

## “Coucou Monsieur!” Pragmatic Competence between Success and Failure in Students’ E-Correspondences to Teachers

Lalla Asmae Karama

---

### **ABSTRACT:**

Today more than ever before, students use the internet to communicate with faculty. For non native students (NNS) of Business English, corresponding with their teachers via email or texting provides the opportunity to exercise their communicative and strategic competencies in English. Building on studies in cross-cultural pragmatics and politeness, this paper explores the extent to which culture specific dimensions, namely collectivism, hierarchy, power distance and uncertainty avoidance play out in interactional strategies that Moroccan university students use to minimize imposition vis a vis their teachers.

Using content analysis, extracts from 60 anonymized e-correspondences are investigated in terms of salutations and forms of address as well as opening and closing sentences that Moroccan Business English students prefer. Instances of potential cross-cultural failures such as cultural overlap due to socio-pragmatic and pragma-linguistic transfer and translation from L1 to L2 are evident in the data. It will transpire that despite their fairly advanced proficiency in English, students lack competent pragmatic knowledge and cross-cultural awareness about how culture shapes discourse and power relations.

Results also show that students often switch between formal and casual discourse while expressing high deference at the same time. This study has pedagogical implications for the teaching and learning of English in ESP contexts and points to the need to further promote cross cultural awareness for ESP students.

**KEYWORDS:** Politeness strategies, face, power, cross-cultural awareness, pragmatic competence, student-teacher e-correspondence.

---

Date of Submission: 14-11-2021

Date of Acceptance: 29-11-2021

---

### **I. INTRODUCTION**

E-mail and text messages are a type of computer mediated communication (CMC) that is frequently in student-faculty asynchronous interaction in an academic setting. CMC also provides a diverse context where Moroccan business students can practice using pragma-linguistic aspects of English as a foreign language. Because of its hybrid nature, CMC combines features from oral and written discourse. However, e-messages “cannot be strictly labeled as spoken messages since the participants neither see nor hear each other” (Collot and Belmore, 1996:14). As a result, studies on the characteristics of e-mail language (Herring, 1996; Crystal, 2001; Barron, 2002, 2003) situated it along the continuum between oral and written language, resembling ‘informal letters’ as well as ‘telephone conversations’ (Barron, 1998) because of its dynamic, interactive and ephemeral nature (Danet, 2001). Some studies found evidence for greater informality (and therefore argue that e-mail language resembles spoken language more) (Gimenez, 2000; Barron, 2003) while others found evidence for greater formality (Davis and Brewer, 1997).

All things considered, e-correspondences from students to their teachers have norms that require students formulate their style, tone, strategies and goal to reach out to an invisible target audience i.e. the teachers. That being the case, students can “employ visual anonymity strategically” and “optimize their self-presentation” (Duthler, 2006:16). Danet (2001) argues that e-mail letters addressed to someone with greater authority are more likely to conform to traditional expectations and be more formal and usually more polite (ibid:65). Because e-correspondence takes place asynchronously, students can take time to compose, plan and structure their thoughts in terms of the language functions they wish to perform and the strategies in which they accomplish these functions in accordance with the cultural norms of discourse. Danet (2001) also pointed out that the relative status of addressor and addressee influences linguistic choice: messages addressed upward tend to be more formal, more polite, and more conforming with conventional norms. This means that, for email users, here the students, to be successful, they need more than fluency. They need to have the ability to express themselves using a variety of language forms and strategies for various communicative purposes as well as the intercultural sensitivity to guide them as to when and how it is appropriate to use them.

The hypothesis connected to this research is that in collectivist cultures such as the Moroccan culture, specific dimensions, namely high power distance, low uncertainty avoidance and hierarchy play out in the choice of the discursive and politeness strategies of addressers and addressees. As such, speakers will use strategies that express a great deal of deference, formal forms of address or honorifics and humble themselves while elevating their interlocutor in order to minimize the weight of imposition and threat to their face as well as their addressee's. As members of a collectivist society, Moroccan students are bound by culturally specific moral values that shape their asymmetrical power relation with teachers and are also manifested linguistically in the polite expressions that students use to address their teachers. The meaning of linguistic politeness, as stated by Lakoff (1990:34), refers to “a system of interpersonal relations designed to facilitate interaction by minimizing the potential for conflict and confrontation inherent in all human interchanges”. Although there are some universals in language usage concerning politeness, there are still some specific politeness phenomena across cultures (Aridah, 2001).

We can safely say that politeness affects e-communication as Lin (2008) discovered that interlocutors from different social and cultural traditions tend to use their own cultural values and systems to comprehend and interpret new social situations. Though they may use grammar correctly in non native L2, students often translate or transfer from their native language (L1) thus failing on the pragmatic level because their speech act fails to produce the desired outcome. Thomas (1983) emphasized that direct or unrevised e-mails might be sensed impolite and that could cause pragmatic failure that indicates the failure to comprehend any meaning conveyed by what is said especially for those who learn English as a foreign language. Thomas (1983) also explained that pragmatic failure happens once “the pragmatic force mapped on to a linguistic token or structure is systematically different from that normally assigned to it by native speakers” (ibid:101).

This study deals with e-correspondence or e-language, as this study will refer to e-mail and WhatsApp texts that students send their teachers in a university setting. Biesenbach-Lucas (2006:81) explains that “student-faculty interactions at the university level have undergone a shift from face-to-face office hour consultations and brief before/after class meetings to more and more ‘cyber-consultations’ between students and faculty”. Today more than ever before, students frequently e-mail or text for a variety of purposes from enquiring about course information, apologizing for absence, requesting appointments and recommendation letters, asking for work and project supervision to complaining about their grades. However, the asymmetrical nature of the relationship between students and teachers, with teachers being of higher status and students of lower status, gives this type of interaction certain traits that equal relationships do not have.

It is from this perspective that the current study attempts to examine how status (in) congruence plays out in student-teacher interaction and the extent to which it impacts the dynamics of the discourse style that non native students (NNS) adopt while using English in their e-correspondences to their teachers.

The research question in this study revolves around whether the politeness strategies that students use as a community of practice reflect culturally specific variables such as power between students and teachers.

## **II. THE CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK OF THE STUDY**

Unlike face to face interaction where interlocutors are able to pick up on physical and vocal cues from one another, e-correspondence senders and receivers are invisible to one another; ergo, the success or failure of the interaction depends solely on the written content. Having said that, this invisibility works to the advantage of the sender to focus on tailoring their message, organizing their thoughts, accentuating the positives, adding a personal touch and avoiding certain words following the guidelines of what is known as “netiquette”.

In his analysis of commercial and academic e-mails, Gains (1999) examined key text and conversational features such as subjects, register, openings and closings as well as compression, abbreviation and word Omission. His study revealed that academic email writers employed a “stylistic register [that] ranges from the semi-formal to the extremely informal” and that “some messages display evidence that writers are mimicking a form of conversation, albeit conducted in extended time and with an absent interlocutor” (ibid:81). Having said that, Gains found no evidence that writers incorporated features of conversational discourse into their texts.

The author noted that most e-mails he examined included opening greetings such as ‘Hi/hello’ or ‘Dear’ and closings with the sender’s name only and expressions such as ‘best (wishes/regards)’ and ‘Love depending on the degree of formality required.

In another study, Biesenbach-Lucas (2006:83-84) discovered that e-mail messages from students to faculty presented “a wide stylistic range, from greatly informal to overtly ceremonial” as the following instances show “- Please advise. - Any comments? - I would appreciate your feedback. - I’d now like to request your approval to do a research paper on fossilization.” While some student e-mails are more conversational and informal, others follow a more professional business like format that includes an opening, a closing, a salutation, more formal vocabulary, etc. Nevertheless, some students’ e-mail may be formulated using a high degree of

directness using imperatives, ellipsis and direct questions. Others, on the other hand, show more conventional indirectness and greater mitigation.

Biesenbach-Lucas explains that “in student-faculty e-mail interaction, this might translate into messages which are at an inappropriate level of directness, or which might not be sufficiently mitigated when request speech acts are involved, particularly for nonnative speakers of English” (2006:83).

Economidou-Kogetsidis’ (2011) study into pragmatic failure in Greek-Cypriot student email request to English language faculty members identified five problematic features: “Significant directness (particularly in relation to requests for information), an absence of lexical/phrasal downgraders, an omission of greetings and closings and inappropriate or unacceptable forms of address” (2011: 3193). Similar results were concluded by Elsami’s (2013) comparative study of the pragmatics of openings and closings in native English-speaking and non-native English speaking students’ emails in an American.

From the perspective of politeness, indirectness is generally associated with rudeness albeit not necessarily valid as students, particularly non natives, may act under the urgency to deliver their message rather than being intently impolite. Culture will likely be an important factor in the choice of specific negative politeness strategies which favour indirectness or positive politeness which favour directness. Either way, non native students might find themselves in the face of epistemic injustices such as negative stereotyping that can occur as a result of pragmatic failure in cross-cultural conversations in many different contexts (Cruz, 2014).

The study also seeks to investigate whether instances of cross-cultural pragmatic failure in the students’ texts emanate from poor cross-cultural awareness as much as it does from culture specific elements such as power distance and uncertainty avoidance which impair students’ pragmatic competence in English.

The purpose of this study is two-fold:

- 1) to identify the forms of address, opening and closing sentences that students use in their e-correspondence to their teachers.
- 2) to interpret and explain the use of these features from the perspectives of social relations, and culture specific politeness values.

### **III. DATA AND METHODOLOGY**

Business English students whose e-correspondences are analyzed in this study, usually use e-mail for more formal purposes such as requests for project supervision, follow up communication on theses progress and letters of recommendation. On the other hand, WhatsApp is more commonly used as a practical medium for quick and instant messaging for queries on the part of students and notifications of delays, cancellations or schedule changes on the part of teachers

Content analysis has been carried out on authentic 50 WhatsApp texts and e-mails received from 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> year Moroccan university male and female Business English students. The corpus includes correspondences for various purposes ranging from requests for class related information, advice, thesis supervision, recommendation to apologies or notification for absence and complaints about grades. Although the names of the students are known to the teacher, the correspondences have been anonymized for reasons of confidentiality. The documents selected were grouped into two parts, namely WhatsApp texts and e-mails because of variations between the two types of writings in terms of closing sentences. The data were extracted from the correspondences based on the problematic features discussed in the conceptual framework regarding forms of address. Analysis also covered other textual components such as salutations, opening and closing sentences..

### **IV. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

This part discusses three sections, namely types of salutations and forms of address, types of opening sentences followed by types of closing sentences which were identified in extracts from the e-correspondences of students to teachers in English. These components were selected because of the politeness import they carry in terms of initiating and closing interaction. The present study seeks to investigate the forms of address employed by students towards their professors. Such forms of address might contribute to the formality or informality of the e-messages.

#### **4.1 Types of salutations and Forms of Address:**

Bjorge (2007:66) states that “in e-mail correspondence choosing the form of address and complementary close will be decided by how the correspondents perceive their relationship”. Culturally speaking, Moroccan student-teacher relationships essentially conform to a strict hierarchical order where teachers have power over students, a moral value that is instilled in the students’ minds since early education, is manifested in language and has consensus in Moroccan society. In Brown & Gilman’s words (1960), the professor has “power of control” over the student and the legitimate right to exert influence owing to the teacher’s institutionalized role (Leichty and Applegate, 1991). Students are therefore expected to use status-

congruent language that properly acknowledges their own lower institutional status and their professors’ higher institutional status (Hardford & Bardovi-Harlig, 1996; Biesenbach-Lucas, 2007). The situation becomes complicated when students and teachers codeswitch to communicate using a foreign language such as English, which adds another layer of complexity as to whether students switch linguistically or mentally also. As things stand, choice of an inappropriate form of address may cause mis-judgements and violates social appropriateness (Burgucu-Tazegül et al.2016).

Bjorge (2007) investigated the forms of address and complementary closes of international students’ e-mails in Norway sent to academic staff. Her study showed that e-mails written by students from a high power distance (PD) culture (Hofstede, 1980, 2001) contained a more formal greeting than those from low power distance cultures. While high PD students favored formal greetings such as ‘Dear Professor/Sir/Madam/Teacher’, ‘Dear Professor + FN + LN’, students from low PD society favored informal greeting such as ‘Dear + FN’, no greeting, ‘hi/hello + FN’.

<b>Hi</b>	<b>Hello</b>	<b>Hey</b>	<b>Good morning Good afternoon Good evening</b>	<b>Dear</b>	<b>Teacher</b>
	dear	Teacher LN	teacher	teaher	No salutation
professor	Mrs		professor	professor	
professor LN	Mrs LN		madam	Mrs FN	
teacher	Ma’am		Mrs FN		
	Dear professor		Mrs		
mam	Madame		Teacher FN		
	Miss LN		Dear teacher FN		
madame	How are you?				

Table 1. Types of salutations and forms of address in e-mails and WhatsApp texts

Table.1 presents a summary of the salutations and forms of address used by Moroccan Business English undergraduates in their e-messages. Most undergraduates address faculty as “teacher” which is a translation from the Arabic “oustad/ oustada”. Instances of codeswitching to the French honorific “Madame” occur frequently to address female teachers. Students also translate it from French into different English variations such as “Ma’am/ Madam/Mam” that they employ to address female faculty, which clearly points to pragma-linguistic transfer. Data observation of the salutations used by students shows that while most students will always initiate their messages with “ Hello”, some will use “Hi” and others will use more elaborate greetings such as “good morning”. In instances where correspondences are initiated by “Dear” or “Dear+ teacher/professor”, the formula “Dear+ Mrs FN” shows lack of knowledge regarding usage of titles, a problem that is also evident in the use of “Mrs”or “Mrs+FN” as shown in the table.1 above. Having said that, our data shows that most students attempt to maintain, successfully or not, some degree of formality in the terms of address they choose to use.

In his study of address strategies employed by British English speakers in interactions within the academic setting, Formentelli’ (2009) found that despite Britain’s growing informality of address in institutional encounters, British university students) employed formal strategies as a way to convey respect and deference. There was also a preference for avoidance strategies in an attempt to strike a balance between formality, honorific (HON) or ‘title + last name’ (TLN)), and informality as in first name (FN). Formenelli (2018:300) confirmed that the use of T-forms albeit promoted by permanent teaching staff as part of the policies of the ELF courses, other informants show some resistance to informality, as it is felt to be partially in contrast with their cultural values particularly among South Asian, Middle Eastern and African students, who are used to a strict hierarchical organization of society in their home countries and to the expression of deference towards people of higher social status like university professors. Our study provides similar results insofar as the students’ felt need to address teachers politely is concerned. Having said, the combinations of honorifics often fail to fulfill this purpose, hence the recurring occurrence of pragmatic failure

#### **4.2 Opening Sentences in E-mails and WhatsApp Messages**

Interactions where power-asymmetrical relations are at work require greater pragmatic maneuvering on the part of lower status addressers towards higher status addressees. According to Holmes and Stubbe (2003:34),

“people typically use explicit and direct forms when they hold a higher position in the institutional hierarchy than their addressee(s), and the addressee’s obligations are clear”. Our data extracts, shown in Table.2, confirm this view as the e-correspondences addressed from students to teachers who are seen as figures of authority are generally characterized by greater formality and a mix of conventional and unconventional indirectness.

How are you? I hope you are good I hope you had a great day I hope all is good with you/ I hope you ae fine and in good health Sorry for disturbing you I hope all good Mrs Excuse me professor I hope you are doing great I hope everything is going well with you I beg your pardon madame On behalf of the students, I ask you to modify the English class schedule for us, which coincides with Friday prayer, and it’s not suitable for everyone
---

**Table 2.** Types of opening sentences in e-mails and WhatsApp texts

The discourse used by the Moroccan non native students in this study operates according to culture specific pragmatic strategies. Instances of opening sentences in our data (see Table2.) show that students use culture specific conversational styles when writing in English thereby increasing their risk of cross-cultural clash and pragmatic failure. Even when the students attempt to disengage from their cultural bubble, confusion as to the level of formality they should adopt and the choice of formulaic expressions to initiate interaction causes them to make the wrong move. Students may well build a rich repertoire of conventional expressions or formulas but still lack the ability to use them appropriately simply because their pragmatic compass is misadjusted to the intercultural junction where L1 and L2 take different paths. In other words, power relations in L2 are slightly more horizontal than vertical while in L1 power relations are constantly vertical, hence the perplexity of students as to which politeness strategy to choose. It may also be the case that the way in which we use language is connected to the way in which individuals choose to perform their identity and perpetuate in a variety of communities of practice and networks. Alternatively, it could be a problem of poor signposting. In her study of English request e-mails written by German, Japanese and Arabian students, Danielewicz-Betz (2013) conclude that the lack of clear guidelines and (mis)use of status-incongruent pragmatic markers, students were not aware of the role that their e-mail messages play in creating an impression on faculty and on the pragmatic failure occurred consequently.

On the other hand, Economidou-Kogetsidis (2011), who investigated how Greek students make e-requests to faculty in English, concluded that their e-mail languages were considered as impolite and characterized by significant directness causing pragmatic failure.

Similar examples were identified in our data in examples where tact is missing as in “On behalf of the students, I ask you to.” Our overall findings veer in a slightly different direction, however, as to the motivation behind the students’ high degree of directness which can be accounted for by the students’ lack of knowledge of appropriate discourse rather than intended rudeness. Generally, students seem to struggle with the ability to understand the cultural meaning of the words they use and the correct context for their use.

The frequency of the “Hey+teacher LN” greeting in our data reinforces the validity of our statement regarding the students’ confusion as how to communicate appropriately using English. Our own observations in face to face and written interactions with students in English as well as in students’ class presentations revealed their perception of the English language as “cool”, hence their desire to enact this view by adopting a laid back attitude when using English. We have to note that while the main classes are in French, English is part of the curriculum for Business students. However, the once a week 90 minute allotted timeframe is not enough to build up students’ pragmatic competence. Students get the most of their exposure to English from sitcoms and other social media platforms, hence their tendency to use casual rather than academic English. In this respect, awareness raising is needed for students to develop sensitivity towards pragmatic behaviour in L2 and also to establish a clear distinction between formality and casualness so they learn to express themselves the way they choose to do so “– rudely, tactfully, or in an elaborately polite manner” (Thomas, 1983: 96).

#### **4.3 Types of Closing Sentences in Students’ E-mail and WhatsApp Messages**

Our data shows (see Table 3.) that most closing lines used by students are formulated in a way to express gratitude and politeness. One explanation for this could be that they want to leave a lasting positive

impression of themselves with the teachers. Our data indicate variations between the two types of communication mediums in terms formality and register.

WhatsApp closing sentences	E-mail closing sentences
Pleaaaaaase+ emoji / Please excuse me for being late Thank you teacher/dear teacher Thanks a lot I appreciate it/ Thank you a lot professor Thnx a lot/thanks a lot/ thank you teacher and sorry for disturb Sorry for the inconvenience I'm sorry for bothering you thank you Alright thank you I'm sorry for troubling you Thank you so much for your time and help/thanks for your time With all my respect+ emoji Sincerely/yours sincerely/ yours respectfully Best regards and have a good weekend Thanks again and have a good night I hope you'll understand and thank you Thank you so much, hope you'll have a good day Have a nice evening!/ Have a good evening/ Have a good night! Good night/have a nice day!/ Have a good weekend! With great delight professor I can't know what to do+emoji Have a sweet night/ May God bless and protect you If you're busy or unable to do that then just tell me, it's ok Okay Mrs LN thank you/ Okeey teacher+emoji Teacher the link doesn't work Thank you for your consideration, sincerely Thank you so much for understanding teacher, have a great day See you Mrs	Respectfully/sincerely/Best/kind regards Thank you teacher Thank you in advance Pending your response, my best regards Kindly yours/ cordially Do accept, dear professor my utmost regards Please if you have any feedback, I'm all ears I remain at your disposal for any further enquiries Looking forward to your feedback, have a nice day Looking forward to your feedback, have a nice day, yours sincerely We would be grateful for you Thank you for your time We hope that you understand Thank you for your time, waiting for your response Thank you for understanding Warm/best regards

Table3. Types of closing sentences in e-mails and WhatsApp texts

As Table 3 shows, closing sentences used in e-mails, despite some being elaborate, tend to be restrained and formal in comparison to closing sentences used in WhatsApp which are characterized by a mix of formality and informality as well as the use of emojis. This may be due to the fact that students may be aware that e-mails represent permanent correspondences and most write them in the format of official letters. In his comparison between academic and commercial e-mails, Gains (1999:95) notes that “in contrast to the data from the commercial source where messages can have a permanent and sometimes legal status, the high incidence of conversational features in this data [academic data] indicate that, in many cases, the writers do not seem to perceive the medium of electronic mail as a particularly permanent form of communication.” In his study, academic e-mail writers tend to use this medium as “a short-term medium for pseudo-conversational interaction, regardless of the fact that it can be stored, retrieved and printed, as with any information which is captured and processed by the computer” (ibid:95).

Our data, however, shows that the students' e-mail writings have a higher degree of formality and include unconventionally elaborate expressions of respect rather than kindness or familiarity as the following:

- “Pending your response, my best regards”
- “I remain at your disposal for any further enquiries”
- “Do accept, dear professor my utmost regards”

As to the discourse style students adopted on WhatsApp, findings show that students tend to relax their register to express well wishes as in “have a good day/ a sweet night/ evening” or need for urgent help as in “pleaaase”. Such expressions would probably not be used by native speakers in an academic setting. Messages both WhatsApp and emails show a certain type of fusion between formality and familiarity in the same sentence as in the following:

- “Best regards and have a good weekend”
- “Looking forward to your feedback, have a nice day”
- “Please if you have any feedback, I'm all ears”

“Do accept, dear professor my utmost regards”

“Pending your response, my best regards”

“With all my respect+ emoji”

There is also a tendency to double or triple expressions of thanks and respect as in:

“Thank you for your consideration, sincerely”

“Looking forward to your feedback, have a nice day, yours sincerely.”

Do accept, dear professor my utmost regards

Apart from well wishes and formulaic prayer expressions, our data shows that students often close their messages with apologies for imposing or causing “inconvenience”. Again, this can be explained through the perception that students have of themselves and their teachers and that contacting the teachers outside of the classroom automatically classifies as an act of imposition. To minimize or redress threat to their face, students will apologize, say “thank you in advance” and ask for forgiveness and redress the potential threat to their face as in the following:

“Please excuse me for being late” (text apologizing for previous absence)

“thank you teacher and sorry for disturb”

“Sorry for the inconvenience”

“I’m sorry for bothering you thank you”

Our data reveals that students sign off their e-mails with such expressions as “kindly yours” or WhatsApp messages with “See you Mrs.” Clearly, these misused expressions denote flagrant instances of pragmatic failure and require remedial work. In cross-cultural situations, nonnative speakers are often unsure regarding appropriate style and politeness strategies (Biesenbach-Lucas, 2006) particularly in hierarchical relationships where the power asymmetry needs to be maintained. This uncertainty causes non native students to use pragmatic strategies that negatively affect the perlocution of their English e-mail requests (Weasenforth and Biesenbach-Lucas, 2000). In her analysis of e-mail requests sent by Taiwanese and U.S. graduate students to their professors, Chen (2001) concluded that the Taiwanese students used different request strategies than the U.S. students due to culturally different perceptions of power relations, familiarity, and imposition. These studies confirm our observations and findings. Traditionally, students and teachers tend to focus on grammatical awareness to the detriment of awareness of pragmatic infelicities. That said, emphasis on standardized lexicogrammatical aspects of language and mere exposure in EFL are not enough to enhance pragmatic competence.

## V. CONCLUSION

This study attempted to shed light on the issue of pragmatic failure in written discourse, specifically e-correspondences of Moroccan university Business students to faculty in the ESP context. Results confirm that despite the students’ fair command of grammar and terminology, their use of English for communicative purposes signals instances of pragmatic failure in terms of degree of formality, forms of address and choice of politeness strategies. The study revealed that students generally vacillated between extreme familiarity and elaborate formality. Our view is that interactions of students with their teachers are impacted by three main factors namely, the asymmetrical relationship between students and teachers, the students’ poor cross-cultural awareness and the absence of instruction on clear guidelines about status congruent discourse in English.

This study has pedagogical implications for raising pragmatic awareness and scaffolding EFL students’ cross cultural pragmatic competencies through methods of explicit instruction using authentic form to function communication based activities. The shift towards using English as a lingua franca and the progression from interlanguage pragmatics to trans-local pragmatics (Verzella & Mara, 2015) may possibly call for a redefinition of pragmatic competence to allow for greater diversity in language use (Kaur, 2011; Maíz- Arévalo, 2014; Chen & Li, 2015). Having said that, pragmatic competence is not so much about creating the ideal foreign language user as it is about making users aware of the cultural context of the language they are using and the social values and discursive norms that come with it.

This study has limitations in terms of the size of the corpus analyzed and the fact that the study only treats three textual features of student teacher e-communication. A larger scale study that uses both quantitative and qualitative analysis of textual and structural features of the e-correspondences and that takes into account factors such as location, gender and age of both students and teachers may yield results that would contribute to a better understanding of pragmatic failure among nonnative students.

## REFERENCES

- [1]. Aridah, (2001), Politeness Phenomena as a Source of Pragmatic Failure in English as a Second Language, TEFLIN Journal, Volume XII Number 2.
- [2]. Assiye Burgucu-Tazegül , Turgay Han & Ali Osman Engin, (2016) Pragmatic Failure of Turkish EFL Learners in Request Emails to Their Professors International Education Studies; Vol. 9, No. 10; ISSN 1913-9020 E-ISSN 1913-9039

- [3]. Balambo M.A., (2014), Hofstede's model revisited: an application for measuring the Moroccan national culture, *International Journal of Business Quantitative Economics and Applied Management Research*, ISSN: 2349-5677 Volume 1, Issue 3.
- [4]. Barron, N. (2003). Why e-mail looks like speech: Proofreading pedagogy and public face. In J. Atchison, & D. M. Lewis (Eds.), *New Media Language* (pp. 85-94). New York: Routledge
- [5]. Biesenbach-Lucas, S. (2006). Making requests in email: Do cyber-consultations entail directness? Toward conventions in a new medium. In K. Bardovi-Harlig, J. C. Félix-Brasdefer, & A. Omar (Eds.), *Pragmatics and language learning* (pp. 81-108). Honolulu, HI: Second Language Teaching and Curriculum Center, University of Hawai.
- [6]. Biesenbach-Lucas, S., (2007), Students Writing Emails To Faculty: An Examination Of E-Politeness Among Native And Non-Native Speakers Of English, *Language Learning & Technology* <http://llt.msu.edu/vol11num2/biesenbachlucas/>.
- [7]. Borge, A. (2007). Power distance in English lingua franca e-mail communication. *International Journal of Applied Linguistics*, 17(1), 60-80.
- [8]. Brown, R. and Gilman, A. 1960. The Pronouns of Power and Solidarity. In Sebeok, T. A. (ed.), *Style in Language*, 253-276. Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press.
- [9]. Brown, P., & Levinson, S. (1978). Universals of language use: Politeness phenomena. In E. Goody (Ed.), *Questions and politeness* (pp. 56-324). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- [10]. Brown, P., & Levinson, S. (1987). *Politeness: Some universals in language use*. Cambridge: Cambridge University press
- [11]. Chen, C. (2001). Making E-mail Requests to Professors: Taiwanese vs. American Students. *Annual Meeting of the American Association for Applied Linguistics* (pp. 1-28). St. Louis: ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 461299.
- [12]. Collot, M., & Belmore, N. (1996). Electronic language: A new variety of English. In S. C. Herring (Ed.), *Computer mediated communication: Linguistic, social and cross-cultural perspective* (pp. 13-28). Philadelphia, PA: John Benjamins.
- [13]. Cruz, M. P. (2014). Pragmatic failure, epistemic injustice and epistemic vigilance. *Language & Communication*, 39, 34-50. doi: 10.1016/j.langcom.2014.08.002
- [14]. Crystal, D. (2001). *Language and the Internet*. Cambridge : Cambridge University Press.
- [15]. Danet, B. (2001). *Cyberpl@y: Communicating online*. Oxford : Berg Publishers. Companion Website: <http://atar.mscc.huji.ac.il/~msdanet/cyberpl@y/> (best viewed in Internet Explorer)
- [16]. Danielewicz-Betz, A. (2013). (Mis)use of email in student–faculty interaction: Implications for university instruction in Germany, Saudi Arabia, and Japan. *Jaltcall Journal*, 9(1), 23-57. Retrieved from [http://journal.jaltcall.org/articles/9\\_1\\_Danielewicz.pdf](http://journal.jaltcall.org/articles/9_1_Danielewicz.pdf) on May 4, 2016 (Duthler, 2006:16)
- [17]. Davis, B. H., & Brewer, J. (1997). *Electronic discourse: Linguistic individuals in virtual space*. Suny Press.
- [18]. Economidou-Kogetsidis, M. (2011). ‘Please answer me as soon as possible’: Pragmatic failure in nonnative speakers’ e-mail requests to faculty. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 43(13), 3193-3215. doi: 10.1016/j.pragma.2011.06.006
- [19]. Eslami, Z. R. (2013). Online communication and students’ pragmatic choices in English. *Lodz Papers in Pragmatics*, 9(1), 71-92. doi: 10.1515/lpp-2013-0005
- [20]. Formentelli, M., (2009a) Address strategies in a British academic setting. *Pragmatics* 19.2: 179-196.
- [21]. Formentelli, M., & Hajek, J.,(2016) Address Practices In Academic Interactions In A Pluricentric Language: Australian English, American English, And British English, *Pragmatics* 26:4. 631-652, International Pragmatics Association .
- [22]. Fraser, B., & Nolen, W. (1981). The association of deference with linguistic form. *International Journal of the Sociology of Language*, 27, 93-109.
- [23]. Gains, J. (1999). Electronic Mail—A New Style of Communication or Just a New Medium?: An Investigation into the Text Features of E-mail, *English for Specific Purposes*, Vol. 18, No. 1, pp. 81–101.
- [24]. Gimenez, J. (2000). Business e-mail communication: some emerging tendencies in register. *English for Specific Purposes*, 19(3), 237-251. [http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/S0889-4906\(98\)00030-1](http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/S0889-4906(98)00030-1)
- [25]. Hardford, B. S., & Bardovi-Harlig, K. (1996). At your earliest convenience: A study of written student requests to faculty. In L. F. Bouton (Ed.), *Pragmatics and language learning* (pp. 55-71). Urbana-Champaign, IL: University of Illinois, Division of English as an International Language.
- [26]. Herring, S. C. (1996). Posting in a different voice: Gender and ethics in computer-mediated communication. In C. Ess (Ed.), *Philosophical perspectives on computer-mediated communication* (pp. 115– 145). Albany : SUNY Press.



- [27]. Holmes, J., & Stubbe, M. (2003b) Power and Politeness in the Workplace: A Sociolinguistic Analysis of Talk at Work. London: Longman. Kasper, G. (1992). Pragmatic transfer. *Second Language Research*, 8, 203-231.
- [28]. Kaur, J. (2011). Raising explicitness through self-repair in English as a lingua franca. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 43(11), 2704-2715. doi: 10.1016/j.pragma.2011.04.012
- [29]. Lakoff, R. T. (1990). *Talking Power: The Politics of Language in Our Lives*. Glasgow: HarperCollins.
- [30]. Leichthy, Greg & James L. Applegate, 1991. Social-cognitive and situational influences on the use of face-saving persuasive strategies. *Human Communication Research*, 17(3): 451-484.
- [31]. Li, B., Kong, S. C., & Chen, G. (2015). Development and Validation of the Smart Classroom Inventory. *Smart Learning Environments*, 2(3), online publication, 1-18.
- [32]. Lyddy, F., Farina, F., Hanney, J., Farrell, L., & Kelly O'Neill, N. (2014). An Analysis of Language in University Students' Text Messages. *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication*, 19(3), 546-561. [http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/jcc4.12045`](http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/jcc4.12045)
- [33]. Maíz-Arévalo, C. (2014). Expressing disagreement in English as a lingua franca: Whose pragmatic rules? *Intercultural Pragmatics*, 11(2), 199-224.
- [34]. McGee, P. (2019). Cross-cultural pragmatic failure. *Training, Language and Culture*, 3(1), 73-84. doi: 10.29366/2019tlc.3.1.5.
- [35]. Roshid, M., Webb, S., Chowdhury, R., (2018), English as a Business Lingua Franca: A Discursive Analysis of Business E-Mails, *International Journal of Business Communication* 1–21.
- [36]. Thomas, J. (1983). Cross-cultural pragmatic failure. *Applied Linguistics*, 4, 91-112. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1093/applin/4.2.91>
- [37]. Verzella, M., & Mara, A. (2015). Translocal pragmatics: Operationalizing postnational heuristics to locate salient cultural overlap. *Rhetoric, Professional Communication, and Globalization*, 7(1), 12-28.
- [38]. Weasenforth, D., & Biesenbach-Lucas, S. (2001). Just a little bit longer: A contrastive pragmatic analysis of requests for late submission. Paper presented at the Annual Convention of the American Association of Applied Linguistics, St. Louis, MO.

Lalla Asmae Karama. “Coucou Monsieur!” Pragmatic Competence between Success and Failure in Students’ E-Correspondences to Teachers.” *IOSR Journal of Humanities and Social Science (IOSR-JHSS)*, 26(11), 2021, pp. 59-67.