included in the study because they do not have the required language skills to understand the questions, and therefore, their answers are not reliable. Initially, only freshman English majors were going to be included in the study because otherwise, they might have studied implicatures, and therefore, be able to choose the +implicature choice. However, during the analysis of the results, this proved to be a false supposition since the English majors did not perform significantly better than others at their language level. Therefore, the study consisted of eight groups: B1 Male, B1 Female, B2 Male, B2 Female, C1 Male, C1 Female, C2 Male, and C2 Female.

### 3.3 The chi-square test of independence

To have meaningful and reliable results, the results of the study were analyzed with a statistical tool called the chi-square test. The chi-square test is a statistical hypothesis test that can be used to identify a relationship between two categorical variables. There are two types of chi-square tests: the chi-square goodness of fit test and the chi-square test of independence, which is also known as the Pearson Chi-square test. One of the strengths of the chi-square test is that it does not require equality of variances among the study groups or for the random variables to have the same finite variance. Thus, it allows the evaluation of dichotomous independent variables (McHugh 2013, 143).

The chi-square uses a contingency table in which the observed counts are compared to the expected counts of the cells. Moore and McCabe (2003, 624) have written that “The chi-square statistic is a measure of how much the observed cell counts in a two-way table diverge from the expected cell counts.”

To discover possible relationships between variables by using a p-value, the chi-square test requires a null hypothesis, an alternative hypothesis, a Degrees of freedom, and the alpha level. The chi-square will test the variables against the expected value of the null hypothesis and if the p-value is small enough (less than 0.05) the null hypothesis can be rejected and replaced with the alternative hypothesis. To demonstrate, the null hypothesis is that the row and column variables are independent, and the alternative hypothesis is that the row and column variables are not independent, the chi-square will test the variables for independence, which is defined by the p-value, Degrees of freedom and alpha level of the study. If the difference between the expected and observed value is great, there is enough evidence against the null hypothesis. The Degrees of freedom is the num-

ber of categories -1. The alpha level is the probability of incorrectly rejecting the null hypothesis, and it can be chosen by the researcher. In this study, the usual alpha level of 0.05 (5%) was used, and thus the confidence level of the chi-square test is 0.95 (95%).

The chi-square test of independence was chosen as the statistical tool for this study because there was an uneven number of cell counts (i.e., participants per group) and several qualitative variables. To calculate the p-value, a 2x4 contingency table was created for one proficiency group at a time (B1, B2, C1, C2). In the table, the numbers of different answers (further details are given in section 4.2) were put in for two separate groups (men, women), after which the p-values were calculated by an online tool.<sup>1</sup> And then finally, again for each question a 2x4 table with all respondents (all proficiency levels) was created, and the numbers of the different answers given to the questions by male and female respondents were added. The null hypothesis was that Variable 1 (male) is independent of Variable 2 (female), the alternative hypothesis was that Variable 1 (male) is not independent of Variable 2, the Degrees of freedom was 3 and the alpha level was 0.05 (5%).

---

<sup>1</sup> Social Science Statistics

<https://www.socscistatistics.com/tests/chisquare2/default2.aspx>

## 4. RESULTS

In this section, the results of the study are presented. The online questionnaire received 352 responses in total, and of those 256 were female and 81 were male. As previously mentioned, the questionnaire had 24 questions that asked a participant to interpret an utterance that included a conversational implicature. The multiple-choice options included one option with an implicature, referred to as +implicature, one with a literal interpretation of the utterance, and one random interpretation. The choices that do not interpret an implicature from the sentence are referred to as -implicature. Even though the participants were only required to answer the questions of sections 1 and 4 of the questionnaire, the number of times a participant did not answer the implicature questions was quite low (often less than 5 participants per question).

### 4.1 Participants of the study

As was mentioned in section 3, participants who did not select female or male as their gender (15), were not included in the study. Moreover, participants who had chosen A1 or A2 as their CEFR level were not included in the study since they do not possess the required level of proficiency to comprehend the questionnaire or its questions. Therefore, the study consisted of 314 participants of which 239 were female and 75 were male. These 314 participants were first divided into groups according to their self-reported gender and then they were again divided into groups according to their self-reported proficiency level. Therefore, the study consisted of eight groups: B1 Male, B1 Female, B2 Male, B2 Female, C1 Male, C1 Female, C2 Male, and C2 Female. The final numbers of participants per group are given in Table 2.

| <b>CEFR LEVEL</b> | <b>Male</b> | <b>Female</b> |
|-------------------|-------------|---------------|
| B1                | 4           | 20            |
| B2                | 23          | 93            |
| C1                | 30          | 98            |
| C2                | 18          | 28            |

*Table 2. The number of participants per each test group.*

From Table 2 it is possible to see that the groups are uneven in the number of participants. The chi-square test requires more than 5 participants per group but since B1 Male was the only group with less than 5 participants it did not create issues with the analysis of the results.

## **4.2 The chi-square test results**

As previously mentioned, to calculate the p-value, a 2x4 contingency table was created for one proficiency group at a time (B1, B2, C1, C2, and ALL). In the table, the numbers of different answers (a, b, c, and no answer) were put in for two separate groups (men, women), after which the p-values were calculated by an online tool. And then finally, again for each question a 2x4 table with all respondents (all proficiency levels) was created, and the numbers of the different answers given to the questions by male and female respondents were added.

According to the chi-square test, the p-value of the groups (B1 male, B1 female...) was more than 0.05 (5%) in over 50% of the questions, which means that for these questions the difference between answers given by male and female did not reach statistical significance. However, in nine questions the p-value was under 0.05 in the B1, B2, and C1 groups. These nine question items included all the implicatures at least once, but manner implicature question items occurred most frequently (4 times), and a relation implicature question item occurred only once. Because the p-value was still less than 0.05 in 4 question items when all females were compared to all males, an additional chi-square test was performed.

### 4.3 2x2 chi-square test and the results

Since the multiple choices were either +implicature or -implicature, a new chi-square test was performed with a 2x2 contingency table. In this test, the number of -implicature answers to a question were collapsed together and put into the 2x2 contingency table with the numbers of +implicature answers. After this, all the questions were summed together. The final p-values for each proficiency group, indicating whether the difference between the responses by male and female respondents was of statistical significance, are presented in Table 3 below.

| <b>Group</b> | <b>P-value</b> |
|--------------|----------------|
| B1           | 0.00126        |
| B2           | 0.035016       |
| C1           | 0.175476       |
| C2           | 0.122178       |
| ALL          | 0.062522       |

*Table 3. The p-values of each test group.*



As can be seen from Table 3, the p-value is greater than 0.05 in all the groups except for B1 and B2.

## **4.4 Other figures**

During the analysis of the p-values, also the percentages were counted for +implicature answers per each group and each implicature type. These rates are reported in the six figures below. In the figures, B1-C2 stands for the different proficiency groups and the gender of the group is denoted with M=male and F=female. Moreover, in all the figures the response rate is reported in percentages on the y-axis.

### **4.4.1 The response rate to all implicatures**

From Figure 1 it can be observed that in percentages females, except for group C2 F, chose the +implicature option from the multiple-choice options more often than men. It can also be observed that the +implicature option was chosen more often when the language proficiency improves.

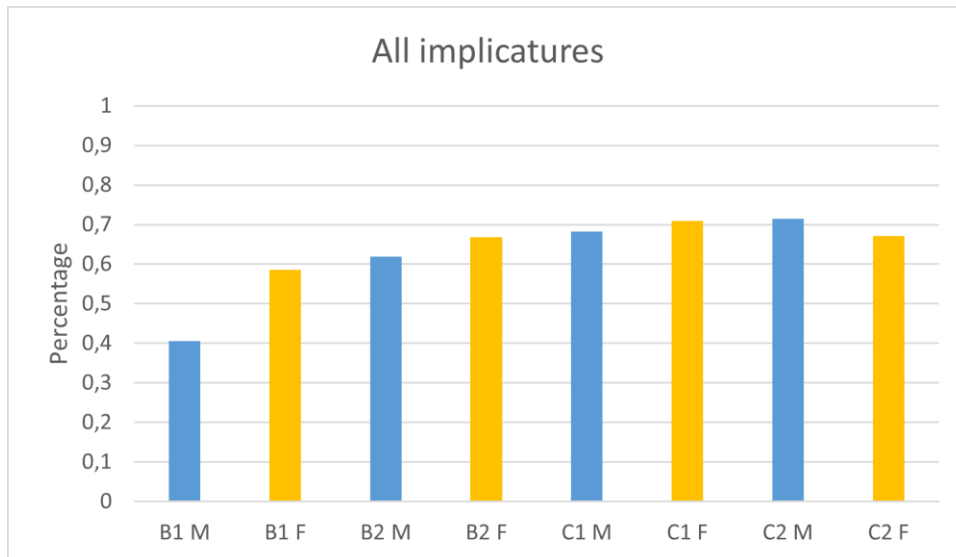


Figure 1. The +impicature response rate to all the implicature test items.

#### 4.4.2 The response rate to different implicature types

In the questionnaire, there were 6 questions per implicature type. This figure illustrates how often both males and females selected the +impicature choice in each implicature type. According to the results presented in Figure 2, in manner and quantity questions the +impicature choice was less frequently chosen, whereas in relation questions the +impicature option was chosen most frequently.

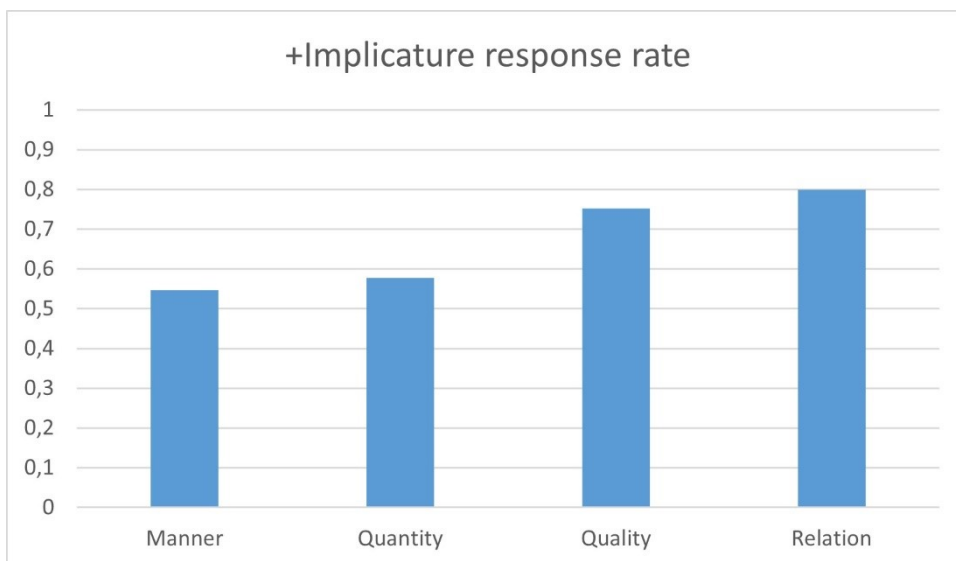


Figure 2. The percentage of +impicature responses per each implicature type.

### 4.4.3 Quality implicatures

In this chart, the response rate for Quality implicatures is presented in percentages. Overall, it can be observed that females chose the +implicature option more often than males.

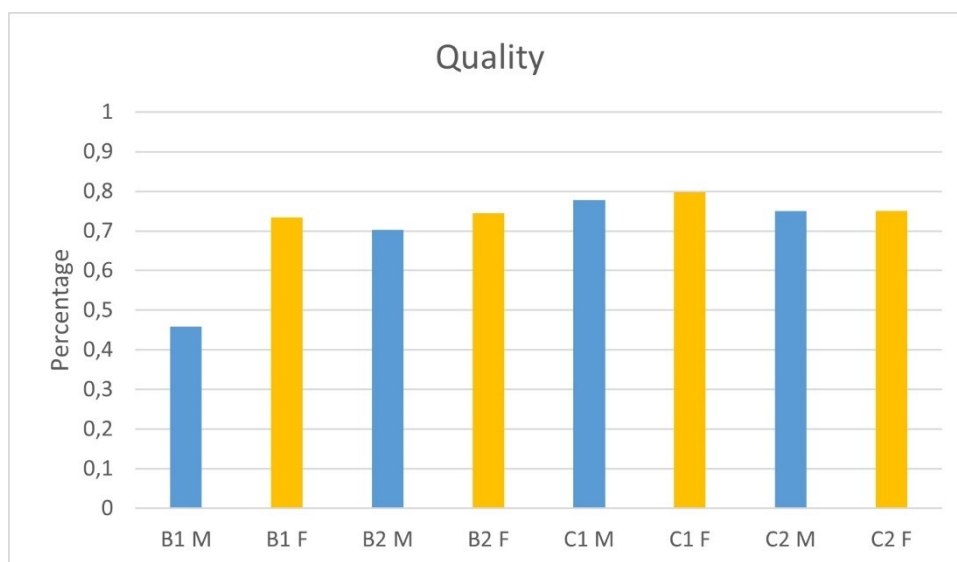


Figure 3. Every group's +implicature response rate to quality implicatures.

### 4.4.4 Quantity implicatures

As well as from Figure 3, from Figure 4 it can be observed that females chose the +implicature option more often than males. For an unexplained reason, females in the C2 group chose the +implicature option less frequently than the females at the lower C1 proficiency level.

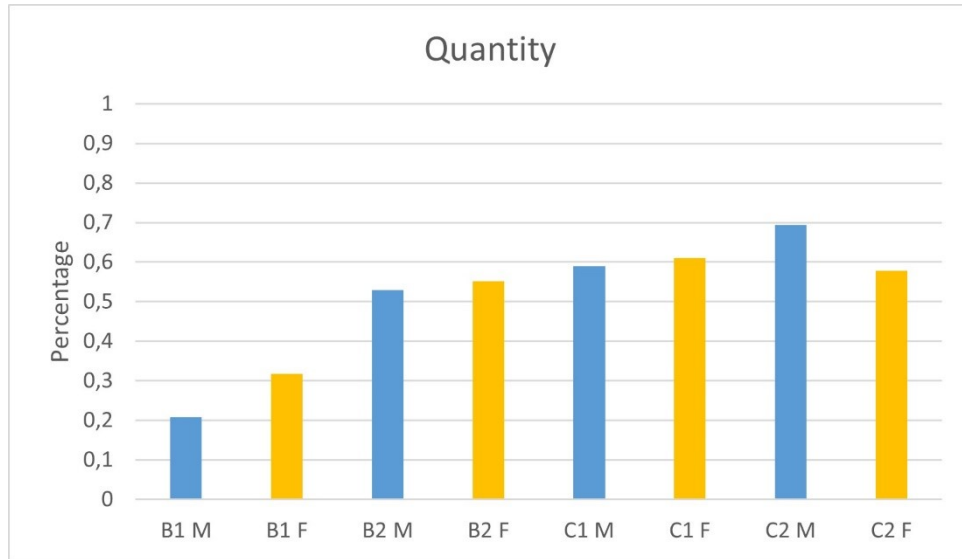


Figure 4. The +impicature response rate to quantity implicatures.

#### 4.4.5 Relation implicatures

As in the previous figures, the more frequent +impicature responses by females can be detected from Figure 5. Interestingly, in comparison to the other implicature types, the +impicature response rate to relation implicatures is higher across all groups.

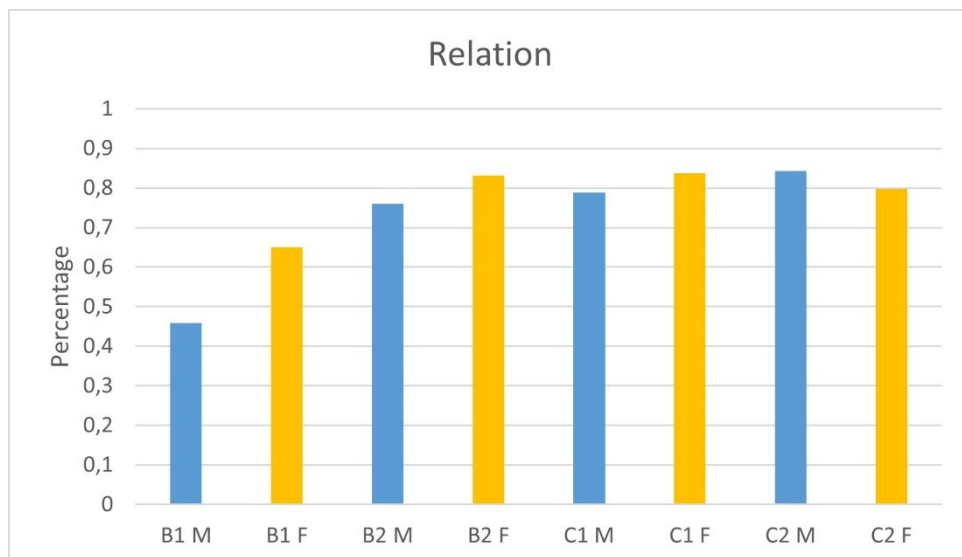


Figure 5. The +impicature response rate to relation implicatures.

#### 4.4.6 Manner implicatures

In this figure, the response rate for manner implicatures is reported. As before the females, except for C2, chose the +implicature option more often than males. Another observation can also be made from this figure: B1 groups chose the +implicature more frequently than other groups.

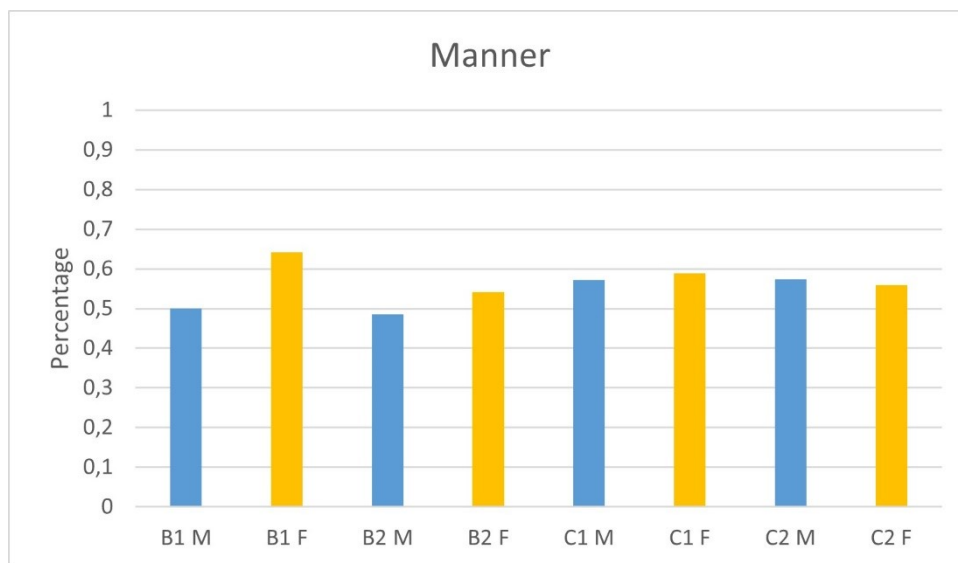


Figure 6. The +implicature response rate to manner implicatures.

## 5. DISCUSSION

In the previous section of the thesis, the results of the study were reported. The p-value was mostly larger than 0.05 (5%) which indicates that the null hypothesis cannot be rejected. In other words, the null hypothesis would suggest that the difference between male and female responses is not statistically significant, and that gender is not a factor when considering the identification or interpretation of implicatures. Thus, the results of the study would indicate that a difference in comprehension of conversational implicatures due to gender cannot be observed.

### 5.1 Differences in the interpretation of the implicatures

Even though the p-value was occasionally smaller than 0.05, it cannot be explained by the group's gender. Instead, any differences between the genders' responses decreased when their language proficiency developed. In addition, the differences tended to occur with the more difficult questions. Either the utterance could be easily interpreted in several ways in the absence of a tone of voice or the question included more difficult vocabulary or expressions that required more cultural competence. For example, the percentage of participants who chose the +implicature option in a question that was quoted from Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* (2016, 1) was significantly lower than in other questions across all the groups. This might have been due to an inability to recognize the author's use of hyperbole. The full question can be seen in (3). The +implicature choice is written in bold.

- (3) Writer: "It is a truth universally acknowledged, that a single man in possession of a good fortune, must be in want of a wife."

What does the writer mean by this?

**The writer does not agree that all rich men want to get married**

The writer thinks that all rich men want to get married

The writer agrees with other people's belief that rich men want to get married

This decrease in the occurrence of the +implicature choice might have been due to the participants' inability to recognize the author's use of hyperbole. This inability might be due to language skills, the style of the text, or an insufficient amount of context. It is unlikely that in general, quality implicatures are harder for L2 speakers to detect since, as can be seen from Figure 2, quality implicatures had a high +implicature response rate.

## 5.2 Relation implicatures

Even though the initial hypothesis of this study cannot be proven, interesting observations can be made from the results of the study. As previously mentioned, any gender differences in comprehension decreased when their language skills improved. Moreover, the choice of +implicature choice was more frequent the higher the proficiency level. This improvement in comprehension of conversational implicatures supports the results of previous studies (Bouton 1988; Taguchi 2005)

However, as can be seen from Figure 2, relation implicatures had a higher +implicature response rate (80%) than other implicature types. Bouton (1992, 58–59) obtained similar results. In his study, the L2 speakers interpreted the relation implicatures with 93 % accuracy. One possible explanation for this could be that the violation of the maxim of relevance is easier to detect. In other words, it is easier to notice when a person's reply does

not seem to be relevant to the utterance that it is replying to, and therefore, a non-literal interpretation is required. To illustrate, one of the relation implicature questions is in (4). The +implicature choice is written in bold.

- (4) A is driving in a strange neighborhood when she notices that she is out of gas. She sees a stranger standing by and opens her window:

A: "I am out of gas."

B: "There is a garage round the corner."

What is the meaning of B's reply?

There is a garage round the corner that may or may not sell gas

**A can get gas at the garage around the corner**

A should talk to the people at the garage and not to B

In (4), A tells B that he is out of gas. B informs A that there is a garage around the corner. According to Grice's (1975), *Cooperative Principle B* must cooperate with A, and therefore, the literal (-implicature) interpretation *there is a garage round the corner that may or may not sell gas* of B's utterance cannot be accepted, instead, an interpretation of implied meaning (+implicature) *A can get gas at the garage around the corner* is triggered. Taguchi's (2009, 746) research indicated that less conventional implicatures were harder to detect by the participants. Therefore, it is possible to argue that it might be easier for a participant to notice that in (4) B's answer is not relevant to A's utterance without an implied meaning, than in (3) where the writer uses hyperbole to signal that the maxim of quality is being flouted. In addition, the conversation described in (4), can be more familiar to the participants than the more formal and older style of text in (3).



### **5.3 Manner implicatures**

In contrast to relation implicatures, manner implicatures had the lowest +implicature response rate (55%). The reason for this might be that the violation of the maxim of manner was not seen as intentional by the participants which might have activated a different kind of interpretation. After all, it is not unusual for people to speak in a manner that is not clear, brief, or orderly. Human speech consists of false starts, hesitation, and unnecessary details. Therefore, it might be harder to notice when a speaker is purposefully being ambiguous or disorderly.

### **5.4 Limitations of the study**

As aforementioned, based on the results of the study, a gender difference cannot be detected. However, the results of the study might have been affected by several factors. Firstly, the study was conducted through a multiple-choice test. If the participants had been asked to write the meaning of the utterance in their own words, they might have not made the same interpretation. Secondly, the results might have been different if the test items would have consisted of longer texts and more authentic material. The implicatures might be easier to detect from short conversations and they might be simpler than implicatures used in real life. For example, Taguchi (2009) has argued that the implicatures should be taken from corpora to obtain more authentic material. In addition to these, an official proficiency test would have made sure that the participants have selected the right level. This does not seem to have affected the results of this study but in future studies, it would naturally add more reliability.

The question in (3) also suggests that implicatures used in literature might be harder to detect, and therefore, might test better the comprehension skills of a more advanced proficiency level. However, open-ended questions and longer texts would cause the study to require more effort from the participants, and therefore, would decrease the number of people who would be willing to participate. The benefit of this study was the high number of participants which could have not been easily acquired if the test required high effort. Lastly, the interpretation of the utterances might have been affected by the absence of tone. However, on the other hand, a tone might have guided the participants into the correct interpretation without them recognizing the implied message. Therefore, it might be necessary to use open-ended questions if audio or video is used as a medium. In future studies, it can be beneficial to use open-ended questions, more authentic material, and perhaps include test items in more than one medium.

## 6. CONCLUSION

This study began with an aim to discover whether a gender difference existed in the reading comprehension of conversational implicatures. Studies such as Lakoff (2004) and Tannen (1991) argued for gender differences in speech. Tannen (1991) also argued that a person's gender not only affected their speech production but also their comprehension.

Because both Lakoff (2004) and Tannen (1991) analyzed their data with their intuition, more objective and reliable research was justified. Since Tannen (1991) studied conversations that included implied messages, a study that used conversational implicatures as a research method was created. The study was conducted through an online questionnaire that had 24 questions that asked the participants to choose an interpretation for the utterance, that included a conversational implicature, from the multiple-choice options. The participants were divided according to their self-reported proficiency level and gender. The results were then analyzed with the chi-square test of independence. Since the p-value was mostly larger than 0.05 (5 %), the null hypothesis cannot be rejected, and therefore, a difference in the comprehension of conversational implicatures between males and females could not be detected. This could mean that such a difference does not exist or that such a difference cannot be detected with this type of study.

However, from the results of further analysis of the participant's answers, it was possible to conclude that the comprehension of conversational implicatures improved with higher language proficiency. These findings support previous studies that have reported an improvement in comprehension of conversational implicatures when language skills developed. Moreover, the relation implicatures were most frequently detected from all the implicature types which is another finding that is supported by previous studies. However,

manner implicatures were least frequently detected which might be an interesting research topic for future studies.

The limitations of the study include the lack of an official language proficiency test, the use of text as a medium, and the use of more artificial conversations as the material. In future studies, these limitations are worth paying attention to.

## REFERENCES

- Austen, Jane. 2016. *Pride and Prejudice*. London: Dover Publications, Inc.
- BOUTON, LAWRENCE. 1988. "A Cross-cultural Study of Ability to Interpret Implicatures in English." *World Englishes* 7, no. 2 (July 1988): 183–196.
- Bouton, Lawrence. 1992. "The Interpretation of Implicature in English by NNS: Does It Come Automatically--Without Being Explicitly Taught?" *Pragmatics and Language Learning* 3: 53–65. <https://eric-ed-gov.libproxy.tuni.fi/?id=ED395521>
- Crawford, Mary. 1995. *Talking Difference : on Gender and Language* London: Sage.
- Eckert, Penelope, and Sally McConnell-Ginet. 2003. *Language and Gender*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. <https://search-ebSCOhost-com.libproxy.tuni.fi/login.aspx?direct=true&AuthType=cookie,ip,uid&db=e000xww&AN=125038&site=ehost-live&scope=site>.
- Gray, John. 1992. *Men are from Mars, women are from Venus: a practical guide for improving communication and getting what you want in your relationships*. New York, NY: HarperCollins.
- Grice, H. Paul. 1975. Logic and conversation. In P. Cole & J. Morgan (eds.), *Syntax and semantics*, 41–58. New York: Academic Press.
- Grice, H. Paul. 1989. *Studies in the Way of Words*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Lakoff, Robin., and Mary Bucholtz. 2004. *Language and Woman's Place Text and Commentaries* 2nd ed. New York: Oxford University Press. <https://search-ebSCOhost-com.libproxy.tuni.fi/login.aspx?direct=true&AuthType=cookie,ip,uid&db=e000xww&AN=475849&site=ehost-live&scope=site>.
- Levinson, Stephen C. 1983. *Pragmatics* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Littlejohn, Stephen W., and Karen A. Foss. 2009. *Encyclopedia of Communication Theory*. Los Angeles: SAGE. <https://search-ebSCOhost-com.libproxy.tuni.fi/login.aspx?direct=true&AuthType=cookie,ip,uid&db=e000xww&AN=495591&site=ehost-live&scope=site>.
- McHugh, Mary L. 2013. "The Chi-Square Test of Independence." *Biochemia Medica* 23 (2): 143–49. doi:10.11613/BM.2013.018.

Moore, D. S., & McCabe, G. P. 2003. *Introduction to the practice of statistics* (4th ed.). New York, NY: W.H. Freeman

Taguchi, Naoko. 2005. "Comprehending Implied Meaning in English as a Foreign Language." *The Modern Language Journal* 89 (4): 543–62. doi:10.1111/j.1540-4781.2005.00329.x.

Taguchi, Naoko. 2009. "Corpus-Informed Assessment of Comprehension of Conversational Implicatures in L2 English." *TESOL quarterly* 43, no. 4 (December 2009): 738–749. <https://doi-org.libproxy.tuni.fi/10.1002/j.1545-7249.2009.tb00202.x>

Tannen, Deborah. 1991. *You Just Don't Understand : Women and Men in Conversation* London: Virago.

Yule, George. 2014. *The Study of Language* 5th ed. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

# APPENDIX: THE QUESTIONNAIRE

## Bachelor's thesis questionnaire on EFL learning

This questionnaire is part of a bachelor's thesis research conducted at Tampere University. The study's aim is to further understand EFL (English as a Foreign Language) learning. The results of this study will be used to provide more information on foreign language learning.

This questionnaire consists of five (5) parts. Part one concerns the personal information of the participant (e.g. age and gender), part two and three are multiple choice questions and part four has questions regarding the participant's general information. In the fifth part, you can leave your email address if you want a chance to win two (2) Finnkino movie tickets or a 10 euro gift card (Amazon or PlayStation). Participation in the lottery is not mandatory and your email address will only be used in the lottery. Winners of the lottery will be contacted via email.

The answers given by the participants are anonymous and participants are allowed to quit at any point of the questionnaire. By filling out this questionnaire, you give permission to use your answers in the bachelor's thesis.

Questions and inquiries to: heini.repo(at)tuni(.)fi

\* Pakollinen

### Personal information

This section contains questions regarding your personal information such as age and gender.

1. Select your age \*

18–21

22–25

26–29

30+

2. Select your gender \*

- Female
- Male
- Other

3.What is your native language? \*

- Finnish
- English
- Other

4.Are you an English major? \*

- Yes
- No

5.(If you answered "yes" to the previous question, answer this question. If you answered "no", move on to the next question)

Are you a first year English major? \*

- Yes
- No

Multiple choice questions — Part 1

First read the question carefully and then select your answer from the given options. Remember to answer all the questions.

6.Two friends are talking about a rumor involving their other friend.



A: "Has she heard the rumor?"

B: "When she heard about the rumor, she exploded!" What does B mean

by her reply?

- B is lying about what happened
- B is being metaphorical
- B thinks their friend overreacted

7. Choose the word or phrase that best completes the sentence.

"Babies \_\_\_\_ when they are hungry."

- cries
- cry are
- crying

8. Choose the option that best describes the meaning of the sentence. "To take the bull by the horns"

- To grapple courageously with a difficulty that lies in our way.
- To punish a person severely for his arrogance.
- To handle it by a fierce attack.

9. A professor is writing a testimonial about a pupil who is a candidate for a philosophy job, and his letter reads as follows: "Dear Sir, Mr. Samuel's command of English is excellent, and his attendance at tutorials has been regular. Yours, Rowan Davis.

What does the professor mean by his letter?

- The professor thinks Samuel is a good candidate for the job
- The professor does not remember who Samuel is
- The professor does not think Samuel is a good candidate for the job

10. What does the word inside [the brackets] mean? Choose the correct alternative.

The house was [immense].

- quite cheap
- expensive
- huge

11. Two friends are waiting for the exam to begin.

Peter: "I'm gonna fail this course."

Jean: "Sure, just like you fail every course you take."

What does Jean mean by her reply?

- Jean thinks Peter does not do well in school
- Jean thinks Peter should be more optimistic based on his previous courses
- Jean is not interested in the conversation

12. Choose the word or phrase that best completes the sentence.

Tom: "What \_\_\_\_?" John: "I'm trying to fix my car."

- you do
- you doing
- are you doing

13. Choose the option that best describes the meaning of the sentence.

"To talk one's head off"

- To talk loudly
- To talk to oneself
- Talk excessively

14. A can not find her phone and needs to know what time it is.

A: "Can you tell me the time?"

B: "Well, the milkman has come." What does B

mean by his reply?

- The time now is after the time the milkman usually arrives
- B has no idea what time it is
- B is letting A know that the milkman has come

15. Select the correct sentence.

- Panettone is an Italian, round, bread-like Christmas cake.
- Panettone is a bread-like, round, Italian Christmas cake.
- Panettone is a round, Italian, bread-like Christmas cake.

16. Two coworkers are having lunch when they see a farewell cake being brought in.

A: "Bill and Martha are leaving tomorrow." B: "I'll miss Martha."

What does B mean by his reply?

- B will miss Martha after she leaves
- B has a crush on Martha
- B does not really like Bill

17. Complete the sentence with the correct alternative.

"I told him . . . "

- don't go there.
- not to go there.
- don't to go there.

18. Choose the word or phrase that best completes the sentence.

"Jolene \_\_\_\_ her black pants today, but usually she wears a dress or a skirt."

- wears
- wearing
- is wearing

19. Two friends are having a cup of coffee at a nice cafe. They have not seen each other for a while and have been catching up.

A: "Susan can be such a cow sometimes!" B: "Lovely weather, isn't it?"

What does B mean by her reply?

- B did not hear what A said
- B wants to talk about the weather B
- finds A's comment inappropriate

20. Select the correct sentence.

- An antenna is a metallic, short, narrow stick.
- An antenna is a narrow, short, metallic stick.
- An antenna is a short, narrow, metallic stick

21. Choose the correct alternative to complete the sentence.

"Don't forget . . . on her birthday!"

- to call your mother calling
- your mother
- call your mother

22. Two coworkers are talking at work.

A: "Did Tina give Sam the check?"

B: "Sam received the check yesterday." What does B

mean by his reply?

- Sam received a check but B is not sure if Tina gave it to him
- Tina gave the check to Sam yesterday
- B does not think it is important who gave Sam the check

23. Select the correct sentence.

- Have you seen my new lovely yellow sundress?
- Have you seen my lovely new yellow sundress?
- Have you seen my yellow new lovely sundress?

24. Writer: "It is a truth universally acknowledged, that a single man in possession of a good fortune, must be in want of a wife." What does the writer mean by this?

- The writer does not agree that all rich men want to get married
- The writer thinks that all rich men want to get married
- The writer agrees with other people's belief that rich men want to get married

25. Choose the word or phrase that best completes the sentence.

"He regretted \_\_\_\_ sold his mother's jewelry."

- to have
- having
- he had

26. Two friends are watching a documentary about Native American tribes. Halfway through the film, one of the friends falls asleep and wakes up after the documentary has ended.

Daniel: "I must have fallen asleep. What happened?" Matt: "The invaders caused the villagers to die." What does Matt mean by his reply?

- The invaders killed the villagers
- The invaders killed the villagers indirectly
- They all died

27.

"The baby girl saw \_\_\_\_ in the mirror and began to laugh"

- himself
- itself
- herself

28. Choose the word or phrase that best completes the sentence.

"Something \_\_\_\_ have happened or they would be here by now."

- must have been
- must must
- have

29. Laura has arrived home from school and hears that her dog is barking. She goes to the living room to talk to her boyfriend.

Laura: "Did you feed the dog?"

Tom: "I put the empty bowl back under the table." What does Tom mean

by his reply?

- He is telling Laura where to find the food bowl
- He is telling Laura that he has fed the dog
- He is telling Laura that he fed the dog last time

30.

"A lot of trains \_\_\_\_ late today due to technical issues."

- are run run
- are running
- 

31. Four words have been given of which three are alike in some way and one is different.

Select the odd one out.

- cooker
- plunger fridge
- dishwasher
- 

32. Two men are having a discussion at work about a work related task.

Steve: "You didn't have seconds, you had three weeks. The universe was created in a third of that time."

Andy: "Well, someday you'll have to tell us how you did it." What does Andy mean

by his reply?

- Andy wants Steve to tell him how to solve the task
- Andy does not think three weeks was enough time
- Andy wants Steve to help him with solving the task

33.

"The students thought they were \_\_\_\_ when they saw the gun."



- in a danger in
- danger
- in the danger

34. Choose the right alternative to complete the sentence.

"If you had asked me . . . to the cinema with you."

- I might had gone
- I might have been
- I might have gone

## Multiple choice questions — Part 2

First read the question carefully and then select your answer from the given options. Remember to answer all the questions.

35. Four words have been given of which three are alike in some way and one is different.

Select the odd one out.

- gold
- silver
- carbon
- diamond

36. A group of guests are talking about the night's performance.

A: "Miss Singer produced a series of sounds corresponding closely to the score of an aria from 'Rigoletto.'"

What does A mean by this?

- Miss Singer sang as well as the original singer of Rigoletto
- Miss Singer sang almost as well as the original singer of Rigoletto
- Miss Singer sang badly

37. Choose the word or phrase that best completes the sentence.

"If I were you \_\_\_\_\_"

- I would of taken the job
- I would have taking the job
- I would have taken the job

38. Choose the right alternative to complete the sentence.

"While we . . . on the high street, a man came up to us."

- were walking
- walking
- walked

39. A student has written an essay for their teacher and received an email with feedback of the essay from the professor.

In the email was written:

"I'm not displeased by what you've done."

What does the student's professor mean by this?

- The professor is pleased with the student's essay
- The professor is not overly impressed but thinks the essay is acceptable
- The professor does not like the student's essay

40. Select the correct sentence.

- Pandora is a small, unusual, Greek box.
- Pandora is an unusual, small, Greek box.
- Pandora is a Greek, small, unusual box.

41. John is having a bad day at work. His boss is yelling at everyone who happens to pass by his office.

After lunch, his boss came to John's desk to yell about the Jackson project.

The corner of John's lips turned slightly upwards when he saw a big piece of spinach hanging from the boss' tooth.

Which of these alternatives best describes John's reaction to what he saw?

- John was smiling
- John was laughing
- John did not exactly smile

42. Select the correct sentence.

- It is a Japanese U-shaped cooking tool.
- It is a cooking, Japanese, U-shaped tool.
- It is a U-shaped, Japanese, cooking tool.

43. Choose the right alternative to complete the sentence.

"Don't start . . . again. You are giving me a headache!"

- to complain complaining
- complain
- 44. Jack and Laura are friends with a woman named Susan. Jack wants to know where Susan lives.

Jack: "Where does Susan live?"

Laura: "Somewhere in the South of France." What does Laura

mean by her reply?

- She is reluctant to tell Jack where Susan lives
- She does not care where Susan lives
- She does not know where exactly Susan lives

45. Choose the word or phrase that best completes the sentence.

" \_\_\_ I work on this all day, I'll never finish it on time."

- Despite
- Even if
- Even though

46. Choose the right alternative to complete the sentence.

"The government is planning to . . . taxes again soon."

- raise
- rise
- race

47.A: "How do I get into your apartment?"

B: "Walk up to the front door, turn the door handle clockwise as far as it will go, and then pull gently towards you."

Why does B give such a detailed response to A's question?

- B is giving typical instructions to A
- B thinks A needs to pay attention to each step of the instruction
- B thinks A's question is stupid

48. What does the word inside [the brackets] mean? Choose the correct alternative.

I don't know him but I [presume] he is Chiara's uncle.

- suppose
- know
- speak

49. Four words have been given of which three are alike in some way and one is different. Select the odd one out.

- box office
- runway
- stage
- footlights

50. Nathan has bought a lottery ticket for Eurojackpot.

Nathan: "I might win the lottery."

Marcus: "Yes, and pigs might fly."

What does Marcus mean by his reply?

- He thinks Nathan might win and pigs might learn to fly
- He thinks Nathan's win is as likely as pigs flying
- He thinks Nathan will win if pigs learn to fly

51. Choose the word or phrase that best completes the sentence.

"My parents are out. So I have to \_\_\_\_\_ my sister."

- look for
- look after
- look down

52. Two friends are walking away from the car. One of them is carrying the grocery bags.

A: "These bags are very heavy, I hope I don't need to answer the phone right now or anything..."

B: "I can answer it."

What does B mean by her reply?

- B wants to answer to A's phone
- B does not want to help carrying the bags
- B can't carry the bags

53. Choose the word or phrase that best completes the sentence.

"\_\_\_\_ someone please tell me where the bathroom is?"

- Can
- May
- Should

54. Four words have been given of which three are alike in some way and one is different. Select the odd one out.

- collar
- cuff
- belt
- lape

55. Two friends Sam and Luca are having lunch and talking about their friend Harry:

Sam: "How did Harry fare in court today?" Luca: "Oh, he got a fine."

What does Luca's reply mean?

- Harry got at least a fine.
- Harry got no more than a fine
- Harry was not punished

56. Choose the word or phrase that best completes the sentence.

"It is just a \_\_\_\_\_ to the center."

- walk of five minutes five-minute
- walk
- five-minutes walk

57. Mark and Paul are best friends. Their children go to the same school.

Mark : "I need a place with fifty seats for my son's birthday party." Paul : "McDonald's has fifty seats."

Question - Based on Paul's answer, how many chairs does McDonalds' have?

- Less than fifty
- Exactly fifty
- More than fifty

58. Choose the word or phrase that best completes the sentence.

"He has the same shirt \_\_\_\_\_ his uncle."

- than
- like
- as

59. Two teachers are talking about a student's term paper

Mr. Jones: "Have you finished with John's term paper yet?"

Mrs. Bond: "Yes, I have. I read it last night."

Mr. Jones: "What did you think of it?"

Mrs. Bond: "Well, I thought it was well-typed."



Did Mrs. Bond like John's term paper?

- She liked it. She thought it was good.
- She thought it was important that the paper was well-typed.
- She did not like it.

60. Choose the word or phrase that best completes the sentence.

" \_\_\_ books are in the other part of this book store."

- Childrens
- Children's
- Childrens'

61. A group of students are in Geology class and a student called A asks the teacher:

A: "Tehran's in Turkey, isn't it, teacher?"

B: "And London's in Armenia, I suppose."

What does the teacher mean by her response?

- The teacher does not know the answer to the question
- The teacher thinks London is in Armenia
- Tehran is not in Turkey

62. Choose the word or phrase that best completes the sentence.

"I think Mrs. Radcliffe \_\_\_ in this school since 1994."

- teaches
- taught
- has taught

63. Maria has just walked into Carmen's office and noticed all the work on her desk.

Maria: "Wow! Has your boss gone crazy?" Carmen: "Let's go for a coffee."

What does Carmen mean by her reply?

- Carmen does not want to talk about her boss with Maria
- Carmen wants to go on her coffee break
- Carmen does not want to talk about her boss in her office

64. Choose the word or phrase that best completes the sentence.

"Most stores are closed \_\_\_\_ New Year's Day."

- at
- in
- on

65. A is driving in a strange neighborhood when she notices that she is out of gas. She sees a stranger standing by and opens her window:

A: "I am out of gas."

B: "There is a garage round the corner." What is the

meaning of B's reply?

- There is a garage round the corner that may or may not sell gas
- A can get gas at the garage around the corner
- A should talk to the people at the garage and not to B

## General information

This sections consists of questions regarding the participant's general information about their language education.

66. What is your CEFR (Common European Framework of Reference for Languages) level in English? \*

If you have not been officially evaluated according to CEFR, self-evaluate according to the Council of Europe's self-assessment grid. Try not to underestimate your language skills, modesty is not necessary.

Notice that the Finnish Matriculation Examination's English (A1 language) exam consists of mostly B2 level questions.

If you are an English major, notice that the English degree program at Tampere University requires students to have a C1 in English.

Link to Council of Europe's self-assessment grid:

<https://rm.coe.int/CoERMPublicCommonSearchServices/DisplayDCTMContent?documentId=090000168045bb52>

(<https://rm.coe.int/CoERMPublicCommonSearchServices/DisplayDCTMContent?documentId=090000168045bb52>)

|                   | A1                    | A2                    | B1                    | B2                    | C1                    | C2                    |
|-------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| Select your level | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

67. Have you lived in an English speaking country? \*

Yes

No

68. Self-estimate your language proficiency \*

Unsatisfactory      Intermediate      Upperintermediate      Advanced

|               |                       |                       |                       |                       |
|---------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| Listening     | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Speaking      | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Reading       | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Writing       | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Pronunciation | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Grammar       | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Vocabulary    | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

69. Estimate the duration of your English language education in years \*

Help: An average Finnish person begins learning English in third grade. By the end of high school they have studied English for approximately 10 years.

- 1-2
- 3-5
- 6-8
- 9-11
- 11+

Enter your email address below if you want to participate in the lottery.

Your email address will not be connected to your answers. It will only be used in the lottery of the movie tickets and/or gift card. The winner of the lottery will be contacted personally via email.

70. Enter your email address.

71. I want to participate in the lottery of...

- movie tickets
- gift card
- both

---

Tämä ei ole Microsoftin luomaa tai suosittelemaa sisältöä. Lähettämäsi tiedot lähetetään lomakkeen omistajalle.

 Microsoft Forms