Communicating Finnish Quietude:
A Pedagogical Process for Discovering
Implicit Cultural Meanings in Languages

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This paper introduces a pedagogical approach to integrating intercultural communication into language learning. The focus is on the development of competence in discovering and interpreting cultural meanings when communicating in English as an international language. The analyses of data which students produced illustrates how discovering implicit cultural meanings embedded in Finnish, about quietude, presents considerable challenges for communicating those meanings through another language.

Artikkeli käsittelee kulttuurien välisen kommunikaation integroimista englannin kielen opintoihin, kun englantia opiskellaan kansainvälisen vuorovaikutuksen kielenä. Artikkeli perustuu vertailevaan dataan, jota on kerätty yliopistossa ja korkeakouluissa Suomessa ja Yhdysvalloissa. Sen analyysi osoittaa, kuinka vaikeaa suomalaiseen kommunikaatioon kuuluvan hiljaisuuden ymmärtäminen on niille, joiden omassa kulttuurissa hiljaisuudella on negatiivinen merkitys.

This paper introduces a pedagogical approach that integrates intercultural communication into language learning. The focus is on the development of competence in discovering and interpreting cultural meanings when communicating in English as an international language. The analyses of data that students produced illustrates how discovering implicit cultural meanings embedded in Finnish, about quietude, presents considerable challenges for communicating those meanings through another language.

In this paper we focus on intercultural situations in which Finnish students become aware of the implicit (i.e. Finnish) cultural meanings embedded in their use of English. Discovering what is implicit in their use of English, as an international language, opens new doors to discovering and interpreting meaning competently, especially in intercultural situations. We aim to show how this process of discovery is facilitated by students' interpretations of local — their own and others' — cultural premises and practices. The paper is divided into four parts: the first introduces a pedagogical approach to combining language learning and intercultural communication; the second discusses

relevant aspects of problems related to English as an international language; the third analyses data produced by Finns who respond to American speakers in English; the fourth discusses the importance of integrating cultural interpretation into language learning. The focus is on the challenges of communicating via English, with applications primarily to non-native (Finnish) but also native (American) speakers of English.

The main theme of this article has evolved out of a nine-year research project about language learning and intercultural communication. During this process, we have used and developed a nested conceptualisation of cultural discourse (Carbaugh, 1988). Cultural discourse is understood here to be a system of symbols (including words and images), forms of action, and their meanings. This conceptualisation invites us to explore how particular terms co-occur in identifiable clusters with cultural forms of practice and their semantic fields. These elements, together, comprise cultural discourse. Our basic conceptual approach, then, activates a whole–part relationship between a particular word-image and the larger system of practice of which it is a part. The approach employs a cultural theory of interpretation by focusing on the ways cultural discourse both presumes and creates knowledge about persons, actions, social relations and feelings (Berry, 1997a; Berry & Innreiter-Moser, 2002; Carbaugh, 1990, 1996, 2005; Carbaugh & Berry, 2001; Philipsen, 1997).

Pedagogical Creation of the Third Space

Over the years we have integrated the following concepts into our pedagogical approach to combining language learning and intercultural communication: spheres of coherence, Third Space, false friends, rich points, and development of competence in discovering, interpreting and communicating meaning in multiple third spaces.

The Third Space between Spheres of Coherence

We suggest that the integration of intercultural communication into language learning is most successful when students from different cultures are actively involved in creating a Third Space between different spheres of coherence. This approach draws attention to the ways people verbally interpret their 'material and social worlds', which are full of 'webs of significance' (Geertz, 1973). These webs create a sphere of coherence, a symbolic space in which a people's taken-for-granted common sense – of human experience, thoughts, feelings and actions – is presumed (Scruton, 1979). Each utterance invokes such a sphere of coherence, with this sphere being deeply felt and widely accessible in one's speech community (Carbaugh, 1996; Scollon & Scollon, 1995). Our general approach echoes Dell Hymes (1972a, 1972b, 1996), who has emphasised how competence, the actual ability of doing what is appropriate and feasible in speech communities, resides in local ways of speaking. When these local ways contact each other, there is risk in creating a rather incoherent and inequitable social environment (Gumperz, 1982, 2001).

The Third Space concept provides an opportunity to focus on creative, if complex, interaction as well as transformation between spheres of coherence. Our use of the concept is indebted to Homi Bhabha (1994), scholars associated with the development of the International Association of Languages and Intercultural Communication (e.g. Berry, 1999a; Berry & Markowski, 2002; Kelly, 1998, 2001; Parry, 2001; Tomic & Lengel, 1999), and authors who have contributed to this journal (e.g. Bartlett, 2001; Jordan, 2002). We build on Homi Bhabha's 'focus on those moments or processes that are produced in the articulation of cultural differences' (Bhabha, 1994: 1) and Pierre Bourdieu's concepts of 'habitus' and 'field' (Bourdieu, 1991). Their insights suggest that a pedagogical Third Space can be regarded as (1) a cultural habitus, 'a micro-field with a limited number of participants and rudimentary structures', (2) 'a social space inhabited by people in motion, in interaction and in transformation' (Kelly, 2001: 56), and (3) *a creation of interlocutors using their own linguistic resources, and doing so outside their traditional spheres of coherence.*

Understood in this way, the Third Space is more than an in-between space between systems of coherence with potential for social interaction and (mis)understanding. The semi-coherent Third Space comes into being as interlocutors discover difference with reference to familiarity and begin to create a shared frame of reference to explore the diversity and commonality in their ways of communicating. In the process, they create a way of using a shared language, in this case English, to cohere some of the meaning of their speech and actions when interacting with others outside their spheres of coherence.

Development of Competence to Discover and Interpret Meaning Leading to Creation of a Pedagogical Third Space

Given our goal of combining language learning and intercultural communication with pedagogical development and ethnographic research, we have emphasised the importance of developing competence in discovering, interpreting and communicating meaning. We consider this essential to acquiring 'cultural knowledge' regarding language use (Byram, 1989: 121) and 'savoir interpretatif' (Zarate, 1993: 118). In the practices of concern to us here, this competence means the ability to discover whether (for example) among Finnish native speakers, the English being used is communicating the same (or at least a similar) message between sender and receiver as would the relevant Finnish. The 'competence' to which we refer here could be identified alternatively as 'semantic', 'hermeneutic', 'semiotic' or 'interpretive' competence (with our emphasis being on the pedagogical element of students discovering, interpreting and communicating the hidden cultural meanings in their language usage).

We have often discovered a barrier to an effective implementation of this process, a 'false friend', a word, a phrase, intonation, style of communication, etc., that is understood differently by people from different linguistic cultures. The 'false friend' concept is applied in this article to suggest that abstract terms of English, when spoken and written, can carry deeply different meanings into different systems of coherence, with these being precisely the meanings

hidden from the other's sphere of coherence. For example, a predominantly positive Finnish sense of 'quietude' is masked and overshadowed by English terms such as 'shy' and 'silent'. Discovering implicit cultural meaning in intercultural situations comes via the discovery of 'rich points' like these, that is, familiar lexical items and their deep cultural premises. Each is rich 'because of the intricate web of associations and connotations that they carry with them, webs that have no corresponding echoes in [one's] own language' (Agar, 1994: 232).

Our pedagogical experience has also led to an emphasis on the concept of (in-between) third spaces. This concept helps students understand how the discovery of rich points reveals the existence of such spaces, thus creating awareness of both (1) the complexity of salient cultural differences found in the use of English as an international language and (2) the opportunity to begin to frame their intended meanings based upon knowledge of these differences. As in-between third spaces like these are discovered, they can give meaning to each other and/or raise questions about previous interpretations. Ethnographic framing of the discovery of such spaces, made explicit by Michael Agar (1991, 1994, 1996), can eventually reveal the existence of different fields of meaning within each respective cultural sphere of coherence (Berry & Irmreiter-Moser, 2002; Carbaugh, 1993, 1995). As the ethnographic framing process moves forward, interlocutors develop a shared frame of reference, thereby creating a productive, if semi-coherent, Third Space out of different spheres of coherence.

A Pragmatic and Critical Approach

Our approach is pragmatic. The teachers expose students to situations in which they experience complexity, and support their efforts to make sense of parts of the complexity. Students gradually begin to realise that they can create a basis for more effective intercultural communication using their shared knowledge of their native language and English, regardless of whether the situational context is full of native and non-native or only non-native speakers of English. Here we focus on a Finnish–American learning situation.[1]

This approach is somewhat similar to that of Claire Kramsch's pioneering pedagogical work on 'culture of a third kind', a 'third place', created by teachers and students through the give-and-take of classroom dialogue in which she refers to the challenges of dealing with 'multiple worlds, facets, layers of meaning' (Kramsch, 2000) and to the importance of 'confronting students within the meanings associated with the specific uses of words, [and of teaching] culture as it is mediated through language' (Kramsch, 1998: 31). Reflecting on the discovery and interpretation of meaning of these multiple third spaces provides an opportunity to understand how different kinds of local knowledge interact (Kramsch & Thorne, 2002). A 'collaborative pedagogy of the Third Space' (Bartlett, 2001) has been active in the pedagogical development leading to this article, thus providing an example of how collaborative and critical (Pennycook, 1994: 315) pedagogy inside and outside the classroom can benefit from similar approaches even if the 'classroom' example in this article involves Finnish–American student interaction.

English as International Language

Geopolitical, economic and cultural dimensions of the globalisation of English language teaching have been discussed extensively in this journal (Bartlett, 2001; Holland, 2002) and elsewhere (Block & Cameron, 2002; Brutt Griffler, 2002; Canagarajah, 1999; Hall & Eggington, 2000; Knapp & Meierkord, 2002; Hall & Eggington, 2000; Holliday, 1994, 1997; Pennycook, 1994). We can easily identify with Bartlett's (2001), Halliday's (1994, 1997), and Pennycook's (1994) emphasis on the importance of viewing English as a resource that can and should be used to communicate the users' perspectives in the context of the global tensions between the 'centre' and the 'periphery'. We focus here, however, on a problem of locally accepted forms of language in one EU country, Finland, where English is often taught and evaluated by non-native speakers of English according to native speaker models (Brutt-Griffler, 2002). Students get a powerful, if implicit, message: 'our goal is to speak like native speakers' even though most of their use of English will probably be with non-natives.

Several recent articles in *English Today* (Jenkins, 2001; Mondiano, 1999a, 1999b, 2001; Seidlhofer, 2001) have focused on the discovery and development of a comprehensive core of lexical, syntactical and sound patterns produced by non-native speakers as an alternative to 'pure' native standards of English. Projects are actively collecting data that can be analysed to provide insight into such varieties and the way these are being used successfully in many intercultural contexts. Students (and teachers) will benefit from some pedagogical tolerance of English varieties that provide comprehensible grammatical structures as well as intelligible terminologies understandable to native and non-native speakers of English.

We emphasise, however, that this approach is only part of the movement (Berry, 1999b; Berry & Nurmikari-Berry, 1997, 1998). Dell Hymes (1996: 67) reminds us that no one has ever used a technically pure form of any language, only varieties of that language. Each variety is, for those who use it, widely understood in its own places, given its own standard of coherence. The discussion below builds on this idea, making explicit the importance of developing a kind of sema anticompetence to discover and interpret meanings in the use of English as an international language to complement the lexical, syntactical and phonological competencies others are studying. We apply the idea of seeking implicit cultural meanings within and between languages, especially as these are active in the multiple spaces of learning and using English as an international language.

Our particular data and analyses focus on the English term, 'shy', and its semantic relationship to 'silence', 'brooding' and 'privacy'. Finnish students have found these terms to be false friends, revealing rich points, thus opening to them the door of developing competence in the discovery and interpretation of meaning in third spaces. Through this process, students realise how the traditional 'target language' learning approach directed them towards the goal of native linguistic proficiency while assuming that English serves as a neutral international language among people proficient in English.[2] Discovering implicit cultural meanings when using English as an international language

follows a different track; it is a question of gaining awareness of how cultural meanings are embedded in an international language and acting on that awareness to become a 'privileged intercultural speaker' (Kramsch, 1998) who can help others, especially native speakers, contribute to creation of productive discourse in an international arena.

Cultural Meanings of 'Shy' in the English-language Speech of Finnish and American Students

The data presented here were collected and analysed by a Finnish–American research team consisting of Michael Berry, Donal Carbaugh, Lu Anne Halligan Carbaugh and Marjatta Nurmikari-Berry. The cooperative teaching–research project has provided opportunities to discover and begin to interpret cultural meanings in the speech of Finnish and American students who are communicating via a foreign and a native language, which should be understood as an international language full of implicit cultural meanings. The particular stimulus for much of the exchange has been a segment from the '60 Minutes' 'news' programme, *Tango Finlandia*, which has been broadcast at least seven times in the USA since 1993 and once in Finland in 2000. The data presented focus upon some of the meanings of 'shy' in the Finnish discourse (in both Finnish and English).[3] The analysis and discussion use only some of these data, and touch on only a fragment of the learning experience of the students and teachers.

Finnish and American responses, as well as many Western non-Finns, often use the word 'shy' in English to describe Finnish people. The frequency of this term, and its use by Americans, Finns and others, recommended it to our attention. What we came to understand, eventually, is that this English term does not necessarily communicate the same meanings to the various participants. At the same time, for each participant, each use of the term invoked a limited, deep and local sphere of coherence. This dynamic will now be explored in more detail.

Exchange students in the intercultural communication courses, using English as a shared foreign language, often initially described Finns to each other in this form (our paraphrase): 'Finns are shy, similar to silent, socially handicapped people that we know in our home communities'. When Finns describe themselves to exchange students they often say (our paraphrase): 'We are a shy, silent people'. Finnish students unknowingly reinforce a negative impression of Finns being 'socially handicapped' just as the dynamic – in the other direction – is hidden from non-Finns, who unknowingly supplied their own negative frame of reference for the positive Finnish sense of 'being shy'. Thus Finnish speakers failed to understand that they were confirming a negative, non-Finnish interpretation of themselves (the idea of shyness as a social handicap was not active in the Finnish sphere of coherence and was thus hidden from them initially). Similarly, non-Finnish speakers failed to understand that they were misunderstanding the positive Finnish meaning (the idea of shyness as a natural and positive way of being was not part of their sphere of coherence). The hidden misunderstanding led both Finns and non-Finns to assume they meant the same thing when they uttered the English words,

'Finns are shy'. This hidden dynamic often continued for a long time, and for some students never really surfaced as a dynamic in their discussions. A similar problem was active in Finnish–American discourse initiated by a viewing of *Tango Finlandia*. We eventually came to understand this dynamic as a minor tragedy for each thought they were being understood as intended, but in fact were not.

One of the many prominent segments from *Tango Finlandia* that students selected to discuss is introduced below. The Finnish subtitles are from the televised presentation in Finland in 2000.

American commentator (Safer):

> 01   it strikes me uh travelling around this country that (.)
> Olen matkustellut täällä
> 02   people are terribly shy
> 03   particularly the men
> ja etenkin miehet vaikuttavat ujoilta (translation downplays 'terribly')

Finn (Knutas): (speaking while American viewers see men sitting silently at a public dance and Finnish viewers see men sitting at a public dance):

> 04   among ourselves we think that is the natural way to be.
> Ajattelemme, että on luontevaa
> 05   not to sort of (.) stick out
> olla erottumatta joukosta
> 06   It's easy to see that coming from another country
> Muualta tulevat
> 07   you think of it as shyness
> pitävät sitä ujoutena
> 08   and it probably is (.) yes
> Sitä se varmaankin on.

Responses from students in the USA offer the term 'shy' as a characterisation of Finns, partly because of Knutas' apparent Finnish confirmation (lines 6–8) of Safer's (mis)interpretation (on line 2). In the introductory segment of the programme, Safer had already made the negative meanings of this term clear. He referred to Finns as 'the shyest people on earth – depressed and proud of it.' He also said, 'they' have 'a difficult time making even the most casual social contact with a stranger on a bus.' In the segment following the one above, Safer goes further, referring to Finnishness as 'clinical shyness', an 'almost terminal melancholy', which Finns *treat* by dancing the Tango. The video leaves little doubt for most American viewers that Finns are nearly pathologically 'shy'. This point has key significance in our argument.

Finnish and American uses of English invoke different spaces of coherence. The thinking process for the Finns begins in their native cultural language, but it enters an in-between space once the message is being translated into English. The Finnish meaning embedded in the use of English thus affects Finnish

interpretations of their English, just as the American meaning of English affects American interpretations of their English. The resulting exchange between, for example, Safer and Knutas, moves English into third spaces where both implicit American English and implicit Finnish interpretations are not only relevant, but also highly active and salient.

Exercises given prior to and after the viewing of the video reveal that very few Finns believe Knutas (on lines 7 and 8) is agreeing with Safer: most hear an effort by Knutas, a Finn, to explain 'in vain' (Hymes, 1981) to Safer, a stranger, in the stranger's language, the 'natural [Finnish] way to be' (as identified on line 4). In so doing, Knutas uses positive Finnish rules and standards for communicating. At the same time, however, he politely implies, from an American perspective, that he regrettably accepts the stranger's negative characterisation that Finns exhibit 'shyness' (08). His move thus conveys a complex and positive message – of acting naturally with Finnish rules and standards – that other, non-Finnish viewers find nearly impossible to comprehend when viewing the video.

As teachers, we have discussed this dynamic in an effort to improve the communication between these cultural spheres of coherence. How do we do that? With as little intervention as possible and without any explicit reference to the implications of English and American cultural premises of social interaction in the video, the teacher positions himself or herself on one, then the other cultural side in order to facilitate the students' attempts to recognise, then break away from this dynamic. When successful, this enables students on both sides of the Atlantic, and the Baltic, to unveil hidden aspects of English, while still benefiting from the existence of English as an international language.

We pay careful attention to Finnish responses to both Safer's statement and American questions, to help students and teachers understand the hidden Finnish meanings of 'shy'. Some of these Finnish comments about Finnishness are as follows (each produced by a different Finnish student):

> I have never realized before that people in other cultures might regard the word shy as a negative word... Ujo in Finnish has a neutral or positive meaning;
>
> We are a bit shy, but not that shy, just more or less non-talkative; In Finnish culture you don't have to 'pretend' to have interests to meet new people;
>
> Internally we [Finns] are not shy at all but externally we are shy to show our feelings;
>
> Shyness [is] like just minding your own business and not to bother others;
>
> Shyness is not understood in Finland as a negative thing, one could describe it as a natural thing;
>
> When we defined shyness in our exercises there was something that hit me. Every member in our group [consisting of Finns and Slavic Europeans], including Finns defined shyness with the same descriptions but it turned out that shyness is acceptable only in Finland.

When focused on shyness and quietude,[4] here is what the Finnish students have said:

> In Finland we don't talk so much and quietness is natural to us. If somebody talks all the time he/she can also be considered even a bit arrogant... When I heard for the first time that the French [in my group] and [Americans] consider shy people socially handicapped I was shocked. A shy person is only a quiet person;
>
> In Finland a lot of people are considered shy in the eyes of foreigners because we are quiet and don't talk to strangers;
>
> My personal opinion is that Finns aren't any more shy than other nations because our culture has taught us to be quiet and not stick out;
>
> I think he [Knutas] doesn't quite agree [with] him [Safer]. However, he [Knutas] is understanding that for Safer it may seem that Finns are terrible shy. For Finns this kind of behavior is like taking other people into consideration, being polite;
>
> [Knutas is saying that] Finns are respecting other people by not starting conversation at a first second.

Depending on how the groups' discussions developed, students were asked to build on their group discussions to discover what they had in mind when almost all of them had used the word 'shy' to describe Finns to strangers. We present the following as the kind of English and Finnish forms of statements that were made during these group discussions:

> (1) We are, I am, Finns are, a Finn is: quiet, reserved, modest, sensitive, careful, cautious, tactful, timid, observant, inward-directed and respectful (of the privacy of others); and
>
> (2) Me olemme (we are), Minä olen (I am), Suomalaiset ovat (Finns are), Suomalainen on (a Finn is): ujo (socially timid, careful), hiljainen (quiet in style and amount of talk, silent), arka (timid, cautious, sensitive), pidättyväinen (tactful, reserved, reticent), varautunut (cautious in order to be prepared before acting/talking inappropriately in a new situation, reserved, observant), hienotunteinen (discrete, considerate, tactful) and herkkä (positive: herkkä aistimaan mielialoja, e.g. sensitive to others' feelings, and negative: easily upset, takes things hard – the more common use of the word implying too sensitive).

As students exchanged their views within group discussions, they quickly realised that 'shy can mean a lot in Finland, it depends on the context', with most Finnish uses treating these words as neutral or positive. The only exception was marked linguistically, with each being preceded implicitly or explicitly by 'too/liian', e.g. self confidence or an 'I don't care' problem. This kind of Finnish speech has appeared repeatedly. Students have been asked to explain the everyday meanings of these words but only after they have produced their own commentary about the video and shyness. Otherwise, they would not be responding with their own symbols, forms of practice, rich points and rules, which they had begun uncovering themselves. This process inevitably raises a question for the Finnish students: 'why are we using shy [in English] when we have all these other options?' The answer is often: 'because

everyone else says we are shy'. The challenge of communicating a Finnish meaning of shyness then comes to the surface.

> When I tried to give my very best explanation for example for the question: 'Why shyness isn't necessarily a negative characteristic in Finland', it was clear to the Japanese in our group at once, but there just weren't words enough to convince the Portuguese for the same matter ... Even more clear differences came when we got to contact with the American students as well.

The teacher introduces a set of learning challenges, all of which are discussed mainly in English but also in Finnish: develop strategies for translating Finnish meaning into English with the goal of helping American students understand Finnish ways from a Finnish rather than an American perspective; begin to understand that persons tend to interpret and translate meaning as cultural beings even if one or both sides are using English as an international language; and become aware of the need to help each other make the implicit explicit when communicating in English. This challenge is met in two general ways: by building on the English and Finnish-language speech that Finnish students have already produced and by encouraging them to link these responses to their local practices and their meanings rather than to other, e.g. American, frames of reference.

Every group creates and follows different paths of discovery, albeit with the investigative suggestions of the teacher. Breakthroughs for the Finnish students begin when they start realising – during translations between Finnish and English that they have been talking in English about Finnish rich points. Chief among these are 'mietiskellä' and 'olla omissa oloissaan': think, reflect, ponder and be in one's own thoughts, even on occasions when surrounded by others. As they make this feature of Finnishness explicit, they become aware of a form of Finnish action that they had been taking for granted. The challenge then shifts to communicating a Finnish message, in English, for these Finnish premises about acting, feeling and being comfortable with quietude, that is, a natural Finnish way of being. Such action is most pronounced in moments when no one is speaking and everyone is respecting the personal space of others. These terms and forms of action constitute a Finnish discourse, with its own premises, a powerful sphere of coherence.

Communicating Finnish Meanings in English to those Uncomfortable with Silence

To talk, from an American view, about being 'comfortable with silence' might sound easy enough, at first, but once again the Finnish speaker is trapped by the everyday English terminologies that are being created and used elsewhere. These are false friends linked to different spheres of coherence. Each easily translates 'Finnish quietude' into 'an absence', typically of frequent sociable speech, this being seen, from the other view, as problematic (e.g. unsociable, unfeeling, impersonal). Referring to silence in this way easily reinforces a negative meaning of shyness. For example, the editing of the televised segment implicitly links silence to shyness   a working

of a US sphere of coherence – and can be seen in a letter from Knutas to a member of our research team.

> Muistan esim. että ensimmäinen kysymys minulta haastattelutilanteessa oli 'Minkälaisia suomalaiset ovat', ja vastasin 'Rehellisiä, tunnollisia, lupauksensa pitäviä ihmisiä jotka eivät vedä mitään roolia, selkeitä luonteita jotka ovat luotettavia. Toisaalta olemme myös hiljaisia, mietiskeleviä jne.' CBS leikkasi vastaukseni sisään vasta tuon 'toisaalta'-sanan jälkeen.

> I remember that the first question to me in the interview situation was 'what are Finns like?' and I answered honest, conscientious people who keep their promises, who never play any roles, they are clear-cut characters who are trustworthy. On the other hand, we're also quiet, thinking, etc. CBS cut my response starting after 'on the other hand'.

The authors consider 'quiet' an appropriate translation of the Finnish term, 'hiljainen'. However, at the beginning of *Tango Finlandia*, Knutas states: 'we're a silent, brooding people, we think a lot'. Characteristics that did not support the American image of 'being shy' were cut, edited out; the English terms, 'silent' and 'brooding' remained. When Finnish students were asked to put themselves in the position of the American commentator in the film in order to help the American students understand what the Finns in the clip were really saying, one student wrote:

> brooding hasn't (as a word) that negative meaning for Finns, or as an action either. It is normal and not weird at all to want to have own space and in her/his own thoughts. Finns appreciate highly certain amount of privacy ... And it definitely doesn't mean that when Finns 'brood' they would be in a bad, depressed or sad mood.

The implications of linking shyness to brooding, which does not capture the Finnish meaning of mietiskellä, are treated elsewhere (Carbaugh & Berry, 2001). Suffice to say, here, that Knutas uses 'silent' because he knows non-Finns speaking in English refer to Finns this way. Also, in his utterances, Knutas is enacting a Finnish way of politely saying, to Safer, yes, Finns are often referred to as 'shy' by non-Finns (line 08), but Finns know that this characterisation of Finns is typically made by those who are not comfortable with silence, or with being quiet, as a natural way to be. From this, Knutas' view, the American reference to 'shy' thus stands out as a typical characterisation of Finnishness made by people presumably uncomfortable with the Finnish concept of quietude.

Knutas' use of 'silent' here is analogous to the Finnish students who just as easily use 'shy' in response to American students. In both cases, American meanings of the terms are active for Americans, just as Finnish meanings are active in the English that Finns are using, at least initially. As a result, when American students hear (1) Safer's reference to the 'shyest people on earth', (2) Knutas' out of context reference to 'being silent' and 'brooding', and (3) Finnish students explanations that 'we are a bit shy', 'but not that shy', they

hear an American message in American English rather than the Finnish messages in English which capture Finnish meanings.

Reference to silence is widely used by scholars who emphasise the importance of a holistic approach to understanding communication. The spirit of this approach is captured with 17 chapters in the book *Silence: Interdisciplinary Perspectives* (see also Liu, 2002). The comments of the book's editor acknowledge the cultural limits of this academic neutrality:

> The only difference between researching silence as opposed to speech is that in the cultural assumptions prevailing in most communities from which the studies in this book have gathered their materials, talk consists of 'vessels' filled with meaning, whereas silence is a void. (Jaworski, 1997: 397)

Even Keith Basso's (1990: 305) often cited pioneering article on understanding the significance of silence, 'To give up on words: Silence in Western Apache culture', called for approaches that specify 'those conditions under which members of the society regularly decide to refrain from verbal behavior altogether'. The frequency of phrases such as 'refraining from speaking', and 'absence of speech' belie a preoccupation with talk as the presumed, primary means of social behaviour. From a Finnish view, perhaps the preoccupation is with quietude; thus the phrasing would be a 'tolerance of speaking' and an 'absence of silence'. Similarly, a recent book published in the USA, for American business people, is titled, 'Talking with confidence for the painfully shy' (Gabor, 1997). In Finland, perhaps an alternate title would be more apt, 'Quietude with confidence for the painfully talkative'! Certainly, each has something to learn from the other, and to do so we must recognise the spheres of coherence for each, the unique premises of each, the related forms of communicative action and the dynamics of these when played together, even when using the 'same' language.

In the process, we may recognise how 'silence' can send something of a shared 'neutral' meaning in Englishlanguage academic journals but the meaning tends to be linked to movement away from rather than movement towards talk or communication generally. This English-language academic usage also tends to 'force' scholars from non-English speaking cultures where locals can be comfortable with quietude to use Anglo-American terminology, rules and premises, or to adopt Anglo-American trends. This is addressed directly in an essay by two Finnish scholars, Kari Sajavaara and Jaakko Lehtonen (Sajavaara & Lehtonen, 1997). They use Anglo-American terminology while challenging the simplistic and misleading negative stereotype of the silent Finn. Silence, like speech, can be negative or positive.

In the Finnish case, communication shares many Nordic communication norms, yet Finnish communication with strangers is often conducted via the language of strangers. In their conclusion they ask: 'Finnish silence: myth or reality?' and refer to how 'the terminology [of English] may... be highly misleading depending on the type of culture that it is applied to.' If American researchers, for example, refer to 'tolerance of silence', this implies a particular standard of talkativeness as a premise for this judgment, just as 'tolerance of talk' implies a Finnish standard of quietude. We have found that both are

being used – by strangers, by locals, by theorists – as a 'correct measuring stick' not only in Finland but also in Scandinavia and elsewhere.

The pedagogical contexts that led to conducting these analyses contributed to becoming aware of the importance of making explicit how Finnish references to 'being silent' and 'being quiet' can send different meanings to strangers. Consequently the pedagogical focus is on communicating the 'meaning fullness' of the Finnish feeling of comfort with quietude. This rich part of the cultural sphere involves being quiet as natural and therefore is not necessarily the same as remaining silent or 'deciding to refrain from verbal behavior'. In other words, 'quietude' is not a void; it is a substantial form of cultural action and communication.

To minimise reference to silence by saying that one is comfortable with moments of quietness in social situations opens the door to suggesting that Finns do not have the same urge to verbalise togetherness that Americans tend to have when surrounded by others. Finnish and American speech, in English, thus distinguishes, often implicitly, between those who talk in a normal way and those who talk less in their respective cultural landscapes. While Americans may refer to a silent person as one who talks less than other Americans, Finns refer to a 'hiljainen ihminen' (a quiet person) as someone who talks less than other Finns. Both cultures depend on appropriate and feasible verbal communication but the premises for appropriate and feasible communication and the local spheres of reference for each are quite different.

Americans, who are uncomfortable with silence, refer to talking as healthy social 'doing' and tend to consider repeated movement towards silence as personally and socially unhealthy. Finns consider hiljaisuus (quietude/quietness) to be one aspect of natural and comfortable social 'being'. Sometimes they choose to be 'vaiti', 'vaitelias', by 'refraining from talking', especially initially in new or in sensitive situations; or they might simply be 'hiljainen' as a natural way of being in harmony with oneself and the environment, whether alone in nature or sometimes when surrounded by others. On a related note, in Finland simply moving from being quiet (as a natural social state) to talking is a process that is not the same as it implies in American culture. Further, when 'silent' is added to 'shy' to describe Finnish people, the nuances in the list of English and Finnish words produced above by Finnish students transform a neutral or positive Finnish meaning into a rather negative meaning for American students and in-class exchange students.[5]

This discovery process has helped the students and teachers understand how they are situated in multiple third spaces between languages and ways of communicating. It has led into a process of understanding how members of each culture tend to have something rich that is rare in the other culture. The presence of exchange students in Finnish classes during these exchanges has been a key factor in this discovery process. Most of them have felt uncomfortable whenever Finns did not live up to their ordinary expectations of 'talking constantly' during group discussions, but they considered reference to 'quiet people' neutral or less negative than reference to 'silent people'. Over time they began to understand the reliability of the speech of people who move from 'quietude' to talking.

Perhaps English-language academic discourse is trapped by a shared meaning of silence in the English-speaking world, which may be supported in many Western academic circles. If so, silence may be more-or-less used by scholars who do not necessarily like the 'talkative cultural frames' but unwittingly contribute to a context of meaning in which silence becomes something negative, a movement away from talk, rather than an activity in its own right.

From a pedagogical perspective, the authors consider the terminological shift from 'silence' to 'quietness' (in everyday speech) an appropriate step in helping people from communities who are 'comfortable with quietude' learn to explain their ways of communicating to strangers who do not have a similar sense of comfort. As students become aware of the extent to which they respect others who think before speaking, listen until they can introduce 'added-value' to the conversation and act on what they say (Carbaugh, 1995; Carbaugh & Poutiainen, 2000; Nurmikari-Berry & Berry, 1999; Sajavaara & Lehtonen, 1997), they begin to create ways to deal with the negative 'shy-silent' stereotype of Finns (our paraphrase):

> We are not shy and silent. We tend to be quiet people who are also comfortable with others when nobody is talking. We talk when we have something to say but we don't have the same sense of urgency that you might have to verbalize when together. We also non-verbalize together-ness.

In this way students are moving away from the 'imperialism' of cultural meanings embedded in English whether used by distant Americans or in-class exchange students who are 'uncomfortable with silence'.

Escaping reliance on false friends they have long lived with – that is, no longer saying, 'we are shy and silent' or 'we are not that shy' – is very difficult for Finnish students, but awareness of their existence and misinterpretation elsewhere helps create other possibilities for communicating Finnish meaning from a Finnish perspective in English. This awareness also creates an important first step towards developing a kind of intercultural communication interpretive competence in which the non-native speaker of English can help the native speaker become an active negotiator of meaning in in-between spaces and thereby collectively move towards creating the discursive semi-coherent Third Space.

Cultural Analysis as Essential to Pedagogical Discovery and Interpretation of Meaning

One of the challenges facing the ethnography of communication and cultural interpretation generally is the detection and understanding of possible links between 'the interactional accomplishments of social identities' and the 'cultural premises and models' which make these social identities 'sensible and appropriate' (Carbaugh, 1990: 150–175, 1996). For example, students learn how the meanings of 'shy' (in English) are differently embedded in Finnish and American premises for social interaction. The discovery and discussion of cultural premises like these, i.e. unquestioned 'beliefs of existence (what is)

and of value (what is good and bad)' (Philipsen, 1992: 8), provides insights into different uses of English in different cultural landscapes. This helps interlocutors become aware of the cultural nature of their speech, not only when speaking a foreign language, but also when speaking their native tongue. In the process, students and analysts can understand how local models for communication – premises, rules and arrangements for communicating – are at the heart of language use and learning. For an example of one student's discovery process, see the Appendix.

Cultural analysis and ethnographic methods help students discover, interpret and translate cultural meanings into appropriate language for different target groups (Wierzbicka, 1997). We have tried to understand this process as a cultural process, salient to language learning, appearing in informal and formal ways, in various situations, with different people. In the process, we have used a special vocabulary that draws attention to different cultural uses and interpretations of language, and ways these differences have played into classrooms of language learning.

In this paper the gradual movement towards creation of a pedagogical Third Space by Finnish and American students focuses on the complicated discovery process of Finns communicating in English. America does not serve here in the traditional meaning of a 'target' culture but, from the teachers' perspective, only one of many symbolic and semantic systems with which Finns use English. The goal is not development of bilingual/bicultural communication competence but development of a hermeneutic competence when using English as an international language. We suggest that non-native speakers who develop this ability will eventually be recognised as privileged intercultural speakers. Here the intercultural speaker is basically understood as a person who can actively contribute to the creation of a Third Space for interlocutors from different cultural systems of coherence.

Movement towards development of this intercultural competence can rarely, if ever, take root during a short course without semi-active participation of the observer–participant teacher who helps students return to their own native speech, its sphere of coherence, to discover taken-for-granted rich points and rules. The experiences of many courses have enabled the authors to help students become aware of some of these dimensions of intercultural communication in English. Equally, if not more important, the teacher's roles as 'observer and participant in the process' provide exciting opportunities for learning about this complicated process.

The development came as Finnish students gradually began to discover the semantic relationship between the lexical terms 'shy' (which sent a message of being socially handicapped to Americans versus a Finnish meaning of being reserved, observant, respectful of others' privacy); 'silent' (something uncomfortable for Americans who are comfortable with continuous speech versus a Finnish meaning of being comfortable with quietude, quietness); 'brooding' (deep thinking about problems for Americans versus a neutral Finnish concept of deep thinking); 'privacy' (socially problematic for Americans versus the positive side of being in one's own thoughts, 'olla omissa oloissaan'). Fundamental to understanding this pedagogical process was the authors' discovery that American English reference to 'silence' implies

movement away from speech but that Finnish reference to 'quietude/ quietness' could perhaps be used to help Americans, and others, understand that movement could also be towards speech in another cultural landscape. These discoveries contributed to creation of a meaningful, if short-term, pedagogical Third Space in which interlocutors in the same course learned about themselves and others.

The approach adopted in this article presumes that English should be learned, to the extent possible, as an international language with explicit reference to how the semantic, grammatical and cultural meanings embedded in native languages play invisible roles in using that new language. As a result, language learning is, to some degree, intercultural communication between users of different languages and different language varieties. The goal is not to turn Finnish into English, but to help students develop appropriate strategies for communicating Finnish meanings in English. In the process, we can bring cultural study into language learning in an explicit way, helping teachers and students alike to hear in their languages, and their varieties, cultures at work.

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Notes

1. For Finnish and Austrian students using English as a shared foreign language, see Auer-Rizzi and Berry, 2000; Berry, 1998, 2002; Berry and Innreiter-Moser, 2002; Reber and Berry, 1999. For Finnish–French English language email communication, see Berry and Markowski, 2002.

2. Many teachers and researchers are aware of the importance of integrating language and intercultural communication competence, see for example Kohonen *et al.* (2000), but the pedagogical focus is usually on bicultural communication competence. Finnish university students demonstrate little, if any, awareness of the role of false friends among interlocutors with a very good command of English. This is also the case for exchange students from other European countries who have participated in courses since the 1980s.

3. The data take several forms: written responses to the video segment in both Finnish and American universities, audiorecorded discussions about the segment in Finnish and US universities, faxed results of summaries of group discussions in both directions, US questions for Finnish students to answer, written reflections in both universities after discussion sessions, impromptu student exchanges via email about the segment, extensive email exchanges between the teachers, in-depth interviews in English and Finnish with some participants in the courses and some in-depth interviews with Finnish students who have not seen *Tango Finlandia* but were asked to comment on the data produced in the courses during the past nine years.

4. In the classroom we use 'quietness' because students are more familiar with quietness than 'quietude'. Here quietude means (*The New Oxford Dictionary of English*, 1998: 1521). 'a state of stillness, calmness, and quiet in a person or place.' In the case of communicating with French students the difference between 'silent' and 'quiet' is culturally significant. French data (60 students) demonstrates a difference between silent (silencieux) and quiet (tranquille) when associated with shy. Shy (timide) is often considered socially negative but also neutral, especially by students from northern France. A neutral view of shy disappears, however, when combined with silent (silencieux). In contrast, quiet, being calm/relaxed, sends a positive social message and can turn a negative view of shy into a neutral or

positive interpretation when a shy (timide) person is also described as a quiet person (tranquille).

5. The authors are currently analysing data related to how voicing over and the use of images in *Tango Finlandia* send an American interpretation of Finnish speech. The goal is demonstration of different dimensions of relationships between language and images that interfere with intercultural communication in modern media. See, e.g Gunther Kress (2003).

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Appendix: One Example of a Student Describing a 'Shy' Discovery Process in her Group

The time spent in the intercultural communication course was enough to start understanding the importance of cultural complexity in conversations but of course it was too short a time to understand everything and be 'ready' in all coming cultural situations. As Mr. Berry pointed out in one lesson, this is a life long learning opportunity where we all are teachers and students at the same time. We teach others about our own culture but at the same time we learn from others about their cultures. This learning is not limited only to the course but can also occur in our everyday life and last 'forever'.

The word shy was our 'false friend'...; although we all knew what the word shy meant when we translated the word from English to the native language, we all understood it differently. The word shy was very deeply attached to our cultural backgrounds. We discussed the word shy in our first lesson. The foreign students in our group described Finns as cold or shy people. We did not discuss the meaning of the word further as we did not see it necessary. We thought that the word shy was understood similarly by all of us but we were wrong. We did not realise that we were at the 'false friend stage'.

In one of the lessons where we started to explore the world shy more we realized that we all had different kinds of images what the word shy represented to us....There was nothing wrong with our English skills but we still could not explain the meaning or understand what the others were saying.... After we had discussed about the meaning of shy we thought about the conversation at home and wrote our reflective essays. By writing the reflective essays we helped each other to understand each other better.... I noticed I had to study the deeper meanings of my own culture to be able to explain my point of view.

In our introductory hand out there was a Cultural Gut – Cultural Knowledge 'seven steps' model [related to the discovery process]. In our subgroup we started at the beginning at the 'I don't hear' phase [which means at first I didn't realise that a point was being made. Now, on reflection, I realise that I am at # below]. We did not realise that we had different meanings for the word shy. By discussing and exploring the hidden cultural meanings behind the word we moved further on the continuum. At the end of the course, I think that we reached the stage 'I hear and I understand' but maybe also the stage 'I hear, I understand, I accept and I can explain'.