

Effective Ways of Teaching American Refusal to Korean Students: Textbook Review and a Suggested Lesson Plan

Yoo-Jean Lee

Kyonggi University

Lee, Yoo-Jean. (2011). Effective ways of teaching American refusal to Korean students: Textbook review and a suggested lesson plan. *Modern English Education*, 12(4), 65-89.

It is difficult to perform speech acts for request, apology, complaint, compliment, greeting, or refusal in English as they can convey wrong information. Performing the speech act of refusal can be even more difficult for ESL or EFL students because refusal indicates one's objection to the others' offer, invitation, suggestion, or request. Particularly Korean students are easy to fail in expressing refusal politely in English due to many differences between Koreans and Americans: social and cultural differences and differences in performing the speech act and using semantic formulas. Their refusal thus often sounds pragmatically inappropriate even though it is grammatically perfect. In this paper, first, what kinds of differences are found between Koreans and Americans when refusing, what makes them misunderstand each other, and how instruction can help Korean students in it are discussed. And then five commonly used textbooks are reviewed to show how American refusal is taught, what kinds of problems are found, and what can be modified to teach it more explicitly and effectively. Finally, a sample lesson plan of teaching American refusal to Korean university students is presented to raise their pragmatic awareness as well as to enhance their pragmatic competence.

[polite refusal/speech act /semantic formulas/L2 pragmatic awareness/L2 pragmatic competence/instruction of American refusal strategies/공손한 거절/발화행위/ 의미공식/제2언어 화용인식/제2언어 화용능력/미국인의 거절전략 지도]

I. INTRODUCTION

To say “no” to other people is always not easy because it requires one “to respond negatively to an offer, request, invitation, etc” (Al-Kahtani, 2005, p. 37). It is difficult

for native English speakers in America, but it is even more difficult to say it for other language speakers, especially for Korean speakers due to different communication orientations between Koreans and Americans (Merkin, 2009). Refusals are considered a “major cross-cultural ‘sticking point’ for many nonnative speakers” (Beebe, Takahashi, & Uliss-Weltz, 1990, p. 56) because they are complex in nature which require long sequences of negotiation (Gass & Houck, 1999; Hassani, Mardani & Vahid Dastjerdi, 2011; Silva, 2003). Silva (2003) mentioned that the risk of face-threat is closely connected to the refusal speech act, and thus indirectness is required when expressing refusal to other people. Even though Koreans have enough linguistic knowledge for refusals, they sometimes fail to express them appropriately due to the lack of pragmatic competence (Yunkyong Cho, 2004; Duk-Young Kim, 2008; Jihyun Kwon, 2004; Merkin, 2009). Their inappropriate utterances may give an unintentional impression that the speaker is rude or impolite. Accordingly, when teaching American refusal to Korean students, it would be necessary for teachers to help students maintain politeness and express refusal appropriately in a given context.¹ The purpose of this paper is to explore what makes it difficult for Korean students to learn American refusal strategy and what kinds of misunderstanding can occur when they fail to refuse properly. In addition, whether instruction of American refusals would have positive effect on Korean students’ pragmatic competence and how they should be taught in ESL/EFL textbooks will be illustrated. Finally, practical activities which can be used in ESL/EFL classrooms especially for university level of Korean students will be suggested.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

1. Why is Korean Refusal Different from That of American?

1) Social and Cultural Backgrounds of Koreans

Koreans and Americans have many differences in terms of social and cultural backgrounds. When considering social perspectives, Korea maintains traditional hierarchical structure regarding authority relations as Confucianism has been deeply

¹ In this paper, the attention was specifically given to only American refusal, though there might be Canadian refusal, Australian refusal, British refusal, New Zealand refusal, etc. because most ESL/EFL research which dealt with the speech act of refusal in pragmatics have mainly focused on American refusal and the author of this article herself has direct experience in it living quite some time in that society.

rooted in it for a long time (Jung Min Kim & Turiel, 1996; Merkin, 2009). Accordingly, Koreans emphasize children's respect for authority of older people. They also "respect people in positions higher than their own in the social hierarchy, and give priority to the group over the individual" (Jung Min Kim & Turiel, 1996, p. 313). In addition, they try to save each other's face by being polite and considerate in communications with higher status people or elderly people (Merkin, 2009). In contrast, Americans tend to put "emphasis on personal freedoms, autonomy, and rights [as in other Western societies, while putting relatively less] emphasis on respect, deference, and obedience to authority" (Jung Min Kim & Turiel, 1996, p.312). M. Agnes Kang (2003) explained about the hierarchical structure in Korea in relation to Korean grammatical structure that "hierarchical relationships based on power, age, and solidarity are encoded in Korean [language] grammatically, both morphologically and lexically, and have been referred to in various ways in the sociolinguistic literature" (p.302). When referring to a person, Koreans thus consider the relative status of the speaker and the listener. With the use of first or second person pronouns, one has to decide whether s/he will use simple or modest forms in referring to him/herself or to his/her interlocutor. For example, "one can refer to one's interlocutor in the third person, calling him or her by title (e.g. 'teacher') or relationship to the speaker (e.g. 'older sister') instead of by name or second person pronoun, as a sign of respect" (M. Agnes Kang, 2003, p. 303). This is called 'kinship terms,' and the use of those terms is "a sign of intimacy as well as mark of relative status" (Ho-Min Sohn, 1981, p. 441).

From cultural perspectives, Koreans and Americans also have remarkably different cognitive cultures (Andrew Sangpil Byon, 2004). More specifically, Americans are "more egalitarian, individualistic, direct, practical, and rationalistic than Koreans, [whereas] Koreans are more hierarchical, collectivistic, indirect, formalistic, and emotionalistic than Americans" (Andrew Sangpil Byon, 2004, p. 40). These social and cultural differences do not necessarily mean that Americans do not respect others and thus are rude and impolite. They also have their own ways of expressing politeness to others even when talking to lower or equal status people in addition to higher status people. Yet, Koreans tend to be more polite and indirect when refusing in English. For example, their reverence especially for people at higher status and their tendency to use respectful words and indirect expressions to those people are likely to apply when talking with Americans. Being too polite, however, often gives Americans the impressions that Koreans are rather impertinent, arrogant, and even unreliable (Fraser, 1990; Jihyun Kwon, 2004; Merkin, 2009; Sunok Park, 2003). Americans may feel uncomfortable considering that Koreans are being too indirect and evasive.

2) Speech Act and Semantic Formulas of Korean Refusal

Koreans and Americans have distinctive differences in terms of their performance in the speech act of refusal and their use of semantic formulas. Speech act of refusal occurs when a person directly or indirectly says “no” to a certain request, invitation, offer, or suggestion (Andrew Sangpil Byon, 2005; Jihyun Kwon, 2004). As Tanck (2002, p. 2, cited in Chen, 1996) mentioned, “Refusal is a face-threatening act to the listener because it contradicts his or her expectations, and is often realized through indirect strategies.” For these reasons, it is required for a speaker to have a high level of pragmatic competence to refuse a request in polite ways. Here, having a pragmatic competence means having both sociolinguistic competence [i.e. “knowledge of contextually appropriate language use” (Krisnawati, 2011, p. 106)] and illocutionary competence [i.e. “knowledge of communicative action and how to carry it out” (p. 106)]. A speaker usually chooses one of the semantic formulas, which is the means by which the speech act of refusal is accomplished, such as reason, explanation, alternative, etc. (Beebe, Takahashi & Uliss-Weltz, 1990; Andrew Sangpil Byon, 2005; Fraser, 1981; Olshtain & Cohen, 1983). Yet, two or more formulas can be often used. For example, let us say that one responds “I’m sorry, but I won’t be able to go because my wife is very sick” to his/her friend’s housewarming party invitation. Even in this one utterance, several semantic formulas such as apology, excuse, reason, and explanation are used.

When performing the speech act of refusal, Korean native speakers tend to use relatively less direct refusals than American English native speakers do as mentioned above. The most common indirect and polite way of refusing for Koreans is not completing utterances. Andrew Sangpil Byon (2005) pointed out that “omission of main clauses is a productive mechanism for performing indirect speech acts in Korean since main clauses usually carry the speaker’s assertion” (p. 6). He provided an example of Koreans’ refusal.

Table 1

An Example of Koreans’ Refusal: Omission of Main Clause

A refusal in Korean	“시간이 없어서... (못 가겠다).”
Pronunciation in Korean	“Sikan-i eps-e-se... (mos ka-kyess-ta).”
Translation in English	“Because I don’t have time... (I can’t make it).”

When one says “Sika-ni eps-e-se...” and omits the rest of the part as indicated in Table 1, it gives an impression to the listener that s/he is politely saying and really feels sorry about refusing. Another example is as follows: When one does not complete his/her speech and says “I wish I could help you, but... (I can’t),” it is usually considered

as a polite way of refusal. Some other examples such as “It’s a good idea, but... (I don’t agree)” and “I really want to do that, but... (I can’t)” could also be used to avoid rudeness.

In the meantime, when using semantic formulas of refusal, Koreans use more formulas and more polite strategies per response than Americans (Silva, 2003). In addition, Koreans tend to resort to “circumstances beyond their control [by] de-personalizing their explanations, [whereas Americans use] reference to their personal decisions and preferences in their excuses and preferences” (Silva, 2003, p. 61). For example, Koreans typically use reasons (e.g. referring to a close relative’s death when refusing a boss’s invitation) to shrink their responsibility (Jihyun Kwon, 2004). Moreover, they rarely refuse with using simple terms such as “no” and “thank you” because they consider those terms as highly face-threatening. Their refusals are more indirect, kind, and elaborate especially when dealing with higher status people (Jihyun Kwon, 2004; Silva, 2003). In contrast, Americans use quite consistent patterns for refusals regardless of listeners’ status level: They “tend to begin their refusal realization with positive opinion (e.g. I’d like to) followed by regret, and concluded with excuse” (Silva, 2003, p. 62, cited in Morrow, 1996, p. 37). As a result, Koreans’ too much indirectness, politeness, and elaboration often make their refusal sounds verbose, unnatural, or awkward to Americans (Fraser, 1990; Sunok Park, 2003).

2. What Makes Koreans and Americans Misunderstand Each Other When Refusing?

Americans tend to use present or past perfect progressive tense to express their politeness. They are thus likely to use such expressions as “I’ve been thinking of~” or “I was considering~” (instead of “I think~”) and “could/would (instead of can/will) you/I~” to avoid rudeness when refusing. In contrast, using non-present tense in Korean does not necessarily show one’s politeness. Accordingly, Koreans mostly use simple present or past tense when refusing in English as they do in Korean (Bardovi-Harlig & Hartford, 1991).

In addition, as English carries politeness on modal verbs such as ‘can,’ ‘could,’ ‘may,’ ‘might,’ ‘would,’ ‘will,’ etc. (Tsarikova, 2005), Americans use those modal verbs frequently when refusing. However, Korean modals do not convey any degree of politeness (Han Chang Kim, 1993). They, of course, have meanings such as obligation, desire, ability, and permission as English modals do, but they are only subordinated to the end of verbs as a particle form and are not related to kindness (Soonja Choi, 1995; Papafragou, 1997). For this reason, Koreans are often confused or have lack of knowledge about appropriate use of English modal verbs. For example, they are more

likely to use 'can' and 'will' when refusing rather than 'could' and 'would' which represent higher degree of politeness.

Sometimes, as mentioned above, Koreans do not complete their utterances showing that they feel sorry for refusing. Or, some Koreans use modal verbs or non-present tense too often regardless of listeners' different status or age because they believe that the use of modal verbs or non-present tense in English is the indicator of respect and politeness. In this case, however, their speech can be seen as too verbose, and they can be seen as excessively polite. Consequently, this can make their listeners feel that they are unreliable or insolent (Fraser, 1990; Sunok Park, 2003).

Moreover, Bardovi-Harlig and Hartford (1991) found in their study that nonnative speakers use many upgraders (i.e. aggravators) such as "yeah, but~," "because~," "in fact~," and "I prefer~," whereas English native speakers use many downgraders (i.e. mitigators) before the rejection such as "I've been thinking~" (instead of "I think~") and "I'm really not sure~" (instead of "I don't know~") (Bardovi-Harlig & Hartford, 1991, p. 45). As a result, when Koreans who do not know how to use downgraders appropriately in English talk with Americans and use a lot of upgraders for refusals, it can seriously threaten others' face.

3. Is Instruction of American Refusal Effective for Korean Students?

Andrew Sangpil Byon (2005) mentioned that learning pragmatics of target language is difficult because "learning how to understand and perform speech acts entails mastering both linguistic forms and socio-cultural knowledge" (p. 13). For the native speakers of English, pragmatics tended to be naturally acquired from their early ages. However, nonnative speakers mostly spend their time in the classroom and thus have limited opportunities to have mutual interactions with native speakers (Kasper & Schmidt, 1996). Krisnawati (2011) stated that classroom interaction does not provide students with "adequate input to produce linguistic action required for authentic communication in target language" (p. 107). Andrew Sangpil Byon (2005) further pointed out that even those who are at advanced L2 proficiency level often lack pragmatic competence because they are required to know not only what to say something in L2, but also how to and to whom to say it appropriately in the target language context. In addition, it is difficult for nonnative speakers to understand typical semantic formulas of the target language and internalize rules to appropriately use them in spontaneous speech (Kasper, 1997). Consequently, instruction on pragmatics would be necessary for them.

All speech acts are face-threatening (Brown & Levinson, 1987), but particularly the speech act of refusal can be even more face-threatening as a speaker has to disapprove of a requester's idea (Andrew Sangpil Byon, 2005). Since inappropriate refusals can make

nonnative speaker sound rude, vague, or abrupt, teaching polite refusals for them would be essential. Much research (Campillo, Safont-Jordà & Codina-Espurz, 2009; Duan, 2008; King & Silver, 1993; Kondo, 2001; Lingli & Wannaruk, 2010; Martínez-Flor & Usó-Juan, 2006; Morrow, 1995; Silva, 2003) indeed supported the fact that pragmatic features are teachable and pragmatic instruction has positive effect on nonnative speakers' pragmatic competence. In those previous research, it was found that both implicit and explicit teaching in English refusals were effective in enhancing learners' pragmatic competence, but explicit teaching was found to be more facilitative in raising their pragmatic awareness.

Now the question is what should be taught for American way of refusal and how should it be done especially for Korean speakers? To answer them, five ESL/EFL textbooks will be briefly reviewed to see how refusals are taught and what problems are found in teaching refusal speech acts. Then, some possible ways of revising them will be presented.

4. How is American Refusal Taught in ESL/EFL Materials and How Should It be Revised?

1) Review of ESL/EFL Textbooks and Suggestions for Using Them in Better Ways

Five books that are mainly used for an analysis of English refusal strategy are *In Touch: A Beginning American English Series 1* (Castro & Kimbrough, 1995a), *In Touch: A Beginning American English Series 3* (Castro & Kimbrough, 1995b), *Life Styles: An Intermediate American English Series* (Lozano & Sturtevant, 1981), *Express English: Beginning Student Book 2* (Ferreira, 1985a), and *Beginning Workbook 2* (Ferreira, 1985b).

First of all, *In Touch: A Beginning American English Series 1* consists of 12 units and two review parts. Since the book is for beginning level students, contents are simple and short overall, and activities simply deal with simple vocabulary knowledge. One good thing about this book is that the main conversation is always shown with pictures with blanks in them. Sometimes, the pictures are arranged in the chronological order so that students can easily follow what is happening and guess possible words for the blanks. Unit 9 and unit 12 contain refusal strategy. The title of unit 9 is 'Let's get something to eat,' and the following dialogue which includes suggesting and accepting/refusing is presented.

Direction: Suggest getting something to eat/drink. Accept or say you can't accept like this:

Tony: Let's get something to eat.

Mr. Champman: I'm sorry. I can't.

A: Let's get something to _____.

B: I'm sorry, I can't. *or* That's a good idea (Castro & Kimbrough, 1995a, p. 62).

Figure 1. A Sample Activity of Suggestion and Refusal 1.

This is only a simple practice of filling in the blank with a word 'eat' or 'drink.' Even though the activity is provided for the practice of suggestion and refusal, it does not actually help students learn how to refuse a suggestion. Also, in the sample dialogue, Mr. Champman appears to be a senior of Tony. However, the given activity does not show who is older/younger or at a higher/lower status between 'A' and 'B.' Whereas Americans use quite consistent patterns for refusals whether their listeners are at a higher or lower status (Silva, 2003), Koreans think that it would be fine to use less polite expressions to lower status listeners. Accordingly, to teach a polite way of American refusal here, providing some information to understand two people's relationship and/or their status, position, or age would be needed. Also, explaining that the relationship between the two people would not be an important factor and thus students do not need to use excessively polite language especially to higher status people would be necessary so that they can practice using consistent refusal patterns regardless of listeners' status level. In addition, in the sample dialogue, starting with a positive opinion (e.g. "I would like to have a dinner with you, but~."), adding a regret (e.g. "~ I don't think I can't."), and giving an excuse for refusing the suggestion (e.g. "I have an important meeting with someone," "I have a prior engagement," or "I don't feel good today.") which are common patterns for American refusal (Silva, 2003) might be needed. The continued activity expanded the first one (i.e. a sample activity of refusal 1 in Figure 1) a little more as shown below:

Direction: Franco, Maria, Ali and Jeannette are talking. Write 'can,' 'can't,' or 'have to' with the words in parentheses.

Franco: What about you, Maria? Ali? Let's get something to eat.

Maria: I _____ (go) home. It's already 8:45, and I _____ (study).

Ali: I'm sorry. I _____ (go) either. I _____ (do) my homework.

Jeannette: I _____ (meet) my husband at 9:30, but I _____ (stay) for a little while (Castro & Kimbrough, 1995a, p. 63).

Figure 2. A Sample Activity of Suggestion and Refusal 2.

Again, this activity only focuses on using modal verbs. Also, the provided dialogue does not seem like a natural speech because three people (Maria, Ali, and Jeannette) are not willing to go with Franco. The authors might have intentionally made this unnatural

conversation. If this activity includes sentences which explain each person's excuse for Franco's suggestion rather than simply giving all possible sentences with blanks, students would have better practice to learn refusal strategy. They could then play the role of each character as follows.

<p>Direction: Franco, Maria, Ali, and Jeannette are having a conversation. Franco is asking three of his friends; Maria, Ali, and Jeannette; to eat something together. However, they all have to leave soon because they have something else to do. If you are Maria, Ali, and Jeannette, how would you respond to Franco? Read the following reasons why they cannot stay long and eat together, and write down how you would refuse Franco's suggestion in polite ways.</p> <p>Franco: What about you, Maria? Ali? Let's get something to eat. Maria: She thinks it's too late. She wants to go home and do study. → _____ Ali: He also cannot go. He has homework. → _____ Jeannette: She can't stay long. She has to meet her husband at 9:30. → _____</p>
--

Figure 3. A Revised Activity for the Sample Activity of Suggestion and Refusal 2.

Through this revised activity, students can write down possible answers, and the teacher can discuss which one is the best one to refuse politely.

In addition to unit 9 of Castro and Kimbrough's (1995a) book, unit 12, whose title is 'What kind of movies do you like?' also includes suggestion and its answer in a dialogue. A sample dialogue is as follows:

<p>Tony: I play tennis. Tomiko: You're kidding! Tony: No. I play every morning before I go to work. Would you like to play sometime? Tomiko: Sure. I'd love to, but maybe not so early (Castro & Kimbrough, 1995a, p. 82).</p>

Figure 4. A Sample Dialogue of Suggestion and Refusal1.

The problem of this dialogue is that it does not specify any particular activity. Students are only supposed to hear the recording tape and read the dialogue loudly. As Bardovi-Harlig and Mahan-Taylor (2003) mentioned, it would be important for the teacher to not only present authentic language samples to students but also provide appropriate production activities with explicit interpretations. Also, as they stressed that pragmatic competence can be developed through active listening, responding, and turn-taking activities, enough practice and appropriate guidelines need to be followed by the presentation of good language samples. One of the ways to make the given dialogue as a better refusal activity would be giving the last part (i.e. Tomiko's part) as a blank and asking students to refuse to Tony's suggestion. In addition, since the expression "Would

you like to play sometime?" is a polite suggestion, it could be practiced together with a polite response to it as a set.

Another textbook, *In Touch: A Beginning American English Series 3*, contains a little longer and complicated sentences and contents. It also consists of 12 units, but have more activities of refusal. The big difference between book 1 and 3 is that the latter presents more naturalistic and polite expressions. Those expressions are 'could/would you~, 'would you mind~, 'why don't you~, etc. As Bardovi-Harlig and Mahan-Taylor (2003) highlighted, presenting authentic and naturalistic language samples as examples or models would help students reduce not only grammatical errors but also pragmatic errors which may make them appear abrupt, brusque, rude, or uncaring in social interactions (Bardovi-Harlig & Mahan-Taylor, 2003; Yates, 2004). The title of unit 5 the book 3 is 'It's hot in here, isn't it?' and one of the activities is as follows:

Direction: Mac and Maria are standing near the bar at Club 54. Fill in the blanks.

Maria: It's hot in here, _____? Let's sit down for a minute.

Mac: OK. **Would you like something else to drink?**

Maria: **You know what I'd really like? A glass of water.**

Mac: OK...The music's really good, _____? Do you know who the DJ is?

Maria: I think it's Pete Reynolds. At least it looks like him.

Mac: Oh, I've heard of him. He's on the radio, _____?

Maria: Uh-huh.

Mac: **Do you want to dance?**

Maria: **I'd like to rest a while, if you don't mind.**

Mac: OK...Tomiko and Tony are fantastic dancers, _____?

Maria: Yeah, they are...There are usually a lot more people here. It isn't very crowded tonight,

_____.
Mac: No, it isn't (Castro & Kimbrough, 1995b, p. 34)

Figure 5. A Sample Activity of Suggestion and Refusal 3.

In this dialogue, several suggestions and responses for them are provided. The teacher can continue practicing those expressions as a set and ask students what Maria's and Mac's feelings would be when those two hear each of their suggestion and response. That is, the teacher can ask students if Maria's suggestion seem to be polite and if Mac's refusal to her suggestions seem to be polite and appropriate to the context as well, for example. The teacher and students can then talk about some other good ways to make suggestions and to refuse to them.

In unit 6 ('I wonder if Mac likes to play tennis') of the same book, a dialogue which includes much more polite way of speaking is provided as follows:

.....
 Maria: Maybe the four of us could play next weekend.
 Tomiko: I'd like to, but I'm planning to go to Washington for the weekend.

 Tomiko: Why don't you come with me? I'm sure Michiko wouldn't mind.
 Maria: Oh, I'd really like to, but I have to work on Saturday.
 Tomiko: Oh, come on. Take a day off (Castro & Kimbrough, 1995b, p. 39).....

Figure 6. A Sample Dialogue of Suggestion and Refusal 2.

Similar to the dialogue in Figure 4, this dialogue itself also does not require students to do any specific practice. It might be good to provide the first one or two sets of suggestion and refusal sentences in the dialogue as examples and then leave other parts as blanks. Some explanations of what Tomiko would like to suggest (e.g. He wants to go to see a football game with Maria and Michiko this Saturday.) and what Maria would like to say to that suggestion (e.g. She has to work during the weekend.) can be presented with the blanks so that students can fill in the blanks with their own words.

Even though the book 3 contains more authentic contents with naturalistic expressions and more practices than the book 1, it does not have enough diverse and interesting activities.

Still another book, *Life Styles: An Intermediate American English Series*, has 10 units and are similarly organized as the above two books are. One remarkable thing of this book is that it includes contents about American life such as real advertisement of certain product, road signs, introduction of international house in college, hotel information with reservation process, getting ticket/confirmation of flight information at the airport, introduction of famous places in America, and a lot more. However, these various situations were not used for refusal activities. If refusal strategy is given in those natural contexts, it might have been used more appropriately. Or, at least students would get used to the American culture and understand Americans' way of thinking better. One of the refusal activities in this book is writing a letter to a friend in unit 1. The direction is as follows:

Direction: Paula invited her friend Lucy to lunch to meet Maggie and George. Lucy said she could go, but a few days before the lunch Paula received this letter from her. Read Lucy's letter. Then write a similar letter to a friend (Lozano & Sturtevant, 1981, p. 8).

Figure 7. A Sample Activity of Writing a Refusal Letter.

The example letter shows the common refusal form. The teacher who uses this activity can change it into an oral practice. It would be also possible to ask students how they are going to politely refuse to several people with different status, power, or age (e.g. teacher, friend, sister/brother, boss in a company) because Korean students are not good at using

appropriate refusal strategies to different kinds of people [(e.g. They tend to express excessive politeness especially for higher status people which is often inappropriate in American context, whereas they tend to express relatively less politeness for lower status people by using many upgraders or modal verbs which convey lower degree of politeness.) (Bardovi-Harlig & Hartford, 1991; Silva, 2003)]. Other activities for refusal in the book consist of filling out blanks.

The last two books which I would like to review here are *Express English: Beginning Student Book 2* and *Beginning Workbook 2*. *Student book* is for listening and speaking, and *Workbook* for writing. They both have 20 units of short lengths and the content of each unit for both are same. These two books are used together for beginning level students. The first page of *Student book* introduces seven characters who appear in the story of the book and shows places that the story takes place. The dialogue of each unit is connected together to form one story which is about a crime. Everything is finally well solved with a happy ending. The story of each unit is written with pictures as a dialogue so it is easy to understand. This type of organization seems to be effective to arouse students' interests and think about what will happen in the next unit. Besides dialogues, there are three to four speaking exercises in such situations as 'going to shopping,' 'traveling,' 'planning for holiday,' etc. Writing exercises of these oral practices are in *Workbook*. And the last two to three exercises of each chapter of *Student book* specify such functions as 'disagree strongly,' 'remind someone to do something,' 'refuse permission,' 'describe a lost object,' etc. One of the sample exercises for 'refuse permission' is a role play followed by a listening activity:

<p>Direction: Ken Matthews drove slowly. The road was filled with water because of the heavy rain. Up ahead he saw police cars. Listen to the conversation. Listen again and write the missing words.</p> <p>Police: Hey, mister. You can't go up that road. It's almost flooded. Ken: I'm a U.S agent. I _____ get to Ocean Beach Drive. Police: You _____ go. It's dangerous, sir. There _____ landslide. Ken: Did you see a _____ man with a mustache? He's driving a _____ Buick. Police: Yeah, he wanted _____ his sister. He said her name was Ana. Ken: I _____ to find that man. I'm _____ 214 Ocean Beach Drive. Police: The rescue helicopter _____ here soon. We can take you to the house. Ken: No, I can't wait. When the helicopter arrives, come and get us.</p> <p>Role Play: You are a police officer. Give or refuse permission to enter the Malibu area to..... Start with: You can't go up that road. It's almost flooded (Ferreira, 1985a, p. 37).</p>
--

Figure 8. A Sample Role Play Activity of Refusing Permission.

Since a sample script for a role play is provided, students can get used to the situation by listening to the tape before making their own script. However, this story seems to be a

little difficult for the beginning level students. Also, the situation seems to be not ordinary. It would be better if the given script includes more familiar language and situation. If the language use and situation of the role play are not familiar enough to students, their “real roles may interfere with their imaginary roles, and the verbal actions performed have no real consequences” (Ellis, 1994, cited in Kasper & Rose, 2002, p. 5) for them because they rely largely on their imagination of how they would behave.

In *Express English: Beginning Workbook 2*, all activities are writing exercises as mentioned above. Most of them require students to simply fill out blanks as follows.

Direction: It’s Friday. Maria and her new boyfriend Mike are deciding on a place to go on Saturday. Write the missing parts.				
expensive	Mozart	festival	soccer	going to play
that kind of	how much	theater	watching	
Mike: Let’s go to the soccer game. The Strikers are playing the Cosmos.				
Maria: No, thanks. I hate _____ sports. It’s boring.				
Mike: Well, what about a concert? Isn’t there a jazz _____ in Malibu?				
Maria: Not on Saturday night. But there’s a _____ concert at the Hollywood Bowl on Saturday.				
Zuckerman is _____ the violin and Neikrug will be there too.				
Mike: Are you kidding? You know I don’t like _____ music. What else is there to do?				
Maria: If we go to the _____, we can see Cats. It’s really spectacular.				
Mike: _____ are the tickets?				
Maria: They’re \$28, \$35, and \$45.				
Mike: That’s too _____.				
Maria: I guess you’re right. Let’s see what’s playing at the movies (Ferreira, 1985b, p. 40)				

Figure 9. A Sample Activity of Refusal 4.

After students fill in the blanks, the teacher can also ask them if two people in this conversation are speaking in polite ways. If not, the teacher and students can further discuss better ways for Maria and Mike to suggest ideas and refuse to the suggestions without hurting each other’s feelings. In addition, students can think about how they will refuse to different people with different status or age.

To summarize, many of the ESL/EFL textbooks which deal with refusals focus on simple activities in artificial contexts. Generally, conversations in those books are somewhat unnatural and include much more direct refusals than indirect ones. The teacher thus needs to suggest further activities such as asking students if the conversations in the text could be used in real contexts or if those are not likely to threaten others’ face. Korean students would be willing to take direct forms if the teacher does not differentiate the direct forms from other possible indirect ones. Also, they will not be able to learn polite ways of refusing; how to use different modal verbs, how to

give appropriate excuse/reason/explanation, how to state alternatives, and how to apologize; if no explicit instruction is given. In other words, it would be necessary for ESL/EFL teachers to provide authentic context to Korean students, give them as much opportunity as possible to participate in the class activities, and give them clear feedback on students' performance (Duan, 2008; Martínez-Flor & Usó-Juan, 2006). Here, teachers should keep in mind that their first aim is to raise students' pragmatic awareness and expand their pragmatic competence, but not just enhancing their grammatical knowledge. Using scenes of dramas or movies which contain direct and indirect refusals, giving chronological order pictures which contain refusal situation and then asking what people in the pictures would say, providing familiar language and situation for role play activities of refusal, etc. could be possible activities of teaching English refusal strategies. Another thing that should be considered when teaching Korean students would be culture. It is important to teach specific strategies for indirect refusal, but it is also important for teachers to help students understand American culture. Otherwise, it would be impossible for Korean students to use the refusal strategies appropriately within the American context. Showing videos which are related to American life (e.g. special food, holidays, family, history, and school life), providing much chance to speak with native speakers outside the classroom, and having some time to introduce Korean culture to native speakers so that students can compare their culture to that of Americans would be some possible ways of enhancing cultural understanding.

2) A Sample Lesson Plan of Teaching American Refusal for Korean Students

The following is a sample lesson plan for teaching refusal strategy. It is designed for a 50-minute lesson and targeting Korean university students at intermediate level in English. It is aimed at developing students' pragmatic competence.

(1) Target Student: intermediate level Korean university students who study English in an ESL or EFL context

(2) Goals:

- ① To introduce American refusal strategies by approaching naturally and unconsciously to the topic
- ② To help students learn polite ways of refusing a suggestion or request by minimizing face threatening act
- ③ To help students practice how to refuse appropriately to different status people

(3) Session: the first session, a 50-minute lesson (3 sessions of total and 50 minutes each)

(4) Procedure:

- ① Consciousness-Raising and Introduction of a Topic – The teacher comes in and talks about what happened to him/her today. S/he says “Did you have a lunch? I went to a restaurant just a little before the class. I like coffee, sandwiches, and everything there. I ordered a sandwich today. I couldn’t finish everything, so I wanted to have a paper bag to take it home. I asked a girl who was working there but she said “My shift is over. Just ask another person.” Even if the paper bags were just in front of her, she told me to ask someone else. Do you think that the way she talked was nice?” As Martínez-Flor and Usó-Juan (2006) highlighted, for the explicit teaching, it is effective for the teacher to start a lesson with asking some questions or introducing certain incidents regarding the speech act of refusal in normal daily life to raise students’ consciousness. Accordingly, by describing personal experience of the teacher herself/himself, s/he can draw students’ attention.
- ② The teacher asks students if this is a good refusal and if there are other ways to refuse in this situation. S/he writes down their responses and further explains which of those would be a polite way (e.g. “I’m sorry, but could you ask another person? I was just about to leave now.”) S/he then explains how to refuse in polite ways such as giving an excuse, suggesting an alternative, showing hesitation, and apologizing.
 To help students understand different ways of refusing in Korean and English, s/he asks them how they would refuse to a higher, the same, and a lower status person in Korean and English in a given situation (e.g. A mother-in law/friend/younger brother asks you to go to see a concert together, but you do not want to go.). After listening to students’ responses, the teacher explains that they would not need to be too polite and indirect especially for a higher status person when refusing in English. S/he also encourages them to use consistent patterns regardless of a listener’s status level (i.e. starting with a positive opinion, adding a regret, and giving an excuse) and tells them what misunderstanding can occur when they show excessive politeness to Americans.
- ③ Classroom Activity – The teacher separates students into 3 groups of 4 to 5 and gives them three kinds of refusal situations with pictures (See Appendix 1, Appendix 2, and Appendix 3.). S/he asks them to talk about polite ways of refusing within each group.

The three situations are as follows:

- You are working on a group project with your professor. The professor feels so hungry that he wants to eat something first and finish the project after dinner. However, you don’t want to because you need to leave early.

→Professor: Hey, it's getting late. Why don't we go down to the cafeteria? We can finish up after eating dinner (adapted from Tanck, 2002, p. 20).

You: _____.

- One of your classmates who often misses classes (and whom you don't know quite well) approaches you. She wants to borrow your notes, but you don't want her to.

→Classmate: Oh, I didn't feel well last Wednesday. I'm sorry, but can I borrow your notes (adapted from Andrew Sangpil Byon, 2005, p. 10)?

You: _____.

- You are a graduate student and tutoring a high school student in Mathematics. Today is your second day of tutoring. Your student asks you to stay a little longer because she has an important exam tomorrow and wants to review her textbook. However, you can't stay longer because you have plans to have dinner with your family.

→Student: I have a test tomorrow, and it covers the whole chapters. Can you stay here one more hour and help me review this textbook (adapted from Andrew Sangpil Byon, 2005, p. 11)?

You: _____.

While each group members are discussing, the teacher walks around and listens to what they are saying. The situation 1 is the refusal of a lower status person to a higher status person, the situation 2 is the refusal between the same status people, and the situation 3 is the refusal of a higher status person to a lower status one. The teacher reminds students to use polite refusal patterns consistently for different status people. For the explicit instruction, it is important for the teacher to encourage students to participate in the given activities, reinforce learning targets, and provide direct feedback on students' performance (Duan, 2008; Martínez-Flor & Usó-Juan, 2006). Thus, after finishing the discussion, as a whole class, the teacher can ask each group to explain what their situation and response for refusal are. They can suggest their opinions to other groups. The teacher can also give other possible responses of politely refusing one's request or suggestion. Through this activity, students can freely exchange their opinions with their friends.

The teacher then asks about what programs students usually watch at home. S/he shows for about one minute of a scene in one of the well-known sitcoms '*sex and the city*.' The story is about a conversation between two female friends on the phone in which refusal is involved. Before watching it, the teacher briefly explains the situation and the relationship between the two characters. Since the rate of speaking between them is fast, the teacher may show it twice. S/he asks students what kinds of refusal strategies were used in the scene and if they can remember the sentences.

S/he then gives a script of the conversation (See Appendix 4.) and checks the sentences which include suggestion(s) and refusal(s) with students. S/he can explain some difficult words or expressions which may hinder students' understanding of the situation. The class discusses how appropriate the conversation between the same status people was and what other possible ways of refusing they can think of. They can be also asked what they would say if the person on the phone is their father/mother, teacher, or little brother/sister. Through this activity, students would learn what kinds of refusal strategies can be used in the authentic situations.

- ④ Closing and Assignment – The teacher asks students what they have learned today which includes the ways to refuse in an indirect and polite manner. For homework, s/he asks them to write any refusal strategy that they hear outside the classroom today (e.g. from TV, a movie, or their own experience), and then evaluates if the utterances are appropriate.

III. CONCLUSION and IMPLICATIONS

American refusal system which is different from that of Koreans would be one of the most difficult areas for Korean students to learn. A lot of misunderstanding between Koreans and Americans can occur due to the lack of pragmatic awareness and pragmatic competence. To overcome this difficulty, textbook practices and classroom activities have to be related to authentic context. Providing natural conversation samples, letting students understand different ways of speaking refusals in English, helping them learn polite and indirect ways of refusing, focusing on cultural education, and creating consciousness raising mood would be good ways to maximize the instruction effect. Most importantly, ESL/EFL teachers should keep in mind that they need to teach pragmatic competence with linguistic competence, but not just linguistic competence itself.

REFERENCES

- Al-Kahtani, S. A. W. (2005). Refusals realizations in three difference cultures: A speech act theoretically-based cross-cultural study. *Language and Translation*, 18, 35-57.
- Bardovi-Harlig, K., & Hartford, B. S. (1991). Saying “no” in English: Native and nonnative rejections. In L. F. Bouton & Y. Kachru (Eds.), *Pragmatics and language learning* (pp. 41-57). Urbana, IL: University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

- Bardovi-Harlig, K., & Mahan-Taylor, R. (2003). *Teaching pragmatics*. Washington, DC: United States Department of State.
- Beebe, L., Takahashi, T., & Uliss-Weltz, R. (1990). Pragmatic transfer in ESL refusals. In R. Scarcella, E. Anderson & S. Krashen (Eds.), *Developing communicative competence in a second language* (pp. 55-73). NY: Newbury House.
- Brown, P., & Levinson, S. C. (1987). *Politeness: Some universals in language usage*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Byon, Andrew Sangpil. (2004). Learning linguistic politeness. *Applied Language Learning, 14*(1), 37-62.
- Byon, Andrew Sangpil. (2005). Teaching refusals in Korean. In H. Wang (Ed.), *The Korean language in America Vol. 10: Selected papers from the tenth annual conference* (pp. 1- 18). Brown University, RI: American Association of Teachers of Korean.
- Campillo, P. S., Safont-Jordà, M. P., & Codina-Espurz, V. (2009). Refusal strategies: A proposal from a sociopragmatic approach. *Revista Electronica de Linguistica Aplicada, 8*, 139-150.
- Castro, O., & Kimbrough, V. (1995a). *In touch: A beginning American English series 1*. New York: Longman.
- Castro, O., & Kimbrough, V. (1995b). *In touch: A beginning American English series 3*. New York: Longman.
- Chen, H. (1996). *Cross-cultural comparison of English and Chinese metapragmatics in refusal*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Indiana University, Bloomington.
- Cho, Yunkyong. (2004). Second language learning and pragmatics: Is grammar a requisite for pragmatic competence? *Modern English Education, 5*(1), 73-87.
- Choi, Soonja. (1995). The development of epistemic sentence-ending modal forms and functions in Korean children. In J. Bybee & S. Fleischman (Eds.). *Modality in grammar and discourse* (pp. 165-204). Amsterdam: Benjamins.
- Duan, L. (2008). *The effects of explicit and implicit instruction on appropriacy of English refusal by Chinese EFL students*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation. Suranaree University of Technology, Nakhon Ratchasima, Thailand.
- Ellis, R. (1994). *The study of second language acquisition*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Ferreira, L. A. (1985a). *Express English: Beginning student book 2*. Rowley, Mass: Newbury House Publishers.
- Ferreira, L. A. (1985b). *Express English: Beginning work book 2*. Rowley, Mass: Newbury House Publishers.
- Fraser, B. (1981). On apologizing. In F. Coulmas (Ed.), *Conversational routine* (pp.259-273). The Hague: Mouton.

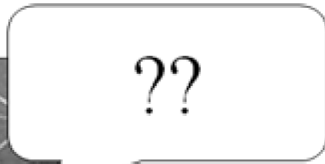
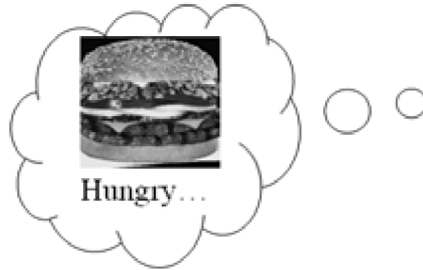
- Fraser, B. (1990). Perspectives on politeness. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 14, 219-236.
- Gass, S., & Houck, N. (1999). *Interlanguage refusals: A cross-cultural study of Japanese-English*. New York: Mount De Gruyter.
- Hassani, R., Mardani, M., & Vahid Dastjerdi, H. (2011). A comparative study of refusals: Gender distinction and social status in focus. *The International Journal – Language Society and Culture*, 32, 37-46.
- Kang, M. Agnes. (2003). Negotiation conflict within the constraints of social hierarchies in Korean and American discourse. *Journal of Sociolinguistics*, 7(3), 299-320.
- Kasper, G. (1997). Beyond reference. In G. Kasper & E. Kellerman (Eds.), *Communication strategies: Psycholinguistic and sociolinguistic perspectives* (pp. 345-360). New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Kasper, G., & Rose, K. (2002). *Pragmatic development in a second language*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Kasper, G., & Schmidt, R. (1996). Developmental issues in interlanguage pragmatics. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition*, 18, 149-169.
- Kim, Duk-Young. (2008). A study of complaint strategies for EFL college learners. *Modern English Education*, 9(2), 58-70.
- Kim, Han Chang. (1993). A contrastive analysis of English and Korean modal expressions. *The Linguistic Science Society*, 10, 1-46.
- Kim, Jung Min, & Turiel, E. (1996). *Korean and American children's concepts of adults and peer authority*. Cambridge: Blackwell.
- King, K. A., & Silver, R. E. (1993). "Sticking points": Effects of instruction on NNS refusal strategies. *Working Papers in Educational Linguistics*, 9, 47-82.
- Kondo, S. (2001). Instructional effects on pragmatic development: Refusal by Japanese EFL learners. *Publications of Akenohoshi Women's Junior College*, 19(3), 32-51.
- Krisnawati, E. (2011). Pragmatic competence in the spoken English classroom. *Indonesian Journal of Applied Linguistics*, 1(1), 100-110.
- Kwon, Jihyun. (2004). Expressing refusals in Korean and in American English. *Multilingua*, 23(4), 339-364.
- Lingli, D., & Wannaruk, A. (2010). The effects of explicit and implicit instruction in English refusals. *Chinese Journal of Applied Linguistics*, 33(3), 93-109.
- Lozano, F., & Sturtevant, J. (1981). *Life styles: An intermediate American English series*. New York: Longman.
- Martínez-Flor, A., & Usó-Juan, E. (2006). Pragmatic development in a second or foreign language: Some classroom techniques. *Greta*, 50-56.
- Merkin, R. (2009). Cross-cultural differences in approach-avoidance communication in South Korea and the US. *Human Communication*, 12, 199-213.
- Morrow, C. (1996). *The pragmatic effects of instruction on ESL learners' production of*

- complaint and refusal speech acts*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, State University of New York, Buffalo.
- Olshain, E., & Cohen, A. (1983). Apology: A speech act set. In N. Wolfon & E. Judd (Eds.), *Sociolinguistics and second language acquisition* (pp. 18-36). Rowley, Mass: Newbury House.
- Papafragou, A. (1997). Modality in language development: a reconsideration of the evidence. *UCL Working Paper in Linguistics*, 9, 1-31.
- Park, Sunok. (2003). The distribution of request strategies and the degree of politeness on different request situations. *The Journal of Linguistic Science*, 25, 113-136.
- Paul, D. (2008). *Communication strategies 1*. Singapore: Thomson Learning.
- Silva, A. J. (2003). The effects of instruction on pragmatic development: Teaching polite refusals in English. *Second Language Studies*, 22(1), 55-106.
- Sohn, Ho-Min. (1981). Power and solidarity in the Korean language. *Papers in Linguistics: International Journal of Human Communication* 14, 431-452.
- Tanck, S. (2004). Speech act sets of refusal and complaint: A comparison of native and non-native English speakers' production. *TESOL Working Papers*, 4(2), 1-22.
- Tsarikova, N. (2005). Issues in teaching 'culture' in Uzbekistan. *IATEFL*, 187, 3-4.
- Yates, L. (2004). The secret rules of language. *Prospect*, 19(1), 3-21.

APPENDIX A

A sample refusal situation with pictures 1

You are working on a group project with your professor. The professor feels so hungry that he wants to eat something first and finish the project after dinner. However, you don't want to because you need to leave early.



APPENDIX B

A sample refusal situation with pictures 2

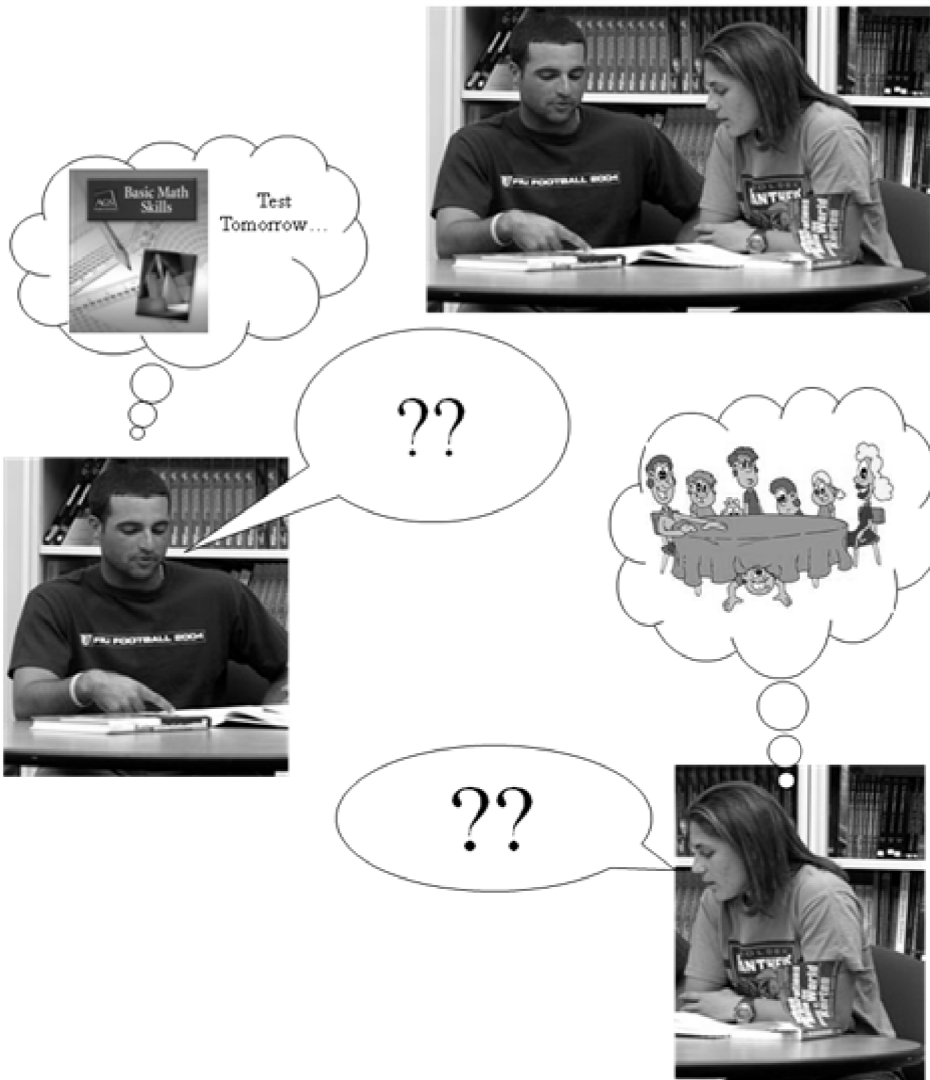
One of your classmates who often misses classes (and whom you don't know quite well) approaches you. She wants to borrow your notes, but you don't want her to.



APPENDIX C

A sample refusal situation with pictures 3

You are a graduate student and tutoring a high school student in Mathematics. Today is your second day of tutoring. Your student asks you to stay a little longer because she has an important exam tomorrow and wants to review her textbook. However, you can't stay longer because you have plans to have dinner with your family.



APPENDIX D

A sample script for a scene of a drama

Narration: In a city where cynicism is as prevalent as pashmina, there is nothing more helpful than getting ready for the first date routine. His name was Will O'Connor. He was a smart cute urban planner Miranda had met at Starbucks. When he had mistaken her latte for his double-caff and offered to make it up to her by buying her a real drink that Saturday. As for me, my routine had become very routine. I was spending almost every night and working.

Carrie: Hello.

Miranda: Ok. My date is three hours late. I'm being stood up, right?

Carrie: Maybe he got lost.

Miranda: Carrie.

Carrie: Uh, doesn't look good.

Miranda: Oh, and I'm wearing a new dress from Barnies. And I'm eating out of plastic.

Carrie: Oh, man. I'm sorry.

Miranda: He doesn't even know me. The least he could do it wait to get to know me before he rejects me.

Carrie: Yeah, that's illegal dumping.

Miranda: Huh~ It's crazy. This hasn't happened to me since I'm 27. I'm older. I should know better. I thought I'd got a little smarter about picking up now, you know.

Carrie: I can't believe guys still stand girls up.

Miranda: I can't believe I'm eating a frozen dinner. I'm such a cliché. Do you wanna grab a drink or something?

Carrie: Not. I can't. I have to work. I agreed to teach these stupid Learning Annex classes. They're calling it "Bright Lights Date City".

Miranda: Oh, I'm so embarrassed for you.

Carrie: Pay. They're paying me 300 bucks a pop. It's a seminar on where to meet men. Apparently, I'm an expert.

Miranda: Tell them to steer clear of Starbucks.

Carrie: Who would pay for something like this?

Miranda: Now? Maybe me. OK, gotta go. This dress is making a mockery of me.

Carrie: I'm sorry, sweetie. Bye.

Yoo-Jean Lee

Department of English Language and Literature

Kyonggi University

San 94-6, Iui-dong, Yeongtong-gu, Suwon-si, Gyeonggi-do, 443-760, Korea

Tel: 010-5039-5340

Email: dabin8201@hotmail.com

Received 14 October 2011

Revised 1 December 2011

Accepted 13 December 2011