

Interlanguage Politeness in Contexts^{*}

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This paper looked into attitudes of learners toward politeness in different learning contexts. Korean learners of both EFL and ESL as subjects participated in a study in which data were collected by means of attitude scale designed to view politeness as a combination of three components, cognitive, affective and behavioral. Given the attitude scale, subjects in both groups were instructed to read statements of each component, and respond to them in terms of a five-point scale. In spite of no statistically significant difference between two learner groups in individual components of the attitude scale, an in-depth look at responses of both groups in each component of the scale showed that there were some clear differences between the groups in their attitude toward politeness in language use. The overall findings of the study indicated that contexts for L2 learning indeed made difference in the development of L2 pragmatic knowledge of politeness.

[politeness/pragmatic competence/L2 pragmatics/
공손/화용적 능력/제 2 언어 화용론]

I. INTRODUCTION

Politeness is a universal concept in human society. It is everywhere across cultures, and mirrors a reality of everyday interaction of any communal groups (Spradley, 2006). It is a socially driven phenomenon that regulates the appropriateness of both verbal and non-verbal communicative behavior to ensure a harmonious bond among people. The knowledge of politeness is a result of socialization by which children learn to be polite in a way accepted by members in a society which they belong to (Blum-Kulka, 1990, 1997;

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Bryant, 2001; Ervin-Tripp, 1974; James, 1978). Knowing how to behave politely whenever necessary is good evidence that a person is mature enough to cope with socially diverse situations in socio-culturally appropriate manners.

In spite of universal aspects of the notion of politeness due mainly to human nature, there also exist differences among cultures in the way that politeness is perceived and expressed. What is polite in one culture may not be viewed as polite in another culture. Thus the expression of politeness becomes problematic in cross-cultural communication in which socio-cultural norms of politeness between two languages come into contact with each other, and induce pragmatically inappropriate performance. Numerous studies on L2 pragmatics have amply demonstrated that either learners who suffer lack of knowledge of socio-cultural rules of L2 or learners whose socio-cultural rules of L1 differ from those of L2 had varying degrees of difficulty handling politeness in L2 use (Bardovi-Harlig, 2002; Chen, 1993; M. Y. Chun, 2010; Hartford & Bardovi-Harlig, 1996; H. S. Kang, 2011; J. Y. Kim, 2013; Rose, 2000; Yu, 2004). Moreover, there seems to be a tendency of target language speakers to take a harsh stance on pragmatic use of language, and to see pragmatic errors as more serious to communication than grammatical errors (Bardovi-Harlig & Dörnyei, 1998). This is maybe because appropriateness of form and meaning in utterance gets deeper to emotional or affective state of interlocutor than grammaticality of sentence. It is also likely that pragmatically inappropriate expressions may not be endured easily, and create negative attitude toward such expressions. This further can lead target language speakers to perceive a person or a learner responsible for the inappropriate use of language as having bad manners or temperament (Thomas, 1983). In other words, an incompetent treatment of politeness in L2 makes learners experience varying degrees of interactional difficulty that range from sounding strange, unfriendly or impolite at least to being disliked or even avoided by others at best because of their negative image (Gleason, Hay & Cain, 1989; Hazen & Black, 1989).

Another reason for a need for exposure to pragmatic aspects of politeness in L2 development lies in learners' preference for the speech act of requests in daily interactions (Ellis, 1995, 1997; Fraser, 1978; Fraser, Rintell & Walters, 1980; Koike, 1989). Learners tend to meet their communicative needs mainly through various types of requests such as asking for help, service, information, and cooperation, among others. From an interactional viewpoint, requests are a pre-event act that is performed in an initiating turn during interaction (J. S. Suh, 1999). More importantly, requests are known as directives to get someone to do something that is beneficial to speaker, but is costly to hearer (Gibbs, 1981; House & Kasper, 1987). Due to the nature of requests that by making requests, a speaker trespasses upon a hearer's right to privacy, and at the same time, intends to gain compliance with the request from a hearer, a speaker is likely to make his or her request sound less imposing and less burdensome whenever performing the request. This is why

the notion of politeness is indispensable in the performance of requests (Held, 1992). Much evidence shows that requests of learners differ from those of target language speakers in many ways, and politeness strategy-use is one main cause of such differences. The intimate relationship between politeness and the act of requests indicates that a successful realization of requests relies much on the knowledge of how to put an appropriate amount of politeness into the request in a given situation.

Given that politeness as one pragmatic aspect of everyday interaction is critical to maintain a social bond among people on the one hand, and that politeness plays a central role in performing requests frequently used to meet communicative needs of learner speech on the other, the present paper looked into attitudes of learners toward politeness in language use. Politeness is perceived and produced through negotiations in talk during which socio-cultural values placed upon various contextual variables (e.g., familiarity, social power, age, and gender, among others) embedded into a particular situation are evaluated, and resulting values are mapped onto appropriate linguistic forms for politeness. In addition to such an ongoing process during the talk, it is likely that conversation participants' attitudes toward politeness (i.e., how individuals think of, feel about and react to politeness in language use) play a certain role in the perception and expression of politeness. That is, what attitude toward politeness a person has may influence the way in which he or she puts the amount of politeness into utterance in a specific situation. Language users' attitudes toward politeness are formed and maintained by their cultural tradition. For instance, Korean people whose cultural tradition was greatly affected by Chinese Confucianism are oriented toward collectivistic, formalistic and hierarchical relationships among social members in interactions rather than individualistic, practical and horizontal ones dominating Western cultures. They tend to show deference or even humiliation to conversation partners of higher social status or the elderly by employing higher level of politeness whereas they readily use crude language with little politeness to conversation partners of lower social status or younger people (A. Byun, 2002; H. M. Sohn, 1986; J. S. Suh, 1999). So they may be seen as over-users or under-users of politeness from the viewpoint of English-speaking people. That is, if it is correct to say that L1 politeness norms are created mostly under the influence of the cultural tradition, and have a close link to one's attitudes toward politeness in language use, it is assumed that Korean students' attitudes toward L1 politeness would be unfavorable for their use of politeness in English given the fact that there exist distinct differences between Koreans and English-speaking people in cognitive value orientation systems built upon their own socio-cultural traditions. The present paper began along this line of inquiry, and its aim was to examine how Korean learners of English think of, feel about, and react to politeness as they learn English in two different learning situations. To be more specific, the research questions guiding the study are as follows:

- 1) Are there differences between Korean learners of EFL and Korean learners of ESL in their attitudes toward politeness in language use?
- 2) What attitude do Korean learners of both EFL and ESL have toward politeness in language use?

II. PREVIOUS STUDIES

Despite a plethora of research on politeness, there exists little consensus among scholars about what politeness is all about. It is Fraser (1990, cited in J. S. Suh, 1998) who provided a comprehensive description of politeness. According to Fraser, as a first type of politeness, there are various kinds of etiquette across cultures which prescribe socially acceptable behavior in a specific situation. When a person observes such a social convention, he or she is considered polite. In light of this view of politeness, the higher formality an utterance or behavior has, the greater level of politeness it represents. As a second type of politeness, both Lakoff (1973) and Leech (1983) offered a set of rules or maxims to explain politeness. Based on the assumption that politeness serves as a strategy to avoid creating offensive situations in interactions, Lakoff (1973, p. 298) proposed rules of politeness such as "Don't impose." "Give options." and "Make A feel good." Using these rules of politeness as a yardstick, Lakoff tried to determine whether a given utterance is pragmatically appropriate. In the same vein, Leech (1983) provided the politeness principles which consisted of six maxims such as tact, generosity, approbation, modesty, agreement and sympathy. Among these maxims, tact and approbation maxims (i.e., "Minimize cost to other." and "Maximize praise of other." p. 132) were regarded as the most important to politeness as politeness is something given to other more than to self.

As a third type of politeness, Fraser (1990) addressed the conversational contract view of politeness in which politeness is dynamic and negotiable since it is determined only at the time of conversation. It was argued that conversation participants follow a conversational contract created through negotiations about rights and obligations they bring to conversation. Also Meier (1997) defined politeness as appropriateness of speech behavior. It was claimed that appropriateness of utterance is sensitive to contexts, so the perception and evaluation of contextual factors in on-going interactions is critical to politeness. Finally, Brown and Levinson (1987) were among the first to develop the most influential and comprehensive theory of politeness. Based on the notion of 'face' referring to one's basic wants or needs, their theory posited that everyone has a concern or desire to save his or her face. Since there are occasions in which one threatens other's face through face-threatening acts, one needs to send a signal to other to show consideration of his or her face by engaging in face-saving work. This is how politeness strategies work during

interactions. According to Brown and Levinson, two distinct kinds of politeness strategies were identified: positive and negative politeness strategies. The former, which aims at positive face, one's public self-image, is used when familiarity exists between interlocutors with little difference in social status as in the case of friends. The latter, which points to negative face, one's right to be uninterrupted from the outside world, is employed when there is a clear difference in social status between interlocutors as in the relationship between a boss and an employee.

In spite of many studies comparing between native and non-native speakers of English in terms of politeness perception and expression, there have been very few studies of non-native speakers' attitude toward L2 politeness. Work by Walters (1980) and Carrell and Konnecker (1981) examined how native and non-native speakers of English perceived politeness of various request forms. It was reported that little difference existed between two groups in their perception of politeness of request forms. In a study involving Japanese learners of English, Kitao (1990) also looked into the perception of request forms by learners and native speakers, and found no significant difference between them. J. S. Suh (1999) made a comparison between Korean learners of ESL and native speakers in politeness of requests under different situations. It was shown that learners differed greatly from native speakers in the production of politeness in some situations in which there existed a social and psychological closeness between requester and requestee. Under such situations learners used the least polite request like 'imperative' frequently whereas native speakers used a moderately polite request starting with 'can you ...?' often.

Some studies of learners of English with Asian languages (e.g., Korean, Chinese or Japanese) as L1 backgrounds were concerned with their politeness behavior in the performance of speech acts such as compliments and compliment responses. In light of the notable differences between the aforementioned Asian nations and English-speaking nations in cultural traditions, it is evident that the difference exists between learners from the Asian countries and English native speakers in attitude toward compliments, and that learners were shown to have a strong tendency to avoid giving and receiving L2 compliments unlike native speakers (Herbert, 1986; J. K. Lim, 2000; M. K. Oh, 2006). In a study in which Korean learners of EFL were compared with native speakers in compliments and compliment responses, M. K. Oh (2006) found that learners produced compliments less often, and showed lower acceptance of them than native speakers. Also according to Barnlund and Araki (1985), Japanese learners differed greatly from English native speakers in frequency of both making and accepting compliments. A similar finding was obtained in Yu's (2004) study of Chinese learners. Her subjects made more frequent use of rejection strategies in responding to compliments than native speakers who relied mostly on acceptance strategies. One possible explanation for this finding is found in the cultural tradition of the Asian countries that emphasizes self-denigration, modesty and

humbleness to express politeness (M. K. Oh, 2006; Yu, 2004). The practice of such a cultural norm in a situation requiring compliment responses is a rejection of compliment given or a downgrading of its illocutionary force to varying degrees. In doing so, people in these Asian nations show their consideration on a complimenter's face, and are seen as polite. Therefore, the Asian subjects' behavior in compliment responses is understood as a transfer of L1 norms into L2 pragmatic use. As stated earlier, it is also well-known that the Asian societies are built upon collectivism pursuing harmonious cooperation among groups rather than individualism promoting comparison or competition among people (Barnlund & Araki, 1985). This offers an account for the difference in frequency of producing compliments between Asian learners and native speakers of English in the aforementioned studies.

There are still many studies dealing with the production of politeness in the performance of various communicative acts by Korean learners in either EFL or ESL learning contexts. To name a few, J. Y. Kim (2013) made a comparison between Korean learners and English native speakers in the expression of gratitude, and found that there existed significant differences between them in the use of politeness strategies in gratitude. Most important, Korean learners used negative politeness strategies more often than native speakers, which was very similar to Korean native speakers in the study, and thus was understood as a result of transfer of L1 pragmatic knowledge into L2 communicative act performance. In a study of Korean college students' politeness strategy-use in requests, H. S. Kang (2011) reported that they tended to express politeness mostly through a very limited range of strategies such as politeness marker (e.g., 'please' and 'excuse me') and formulaic expressions (e.g., interrogative with modal verbs, 'could' and 'would'). Such a heavy reliance on a few strategies to express politeness was believed to be a major cause of misunderstanding or communication break-down in cross-cultural communication. Similarly, E. M. Yang (2001) compared Korean college students with American college students in email requests in various situations, and found that two groups differed greatly in directness to express politeness. As compared to native speakers who were more direct in their organization of email requests, Korean students preferred to be indirect in their requests, which was traceable to a transfer of L1 pragmatic norms into L2 use.

III. METHOD

1. Participants

There were two different groups of subjects in the study. The first group was made up of fifteen Korean learners of ESL. They were enrolled at Intensive English Program of one

major university in America at the time of study. Their main reason for learning English in the program was that they wanted to improve spoken English skills at a naturalistic setting, or to increase academic English abilities needed for entering into undergraduate or graduate schools in the US. Nearly all of them were believed to have been college students with various majors in Korea before coming to America. The program had seven proficiency levels in which levels 1 and 2 were for beginners, levels 3, 4 and 5 for intermediate learners, and levels 6 and 7 for advanced learners. Among fifteen subjects, eleven were from levels 3 and 4 while four came from levels 6 and 7. So subjects in this group ranged in English proficiency from intermediate to advanced level. On the other hand, the second group of subjects consisted of fifteen Korean learners of EFL. Subjects here were also college students enrolled in one of the major universities in Korea. They majored in English education, and most of them were either sophomore or junior. Their self-rated English proficiency varied from intermediate low to advanced level.

2. Instruments and Procedure

Data were gathered by means of an attitude scale. The attitude scale has long been used to measure change or growth of attitude in social and educational research (Fraenkel & Wallen, 1993; Karavas-Doukas, 1996). Following Eagly and Chaiken (1993), attitude in the present study was defined as a combination of three components such as cognitive, affective and behavioral. Based on such a tri-component view of attitude, an attitude scale was created to include twenty statements about subjects' attitude toward politeness in language use: ten statements for thoughts or opinions about politeness in language use in a cognitive component (i.e., statements 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 14, 17, 19), four statements for feelings about politeness in language use in an affective component (i.e., statements, 4, 12, 15, 18), and six statements for actual behavior involving the use of politeness in a behavioral component (i.e., statements, 1, 10, 11, 13, 16, 20) (see Appendix for the attitude scale). Given the attitude scale, subjects in two groups were instructed to read each statement carefully, and respond to it by choosing one of the five response categories (i.e., 'Strongly Disagree' 'Disagree' 'Undecided' 'Agree' and 'Strongly Agree'). The response format in terms of a five-point scale is conducive to the enhancement of reliability of the scale and to the reduction of random variance to score distribution (Mueller, 1986).

3. Data Analysis

The data collected via the attitude scale were analyzed quantitatively. Since subjects were asked to respond to individual statements in the attitude scale by selecting one number from 1 for 'Strongly Disagree' through 3 for 'Undecided' to 5 for 'Strongly

Agree,' the resulting data took the form of numerals. In order to answer the research question 1 (i.e., Are there differences between Korean learners of EFL and Korean learners of ESL in their attitudes toward politeness in language use?), first, frequencies with which each one of the five response categories was chosen in individual statements were counted. Given that the attitude scale was built upon a tri-component view of attitude toward politeness, and thus consisted of three major components, means of individual components were calculated. Then a comparison was made between Korean learners of EFL and Korean learners of ESL in terms of each one of the three components by using a statistical technique, t-test, with the significance level set at .05. Second, to find out an answer to the research question 2 (i.e., What attitude do Korean learners of both EFL and ESL have toward politeness in language use?), descriptive statistics (e.g., frequency and means) were used to give a somewhat detailed description or explanation of subjects' thoughts, feelings and behaviors in their perception and production of politeness on the basis of the findings of the attitude scale.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. Comparison of Two Learner Groups in Attitude via t-Test

A comparison was made between EFL learners and ESL learners in each one of the three components of the attitude scale, and results were given in Table 1 below.

TABLE 1

Comparison of Two Learner Groups in Three Components of the Attitude Scale via t-test

Components of attitude	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
Cognitive	.538	.603
Affective	.551	.620
Behavioral	.670	.532

As seen in Table 1, no statistically significant difference was found between two learner groups in individual components of the attitude scale. In other words, both learner groups did not differ greatly from each other in their attitude toward politeness in communication. This finding indicates that despite many advantages of learning L2 as a second language, ESL learners showed their thoughts, feelings, and behavior in the use of politeness in a way similar to EFL learners. So the finding is surprising in light of the assumption that

natural exposure to input and authentic interaction in various situations might have enabled ESL learners to have rich experience with L2 socio-cultural rules and norms of politeness, and therefore, might have contributed considerably to their promotion of L2 pragmatic knowledge of politeness. Also ESL learners' increased knowledge might have affected their existing attitude about politeness in such a way that it might have led them to heighten awareness about differences between L1 and L2 in cultural patterns of politeness, and to incorporate them into their existing attitude about politeness.

One plausible explanation for no difference between the two learner groups in their attitude about politeness can be found in both L2 proficiency and length of residence in L2 community. The fact that about two thirds of ESL learners were at intermediate level in the Intensive English Program suggests that their overall English proficiency might not be high enough to notice a variety of pragmatic features within input, and process them in a way to bring about meaningful changes in their existing attitude established before moving to America. Moreover, according to research into L2 pragmatics, pragmatic competence is not equal to grammatical competence, with the former falling behind the latter (Bardovi-Harlig, 2002; Bardovi-Harlig & Dörnyei, 1998; Kasper, 1997). That is, learners with higher grammatical competence do not always attain pragmatic competence to the same point to which they develop grammatical competence. Given the fact that the proficiency levels of ESL learners in the program were usually determined by scores on standardized tests like TOEFL which, as a rule, measures conscious knowledge of grammar for academic purposes, much of L2 abilities of ESL learners could be accounted for by such formal knowledge, and be similar to those of EFL learners. Thus the overall English proficiency of ESL learners in this study seemed insufficient to make their attitude toward politeness closer to that of English native speakers in ESL learning contexts.

Length of residence in L2 community is another candidate to account for no significant difference between the two learner groups in their attitude toward politeness in language use. Though no data from ESL learners were gathered about their residence period in America, informal interviews with many of them taking place before administering the attitude scale indicated that they had been enrolled in the program to learn English for less than two years since their first arrival in the US. While there is evidence for a close relationship between length of residence in L2 community and L2 pragmatic development (Blum-Kulka, 1986; Cheng, 2005; Ellis, 1995; Takahashi & Beebe, 1987), it is likely that the total time spent living in the target community by many ESL learners in the study (i.e., less than two years) was not long enough to yield positive changes that differentiated them from EFL learners, and at the same time, helped their existing attitude toward politeness look similar to L2 norms of politeness (Castro, 2005).

2. Comparison of Learner Groups in Each Component of Attitude Scale

Though there was no statistically significant difference between the two learner groups in individual components of the attitude scale, it is necessary to take a close look at responses of two learner groups to the attitude scale which are interesting enough to deserve special attention. This way of working with data made it possible to take an in-depth look at the similarities and differences between the two learner groups in attitude toward politeness in a more detailed and meaningful manner. Regarding the cognitive component of the scale, learners of both EFL and ESL showed a very high degree of agreement on many statements. In statements 14 and 19 ('Politeness is significantly affected by cultural differences' and 'Politeness is always important in making human interaction smooth'), the two groups were nearly the same in reaching a considerably high level of agreement (i.e., an average of 3.6 for EFL learners and 3.5 for ESL learners in statement 14 and an average of 3.8 for both groups in statement 19). It appeared that most subjects in the two groups were well aware of the notion of politeness that politeness is a universal aspect of human life needed for social interactions while being polite may differ from culture to culture. Also in statements 3 and 7 ('Expressing politeness in requests in English is not an easy task' and 'Impoliteness always results in a serious communication breakdown'), the EFL learner group responded in a way similar to the ESL learner group, both groups reaching a higher level of agreement (i.e., an average of 2.9 for EFL learners and 2.7 for ESL learners in statements 3 and 7). This indicates that many subjects in each group experienced difficulties using an appropriate amount of politeness in L2 requests and knew about possible consequences of lack of politeness in communication.

On the other hand, some notable differences were observed between the two learner groups in other statements. For instance, in statement 8 ('A polite request always guarantees a good relationship with conversation partners'), ESL learners tended to be more agreeable than EFL learners when responding to this statement (i.e., an average of 3.5 for ESL learners versus 2.9 for EFL learners). The ESL learners were likely to have far more chances to make requests for a variety of purposes through daily interactions with target language speakers than the EFL learners, which enabled them to readily realize the important role of politeness in requests in creating and maintaining a good relationship with others. But in statement 9 ('Not knowing how to express politeness appropriately in making requests is a serious problem to non-native speakers of English'), the ESL learners reached a lower degree of agreement than the EFL learners (i.e., an average of 2.9 for ESL learners versus 3.5 for EFL learners). This finding was difficult to understand. Among several possible explanations, if one is optimistic about most ESL learners' everyday interaction in the target community, it may be assumed that they had been exposed to various speech events requiring the performance of requests in L2 society, and thus had

developed an overall knowledge of how to make requests in socially appropriate ways. As a result, they were unlikely to experience much difficulty in realizing requests in most situations, which would promote confidence in meeting their needs for polite requests, and lead them to underestimate the importance of L2 pragmatic knowledge of politeness in requests. In contrast, the EFL learners, who rarely had learning environments experienced by the ESL learners, seemed to have a good understanding of negative influence of lack of L2 knowledge of politeness on the competent use of L2 on the part of non-native speakers. Meanwhile, in responding to statement 17, the ESL learner group was more active than the EFL learner group in agreeing on the statement that ‘Politeness depends greatly on the level of education’ (i.e., an average of 3.3 for ESL learners versus 2.9 for EFL learners). In light of the fact that a college town where the ESL learners stayed for English learning was assumed to be characterized mainly by middle-class, white people with college degrees who tended to be kind and nice to international students, the learners, who had frequent interactions with these residents in everyday life, were likely to perceive them as friendly, cooperative or polite. So such a daily interpersonal communication with L2 speakers might have affected the ESL learners, most of whom had come to America for the first time, in such a way that they could form positive attitude toward English native speakers, and hopefully, see a close link between politeness and level of education of language users.

Concerning the affective component of the attitude scale, clear differences were also noted between the two learner groups. In response to statements 4 and 12 (‘When making a request, I worry about whether I sound polite or not’ and ‘When being asked impolitely, I feel uncomfortable’), though both groups reached an overall agreement, they differed quite a lot from each other in the level of agreement. That is, the EFL learners responded more affirmatively than the ESL learners (i.e., an average of 3.8 and 3.9 for EFL learners versus 3.3 and 3.3 for ESL learners in statements 4 and 12). This means that the EFL learner group was more sensitive to politeness than the ESL learner group in both production and comprehension of requests. One main reason for the difference appears to lie in the learning contexts for the EFL learners in which Korean people are much concerned with politeness in terms of age, social status, or familiarity in their everyday life. The EFL learners, who had been used to such a socio-cultural environment focusing on negative politeness, were likely to pay constant attention to the way of their being polite or being treated politely in interactions, and thus show oversensitivity to politeness in statements 4 and 12 (Tanaka & Kawade, 1982). As stated earlier, the American community in which the ESL learners had been residing for more than a year was known for horizontal relations among people based on individualism rather than hierarchical relations among people. The ESL learners, who had been exposed to such a socio-cultural environment of L2 learning with most time spent on interacting with peers or friends, were believed to engage in expressing politeness by attending to their interests, seeking identity or offering sympathy,

not showing deference or self-denigration as they did in their home country. Hence, the ESL learners were unlikely to face situations in ESL contexts in which they would have to pay attention to politeness or invest it to the same extent that the EFL learners would need to do in their home country.

Meanwhile, the two learner groups showed much similarity in their response to statement 15 ('An impolite request usually makes conversational partners embarrassed'). Both groups were nearly the same in agreeing on the statement (i.e., an average of 3.6 for ESL learners versus 3.7 for EFL learners). As in two previous statements 4 and 12 in which most learners in two groups showed pretty high levels of worry or concern about giving and receiving polite requests, their response to the statement here confirmed that a request performed through an inappropriate investment of politeness for any reason in a given situation could make an interlocutor feel uncomfortable, threaten his or her face, and, in the worst case, create a negative image of a requester.

Finally, regarding the behavioral component of the attitude scale, as in the other components of the scale, some differences were also observed between the two learner groups. As Thomas (1983) and Cohen and Olshtain (1994) pointed out, the production and comprehension of politeness in a specific situation involve a combined work of two types of knowledge, socio-pragmatic knowledge and pragma-linguistic knowledge. The former evaluates the values placed on contextual factors (e.g., age, gender, familiarity or social power) on the basis of socio-cultural norms or rules in a given community, and the latter involves the mapping of evaluated values by socio-pragmatic knowledge into linguistic forms. If learners lack any of them or have insufficient knowledge of one or both, they would end up with an inappropriate use of politeness, and sound impolite or rude, which indicates the importance of a balanced operation of the two types of knowledge to use politeness in socio-culturally appropriate manners. In this sense, a quick look at the differences between the two learner groups in this component showed that the ESL learners were able to evaluate various contextual factors in situations in a way similar to English native speakers as compared to the EFL learners. That is, in statements 13 and 20 ('A polite request should always be made even among friends' and 'I would always be polite when I make a request to a young person whom I do not know'), the ESL learner group responded more affirmatively than the EFL learner group (i.e., an average of 3.6 and 4.2 for ESL learners versus 2.8 and 3.9 for EFL learners in statements 13 and 20). In most English-speaking communities in which there is little difference between requester and requestee in familiarity and social status (e.g., friends or classmates), native speakers are still concerned with politeness for their requestee by using positive politeness strategies focusing on closeness, friendship or cooperation. The same positive politeness strategy-use in an English-speaking society is considered appropriate among people who are equal in social status, but have little familiarity (e.g., peers or colleagues). Such is not the case,

however, in the Korean society in which crude language or language with lower level of politeness is usually preferred between peers or colleagues (A. Byun, 2002; H. M. Sohn, 1986; J. S. Suh, 1999). Therefore, a higher level of agreement reached by the ESL learners on the two statements 13 and 20 suggests that they must have moved closer to the L2 norms of politeness.

A stronger tendency of the EFL learners to stick to the L1 norms of politeness is seen in statement 10. The EFL learner group was a little more agreeable than the ESL learner group on the statement, 'I would always be polite when I make a request to a person with a higher social status than I' (i.e., an average of 3.9 for ESL learners versus 4.1 for EFL learners). As mentioned earlier, the difference here can be understood by a hierarchical structure of the Korean society that roots in the Chinese Confucian philosophy, and stresses deference and self-humiliation to people in old age or with higher social status in a male-dominating family or workplace (Yu, 2004). Thus it is not surprising that the EFL learners under such an L1 socio-cultural environment were more active than the ESL learners in accepting that they would be willing to make polite requests to people with higher social status at all events. In addition, in statement 16 ('Being able to become polite in performing a request requires a lot of efforts to learn about socio-cultural knowledge of English'), the clear difference was also noted between the two learner groups. The ESL learners showed lower levels of agreement than the EFL learners on the statement (i.e., an average of 3.4 for ESL learners versus 3.7 for EFL learners). This response pattern is reminiscent of the statement 9 in which the ESL learners were more reluctant than the EFL learners to see an inability to express an appropriate amount of politeness in requests as a serious problem to non-native speakers. As stated before, the ESL learners were believed to have frequent interactions through which they learned to cope with socially different situations requiring the expression of politeness mostly in a natural, unconscious way. Such a way of dealing with L2 pragmatics in authentic situations might have helped the ESL learners to reduce the burden of developing and enhancing L2 pragmatic abilities to a considerable extent, and led them to think that L2 pragmatic achievements were not really difficult to attain. On the contrary, the EFL learners, who had suffered from lack of opportunities to interact with L2 speakers in socially diverse situations, seemed to see a definite need for the development of L2 pragmatic skills, but view their learning task as burdensome and formidable.

V. CONCLUSION

The aim of the present study was to investigate learners' attitude toward politeness in different learning contexts. To this end, a study was undertaken in which thirty Korean

learners of both EFL and ESL participated as subjects, and data were collected through attitude scale designed to view politeness in language use as consisting of three components such as cognitive, affective and behavioral. Among many findings, most important, there existed no statistically significant difference between the two learner groups in their attitude toward politeness in communication. This finding was accounted for by both L2 proficiency and length of residence in the target community. The ESL learners' L2 proficiency and their period of residence in America were not sufficiently high and long enough to learn about differences in cultural patterns of politeness between L1 and L2, and to accommodate them in their existing attitude about politeness. Meanwhile, the results of the study showed clear differences between the two learner groups in some of the statements of individual components in the attitude scale (Kitao, 1990; J. S. Suh, 1999; Walters, 1980). This indicated that as a rule, the ESL learner group was able to make gradual approximation to the target socio-cultural norms of politeness, and to bring about changes in their existing attitude toward politeness established prior to arrival in America. For instance, the ESL learners were more agreeable than the EFL learners on the statement that they would become polite when making requests to people with equal social status or in the same age, which is a typical socio-cultural norm of politeness in most English-speaking communities stressing horizontal relations among individuals. On the other hand, the EFL learners responded more positively to the statement that they would make polite requests to people with higher social status, which indicated that with few chances to have access to L2 pragmatics in a naturalistic setting they tended to adhere to their L1 socio-cultural norms of politeness featured by respect and deference to people with higher authority or elder people in a hierarchically-oriented society.

Due to several weaknesses of the study, caution needs to be exercised in the interpretation of the results of the study. First, since no baseline data were collected from English native speakers, it was difficult to see in what ways and how much Korean learners of both ESL and EFL were similar to or different from native speakers in attitude toward politeness in language use. With the help of L2 baseline data, it would be possible to describe and explain attitudes of the learners toward politeness in a more systematic, comprehensive manner. Second, gender in the sample was not controlled properly. Since there has been plentiful evidence for differences in speech behavior between males and females (Andersen, 1990; Romaine, 2003; Sheldon, 1990), the mistreatment of gender in the sample would have negative influence on the overall findings of the study. Third, the study suffered from a small sample size. The number of subjects in each language group was fifteen, which may not be large enough to conduct statistical analyses. Such a small sample size is also likely to limit generalizability of the findings of the study. In spite of these problems, the results of the study clearly showed that contexts for L2 learning had a positive impact on the overall development of L2 pragmatic competence in several

important ways: helping the ESL learners to experience differences in socio-cultural patterns of politeness between L1 and L2 in various authentic situations, to accommodate them in their existing system of L2 pragmatic knowledge, and to move it closer to the target norms of pragmatics. It is future research that needs to further investigate whether the learners' performance found in this study would lead them to express politeness in various situations in a way similar to native speakers of English.

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APPENDIX

Attitude Scale

Male () Female ()

Your English Proficiency:

Intermediate low (), Intermediate Mid (), Intermediate High (), Advanced ()

The following is the questionnaire as part of my research. Your contribution is very important for it. I'd really appreciate it if you could answer the questionnaire as truthfully and seriously as possible. Thank you very much!

Please read each statement, and respond to it in terms of one of the following:

'Strongly disagree' (1) 'Disagree' (2) 'Undecided' (3)
'Agree' (4) 'Strongly agree' (5)

-
1. ___ One should always be polite when making a request.
 2. ___ Being polite assures that a request will be approved by a conversational partner.
 3. ___ Expressing politeness in a request in English is not an easy task.
 4. ___ When making a request, I worry about whether I sound polite or not.

5. ___ Women tend to be more polite than men.
6. ___ Being overly polite sometimes makes it hard to get a message across.
7. ___ Impoliteness always results in a serious communication breakdown.
8. ___ A polite request always guarantees a good relationship with conversational partners.
9. ___ Not knowing how to express politeness appropriately in making a request is a serious problem to non-native speakers of English.
10. ___ I would always be polite when I make a request to a person with a higher social status than I.
11. ___ Being overly polite is always better than not being polite enough.
12. ___ When being asked impolitely, I feel uncomfortable.
13. ___ A polite request should always be made even among friends.
14. ___ Politeness is significantly affected by cultural differences.
15. ___ An impolite request usually makes conversational partners embarrassed.
16. ___ Being able to become polite in making a request requires a lot of effort to learn about socio-cultural knowledge of English.
17. ___ Politeness depends greatly on the level of education (for example, those who have a higher level of education tend to be more polite than those who do not in making a request).
18. ___ Politeness often requires self-denigration (자기 비하)
19. ___ Politeness is always important in making human interaction smooth.
20. ___ I would always be polite when I make a request to a young person whom I do not know.

Examples in: English**Applicable Languages: English****Applicable Levels: Tertiary**

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