

Consciousness in EFL Performances*

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Kim, Byong Won. 2001. *Consciousness in EFL Performances*. *Korean Journal of English Language and Linguistics* 1-3, 387-416. In an attempt to identify highly probable causes of poor EFL performances, certain intriguing data of 11 common errors collected from 23 university students' listening and reading for correction of a short conversation of three people, with a questionnaire regarding their knowledge of the situational context, were analysed and interpreted within a theoretical framework of consciousness and the intonation unit (Chafe 1974, 1980, 1994), compatible with some important philosophical and psychological theories. The results: situational understanding does not always guarantee good EFL performances; the 11 errors were not attributable to hearing problems; consciousness appropriate for literacy and formal schooling appeared to be the major cause, which was inappropriate for a communicative use of English. Re-shaping of consciousness was suggested, with a warning against the 'grammar consciousness raising' approach.

1. Introduction

1.1. Purpose

It is generally understood that people produce speech by modulating the air stream coming out of their lungs. However, the air stream is not literally a *flowing* body of air; it comprises a series of exhaling breath-groups with brief inhaling 'breaks' between them. The breath group has been named an *intonation unit* by Chafe (1994:55) who defined it as 'a unit of mental and linguistic processing... which seems to be of exactly the right size

*An earlier version of this paper was presented at the 2001 Seoul International Conference on English Linguistics, August 16-17, in Seoul, Korea.

to be processed in its entirety with the help of echoic memory, a fact suggesting that this ability functions crucially as a support for language,' where consciousness is referred to as 'echoic memory,' i.e., a momentary echo.

Assuming that the mental and linguistic processing of the intonation unit is directly related to human consciousness, this paper was organized with its center of interest in the *shaping of consciousness* inferred from the data derived from some students' English as a Foreign Language (EFL) performances.

Specifically, the goal of this paper is to document certain intriguing data that appear to tentatively prove that a major cause of problems revealed in poor EFL performances must be a failing of the students to shape an appropriate consciousness for the communicative use of English.

1.2. Some Related Studies

Chafe's theory of consciousness and the intonation unit appears compatible with some important philosophical studies of consciousness (Churchland 1996; Searle 1998). It is also compatible with some leading psychological theories of short-term memory in comprehension processes (Kintsch 1992, 1998; Carpenter, Miyake, and Just 1994; Radvansky and Wyer, Jr. 1994).

Organized within the theoretical framework of consciousness and language, some linguistics-oriented studies have been reported in related fields. For example, I applied Chafe's contextual rule of $W : X = Y : Z$, which was an interesting analogy of his notion of consciousness and given-new distinction in the processes of text construction (Chafe 1972, 1974, 1976, 1980), to a study of three Korean children's learning of the functions of the English article (Kim 1983). Then, in 1988, I studied the same three Korean children's re-learning of their first language, also applying Chafe's framework to an analysis of their draw-and-tell monologues in Korean, collected for three

years immediately after their return to Korea. These studies (Kim 1983, 1988) documented some empirical data that demonstrated the Korean children's success in learning English and in re-learning their first language during a comparatively short period respectively.

Lee (1982) employed Chafe's theory of consciousness and given-new distinction in the field of Korean linguistics for an appropriate understanding of the use of the Korean 'double subject' and zero-subject phenomena. In 1986, I again relied on Chafe's theory for a comparative study of topicalization in English and Korean, where American and Korean fifth graders' writings on the same topic were analyzed, to find that their schemata for topicalization didn't appear different from each other's despite the formal differences between the two languages.

1.3. Consciousness in EFL Studies and Objectives of This Study

In some empirical studies (Kim 1987, 1989, 1998), it was reported that Korean EFL students were found to be poor in their performances. The subjects in the studies had studied EFL for more than six years. How should we explain this divergence between the EFL students' failure and the three Korean children's success in learning a new language and also in re-learning of their first language (Kim 1983, 1984, 1986)?

We know that the children learned English as a second language immersed in an English speaking society while the students studied English as a subject in a society, where English is used only as a foreign language. Admitting this critical difference, we still need to attempt to empirically locate any probable major cause of the students' failure.

This paper was organized to report that the divergence between the students and the children was found to be caused by inappropriately shaped consciousness for realistic language performances, when some intriguing data collected from university

students were analysed. The data were interpreted in terms of Chafe's theory and a notion of *shaping of consciousness* (Olson 1996; Painter 1999).

Incidentally, in the field of second language learning, an alternative approach to consciousness and language appeared. Schmidt (1990) and Tomlin and Villa (1994) discussed 'consciousness' at length with an emphasis upon some processing stages of 'being conscious,' such as *attention* and *noticing*, which some language education researchers directly applied to their educational research studies where 'consciousness of grammar raising' was attempted for the success of explicit teaching and learning of some grammatical items (Fotos 1993; Izumi and Bigelow 2000; Park 2001). Chafe's theory of consciousness and language as well as the data presented in this paper may as well lead the researchers to re-evaluate their studies within the framework provided by Schmidt (1990) and Tomlin and Villa (1994).

2. Theoretical Background

2.1. Consciousness and Information Unit

The following quotation will provide us with a basis for a good understanding of Chafe's theory of language and consciousness:

People are conscious at different times of different things. It seems that how people use language depends very much on what they are conscious of from one moment to the next —on the focus of their internal attention, coupled with a concern for what is going on in the consciousness of the listener. (Chafe 1980:9)

To illustrate this, let's think of a short conversation between two women, Anita and Josie. A conversation is a method of

understanding the focus of each other's consciousness, which is realized in their utterance of intonation units.

Anita: "Would you like a cup of coffee?"

Josie: "Yes, I'd love one."

Anita: "Okay. Here's the kitchen."

Apparently, Anita was interested in offering a cup of coffee to Josie. In Anita's mind, the idea of offering coffee was activated out of her vast pool of knowledge of the world, as well as a polite way of expressing her interest and intention. The idea was realized in its entirety in a systematized whole of the intonation unit, "Would you like a cup of COFFEE?" The activated word 'coffee' had the primary stress, with one of the learned expressions 'Would you like...' preceding it in "Would you like a cup of coffee?"

On hearing Anita's utterance, Josie was conscious of the deployment of information. Within a moment, in Josie's mind, Anita's activated information 'coffee' turned into the given information.

Josie was actually interested in coffee and intended to let Anita know of her stronger interest in it. Being conscious of their sharing of the given information 'coffee,' the semi-activated information was replaced with the unstressed 'one,' while 'love' was activated with a primary stress on it for the expression of her whole-hearted acceptance of the offer. Thus, her interest and intention was realized in an intonation unit, "I'd LOVE one."

Then, Anita finalized the communication with "Here's the kitchen," which was an indirect realization of her meaning, "The coffee is in the kitchen [of the office]; so, help yourself." This speaker's meaning was to be inferred from the context.

To this understanding of how people use language in a conversation, we have applied certain important properties of

consciousness that Chafe delineated in his *Discourse, Consciousness, and Time* (1994), which may be summarized for the organization of this paper as follows:

Speaker's interest activates new information within an intonation unit for communicative purposes. Each unit is processed one piece at a time, for a short duration, resulting in the realization of the deployment of information into a series of strongly or weakly stressed pronunciations. The focus of consciousness is restless, moving constantly from one item of information to another in a spurt-like flow of thought and language.

The conversation between Anita and Josie appears to be a typical example of the deployment of consciousness. So, any adult native English speaker will immediately understand it without such an extensive explanation as we detailed earlier, and can tell when and where it is very likely to occur. What would happen, however, if EFL students listen to the same conversation recorded on a tape? This curiosity led to the design of the study reported in this paper.

2.2. Consciousness in Philosophy

Is consciousness real? Churchland responds in his *The Engine of Reason, the Seat of the Soul* (1996) that "Consciousness is at least a real and an important mental phenomenon, one that neuroscience must acknowledge as a prime target of its explanatory enterprise" (213).

Searle, in his *Mind, Language, and Society* (1998), plainly defines what we are talking about: "The primary and most essential feature of minds is consciousness. By 'consciousness' I mean those states of sentience or awareness that typically begin when we wake up in the morning from a dreamless sleep and

continue throughout the day until we fall asleep again” (40-41).

What does consciousness have to do with language? In his *Thought and Language*, Vygotsky (1934, reissued in 1962) stated how intrinsically consciousness and language are related as follows:

Thought and language, which reflect reality in a way different from that of perception, are the key to the nature of human consciousness. Words play a central part not only in the development of thought but in the historical growth of consciousness as a whole. A word is a microcosm of human consciousness (153).

Vygotsky, also, seems to be the originator of the idea of ‘given-new’ distinction in the deployment of consciousness in utterances. He explains why people give a primary stress on new information and pronounce other information less saliently. For example, he describes two persons that have knowledge of a clock in the next room and have heard some noises made on its falling to the floor. One person will say, “It fell,” with a primary stress on ‘fell’ because ‘fell’ is new information but ‘the clock’ is given information (Vygotsky 1934:127).

Bruner (1985:30-31) introduced Chafe as the linguist who ‘revitalized’ Vygotsky’s ‘topic-comment structure of language,’ which appears to be identical with Chafe’s theory of consciousness and language.

To materialists, on the contrary, mind and matter are mutually exclusive, and matter is all that exists; so, mind or consciousness cannot exist because it cannot be programmed into a computer. For example, Pinker (1997) states that “...the mystery remains a mystery, a topic not for science but for ethics” (148), and raises several questions about the reality of consciousness including this: “If we could ever duplicate the information processing in

the human mind as an enormous computer program, would a computer running the program be conscious?" (145). No, it would not, because computers are not human. If we could ever create a computer exactly like a human, then that computer would be conscious because human beings have consciousness.

2.3. Consciousness in Psychology and Linguistics

In psychological studies, working-memory or short-term memory is discussed at length as an important capacity for language comprehension. It has been rarely studied in the processes of language production by psychologists.

Kintsch (1998) explains the function of working memory relying on an analogy with a computer:

A great deal of information is stored in various forms accessible to the computer, but this information does not affect processing unless it is retrieved and installed in the computer's central processor. The human central processor is called working memory (WM). To affect a cognitive process, items in long-term memory must be retrieved and inserted into working memory. Working memory is thus the active part of long-term memory... There are other names for the active part of long-term memory—short-term memory (STM), the focus of attention, and consciousness" (Kintsch 1998:217).

The capacity of working memory or consciousness is only about 4 chunks of information (Kintsch 1998:217). Thompson (2000) states that 5-9 chunks "...can be accurately held in short-term memory for a period of seconds, without rehearsal. In a very real sense, short-term or working memory is equivalent to the contents of consciousness: It is what we are aware of at any given moment in time" (175).

Radvansky and Wyer, Jr. (1994) introduce that working

memory is “even thought of by some researchers as the seat of consciousness in the memory system,” which is thought to be where information processing occurs, and “...the limit on short-term memory capacity simply depends on the amount of information from long-term memory that can be called into consciousness at any one time” (138).

These specified characteristics of short-term memory, especially its limited capacity of processing information, appear to be compatible with Chafe’s theory of consciousness and the intonation unit derived from his famous study of ‘the pear stories’ (1980), which we can verify in the following quotation, where the intonation unit was referred to as an ‘idea unit’:

In the pear film narratives the mean length of these idea units is about 2 seconds (including pauses), or about 6 words. Three obvious criteria aid in identifying idea units... Although idea units have a tendency to be set off by all three of these factors—intonational, hesitational, and syntactic—all three are not always present (Chafe 1980:14).

The limitation of the intonation/idea unit seems to be the cause of many problems in language performances. There would not be any problem in comprehension, for example, if we could hear as many words as we wanted without any limit of duration, and at the same time, if we could keep them in our memory exactly as they were spoken to us, like recording sounds on a tape. Without the limitation of the intonation unit, there would not be so many problems we need to try to eliminate between the performances of the native English users and the poor EFL users.

One particular problem caused by the characteristics of the intonation unit, revealed in EFL performances, is that they

cannot easily *compose* a conventionally acceptable intonation unit, a systematized whole of words that represents one idea in mind, because of the limitation of its processing information. Native English speakers don't compose the frequently used intonation units each time they use them; they simply '*quote*' a conventionalized expression when it is chosen as an appropriate one for a certain idea they have in mind.

In this study the students listened to a simple conversation three times consecutively, which would help to eliminate some problems caused by the limitation of the intonation unit. To prevent any intervention of 'hearing' problems in the students' performances, the same conversation lines (including some mutilated parts) were to be read by the students for their correction. Then, a survey was conducted to find out how well the students understand the situational context of the conversation.

3. Research Design

3.1. The Common Errors in Five Lines

In March, 1996, I had three EFL Freshman classes listen to a recorded conversation (Nunan 1995) two times. They then heard each line of the conversation to write it down verbatim.

Next, three volunteers from each class were allowed to write their transcript on the board. After that, the whole class was invited to find errors in each transcript and come up to the board to correct them freely.

Surprisingly, I found that no one in any of the classes completely corrected the errors in lines of the text (1), (2), (3), (4), and (5), as below, with eleven problem items in them.¹

¹There were some other minor errors besides these, which will be discussed later in the <NOTES> of the 'Results' section of this paper.

1st voice(Anita): Would you like a cup of coffee?

2nd voice(Josie): **(1) Yes, I love one.**

(Cf. Yes, I'd love one.)

1st voice(Anita): Okay. Here's the kitchen....

1st voice(Anita): Oh, hi, Marcella.

Marcella: Hi, Anita.

Anita: **(2) Marcella, I like to meet Josie.**

(Cf. Marcella, I'd like you to meet Josie.)

(3) Today's his birthday.**

(Cf. Today's her first day.)

Marcella: **(4) Please meet Josie.**

(Cf. Pleased to meet you, Josie.)

Josie: **(5) Please meet Marcella.**

(Cf. Pleased to meet you, Marcella.)

** Some students wrote 'birthday'; others 'first day.'

With curiosity, in the summer of 1997, I used the same procedure with the same text to an advanced English class of 72 sophomores and juniors. This time, I gave the following written directions to help them understand the situational context in which the conversation took place: "Directions: Listen to the conversation. Three persons talk, Anita, Josie, and Marcella. Write down exactly what they say. You will listen to their conversation twice; then, you will hear each line so that you may have time to write down each line."

The results revealed that they had the same problems, particularly in the same five lines. There were only 4 students who wrote down all of the five lines correctly. The rest of them made some errors on one or more of the same problem items.

In the first week of March, 1998, to go one step further, I used the same procedure with the same text with a freshman class of 21 students, this time with an additional procedure: i.e.,

in the next class after the initial (listening) procedure, I announced the results of their 'listening' errors comparing them with the original text, hoping that they recognize what went wrong with their problem items in listening. After that, in the first week of April, I directed the class to read a conversation text, which included some 'mutilated' parts on the five problem lines, to correct any inappropriate expressions they found. The text was exactly the same conversation they had for listening, only this time having female speakers replaced with male speakers, Jack, Mark, and Sam. Accordingly "Today's *her* first day" was replaced with "Today's *his* first day."

The written directions read: "In the following conversation of three persons, Jack, Mark, and Sam, you will find quite a few INCORRECT parts. Underline them and correct them beneath the underlined parts."

The results, again, revealed that the five lines with 11 items were their critical problems (Kim 1998). The disclosing of the results of their listening prior to the reading of the text for correction did not seem to show any apparent influence on their performance in reading for correction.

3.2. Data Collection for the Present Study

On March 7, 2001, 23 students listened four times to the taped conversation between the three women with the goal of writing down the lines verbatim. Actually, they listened three times to the whole conversation, and then listened to each line to write it down.

On March 9, the same students read the same conversation in which the lines were 'mutilated' to reflect the 11 common errors. They were supposed to correct the errors (See the actual reading text in APPENDIX I).

Immediately after the reading session, then, the same students were asked to respond to a questionnaire in relation to the sessions of listening and reading (See the actual form of the survey in APPENDIX II).

<Data Analysis Procedures>

- <1> Listening: (1) The researcher read each student's sheet to mark every deviation compared with the conversation the students heard. (2) Then, each of the 11 target errors were tallied. (3) Deviants other than the targets were separately marked and tallied.
- <2> Reading for correction: The same procedure of <1> was applied.
- <3> Questionnaires: Each student's responses were tallied.

3.3. Expected Outcomes

- (1) The questionnaire responses will be compared to the results of listening and reading for correction, expecting that the comparisons will disclose some positive/negative correlation between vague comprehension and language processing.
- (2) Students' listening and reading for correction will be comparatively examined, in an attempt to locate major causes of EFL users' failure to perform better in English.
- (3) Students' common errors will be examined syntactically, textually, and situationally to inferentially locate probable causes of EFL users' poor performances.

4. Results

The results are presented below in three tables.

<Table 1> Correctly Responded Total

Number of Correct responses	Listening	Reading for correction
11-10 items	0(0 Students)	0(0 Students)
9-8	35(4)	0(0)
7-6	41(6)	20(3)
5-4	39(9)	31(7)
3-2	5(2)	17(7)
1-0	1(2)	4(6)
<i>Averages</i>	<i>121/253(48%)</i>	<i>72/253(28%)</i>

<Table 2> Comparisons of Correct Responses in L & R*

Lines	[1]	[2]	[3]	[4]	[5]						
Items	I'd	I'd	you	her/his	first	pleased	to you	pleased	to you		
L(%)	30	43	39	13	52	22	70	74	22	78	83
R(%)	30	52	13	35	0	22	61	9	22	61	9

(Notes: L = Listening; R = Reading for correction)

* See the Appendix III for the percentages written on the actual problem items in listening and in reading for correction.

<Table 3> Questionnaire Responses

▷ In Relation to *Listening*

Questions	'I Know'
<1> Did you know of a third person's appearance?	96%
<2> Did you know that Anita was introducing the other two?	70%
<3> Did you know the two were introduced?	78%

▷ In Relation to *Reading for Correction*

Questions	'I Know'
<A> Did you know that the following is the same text you heard in the previous listening session?	100%
 Did you know that the three characters in the following text are male?	65%
<1> Did you know of a third person's appearance?	83%
<2> Did you know Anita was introducing the other two?	61%
<3> Did you know the two were introduced?	83%

<Notes> Insignificant Errors: Errors other than those of the 11 target items were insignificant. In listening, 132 errors were made on the 11 target items; in reading, 181 errors were made, which add up into a total of 313 errors. By contrast, only 24 errors (20 in listening, 4 in reading) were made in items other than the 11 target items (See the following table). In listening, there were 15 error types, two students made errors in each of the five types, and only

one made an error in each of the other 10 types; in reading, there were 4 error types, and 1 student made each error. Therefore, the 24 errors made on others than the targets are not discussed in this paper.

	Listening	Reading		TOTAL/Averages
Errors :	132	181	313	14 per person 29 per item
Other Errors :	20	4	24*	

*Examples of insignificant errors

In listening: "Would () like a cup of coffee?" "Would you to cup of coffee?" "Would you like () cup of coffee?" "Here's () kitchen." "Marcella, I *introduce* Josie." "Marcella, I like to *meet you* Josie." "*They are the first day.*" "*Thanks for birthday.*"

In reading: "Would you like to *have* a cup of coffee?" "*I like one.*" "Today *she's* birthday." "*Please meet to* Sam."

5. Interpretations and Discussions

5.1. Comprehension and Expressions

In the survey questionnaire responses, in listening, 96% responded that they knew of a third person, Marcella, appearing and more than 70% responded that they knew Anita was introducing the other two, who greeted each other.

However, Table 1 gives us a general impression of the EFL students' poor performances in actual listening. On average only 48%(121 out of 253) were correctly 'listened.' There were no students who gave all correct responses.

In reading for correction, only 28% (72 out of 253) were correctly changed. This seems to tell us that the poor performances in listening were not totally due to the students' *hearing* problems.

From these observations, we may safely infer that a vague understanding of things going on in a certain situation does not

always guarantee a good performance in EFL conversation. Having a vague understanding of a situation and reflecting the situation in a conventionally acceptable intonation unit doesn't seem to be identical in EFL performances.

How did the four students perfectly responded in the same listening and reading, which was earlier mentioned in this report (Kim 1998)? What about the intonation units like "Would you like a cup of coffee?" and "Here's the kitchen," which most of the students successfully wrote down in listening?

It is supposed to be explained in terms of Chafe's theory of consciousness and language. To put it briefly, when a person intends to offer coffee to someone, the person becomes conscious of the idea of 'offering coffee' and the situational context from which his/her consciousness determines how to express the intention, when out of a vast pool of expressions in his/her brain the consciousness chooses one conventionalized expression. The choice would not sound like "*Will* you like a cup of coffee?" or, "Would you like a *mug* of coffee?" even though there was a mug available there, because such 'newly created' expressions as these are not conventionally acceptable.

Those frequently used expressions are 'ready-made' intonation units stored in the user's mind; otherwise, the limited capacity of consciousness will not allow the user to organize new content of an intonation unit each time in a given context. EFL students were able to *hear* and correctly write out, "Would you like a cup of coffee?" in some cases for the first time they heard 'coffee,' in some other cases when they heard it followed by the second person's response, "Yes, I'd love one," and in still other cases when they heard the whole conversation two or three times, probably all depending upon the level of their re-shaped consciousness appropriate for the communicative use of English.

5.2. Language Learning

How did first language users and some successful EFL users shape their consciousness appropriate for ordinary performances in English?

Let me quote a small example collected by Painter (1999a:191) from her son Stephen when he was 2 years and 10 months old:

(Mother chuckles at something Stephen has said.)

S: Don't say that.

M: Don't say what?

S: Laugh... I don't want you to laugh.

Originally Stephen intended to stop his mother from laughing at him. But his consciousness picked up an inappropriate expression schema which produced a ready-made intonation unit, "Don't say that." When his mother asked, "Don't say what?" however, Stephen's consciousness recognized that the initially chosen schema was inappropriate for his intention to be realized because the word 'laugh' was not nicely placed into the "Don't say that" schema. So, his consciousness found another schema, which produced an alternative intonation unit, "I don't want you to laugh" that plainly delineated what he had in mind.

This short conversation demonstrates how a person's consciousness works for trial and error experiences in real-life conversation, while the consciousness is being shaped for communicative use of English.

Then what do the poor EFL users' errors demonstrate? Perhaps their consciousness has been well shaped for *studying English as a subject*.

Naturally, these students' consciousness had been shaped for daily conversation in Korean. When they began to study subjects at home as well as at school, however, they had to re-shape their originally and naturally developed consciousness, to make it

appropriately function for literacy and formal schooling (Olson 1996; Painter 1999b). That re-shaped consciousness must have been employed to their listening and reading processes in this study, which is essentially different from consciousness for everyday conversation.

5.3. Listening vs. Reading for Correction

In the study reported in this paper, the purpose of directing the students to read the same text, administered in 48 hours after listening, was to detect any *hearing* factor intervening in the listening comprehension process. Surprisingly, however, the students appeared to have performed worse in reading for correction. On average, 5.3 items (48%) out of 11 were correctly responded to in listening; by contrast, only 3.1 mutilated items (28%) out of 11 were corrected in reading.

This should be interpreted as an indication that in listening they principally relied on their sound hearing and that in reading they turned out to be 'helpless,' all because their consciousness was shaped for dealing with English forms, usually in terms of individual words. Functions of their *study* consciousness were not at all appropriate for dealing with intonation units meaningfully organized within a connected discourse unit.

This interpretation seems to be positively confirmed when we are reminded of the fact that in the survey questionnaire responses, 100% of the students said that they knew the reading text was the same one that they heard in the previous listening session.

In the following '*Reading*' of *EFL Errors*, we will encounter a sufficient number of typical errors that we can convincingly explain within the framework of consciousness and language, which is *incompatible* with any framework provided by syntactic and semantic theories focused on individual sentences/clauses.

5.4. 'Reading' of EFL Errors

Errors detected in this study must have been produced principally due to the fact that the students' consciousness focused on individual words, which may be good for traditional syntactic/semantic studies of English but which can hardly be functional for communicative use of English. The following summary of the 'readings' of the errors seems to support this interpretation.

(1) 'Would'

Formally speaking, "Yes, I love one," (without 'would') has no problem at all as a grammatical sentence. However, when it is produced in response to a polite offer, "*Would* you like a cup of coffee?" "Yes, I love one" without *would* is inappropriate because coherence has been broken between "Would you...?" and "I love..."

However, 70% of the students wrote "I love one" in listening and failed to correct "I love one" into "I'd love one" in reading. If it had been a matter of *sound hearing*, then, in reading they should have found that 'I' in "I love one" was not correct. In fact, they failed to detect it, which means theirs was not a matter of *hearing*.

This paper interpreted that such an incoherent response could be possible when the speaker was out of the situational and textual contexts. In other words, an appropriate response can be expected only when the speaker's consciousness functions with a full understanding of the relevant contexts.

(2) The first 'you'

No one would say, "Marcella/Sam, I'd like to meet Josie/Mark" when introducing Marcella to Josie, or Sam to Mark. However, 61% of the students failed to write 'you' in "Marcella, I'd like *you* to meet Josie," in listening. In reading, 87% failed to

insert 'you' in "Sam, I'd like [] to meet Mark."

Interestingly, on the other hand, 96% of the students in listening and 83% in reading told us that, in their responses to the questionnaire, they knew of a third person appearing in the conversation scene. Also 70% of the listeners and 61% of the readers reported they knew that Anita/Jack was introducing the other two persons.

"I'd like to meet somebody" is a syntactically/semantically complete sentence; however, it doesn't mean "I'd like *you* to meet somebody." The high percentages of errors seem to reveal that it was a matter of the students' consciousness appropriate for studying English as a subject. They must have been conscious of individual words within the sentence, without being sufficiently conscious of the situation.

Thinking of the fact that people will delete '*you*' in a Korean version of the sentence in the same context, one might as well take these errors as examples of first language interference. Such a suspicion appears possible; nevertheless, we have no direct evidence to prove it in the data of this study.

(3) The second '*you*'

In listening to "Pleased to meet *you*, Josie," 74% correctly inserted '*you*'; by contrast, however, only 9% inserted '*you*' in reading a mutilated expression, "Pleased to meet Mark." This apparent difference between 74% and 9% tells us that they were mostly conscious of sound-hearing in listening. They didn't seem to possess consciousness that understood the contexts well enough to function appropriately for communicative purposes.

(4) '*Her*' and '*his*'

In listening, only 13%, the lowest percentage on problem items in listening, correctly wrote: "Today's *her* first day." In reading, 35% correctly changed '*her*' into '*his*' in "Today's *his* first day,"

where the 'his' was to refer to a man Mark. Obviously, this is not a grammar problem; this is a problem of not being conscious of situational/textual context necessary for maintaining coherence between the information units.

Incidentally, 10 students *incorrectly* wrote the following in place of 'her' in listening to "Today's [] first day." Three students wrote 'for,' 3 'a,' 2 'the,' 1 'of,' 1 'his.'

According to the questionnaire, 65% of the students knew that Jack, Mark, and Sam were *male*. However, only 53% correctly changed 'her' into 'his' in "Today's *her* first day." 40% didn't make any changes, and 7% changed 'her' into 'she's.'

This means that their consciousness failed to grasp the coherence between a female voice and *her* and between a man's name and *his*, which is not a matter of sentence grammar.

(5) 'First day' vs. 'Birthday'

Listening to an intonation unit, "Today's *her first day*," 52% of the students correctly wrote 'first day' but the others wrote it "Today's *her birthday*." In reading, 0% corrected 'birthday' into 'first day.'

Formally, "Today's *her/his birthday*" appears perfectly correct by itself. Contextually, however, it doesn't seem to be appropriate because the comment was preceded by an introduction of two persons. When a person introduces someone to someone else, ordinarily, s/he says something about the person introduced, after an introduction like "X, I'd like you to meet Y." The students' consciousness must not have been appropriately shaped for a larger context than individual sentences.

(6) 'Pleased to'

To was the only one common error that more than 70% of the students correctly wrote and inserted in its place. This case of *to* has nothing to do with any situational and textual context.

By definition, it is a matter of form.

Interestingly, only 22% correctly wrote '*pleased*' which has something to do with the *to*, both in listening and reading and both in the first and the second greeting, "*Pleased to meet you, Josie/Mark.*"

By contrast, no one from among the 78% of failures gave a single correct response to any one of those four cases of *pleased to* in the two intonation units. In other words, 78% incorrectly *heard* it either as "*Please to meet you...*" or as "*Pleased meet you...*," which is not at all appropriate as a natural English expression that can be used in any context. In other words, the fact that 78% of the students had a grammatical knowledge of the infinitive form of *to meet* does not mean that they had a functional knowledge of *to meet* in the construction process of a conventionally acceptable information unit.

Poor EFL users do not seem to have their sentence schemata well developed for simple ideas like "*Pleased to meet you, X*" unless the idea structures are very simple like those in "*Would you like a cup of coffee?*" or "*Here's the kitchen.*"

6. Conclusions

Why do many students perform poorly in EFL? The data we have examined in this study lead us to conclude that it is largely because they have consciousness good for studying English as a subject, which is definitely *inappropriate* for the communicative use of English.

Research Objective 1: The questionnaire responses were compared to the listening and reading results, and no definitely positive correlation was established between vague situational understanding and language processing.

Research Objective 2: The data derived from the students' listening and reading were compared, to find that the students

were poorer in reading, positively confirming that their functional knowledge of English itself was poor.

Research Objective 3: The target errors were examined syntactically, textually, and situationally, to find that their consciousness was *inappropriate* for effective use of intonation units in a connected discourse.

Another finding: their sentence schemata were so poorly developed that they were unable to use them for proper construction of conventionally acceptable information units.

To reiterate, one major cause of the students' poor EFL performances appeared to be their consciousness which was good for literacy and formal schooling, but not good for communicative use of English.

An alternative notion of consciousness or 'noticing' proposed by Schmidt (1990) and Tomlin and Villa (1994) may as well be simplified as follows: "No learning without awareness" (Schmidt 1990:145). Forms and 'noticing' are closely related, according to their notion, and students will not be able to use a form until their consciousness notices it, even though they have heard it many times before.

It may be partly true. However, some educational research studies and/or teaching practices directed to raise grammar consciousness need to be re-evaluated because the study reported in this paper tells us that without re-shaped consciousness appropriate for communicative use of English, consciousness for literacy and formal schooling is very likely to function and produce poor EFL performances. The 'grammar consciousness-raising' approach, which places a stronger emphasis on explicit learning than on implicit learning, may eventually result in reinforcing EFL users' consciousness suitable for studies of English as a subject.

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접수일자: 2001. 8. 17.

게재결정: 2001. 9. 11.

APPENDIX I

- The following was used for reading for correction.
(Notes: There were enough spaces for corrections between the lines.)

Directions: In the following conversation of three persons, Jack, Mark, and Sam, you will find quite a few INCORRECT parts. Underline them and correct them beneath the underlined parts.

Examples: Somebody gives her gift yesterday.
 gave a gift

Jack: Would you like a cup of coffee?

Mark: Yes, I love one.

Jack: Okay. Here's the kitchen...

Jack: Oh, hi, Sam.

Sam: Hi, Jack.

Jack: Sam, I like to meet Mark. Today's her birthday.

Sam: Please meet Mark.

Mark: Please meet Sam.

APPENDIX II

- ▶ Questionnaire: The following is an English version of the questionnaire organized in Korean.

▷ In Relation to Listening

Directions: You listened to a recorded conversation on Wednesday. Answer the following questions, paying attention to the underlined parts, by checking one of the spaces provided.

Anita: Would you like a cup of coffee?

Josie: Yes, I'd love one.

Anita: Okay. Here's the kitchen.

Anita: Oh, hi, Marcella

Marcella: Hi, Anita.

Anita: Marcella, I'd like you to meet Josie. Today's her first day.

<Question 1> Did you know a third person(Marcella)'s appearance?

[] I knew [] I didn't know

<Question 2> Did you know that Anita was introducing the two?

[] I knew [] I didn't know

Marcella: Pleased to meet you, Josie.

Josie: Pleased to meet you, Marcella.

<Question 3> Did you know the two were introduced?

[] I knew [] I didn't know

▷ In Relation to Reading for Correction

Directions: Read the following to correct wrong parts. Answer the following questions, paying attention to the underlined parts, by checking one of the spaces provided. Notes: Respond to the Questions A and B before you begin to read the questions 1 to 3.

<Question A> Did you know that the following is the same text you heard in the previous listening session?

[] I knew [] I didn't know

<Question B> Did you know that the three characters in the following text are male?

[] I knew [] I didn't know

Jack: Would you like a cup of coffee?

Mark: Yes, I love one.

Jack: Okay. Here's the kitchen.

Jack: Oh, hi, Sam.

Sam: Hi, Jack.

Jack: Sam, I like to meet Mark. Today's her birthday.

<Question 1> Did you know a third person's appearance?

I knew I didn't know

<Question 2> Did you know Anita was introducing the two?

I knew I didn't know

Sam: Please meet Mark.

Mark: Please meet Sam.

<Question 3> Did you know the two were introduced?

I knew I didn't know

APPENDIX III

<A> Listening: % of 11 Target Items Correctly Heard

1st voice(Anita): Would you like a cup of coffee?

2nd voice(Josie): (1) Yes, I'd love one.

30%

1st voice(Anita): Okay. Here's the kitchen.

1st voice(Anita): Oh, hi, Marcella.

Marcella: Hi, Anita.

Anita: (2) Marcella, I'd like you to meet Josie.

43% 39%

(3) Today's her first day.

13% 52%

Marcella: (4) Please to meet you, Josie.

22% 70% 74%

Josie: (5) Pleased to meet you, Marcella.

22% 78% 83%

 Reading for correction: % of 11 Target Items Corrected

Jack: Would you like a cup of coffee?

Mark: (1) Yes, I love one.

→ I'd 30%

Jack: Okay. Here's the kitchen.

Jack: Oh, hi, Sam.

Sam: Hi, Jack.

Jack: (2) Sam, I like to meet Mark.

→ I'd 52% → you to 13%

(3) Today's her birthday.

→ his 35% → first day 0%

Sam: (4) Please () meet Mark.

→ pleased 22% → to 61% → meet you 9%

Mark: (5) Pleased () meet Sam.

→ pleased 22% → to 61% → meet you 9%