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Metapragmatic Approach to Impoliteness in Korean and English*

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This study aimed to investigate how impoliteness is conceptualized in Korean and American female students to reveal the discursive nature of impoliteness by comparing judgements of impoliteness based on metapragmatic data analysis. The data consisted of responses to a questionnaire filled by one hundred female students (fifty from each group). The results show that there are similarities as well as differences. Both groups of participants provided a wide range of impoliteness related concepts, revealing the variability of semantic domains that lay people associate with impoliteness. Among the various concepts, 'rudeness' and 'verbal agression' are mainly judged as impoliteness by both groups of participants. A significant difference between the two groups was that the American participants associated impoliteness with public contexts involving strangers while the Korean participants related impoliteness to both public and private settings involving friends and acquaintances. Findings from the contrastive study appear to be in line with the relational approach to impoliteness which views impoliteness as relational and proposes a discursive understanding of social norms of inappropriateness that underlie the judgements.

[metapragmatics/impoliteness/conceptualization/discursiveness/emic]

I. INTRODUCTION

The majority of cross-cultural research on politeness or impoliteness has been conducted based on the universal framework of Brown and Levinson's (1987) politeness

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theory. Foregrounding the authority of analysts, the studies in this research tradition viewed politeness and impoliteness as a theoretical construct (a second-order concept). With the discursive turn (Haugh, 2013; Mills, 2003; Watts, 2003), however, the focus has been given to the participants' understandings of politeness (a first-order concept). The first-order approach to politeness prioritized how lay people evaluate specific behavior in ongoing interactions as impolite and what they perceive impoliteness to be about (Eelen, 2001; Locher & Watts, 2005; Mills, 2003). Since people's own judgements about the linguistic and social behavior are based on appropriateness norms and frames of expectations in a given situation of social practice, impoliteness should be regarded as a first order concept (Locher & Watts, 2008), which is a judgement of the social behavior of their interactants with regard to the norms of appropriateness and frames of expectations.

This interest in emic approach has been implemented basically with real-life interactional data and complemented with interview by eliciting the participants' assessment of their behaviors (Grainger & Mills, 2016). While this kind of data analysis provides more reliable interpretation of interactions, more general patterns and assumptions may be missed since it is difficult to generalize the participants' evaluations of specific encounters to the interpretations about culture-specific understandings of politeness (Fukushima & Sifianou, 2017).

This study investigates culture-specific general patterns and assumptions in relation to impoliteness based on the metapragmatic data by examining Korean and American female students' responses to open-ended questionnaire. While there have been many cross-cultural comparative studies on lay people's conceptualization of politeness between Japanese and English (Haugh, 2004), between Greek and English (Ogiermann & Saloustrou, 2020; Sifianou, 1992), between Japanese and Greek (Fukushima & Sifianou, 2017), not much cross-cultural work on impoliteness taking a metapragmatic approach has been done except Locher and Watts (2008), Tyalor (2016), and Waters (2012). Moreover, there is not as yet any metapgragmatic comparative study as well as cross-cultural pragmatic work on the understandings of impoliteness between Korean and English. Thus, this study would be interesting and meaningful endeavor in understanding the culure-specific aspect of judgements on impoliteness and providing a further step to metapragmatic approach to cross-cultural research on the understandings of impoliteness. It is essential to stress that the concept of impoliteness should be seen as a judgement by interactants in a given situation of social practice. By exploring emic understandings of impoliteness as a first order concept, therefore, this study aimed to show how impoliteness is conceptualized by Korean and American female students. It is thus shown how impoliteness studies can enrich and also benefit from other research traditions.

II. IMPOLITENESS

1. Definition of Impoliteness

Since Culpeper's (1996) landmark study, research on impoliteness continues to expand very rapidly making the notion of impoliteness become an independent field of study (Dynel, 2015). The multifarious studies on impoliteness (Culeper, 1996, 2005; Culpeper, Bousfield, & Wichmann, 2003; Bousfield, 2008, 2013; Mills, 2009) have been based on the premise that impoliteness cannot be regarded as merely an unintentional failure of politeness. The scholarship on impoliteness rely on distinct research frameworks developed for it and deal with research queries independent from those pivotal to politeness (Dynel, 2015).

All things considered, the label 'impoliteness' is an umbrella term in the literature for intentionally produced face-threatening utterances. Depending on how they are conveyed, face-threatening utterances has two significant manifestations. One is unmitigated utterances where they are required to be mitigated and the other is utterances with deliberate face-threat infliction (Bousfield, 2007). Some researchers (Beebe, 1995; Kienpointner, 2008) used 'rudeness' synonymously, while intentionality is considered at the heart of definition of impoliteness. Impoliteness is viewed as an intentional face-aggravating behavior and rudeness as unintended face-threatening act (Bousfield, 2008; Culpeper, 2005; Culpeper et al., 2003). By contrast, Terkourafi (2008) avers that impoliteness best represents unintentional face-threat, while rudeness is the label for intentional one. Regardless of lay people's perception, impoliteness is a typical counterpart of 'politeness' which has been academically studied as intentional language behavior.

As a linguistic phenomenon, attempts have been made at classifying impoliteness into subcategories of manifestation. The taxonomy by Culpeper (1996) and Culpeper et al. (2003) has been adopted in a wide range of discourse studies (Cashman, 2006; Lorenzo-Dus, 2009). The taxonomy is the five-point classification: bald on-record, positive, negative, off-record, and withhold impoliteness. These impoliteness strategies, however, have been criticized with reference to their unrelated criteria. Among others, while on-record impolteness is distinguished with off record one based on positive or negative face, negative and positive impoliteness strategies involve implicitness. The strategies, thus, are not mutually exclusive and even frequently co-occur (Bousfield, 2008). Moreover, face-oriented taxonomy has been challenged on the ground that positive face and negative face easily merge in interactional discourses (Harris, 2001; Haugh, 2007). The taxonomy of politeness strategies (Brown & Levinson, 1987) has been challenged on the same grounds. Later, the taxonomy of five impoliteness strategies has been replaced with two simple types of impoliteness; on-record and off-record (Bousfield, 2008).

When it comes to the notion of intention, it raises a problem on its own. According to its prevailing definitions (Bousfield, 2010; Culpeper, 2005), impoliteness is an intentional face-threatening act. In the light of this, however, the problem is that intentions cannot be easily determined (Culpeper et al., 2003) and the result of speakers' intention is never clear (Hardaker, 2010). This is why Locher and Watts (2008) argue that it is not the speaker's intention, but the addressee's perception or judgement that determine impoliteness of the utterances. To deal with this problem, Bousfield (2008) proposed a classification impoliteness based on four binary criteria involving both speaker's intent and hearer's perception. Culpeper (2005) also includes the hearer's perspective as well as speaker's when he mentions the intention. That is, the emphasis is put on the communicative product involving the speaker and the hearer in situated interaction (Culpeper, 2011; Mills, 2005; Terkourafi, 2008; Watts, 2003). However, the situated linguistic behaviors are considered impolite when they clash with how one expects them to be. Therefore, it is the hearer's perception not the speaker's intention that causes impoliteness (Denyl, 2015). From this, regardless of intention-based definitions, one can infer that second order approach to impoliteness also need to embrace first order interpretations of lay people (Lorenzo-Dus, 2009).

2. Metapragmatic Impoliteness

No linguistic form inherently manifests impoliteness, being heavily dependent on situated interaction (Locher 2004). Nonetheless, some linguistic expressions have been conventionally associated with impoliteness by researchers (Culpeper, 2010, 2011) across the contexts. Allegedly non-normative, impoliteness is a common communicative phenomenon.

Since every communicative acts have both informational and interpersonal aspect, they represent some form of relational work (Locher & Watts 2005). In other words, relational work is the work people devote in negotiating their interactional relationships (Locher & Watts, 2005). Relational work is comprised of all possible interpersonal aspect of social practice. Therefore, taking discursive relational approach to interpersonal aspect of communication is equally concerned about impolite aspects of social behavior as well as politeness phenomenon.

Whether people perceive their interactants' social or linguistic behavior to be polite or impolite totally depends on their judgements during the ongoing interaction (Locher & Watts, 2005). The judgements are made based on the norms and expectations of appropriateness in a specific culture and they are acquired over time though the experiences in social practice (Locher & Watts, 2008). They are an individual's conceptualizations of the forms of appropriate or inappropriate behavior constructed

within a community of social practice over time (Locher & Watts, 2008; Tannen, 1998).

As norms and expectations of appropriateness in a speech community change over time and they are constantly negotiated in the same situation, so do people's judgements about relational work. Because social norms and expectations are constantly varied and, consequently cognitive conceptualizations of forms of appropriateness are also subject to change, the cognitive domains of impoliteness change and vary over time and across culture likewise (Watts, 2008). This is what Locher and Watts (2005) called the discursive and flexible nature of impoliteness. Therefore, any linguistic behavior is not inherently polite or impolite. The concepts of appropriateness and markedness, according to Locher and Watts (2008), are the cognitive domains against which the word polite or impolite is profiled. If a particular utterance is evaluated as representing socially appropriate behavior, it might be judged as positively marked. On the other hand, if it is considered as representing a behavior that violates a social norm, it might be evaluated as negatively marked and evoke negative evaluations such as rude or impolite. The evaluations or judgements totally depend on the degree on the violation and the conceptualizations of the inappropriate social behavior in a specific culture. Therefore, the notion of impoliteness should be considered as a first order concept rather than second order one, that is, a judgement or evaluation made by individual interactant (Locher, 2006; Spencer-Oatey, 2005; Watts, 2008).

In a second order, theoretical approach, the focus has given to how impoliteness or rudeness is manifested through the linguistic strategies (Culpeper, 1996, 2005, 2010; Kienpointner, 1997; Lachenicht, 1980) as Brown and Levinson (1987) worked on linguistic strategies used to achieve politeness. Impoliteness or rudeness as a second order concept can be defined as non-cooperative communicative behavior (Kienpointner, 1997). This non-cooperativeness is critical in people's behavior that they intentionally act to hurt the addressee. In this case, the interactants must be aware of the norms of interactional appropriateness in question and play with relational work to achieve their aim (Lachenicht, 1980). Impoliteness is termed inappropriateness of communicative act relative to a particular context (Kienpointner, 1997) and also be any type of linguistic behavior assed as intending to threaten the addressee's face or social identity (Mills, 2005). Taking this approach means that it is the participants' intentions that make the communicative behavior be taken to be impolite. In a first order approach to impoliteness, however, the emphasis is put on the addressee's perceptions of the utterer's intentions rather than the intentions themselves. Regardless of the speaker's intention, the hearer may evaluate the speaker's utterance as impolite or not (Locher & Watts, 2008).

Most research on impoliteness conducted to date, English being undoubtedly the most studied language, investigated the manifestations of impoliteness like linguistic formulae based on the second order approach. These include the analysis of naturally occurring

interaction recorded in a variety of discourse domain such as legal discourse (Harris, 1984), talk in the workplace (Mullany, 2011), political broadcast (Harris, 2001), classroom discourse (Cashman, 2006), and films and plays (Culpeper, 2001; Dynel, 2015). It is hardly surprising that researchers resort to such diversified discourse domains due to its public availability. While impoliteness manifests itself in everyday interpersonal interactions, it is much more rarely analyzed, given its restricted availability.

Locher and Watts (2008), however, aver that impoliteness should be viewed as a first order concept and examined internet discussion of behavior in restaurant and political interview on the BBC to illustrate the discursive nature of people's judgements on impoliteness. Inter-cultural and cross-cultural research on metapragmatic impoliteness which takes first order approach includes the investigation of impoliteness phenomenon in workplace interaction in ethnic varieties of New Zealand English (Holmes, Marra & Vine, 2012) and corpus studies by Taylor (2016) who compared the perceptions and practice in UK. While corpus-based studies provided insights into the semantic fields of impoliteness-related concepts, most of them dealt with different varieties of English (Culpeper, 2011, Tylor, 2016). However, lay people's interpretations of impoliteness are much more rarely investigated by researchers. Even though there are a few cross-cultural studies on the conceptualizations of impoliteness, there is not yet any comparative study between Korean and English conceptualizations of impoliteness. Thus, this would be a meaningful endeavor, since these two speech communities represent quite distinctive linguistic and cultural systems. So by comparing the way in which impoliteness is conceptualized in American English and Korean, this study aims to explore how impoliteness is conceptualized by Korean and American students to show any cross-cultural differences and similarities as well, while drawing on both lay people's perceptions of impoliteness and metapragmatic remarks comprised of situated instances of impolite behaviors.

III. METHODS

The current study investigated female students' conceptualization of impoliteness using an open-ended questionnaire to delve into the concepts American and Korean people associate with impoliteness. Open-ended questionnaires give respondents more freedom to express their ideas and thoughts in their own way, and thus may result in insightful and unexpected outcome (Mackey & Gass, 2005). The first-order approach to impoliteness underlined the manifestations of impoliteness as it occurs in ongoing interpersonal interactions (Watts, 2003). Therefore, questionnaire has its own advantages in eliciting the participants' own evaluations of their interactions and, moreover, dealing with relatively a

large numbers of responses, thus yielding more substantial results of lay member's conceptualizations. In comparison to interviews, questionnaires allow the participants to have more time for reflection. The questionnaire in the present study included three questions, namely:

1. What words would you use to describe an impolite person?
2. How would you define impoliteness?
3. Could you give us examples of impolite behaviors?

The data derived from one hundred questionnaires responded by fifty American and fifty Korean. The Korean questionnaire was distributed in linguistics-related classes in three universities in Korea and the English questionnaire was distributed in various linguistics classes in a state university in the US. Participation was optional and the questionnaire was anonymous. The Korean participants were aged 20-31, while the American ones were 22-34 years old. Both groups of participants were all female undergraduate and graduate students. The participation was confined to female students to reduce gender variable and to secure homogeneity of the participants. Neither group was familiar with the first order research on impoliteness.

Responses from both groups are classified into three topics underlying the questions of questionnaire: one-word synonyms of impolite and impoliteness, such as rude or insult; abstract definitions of impoliteness, for instance "being verbally aggressive"; and examples of impolite behavior in specific circumstances, such as "snap your fingers at the water in a restaurant" or "laugh loudly and point". Since the related concepts of impoliteness provided by participants show the affinity with the definitions, the concepts were merged with the synonym provided in responses. This resulted in a total of 68 different impoliteness-related concepts in the English and 58 in the Korean data. Besides the decontextualized impoliteness concepts, the English data comprise 65 and the Korean data 62 contextualized examples of impolite behaviors. It is notable that 17 of the situated examples provided by the Korean participants included specific addressee, such as "being rude to your parents", while neutral terms were used in the English data such as "being rude to others". The fact that the English speakers tend to treat their interlocutors more neutrally, while the Korean participants associate forms of impoliteness with specific groups represents an interesting difference between Korean and English conceptualization of impoliteness.

IV. RESULTS

The analysis of data is divided into two parts. First part focuses on the ways in which American and Korean participants interpret impoliteness as an abstract concept. Second one, on the other hand, examines the situated examples of impolite encounters which both groups of participants experienced.

1. Impoliteness Concepts

1) American English Data

In order to establish the scope of abstract concepts associated with impoliteness by lay people in Korea and the US, all mentions of impoliteness-related notions were counted and their frequencies were identified. Among the 68 concepts provided by American English speakers, ten make up more than half of the data. Table 1 below shows the most frequent impoliteness-related notions in the American English data.

TABLE 1
The Most Frequent Impoliteness Concepts in the AE Data

Concepts	*N*(%)
Rude, rudeness, discourtesy	27(8.7)
Verbal aggression	25(8.1)
Conflict, disagreement	24(7.6)
Insult using taboo language	20(6.4)
Invading personal space	15(4.8)
Swearword	15(4.8)
Slurs	14(4.5)
Disparagement	13(4.2)
Sarcasm	11(3.5)
Deception including lying	8(2.6)
Total	172(55.2)

The ten concepts listed in Table 1 account for 55.2% of all mentions (172 of 312), with the four concepts, namely ‘rudeness’, ‘verbal aggression’, ‘conflict, disagreement’ and ‘insult using taboo language’ dominating the data (30.8%). The remaining 44.8% are made up of 58 different impoliteness-related concepts, with 21 of those mentioned only once.

The results largely support previous studies on impoliteness concepts in English. Some researchers (Kasper, 1990; Kienpointner, 1997) aver that ‘rudeness’ and ‘impoliteness’ can be used synonymously regardless of intentionality of face-threat because it is not the speaker’s intention but the hearer’s interpretation of an utterance that determines the degree of impoliteness. As a notion discussed in sociology and psychology, Bousfield

(2008) viewed 'verbal aggression' is a concept by means of which impoliteness is defined. The underlying rational of this is based on the Brown and Levinson' (1987) statement that politeness seeks to disarm the potential for aggression. Then, impoliteness presupposes the aggression by way of contrast. Researchers (Bousfield, 2013; Harris, 2001) suggest that 'conflict' and 'disagreement' are interchangeable even though not all disagreement is conflictual and that 'conflict' is a manifestation of impoliteness. The topic of 'insults' was raised as the one that bridges the phenomena central to impoliteness (Mateo & Yus, 2013).

Using 'taboo language' is identified as a conventional impoliteness formula (Bousfield, 2008; Culpeper, 1996). Thus, insults using taboo language, particularly related with bodily functions, sex, and religion are recognized as a critical impoliteness strategy. Related to 'insults', 'slurs' are defined as contemptuous expressions targeting individuals or groups with reference to gender, race, and sexual orientation (Dynel, 2015). Dynel (2015) avers that 'slurs' as a salient type of insults generate impoliteness towards whoever the targets are. 'Sarcasm' referred as a synonym of mock politeness makes negative interpersonal effects (Partington, 2006), which is why sarcasm is asserted to a salient type of impoliteness (Ball, 1965; Partington, 2006).

Overall, the first-order emic concepts of impoliteness provided by American English speakers largely confirm the notions that impoliteness researchers frequently raised as being naturally associated with impoliteness among Anglophone speakers.

2) Korean Data

Similarly to the English data, while the Korean named a total of 58 different impoliteness-related concepts, just eight of those account for almost half of the total frequency.

TABLE 2
The Most Frequent Impoliteness Concepts in the Korean Data

Concepts	*N*(%)
Rude, rudeness, discourtesy	25(9.2)
Verbal aggression	24(8.8)
Failure to reciprocate	23(8.4)
Disparagement	20(7.4)
Failure to use appropriate honorifics	16(5.9)
Swearword	9(3.3)
Sarcasm	7(2.6)
Cyberbullying, spamming	7(2.6)
Total	133(48.2)

Table 2 lists the eight most frequent impoliteness-related concepts collected from the Korean data, which make up 48.2% of all mentions (133 of 272). As in the American

English data, five concepts, ‘rudeness’, ‘verbal aggression’, ‘failure to reciprocate’, and ‘disparagement’ are particularly frequent (34 %). There are considerable overlaps between the lists in Table 1 and Table 2 named by the American and the Korean participants each. Both in the American English data and the Korean data, ‘rudeness’ and ‘verbal aggression’ feature the two most frequent impoliteness concepts. There are three more concepts that both groups share. ‘Disparagement’, ‘swearword’, and ‘sarcasm’ also appear in both American English and Korean data, while their weightings are different in each data.

It is notable that ‘failure to reciprocate’ and ‘failure to use appropriate honorifics’ appear as salient impoliteness-related concepts in the Korean data. Impoliteness can be viewed as a kind of attitude or attitude schema which consists of socially determined evaluative beliefs about certain behaviors (Culpeper, 2011). In other words, it is overall attitudes shared by members of social group. Culpeper (2011) maintains that some attitudes make up impoliteness ideologies. The salience of ‘failure to reciprocate’ and ‘failure to use appropriate honorifics’ is considered in terms of conceptualization of impoliteness in Korean society as all socially inappropriate behaviors. The high rating of the two concepts is not surprising. Honorifics as well as conventional markers of gratitude such as ‘thank you’ have long been considered as primary linguistic index of politeness particularly in Asian cultures. More recent studies reveal that honorifics also represent the speaker’s stance and empathy to show his conforming to socially appropriate linguistic norms (Haugh & Obana, 2011). Therefore, failing to use appropriate honorifics and markers of gratitude are naturally perceived as manifestation of impoliteness in Korean society. It is also notable that ‘cyberbullying’ and ‘spamming’ appear only in the top eight of the Korean data. ‘Cyberbullying’ and ‘spamming’ involve various genres of computer-mediated interaction. Appearance of the two concepts in the list is rather unexpected since these computer-mediated linguistic behaviors are relatively new phenomena and thus may represent changing nature of impoliteness in contemporary Korean society.

In contrast to their salience in the American English data, however, ‘insulting using taboo language’ and ‘invading personal place’ have not made it into the Korean top eight frequent concepts. In contrast to its high rating in American English data, moreover, ‘conflict’ was mentioned only once by Korean participant. This may indicate that the sort of behaviors that American English speakers easily identify as impolite such as ‘invading personal space’ or ‘insulting with taboo language’ are perceived quite differently among the Korean participants.

Although the American English speakers mentioned more concepts overall than did the Korean participants, ten and eight concepts each accounted for around half of the data. On the whole, the data demonstrate that different concepts are prioritized by each group of participants when referring to impoliteness. A comparison of frequent impoliteness-related concepts named by the American and Korean participants reveals that ‘rudeness’ and

'verbal aggression' are the two concepts that both groups perceive as central to impoliteness as it features at the top of the lists. There are three more concepts that each data have in common, namely 'disparagement', 'swearword', and 'sarcasm', but these are given different weightings in each group. It is expected that 'failure to use appropriate honorifics', the high ranking concept in the Korean data was not mentioned by the American participants, since appropriate use of honorifics are highly valued only in Korea. It is unexpected, however, that 'failure to reciprocate', another high ranking concept in the Korean data do not appear in the top ten list of American English data. Only three American participants mentioned 'failure to write a thank-you note' as impoliteness. Failure to reciprocate such as 'keeping silent or not writing a thank-you note when you are supposed to thank someone' is interpreted as a kind of unwritten rule and perceived to tarnish one's image with others (Waters, 2012).

2. Impoliteness Context

The analysis above has demonstrated some cross-cultural differences in conceptualizations of impoliteness between provided by the American and Korean participants. To find out to what extent the semantic fields of impoliteness have influence on lay people's judgements of others' behavior as impolite, however, it is needed to examine the contextualized evaluations of encounters involving different manifestations of impoliteness. Therefore, this part centers on the forms of behaviors that the two groups of participants recalled their experiences of impoliteness.

1) American English Context

The American respondents provided a total of 65 situated examples of impoliteness. The majority of the situations they characterized took place in public (56) and involved strangers (51). 46 of these encounters involved strangers of equal status, while only five displayed interactions involving unequal relations. Just nine occurrences provided by the American participants presented encounters between friends in private setting.

Among the 46 situated examples featuring strangers of equal status, 39 featured fairly general forms of impolite behaviors, such as 'interrupting others while they are talking', 'disregarding or ignoring others' feelings', 'neglecting the etiquette', 'sneezing in public without covering your mouth', 'talking and laughing loudly', 'reading someone else' e-mail without permission' and 'invading someone's personal space'. The remaining seven examples described the participants' own experiences such as 'Two colleagues never stopped talking in lecture. It's too rude' and 'I saw my roommate took a phone calls on the toilet'. Keeping deferential silence while someone is talking as in during speeches is

highly valued in Anglophone cultures (Waters, 2012). Therefore, breaking this unwritten rule can insult people. Taking a phone call on the toilet encroach on privacy because the sphere is deemed to be personal and private. This is another typical Anglophone concept of 'privacy' (Wierzbicka, 2006). Thus, the person on the phone might feel uncomfortable if he knew that he was in that private sphere.

The majority of occurrences include both verbal and non-verbal acts. All the examples describe the behaviors, both verbal and non-verbal, that all Anglo speakers (also the American English speakers in this study) can effortlessly identify as impolite or rude (Waters, 2012). Many of these behaviors involve formulaic socialization tools, for example, encouraging children to avoid socially inappropriate behaviors. That is, it is desirable for people to follow unwritten social rules and not to carry out the behaviors described above if they want to be perceived as socially aware individuals. It is also noticeable that the responses were not prefaced with the hedges such as 'I think' or 'in my opinion'. This may represent that the behaviors provided by the American participants have been established as impolite or rude in Anglophone societies.

Overall, the analysis of situated examples of impolite behaviors provided by the American participants clearly demonstrates a rather different perspective on what constitutes impoliteness than the one from the related concepts of impoliteness. First of all, the American participants perceived impoliteness primarily as a phenomenon relating to public settings involving strangers, with only 13.8% of the data referring to private situations. The majority of the examples discussed by the American participants (86.2%) depict encounters between strangers regardless of their status.

2) Korean Context

The Korean participants provided 62 instances of contextualized impolite forms of behaviors were provided. Although, the Korean data present a more balanced perspective than those from the American participants, with 69 % of the data mentioning public and 31% referring to the private context, public contexts make up two-thirds of the data. Among the 43 situations that occurred in public contest, 15 involved strangers regardless of their status. No addressee was given in the remaining 28 public situations provided by the Korean participants as in 'talking loudly in the restaurant', 'ignoring the other', 'splitting in public', 'disregarding others' feelings', 'talking about someone in his absence', 'asking a woman her age', 'using inappropriate address forms', 'treating people as if they are beneath you' and 'asking any full-time mother what she does the whole day'.

Among 19 situated examples in private contexts, nine involved acquaintances like classmates and colleagues and described the participants' own experiences such as 'One of my classmate never says 'thank you' when she is supposed to do so. I don't understand',

and ‘A friend of mine tends to request something quite directly. Then I feel uncomfortable’. The remaining ten private situations were not given the parties involved, though they were likely to be family members or friends, as in ‘eavesdropping and then adding your opinion’, ‘breaking up via text message or KakaoTalk’, ‘calling early in the morning or late in the night’, and ‘reading my text message or e-mail’.

The most popular responses of impolite behavior both in public and private settings involve ‘lack of concern for others’, ‘use of rude words’ and ‘demeaning behaviors’. Nine of the encounters with strangers provided by the Korean participants referred to the use of impolite language. These include ‘relatively direct request with aggravator’ (*I want that right now*), ‘being condescending’ ‘neglecting the rules of etiquette’, ‘making derogatory statements about other people of different styles or religion’, and ‘being uncivil with others’

Unlike the American data, in general, the contextualized examples of impoliteness in the Korean context pertains to both public and private settings, though public contexts weigh much more. The analysis of situated occurrences of impolite behaviors yielded similar findings to those of impoliteness related concepts, since ‘demeaning behaviors’, ‘lack of concerns for others’, and ‘use of impolite and rude language’ featured prominently in both related concepts and situated examples data set. However, the situated occurrences provided insights into more detailed types of ‘demeaning behaviors’ and ‘lack of concern for others’, as well as into specific impoliteness examples. The contextualized examples, thus, have showed us about the behaviors to be avoided if people want to have harmonious interpersonal relations with others.

The analysis of situated occurrences of impolite behaviors broaden our understanding of American and Korean conceptualizations of impoliteness. The findings revealed that the American participants relate impoliteness mainly with public contexts involving strangers, with very few occurrences referring to private settings. On the other hand, the Korean data yielded more examples of private contexts involving friends and colleagues.

V. DISCUSION AND CONCLUSION

For a long time, studies on politeness and impoliteness were dominated by Politeness theory proposed by Brown and Levinson (1987) in which its technical concept of ‘politeness’ was driven by universal ‘face need’. It has since become obvious that the notion of basic ‘face need’ is personal autonomy and thus the theory is Anglo-centric since it melted into Anglophonic cultural values (Gu, 1990; Waters, 2012). Most research within this framework paid focused attention to comparing the linguistic realizations of various speech acts in different languages. The findings of the studies within the universal politeness framework are primarily quantitative in nature. Moreover, the association of

preferences for particular strategies of a speech act with culture-specific norms tend to reflect the analysts' intuitions (Ogiermann & Saloustrou, 2020). Within the growing field of impoliteness research, it is of importance to recognize that applying Anglophone-specific conceptual categories to other cultures and languages may fall into ethnocentrism (Waters, 2012).

To avoid running the risk of falling into the covert Anglo-centrism in impoliteness and politeness studies as well, more recent studies on impoliteness have focused on emic, that is, culture-internal, lay people's conceptualizations of impoliteness. The emic approach have little to show specific linguistic realizations of impoliteness. Rather it provides a broad perspective on how ordinary members of the specific cultures conceptualize impoliteness and what is precisely they perceive when they think of impoliteness. Within the growing field of impoliteness research, the importance of metapragmatic data from eliciting lay people's evaluations of impoliteness has been recognized since the understandings of impoliteness derived from such data represent the people's point of view, reflecting their beliefs and experiences.

Following the emic approach to impoliteness, the present study examined how young American and Korean people conceptualized impoliteness. This is the first in comparative study involving American English and Korean, two linguistically and culturally very different systems. The findings confirmed those of previous studies on impoliteness with emic approach in that there is a closer bond between lay conceptualization of impoliteness and recent discursive approaches in that impoliteness as well as politeness as a multifaceted social phenomenon is perceived only in ongoing social interactions.

In agreement with previous research that have demonstrated that lay conceptualizations of impoliteness should be considered seriously to understand the impoliteness phenomenon, this study tried to explore how young Korean and American English speakers conceptualized impoliteness. Overall, the American informants provided more instances of language use, especially in the public contexts. The main difference between the American and Korean perceptions of impoliteness was that the American participants related impoliteness almost with public contexts while the Korean participants provided more instances of private settings involving friends and acquaintances. Very few of the American informants associated impoliteness with close relationships. The Korean situated examples generally fit into the three categories of 'demeaning behaviors', 'lack of concerns for others', and 'use of impolite and rude language'.

While the concept of 'breaking social rules' was less common in the American data, the majority of contextualized examples provided by the American participants revealed the different forms of 'not following unwritten social rules both verbal and non-verbal' in public settings. At the same time, the American data do not fit the three categories as the Korean data. The majority of American examples referred to encounters between status

equal strangers.

In spite of the different sociocultural and linguistic system between the two groups of informants, their perceptions of impoliteness are not completely unrelated phenomenon. This is in line with the previous studies (Holms et al., 2012; Locher & Watts, 2008). Both American English and Korean data contained a wide range of impoliteness related concepts, revealing the variability of semantic domains that lay people associate with impoliteness. Lay people's experiences of impoliteness differ from the semantic domains of impoliteness. While the situated responses contained critical evaluations of impolite behaviors, no abstract concepts conveyed this attitude. Context is critical in ordinary people's interpretations of impoliteness, therefore, emic analysis need to go beyond examining abstract semantic fields and give more focus on the contextualized examples from participants' own experiences.

The findings of this study revealed that lay peoples' understandings of impoliteness are in contrast to theoretical approach to politeness and impoliteness since Brown and Levinson's (1987) theory driven by universal 'face need', which is Anglo-centric in its origin and smuggles in Anglophone socio-cultural values. This study is one of a series impoliteness studies that recognize the crucial role of culture-internal emic analysis of conceptualizations of impoliteness. The findings of this study also confirm the ordinary people's conceptualizations of impoliteness and discursive approaches in which impoliteness is viewed as a linguistic and social phenomenon (Haugh, 2013). To provide more insight into the culture-internal emic interpretations of impoliteness, however, further research needs to compare the conceptualizations of impoliteness according to various social factors such as status, gender, and age.

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Examples in: English
Applicable Language: English
Applicable Levels: Tertiary

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