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Practice through Interaction: Asking Someone to Do Something in English*

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This paper has an aim to examine English native speakers' requests, and offer an instructional technique to develop EFL students' pragmatic ability. For this purpose, English-speaking native speakers' requests were collected in six different face-threatening situations, and analyzed in three ways: directness levels, internal modification and sequence of request. The analysis of requests showed that they were realized mainly through conventionally indirect level in most situations, were internally modified frequently through the use of downgraders, and had a certain sequence of utterances realizing a request. On the basis of these findings, two kinds of interactional activities (Jigsaw and pair work) were provided as sample activities to promote EFL students' pragmatic knowledge about the appropriate ways of making requests given the fact that pragmatic errors can be more serious and more problematic than grammatical errors in social interaction.

[pragmatic competence/requests/cooperative learning, 화용적 능력/요청/협동학습]

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I. INTRODUCTION

Due to globalization and technology, there has been a strong, definite need for the use of the English language as a language of global communication. People in the multi-cultural world these days have more opportunities to engage in cross-cultural communication than ever before. Particularly, when non-native speakers have a chance to stay in English-speaking countries for various purposes, they are required to make communication happen in everyday language use. A successful communication depends at least on two different abilities: the ability to create a number of new correct utterances and the ability to use these utterances in a way that is accepted in a given English-speaking society. The first ability involves grammatical competence which was the main focus of most studies on second language acquisition during the 1960s and 1970s when Chomskyan linguistics enjoyed popularity, and had a great effect on the field of L2 teaching profession. The second ability constitutes pragmatic competence which is concerned with the functional use of language in social interaction. Pragmatic competence, one important aspect of communicative competence, has been drawing much attention from applied linguists and language practitioners since the early 1990s, and is now considered an ultimate learning goal in the L2 teaching profession (Brown, 2001).

Interlanguage pragmatics is the field of studying the acquisition of pragmatic competence of L2 learners by comparing the similarities and differences between native and non-native speakers in their use of language in context (Kasper & Blum-Kulka, 1993; Kasper & Rose, 2002; Yang, 2005). Due to the influence of the speech act theory which views human's language use as verbal acts on the field of interlanguage pragmatics, most L2 studies conducted in the field to date tended to focus on the way in which native and non-native speakers differ from each other during the performance of various speech acts such as requests, apologies, complaints, and refusals, among others (Ellis, 1994). One of the major findings of these studies is that learners, even those in advanced proficiency level, experienced a hard time doing a given communicative act in a way that is socially and culturally appropriate to an L2 community, and accordingly, were pragmatically deficient (Banerjee & Carrell, 1988; Bardovi-Harlig & Dornyei, 1998; Bardovi-Harlig & Hartford, 1990). Such a

deficiency in pragmatic ability may cause misunderstanding between interlocutors or even communication breakdown during interaction, and further lead learners to appear rude or insulting in the eyes of target language speakers (Hymes, 1996; Thomas, 1983).

The failure of L2 learners to become pragmatically competent language users shows two important corollaries for second language theory and pedagogy. First, since learners with high grammatical competence were unable to show an appropriate use of the L2 in context, it is obvious that the high level of grammatical competence does not necessarily guarantee the corresponding level of pragmatic competence, and thus that both competences are two distinctive components of communicative competence (Bachman, 1990; Chen, 1990; Scarcella & Oxford, 1992). Second, as compared to grammatical competence, pragmatic competence is difficult to attain, and is tricky to deal with in classroom L2 learning. On the part of both students and teacher, it is a complicated, daunting task to develop pragmatic competence to the point that they handle and control over grammatical aspects of language at their disposal. What the two corollaries suggest for L2 classrooms is the importance of explicitly teaching pragmatic aspects of language to learners especially in foreign language learning situations in which few opportunities exist for an exposure to authentic input and real-life interaction with target language speakers outside of the classroom. In this respect, there is a clear, definite need for a well-planned instructional design in which based on a solid understanding of currently popular teaching methods within the communicative approach, and a baseline data from target language speakers, learners are presented with pragmatic information of the L2, and are offered plentiful opportunities to practice what is learned to become pragmatically competent L2 users. The present paper was guided by this line of inquiry, and had a goal of offering an instructional model of developing L2 pragmatic competence of Korean students of EFL. For this purpose, two decisions were made about the type of communicative act to be taught and the kind of a teaching technique to be used as an instructional model to promote pragmatic competence. The communicative act of requests was selected as a main focus of teaching and learning in the model since requests not only are one of the most frequently used acts in everyday interaction to get information, help or cooperation from others, but are 'face-threatening act' that threatens a

hearer's freedom not to be interrupted from the outside world, and thus requires the use of politeness strategies during their performance (Brown & Levinson, 1987). It is clear that knowing appropriate ways of making requests under different situations in an L2 community where various contextual factors are combined is one important aspect of pragmatic knowledge which leads to both a successful communication at a specific moment of language use, and a good relationship between learners and target language speakers. In addition, as a teaching technique to present the act of requests and practice it, cooperative and collaborative learning was chosen. In light of many benefits of interaction in L2 learning such as increased opportunities for language practice in contextualized, low-anxiety situations, promotion of motivation for learning, and development of various pro-social skills through meaningful language use, it was felt that cooperative and collaborative learning would be effective in serving as a bridge between theory (i.e., theoretical underpinnings of face-threatening acts) and practice (i.e., provision of an opportunity to perform the face-threatening act of requests in concrete situations).

II. REVIEW OF PREVIOUS STUDIES

1. Requests as a Face-threatening Act in L2 Learning

The act of requests which is acquired from the early beginning of life is one of the basic conversational skills in everyday speech (Taylor & Taylor, 1990). It is defined as directives (House & Kasper, 1987) since "the speaker intends his utterance to count as an attempt to get the hearer to carry out the act specified in his utterance" (Fraser, 1978, p. 5). In this sense, requests are beneficial to the speaker, but are costly to the hearer. According to Brown and Levinson (1987), requests put imposition on the hearer, and threaten his or her freedom (i.e., negative face) to act freely without being interrupted by others. Thus requests as face-threatening act need to be made in such a way that the speaker considers saving the hearer's face, and makes requests sound less direct and less imposing through politeness strategy-use.

Concerning actual request realizations, there are three major components of

requests: directness level, external modification and internal modification. A choice of directness level is an essential step toward making a request. Three levels of directness have been posited to be represented universally in requests, and include: direct level, conventionally indirect level, and non-conventionally indirect level (Blum-Kulka, 1991). The three levels of directness can be further divided into nine sub-levels: mood derivable, performative, hedged performatives, obligation statements, want statements, suggestory formulae, query preparatory, strong hints and mild hints (Blum-Kulka, House & Kasper, 1989). The choice of a particular level of directness is influenced by a number of factors, for instance, to name a few, socio-cultural norms in a given society, cognitive value orientations of language users in a specific society, and various contextual variables (e.g., age, gender, social status, and familiarity between interlocutors). A second component of requests is external modification. External modification is a requester's attempt to reduce or strengthen the illocutionary force of a request, and is manifested in terms of mitigating and aggravating supportive moves. A third component of requests is internal modification which occurs inside a request strategy. Internal modification serves a function of either downgrading or upgrading the requestive force through the use of various types of syntactic, phrasal and lexical devices. For instance, syntactic downgrader, 'past tense with present time reference' and lexical downgrader, 'possibly' play a key role in making a request ('*Could* I *possibly* borrow your notebook?') sound more indirect and more polite than no use of downgraders in a request ('Can I borrow your notebook?').

Most of the studies on L2 requests have shown that non-native speakers differed from native speakers in several ways when making requests. Above all, non-native speakers tended to talk much more in their requests than native speakers, and accordingly, ended up with lengthy requests (Blum-Kulka & Olshtain, 1986; Rintell & Mitchell, 1989; Han, 1999). One primary reason for such a talking-much behavior lies in a frequent use of supportive moves, which indicates "the lack of fluency and lack of certainty about appropriateness that characterize the learner" (Rintell & Mitchell, 1989, p. 267). Non-native speakers also differed from native speakers in the use of internal modification within requests. They were unable to mitigate the illocutionary force of their requests in a way similar to native speakers in various face-threatening

situations (Hartford & Bardovi-Harlig, 1996; Tanaka, 1988; Yang, 2001). As a result, non-native speakers' requests sounded more direct, more abrupt, and more impolite than those of native speakers. On the other hand, both native and non-native speakers showed the overall similarity in the perception of politeness levels in requests (Carrell & Konneker, 1981; Kitao, 1990; Walters, 1980) though the studies reporting such a finding suffered from research problems with data collection in that they elicited data through subjects' judgment of politeness levels in requests in hypothetical situations rather than through their actual production of politeness strategies in real-life situations.

2. Cooperative and Collaborative Learning in L2 Development

Cooperative learning is "carefully structured-organized so that each learner interacts with others and all learners are motivated to increase each other's learning" (Olsen & Kagan, 1992, p. 1). It fits the current educational paradigm in which learning goals are believed to be best achieved through social interaction in a less-competitive, more-collaborative, and less-anxious learning atmosphere. In light of the fact that cooperative learning shares many tenets and principles of language and language learning with communicative language teaching (Brown, 2001; Savignon, 2001), it is easily assumed that cooperative learning would be an appropriate, effective means to promote communicative competence, particularly pragmatic ability through socially well-structured group learning activities in which students in groups engage in interactions requiring the performance of various types of socially motivated communicative acts such as explanations, argumentations, elaborations, consultations, suggestions, and persuasions, among others which are basic pro-social skills constituting pragmatic competence. There are many advantages to the use of cooperative learning in L2 development. According to McGroarty (1989), cooperative learning is beneficial to L2 learning in that it offers increased frequency of language practice, increased motivation of learning, and integration of subject matter into instruction. Knerr and James (1991) consider development of discourse strategies and creation of non-threatening learning environment as the key benefits of cooperative learning in interlanguage development. Likewise, Richards and Rodgers (2001) are active in arguing that cooperative learning facilitates the

development of communication skills through enhancing naturalistic language use, developing useful communication strategies and creating a positive affective classroom circumstance.

Meanwhile, collaborative learning is differentiated from cooperative learning in that it does not necessarily involve "the socially structured exchange of information between learners" (Brown, 2001, p. 47), and refers to any forms of interaction involving learners of differing language proficiency or knowledge level. The result of collaboration in small group work or pair work provides a learner of lower proficiency with assistance or help, and guides him or her in advancing toward the next level of language development, which indicates that a philosophical perspective of collaborative learning lies in social constructivism (Oxford, 1997). Despite some crucial differences between cooperative learning and collaborative learning, it is clear that both of them encourage learners to engage in various types of pair work and group work generating genuine, meaningful interaction, and thus become an appropriate means which matches communication-oriented instruction with a focus on developing pragmatic ability to successfully perform social functions of language.

III. METHOD

1. Subjects

To assist college students in promoting their pragmatic ability to perform the act of requests with the help of cooperative and collaborative language learning, first of all, English native speakers' requests were needed as baseline data. For this reason, requests collected in previous studies, i.e., Suh (1998) and Suh, Fujioka and Aoki (1996) were used as baseline data for the present study. There were thirty native speakers (fifteen males and fifteen females) in Suh (1998), and fifteen native speakers (six males and nine females) in Suh, Fujioka and Aoki (1996). All of the forty five native speakers were Americans, and were all enrolled in one of the major universities in the US as graduates or undergraduates, majoring in a variety of fields. They ranged in age from twenty to forty years old.

2. Instrument and Procedures

English native speakers' requests used as baseline data in the study were collected via discourse completion test (henceforth DCT) in both Suh (1998) and Suh, Fujioka and Aoki (1996). The DCT in Suh (1998) contained twelve situations while the DCT in Suh, Fujioka and Aoki (1996) included six situations. For this study, four situations were taken from Suh (1998), and two situations from Suh, Fujioka and Aoki (1996). That is, requests made in the six situations of the DCTs in the two previous studies were used for analysis. The six situations can be categorized into three groups in terms of three contextual variables: The first group (situations 1 and 2) is characterized by social status while the second group (situations 3 and 4) is featured by familiarity. The third group (situations 5 and 6) is characterized by a variable, talking to a human or a machine at a fast-food shop. All six situations were selected on the basis of the assumption that Korean college students would be likely to encounter them often in an American academic setting. Situations 1 and 2 involved asking a professor to either lend a book, or extend paper due while situations 3 and 4 were about asking a classmate to show a notebook, or an unknown student to get together for studying. Situations 5 and 6 involved ordering food at a fast-food restaurant by talking to either an employee or a drive-through machine. During the performance of the DCTs, native speakers were instructed to read each situation, and write down what they would be most likely to say in a given situation. As an example, the first two situations are given below, and the rest are attached to Appendix A.

Situation 1)
You are looking for a book that you need to read for writing a term paper. Today you have just found that this book was checked out and recalled by another student, which means that you will have to wait for at least a month. You have about a week to write the paper. You know that your professor has this book. Because you have taken a course from this professor, you know him/her. You want to ask the professor to lend the book to you. What would you say?

Situation 2)
Tomorrow is the due date of a final term paper for one of the courses you take this semester. However, you are not able to turn it in on time. You want to talk to the professor, whom you have known for a couple of years, and ask him/her to give you an extension on the paper. You go to his/her office and knock on the door. What would you say?

3. Data Analysis

Native speakers' requests gathered from the DCTs were analyzed in terms of directness level, internal modification, and sequence of request realization. Such a way of analyzing data was similar to that taken in the previous studies, i.e., Suh (1998) and Suh, Fujioka and Aoki (1996), but differed in that requests taken from Suh (1998) were newly analyzed in terms of sequence of requests while requests from Suh, Fujioka and Aoki (1996) were also newly coded for internal modification for the present study. In addition, there was an overall reanalysis of data in terms of the above three aspects of requests for this study. First, directness level in requests chosen in each one of the six situations was identified and counted. Since each pair of situations was featured by three differing contextual factors, the frequency of directness levels selected in one situation of an individual pair was compared to the frequency of directness levels in the other situation of that pair to see if any differences existed between the two in the choice of directness levels in requests. Second, since internal modification in requests is done through the use of downgrading, downgraders were identified and counted for a later comparison by using a coding scheme developed by Blum-Kulka, House and Kasper (1989), and House and Kasper (1981, 1987) (See Appendix B). Finally, to determine the overall pattern of request realization in each one of the situations, based on a coding manual developed by Blum-Kulka, House and Kasper (1989), a request sequence was identified in all requests made throughout the situations for a comparison. In Blum-Kulka, House and Kasper (1989), a request sequence consists of alerters (address terms), external modification (supportive moves), head act and internal modification (downgraders or upgraders) embedded into head act.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. Characteristics of English Native Speakers' Requests

1) Choice of Directness Levels in Requests

As mentioned above, the first way of analyzing native speakers' requests was by examining directness levels within requests, an obligatory step toward making requests. Directness is "the degree to which the speaker's illocutionary intent is apparent from the locution" (Blum-Kulka, House & Kasper, 1989, p. 278). According to Blum-Kulka et al. (1989), direct level is usually realized in requests through language forms like imperatives and want statements while conventionally indirect level is often realized through query preparatory beginning with 'Can you?' 'Will you? or 'May I.' Non-conventionally indirect level is realized in strong and mild hints. The following are the summary of frequency of three directness levels chosen within requests under each one of the six situations.

TABLE 1
Directness Levels in Requests Chosen in Situation 1

Directness levels	Examples	Frequency
Direct	I would come and ask you if I could possibly borrow the book for a couple days. I would really appreciate it if I could use yours. Could I please borrow yours for a week just to finish my paper?	7%
Conventionally indirect	Can I borrow a book? I was wondering if I could borrow this book for my term paper? May I please borrow this book from you to write my paper?	93%
Nonconven-tionally indirect		0%

Situation 1: Borrowing a book from a professor

TABLE 2
Directness Levels in Requests Chosen in Situation 2

Directness levels	Examples	Frequency
Direct	I would like to have an extension. I need an extension on my paper. I'd really appreciate it if you could give me an extension whatever it may be. I wanted to see if I could maybe turn it in a little late. Would you possibly give an extra few days?	27%
Conventionally indirect	I was wondering if I might possibly be able to get an extension. Could I please have an extension on this term paper to make changes? Would there be any way I could get extension?	67%
Nonconven-tionally indirect	Would I be severely punished for my paper being a few days late?	6%

Situation 2: Getting a permission on paper due extension from a professor

As seen in Table 1 and 2, native speakers showed a strong preference for conventionally indirect level within their requests in situations 1 and 2. Such a preference was more pronounced in situation 1 than situation 2. In general, conventionally indirect level chosen in the two situations included 'query preparatory' beginning with inquiring about hearer's willingness ("*Would you* possibly give an extra few days?"), permission ("*Can I* borrow a book?") and possibility ("*Would there be any way* I could get an extension?"). Direct level selected included 'explicit performative' ("I would come and *ask* you if I could possibly borrow the book for a couple days"), and 'want statement' ("I *would like to* have an extension"). Non-conventionally indirect level which is realized through hints were rarely used in the situations.

TABLE 3
Directness Levels in Requests Chosen in Situation 3

Directness levels	Examples	Frequency
Direct	I would really appreciate it if I could photo-copy your notes. Let me borrow your notes from class. Is there any way that I could borrow your notes or take them to the copy machine?	10%
Conventionally indirect	I was wondering if it be at all possible to borrow your notes to copy them. Could I please borrow your notes? Can I please borrow your notes? Would it be at all possible for me to borrow your notes?	90%
Nonconven-tionally indirect		0%

Situation 3: Borrowing a notebook from a classmate

TABLE 4
Directness Levels in Requests Chosen in Situation 4

Directness levels	Examples	Frequency
Direct	I would really like to study with you. You want to get together to study this stuff for the test.	17%
Conventionally indirect	I was wondering if you want to study for the upcoming test. I was wondering if you would like to study together. Is it possible for you to give me some help studying for the test? Could we get together and study?	83%
Nonconven-tionally indirect		0%

Situation 4: Asking an unknown student to get together for studying

As in the previous situations, native speakers selected conventionally indirect level much more frequently than any other level in situations 3 and 4. The

average percentage of conventionally indirect level in these situations is slightly higher than that in situations 1 and 2 (86% versus 80%). That is, native speakers tended to choose conventionally indirect level more often in situations in which they made requests to hearers of equal social status (student) than in situations in which they made requests to hearers of higher social status (professor). This indicates that American people are concerned about considering saving face of a hearer of equal social status when selecting directness levels affecting politeness in requests. In light of the fact that American society is horizontal and individualistic, and places less importance on social status than Eastern culture which is hierarchical and collective (Sohn, 1986 in Byon, 2004), it is true that Americans consider an interaction among socially equal-status members quite important in everyday communication, and see such an interaction as dynamic and unstable, which usually leads to more negotiation and more politeness strategy-use in conversation (Wolfson, 1988). In this sense, it becomes understandable why native speakers made the most frequent use of conventionally indirect level in their requests which is the most polite of the three directness levels when making requests to hearers of equal social status in situations 3 and 4 (Blum-Kulka, 1987).

TABLE 5
Directness Levels in Requests Chosen in Situation 5

Directness levels	Examples	Frequency
Direct	(Elliptical imperative) A cheeseburger and medium diet coke, please. #3 value meal and medium diet coke. A cheeseburger. (Want statement) I need a cheeseburger and medium diet coke, please. I'd like a cheeseburger and medium diet coke. I want a cheeseburger.	100%

Situation 5: Ordering food by talking to an employee in a fast-food restaurant

TABLE 6
Directness Levels in Requests Chosen in Situation 6

Directness levels	Examples	Frequency
Direct	(Elliptical imperative) #3 value meal, please. One cheeseburger and medium diet coke, please. (Want statement) I need a cheeseburger and medium diet coke, please I'd like a cheeseburger and diet coke.	93%
Conventionally indirect	Can I have a cheeseburger and medium diet coke.	7%

Situation 6: Ordering food by talking to a drive-through machine

In situations 5 and 6, native speakers showed no big difference in their choice of directness levels in requests when talking to an employee or a drive-through machine to order food at a fast-food restaurant. In these situations they made far more frequent use of direct level in their requests than they did in the other situations. Particularly, they showed a strong preference for a sub-type of direct level, 'elliptical imperative', which took a form of imperative with the omission of verb, and never appeared in the previous situations. This is mainly because the context itself in which communication occurs has a great effect on the nature of interaction between customers and employees in a commercial setting. That is, at a fast-food restaurant in which quick, efficient ordering and service are important to both customers and employees, a direct, simple way of making requests is necessary, and for this reason, elliptical imperatives seem to serve this function well (Suh, Fujioka & Aoki, 1996).

2) Internal Modification

The second way of analyzing native speakers' requests was through looking into how they modified their requests with downgrading. As stated earlier, since downgrading assumes a crucial role in expressing politeness in face-threatening acts, it is necessary to take a close look at native speakers' use of downgraders in the act of requests.

TABLE 7
Distribution of Downgraders in Requests across Situations (raw scores)

	Syntactic downgraders	Lexical downgraders	Phrasal downgraders	Total
Situation 1	43	10	4	57
Situation 2	56	9	4	69
Situation 3	55	8	2	65
Situation 4	53	3	4	60
Situation 5		15		15
Situation 6		12		12

As seen in Table 7, it is clear that native speakers made efforts to modify their requests internally through the use of various types of downgraders in the first four situations while they were not active in using downgraders in the last two situations. As mentioned before, situations 5 and 6 are characterized by service encounters at a fast-food restaurant in which a simple, quick, and clear communication between customers and employees was much more important than any other thing, for instance, provision of reasons or justifications for making requests or expression of politeness within requests. In this respect, it is understandable why the native speakers underused downgraders in these situations. One typical way of using downgraders here is by inserting politeness marker 'please' which belongs to lexical downgrader into a request framed upon sub-levels of directness such as 'elliptical imperative' or 'want statement' as shown in the examples: "A cheeseburger and medium diet coke, *please*", or "I need (want) a cheeseburger and medium diet coke, *please*" Meanwhile, situations from 1 through 4 are face-threatening situations which usually require a speaker to consider saving a hearer's face through politeness strategy-use when performing requests. For this reason, the native speakers engaged in reducing the impositive force of their requests by investing politeness through the use of downgraders in those four situations. Here are some examples showing the native speakers' good command of using downgraders in requests (Italicized parts are downgraders):

(In situation 1)
"*Could* I *please* borrow yours for a week *just* to finish my paper?"

"I *was just wondering if* you *would mind if* I *borrowed* that book we need to use for the paper."
(In situation 2)
"I *was wondering if* I *might possibly* be able to get an extension."
"*Would there be any way* I *could* get an extension?"
(In situation 3)
"*Is there any way* that I *could* borrow your notes or take them to the copy machine?"
"*Would it be at all possible* for me to borrow your notes?"
(In situation 4)
"*Is it possible* for you to give me some help studying for the test?"
"*Do you think* we *could* meet somewhere before the test?"

One of the advantages of using empirical data as used in this study in EFL learning context is that learners have a chance to be exposed to what native speakers actually say in a given situation, and build familiarity to a natural, appropriate way of using the L2, which would contribute greatly to the development of pragmatic competence.

3) Sequence of Request

Finally, the third way of analyzing native speakers' requests was through identifying the internal structure of requests to determine a typical, general sequence of requests. When people need to make requests, they do not simply produce a single request strategy, but rather provide a sequence of utterances to realize a request in a given situation. The native speakers in the study appeared to perform their requests under this assumption by producing a set of utterances serving different functions within requests. In situations from 1 to 4, overall, the native speakers began their requests with alerter which serves a function of drawing attention from a hearer by calling a name with title or using attention getter like 'Hi' or 'Hello', and moved into the next step by giving supportive moves to prepare a hearer for the upcoming request, apologize for interruption, and offer reasons or explanations for making a request. Then they produced head act (request strategy), an essential part of a request realized

through the choice of directness level, and as a closing of a request, optionally gave additional supportive moves to express appreciation, acknowledge imposition, show concern about hearer's ability or willingness to carry out the act specified in a request, or minimize imposition created by a request. Thus a typical sequence of request identified in the first four situations can be represented as follows: Alerter + Pre-posed supportive moves + Head act + Post-posed supportive moves (Blum-Kulka, House & Kasper, 1989). Here are some examples from the data:

(In situation 1)
"Excuse me, Professor ___ . I am in need of a book named ___ and the one at the library has been checked out. Could I borrow yours for a week just to finish my paper?"
"Professor, I need that book that you have and I have gone to the library but the only copy is checked out and won't be back for a month. My paper is due in a week. Could I please borrow your copy? I will return it as soon as you need it back. I would appreciate this so much. Thank you."
(In situation 2)
"Professor Smith, I apologize for having to ask you this, but my paper isn't where I would like it to be and I was wondering if I might be able to turn it in late to you."
"Hello, Sir? Hi, I just wanted to talk to you about the paper that is due tomorrow. I have had so many problems with it and I won't be finished by tomorrow. Would there be any way I could get an extension? I understand if you can't, but I would really appreciate if you could."
(In situation 3)
"Hello. I'm really sorry, but I had a terrible cold last week, and as a result, I missed a few classes. I was wondering if it be at all possible to borrow your notes to copy them. I would really appreciate it."
"Excuse me. I was really sick last week. Do you think I could borrow your notes? I'm worried about the mid-term and really want to look over notes from last week."
(In situation 4)
"I know you don't know me, but I would really like to study with you for the

test. You seem to have a really good hold on the information and I am extremely lost."
"Hi, my name is ___ . I was wondering if you would be interested in helping me prepare for the exam? I am really having a hard time with math, and would greatly appreciate it."

Unlike somewhat lengthy requests made in the above four situations which contain a sequence of alerter and head act together with pre- or post-posed supportive moves, considerably simple and brief requests were made in situations 5 and 6. Actually, native speakers here preferred to produce only head act as their request to order food at a fast-food shop. As an illustration, the following are some examples showing a typical pattern of request sequence in the last two situations:

(In situation 5)
"Ah, I want a cheeseburger and I want pickle on it and I want lettuce and medium diet coke."
"I'd like cheeseburger and medium diet coke, please."
(In situation 6)
"I'd like cheeseburger and medium diet coke. Yes, that's all."
"Yeah, cheeseburger and medium diet coke, please."

Regardless of whether talking to an employee or a drive-through machine, the native speakers tended to make their requests quite simple and short by saying just what they wanted at a service desk. As mentioned before, such a tendency can be attributed to the very nature of interaction between employees and customers occurring during transaction at commercial business. The finding that there exists a typical, general pattern of request sequence favored by native speakers in a specific situation would be useful information for classroom L2 learning, particularly EFL learning in which natural, authentic data are limited in terms of both quantity and quality, and this limitation is likely to play a debilitative role in increasing students' pragmatic awareness in L2 use.

2. Sample Activities to Promote Pragmatic Ability

This section deals with ways of increasing pragmatic knowledge with the help of cooperative or collaborative learning in EFL classes. The instructional design which introduces the face-threatening act of requests to the interaction-oriented classroom needs to be built upon the findings of the study: First, among the three directness levels, conventionally indirect level was preferred in most situations while direct level was common in some special situations, for instance, at a fast-food restaurant in which negotiation of meaning is usually unnecessary, and interaction occurs mechanically only to achieve a successful transaction on the part of both customers and employees. Second, as a way of expressing politeness, requests were modified internally through downgrading. Many different types of downgraders were used within requests in an academic setting which was featured by contextual variables such as social status and familiarity while few downgraders were employed in a commercial setting which required a quick, simple transaction. Third, requests were found to take the form of a set of utterances in most situations, which means that learners should be presented with a whole request sequence rather than a single request strategy (i.e., head act) in proficiency-oriented classrooms. In what follows, to promote EFL students' pragmatic ability, two different kinds of interaction-oriented activities are given as sample activities in which students are exposed to what they would actually hear in real-life situations, and have an opportunity to practice it by themselves in contextualized, low-anxiety situations. The sample activities are designed for college EFL classrooms in which class size ranges from twenty to forty students, and learners range in proficiency from intermediate-low to intermediate high. They can also be adjusted appropriately to other teaching circumstances when learner variables (e.g., age, proficiency level or educational background) and instructional variables (e.g., language skills to be focused and language needs of students) are considered and dealt with properly (Celce-Murcia, 1991).

1) Jigsaw

As one major type of cooperative learning, Jigsaw is a highly structured,

directive group learning activity in which each member in groups should make an equal contribution to the achievement of a common goal through the fulfillment of role assigned to every group member (Olsen & Kagan, 1992). As an example, before the start of Jigsaw, students are introduced into the general characteristics of requests, i.e., the role and function of directness levels, supportive moves and downgrading in the making of requests in English. Then students are asked to work in six, and every member in an individual group belongs to an original group. Each group member is asked to choose one of the six situations that were used in the study in order to find out the most appropriate way of making a request in a selected situation with reference to a variety of sources (e.g., TV, movies, magazines, textbooks, and literature, among others). Then students in individual groups who need to make a request in the same situation get together to form an expert group in which they discuss and share information with each other in order to refine and synthesize what they come up with in relation to the most appropriate way of making a request in a given situation. After working in expert groups, students go back to original groups, and teach what is learned in expert groups to other group members. In this way, every member in original groups get to know about how to make requests in the most appropriate way across each one of the six situations through interaction. As a way of assessing what individual groups achieve, each group is asked to report its findings to the entire class which are written down on the blackboard. After reporting, students are given requests made by English native speakers in the six situations, and asked to compare their requests with native speakers′ to see the similarities and differences in the choice of directness level, the use of supportive moves, and the expression of politeness through downgraders in each one of the six situations. Finally, in a debriefing session, teacher guides students in raising questions or issues, and discussing whatever comes into their mind in relation to the appropriate, successful ways of performing requests under the situations. The Jigsaw activity, when planned and conducted carefully, could become a useful teaching technique to not only provide students with a chance to produce the act of requests in different situations, but also raise pragmatic awareness of an appropriate use of the L2 through a comparison of requests made by both native speakers and students themselves.

2) Pair Work

Pair work is one of the typical group activities that has proven to work well in promoting communication skills (Brown, 2001; Knerr & James, 1991). It here aims to help students to make themselves familiar and sensitive to the use of downgrading to express politeness in different face-threatening contexts where various contextual factors influence the investment of the amount of politeness in requests. For the activity to be conducted successfully, first, it is necessary for students to know what downgrading is, and how it works within a request strategy. For this purpose, a list of request strategies which contain different types of downgraders in a various combination should be provided students before the activity. As seen earlier in the data, native speakers showed a wide range of downgraders within their request strategies, and used them on their own or in combination with one another according to context in which a request is made. Thus students need to be instructed explicitly on the use of downgraders in context, for instance, how each downgrader is used, and in which context one downgrader co-occurs with another to express differing degrees of politeness. After learning about the role and function of downgrading along with exemplary requests from the data, students are asked to work in pairs in which one student plays the role of professor, and the other student. Given the first two situations used in the study, each pair of students practice using downgraders with special attention paid to a contextual variable, social status. Likewise, students in pairs continue to work together to practice using downgraders in other situations (i.e., situations 3 and 4 in the study) in which a focus of students should be on a contextual factor, familiarity. As an expected outcome of this activity, students are likely to become familiar with the use of downgraders in requests, and to build self-confidence in expressing English linguistic politeness through downgrading in various face-threatening situations.

V. CONCLUSION

The purpose of the present paper was to offer an instructional technique to help EFL students to develop pragmatic competence. To this end, as baseline

data, the speech act of requests which was made by English native speakers in six face-threatening situations was analyzed in several ways. The analysis of requests indicated that native speakers showed a strong preference for a certain level of directness, i.e., conventionally indirect level in their requests, made frequent use of downgraders to both reduce the impositive force of a request and express politeness, and produce a set of utterances in the realization of a request in most situations. Based on these findings, two different interaction-oriented activities were suggested in which students are provided with an opportunity to perform requests with their own words under various face-threatening situations, make themselves familiarized to the appropriate ways of making requests, and hopefully, would be able to realize requests in a way similar to native speakers out of the classroom. Some people may think that one of the problems with the design of instructional activities presented here lies in the collection of native speakers' requests in EFL context. This may be true, however, given that the number of native English-speaking teachers has been growing steadily nationwide these days since the end of Korean financial crisis, collecting baseline data is not likely to cause teachers a lot of difficulty or burden, and instead, they should take advantage of such an increase in the number of native English-speaking teachers for their teaching career.

One of the weaknesses of the study is that it gathered data in the limited number of situations which could not represent well what college students would encounter in a hosting country. Another weakness involves the use of contextual variables during data collection. Only three contextual variables (i.e., social status, familiarity, and talking to either a human or a drive-through machine) were embedded into six situations of the DCT. In order to both gain a full understanding of English-speaking native speakers' speech behavior of requests, and design more-developed, more-comprehensive activities, more contextual variables (e.g., age, gender, and educational background, among others) need to be considered in future research. Pragmatic failure tends to create more serious communication problems than grammatical errors during social interaction (Thomas, 1993), and this is why we EFL teachers should make efforts to promote students' pragmatic ability which leads to a successful interaction with target language speakers, and further an establishment of good relationships with them in cross-cultural communication.

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Appendix A
Questionnaire

Situation 1)
You are looking for a book that you need to read for writing a term paper. Today you have just found that this book was checked out and recalled by another student, which means that you will have to wait for at least a month. You have about a week to write the paper. You know that your professor has this book. Because you have taken a course from this professor, you know him/her. You want to ask the professor to lend the book to you. What would you say?

Situation 2)
Tomorrow is the due date of a final term paper for one of the courses you take this semester. However, you are not able to turn it in on time. You want to talk to the professor, whom you have known for a couple of years, and ask him/her to give you an extension on the paper. You go to his/her office and knock on the door. What would you say?

Situation 3)
You are taking a course. Last week you missed a few classes since you had a bad cold. A mid-term exam is scheduled to be held next week. You know that

one of the classmates attends classes regularly and takes good notes. You want to borrow his/her notebook. You approach him/her. What would you say?

Situation 4)
For the first time, You are taking a mathematics course. You have had a hard time following lectures and understanding the textbook. A test is scheduled to be held next week. You notice that one student sitting next to you seems to have a good background knowledge of math, and is doing well. Since it is the beginning of the semester, you don't know him/her yet. You want to ask him/her to study together for the upcoming test. What would you say?

Situation 5)
It's around 12 o'clock. You feel hungry. You are in a mall which has a variety of fast-food restaurants for hamburgers, pizzas or pastas. You decide to have hamburger for lunch. You enter into a fast-food shop, and talk to one of the employees to order food. What would you say?

Situation 6)
You are driving a car, heading to Chicago to participate in an academic workshop. It's around 12 o'clock. You feel hungry. On the Interstate highway, you see a sign showing a fast-food restaurant 1 mile away. You decide to have hamburger for lunch, and pull the car into a drive-through machine to order food. What would you say?

Appendix B

Coding scheme for the classification of downgraders (Adapted from Blum-Kulka, House & Kasper (1989) and House & Kasper (1981, 1987))

I. Syntactic downgraders (Italicized parts indicate downgraders)

1. Tense: Past tense forms as downgrading only if they are used with present time reference, i.e., if they can be replaced by present tense forms without changing the semantic meaning of the utterance

(Example: "I *wanted* to see if I could turn it in a little late", "Would it be alright if I *could* borrow the article from you?")

2. Aspect: Durative aspect marker as downgrading only if it can be replaced by a simple form

(Example: "I *was wondering* if the music could be turned down", "I *was hoping* to get an extension for the paper")

3. Interrogative: Syntactic structure used as interrogation for downgrading

(Example: "*Do you think* I could borrow your notes?")

4. Conditional clause: Syntactic device used to tone down the illocutionary effect of an utterance

(Example: "I was wondering *if* I could borrow your notes and maybe copy them")

5. Agent avoider: Syntactic devices by means of which it is possible for the speaker not to mention either him/herself or the hearer as agents, hence, avoiding direct attack

(Example: "*Would it be at all possible* for me to borrow your notes?", "*Is there any way* I could have an extension because I will not be done in time")

II. Lexical and Phrasal downgraders

1. Politeness marker: An optional element added to a request to involve a hearer directly in a request, bidding for cooperative behavior

(Example: "Could you *please* let someone who is doing academic work use this computer?")

2. Downtoner: Sentential modifiers (e.g., 'just', 'possibly', 'maybe', 'rather', 'simply', and 'perhaps', etc) used to reduce the illocutionary effect of an utterance on a hearer

(Example: "Could you *possibly* turn your music down?", "I was *just* wondering if you could *maybe* turn your music down a little bit because I have a huge test tomorrow")

3. Understater: Adverbial modifiers (e.g., 'a little bit', 'for a second', 'not very much', and 'just a trifle', etc) by which a speaker under-represents the state of affairs denoted in the proposition

(Example: "I was wondering if you guys could turn down the music *a little*

bit")

4. Subjectiviser: Elements (e.g., 'I think', 'I believe', 'I suppose', 'I am afraid', and 'in my opinion', etc) in which the speaker explicitly expresses his or her subjective opinion vis-a-vis the state of affairs referred to in the proposition, thus lowering the assertive force of an utterance

(Example: "*I think* you should give other students your computer", "*I am afraid* you're going to have to move")

예시언어(Examples in): English
적용가능 언어(Applicable Languages): English
적용가능 수준(Applicable Levels): Secondary/College

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