Begüm Bacak
Lecturer
MA in English Language and Literature
Kütahya Dumlupınar University
School of Foreign Languages
Kütahya, Turkey
ORCID ID 0000-0002-4732-4841
begum.bacak@dpu.edu.tr

The impact of prep class education on effective English requestive e-mails written by students in Turkey

Abstract. For the past years, cross-cultural and interlanguage pragmatics have focused on native and non-native speech act descriptions, and only a small number of studies have investigated the preparatory class effect involved in speech act productions. To bridge the gap, this study aims to investigate the degree of directness and amount of lexical / phrasal internal and external modifications of requestive e-mails employed by 25 first grade students of English Language and Literature department with preparatory education and 25 first grade students of English Language and Literature department without preparatory education in their in a state university. It also aims to explore whether there is a difference between two groups according to the degree of imposition while making requests. The participants were given discourse completion tests in e-mail format including two different situations with low and high imposition levels and asked to write two requestive e-mails to their non-native professor. Based on the percentages and frequencies, the students with preparatory class education were compared to the students without preparatory class education, with respect to their usage of request strategies, lexical/phrasal internal modification and external modification. The results indicated that these two groups had both similarities and differences with respect to the degree of directness, the amount of internal and external modifications. In Turkey, learners of English as a foreign language (EFL) with and without prep class education employed more direct strategies in both situations. However, the group without prep class education employed more conventionally indirect strategies than the group with prep class education. None of the participants used non-conventionally indirect strategies. The group with prep class education used more internal modification than the group without prep class education. The most common internal modification was the consultative device in both groups. As for external modification, the group with prep class education utilized more supportive moves than the group without prep class education. Grounder was the most preferred supportive move by both groups.

Keywords: academic e-mails; requestive e-mails; direct and indirect strategies; Turkish EFL students; prep class education.

1. INTRODUCTION

Language learners today differ in many ways from those in the past in terms of the ways they communicate with their teachers outside of the classroom. Although face-to-face communication may still be the most effective way to get your message across, using online tools such as e-mail seems to be the most convenient and efficient option. In addition to those advantages, for English language learners, communicating through e-mail also gives them the opportunity to revise their messages. One of the most important reasons for writing e-mails to their teachers is to make a request (Shim, 2013). However, writing a request e-mail to a teacher is a challenging situation for students because the request is a face-threatening act (Brown & Levinson, 1987) in its nature. It is also a power-asymmetrical situation that is, while students have lower institutional status, teachers have higher institutional status. It requires to have pragmatic competence and linguistic awareness. There are not any existing conventions for e-mail writing because e-mail is a relatively new way of communication (Biesenbach-Lucas, 2006).

In one hand, e-mail writing is considered to be related to speaking because it is dynamic and interactive (Economidou- Kogetsidis, 2011); on the other hand, it has some features from writing because the speaker and the hearer cannot see each other while writing e-mails (Collot & Belmore,

1996). Thus, e-mail writing shares some features with both speaking and writing, so it is regarded as "a hybrid medium" of communication (Crystal, 2001). Chen (2006) stated that challenge in writing e-mails occurs because "non-native speakers often lack the sophisticated pragmatic competence in the L2 and critical language awareness of how discourse shapes and is shaped by power relations, identity, and ideologies established in the target culture" (p. 36).

The degree of imposition is another important point while writing a requestive e-mail to a teacher. Biesenbach-Lucas (2007), using a modified Cross-Cultural Study of Speech Act Realization Patterns (CCSARP) categories, analyzed three types of requests in academic emails of NS and NNS graduate students. Ordered in increasing imposition, these types are requests for appointments, requests for feedback, requests for extensions. Much of the research on requests in second/foreign language is based on the Cross-Cultural Study of Speech Act Realization Patterns (CCSARP) conducted by Blum-Kulka et. al (1989). The CCSARP is a large-scale project that established the similarities and differences between native and non-native speakers' patterns across languages in request and apology speech acts.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW
2.1. Politeness Theory and Request Speech Act
Brown and Levinson (1987) illustrated how politeness functions in language interaction drawing on the notion of "face". People are encouraged to interact with each other in a way that saves a positive face (the positive and consistent image people have of themselves, and their desire of approval) or negative face (personal preserves and rights to non-distraction) of one another (Brown & Levinson, 1987, p. 61). Therefore, a request is a specifically distinguished speech act as it includes face-threatening potential (Brown & Levinson, 1987) and requires the use of regressive actions to mitigate the potentially negative effects.

2.2. Academic Requestive E-mail
There is an institutional power difference between a student and a professor, so students' requests toward their professors are generally "characterized by higher formality, avoidance of imperative requests (avoidance of direct strategies and preference for conventionally indirect strategies instead), quite a high level of mitigation (marker "please", "would you mind" etc.) and recognition of the imposition involved" (Economidou-Kogetsidis, 2011, p. 3194). Nonetheless, non-native students who do not often have adequate linguistic and pragmatic options at their transfer, fail to reach the expected level of politeness in writing power-asymmetrical e-mails.

Academic requestive e-mails have been the subject of many studies up to now in the literature to address NNSs' academic performances in academic settings, who are often lack of adequate level of linguistic and pragmatic competence and performance. Hartford and Bardovi-Harlig (1996) examined e-mail requests of NS and NNS graduate students at an American university. The results showed that the NNSs used fewer downgraders, more often expressed their time needs, and less often acknowledged imposition on the faculty than the NSs.

Biesenbach-Lucas (2007), examined three types of requests by using modified CCSARP categories in academic e-mails of NS and NNS graduate students. The NSs used past tense in appointment requests and embedded forms in extension requests as syntactic modifiers much more frequently than NNSs. The marker "please" was used much more frequently by the NNSs. Economidou-Kogetsidis (2011) analyzed NNS undergraduate and graduate students in an English-medium university in Greece. Results showed that the NNSs employed a higher number of direct strategies than indirect ones. Marker "please" was the most frequently used downgrader.

Göy, Zeyrek and Otcu (2012). investigated the acquisition of requests by high and low proficiency level Turkish learners. They examined alerters, external modification, internal modification, request head act realizations, modal and main verbs in request head acts. Results revealed that participants did not use a large variety of external modification. They used grounders mostly. In terms of internal modification, high proficiency learners could transfer pragmatic functions more successfully than low proficiency level (Göy, Zeyrek & Otcu, 2012).

Ölmezer-Öztürk (2017) investigated the degree of directness and amount of lexical/phrasal internal and external modifications employed by 20 Turkish EFL learners, 10 native speakers of English, and 10 native speakers of Turkish. The study also explored whether there is a difference across three groups while making requests. Results indicated that Turkish EFL learners and native speakers of Turkish resorted to more direct strategies, while native speakers of English performed more conventionally indirect strategies. However, the internal and external modification indicated that the phrases Turkish EFL learners utilized were similar to native speakers of English.

3. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Although the previous research contributed to increasing our understanding of non-native students' academic request e-mails, some areas are still understudied. Firstly, much of the previous research was conducted with ESL students (Hartford and Bardovi-Harlig, 1996; Biesenbach-Lucas, 2006; 2007; Chen, 2006) but research focusing on EFL students is largely understudied. As a result, further study is needed with EFL learners to provide useful insights for English learners around the world.

Secondly, for English Language and Literature students in Turkey at Kütahya Dumlupınar University (KDPU), preparatory class education is obligatory. During the academic year, they take a lot of instruction on grammar, vocabulary and four skills with meaningful context. EFL students who can pass the proficiency exam at the beginning of the academic year continue their education in their departments. Therefore, they are lack of aforementioned instructions. However, there has been little research on whether preparatory class education has any effect on EFL students' pragmatic competence and performance. This study might help understand if prep class education makes a pragmatic difference with respect to different levels of imposition while writing an academic request.

Finally, previous studies which focus on EFL students from different departments around the world and in Turkey, but the population of English Language and Literature department students were underrepresented. English Language and Literature students are accepted as advanced level EFL students in Turkey at KDPU. These students resort to e-mail communication with their professors for different reasons including requests. However, it is very common for professors to complain about the inappropriateness of students' e-mails in terms of politeness level. The students' possible lack of experience in writing request e-mails to their teachers for different situations before university and pragmatic transfer from their mother tongue (L1) could be important factors in the problem. As a consequence, further research analyzing EFL students' requestive e-mails in Turkey will portray a more comprehensive picture of their pragmatic competence and performance and help develop new ways of pragmatic instruction.

4. AIM AND SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

Even though previous studies reveal similar findings on the interaction of the student-to-teacher request via e-mail in relation to degree of directness and amount of lexical/phrasal internal and external modification, a study based on the effects of prep class education on e-mail requests carried out in Turkish context has not been encountered. In the effort to address these underrepresented areas, the present study aims to explore and compare the degree of directness and amount of lexical/phrasal internal and external modifications employed by Turkish students of English Language and Literature department who started their education in their departments having successfully completed one year of preparatory education with those who started their education in their departments without getting preparatory education. It also aims to investigate whether there is a difference between the high and low degree of imposition requests of these two groups of students. With these aims, the study is going to address the following research questions:

1. What is the degree of directness and amount of lexical/phrasal internal and external modification employed by: a) English Language and Literature students with preparatory education; b) English Language and Literature students without preparatory education?

2. How does the degree of imposition affect the requestive e-mails by: a) English Language and Literature students with preparatory education; b) English Language and Literature students without preparatory education?

5. METHODOLOGY
5.1. Research Design
This study is both quantitative and qualitative. For qualitative analysis, the classification of each request head act was determined and sorted out by the researcher manually. After this classification, for quantitative analysis, descriptive analysis was done to calculate the occurrences of the request strategies in the emails. The frequencies of these occurrences with respect to directness level, internal and external modification were provided through descriptive statistics.

5.2. Participants
The participants of this study composed of a total 50 first grade students of the English Language and Literature department for whom preparatory class is obligatory. While selecting the participants, the convenience sampling method was used, in which the researcher chooses the subjects as they are available and convenient in predetermined classrooms/groups (Creswell, 2005). 25 of these students received above 65 out of 100 from the proficiency exam which was administered by The School of Foreign Languages (SFL) at the beginning of the academic year and started their education in their departments. The other half of the participants received below 65 out of 100 from the aforementioned exam and attended the prep school for one academic year. At the end of the academic year, these students took the final proficiency exam, scored above 65 out of 100 and started their education in their departments.

5.3. Research Setting
English preparatory class is obligatory for the students of the Division of Western Languages, Mathematics Teaching and Electric and Electronical Engineering at Kütahya Dumlupınar University. Additionally, some students from different departments, who states that they want to learn English, are accepted to the program according to their scores of the university entrance exam. These students are administered a placement test and placed at different groups according to their levels (Elementary, Pre-intermediate, Intermediate). Throughout the academic year, students take a written midterm exam and an oral exam once every eight weeks, and two in total each semester. They also take pre-determined quizzes once every four weeks and unexpected pop quizzes.

The courses the students take are classified as follows: Main Course, Listening-Speaking and Reading-Writing. The number of class hours for English is 24 hours weekly. Additionally, they have an option to take a 4-hour course for another language such as Russian, Spanish, French, Japanese or German if they want. The coursebook for the main course class is New English File, which is a communicative one, focusing on four skills in an integrated way. For the skills lessons, Q Skills Series are used. At the end of the academic year, the students who can take above 65 out of 100 from the proficiency exam finishes the preparatory education with an intermediate level.

5.4. Instruments
The data was collected with a discourse completion test requiring the participants to write two e-mails to their professors in two given situations. The situations were written as one low degree of imposition and one high degree of imposition (request for appointment/request for extension). The situations were designed according to Biesenbach-Lucas's (2007) types of requests in terms of their level of imposition.

5.5. Data Collection
Discourse completion tests were passed out to the participants during their regular class hour with the permission of the class teacher by the researcher. The students had 20 minutes for each situation. The first situation was given at the beginning of the class and when their time finished,

the DCTs were collected. Students were asked to write a code on the paper which they could remember later. At the end of the lesson, the second situation was distributed to the students and they were asked to write the same code on the papers. The aim here was to prevent students from writing the same sentences and structures for both situations. Finally, the DCTs were matched together for each participant and they were separated into two groups according to their preparatory education status. The data of the students who are from different countries, who studied prep class education at different universities, and who took the YOKDIL exam and continue their education before the in their departments was excluded from the analysis process.

5.6. Data Analysis

Discourse completion tests were analyzed and classified based on Economidou-Kogetsidis's (2011) framework which relies on Blum-Kulka et. al (1989) and Biesenbach-Lucas (2006; 2007). For the analysis, the first step was to identify the request head acts in each e-mail and categorize them under the suitable request strategy. The differences between the situations were also analyzed for each group in terms of the degree of directness. Based on this classification, each request head act was identified and sorted out manually by the researcher.

After that, the frequencies and percentages were provided for each category and subcategory with respect to two groups of participants and the degree of imposition. Finally, based on the percentages and frequencies, the students with preparatory class education were compared to the students without preparatory class education, with respect to their usage of request strategies, lexical/phrasal internal modification and external modification.

40% of the data classification of the researcher based on the coding scheme were also cross-checked by a colleague who was holding a PhD in English Philology. The consensus estimates of interrater reliability was 80.3%. In the cases where discrepancies existed, a discussion was conducted to reach an agreement. All differences were resolved and adjustments made before performing the analysis.

6. RESULTS
6.1. Findings of The First Research Question
6.1.1. Comparison of two situations in terms of the degree of directness

In terms of the degree of directness, students with prep class education employed 41 request head acts totally in two given situations. As for the students without prep class education, 62 request head acts were employed totally. In both groups, direct strategies were employed more than indirect strategies. The most commonly preferred direct strategy was "want statements" by each group. What is interesting in the table is that the students without prep class education used indirect strategies more frequently than the other group. Both groups used less indirect strategies for the high imposition level situation, but the students without prep class education employed more indirect strategies than the first group.

Table 1

	STUDENTS WITH PREP CLASS EDUCATION				STUDENTS WITHOUT PREP CLASS EDUCATION			
DEGREE OF DIRECTNESS	*low imposition level situation*		*high imposition level situation*		*low imposition level situation*		*high imposition level situation*	
	frequency	*percentage*	*frequency*	*percentage*	*frequency*	*percentage*	*frequency*	*percentage*
direct strategies	12	60,00%	15	71,43%	17	53,13%	17	56,67%
pre-decided statements	1	5,00%	0	0,00%	0	0,00%	0	0,00%
want statements	8	40,00%	10	47,62%	9	28,13%	8	26,67%
performatives	1	5,00%	1	4,76%	0	0,00%	0	0,00%
need statements	1	5,00%	1	4,76%	2	6,25%	4	13,33%
expectation statements	0	0,00%	0	0,00%	1	3,13%	0	0,00%
imperatives/mood derivable	1	5,00%	3	14,29%	5	15,63%	5	16,67%
conventionally indirect strategies	8	40,00%	6	28,57%	15	46,88%	13	43,33%
non-conventionally indirect strategies	0	0,00%	0	0,00%	0	0,00%	0	0,00%
in total	20	100,00%	21	100%	32	100%	30	100%

6.1.2. Comparison of two situations in terms of internal modification

Participants with prep class education utilized 32 internal modifications totally. The most common downgrader was consultative devices in both situations. As for the students without prep class education, they used 27 internal modifications in total. Consultative devices were the most common downgraders in both situations, too. The group without prep class education used marker "please" more than the group with prep class education.

Table 2

LEXICAL / PHRASAL INTERNAL MODIFICATION

	STUDENTS WITH PREP CLASS EDUCATION				STUDENTS WITHOUT PREP CLASS EDUCATION			
	low imposition level situation		*high imposition level situation*		*low imposition level situation*		*high imposition level*	
	frequency	*percentage*	*frequency*	*percentage*	*frequency*	*percentage*	*frequency*	*percentage*
downgraders	**18**	**100,00%**	**12**	**85,71%**	**17**	**100,00%**	**10**	**100,00%**
consultative devices	11	61,11%	10	71,43%	7	41,18%	5	50,00%
marker "please"	3	16,67%	2	14,29%	7	41,18%	5	50,00%
subjectivisers	3	16,67%	0	0,00%	2	11,76%	0	0,00%
downtoner	1	5,56%	0	0,00%	1	5,88%	0	0,00%
upgraders	**0**	**0,00%**	**2**	**14,29%**	**0**	**0,00%**	**0**	**0,00%**
intensifier	0	0,00%	2	14,29%	0	0,00%	0	0,00%
in total	**18**	**100,00%**	**14**	**100%**	**17**	**100%**	**10**	**100%**

6.1.3. Comparison of two groups in terms of external modification

The participants with prep class education utilized 139 external modifications in total while the participants without prep class education used 123 external modifications. The most preferred supportive move for both situations by the two groups was grounder. For the greeting/opening, both groups tended to use "hi/hello" to their professors for each situation. The number of self-introduction and greeting/opening moves was very small in both groups.

Table 3

EXTERNAL MODIFICATION

	STUDENTS WITH PREP CLASS EDUCATION				STUDENTS WITHOUT PREP CLASS EDUCATION			
	low imposition level situation		*high imposition level situation*		*low imposition level situation*		*low imposition level situation*	
	frequency	*frequency*	*frequency*	*frequency*	*frequency*	*frequency*	*frequency*	*percentage*
supportive moves	**70**	**100,00%**	**69**	**100,00%**	**55**	**100,00%**	**68**	**100,00%**
greeting/opening	14	20,00%	13	18,84%	11	20,00%	9	13,24%
self introduction	4	5,71%	4	5,80%	2	3,64%	1	1,47%
grounder	24	34,29%	24	34,78%	22	40,00%	23	33,82%
disarmer	4	5,71%	1	1,45%	2	3,64%	0	0,00%
promise	1	1,43%	3	4,35%	1	1,82%	4	5,88%
apology	0	0,00%	1	1,45%	1	1,82%	5	7,35%
imposition minimizer	0	0,00%	7	10,14%	0	0,00%	8	11,76%
orientation move	7	10,00%	0	0,00%	2	3,64%	0	0,00%
complements/sweetener	0	0,00%	1	1,45%	0	0,00%	0	0,00%
pre-closing thanks	15	21,43%	14	20,29%	9	16,36%	13	19,12%
e-mail closing	1	1,43%	1	1,45%	5	9,09%	5	7,35%
in total	**70**	**100,00%**	**69**	**100%**	**55**	**100%**	**68**	**100%**

6.2.   Findings of The Second Research Question
6.2.1. Degree of Imposition and Prep Class Education

The results revealed that both the participants with and without preparatory class education have difficulty in acknowledging the level of imposition in terms of the degree of directness, internal and external modifications. They mostly employed direct strategies for both low and high imposition level situations. What is interesting is that, students without prep class education used more conventionally direct strategies for both situations than the other group. Additionally, both groups of participants failed to use a wide range of downgraders to mitigate the requestive force for both imposition levels. Both groups utilized external modifications mostly.

7.   DISCUSSION AND PEDAGOGICAL IMPLICATIONS
7.1. Degree of Directness

First research question of the present study is "What is the degree of directness and amount of lexical/phrasal internal and external modification employed by a) English Language and Literature (ELL) students with preparatory education b) English Language and Literature students without preparatory education". In terms of the degree of directness, students with prep class education made use of more direct strategies than conventionally indirect strategies. As for the students without prep class education, they also used more direct strategies than conventionally indirect strategies, but their total number of conventionally indirect strategies for both situations is 28, more than the other groups' number of totally conventionally indirect strategies, which is 14. However, the most common conventionally indirect request strategy structure used by both groups were "Can you…" or "Could you…". This can result from the fact that "can and could" structures are taught in most coursebooks starting from lower levels. (Şanal, 2016). Furthermore, "Want Statements" are the most commonly preferred direct strategies by both groups. None of the participants used non-conventionally indirect strategies.

One of the concerns of this study is that, although Turkish ELL students' level is accepted as advanced, their professors commonly complain about the inappropriateness of their requestive e-mails in terms of politeness. The results indicated that, although both Turkish ELL learners with and without prep class education, failed to use a variety of grammatical structures for different situations while sending request e-mails to their professors. This might be related to the fact that although Turkish ELL students have high-level proficiency in grammatical and lexical knowledge in the target language, they may still fail achieving successful communication because of lack linguistic and social aspects of the target language (Li, 2015; Ortactepe, 2012; Taguchi, 2012). These results are in line with Economidou-Kogetsidis (2011) who concluded that Greek-Cypriot NNSs of English tended to use more direct strategies while writing requestive e-mails. Ölmezer-Öztürk (2017) also showed that Turkish EFL learners resorted to more direct strategies.

Additionally, it could be understood from the findings that, although the students without prep class education tend to be more polite by employing more conventionally indirect strategies than the students with prep class education, both groups used direct strategies more in total. Thus, it can be concluded that preparatory class education should include explicit instruction to improve Turkish ELL learners' pragmatic competence and performance because the social aspect of the target language is highly challenging for the learners. Moreover, Faerch and Kasper (1989) stated that when learners resort to the strategies in their L1 while speaking the target language, then pragmatic transfer occurs. Further study could be carried out to reveal how well Turkish ELL students can use their L1 in social contexts and such power asymmetrical situations as in this present study to scrutinize their pragmatic transfer to L2.

7.2. Lexical / Phrasal Internal Modification

These findings are in line with Hartford and Bardovi-Harlig (1996) who concluded that the NNSs used fewer downgraders and less often acknowledged imposition on the faculty. However, the results are in contrast with the findings of Economidou-Kogetsidis (2011) who stated that Marker "please" was the most frequently used downgrader. In terms of preparatory class education

status of the participants, it can be obvious that the majority of the requestive e-mails of both groups were bare of any lexical/phrasal modification to mitigate the effect of the request, which might also cause pragmatic failure by adding a coercive tone to the participants' e-mails. Hardford and Bardovi-Harlig (1996) stated that "in an institutional setting such as academic, the use of unmitigated, speaker dominant 'I want' and 'I need' forms by lower-status requesters seems to elevate both the right of the requesters and the obligation of the requestee. At the same time, however, these forms appear to remove the student requester from the framework of the institution to a more individual context, which makes it even less likely that the faculty member has the obligation to grant the request" (p. 58).

The use of limited kinds of internal modifications by both groups may be the indication of students' lack of linguistic flexibility and pragmatic competence, which might show that they do not know the appropriate politeness and formality level while sending a request e-mail to their professors as they lack conceptual socialization in the target language and preparatory class education did not change this result. Keeping this in mind, at the preparatory school at KDPU, teaching of speech acts may be integrated into coursebook, curriculum design and testing to raise the students' awareness of the available choices for speech act realization in different situations.

7.3. External Modification

For the external modifications, Turkish EFL students with prep class education utilized 139 supportive moves in total. Among the supportive moves, they favored grounder, greeting/opening and pre-closing thanks most. As for the students without prep class education, they employed 123 supportive moves in total. The most preferred supportive moves by this group are also grounder, greeting/opening, and pre-closing thanks, too. This finding is in line with the interlanguage study of Otçu and Zeyrek 2006, who concluded that the grounder was the most frequent supportive move by Turkish EFL students.

However, the majority of the e-mails were written without a greeting and without a closing. It could be stated that a greeting in an e-mail writing can generally function as a positive politeness strategy which presupposes common ground (Brown & Levinson, 1987, p. 117). Clearly, this positive strategy to soften requests seems to be largely ignored by the participants of the present study, who mostly preferred to state their requests explicitly and directly. This may result from the instant messaging culture of young people where speed and directness are especially important. It can be clearly seen from the results that, there is a high degree of similarities between the students with and without prep class education with respect to external modification. This could be another indication of the lack of pragmatic instruction of preparatory class education at KDPU.

7.4. Degree of Imposition and Prep Class Education

The second research question of this study is "How does the degree of imposition affect the requestive e-mails by both groups of participants?". The results revealed that both the participants with and without preparatory class education have difficulty in acknowledging the level of imposition in terms of the degree of directness, internal and external modifications. They mostly employed direct strategies for both low and high imposition level situations, which is an indication of their lack of pragmatic competence and performance. Interestingly, students without prep class education used more conventionally direct strategies for both situations than the other group.

In addition, both groups of participants failed to utilize a variety of downgraders to mitigate the requestive force for both imposition levels. What is interesting here is that both groups used more downgraders for low imposition level situation than high imposition level situation. This can be an indication of the participants' lack of linguistic flexibility of recognizing their low status and their professors' high status while writing their request e-mails.

As for external modifications, this is the most preferred type of modification by both groups in both situations. It has been claimed that non-native learners prefer external modifiers because such modifiers are more explicit in their intended politeness function (Faerch & Kasper, 1989). Moreover, external modifiers are syntactically less demanding and less complex

pragmalinguistically, so learners are more able to use them (Hassal, 2001, p. 273–274). These findings are in line with the previous ones, which are indication of necessity for pragmatic instruction for Turkish ELL students.

8. CONCLUSIONS AND SCOPE FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

The present study revealed that, although Turkish ELL students are advanced level, they still cannot produce appropriate request speech acts to their professors with different imposition levels of situations. Students in Turkey start learning English from very early ages at primary school but they mostly take grammatical instruction and authentic models for the social aspect of the target language are rarely available in natural settings. This situation generally continues through their education life until university, and it might be difficult to change their attitude toward the target language.

Therefore, more importance should be given in encouraging learners to realize cultural and linguistic differences in the use of speech acts. It can be claimed that, preparatory class education curriculum should include not only focus on form, but also a variety of structures used for different social contexts including participants who have different social statuses and this education should be obligatory for all Turkish ELL learners. With the help of technology, students' awareness of the different structures used in various social contexts can be raised by using videos or scenes from TV series in classes. Roleplay activities could also be used to create a social context to use different speech acts.

REFERENCES

Biesenbach-Lucas, S. (2006). Making requests in e-mail: do cyber-consultations entail directness? Toward conventions in a new medium. In K. Bardovi-Harlig, J. C. Felix Brasdefer, A. Omar (Eds.), *Pragmatics and Language Learning* (pp. 81–107). National Foreign Language Resource Center, University of Hawaii Press, Honolulu, HI.

Biesenbach-Lucas, S. (2007). Students writing e-mails to faculty: an examination of e-politeness among native and non-native speakers of English. *Language Learning and Technology, 11*(2), 59–81.

Blum-Kulka, S., House, J., & Kasper, G. (1989). *Cross-cultural Pragmatics: Requests and Apologies.* Ablex, Norwood, NJ.

Brown, P., & Levinson, S. (1978). Universals in language usage: Politeness phenomena. In E. Goody (Ed.), *Questions and politeness: Strategies in social interaction* (pp. 56–310). Cambridge University Press.

Chen, C. E. (2006). The development of e-mail literacy: from writing to peers to writing to authority figures. *Language Learning and Technology, 10*(2), 35–55.

Collot, M., & Belmore, N. (1996). Electronic language: a new variety of English. In S. Herring (Ed.), *Computer Mediated Communication: Linguistic, Social, and Cross-cultural Perspectives* (pp. 13–28). John Benjamins.

Creswell, J. W. (2005). *Educational research: Planning, conducting, and evaluating quantitative and qualitative research*. Pearson.

Crystal, D. (2001). *Language and the Internet*. Cambridge University Press.

Economidou-Kogetsidis, M. (2011). "Please answer me as soon as possible": Pragmatic failure in non-native speakers' e-mail requests to faculty. *Journal of Pragmatics, 43*, 3193–3215.

Faerch, C., & Kasper, G. (1989). Internal and external modification in interlanguage request realization. In S. Blum-Kulka, J. House and G. Kasper (Eds.), *Cross-cultural Pragmatics: Requests and Apologies* (pp. 221–247). Ablex, Norwood.

Göy, E., Zeyrek, D., & Otcu, B. (2012). Developmental Patterns in Internal Modification Use in Requests: A Quantitative Study on Turkish Learners of English.In H. Woodfield and M. Kogetsidis (Eds.), *Interlanguage Request Modification* (pp. 51–87). John Benjamins Publishing Company.

Hardford, B. S., & Bardovi-Harlig, K. (1996). At your earliest convenience": a study of written student requests to faculty. In L. Bouton (Ed.), Pragmatics and Language Learning (pp. 55–69). University of Illinois.

Hassall, T. (2001). Modifying requests in a second language. *International Review of Applied Linguistics, 39,* 259–283.

Li, R., Raja Suleiman, R., & Sazalie, A. (2015). An Investigation into Chinese EFL Learners' Pragmatic Competence. *GEMA Online Journal of Language Studies*, 15(2), 101–118.

Ortactepe, D. (2012). *The development of conceptual socialization in international students: A language socialization perspective on conceptual fluency and social identity* (advances in pragmatics and discourse analysis). Cambridge Scholars Publishing.

Ölmezer-Öztürk, E. (2017). Requestive E-Mails of Turkish Efl Learners: A Comparison with Native Speakers of English and Native Speakers of Turkish. *Zenodo*. https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.1012564

Shim, Y.-S. (2013). Requests in Student-to-Professor Emails of Korean EFL Students. *English Language and*

Linguistics, 19(3), 171–194.

Şanal, M. (2016). *Conceptual socialization in EFL contexts: a case study on Turkish EFL learners request speech acts realization* (Doctoral dissertation). Bilkent University).

Taguchi, N. (2012). *Context, individual differences and pragmatic competence*. Multilingual Matters.

APPENDICES
Appendix A: Coding Scheme in terms of The Degree Of Directness

Directness level	Request strategies	Examples
Most Direct	Imperatives/mood derivable	- Please note what changes should be made.
	Elliptical requests	- Any comments?
	Performatives	- I have to ask for an extension for a week.
	Want statements	- I would like your suggestion
		- I want to have an extension
	Need statements	I will need a little more time
	Expectation statements	- I hope you'll give me the weekend to finish my assignment
		- I look forward to hearing from you.
	Reminder requests[5]	- I would like to remind you of my reference letter
	Pre-decided statements[6]	- I will hand my assignment in tomorrow.
Conventionally indirect	Query preparatory (ability, willingness, permission)	- Can/could.../Would you mind...
		- I would appreciate it if....
Hints	Strong hints/mild hints	- Attached is a draft of my work.
		- I have some trouble understanding the essay question.

Most direct	Direct questions	- Did you get my project?
	Elliptical	-Any news?
	Mood derivable	- Please let me know if you have to withdraw me from class.
	Performative	- I would like to ask if ...
	Want statements	- I would like to know what your policy is on grading students for the Degree Equivalence Program
	Need statements	- I will need to know....
Conventionally indirect	Query preparatory (ability, willingness, permission)	- Could you tell me....
Hints	Strong hints/mild hints	- I tried very hard to find your office but couldn't find it.

Appendix B: Classification of Lexical/Internal Modifications

Name	Explanation	Devices
Marker 'please'	"An optional element added to a request to bid for cooperative behavior" (Blum-Kulka et al., 1989:283).	'please'
Consultative devices	"expressions by means of which the speaker seeks to involve the hearer directly bidding for cooperation" (Blum-Kulka et al., 1989:283).	'would you mind', 'do you think', 'would it be all right if', 'is it/would it be possible', 'do you think I could...', 'is it all right?'
Downtoners	"modifiers which are used by a speaker in order to modulate the impact his or her request is likely to have on the hearer" (Blum-Kulka et al., 1989:284).	'possibly', 'perhaps', 'just', 'rather', 'maybe', 'by any chance', 'at all'
Understaters/hedges	"adverbial modifiers by means of which the speaker underrepresents the state of affairs denoted in the proposition" (Blum-Kulka et al., 1989:283).	'a bit', 'a little', 'sort of', 'a kind of'
Subjectivisers	"elements in which the speaker explicitly expresses his or her subjective opinion vis-à-vis the state of affairs referred to in the proposition, thus lowering the assertive force of the request" (Blum-Kulka et al., 1989:284).	'I'm afraid', 'I *wonder*', 'I think/suppose'
Cajolers	"conventionalized, addressee-oriented modifiers whose function is to make things clearer for the addressee and invite him/her to metaphorically participate in the speech act" (Sifianou, 1992:180).	'You know', 'You see...'
Appealers	Addressee-oriented elements occurring in a syntactically final position. They may signal turn-availability and "are used by the speaker whenever he or she wishes to appeal to his or her hearer's benevolent understanding" (Blum-Kulka et al., 1989:285).	'Clean the table dear, *will you?............ok/right?*'
Intensifier	"Adverbial moodier that stresses specific elements of the request" (Schauer, 2009:91)	- I *truly/really* need this extension. - I had *such a* high fever
Time intensifier	"employed to emphasise the temporal aspect of the speaker's request" (Schauer, 2009:91)	- as soon as possible - urgently - right now
Overstater	"Exaggerated utterances that form part of the request and are employed by the speaker to communicate their need of the request being met" (Schauer, 2009:91)	- I'm in *desperate* need of material for my essay.

Appendix C: Classification of External Modifications

Name	Explanation	Example
Greeting/opening	The writer opens the e-mail with a greeting	- Hi/Hello/Good morning - How are you? - I am sorry to hear that you are not well.
Self introduction	The writer introduces himself/herself	I'm Maria K. from your LALI-141 class
Grounder	A clause which can either precede or follow a request and allows the speaker to give reasons, explanations, or justifications for his or her request	'I would like an assignment extension *because I could not deal the typing time.*'
Disarmer	A phrase with which "the speaker tries to remove any potential objections the hearer might raise upon being confronted with the request" (Blum-Kulka et al., 1989:287)	*'I know that this assignment is important but could you....?'* 'I hope you understand my situation…'
Preparator	The speaker prepares the hearer for the ensuing request.	'I really need a favor ….'
Getting a precommitment	The speaker checks on a potential refusal before performing the request by trying to get the hearer to commit	'Could you do me a favor?'.
Promise	The speaker makes a promise to be fulfilled upon completion of the requested act	'Could you give me an extension? *I promise I'll have it ready by tomorrow.*'.
Imposition minimizer	"The speaker tries to reduce the imposition placed on the hearer by his request" (Blum-Kulka et al., 1989:288).	'I would like to ask for an extension. *Just for a few days.*'
Apology	The speaker apologises for posing the request and/or for the imposition incurred.	*'I'm very sorry* but I need an extension on this project.'
Orientation move	Opening discourse moves which serve an orientation function but do not necessarily mitigate or aggravate the request in any way	'You know the seminar paper I'm supposed to be giving on the 29th ….' 'It about our midterm exam' 'I have a question about the essay…'
Complement/sweetener	"Employed to flatter the interlocutor and to put them into a positive mood" (Schauer, 2009:92)	'Your opinion counts' 'I hope you feel better'
Pre-closings/thanks		'Thanks for your time' 'I look forward to hearing from you'
E-mail closing		Best, Sincerely,

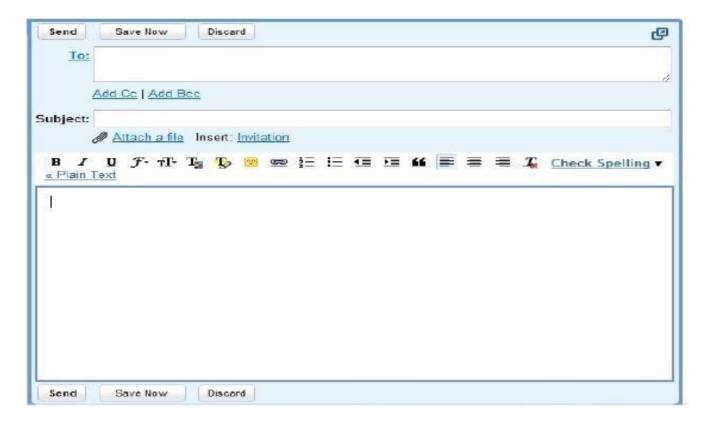**Discourse Completion Test for Requestive Email**

Değerli katılımcılar, aşağıdaki seçeneklerden sizin için uygun olanları işaretledikten sonra, verilen duruma uygun e-posta yazmanız beklenmektedir. Cep telefonu ve sözlük <u>kullanmamanız</u> gerekmektedir. Süreniz 15 dakikadır. Vaktinizi ayırdığınız için teşekkürler.

Lütfen sizin için uygun olan yaş aralığını işaretleyiniz.
☐ 18-22 ☐ 23-27 ☐ 27+

Lütfen sizin için uygun olan tüm seçenekleri işaretleyiniz.
☐ KDPÜ'de 1 yıllık hazırlık eğitimi aldım
☐ Başka bir üniversitede 1 yıllık hazırlık eğitimi aldım
☐ Hazırlık eğitimi almadım
☐ Bu dersi alttan alıyorum
☐ 1.sınıf öğrencisiyim

SITUATION 1

You are studying for your midterm exams and you cannot understand a grammar topic which was taught in one of your previous lessons. You need to ask your questions to your professor who is teaching that course. In order to ask your questions, you should ask your professor for an appointment in advance.

You are going to write a request e-mail to your professor and ask for an appointment for your questions.

Appendix D: Discourse Completion Tests

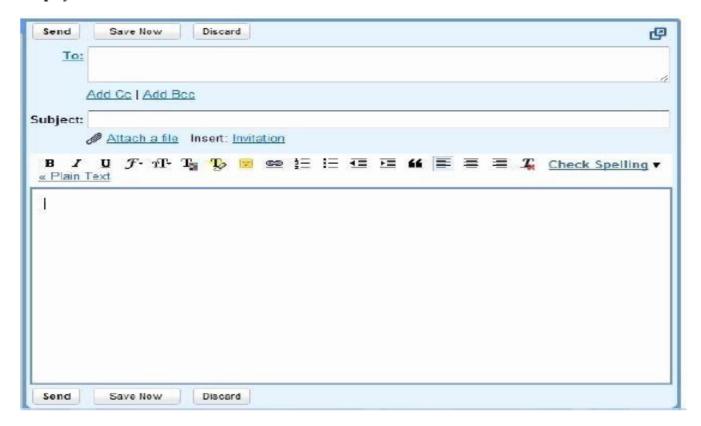**Discourse Completion Test for Requestive Email**

Değerli katılımcılar, aşağıdaki seçeneklerden sizin için uygun olanları işaretledikten sonra, verilen duruma uygun e-posta yazmanız beklenmektedir. Cep telefonu ve sözlük kullanmamanız gerekmektedir. Süreniz 15 dakikadır. Vaktinizi ayırdığınız için teşekkürler.

Lütfen sizin için uygun olan yaş aralığını işaretleyiniz.
☐ 18-22   ☐ 23-27   ☐ 27+

Lütfen sizin için uygun olan tüm seçenekleri işaretleyiniz.
☐ KDPÜ'de 1 yıllık hazırlık eğitimi aldım
☐ Başka bir üniversitede 1 yıllık hazırlık eğitimi aldım
☐ Hazırlık eğitimi almadım
☐ Bu dersi alttan alıyorum
☐ 1.sınıf öğrencisiyim

SITUATION 2

Your project deadline is tomorrow. You have not finished it yet because you have been ill. You have decided to ask your professor for extra 2 days to finish your project.

You are going to write a request e-mail to your professor and ask for an extension for your project.

Send	Save Now	Discard	🗗

To:

Add Cc | Add Bcc

Subject:

📎 Attach a file   Insert: Invitation

B *I* U ℱ· ℱ· T T 🔽 ∞ ≔ ≔ ⇤ ⇥ 66 ≡ ≡ ≡ T Check Spelling ▼
« Plain Text

Send	Save Now	Discard

Бегюм Бакак. Вплив передвищої підготовчої освіти в Туреччині на ефективне творення студентами англомовних електронних листів-запитів. Наголошено, що протягом останніх років міжкультурна та міжмовна прагматика зосереджувалась на дослідженні мовних актів рідною та іноземною мовами, і лише невелику кількість досліджень було спрямовано на вивчення впливу передвищої підготовчої освіти на ефективне продукування мовних актів іноземною мовою, зокрема англійською. Щоб подолати цей розрив, дослідження ставило за мету вивчити ступені вільності та кількість лексичних / фразових внутрішніх і зовнішніх модифікацій в англомовних електронних листах-запитах, що використовувалися 25 студентами кафедри англійської мови та літератури, які пройшли курс підготовчого навчання, та 25 студентами тієї ж кафедри без підготовчої освіти в державному університеті Думлупінар у Кютах'ї. Результати показали, що студенти без підготовчого класу використовували більше умовно непрямі стратегії та внутрішні модифікації у написанні англомовних електронних листів-запитів, ніж студенти з групи з передвищою підготовчою освітою.

Ключові слова: навчальні електронні листи; електронні листи-запити; прямі та непрямі стратегії; турецькі студенти, які вивчають англійську мову; передвища підготовча освіта.