



## L2 Learners' Pragmatic Awareness in Comparison to Grammatical Awareness in Tertiary Education Settings\*

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### ARTICLE INFO

Received 8 March 2019

Revised 26 April 2019

Accepted 17 May 2019

Examples in: English

Applicable Languages: English

Applicable Levels: Tertiary

### KEYWORD

*tertiary education/*

*pragmatic awareness/*

*grammatical awareness/*

고등교육/

화행의식/

문법의식

### ABSTRACT

**Jung, Woo-hyun. (2019). L2 learners' pragmatic awareness in comparison to grammatical awareness in tertiary education settings. *Modern English Education*, 20(2), 19-32.**

This study aims to explore Korean students' pragmatic and grammatical awareness with attention to whether there are any differences between college and university students in their level of pragmatic and grammatical awareness. For this purpose, this study employs a language awareness task, which covers three sub-tasks: error recognition, error severity ratings, and error correction. Correlation analyses show that there was a positive correlation between the college group's grammatical error correction and their pragmatic error correction and between the university group's pragmatic error recognition and correction. The results also show that the college group recognized pragmatic errors better than grammatical ones and that the university group outperformed the college group at grammatical error recognition. The analysis also reveals that both college and university groups rated pragmatic errors as more severe than grammatical ones. However, the error correction task reveals the opposite, showing that the two learner groups performed grammatical error correction much better than pragmatic error correction. On the basis of the results, pedagogical implications are provided to help learners promote their pragmatic and grammatical awareness.

### I. INTRODUCTION

As the focus of classroom instruction has shifted over the past few decades from an emphasis on language forms to attention to functional language within communicative contexts (Brown, 2007), there has been an upsurge of interest in the research of second language (L2) pragmatics, which deals with the learners' functional language use. This is a welcome research trend, given that pragmatic competence is one crucial component of communicative

competence (Bachman, 1990). Commensurate with this trend, L2 pragmatics research to date has addressed a variety of issues covering pragmatic awareness, pragmatic production, and instructions on pragmatics among many others. However, many researchers argued that most of the previous studies have dealt with pragmatic production, with more limited focus on pragmatic awareness of speech acts (Bardovi-Harlig & Dörnyei, 1998; Bardovi-Harlig & Griffin, 2005; Schauer, 2006). Far less attention has been paid to the interrelatedness of pragmatic and grammati-

\* This research was supported by Yeungnam University research grants in 2019.

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cal awareness (Schauer, 2006). Furthermore, this line of research has focused largely on error recognition (i.e., the ability to recognize and identify pragmatic errors) and error severity ratings (i.e., the ability to rate the degree of seriousness of errors) with rather limited attention to error correction especially in L2 pragmatics. In particular, in Korean EFL contexts, research on the grammatical development is fruitful, with less heed to the pragmatic development.

Therefore, the present study primarily sets out to deal with pragmatic awareness, as compared to grammatical awareness. Pragmatic awareness has been found to occupy a unique place in language ability (Garcia, 2004). As stated earlier, L2 learners' pragmatic awareness has been explored in the previous studies by measuring their error recognition and their severity ratings for errors. The present study goes one step further by including L2 learners' pragmatic awareness manifested in their error correction ability, that is, the ability to correct/repair pragmatic errors (Bardovi-Harlig & Griffin, 2005). There may be different opinions on dealing with the issue of error correction in the area of awareness, but the present study follows MacKay's (1992) point that awareness is a central concept for theories of error correction and that self-corrections are hardly ever made without a touch of awareness. The main purpose of the study is to compare Korean college and university groups' pragmatic awareness with their grammatical awareness by examining three key factors: error recognition, error severity ratings, and error correction. The underlying reason for the comparison between the college and university students is that different types of learners have different needs for the components of communicative competence, depending on different learning contexts (W. Jung, 2010). More specifically, while the enhancement of learners communicative competence has long been the main goal of English instructional programs in Korea, the different learner groups under study had their own context-specific goals: The vocational colleges aimed to prepare students for employment and thus its curriculum was based on industrial needs, together with a great deal of vocational training and work experience, whereas the university programs aimed to train students to become professionals in the use of English (W. Jung, 2010).

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Literature reviewed here focuses on pragmatic awareness at the expense of grammatical awareness because the main concern in the present study is pragmatic awareness.

### 1. Theoretical Background of Pragmatic Awareness

Pragmatic awareness was firmly grounded in Schmidt's (1990) theory of consciousness. According to this theory, consciousness was distinguished in three major dimensions: awareness, intention and knowledge. Awareness

was also distinguished in several levels: perception (the ability to create internal representations of external events), noticing (focal awareness), and understanding (deeper level of awareness than noticing) (Schmidt, 1990). Thus, awareness and noticing were considered as isomorphic (Bardovi-Harlig & Dörnyei, 1998). Indeed, many L2 researchers have underscored the importance of noticing. Schmidt (1990, 1995) claimed that noticing is a necessary condition for learning and is a process of attending consciously to linguistic features in the input. This is in line with his noticing hypothesis, which states that what learners notice in the input is what becomes intake for learning (Schmidt, 1990, 1995). Its strongest view holds that there is no L2 learning without noticing. To put it differently, learners cannot learn the linguistic features without noticing them. While this hypothesis has been advocated by some researchers (e.g., Ellis, 1997) but criticized by others (e.g., Truscott, 1998), there is now general consensus that noticing is conducive to language development, though it is not a necessary and sufficient condition for L2 learning (Truscott, 1998). These claims taken as a whole implicate that raising pragmatic awareness is a crucial way of promoting pragmatic competence.

### 2. A Comparison Between Pragmatic and Grammatical Awareness

A comparative study of pragmatic and grammatical awareness was initiated by Bardovi-Harlig and Dörnyei (1998). They examined the extent to which learners and teachers are aware of differences in grammatical and pragmatic violations. They found that whereas Hungarian EFL learners and their teachers consistently identified and ranked grammatical errors as more serious than pragmatic ones, ESL learners and their teachers showed the opposite pattern, ranking pragmatic errors as more serious than grammatical ones. They also delved into the effects of proficiency on awareness and revealed that high-proficiency EFL learners scored significantly higher in both their pragmatic and grammatical ratings than low-proficiency EFL learners, whereas in ESL contexts high-proficiency group scored higher in pragmatic error ratings than low-proficiency group, but the former scored lower in grammatical error ratings than the latter.

Bardovi-Harlig and Dörnyei's (1998) study stimulated further research in this area using other data samples. Schauer's (2006) research on a comparison between German EFL and ESL learners yielded similar findings to those of Bardovi-Harlig and Dörnyei's (1998) study: Just as the Hungarian EFL learners who detected fewer pragmatic errors than the ESL learners in the latter study, the German EFL learners also were able to recognize significantly fewer pragmatic errors than the ESL learners in the former study. Both studies also revealed that the ESL learners perceived pragmatic violations to be more serious than grammatical errors (Schauer, 2006).

However, other studies yielded different findings. For

example, Niezgodna and Röver (2001) upon an examination of Czech EFL and ESL learner data showed that the Czech EFL learners outperformed the ESL learners at error identification and severity rating for both grammatical and pragmatic items. When proficiency level was considered, high-proficiency learners recognized significantly more grammatical errors than low-proficiency learners, whereas the difference between the two proficiency groups for the recognition of pragmatic errors was not significant. For error severity ratings, low-proficiency learners rated pragmatic errors as significantly more severe than grammatical errors, while high-proficiency learners did not differ significantly in their severity ratings for the two error types.

In a similar line of research, Sorour (2018) compared the pragmatic awareness of Egyptian students with their grammatical awareness. In-group comparisons revealed no significant differences between the grammatical and pragmatic awareness of the members within each proficiency group. The results of the cross-group comparisons indicated, however, that the high-proficiency group displayed a significantly higher level of grammatical awareness than the low-proficiency group. On the other hand, analysis of the difference in the pragmatic awareness between the two learner groups did not yield any significant results.

Unlike the above-mentioned studies, which focused on error recognition and error severity ratings, Bardovi-Harlig and Griffin (2005) probed not only error recognition but also repairs or error correction. Their findings showed that the learners generally recognized pragmatic errors and knew what to correct, although the form and content of the repairs differed from target-like norms in some respects.

In Korean EFL contexts, only a few studies documented the interconnectedness between grammatical and pragmatic awareness. T. S. Park (2013) delved into Korean university students' error recognition and severity ratings and found that the learners recognized a similar number of errors including pragmatic and grammatical violations and that there was similarity in error ratings between the two error types. Her collaborative research (T. S. Park & C. S. Oh, 2015) further indicated that the intermediate and advanced learners recognized far more grammatical errors than pragmatic errors and considered grammatical errors to be more serious than pragmatic ones. The findings discussed above indicate that the environment and proficiency are crucial variables influencing L2 learners' pragmatic and grammatical awareness.

### 3. Research on Pragmatic Awareness and Teaching Pragmatics

Another intriguing issue in the field of pragmatic awareness is how recognition relates to production with respect to conventional expressions. In this regard, Bardovi-Harlig (2008) indicated that learners reported high rates of recognition, but even with priming of the recognition task, they show much lower rates of production. In this

line of research, Bardovi-Harlig (2009) further showed from the analysis of an aural recognition task and an oral production task that recognition of conventional expressions is a necessary condition for production but not sufficient. More recently, Bardovi-Harlig (2014) took a closer look at L2 learners' pragmatic awareness of meaning of L2 conventional expressions and revealed that learner awareness of the meaning of conventional expressions seems to play a role in whether learners use an expression, and which expression among related expressions they use to the exclusion of others.

Pragmatic awareness approach was also popular not only in the study of conventional expressions but also in an exploration of nonconventional expressions. In this regard, García (2004) compared the pragmatic awareness of low and high ability learners and native English speakers and showed that participants identified requests, suggestions, corrections, and offers with varying success. He argued that speech act type may interact with contextual knowledge and linguistic features, which help to account for performance variability.

Pragmalinguistic awareness, which is a part of pragmatic awareness, is also worthy of investigation, with attention to individual difference variables such as proficiency and motivation. In this line of research, Takahashi (2005, 2015) paid special attention to how pragmalinguistic awareness is related to proficiency and motivation and indicated that the learners differentially noticed the target pragmalinguistic features and that the learners' awareness of the target features was correlated with motivation subscales, but not with their proficiency. Motivation and proficiency were also examined in Takahashi's (2015) another study, which showed that the learner profiles (the combination of individual difference variables such as motivation and proficiency) constrained awareness of target bi-clausal request forms, although these profiles did not affect their learning of bi-clausal forms. These two studies render proficiency and motivation open to further research to examine their effects on pragmalinguistic awareness in other EFL contexts.

On the other hand, there has been growing concern about how to raise learners' pragmatic awareness. Earlier, Tomlinson (1994) advocated a pragmatic awareness approach which aimed to help learners develop pragmatic awareness. He provided a pragmatic awareness lesson through which the learners can make discoveries about how interaction between context and language form is used to achieve illocutionary force.

In a similar vein, Eslami-Rasekh (2005) provided some activities that can be used to raise learners' pragmatic awareness. The two major techniques employed here were teacher presentation and discussion of research findings on different aspects of pragmatics, and a student-discovery procedure in which students obtain information through observations, questionnaires, and/or interviews. These activities can help to make learners consciously aware of differences between L1 and L2 speech acts (Eslami-Rasekh, 2005).

To sum up, the previous studies discussed thus far have dealt with such variables as proficiency, language learning environment (ESL vs. EFL), and motivation as crucial variables affecting pragmatic awareness. However, they have paid scant attention to another aspect of language learning environment, that is, a comparison between college and university students who have different goals of English education in different learning contexts. As pointed out earlier, the vocational colleges aimed to prepare students for employment, especially in the field of engineering and health, which required a great deal of technical and vocational training, whereas the university programs aimed to train students to become professionals in the use of English (W. Jung, 2010). This motivated the present study to address two major research questions:

- 1) Is there any relationship between error recognition and error correction in terms of pragmatic and grammatical errors?
- 2) Do different language learning environments (college vs. university) influence students' recognition, severity ratings, and correction of pragmatic and grammatical errors?

Here different language learning environments refer to two learner groups: junior college and university groups. The first research question attempts to find any relationship between pragmatic and grammatical errors in terms of error recognition and error correction. The second one involves three sub-issues as to whether there are any differences between the college and university groups in their (a) error recognition, (b) error severity ratings, and (c) error correction. Here grammatical errors involve incorrect structures at the sentence level, whereas pragmatic errors refer to inappropriate speech acts in specific sociocultural contexts. This study, however, does not consider the learners' proficiency, which is why the study did not measure their proficiency.

### III. METHOD

#### 1. Participants

Students who participated in this study consisted of two groups at the tertiary education settings: 134 (56.5%) junior college students and 103 (43.5%) four-year university students totaling 237 participants. Data were collected from three junior colleges and two universities in the Gyeongsang area of Korea, with only two students studying at another university in Seoul. Detailed distribution of the participants is presented in Table 1.

In terms of gender, the number of males (130; 54.9%) was greater than the number of females (107; 45.1%). The participants were grouped into two in terms of major: English major students (95; 40.1%) were even fewer than non-English majors (142; 59.9%), who ranged from engi-

neering to nursing. This uneven distribution is due to the fact that there was no English major in the junior colleges that participated in this study. In terms of academic year, freshmen (130; 54.9%) were predominant with 71 (30.0%) sophomores, 16 (6.8%) juniors, and 20 (8.4%) seniors.

**TABLE 1**  
Distribution of the Participants

		College	University	Total
Gender	M	96 (71.7)	34 (33.0)	130 (54.9)
	F	38 (28.3)	69 (67.0)	107 (45.1)
Major	English	0 (0.0)	95 (92.2)	95 (40.1)
	Non-English	134 (100.0)	8 (7.80)	142 (59.9)
Grade	1	115 (85.8)	15 (14.6)	130 (54.9)
	2	14 (10.4)	57 (55.3)	71 (30.0)
	3	5 (3.70)	11 (10.7)	16 (6.8)
	4	0 (0.00)	20 (19.4)	20 (8.4)
Studying abroad	Yes	2 (1.50)	28 (27.2)	30 (12.7)
	No	132 (98.5)	75 (72.8)	207 (87.3)
Total		134 (56.5)	103 (43.5)	237 (100.0)

Studying abroad = Experience of studying in English speaking communities;

With respect to English learning experiences in English speaking countries, those who said *no* (207; 87.3%) outnumbered those who said *yes* (30; 12.7%). Their length of stay in English speaking countries averaged 15.67 months. It was difficult to measure the participants' proficiency level because many of the students, especially junior college students had not taken any standardized English tests such as TOEFL, TOEIC or IELTS, and thus this study did not consider the proficiency variable. Nonetheless, education level and proficiency level here are not mutually exclusive but interrelated with each other in one way or another since university students are generally acknowledged to have a higher level of proficiency than junior college students.

#### 2. Instrument

In order to assess language awareness, this study employed an adapted version of the awareness judgment task developed by Bardovi-Harlig and Dörnyei (1998) (see Appendix). Indeed, their task has been employed in some of the previous studies (Niezgoda & Röver, 2001; Schauer, 2006) and its reliability has been born out through several delicate steps (Bardovi-Harlig & Dörnyei, 1998). In Bardovi-Harlig and Dörnyei's (1998) study, the awareness task was made up of 20 scenarios presented in a video format together with a written format, but the present study employed only the awareness task of written format for several reasons. First, the video task makes it difficult for the Korean EFL students to comprehend the content of the scenarios. Second, the task of listening to the video clips and immediately filling in the written format gives the students too heavy a burden to bear. Indeed, Bardovi-Harlig and Dörnyei also conceded that the video task, with its listening comprehension component, may

have been inherently more challenging than the written presentation. Under the circumstances, it is by no means easy to draw reliable and sufficient data. In other words, the awareness task of written format makes it easier to get cooperation from the participants. For these reasons, the awareness task of written format was also employed in some previous studies (T. S. Park, 2013; Sorour, 2018).

The awareness task consisted of two major parts. The first part was designed to elicit the participants' demographic information such as type of school, gender, major, school grade, experiences studying in English speaking countries, and the duration of study there. This section is immediately followed by detailed instructions on how to complete the task, together with one example as guidance to the task. This is an attempt to help the participants figure out how to fill out the task. The subsequent part of the task comprised 20 awareness task items in the form of dialogues designed to elicit one of the four speech acts: requests, apologies, suggestions or refusals (Bardovi-Harlig & Dörnyei, 1998). The twenty individual items were grouped into three overall categories in compliance with Bardovi-Harlig and Dörnyei's (1998) original framework: (1) 8 featuring sentences that were pragmatically appropriate but ungrammatical; (2) 8 featuring sentences that were grammatical but pragmatically inappropriate; and (3) 4 featuring sentences that were both grammatical and pragmatically appropriate.

In the twenty dialogues, interlocutors' role relationships were various in terms of their social status and social distance, which are key factors in determining pragmatic appropriateness or inappropriateness. Detailed distribution of the task items is summarized in Table 2.

**TABLE 2**  
Distribution of the Task Items

Overall categories	Individual items
Grammatical errors	2, 5, 8, 9, 12, 14, 18, 19
Pragmatic errors	1, 3, 7, 10, 11, 13, 16, 20
Control category	4, 6, 15, 17

The category of grammatical errors involves pragmatically appropriate but grammatically incorrect items, while that of pragmatic errors concerns grammatically correct but pragmatically inappropriate items. These two categories were equally divided into eight items, but the last category, which did not contain any errors at all either grammatically or pragmatically, was designed to serve as a control category consisting of 4 items. Grammatical errors included wrong addition of a preposition, wrong choice of the plural form, omission of an object, double-marking of the past, wrong use of the infinitive with *Let's*, omission of *do*, wrong inversion of an embedded question, and wrong choice of *-ing* form, whereas pragmatic errors covered utterances addressed to classmates (e.g., a bare imperative used for a request without an alerter, a denial of an offense where an apology was expected, and an overuse of polite forms) and to teachers (e.g., the use of upgraders in a suggestion without downgraders, the lack of an explanation

or a query preparatory formula with a speaker-oriented request, and the lack of explanation formulas in refusals) (Bardovi-Harlig & Griffin, 2005).

Each task item covered three sub-tasks: (a) error recognition task, which was used to ascertain whether the learners can identify an error in the last sentence of each dialogue; (b) error severity rating task, which was designed to figure out the learners' severity assessment of the error identified; (c) error correction task, which was developed to find out to what extent the learners can self-correct the error in each dialogue.

Unlike the original version of the awareness task designed by Bardovi-Harlig and Dörnyei (1998), this adapted version was written partially in Korean but mostly in English. More specifically, the task instructions and situation descriptions for the task items were presented in Korean, but the core parts of the awareness task including dialogues were given in English. The primary reason for the partial use of Korean language was to avoid misunderstanding and confusion on the one hand and to relieve the participants' burden on the completion of the task on the other. The participants, especially junior college students, who participated in the pilot study, agreed that completing the whole task in English is demanding, giving them a heavy burden. These reasons strengthen the justification for the partial use of Korean.

The awareness task was piloted with a group of five (two college and three university students) prior to administering the task. This helped to identify any unclear or inadequate wordings and subsequently refine them in the task form, which eventually ensured that the components of the task are feasible.

### 3. Procedure and Data Analysis

The awareness task was administered during the 2018 spring semester. The university data were collected by the researcher, while the college data were collected by a trained instructor in the field of TESOL teaching English at three colleges. The task was conducted in class to prevent the students from using some references or appealing to native speakers. They were allowed a sufficient amount of time to complete the task. This was an attempt to elicit what the students actually notice in language input. The two students studying in Seoul completed the task individually, following the guidelines of the researcher, when they visited Daegu over the weekend.

A total of 300 copies of the awareness task were distributed to the students and 288 copies were returned. Out of them, 51 copies were eliminated since some task items remained unanswered or unfilled. This suggests that many of the participants felt burdened by the task. 237 copies finally proved valid for data analysis.

The participants were given detailed instructions on how to complete the awareness task and allowed to ask questions, if they had any. They were instructed to perform three sub-tasks for each task item. The first sub-task was to identify whether or not the last utterance of the dialogue

in each task item was correct/appropriate (error recognition task). If the last utterance was correct/appropriate, the learners were asked to mark *yes*, and if not, mark *no*. The subsequent sub-task was that, if they marked *yes*, they were guided to move on to the next task item, but if they marked *no*, rate the degree of severity of the error (error severity rating task). For this sub-task, the students were instructed to choose one of the five options on a five-point Likert rating scale with values of 1 to 5 assigned to each descriptor (1 = never severe, 2 = hardly severe, 3 = moderate, 4 = somewhat severe, 5 = very severe). The last sub-task assigned to the participants was, as indicated earlier, to self-correct the error identified in each task item (error correction task).

Data analysis was conducted using SPSS (Version 23) package. The analysis focused on eight pragmatic errors and eight grammatical errors. A participant's score on the error recognition task represented the percentage of recognized errors in relation to total errors present for the particular error type (Niezgoda & Röver, 2001). Similarly, a student's score on the error correction task represented the percentage of accurately corrected items in relation to total corrected items for the particular error type. The three sub-tasks (recognition, severity ratings, and correction) were quantified in terms of the two types of schools (college vs. university) on the one hand and in terms of the two types of errors (grammatical vs. pragmatic) on the other. Each of the three sub-tasks was analyzed in a twofold manner, as was done by some researchers (Niezgoda & Röver, 2001; Sorour, 2018): in-group comparisons (comparison between the two error types in each learner group) and between-group comparisons (comparison between the two learner groups in each error type).

#### IV. RESULTS

##### 1. The Relationship Between Error Recognition and Error Correction

The first question to address is whether there is any relationship between error recognition and error correction in terms of grammatical and pragmatic errors. Let us first consider potential correlations between error recognition and error correction by the participants as a whole without dividing them into the two learner groups. This result is listed in Table 3.

The table shows that a positive correlation existed in two aspects, that is, correlation between the learners' grammatical error recognition and their grammatical error correction ( $r = .268$ ;  $p < .001$ ) and correlation between their grammatical error correction and their pragmatic error correction ( $r = .454$ ;  $p < .001$ ). The former case implies that as the learners as a whole had a higher level of grammatical error recognition, they also had a higher level of grammatical error correction ability, or the other way around. The latter case indicates that the higher the learn-

ers' ability to correct grammatical errors was, the higher their ability to correct pragmatic errors was, or the other way around.

**TABLE 3**  
Correlations Between Recognition and Correction by the Learners as a Whole

	GER	GEC	PER	PEC
GER	1			
GEC	.268***	1		
PER	.089	-.102	1	
PEC	.089	.454***	.056	1

GER = Grammatical Error Recognition; GEC = Grammatical Error Correction; PER = Pragmatic Error Recognition; PEC = Pragmatic Error Correction  
\*\*\* $p < .001$

It is also revealing to examine correlations between error recognition and error correction in terms of two learner groups: the college and university groups. Correlation coefficients were computed and their results are displayed in Table 4.

**TABLE 4**  
Correlations Between Recognition and Correction by Learner Groups

Group		GER	GEC	PER	PEC
College	GER	1			
	GEC	.146	1		
	PER	.145	-.190*	1	
	PEC	.013	.360***	-.165	1
University	GER	1			
	GEC	.104	1		
	PER	.009	-.072	1	
	PEC	-.122	.041	.283**	1

GER = Grammatical Error Recognition; GEC = Grammatical Error Correction; PER = Pragmatic Error Recognition; PEC = Pragmatic Error Correction  
\* $p < .05$ , \*\* $p < .01$ , \*\*\* $p < .001$

The correlation analyses yielded correlations in three dimensions. First, the college students' grammatical error correction was negatively correlated with their pragmatic error recognition ( $r = -.190$ ,  $p < .05$ ). In short, as the college students' ability to correct grammatical errors got higher, their ability to recognize pragmatic errors increased as well, or the other way around. Second, the college students' grammatical error correction was positively associated with their pragmatic error correction ( $r = .360$ ,  $p < .001$ ), implying that the higher ability to correct grammatical errors the college students had, the higher ability to correct pragmatic errors they were likely to have, or the other way around. Another positive correlation was evident between the university students' pragmatic error recognition and pragmatic error correction ( $r = .283$ ,  $p < .01$ ). In other words, as the university students had better recognition of pragmatic errors, they tended to have a higher ability to correct pragmatic errors as well, or the other way around. The remaining sets revealed no correlations (be-

tween grammatical error recognition and grammatical error correction, between grammatical error recognition and pragmatic error recognition, between grammatical error recognition and pragmatic error correction, and between pragmatic error recognition and pragmatic error correction at the college level; between grammatical error recognition and grammatical error correction, between grammatical error recognition and pragmatic error recognition, between grammatical error recognition and pragmatic error correction, between grammatical error correction and pragmatic error recognition, and between grammatical error correction and pragmatic error correction at the university level). These results taken together indicate that not all the errors recognized by the students were corrected accurately and that grammatical competence is not always in conformity with pragmatic competence (Bardovi-Harlig & Dörnyei, 1998). This may be largely because the correction task is more difficult and demanding than the recognition task (Naucler & Magnusson, 1994) and that correction tasks on pragmatics may be inherently challenging (Bardovi-Harlig & Griffin, 2005). Hence, pragmatic error correction requires more explicit awareness or a higher level of analysis of linguistic knowledge and a higher level of awareness than error recognition (Naucler & Magnusson, 1994).

From Tables 3 and 4 above, it seems reasonable to conclude that error recognition was not always correlated with error correction. In addition, they revealed that there was a similarity between the learners as a whole and the college students in the sense that both groups showed a positive correlation between their grammatical error correction and their pragmatic error correction.

## 2. The Influence of Different Learning Environments

### 1) Error Recognition

As pointed out earlier, error recognition is discussed in terms of in-group comparisons and between-group comparisons. Table 5 shows the results of the in-group comparisons.

**TABLE 5**  
Learners' Error Recognition by Error Type

School	Error type	N	M	SD	Difference		t	p
					M	SD		
CG	Grammatical	134	58.21	20.51	-8.49	26.66	-3.685***	.000
	Pragmatic	134	66.70	20.27				
UG	Grammatical	103	69.30	18.51	1.94	27.99	.704	.483
	Pragmatic	103	67.35	21.17				

CG = College Group; UG = University Group  
\*\*\* $p < .001$

A paired *t*-test shows that there were statistically significant differences between grammatical and pragmatic error recognition at the college level ( $t = -3.685, p < .001$ ), but not at the university level. In other words, the college students were able to recognize pragmatic errors ( $M = 66.70$ ) better than grammatical ones ( $M = 58.21$ ), while the university group did not reveal any differences

between grammatical ( $M = 69.30$ ) and pragmatic ( $M = 67.35$ ) error recognition. This result is not in keeping with Bardovi-Harlig and Dörnyei's (1998) point that typical foreign language classrooms tend to emphasize micro-level grammatical accuracy at the expense of macro-level pragmatic appropriateness.

On the other hand, the between-group comparisons were made to test whether there are any differences between the college and university groups in their recognition of grammatical errors on the one hand and in their recognition of pragmatic errors on the other. The results of the independent *t*-test are tabulated in Table 6.

**TABLE 6**  
Learners' Error Recognition by School Type

Error type	School	N	M	SD	t	p
Grammatical	CG	134	58.21	20.51	-4.302***	.000
	UG	103	69.30	18.51		
Pragmatic	CG	134	66.70	20.27	-.242	.809
	UG	103	67.35	21.17		

CG = College Group; UG = University Group  
\*\*\* $p < .001$

It is important to note that the control type is the one which is grammatically correct and pragmatically appropriate. There were statistically significant differences between the college and university students in their recognition of grammatical errors ( $t = -4.302, p < .001$ ), indicating that the latter group ( $M = 69.30$ ) outperformed the former group ( $M = 58.21$ ) at grammatical error recognition. However, there was no statistically significant difference between the two groups in their recognition of pragmatic errors.

### 2) Error Severity Ratings

Error Severity ratings are also considered in terms of in-group and between-group comparisons. The in-group comparisons were made to test whether there are any differences between the participants' severity ratings for grammatical and pragmatic errors in each learner group. These results are presented in Table 7.

**TABLE 7**  
Learners' Error Severity Ratings by Error Type

School	Error type	N	M	SD	Difference		t	p
					M	SD		
CG	Grammatical	134	3.16	0.58	-.41	.59	-7.955***	.000
	Pragmatic	134	3.56	0.49				
UG	Grammatical	102	3.20	0.65	-.22	.72	-3.026**	.003
	Pragmatic	102	3.42	0.52				

CG = College Group; UG = University Group  
\*\* $p < .01$ , \*\*\* $p < .001$

At this point, it is important to note that only 102 university students were included for the statistical analysis of their severity ratings of pragmatic errors at the exclusion of one participant mainly because she determined that all the eight pragmatic items are appropriate. As shown above, there were statistically significant differences in

the college students' severity ratings for grammatical and pragmatic errors ( $t = -7.955, p < .001$ ), indicating that they rated pragmatic errors ( $M = 3.56$ ) as significantly more severe than the grammatical errors ( $M = 3.16$ ). In a similar vein, statistically significant differences were found in the university students' ratings for grammatical and pragmatic errors ( $t = -3.026, p < .01$ ). To put it differently, the university group rated pragmatic errors ( $M = 3.42$ ) as more severe than grammatical ones ( $M = 3.20$ ). The findings clearly indicate that both learner groups show a similar pattern in rating the severity of grammatical and pragmatic errors. This certainly stands in a stark contrast to Bardovi-Harlig and Dörnyei's (1998) finding that both high-proficiency and low-proficiency EFL groups scored significantly higher in their grammatical error rating than in their pragmatic error rating.

Another concern here is whether there are any differences between the college and university groups in their severity ratings for grammatical errors on the one hand and in their severity ratings for pragmatic errors on the other. An independent t-test was calculated, and its results are summarized in Table 8.

**TABLE 8**  
Learners' Error Severity Ratings by School Type

Error type	School	N	M	SD	t	p
Grammatical	CG	134	3.16	0.58	-.427	.670
	UG	103	3.19	0.65		
Pragmatic	CG	134	3.56	0.49	2.259*	.025
	UG	102	3.42	0.52		

CG = College Group; UG = University Group  
\*\*\* $p < .05$

As revealed in the table, there was no statistically significant difference between the two learner groups in their ratings for grammatical errors. This is contrary to their ratings for pragmatic errors, which revealed statistical differences ( $t = 2.259, p < 0.05$ ). In other words, the college group ( $M = 3.56$ ) rated pragmatic errors as more severe than the university group ( $M = 3.42$ ).

### 3) Error Correction

Another point of concern is to what extent the learners can correct errors. For the in-group comparisons, a paired t-test was calculated to address whether there are any differences in the success rates between grammatical and pragmatic error correction in each learner group. Its results are tabulated in Table 9.

**TABLE 9**  
Learners' Error Correction Ability by Error Type

School	Error type	N	M	SD	Difference		t	p
					M	SD		
CG	Grammatical	134	29.23	30.07	12.10	30.94	4.526***	.000
	Pragmatic	134	17.14	23.89				
UG	Grammatical	102	73.35	22.93	27.77	35.73	7.851***	.000
	Pragmatic	102	45.57	28.35				

CG = College Group; UG = University Group  
\*\*\* $p < .001$

There were statistically significant differences between the success rate of grammatical error correction ( $M = 29.23$ ) and that of pragmatic error correction ( $M = 17.14$ ) at the college level ( $t = 4.526, p < .001$ ). The same is true for the university group ( $t = 7.851, p < .001$ ) with the university group's success rate of grammatical error correction ( $M = 73.35$ ) exceeding their success rate of pragmatic error correction ( $M = 45.57$ ). These results taken as whole clearly indicate that both college and university groups performed grammatical error correction much better than pragmatic error correction. This fits in with Bardovi-Harlig and Dörnyei's (1998) point that EFL learners may generate grammatically correct sentences, but they may violate social norms of the target language.

Another inquiry here is whether there are any differences between the college and university groups in their ability to correct grammatical errors on the one hand and in their ability to correct pragmatic errors on the other. The results of the independent t-test are presented in Table 10.

**TABLE 10**  
Learners' Error Correction Ability by School Type

Error type	School	N	M	SD	t	p
Grammatical	CG	134	29.23	30.07	-12.818***	.000
	UG	103	73.28	22.82		
Pragmatic	CG	134	17.14	23.89	-8.353***	.000
	UG	102	45.57	28.35		

CG = College Group; UG = University Group  
\*\*\* $p < .001$

The differences were statistically significant between the college and university groups in their ability to correct grammatical errors ( $t = -12.818, p < .001$ ), and the exactly same is true in their ability to correct pragmatic errors ( $t = -8.353, p < .001$ ). To rephrase, the university group ( $M = 73.28$ ) were able to correct grammatical errors with significantly greater accuracy than the college group ( $M = 29.23$ ), and this tendency is repeated in the case of pragmatic error correction ( $M = 45.57$  for the university group as opposed to  $M = 17.14$  for the college group). The discussion thus far shows that the findings of error recognition are not always in accordance with those of error correction.

## V. PEDAGOGICAL IMPLICATIONS AND CONCLUSION

The analysis thus far has demonstrated that the level of language awareness varies depending on different language learning environments (college vs. university students) and error type (grammatical vs. pragmatic errors). This indicates that, while previous studies (e.g., Bardovi-Harlig & Dörnyei, 1998; Niezgodna & Röver, 2001; Schauer, 2006) showed that learners' language awareness is influenced by the environment (ESL vs. EFL) and proficiency level, this study proves that another strand of language learning environment, that is, junior college vs.

university, is an additional variable influencing language awareness in Korean EFL tertiary classrooms.

One of the significant findings involves the relationship between error recognition and error correction in terms of grammatical and pragmatic errors. When the correlations were considered in terms of the learners as a whole, there was a positive correlation between their grammatical error recognition and their grammatical error correction and between their grammatical error correction and their pragmatic error correction. This suggests that the learners' greater ability to recognize grammatical errors was likely to promote their higher level of ability to correct grammatical errors and that, as the level of their ability at grammatical error correction got higher, so did the level of their ability at pragmatic error correction. In this respect, it seems important that the instructors in the tertiary classes should give priority to raising the learners' recognition levels of grammatical errors, which will assist them to improve their ability at grammatical error correction, which will eventually help them to increase their ability to correct pragmatic errors.

On the other hand, the findings of the correlation analyses in terms of the two different learner groups indicated that, as the college students' grammatical error correction ability got higher, their pragmatic error correction ability was likely to increase as well, and that the better recognition of pragmatic errors the university students had, the higher ability to correct pragmatic errors they tended to have. The positive correlation between the college students' grammatical error correction ability and pragmatic error correction ability suggests that college instructors should encourage their students to improve one of the grammatical and pragmatic error correction abilities, which will in turn help them improve the other. Since grammatical competence in a second language has been traditionally considered to be the primary indicator of L2 proficiency (Sorour, 2018) and since grammar has been central to English language learning in Korean EFL contexts, it may be a good idea to provide the students with training sessions for grammatical error correction, which will eventually enhance their ability to correct pragmatic errors. With respect to the positive correlation between the university students' pragmatic error recognition and correction, it may also be a good move to help the students promote pragmatic error recognition, which is expected to improve pragmatic error correction ability, since error recognition precedes error correction in second language development.

With respect to error recognition, it was found that the college students recognized pragmatic errors better than grammatical errors, while the university group did not reveal any differences in their recognition of the two error types. This is a somewhat puzzling and unexpected finding in the sense that the college students had a lower level of education than the university students and that they did not have pragmatics courses in their curricula. This leaves a room for further study, especially for a qualitative analysis, in order to capture what underlies this

finding. On the other hand, the university students' ability to recognize grammatical errors was found to surpass that of the college students. This may be partly attributable to the different English curricula in the colleges and universities. Specifically, the college participants did not include English major students with their majors ranging from engineering and nursing, whereas the university participants were taking English as their major or double major at the time of the survey. Thus, the former group did not have grammar courses, but the latter did in their curricula. Moreover, most of the university participants had already taken the grammar course at the time of the survey. Under the circumstances, they were likely to have more opportunities to raise the awareness of grammatical errors than the college participants. Considering Schauer's (2006) claim that insufficient recognition results in a marked linguistic disadvantage on the part of the EFL students, the college students should be guided to improve their abilities to recognize grammatical errors. For this, the college instructors need to offer grammar courses to their students. If this is difficult, they need to utilize the General English course to activate grammar awareness-raising tasks.

When it comes to error severity ratings, it was found that both college and university students rated pragmatic errors as more serious than the grammatical errors and that the college group rated pragmatic errors as more severe than the university group. This is also contrary to our expectation that the students in higher education would have a higher level of grammatical and pragmatic awareness than those with less learning options. Hence, this finding is less directly interpretable, and thus it calls for further study, especially qualitative research, to probe why the college participants consider pragmatic errors as more serious than grammatical errors. One plausible reason is that, since the college students were taking an English conversation class at the time of the survey, they might have paid more attention to functional language use than grammatical usage. Whatever the reason may be, the college and university learners' assessment of pragmatic errors approximates native-like awareness, considering Schauer's (2006) report that native speakers of English perceived pragmatic violations to be significantly more serious than grammatical errors.

Another finding deserving much attention involves error correction. In this regard, both college and university students performed grammatical error correction much better than pragmatic error correction. This finding is by no means surprising given that there has been heavy reliance on grammar with undue attention to pragmatics instructions in English classrooms and English textbooks in Korea. In particular, the university students had been exposed to a considerable amount of grammatical input and given many opportunities to practice correcting grammatical errors, which might have enabled them to build a relatively good foundation of grammar at the expense of pragmatic knowledge.

What was found further in this study was that the university group had a higher level of grammatical error

correction ability than the college group, and this tendency was repeated in the case of pragmatic error correction. This means that the university group achieved a higher success rate than the college group in correcting both grammatical and pragmatic errors. Bardovi-Harlig and Dörnyei (1998) attributed the disparity between learners' and native speakers' pragmatic competence to the availability of input. This factor also has explanatory power for the discrepancy between the Korean college and university groups' grammatical error correction because, as indicated earlier, the university programs provided the students with more opportunities to be exposed to grammatical input and practice correcting grammatical errors than the college programs. This suggests that the college group needs to be given more practice in grammatical error correction than the university group, with emphasis on how to form language accurately. In addition, the finding that both college and university students performed grammatical error correction much better than pragmatic error correction may be largely due to a dearth of pragmatics courses in the tertiary education institutions that participated in this study. In this sense, the learners, either at the college or university level should go beyond the mastery of grammatical accuracy to the development of pragmatic awareness in a narrow sense and pragmatic competence in a broader sense. Indeed, the importance of pragmatic competence cannot be overemphasized, considering Thomas' (1983) claim that pragmatic failure is an important source of cross-cultural communication breakdown. Pragmatic awareness can be raised by integrating a pragmatics course into the tertiary curricula since it will certainly provide the students with the opportunities to think about why a particular speech act is inappropriate and how to correct it. In this case, the instructors and learners should be aware of the widely held claim that the perception and production of speech acts are influenced by social status and social distance between interlocutors and the degree of imposition of the act (Brown & Levinson, 1987; W. Jung, 2012).

There are some limitations in this study, which are worthy of consideration. Above all, there is imbalance between the college and university groups in the distribution of their majors, though this study did not consider this variable. In future studies, it would be interesting to consider whether the participants' majors influence their pragmatic and grammatical awareness. The present study is quantitative in nature. In this sense, one meaningful area of future research would be to conduct a qualitative analysis using interviews or think-aloud techniques, which may bridge the gaps that the quantitative study cannot fill in the investigation into language awareness. Despite these limitations, the findings of the study shed light on the area of language awareness, especially pragmatic awareness, showing that the tertiary students' level of education exerts some influence on their success rates of error recognition and correction tasks. The results will provide insights into what type of language awareness should be accentuated in Korean EFL contexts. This will assist the learners to raise pragmatic and grammatical awareness in one way or an-

other, which will ultimately act as a stepping stone to the development of pragmatic and grammatical competence.

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**APPENDIX**

Language Awareness Task

1. 학교명: \_\_\_\_\_ 2. 전공: \_\_\_\_\_ 3. 성별: (남/여) 4. 학년: \_\_\_\_\_  
 5. 영어권 국가에서 공부한 경험이 있습니까? (예: \_\_\_ 아니오: \_\_\_)  
 6. 공부한 경험이 있다면, 몇 개월 동안 공부했습니까? \_\_\_\_\_ 개월

아래 대화에서 밑줄 친 문장은 문법적으로 잘못된 문장도 있고, 표현이 자연스럽지 못한 문장도 있고, 문제가 없는 문장도 있습니다. 밑줄 친 문장이 문법적으로 정확한지, 표현이 적절한지 체크하시고, 문제가 있는 문장이라면 그 문제점이 얼마나 심각한지 심각한 정도를 다섯 개 숫자 중에서 하나를 체크해 주세요. 그리고 적절치 못한 문장은 올바른 문장으로 바꾸어 주세요.

예를 들어, 아래 대화를 살펴봅시다.

John: Good morning, Anna.  
 Anna: Good night, John.

▶ 위의 밑줄 친 문장은 정확/적절합니까? 예 \_\_\_ / 아니오 \_\_\_  
 ▶ “아니오”에 체크했다면, 그 문제점이 어느 정도 심각한지 하나를 체크하세요.  
 1. 매우 심각하지 않다 2. 심각하지 않다 3. 보통이다  
 4. 심각하다 5. 매우 심각하다  
 ▶ 문제가 있는 문장이라면 올바른 문장으로 바꾸어 주세요: \_\_\_\_\_

위에서 John이 “Good morning”으로 인사했는데 Anna는 “Good night”으로 대답했기 때문에 이 대답은 부적절합니다. 따라서 “아니오”에 체크해야 하고, 이 문제가 얼마나 심각한지 다섯 개 숫자 중에 하나를 체크하면 됩니다. 그리고 “Good night”을 올바른 문장으로 바꾸면 “Good morning”이 됩니다.

1. 선생님은 Peter에게 학급 여행 계획과 관련하여 도움을 요청합니다.

Teacher: OK, so we'll go by bus. Who lives near the bus station?

Peter, could you check the bus times for us on the way home tonight?

Peter: No, I can't tonight. Sorry.

- 1-1. 위의 밑줄 친 문장은 정확/적절합니까? 예 \_\_\_ / 아니오 \_\_\_  
 1-2. “아니오”에 체크했다면, 그 문장의 문제점이 어느 정도 심각한지 아래에서 하나를 골라 체크하세요.  
 1. 매우 심각하지 않다 2. 심각하지 않다 3. 보통이다 4. 심각하다 5. 매우 심각하다  
 1-3. 문제가 있는 문장이라면 올바른 문장으로 바꾸어 주세요: \_\_\_\_\_

2. George는 친구인 Peter를 집으로 초대하려 하지만 Peter는 갈 수가 없습니다.

George: Peter, would you like to come over to my house tonight?

Peter: I'm sorry, I just can't. I'm very tired. I couldn't sleep on last night.

(2번에서 20번까지 질문 항목은 1번의 질문 내용과 동일함.)

3. Peter는 수업에 가기 전에 먹을 것을 사기 위해 햄버거 가게에 들어갑니다.

Fast Food Worker: May I help you?

Peter: Would you be so kind as to give me a sandwich and a yogurt please?

4. George는 도서관에 가려고 하는데 Peter가 도서관 책을 반납해주시기를 요청합니다.

George: Well, I'll see you later. I've got to go to the library to return my books.

Peter: Oh, if you are going to the library, can you please return my book, too?

5. Peter는 선생님과 대화를 나누고 있고, 그 대화는 거의 마무리 단계에 있습니다.

Teacher: Well, I think that's all I can help you with at the moment.

Peter: That's great. Thank you so much for all the informations.

6. Anna는 선생님 사무실에서 대화를 나누다가 실수로 선생님 책 몇 권을 떨어뜨립니다.  
Anna: (책들이 떨어진 후) Oh no! I'm really sorry! Let me help you pick them up.
7. 수업에서 Anna가 발표할 차례인데 Anna는 발표 준비가 되지 있지 않습니다.  
Teacher: Thank you, Tom, that's interesting. Anna, it's your turn to give your talk.  
Anna: I can't do it today but I will do it next week.
8. Anna는 수업에 가기 전에 먹을 것을 사기 위해 햄버거 가게에 들어갑니다.  
Fast Food Worker: May I help you?  
Anna: A cup of coffee please.  
Fast Food Worker: Would you like some cream in it?  
Anna: Yes, I would like.
9. Anna는 친구 Maria로부터 책 한 권을 빌렸습니다. Maria는 그 책을 돌려받기를 원하는데 Anna는 깜빡 잊고 있었습니다.  
Maria: Anna, do you have the book I gave you last week?  
Anna: I'm sorry but I was in a rush this morning and I didn't brought it today.
10. Anna는 낯선 사람에게 도서관 가는 길을 묻습니다.  
Anna: Hi  
Student: Hi  
Anna: Tell me how to get to the library.
11. Peter는 George의 집에 가려고 하는데, Peter가 많이 늦었습니다.  
Peter: Hi George.  
George: Hi Peter. I've been waiting for you for over half an hour.  
Weren't we supposed to meet at 4?  
Peter: I couldn't come earlier. And anyway, we don't have to hurry anywhere.
12. Peter와 George는 수업에 가기 전에 만나서 무언가를 하기를 원합니다.  
George: Hey, we've got 15 minutes before the next class. What shall we do?  
Peter: Let's to go to the snack bar.
13. Peter는 선생님을 만나기 위해 그의 사무실에 갑니다. 선생님은 바쁜 상황입니다.  
Peter: (사무실 문을 노크한다)  
Teacher: Yes, come in.  
Peter: Hello, Mr. Gordon. Are you busy?  
Teacher: Erm . . . I'm afraid so. Could you come back later?  
Peter: OK, I'll be here tomorrow morning at 8.
14. Peter는 선생님께서 책 한 권을 빌리려고 합니다.  
Peter: Mr. Gordon?  
George: Yes?  
Peter: Could I possibly borrow this book for the weekend if you not need it?
15. Peter의 선생님은 학급 파티에 대해 Peter와 얘기하기를 원합니다. Peter는 언제 찾아 봐야 할지 약속을 정하고자 합니다.  
Teacher: Peter, we need to talk about the class party soon.  
Peter: Yeah, if tomorrow is good for you, I could come any time you say.
16. Anna는 선생님이 설문지 하나를 작성해 줄 수 있는지 여쭙기 위해 사무실로 찾아 갑니다.  
Anna: (문을 노크한다)  
Teacher: Yes, come in  
Anna: Hello. My name is Anna Kovacs. If you don't mind, I would like you to fill this in for me.

17. Maria는 Anna를 집으로 초대하려 하지만 Anna는 갈 수가 없는 상황입니다.  
Maria: Anna, would you like to come over this afternoon?  
Anna: I'm sorry, I'd like to come but I have a difficult math test tomorrow.
18. Anna는 낯선 사람에게 도서관 가는 길을 묻습니다.  
Anna: Excuse me, could you tell me where is the library?
19. Anna는 선생님께서 책 한 권을 빌렸습니다. 선생님은 그 책을 돌려받기를 원하는데 Anna는 깜빡 잊고 있었습니다.  
Teacher: Anna, have you brought back the book I gave you yesterday?  
Anna: Oh, I'm sorry, I completely forgot. Can I giving it to you tomorrow?
20. Anna는 방과 후에 친구 Maria를 만나서 어딘가에 가기를 원합니다.  
Anna: Maria, are you doing anything this afternoon?  
Maria: No, I've already prepared for tomorrow's classes.  
Anna: Then I say we go to the cinema. OK?