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An Intercultural Pragmatic Study of Speech Act of Correction in Korean EFL Context

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Taking an intercultural pragmatic approach, the present study compared native English speakers and Korean L2 learners' performance of the speech act of correction and how it is realized with status unequals. The difference in status here is not necessarily socio-economic, but rather a matter of the power structure within the classroom context. By focusing on correction, this study looked at situations where one person knows the other has had a factual errors. The study attempted to find out whether there is pragmatic transfer from Korean (L1) among L2 learners of English in the strategies used to realize the speech act of correction. The correction speech act classified as an expressive is one of face-threatening speech acts and therefore have received much attention because of their potential for causing cross-cultural miscommunication. The participants included 20 Korean university students and 10 native English speakers. The data consisted of responses to four items of written discourse completion test per participant to elicit the speech act of correction. All the responses were analyzed as consisting of a sequence of semantic formulas (Cohen & Olshtain, 1981). Findings indicated the cultural background and L1 effects on the use of correction strategies.

[speech act of correction/politeness/face-threatening act/pragmatic transfer]

I. INTRODUCTION

Although the accuracy of language use has gained momentum in L2 teaching and learning, a more focused attention has been devoted to the knowledge of socio-cultural components of the target language in the field of interlanguage pragmatics (Olshtain & Cohen, 1991). The socio-pragmatic knowledge according to which the particular culture

functions is of great significance in inter-cultural communication (White, 1993). The knowledge forms and determines the way the speakers comprehend and perform speech acts (Koike, 1989). Speech acts are the fundamental units of linguistic communication (Searle, 1979) and the ability to formulate speech acts appropriately is a major component socio-pragmatic competence.

While speech acts themselves are universal, the socio-pragmatic rules determining the formulation of appropriate speech acts extensively differ among languages (Allami, 2012; Blum-Kulka, House, & Kasper, 1989; Cohen & Olshtain, 1993; Golato, 2002; Matsumura, 2001). When L2 learners transfer the cultural norms and pragmatic rules of their L1 into L2 in their performance of speech acts, this often triggers cross-cultural miscommunications (Kasper, 1992; Takahashi & Beebe, 1993). Research indicated that the illocutionary force of speech acts is not always conveyed from the utterance itself (Johnstone, 2008). This also applies to the speech act of correction. Corrections occur in all languages but not all languages represent corrections in the same way (Takahashi & Beebe, 1993). Corrections are socially complicated even for native speakers. Speech act of correction is recognized as face-threatening act due to its commissive and directive nature (Barron, 2003). Therefore, the social relationship between the interlocutors play an important role in selecting appropriate strategies in making correction. Considering issues concerning politeness and face, face-threatening speech acts have received much attention because they can be the source of cross-cultural misunderstanding (Thomas, 1983).

Whereas some speech acts such as requests, refusals, and compliments have been studied in the Korean L2 context, studies regarding correction speech act have not been carried out. This study, therefore, aimed to compare the speech act of correction as realized by Korean L2 leaners of English and native English speakers to find out whether there was pragmatic transfer from Korean (L1) among the Korean L2 leaners of English in the use of strategies for correction. Intended as an initial trial to examine the realization of the speech act of correction, the present study investigates the performance of the speech act of correction by looking at how the speech act is performed with status unequals. By focusing on correction, the study looks at situations where one person knows the other has made a factual errors. The difference in status is not necessarily socio-economic, but rather a matter of the power status within the classroom context. This study addressed style-shifting according to the status of the interlocutor and the use of politeness strategies that the speaker uses in order to make each correction less face-threatening.

II. SPEECH ACTS

While speech acts are the basic unit of communication in any speech community, the performance and interpretation of speech acts are context-sensitive. Speech acts are often associated with illocutionary meaning of the utterances which is the intention of the speaker and not always directly conveyed from the utterance itself. Austin (1962) proposes 'felicity conditions' which have to be satisfied for successful communication. Following Austin, Searle (1979) classified speech acts into five categories: representatives (assertion, claim, conclusion), directives (request, suggestion), expressives (apology, complaint, thank), commissives (promise, refusal, offer), declaratives (declaration). Searle (1979) also proposes the notion of indirect speech acts in which the speaker conveys meaning to the hearer more than actually saying, relying on their mutually shared background information, knowledge and inference on the part of the hearer. It is assumed that most uses of illocutionary forces are indirect (Mey, 1993) and people tend to use indirect speech acts is related to politeness (Leech, 1983). Literature on politeness commonly regard indirect speech acts to be more polite than their counterparts (Hung, 2007).

However, direct strategies of speech acts can be perceived as impolite because they may indicate a lack of concern with face and nonconventional indirect strategies such as hints can be perceived as impolite because they indicate a lack of manner of clarity (Blum-Kulka, 1987). Politeness can be defined as the means used to show awareness of another person's face (Yule, 1996) which is the public image of every member wants to claim and avoid face threatening acts which can inherently damage the face of the speaker or the hearer. If some actions might be interpreted as a threat to another's face, the speaker can lessen or minimize the potential threat. Brown and Levinson (1987) suggested politeness strategies ranging from doing the face threatening acts to avoiding doing it such as bold-on record, off record, negative and positive politeness strategies. The amount and kind of politeness applied to a certain speech act is determined by the weightiness of the speech act (Ellen, 2001). The weight is determined by the speaker considering social variable such as power and distance.

In sum, though the definition of politeness varies from study to study (Brown & Levinson, 1978, 1987; Ide, 1989, Leech, 1983), it is generally agreed that politeness is best expressed as the pragmatic application of good manner in order to make a situation less face-threatening. In this sense, the politeness strategies such as softeners and positive remarks are important. However, it is culturally defined phenomenon. Therefore, the realization of speech acts and politeness principles are different across cultures. What is considered polite as a realization of speech act in one culture might be impolite in another. There are various cross-cultural studies which compared and contrasted various speech acts and politeness strategies used in English with those of other languages such

as Persian, Chinese, Korean, Japanese, Iraqi, Turkish (Jalilifar, 2009; Grossi, 2009; Chang, 2008; Min, 2013, 2018; Takahashi & Beebe, 1993; Young, 2008; Umar, 2006). The speech act of correction, however, had remained somehow untouched in Korean L2 context.

III. SPEECH ACT OF CORRECTION

The speech act of correction as an expressive speech act is obviously a face-threatening act in that it represents a threat to the hearer as he needs to initiate the corrective act. At the same time, the act also effects the face of the speaker by telling the hearer what correction is needed for what he has just mentioned (Takahashi & Beebe, 1993). The speaker may opt not to utter correction speech act but to remain silent. The speech act of correction like any other speech acts has its own felicity conditions to be performed successfully (Searle, 1979). To be able to deal with the error in the interlocutors' utterance is of crucial importance. That is, the hearers realizes the error in the utterance of the speaker, feels that he is able to correct the error, and wants to change the erroneous utterance of the speaker.

There are different types of correction (Brown, 2007; Celce-Murcia, 2001) such as direct, indirect, self-correction, peer-correction and metalinguistic feedback. Whatever the type of correction will be, the correction speech act should be performed carefully because the correction represents a face-threatening for both speaker and hearer. In any speech community, people are supposed to cooperate with one another by pursuing the rules of politeness. Politeness is viewed here as the language usage developed in order to make a speech event less face-threatening and in this sense, politeness strategies such as positive remarks and softeners are important (Takahashi & Beebe, 1993). Face-threatening speech acts with status unequals such as correction have received focused attention because they may trigger cross-cultural misunderstanding. The kind of the relationship between the speaker and the hearer also has a significant role to perform the correction speech act properly and politely. It is generally claimed that Asian cultures like Korean and Japanese are much status-conscious compared with western cultures (Ide, 1989). In their cross-cultural study on speech acts, Nomura and Barnlund (1983) demonstrated that status relations are critical in determining the character of speech acts in Japan but less critical in the United States.

Takahashi and Beebe (1993) examines the speech act of correction performed by native English speakers and Japanese L2 learners with status unequals. They analyzed the speech act of corrections as consisting of a sequence of 'semantic formulas' (Cohen & Olshtain, 1981) such as the positive remarks, softeners, and the expression of regret as

means to lessen the face-threatening act and keep rapport between interlocutors. Their study showed that native speakers and Japanese L2 learners are different in their use of semantic formulas for the speech act of correction between status unequal interlocutors and Japanese L2 learners transferred patterns of sociolinguistic style-shifting from their L1 to L2. Following the model and method of Takahashi and Beebe (1993), Darweesh and Mehdi (2016) examined the performance of the Iraqi EFL students for the speech act of correction with status unequals in terms of strategy use and awareness of direct vs. indirect and rank-power notion. They showed that Iraqi EFL students preferred to be direct in their correction speech act and were able to manipulate some polite forms and semantic formulas to lessen the threatening effect of the speech act. Analyzing the speech act of correction in the classroom context, Pishghadam and Kermanshahi (2011) investigated how Iranian EFL learners correct their teachers when they make mistakes in class. Based on the frquency and percentage of the strategy use by the participants it was confirmed that age, gender and level of proficiency do not have critical effect on teacher correction. They concluded that Iranian EFL learners tend to be implicit in their correction and teachers need to think deeply when they correct learners in order not to make them feel absolutely stupid and to maintain rapport. In the context of south Asia, Hanh (2011) compared the realization of the speech act of correction by Vietnamese learners of English and American speakers of English. Based on the findings, Hanh reported that the group of native speakers are more direct in the ways they correct and employ more positive remarks and the Vietnamese group are more sensitive to the social status and social distance of correction-provoking situations.

In the Korean L2 context, there are various cross-cultural studies which aimed at comparing speech acts by Korean L2 learners and native English speakers such as refusals, requests, apologies, compliments, and offers, the speech act of correction has remained untouched so far. Therefore, paucity of research in the speech act of correction makes the present study significant with purpose of delving into the context of Korean L2 learners of English to discern how the speech act of correction is realized by Korean L2 leaners of English and to compare Korean L2 learners' performance with that of native speakers to find out whether there was pragmatic transfer from Korean (L1) among the Korean L2 leaners of English in the use of strategies for correction. The present study investigates the performance of the speech act of correction by looking at how the speech act is performed with status unequals. By focusing on correction, the study looks at situations where one person knows the other has made a factual errors. The difference in status is not necessarily socio-economic, but rather a matter of the power status within the classroom context. This study addressed style-shifting according to the status of the interlocutor and the use of politeness strategies that the speaker uses in order to make each correction less face-threatening.

III. METHODS

1. Participants

The participants included a total of 20 Koran L2 learners of English from three universities in Korea and 10 native English speakers. Korean participants were all BA students in English education and aged between 20 and 24. A group of native English speakers consisted of 10 participants who were aged between 27 and 34 and teaching as full-time instructors in universities in Korea. They self-identified as Standard English speakers. There was no age-limit set for the participants since age was not considered to the concern of the study. English proficiency of Korean participants is considered to be high-intermediate based on their average TOEIC score of 830 with minimum score of 810 and 980 in maximum. Their level of English competence can also be inferred from the environment in which they get much access to learning English learning and their experiences of studying abroad in English speaking nations which ranged from 4 to 23 months. 4 students have not been to any English speaking nations.

2. Instruments and Data

The data for the present study was gathered from a written questionnaire in a form of Discourse Completion Task (DCT). Though the naturalness and authenticity of the data elicited by DCT is under doubt, the DCT yields a large number of responses and is easy to assess. It also can control for various variables such as status and gender difference and establish cross-culturally significant differences (Olshtain & Blum-Kulka, 1985). Thus, DCT questionnaire was prepared for the study and was modified for naturalness and cultural familiarity by one Korean colleague and two native English speakers. Four different situations were adapted and modified from Takahashi and Beebe (1993) with real life instances from our daily communication. Two situations involved a person of higher status talking to someone in a lower position and two are from lower to higher status. All the responses were analyzed according to the directness, whether it is direct or indirect. If the responses were considered as indirect, they were analyzed as consisting of a sequence of semantic formulas such as positive remarks, softeners, and other expressions (Cohen & Olshtain, 1981). For each group, the total number of semantic formulas of any kind used for each situation was obtained. If someone chooses to remain silent, he prefers not to do the face-threatening act. The participants were instructed to feel free to produce as much responses in each situation. The answer sheets were checked for invalid ones.

3. Data Analysis

The data collected through DCT questionnaire was categorized and analyzed as consisting of a sequence of semantic formulas following Takahashi and Beebe (1993). Takahashi and Beebe (1993) classified politeness strategies used for correction into positive remarks and softeners. Positive remarks include praise, compliments and positive evaluation. They defined positive remarks as a preceding adjunct which is phrasal and separate from the main body ('It was a great speech, but ...'). Softeners, on the other hand, are down-toning devices integrated in the main body of the speech acts. Softeners are categorized into three groups:

Softeners: devices which reduce the directness of the utterance. *I believe, I think, You may have....*

Questions: the interrogative form of the correction speech act. *Do you mean ...?, Di you say....?*

Other expressions to lighten the gravity of the mistake or to defend the interlocutor. *You made a tiny error in....*, *In fact, you are somehow incorrect*

Table 1 below is the classification of the speech act of correction and the strategy use analyzed in the study.

TABLE 1

The Classification of the Correction Speech Act

Direct		
Indirect	softeners	Softeners
		Questions
		other expressions
	positive remarks	
keep silent		

IV. RESULTS

1. Correction in Situations from Higher to Lower Status

The situations 1 and 2 deal with the utterances made by a person in higher status position to a person in a lower status.

Correction situation 1 read as follows:

You are a professor in a history course. During the class discussion, one of your

students gives an account of a well-known event with the wrong date.

Correction situation 2 read as follows:

You are a high school teacher. During the English class, one of your students quotes a poem attributing it to the wrong poet in her presentation of group assignment.

What is common to both groups is that the majority of subjects decided to correct the others. The most noticeable difference is 15 out of 20 responses from the native speakers (75%) prefaced their correction with at least one positive remarks: most typically "*That's good*, but I think that took place in 1988 not in 1986", "Good explanation, but make sure about the date", "It was a very good presentation, but just one mistake. The poet", "Well-organized! but I think the poem is Elliot's". Other responses were quite similar, with a variety of adjectives being used: "very good", "great", "excellent", and "awesome". Seven native speakers used more than one positive remark such as "*That was a very good* explanation about the Olympic. *Everything was in line* except the date. It was 1988 not 1986", "*Excellent demonstration! I love the way you outlined the event*. Okay, when did that take place?" "Marvelous! I really like your work, Susan. Is he Elliot not Frost? Total of 20 positive remarks were used by the group of native speakers. That means that some native speakers used positive remarks more than once and they tend to perform the correction speech act indirectly when they correct the utterances from the speakers in higher to lower status.

Among the Korean L2 learners, on the other hand, a few prefaced their responses with a sincere positive remark. The group of Korean L2 learners tended to perform the act of correction more directly compared to that of native speakers. Most of the responses are straightforward. Most typical of their responses was "I think the date is wrong", "Hey, the date is not correct", "The correct date is 1986 not 1988", "Please check the date", or "Be sure to check the date is correct", "What you said is correct except the date", "I think the poet is another person". Within this direct speech act, some partially direct responses were found. This includes adding a certain polite form to the direct utterance of correction to make it partially direct and reduce the possible threatening effect on the hearer's face. The examples are: "I'm satisfied with your description of the event except one thing, the date", " Thank you for your account, though the date was actually 1986", "Sorry, the date is incorrect", "Your ideas are fine, but I think the date is wrong", "Oh, the poem was composed by different person".

Positive remarks including praise and positive evaluations are important pragmatic devices for the face-threatening acts in English (Takahashi & Beebe, 1993). Positive remarks are adjuncts to the speech act of correction because they cannot stand alone. As a prefix to the correcting speech act, a positive remark softens the forthcoming correction.

In addition to the use of positive remarks to soften the correcting utterances, the native speakers used more softeners than Korean L2 learners did (77% vs. 54%) and made the correcting act the least face-threatening possible. They used softeners, which act as hedges, such as “you may have”, “I think”, “I believe”; questions such as “When do you think the event happen?”, “When was that again?”, “Did you say . . .?”, “Who did you say. . .?”, “Who wrote the poem?”; and other expressions such as “You made one small error”, “Just one little mistake”, which soften or lighten the weight of the interlocutor's error.

Korean L2 learners also employed similar formulas. They used softeners such as “I think,” “I believe”, “I'm afraid”; questions such as “That was in 1950, isn't it?”, “How was that? Really?”, “Are you sure?”, “Why don't you check the date again?”, “How about check the poet again?”, “Isn't he really Longfellow?”; and other expressions such as “The date is wrong. I should correct it for you”, “In fact, the date is not correct”, “Please check it again”. Essentially, the pattern for softeners is the same as that for positive remarks with more uses by native speakers than Korean L2 learners. However, the gap between the two groups is smaller in the use of softeners than in the use of positive remarks.

It is generally observed that people in eastern cultures tend to place a value on silence compared to those in western cultures (Beebe et al., 1990; Takahashi & Beebe, 1987; Clancy, 1986). The responses from Korean L2 learners also supported the argument. Korean L2 learners used pauses to show silence or hesitance. This could be explained as evidence that people in Korean culture do not completely rely on explicit verbal expressions in face-threatening situation, which is one of the delicate situations and so people want to avoid it if possible. The group of native speakers, on the other hand, never once used pause to show silence. They employed a variety of verbal strategies in dealing with possible threat to face. It seems to be due to the fact that western cultures promote explicit verbal expressions as means of undoing the threat to face such as correction. This results in a strong tendency toward a ritualized use of the positive remark (Takahashi & Beebe, 1987, 1993). Therefore, the positive remarks is one of the most important politeness strategies for native English speakers.

The Korean L2 learners relied much less on the positive remarks than native speakers did. Instead, they used softeners. The softener is a down-toning device which is integrated in the main body of an utterance, while the positive remark is an adjunct prefaced to the main body as a separate form. Being separate form and alone may mean its explicit verbal nature. This might result in much less use of positive remarks in the group of Korean L2 learners and their preference for the use of softeners.

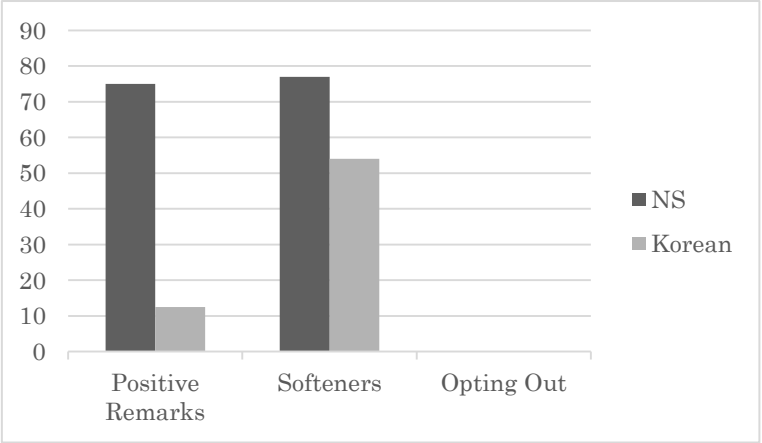
Besides the use of these formulas, the overall tone of responses from Korean L2 learners is quite different from those of native speakers. Korean L2 learners tended to

point out directly that there was an error or mistake and consequently sounded more strict than native speakers. With the use of directive form of correcting act to the error, they sounded being superior in their status being higher than their interlocutors. The results of two situations of the higher to lower status, therefore, reveal that directness is preferable in higher to lower status in the correction speech act performed by Korean L2 learners.

The percentage of politeness strategies such as positive remarks, softeners and opting out used by two groups of participants is presented in Figure 1. The finding is that native speakers used by far higher percentage of positive remarks than Korean L2 learners did when they perform the speech act of correction to the people in lower status.

FIGURE 1

Percentage of Strategies in Correction Situations 1 and 2



2. Correction in Situations from Lower to Higher Status

The situations 3 and 4 deal with the utterances made by a person in lower status position to a person in a higher status.

Correction situation 3 read as follows;

You are a student in a sociolinguistics class. During the lecture, the professor quotes a famous statement attributing to the wrong scholar.

Correction situation 4 read as follows;

Your head of department give you a file that should be delivered to the Dean's office. He says you should deliver it to the Inbox Section.

In situation 3, it was the professor who made the mistake and the head of the department in situation 4. Therefore, any correction attempted would have to be from the lower to the higher status interlocutors. The most noticeable difference from the situations from higher to lower status interlocutors was that no native English speakers and Korean L2 learners used a positive remark to the higher status interlocutors when they made a correction. It is presumed that to use positive remarks before a correction to higher status interlocutors like professor or department head is judged totally inappropriate. This evidently reveals that not only Korean L2 leaners but also native English speakers are very sensitive to status difference in their correction speech acts.

Keep silent or saying nothing to avoid correcting act was possible as a response. One native speaker decided to opt out completely in situation 3. One wrote, “Probably nothing, or I would go to the professor after the lecture and say something”, another wrote “Probably nothing, or I might say something like 'you mean Fairclough, don't you?”. And another wrote “I wouldn't say anything unless I know him well because it's not a big deal to correct the small mistake in the lecture”. Five Korean L2 learners opted out completely in situation 3. One wrote, “I may not show immediate reaction. But I could say something later”. Another commented “It is not easy to correct the professor especially when it is not quite important”. No single participant from both groups opted out or kept silent in their responses for situation 4.

The dominant pattern of correcting act by both groups of participants in the situations 3 and 4 was to soften the correction using questions such as “You mean Dean's, don't you?”, “Sorry, did you mean the Dean's office?”, “You mean the Inbox Section not Dean's?”, “Really, is it Fairclough?”, “Excuse me, are you sure it's Crystal?”. And both groups of participants used softeners a lot before a correction such as “I think it's Dean's office is right place”, “I guess it's Chomsky”, “Sorry, but I do believe it's Chomsky”, “I may be wrong, but it is Saussure”, “I'm not quite sure, but it is Chomsky”, “I'm afraid it is not Dean's”, “I am afraid it is not Chomsky”. The percentage of politeness strategies such as positive remarks, softeners and opting out used by the two groups of participants is presented in Figure 2.

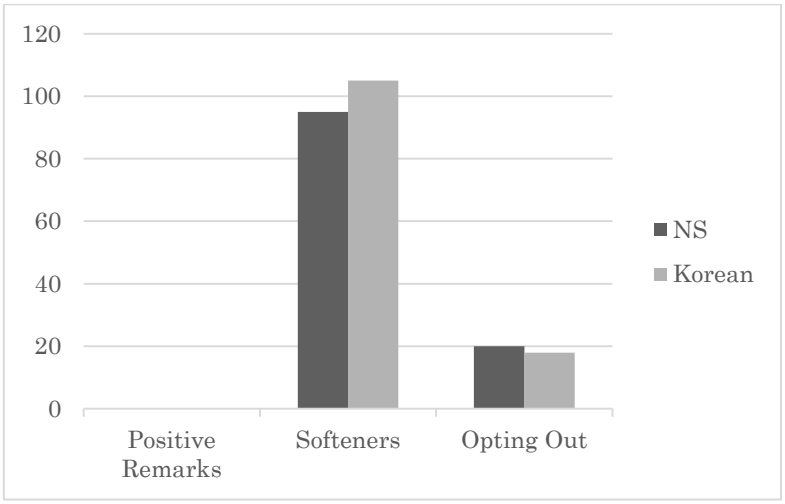
There's no striking difference in the frequency of questions and softeners used between native speakers and Korean L2 learners (95 % and 100% each). But one notable difference between the two groups is the wording of the softeners. The group of native speakers used more self-deprecating softeners with a variety of wording and a preference for a specific sentence structure such as “Sir, I may be wrong, but it's from Chomsky” and “I’m not quite sure about that, but isn't it from Chomsky”, “Excuse me, I'm curious about what you just mentioned. Is he Quirk?”, “Excuse me, sir, I believe it's Dean's”, “Excuse me, sir, I think it's Dean's. It is written here 'the Dean's Office”.

Korean L2 learners also used softeners such as “I believe”, “I think” and “I'm afraid”.

Among these, only Korean L2 learners used the formula “I'm afraid” as a polite marker. However, it was not used at all by native speakers in the situations from lower to higher status. The avoid of the use of “I'm afraid” by native speakers, according to Takahashi & Beebe (1993), can be due to its nuance of strictness or superiority. The expression “I am afraid I made a mistake” sounds undoubtedly polite and appropriate, but “I am afraid you made a mistake” sounds condescending or even improper.

FIGURE 2

Percentage of Strategies in Correction Situations 3 and 4



Several Korean L2 learners used this formula, it is highly unlikely that they meant to convey this tone in the correction-provoking situation from lower to higher status interlocutors. Rather, it is likely that Korean L2 leaners tended to stick to several short and patterned formulaic softeners in expressing politeness such as “I'm sorry” and “I'm afraid” in a variety of face-threatening situations. The degree to which politeness strategies in face-threatening speech acts may vary in different cultures as well as different situations (Takahashi & Beebe, 1993). Therefore, the difference in the use of softeners by Korean L2 learners and native speakers might reflect the purported cultural differences.

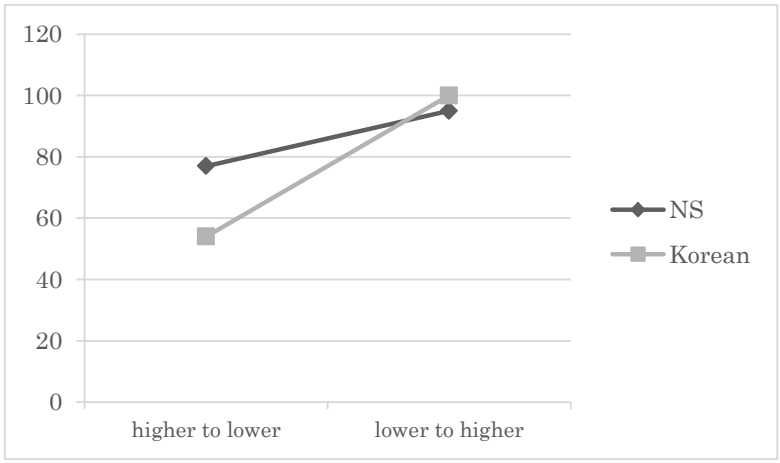
Another noticeable difference between Korean L2 learners and native speakers is the form of questions they used. Though the question form of “Isn't it somebody?” is dominantly used by both groups of participants, only two Korean L2 learners used the form of seemingly factual question to elicit self-correction, “Would you tell me the name of the linguist again?” and “Sir, would you tell me his name again, please?”. This pattern

of question is evidently indirect way of correcting someone, therefore, can be considered as a way of showing politeness. Indirect strategies, however, are not always valued in performing speech acts and politeness does not necessarily vary directly as indirectness in American culture (Blum-Kulka, 1987). The use of question which elicits self-correction is frequently used and interpreted as being appropriate in the speech act of correction from higher to lower status interlocutors (Beebe & Takahashi, 1989). But the same pattern of question in the context of interlocutors from lower to higher status is highly likely interpreted as a simple request not correction (Takahashi & Beebe, 1993). Therefore, the use of this question form to correct someone in higher status can make him feel embarrassed.

It is generally recognized that cultures in countries like Korean and Japan place a value more on indirect style of communication compared with those of western countries (Kasper, 1990). The more indirect their communicative style is, the more polite their utterance sounds, consequently their speech act has less face-threatening effect. Therefore, it is likely that Korean L2 learners tried to reduce face-threatening effect when they performed the correction speech act. It can be said that Korean L2 leaners may transfer their L1 communicative style and pattern into the speech act in English.

FIGURE 3

Percentage of Softeners in the Two Correction Situations



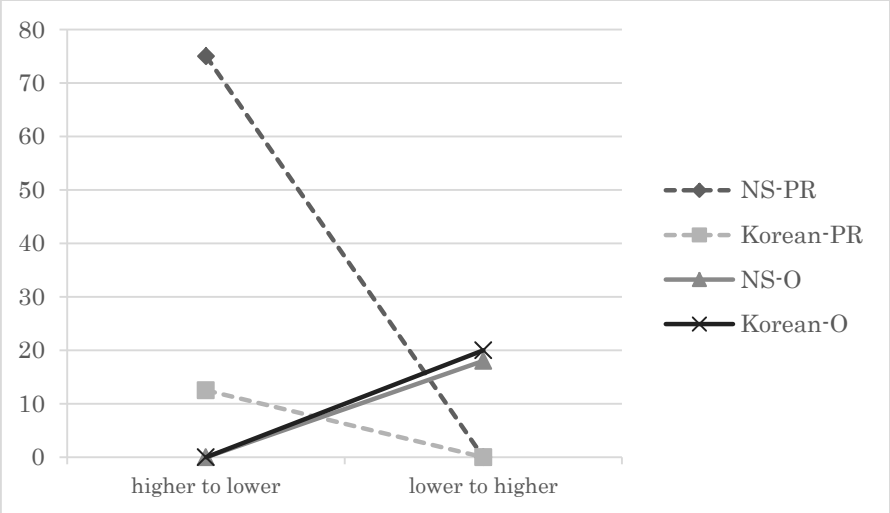
The figure 3 and 4 below presents the comparison between the two status situations in the use of softeners, and positive markers and opting out by the two groups of participants. In the speech act of correction, the situations and the relative social status was found important factors influencing the way the speakers perform correction speech

act. As seen here, Korean L2 learners style-shifted more than native speakers by the use of softeners within each situation. This suggests that Korean L2 learners showed their L1 transfer in their speech act of correction.

This is consistent with the finding from Takahashi and Beebe (1993), where Japanese L2 learners style-shifted more than native English speakers in the use of softeners and positive remarks. Similarly, the use of positive remarks and opting out suggests similar style-shifting tendencies as seen in Figure 4.

FIGURE 4

Percentage of Positive Remarks and Opting Out in the Two Correction Situations



V. DISCUSION AND CONCLUSION

The purpose of this study was to shed light on speech act theory, which is one of the most rigorous theories in inter-language pragmatics by investigating the speech act of correction. The study delved into the context of Korean L2 learners of English to discern how the speech act of correction is realized by Korean L2 leaners of English. By comparing Korean L2 learners' performance with that of native English speakers, this study also aimed to find out whether there was pragmatic transfer from Korean (L1) among the Korean L2 leaners of English in the use of strategies for the correction speech act. The present study investigates the utterances performed in the correction-provoking situations by looking at the correction performed between interlocutors with status

unequals. This study addressed style-shifting according to the status of the interlocutor and the use of politeness strategies that the speakers use in order to make each correction less face-threatening.

The findings of this study uncovered some patterns in the speech act of correction. The model developed by Takahashi and Beebe (1993) to examine the speech act of correction performed by Japanese L2 learners of English and native English speakers can fit the data of this study. The results of the current study confirm that of Takahashi and Beebe (1993). They concluded that both native English speakers and Japanese L2 learners preferred to preface their responses with softeners and hedges, though the percentage of the used softeners differs between the two groups. This might show some universal aspects of the correction speech act and its similar representations in different cultures.

First, it is typical pattern in the group of native English speakers to use positive remarks such as "It was very nice presentation" before making a correction when speaking to a person of lower status. 12.5% of Korean L2 learners used positive remarks in the situations whereas 75% of the native English speakers did. Second, softeners give evidence of cross-linguistic influence in both the situations with the higher to lower status interlocutors and the ones with the lower to higher status interlocutors. Third, it is striking that style-shifting patterns in Korean L2 learners are transferred from their L1 between two different discourse patterns with interlocutors of different status. The group of native English speakers were not unconscious of status. Rather they showed how conscious of status they were by making moves to downplay or cover up status differences. They were aware of status differences and sometimes showed a distinct style-shifting pattern. Overall style-shifting according to interlocutor status, however, was shown to be greater among Korean L2 learners than native English speakers. Fourth, indirectness is not always highly valued in speech act in English. Indirectness and politeness do not necessarily co-vary. Rather, direct corrections are generally acceptable among native English speakers. Therefore, L2 learners of English do not have to stick to more indirect patterns when they correct someone in higher status. Fifth, both groups of participants had a strong tendency to correct their interlocutors in correction-provoking situations and only few instances of the whole responses opt keeping quiet and silent. This means that they are willing to perform the speech act.

The degree of politeness and face saving efforts is the main concern in speech acts. To be more polite by minimizing potential threats to the hearer is important for language use both as L1 and L2. The differences in selecting strategies for the speech act of correction between Korean L2 learners and native English speakers may be due to the transfer of politeness strategies from L1 to L2 or the developmental nature of inter-language. In spite of the fact that certain social condition demands the use of speech acts, culture

plays a critical role in the variation of production and perception of certain speech act in different situations. Inevitably, it is important to guide L2 learners to their being perceived as more appropriate in their speech act behaviors in English. Further research is needed to determine the particular situational circumstances. In addition, a logical next step in the analysis of correction speech act in Korean L2 learners and native English speakers is a cross-cultural analysis of correction modification in the correction act at hand given the role of modification increasing directness and indirectness levels.

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Examples in: English
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