Research Article

The Complexity of Pragmatic Competence: A Comparative Analysis of Native English Speakers' and Turkish ESL Students' Advice-giving Strategies

Tuba Yılmaz*

ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
	Studies revealed that English as a second language (ESL) speakers and native English speakers (NES) often used different strategies to offer advice in English. Since these differences can cause cross-cultural misunderstandings and misattribution of intent between ESL speakers and NES, it is important to identify them. For this purpose, this study analyzed the structural and pragmatic differences between the advice-giving strategies of NES and Turkish ESL speakers. 18 NES and 20 Turkish ESL students were recruited and asked to offer written advice to the given cases in a WCDT questionnaire. The analysis revealed that while the NES students tended to use the modal 'would', the pronoun 'I', and some other politeness features in their advice, Turkish ESL speakers tended to use the modal 'should' and the pronoun 'you' more. These results indicated that Turkish ESL speakers employed their pragmatic competence in Turkish to construct their discourses in English.

*Assit. Prof. Dr, ORCID ID: https://orcid.org/my-orcid?orcid=0000-0003-2844-1230, Necmettin Erbakan University, Department of Foreign Language Education, tubayilmaz@erbakan.edu.tr

Introduction

Advice-giving is considered a speech genre and communicative act, among several others (Bakhtin, 1986; Bouton, 1996), and requires pragmatic competence to achieve its function (Feng, 2015). Advice can be defined as "an utterance that encourages the hearer or advisee to take a particular action" about a given (often problematic or precautious) situation (Jenetto & Hanafi, 2019). When the advice is given in a foreign/second language, second/foreign language speakers need to follow the pragmatic norms and rules in that language to save the face of the advice seeker. However, studies revealed that second/foreign language speakers often experienced great difficulties and used divergent strategies in giving advice due to their complex pragmatic competence (Al-Shboul, Maros & Mohd-Yasin, 2012; Farashaiyan & Muthusamy, 2016; Matsumura, 2001). The strategies used by native English speakers and ESL speakers to offer advice often varied based on directness and politeness (Babaie & Shahrokhi, 2015; Nida, 2020; Tavakoli & Tavakoli, 2010).

Several studies analyzed advice-giving strategies of native English speakers (NES) and English as a second/foreign language (ESL/EFL) speakers to identify the structural and pragmatic differences in their advice and understand the development of the ESL students' pragmatic competence in English (Babaie & Shahrokhi, 2015; Baca, 2011; DeCapua & Findlay-Dunham, 1993; Feng, 2015; Houck & Gass, 1999; Hosni, 2020; Nida, 2020; Tavakoli & Tavakoli, 2010). These studies compared the advice-giving strategies of NES and ESL/EFL participants from Iran, Indonesia, Egypt, Jordan, Korea, China, and others (Al-Shboul et al., 2012; Feng, 2015; Hosni, 2020). Although these studies had strong contributions to the literature, they stayed limited since they did not involve Turkish ESL students and stayed limited to provide implications for the ESL/EFL field in Turkey and teachers of Turkish background students in the world. This study aims to fill this gap by analyzing the advice-giving strategies of NES and Turkish ESL students living in the USA by using interlanguage pragmatics as a theoretical framework. Thus, this study aimed to answer the following research questions:

1) How do the advice-giving strategies of Turkish ESL students differ from the advice-giving strategies of native English-speaking students?

   a. Do the advice-giving strategies of Turkish ESL students differ from the advice-giving strategies of native English-speaking students based on gender, age, proficiency level, and duration of stay in the U.S.A.?

Theoretical Framework: Interlanguage Pragmatics (ILP)

Interlanguage pragmatics (ILP) is an approach that connects the theories of pragmatics and second language acquisition in the analysis of language learners' languaging practices (Huang, 2010). This theory examines "second language (L2) learners' knowledge, use, and development in performing sociocultural functions" (Taguchi, 2017, p.153), and evaluates language learners' comprehension and production in the target language by centering pragmatics and SLA theories together (Kasper & Rose, 2002). This framework suggests that learning a language requires pragmatic competence and cultural awareness to function properly

in the target culture and to gain an understanding of the native speaker's perspective (Stern, 1992).

Pragmatic competence was first defined by Chomsky (1980) as the "knowledge of conditions and manner of appropriate use (of the language), in conformity with various purposes" (p.224). It is then developed by researchers and defined as "the ability to understand and use linguistic resources appropriately according to context" (Xiao, 2015, p.132). Developing pragmatic competence requires time, and frequent interactions with the target culture elements (DeCapua & Findlay-Dunham, 2007; Matsumura, 2001; Nababan, 1974; Spencer-Oatey, 1993). Considering the limited time and resources provided in the EFL school contexts, language learners at school often develop pragmatic competence late (Rueda, 2006). Studies revealed that even the language learners that spoke the target language at the advanced level experienced pragmatic errors in the target language due to their limited interactions with the pragmatic norms and values in the target culture (Celaya & Barón, 2015; Salsbury & Bardovi-Harlig, 2000).

To maintain communication "appropriately" in a different language, one may also need to develop cultural awareness. Cultural awareness involves distinguishing the similarities and differences between cultures, respecting the differences, achieving cultural empathy, and avoiding stereotypes about certain behaviors and values (Shemshadsara, 2012; Tomlinson & Musuhara, 2004). Developing cultural awareness is important because the appropriateness of the forms and formulaic expressions used in the speech acts may vary across cultures (Shemshadsara, 2012). For example, House and Kasper (1981) analyzed the directness of German and English speakers and revealed that English speakers were more indirect than English speakers in enacting complaints and requests. Similarly, Nida (2020) compared the directness of Indonesian and American people and found that Indonesian people were more indirect in their advice compared to American people. Finally, Babaie and Shahrokhi (2015) analyzed the directness of Iranians and Americans in offering advice, and they unveiled that Iranians were less indirect compared to Americans. These studies showed that when language learners developed limited pragmatic competence and cultural awareness in the target language, they usually rely on their pragmatic knowledge in their first language (Bardovi-Harlig & Dornyei, 1998; DeCapua, 1998; DeCapua & Findlay-Dunham, 2007; Sánchez-Hernández & Barón, 2022).

Advice Giving Strategies in English

Advice giving adopts the enactment of specific linguistic and socio-pragmatics features to align with the cultural norms and values in society (Brown & Levinson, 1987; Feng, 2015; Tavokoli & Tavokoli, 2010). When the pragmatic norms in the heritage and target languages conflict, target language learners may experience socio-pragmatic failure (responding with an incorrect speech act) or pragmalinguistic failure (correct speech act yet incorrect meaning) in their communications with the native speakers of the target language (Hosni, 2020). DeCapua and Findlay-Dunham (2007) suggest that these kinds of pragmatic errors are less tolerated by the native speakers, and people using these expressions are mostly defined as "rude, arrogant or insincere" (p. 320). Moreover, they may experience misinterpretations, communication breakdowns, misunderstandings, and ethnocentric conflicts with the native speakers, and fail

to maintain proper communication with native speakers of the target culture (Bardovi-Harlig, 2001; DeCapua & Findlay-Dunham, 2007; Kecskes, 2015; Shemshadsara, 2012; Sykes & Cohen, 2018). Thus, it is important to know these linguistic and socio-pragmatic features in English.

Advice giving in American English occurs in two ways: Verbal and written. While the verbal advice is used mostly in our daily conversations, that is, talks with psychiatrists, employers, teachers, friends, or parents, and in TV or radio shows, the written advice occurs through e-mails, newspapers, or websites designed for only advice purposes with the same group of people. The verbal advice-giving discourse is initiated by the person who has a problem. The utterance starts with a request for advice (DeCapua & Findlay-Dunham, 2007) and is followed by the statement of the problem explicitly. During this process, the advice-giver can reformulate the problem to clarify the situation and get confirmation or ask questions to explore the details. This process should be maintained cooperatively, and enough turns should be used by both the advice-giver and the advice seeker to make the advice more effective (DeCapua & Findlay-Dunham, 1993). When both the advice-giver and the advice seeker verify the problem, the advice-giver provides his/her recommendations, and it is up to the advice seeker to follow the suggestions (Abolfathiasl & Abdullah, 2015).

The written advice discourse, on the other hand, has different strategies (Babaie & Shahrokhi, 2015; DeCapua & Findlay-Dunham, 2007; Hosni, 2020; Morrow, 2006). In written advice, the number of turns that both advice seeker and advice giver use is limited. The advice-giving usually ends in three turns, two used by the advice seeker, and one used by the advice giver. In the first message, the advice seeker greets the advice-giver with an opener, explains the problem, expresses his/her helplessness, gives background information about the problem, makes the request for advice, and ends the message with his name (or pseudonym). The advice-giver, in response, greets the advice seeker, suggests specific advice, explains the rationale of the advice based on his/her own experiences, makes a complementary, empathetic positive closure, and adds his/her special notes if necessary. The third turn which is used by the advice seeker mostly includes a thanks message and ends the conversation. Other features can be added depending on culture, but this is the strategy used by the most American people (DeCapua & Findlay-Dunham, 2007)

Politeness and indirectness are perceived as two significant pragmatic components of advice-giving speech acts in English to save and support the advice seekers' faces (Babaie & Shahrokhi, 2015; Brown & Levinson, 1987; Feng, 2015; Hosni, 2020; Tavokoli & Tavokoli, 2010). Several studies investigated the politeness strategies and indirectness used in offering advice in English. For example, Brown and Levinson (1987) listed some positive and negative politeness expressions as such:

> "Do you think…", "Don't you feel…" fall under "Seeking agreement" (positive politeness), "If I were you…" under "Changing focus from A to S" (positive politeness) and "Why don't you…" under "Asking reasons/explanation" (positive politeness) are used to be polite. On the other hand, components like "I think", "it seems", "sort of", "..or something" are classified under "Hedges" (negative politeness) (Bayraktaroglu, 2001, p. 184).

DeCapua and Huber (1995) highlighted the use of similar situations, softeners, downgraders, and mitigators as other strategies to be polite and support advice seekers' faces in advice-giving. Kecskes and Kirner-Ludwig (2017) noted a limited use of imperatives and verbs with strong illocutionary force to save the advice-seekers' faces and be polite and indirect. Morrow (2006) and Zeyrek (2001) suggested the inclusion of greetings in the openings and good or empathetic wishes and exclamations in the endings to form solidarity between the advice seeker and the advice giver. Finally, Morrow (2006) suggested the involvement of personal experiences, justifications, general facts to empower their advice, and expressions of empathy, sympathy, and positive regard to establish rapport, and comfort the advice seeker.

Methodology

Participants

After obtaining the IRB approval from the Ethics Committee at the University of Florida (IRB201700418), two groups of participants were recruited for this study. All participants studied in a graduate or undergraduate program at a southern university in the U.S.A. The participants were randomly selected via a mass of emails and messages to friends, colleagues, and acquaintances of the research with invitations to participate in the study. The first group included 18 native English-speaking students. 13 of them were between the ages of 18-25, 4 of them were between the ages of 25-35, and only one participant was between the ages of 35-55. Moreover, 13 native English-speaking participants were female, and 5 participants were male.

On the other hand, the second group included 20 Turkish ESL students. 4 of them were between the ages of 18-25, 14 of them were between the ages of 25-35, and only 2 Turkish ESL participants were between the ages of 35-55. Moreover, 7 Turkish ESL participants were female, and 13 of them were male. 4 Turkish ESL students lived in the U.S. for less than a year, 10 Turkish ESL students lived in the U.S.A. between 1-3 years and 6 Turkish ESL students lived in the U.S.A. between 3-10 years. Finally, 15 Turkish ESL participants considered themselves advanced/fluent English speakers while 4 of them considered themselves intermediate-level English speakers, and only one of them considered himself/herself a beginner level English speaker.

Data Collection and Analysis

Data of this study were collected through the Written Discourse Completion Task (WDCT) questionnaire, adapted from Blum-Kulka (1991) and developed by Hinkel (1997) to analyze advice-giving strategies. WDCT was used before to analyze speech acts such as apologies, requests or advice-giving that ESL speakers from different linguistic backgrounds enacted in English (DeCapua & Findlay-Dunham, 2007; Jenetto & Hanafi, 2019; Matsumura, 2001). This data collection tool was also commonly used to compare variances between native speakers' and English learners' advice-giving strategies (Babaie & Shahrokhi, 2015). The WDCT questionnaire was prepared in Qualtrics and delivered online to the participants between January to March 2018 at a southern university in Florida, the U.S.A., and the participants were initially asked to sign the consent forms electronically, and then fill out the questionnaire in a comfortable environment.

Four different problematic situations about advice seekers' personal, family, social, and work lives were given in the WDCT questionnaire, and the participants were asked to offer advice on the situations in writing. The questionnaire was designed like agony columns of newspapers to increase authenticity. The topics did not involve bias in Turkish and American cultures. To capture the reliability of the questionnaire, 10 Turkish EFL students in Turkey were selected for the pilot testing. The inter-rater reliability estimate for the questionnaire was found 0.80%, which is an acceptable index. The validity of WDCTs is controversial since they may not reflect the real world and the advice-givers may not actually give the advice they write in real and naturally occurring situations (Kachru, 1994). To capture the validity, the variables were controlled by both the researcher and a native English-speaking professor at the linguistic department at the University of Florida.

The data analysis was conducted in three steps. The first step involved a general assessment of advice entries and an analysis of the overall structures of the sentences. The second step involved a quantitative analysis of entries to reveal patterns and calculate the average frequencies of certain forms, words, or other linguistic features. The final step involved a pragmatic analysis of advice entries based on the degree of directness and politeness.

Results

The analysis results showed important structural and socio-pragmatic differences between Turkish ESL speakers and native English speakers' strategies in offering advice. To discuss the results, this section is divided into two parts. In the first part, the advice-giving strategies of Turkish ESL students and Native English-speaking students were compared based on structural elements. This part also involved a comparative analysis of the use of these structural elements based on Turkish ESL students' age, gender, duration of their stay in the USA, and English proficiency levels. In the second part, the advice-giving strategies of Turkish ESL students and Native English-speaking students were compared based on directness and politeness strategies.

Structural Analysis

An analysis of the differences in participants' advice-giving strategies showed that Turkish ESL students and Native English-speaking students used different sentence structures while offering advice in English. These structural differences are presented in five categories below: Imperatives, Modals, Conditional Sentences, Pronouns, and the use of Quotation marks.

Imperatives

Imperatives are sentences that convey direct messages. In this study, although imperative sentences were used by both native English-speaking students and Turkish ESL students, the number of imperative sentences used in native English-speaking students' advice was considerably less than those used in Turkish ESL students' advice. Moreover, the illocutionary force of the verbs that native English-speaking students used was weaker than that of Turkish ESL students in the imperative sentences. Examples (a), (b) and (c) show that Turkish ESL students use active (strong) verbs which had strong illocutionary force while

examples (d) and (e) show that native English speakers used passive (weak) or indirect verbs in their imperative sentences to offer advice.

a. *"Just **keep working** till you get a better job as you need the money. **Do not try to talk** to the boss cause it will not work."*

b. *"Try to find something to do outside of your job. Then **finish your degree** as soon as possible and find a new job."*

c. *"**Do not obey** the pressures and live your life until you are ready."*

d. *"... **Ask yourself** how important that concert is to your happiness versus how important your help is to your boyfriend. See if it's possible to him prepared for himself so that your investment would be minimal and still help him to study for the exam while still being able to attend."*

e. *"...**Consider all the** possibilities, even work that you may have previously considered 'beneath' you. If this fails, try talking to your boss and see if there are any ways you can change to meet his expectations."*

The verbs used in Turkish ESL students' sentences were active, that is, they required a physical action directly and they had stronger illocutionary force compared to the verbs used by NES. On the other hand, the verbs that native speakers used were passive which required mental actions more and had weaker illocutionary force.

The use of imperatives based on age, gender, duration of stay in the U.S.A., and English proficiency levels

The younger Turkish ESL participants used the highest number of imperative sentences in their advice. 40% of the Turkish ESL students between the ages of 18-25 used imperatives while 15% of the Turkish ESL students between the ages of 26-35 and above 35 used imperatives in their messages to the advice seekers in the questionnaire. On the other hand, only 10% of the NES between the ages of 18-25 used imperatives while only 2% of the older NES used imperatives. This result may imply that younger NES and Turkish ESL students had fewer concerns about politeness and directness in giving advice.

A comparison of female and male Turkish ESL students' advice-giving strategies showed that while 15 % of the female students used imperatives in their advice, this rate was 20% among male Turkish ESL students. A similar pattern was observed among NES. While 2% of the sentences that female NES used included imperatives, 5% of the sentences that male NES used included imperatives. This result may imply that male students are less concerned about politeness in their advice. However, compared to male NES, male Turkish ESL students were considerably more direct in giving advice.

While 20% of the Turkish ESL students who lived in the U.S.A. for less than one year used imperatives, 16% of the Turkish ESL students who lived in the U.S.A. for 1-3 years used imperatives. On the other hand, 35% of the Turkish ESL students who lived in the U.S.A. for more than three years used imperatives. An analysis of these rates did not identify a correlation between politeness and ESL students' duration of stay in the U.S.A.

The only beginner-level Turkish ESL participant in this study made use of only imperative sentences in his/her sentences in this study. 25% of the intermediate-level participants involved imperative sentences in their advice. Finally, 20% of the advanced-level participants used imperatives in their advice. The decreasing rate in the use of imperatives may imply that as the participants' English proficiencies increased, they enacted more polite advice-giving strategies in their discourses.

Modals

Modals are widely used to convey the message indirectly and to be polite in English. Different modals have different degrees of directness. For example, while the modal 'should' suggests a strong obligation to do the advised action directly, the modal 'can' just offers an option and is considered hedged advice. The frequency of modals used by participants is demonstrated in the tables below (see Figure 1 and Figure 2). The results showed that while native English-speaking students used 'would' and 'can' modals commonly in offering advice, Turkish second language speakers often preferred 'should' and 'can' to give advice.

In the given cases, Turkish ESL students used almost all possible modals to offer advice. Unlike native English-speaking students, Turkish ESL students used 'must' and 'why don't you...' structures to offer advice. The most widely used modals by Turkish ESL students were 'should' and 'can'. While they made strong suggestions with 'should', they provided options to the advice-seekers with 'can' and offered hedged advice.

Figure 1. The number of sentences formed with a modal by Turkish ESL students
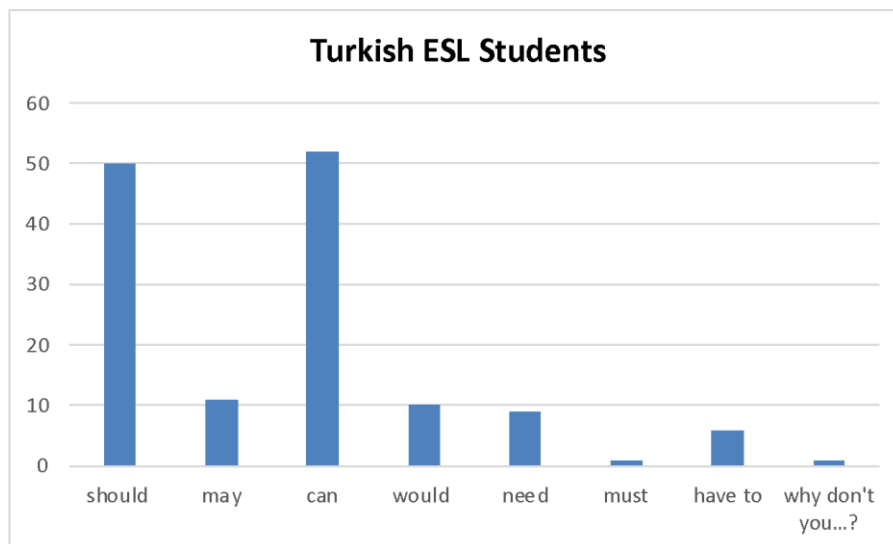
On the other hand, 'can', and 'would' were two modals commonly used by native English-speaking students to give advice. The modals 'should' and 'need' were also moderately used by native English-speaking students. While 'should' and 'need' conveyed a strong force for making a recommendation, 'would' was used for hypothetical assumptions, and 'can' was used to offer options. When the degrees of the directness of Turkish ESL students and native English-speaking students' advice were compared, it can be concluded that native speakers preferred hedged advice and indirect advice more often than Turkish ESL speakers.

Figure 2. The number of sentences formed with a modal by native English-speaking students
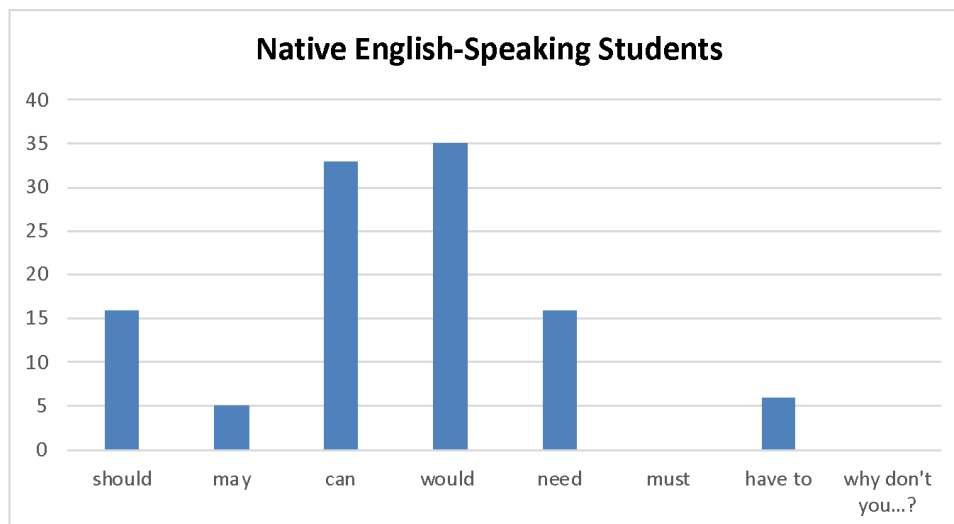
The use of modal based on age, gender, duration of stay in the U.S.A., and English proficiency levels

An analysis of all the sentences that included modals indicated that "should" and "can" were two commonly used modals among Turkish ESL students at the age of 18-25. While 'should' was widely used more by younger (47%) and older students, it was used less by Turkish students between the ages of 26-35 (40%). In contrast, 'can' was widely used by the middle-aged group (48%) while it was used less by younger (35%) Turkish ESL students. On the other hand, the modal 'can' was preferred over the modal 'should' by both young, middle-aged and older NES. The young NES used the modal 'can' by 12% and the modal 'should' by 4% while the older NES used the modal 'can' by 11% and the modal 'should' by 7%.

An analysis of participants' discourses based on gender indicated that while female Turkish participants preferred dominantly the use of 'should' in their advice, male Turkish participants preferred dominantly the use of 'can' in their advice. 52% of the sentences that female Turkish participants enacted involved 'should' and 29% of them involved 'can'. Moreover, 47% of the sentences that male Turkish participants involved 'can' while 32% of them involved 'should' in their advice. On the other hand, both female and male NES preferred the modal 'can' over 'should' in their advice. The female NES used the modal 'can' by 16% and the modal 'should' by 6% while the male NES used the modal 'can' by 12% and the modal 'should' by 10%. Both genders tended to use the modal 'would' in their discourses.

An analysis of Turkish participants' discourses based on the duration of stay in the U.S.A. indicated that the modal 'should' was commonly preferred by the participants who spent the shortest time in the U.S.A. 46% of the participants who lived in the U.S.A. less than a year used 'should' while 33% of them used 'can' to offer advice. On the other hand, the participants who lived in the U.S.A. between 1-3 years preferred to use the 'can' modal more. While 39% of the sentences that these participants used to offer advice involved 'can', 33% of

them involved 'should'. Finally, %48 of the sentences that participants who lived in the U.S.A. for 3-10 years involved 'should' while 43% of them involved 'can'.

The only beginner-level Turkish participant in this study preferred to use only the 'should' modal in his/her sentences in addition to imperative sentences. On the other hand, 63% of the sentences that intermediate-level participants involved 'can' while 37% of them involved 'should'. Finally, %37 of the sentences that advanced level participants involved 'should', and 30% of them involved 'can'. 15% of the sentences involved 'would' and 12% of them involved 'may'.

Conditional Sentences

Conditional sentences are one of the widely used strategies to offer advice in English especially when there is limited information provided by the advice seeker. Since written advice does not involve several turn-takings, advice-givers often offer their advice conditionally. Conditional sentences include subordinate clauses formed with 'if', 'unless', 'as long as', and so on. In this study, both native English-speaking students and Turkish ESL students frequently used conditional sentences while giving advice. The analysis of Turkish ESL students' advice showed that 25% of the total sentences involved conditional sentences. On the other hand, 43% of the total sentences that native English-speaking students formed to offer advice involved conditionals. While the native English-speaking students preferred to use mainly the type II conditional sentences to clarify the situation or state hypothetical decisions (see examples (f) and (g)), the Turkish ESL students commonly used type I conditional sentences to express a probable result as shown in the example (h) below.

> *(f) "**If they told** you to do something one way and you choose to do it another, that might lead to criticism since it doesn't turn out the way it should."*

> *(g) "**If I were** you, I would ask them to be a bit more responsible for the maintenance of the home."*

> *(h) "It is your life, **if you don't** feel ready to get married, don't rush. It is an important decision, if you rush and regret, it will be more painful for you. I think that marriage is just a paperwork, if you think your darling is the one that you want to experience life with, go ahead, get married."*

As a result, both Turkish ESL students and native speakers use conditionals frequently; however, the percentages and types of conditional sentences in native speakers' advice and Turkish ESL students' advice varied.

The use of Conditionals based on age, gender, duration of stay in the U.S.A. and English proficiency levels

Conditional sentences were commonly used by both the Turkish participants and NES participants in this study. The analysis of data showed that 24% of the sentences enacted by Turkish ESL students and 16% of the sentences enacted by the NES at the age of 18-25 involved conditional sentences. Conditional sentences were preferred even more by participants between the ages of 26-35. The analysis showed that 29% of the sentences enacted by Turkish ESL students and 18% of the sentences enacted by the NES at the ages of 26-35 involved conditional sentences with 'if' 'unless' and 'as/so long as'. On the other hand, older

participants did not prefer to use conditional sentences as much as younger participants. Only 9% of the sentences enacted by Turkish ESL students and 10% of the sentences enacted by the NES above 36 involved conditional sentences.

The analysis results showed that Turkish female ESL students tended to use conditional sentences more than Turkish male ESL students. While 24% of the sentences female participants used conditional sentences, only 20% of the sentences male participants used them. On the other hand, male NES tended to use conditional sentences more than NES female students. While 18 % of the sentences female NES participants used conditional sentences, 20% of the sentences male participants used them.

Conditional sentences were mostly preferred by participants who stayed in the USA for 1-3 years. 19% of the sentences participants who lived in the USA for less than a year used involved conditional sentences. This rate was 6% for participants who lived in the USA for 3-10 years. However, 26% of the sentences that participants who lived in the USA for 1-3 years used involved conditional sentences.

While the beginner level participant did not use any conditional sentences in his/her sentences, advanced level participants used 23% conditional sentences, and intermediate level participants used 30% conditional sentences in their advice.

Pronouns

The use of pronouns 'I' and 'you' in native English-speaking students and Turkish ESL students' advice also varied considerably. While native English-speaking students commonly preferred to use the 'I' pronoun in their advice to state their hypothetical decisions in similar situations and demonstrate empathy, Turkish ESL students frequently preferred to use the "you" pronoun in their advice. The proportion of the pronoun "I" to the pronoun 'you' in native English-speaking students' advice was 55% while it was 1% in the Turkish ESL students' advice. Moreover, Turkish ESL students used the "you" pronoun to give direct advice while native English-speaking students used the "I" pronoun to make indirect suggestions. This finding implied that while NES constructed a social distance between the advice-seekers and themselves, Turkish ESL students made more direct suggestions. Their frequent use of "you" also clarified the hierarchy of roles in the advice-giving context.

The use of pronouns based on age, gender, duration of stay in the U.S.A., and English proficiency levels

The analysis indicated that the oldest Turkish ESL participant group (36-55) did not use the 'I' pronoun in their advice at all. The rate of the pronoun 'I' to the pronoun 'you' was 10% among Turkish ESL participants between the ages of 18-25, and 13% among the Turkish ESL participants between the ages of 26-35. On the other hand, the pronoun 'I' was widely used by the NES of all ages. The rate of the pronoun 'I' to the pronoun 'you' was 73% among NES between the ages of 18-25, 30% among the NES between the ages of 26-35, and 57% among the NES above 36 years old.

The analysis showed that male Turkish ESL participants used 'I' sentences more than female Turkish ESL participants to save the advice seekers' faces. The rate of 'I' pronoun to 'you' pronoun was 6% among female Turkish ESL participants while it was 12% among the

Turkish male participants. On the other hand, the rate of the pronoun 'I' to the pronoun 'you' was 74% among female NES while it was 38% among male NES.

The rate of the pronoun 'I' to the pronoun 'you' was low for the Turkish ESL participants who lived in the U.S.A. for more than three years (3%). On the other hand, the rates of the pronoun 'I' to the pronoun 'you' were slightly higher for the Turkish ESL participants who lived in the U.S.A. for less than a year (9%) and between 3-10 years (11%).

The beginner-level Turkish ESL participant used only the pronoun 'you'. On the other hand, the rate of the pronoun 'I' to the pronoun 'you' was 13% in the intermediate Turkish ESL participants' advice. This rate decreased to 9% in the advanced Turkish ESL students' advice.

Quotation marks

Although quotation marks are not applied in verbal conversations, they carry special meanings in written language. In written language, they are mostly used to emphasize the words or sentences with special importance or provide quotes. In this study, Turkish ESL students did not use them at all while native English-speaking students used them in some sentences (see examples "I" and "j" below).

*(i) If you really love them and trust them, then you should be happen to **"experience life"** with them.*

*(j) If their parents suggest it, you should respond along the lines of, **"When you take over my life, I'll be happy to do what you want"** (if it's insistent), or **"We're considering our options and what we want to do with our future. If we come to any decisions, you'll be the first to know."***

Since Turkish ESL students did not use this specific linguistic feature, a comparative analysis based on age, gender, duration of stay in the U.S.A and English proficiency levels was not conducted for this item.

Pragmatic Analysis

A pragmatic analysis of the data indicated that the use of empathy, sympathy, and positive regard, the use of openings and closings, the use of questions, justifications, and narratives, and the use of formulaic expressions varied in Turkish ESL students' and native English-speaking students' advice-giving strategies.

Empathy, Sympathy, and Positive Regard

Advice giving also requires close attention to advice seekers' emotions to save and support their faces and form solidarity between the advice seeker and the advice-giver. Thus, advice givers use some linguistic and pragmatic features to be polite. Politeness is often enacted in the form of empathy, sympathy, and positive regard in advice-giving (Morrow, 2006). Empathic statements are the expressions that advice-givers tell the advice seeker that they understand the difficulty of the situation. Sympathetic statements often suggest that the situation is not fair and not the advice seeker's fault. Lastly, positive regards are optimistic expressions about the future.

Empathy, sympathy, and positive regard were observed in the native English-speaking students' discourses in this study. For example, while sentence (k) exemplified the empathetic statements, sentence (l) sympathized with them, and sentence (m) provided positive regards.

*(k) "**I understand that** finances can sometimes be a burden, but you should never remain in a situation where you are not respected or supported."*

*(l) "**I'm so sorry to hear that! No one would be treated in a way that makes them feel stupid or inept.** But you always have to weigh the pros with the cons in everything and see which outweighs the other."*

(m) "You can love without marriage, but it really can open up the doors to many enriching experiences in itself too."

On the other hand, the use of empathy, sympathy, and positive regard was very limited in Turkish ESL students' advice. Instead, their advice was more norm-referenced (see example (n)) and didactic (see example (o)).

*(n) "You should talk to them seriously. As an adult and a couple, they should be aware of their responsibility. Also, if they are living in your home, **have to respect your claims**"*

*(o) "If you want to postpone marriage, that should be due to the desire to know your partner more in depth. **Marriage doesn't hinder experience you get from life**."*

As a result, this study revealed that Turkish ESL students paid less attention to supporting advice seekers' faces using empathy, sympathy, and positive regard compared to native English-speaking students.

Openings and Closings

Advice giving requires opening and ending statements (Morrow, 2006). Data of this study showed that 94% of the native English-speaking students' advice started with the opening "dear" and was followed by the name of the advice seeker. However, only 40% of the Turkish ESL students' advice started with an opening. Closings, on the other hand, were very rarely used by both Turkish ESL and native English-speaking students. While 36% of the native English-speaking students ended their messages with positive regard or formulaic expression, only 7% of Turkish ESL students used closings to end their messages.

Questions, Justifications, and Narratives

Questions, justifications, and narratives were often used in the body part of the advice message to the advice more convincing and persuasive. Data from this study showed that NES students used these strategies more than Turkish ESL students in their advice messages. The following sentences (p) and (q) demonstrated examples of justifications and questions utilized by a NES student (p) and a Turkish ESL student (q) to offer advice:

*(p) "The situation with your son sounds like it bothers you, but you don't really state why. **What about their not getting up earlier bothers you specifically? Are they remiss in their responsibilities? Does their sleeping in disrupt your day?** Once you know why this bothers you, I recommend bring the topic up."*

*(q) "**You should help your boy/girlfriend whatever it takes. Because your relationship has to be built on solidarity.** Once you give little harm to the cooperation between you and your mate, it may not be easily repaired"*

While NES students used clarification questions more, Turkish ESL students preferred to provide justifications for their advice more.

Formulaic Expressions

Formulaic expressions are idioms or proverbs that advice-givers use in their advice to support their advice with values and norms in their cultures. They are frequently used by advice-givers because they convey strong messages with just a few words. Moreover, they are used to build solidary with the advice seekers who share the same culture. Data showed that both Turkish ESL students and native English-speaking students used formulaic expressions in their advice to convey strong messages to the advice-seekers with just a few words and reflect cultural values and beliefs. Below are presented two examples of formulaic expressions used by a native English-speaking student (r) and a Turkish ESL student (t) to offer advice.

(r)" ...Maybe try "killing it with kindness" and be extremely pleasant towards your boss."

(t) "...If she does not understand you, she is not right person for you to get married. 'True love waits'."

However, when the number of formulaic expressions used by NES and Turkish ESL students compared, NES students used them more often than Turkish ESL students.

Discussion

This study compared the strategies that native English-speaking students and Turkish ESL students employed to offer advice. Results showed that there were both structural and pragmatic differences between the advice-giving strategies of Turkish ESL students and native English speakers. While the Turkish ESL students enacted more direct suggestions to the advice seekers, NES enacted more indirect suggestions to the advice seekers. Similar findings were also revealed that compared NES and ESL students from collectivist countries such as China, Egypt and Iran (Feng, 2015; Hosni, 2020; Tavakoli & Tavakoli, 2010). Considering that Turkish culture is regarded more of a collectivist culture, and advice giving is widely used to underline and consolidate solidarity in Turkish culture (Bayraktaroglu, 2001), these differences indicated a transfer from Turkish ESL students' pragmatic competence in Turkish to their English discourses.

When the structural differences between the two groups' discourses were analyzed, it was found that Turkish ESL students provided more explicit and realistic solutions to the advice seekers' problems using imperative sentences, the modal 'should', type I conditional sentences and the pronoun 'you' like the ESL participants in the Garcia's (2010) and Zalaltdinova's (2018) studies. Although these solutions could be perceived clearer by the advice-seekers, they could also be perceived as more threatening. On the other hand, NES students mostly provided implicit or indirect solutions to the advice-seekers using type II conditional sentences, the pronoun "I" and the modal 'would'. Their advice could be perceived as less threatening by the advice seekers. These results indicated that Turkish ESL students paid more attention to the proposed problem and functions of their discourses than NES students like the Egyptian ESL students in Hosni's study (2020) while NES students paid more

attention to the politeness to save the advice seekers' faces like the NES students in DeCapua and Findlay-Dunham's study (2007).

Turkish ESL students' discourses included strong illocutionary force and positioned advice-givers at a higher social hierarchy and knowledgeable ones in the advice-giving situation like in Muthusamy and Farashaiyan's (2016) study. Akıncı Oktay (2020) affirmed that Turkish people used fewer hedges in their advice to soften the strength of the statements, but more amplifiers to increase the power of statements. Zeyrek (2001) considered these expressions with strong illocutionary force as a method to build solidarity in the collectivist Turkish culture. On the other hand, NES students' discourses included weaker illocutionary force and respected the personal space between advice-seekers and advice-givers. The individualist American culture considers these strong and direct discourses impolite and rude (Nida, 2020). Bayraktaroglu (2001) explains these differences that Turkish people were more accustomed to soliciting-offering advice while American people regarded imposition of actions in advice as a violation of personal rights.

The comparative analysis of the use of linguistic features based on age and gender showed that younger Turkish ESL students used more imperatives, and the modal 'should' compared to older Turkish ESL students. This finding implied that younger Turkish ESL students were less concerned about threatening the advice seekers' faces, more confident about their knowledgeable status, and more willing to build solidarity with the advice-seekers compared to older Turkish ESL students. Similarly, a comparative analysis of Turkish ESL students' advice based on their English proficiencies revealed that as the Turkish ESL students gained proficiency, their use of imperative sentences and the modal 'should' decreased. This finding implied that as Turkish ESL students increased their English proficiency, they also developed English pragmatic competence and got more polite and indirect to save advice-seekers' faces. However, compared to NES students, both older Turkish ESL students and advanced Turkish ESL students could be considered less polite and indirect.

The comparative analysis of the use of linguistic features based on the duration of Turkish ESL students' stay in the USA indicated that the rates of direct advice decreased as the duration of students' stay in the U.S.A. increased. However, a negative correlation between duration of stay in the U.S.A. and politeness could not be posited in this study because the Turkish ESL students who lived in the U.S.A. for more than three years showed a tendency to use direct advice more. This finding implied that the development of the ESL students' pragmatic competence might not be achieved, and the influence of first language and culture can still be observed in ESL students' discourses even if they were submersed in English-speaking contexts.

The comparative analysis of the use of linguistic features based on gender revealed that the female Turkish ESL students enacted direct advice more than the male Turkish ESL students like the Jordanian females and males in the study of Al-Shboul and Abumahfouz (2018). Since the advice-giving is a common practice among women in the Turkish culture (Zeyrek, 2001), this finding indicated that the female Turkish ESL students transferred their understanding of the role of advice to build solidarity to their English discourses. On the other hand, advice is not as common among men in Turkish culture, and thus, although the male

Turkish ESL students were as direct as the female Turkish ESL students in giving advice, they employed less direct advice compared to female Turkish ESL students.

Finally, an analysis of pragmatic features in Turkish ESL students and native English-speaking students' advice demonstrated that native English-speaking students used the expressions of empathy, sympathy, and positive regard more than Turkish ESL speakers did in their advice. Although these linguistic features were also commonly used in advice-giving in Turkish culture (Zeyrek, 2001), the Turkish ESL participants in this study used them minimally. This finding implied that Turkish ESL students were less worried about threatening advice seekers' faces and being perceived as rude, like ESL students in Garcia's (2010) study and Malaysian postgraduate ESL students in Farashaiyan and Muthusamy's (2016) study compared to NES students. This result also implies that ESL/EFL programs need to increase ESL/EFL students' meta-cultural awareness so that they can function appropriately in various authentic contexts.

Suggestions for Practice

The findings of this study confirmed that advice-giving in a second language requires pragmatic competence in addition to language proficiency to achieve the function appropriately. This study provides important insights into the teaching fields of English as a second language and/or English as a foreign language.. Firstly, in teaching the topic "giving advice", teachers may need to explain to English learners the structural and pragmatic features that native English speakers use to facilitate their development of pragmatic competence in English (Kecskes, 2015). Moreover, they need to compare these features with the structural and pragmatic features used in giving advice in Turkish and increase students' metalinguistic and meta-cultural awareness. Teachers may also need to be careful in teaching the modal "should" and imperatives, and their functions in giving verbal and written advice because this study showed that they were not frequently used in written advice offered to unfamiliar advice seekers in English. Finally, teachers need to increase students' linguistic and cultural awareness about being polite in Turkish and English, emphasizing the role of the pronouns 'you' and 'I' to support advice seekers' faces and be polite in English.

Conclusions

This qualitative research study contributed to the literature by comparing the advice-giving strategies of Turkish ESL speakers and American Native English speakers. The findings showed that advice-giving strategies used by Turkish ESL students and American NES students differed pragmatically and structurally due to the variances in advice givers' cultures and perceptions of advice seekers' status. The study noted that while NES enacted indirect advice and paid significant attention to saving advice seekers' faces through positive regard, empathy, and sympathy expressions, Turkish ESL students enacted more direct advice and positioned themselves to a higher status.

Moreover, it is found that not only limited proficient Turkish ESL students, but also advanced Turkish ESL students constructed their advice under the influence of their Turkish

pragmatic competence considering their tendency to use direct advice. They also used politeness expressions at the minimum level. An analysis of Turkish ESL students' discourses based on age and proficiency showed that younger and limited English proficient students used more direct advice compared to older and advanced ESL students. Finally, the analysis based on ESL students' genders and duration of their stay in the U.S.A. did not reveal a correlation.

Although this study revealed important insights, it has some limitations. Firstly, the number of participants from each linguistic background is limited. More participants could be recruited to confirm the findings. Secondly, additional scenarios could reveal additional differences between people from various linguistic backgrounds. Thirdly, since the participants were required to provide advice in writing, the findings may differ when the same participants were requested to offer advice verbally. Further research that includes participants from more than two linguistic backgrounds could provide important insights into the development of participants' pragmatic competence.

Acknowledgements

References

Abolfathiasl, H., & Abdullah, A. N. (2015). Pragmatic consciousness-raising activities and EFL learners' speech act performance of 'Making Suggestions'. *Journal of Language Teaching and Research, 6*(2), 333-342. http://dx.doi.org/10.17507/jltr.0602.13

Akıncı Oktay, S. (2020). The metadiscursive aspects of advice giving: Hedging and boosting in an agony aunt's column. *Journal of Language and Linguistic Studies, 16*(3), 1611-1620.

Al-Shboul, Y., & Abumahfouz, A. (2018). Gender Differences in Advice-giving among Jordanian Undergraduate Students at BAU. *Arab World English Journal, 9*(4), 177- 185. https://dx.doi.org/10.24093/awej/vol9no4.12

Al-Shboul, Y., Maros, M. M., & Mohd-Yasin, M. S. (2012). An intercultural study of refusal strategies in English between Jordanian EFL and Malay ESL postgraduate students. *The Southeast Asian Journal of English Language Studies, 18*(3), 29-39.

Babaie, S., & Shahrokhi, M. (2015). A cross-cultural study of offering advice speech acts by Iranian EFL learners and English native speakers: Pragmatic transfer in focus. *English Language Teaching*. https://doi.org/10.5539/elt.v8n6p133

Baca, E. (2011). Pragmatic competence: *The case of advice in second language acquisition (SLA) abroad* [Unpublished doctoral dissertation]. Arizona State University.

Bakhtin, M. M. (1986). *Speech genres and other late essays*. University of Texas Press.

Bardovi-Harlig, K. (2001). Evaluating the empirical evidence: Grounds for instruction in pragmatics. In Kasper, G., & Rose, K. (Eds.). *Pragmatics and language teaching*, (pp.11-32). Cambridge University Press.

Bardovi-Harlig, K., & Dornyei, Z. (1998). Do language learners recognize pragmatic violations? Pragmatic versus grammatical awareness in instructed L2 learning. *TESOL Quarterly, 32*(2), 233–262. https://doi.org/10.2307/3587583

Bayraktaroglu, A. (2001). Advice-giving in Turkish: "Superiority" or "solidarity"? In A. Bayraktarogly & M. Sifianou (Eds.), *Linguistic politeness across boundaries: The case of Greek and Turkish* (pp. 177- 208). John Benjamins.

Blum-Kulka, S. (1991). Interlanguage pragmatics: The case of requests. In R. Phillipson, E. Kellerman, L. Selinker, M. S. Smith, & M. Swain (Eds.), *Foreign/Second language pedagogy research: A commemorative volume for Claus Faerch* (pp. 255-272). Multilingual Matters.

Bouton, L.F. (1996). Pragmatics and language learning. *Pragmatics and Language Learning, 7*, 1-20.

Brown, P., & Levinson, S. (1987). *Politeness: Some universal in language use*. Cambridge University Press.

Celaya, M. L., & Barón, J. (2015). The interface between grammar and pragmatics in EFL measurement and development. *European Journal of Applied Linguistics, 3*(2), 181-203.

Chomsky, N. (1980). *Rules and representations*. New York: Columbia University Press.

DeCapua, A. (1998). Pragmatic transfer and cultural stereotyping. *Issues in Applied Linguistics (IAL), 9*(1), 21–36.

DeCapua, A., & Findlay-Dunham, J. (1993). Strategies in the discourse of advice. *Journal of Pragmatics, 20*(4), 519–530. https://doi.org/10.1016/0378-2166(93)90014-G

DeCapua, A., & Findlay-Dunham, J. (2007). The pragmatics of advice giving: Cross-cultural perspectives. *Intercultural Pragmatics, 4(*3), 319-42. https://doi.org/10.1515/IP.2007.016

DeCapua, A., & Huber, L. (1995). 'If I were you . . .' Advice in American English. *Multilingua*, *14*(2), 117-132. http://doi.org/bt22x4

Feng, H. (2015). Understanding cultural variations in giving advice among Americans and Chinese. *Communication Research, 42*(8) ,1143–1167. https://doi.org/10.1177/0093650213486668

Farashaiyan, A., & Muthusamy, P. (2016). Pragmatic variations in giving advice in L2 by Malaysian. *English Language Teaching, 9*(5), 179-191. http://dx.doi.org/10.5539/elt.v9n5p179

Garcia, P. (2010). Developmental differences in speech act recognition: A pragmatic awareness study. *Language Awareness, 13*(2), 96-115. https://doi.org/10.1080/09658410408667089

Hinkel, E. (1997). Appropriateness of advice: DCT and multiple-choice data. *Applied Linguistics, 18*(1), 1–26. https://doi.org/10.1093/applin/18.1.1

Hosni, H. R. (2020). Advice giving in Egyptian Arabic and American English: A cross-linguistic, cross-cultural study. *Journal of Pragmatics, 155,* 193-212. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pragma.2019.11.001

Houck, N., & Gass, S. M. (1999). *Interlanguage refusals: A cross-cultural study of Japanese English*. Berlin, Boston: De Gruyter Mouton. https://doi.org/10.1515/9783110809879

House, J., & Kasper, G. (1981). Politeness markers in English and German. In F. Coulmas (Eds.), *Conversational Routine* (pp. 157-186). De Gruyter Mouton.

Huang, Q. (2010). Interlanguage pragmatics theory and its implications for foreign language. *Journal of Language Teaching and Research, 1*, 682-684. http://dx.doi.org/10.4304/JLTR.1.5.682-684

Jenetto, G., & Hanafi, H. (2019). Speech act of advice and its social variables as acquired by senior students of English department of Andalas university in 2019. *Vivid: Journal of Language and Literature, 8*(2), 43–51. http://dx.doi.org/10.25077/vj.8.2.43-51.2019

Kachru, Y. (1994). Cross-cultural speech act research and the classroom. *Pragmatics and Language Learning, 5*, 39–50.

Kasper, G., & Rose, K. R. (2002). Developmental patterns in second language pragmatics. *Language Learning, 52*(1), 117–158.

Kecskes, I., & Kirner-Ludwig, M. (2017). "It would never happen in my country I must say": A corpus-pragmatic study on Asian English learners' preferred uses of "must" and "should". *Corpus Pragmatics, 1*, 91–134. https://doi.org/10.1007/s41701-017-0007-x

Kecskes, I. (2015). How does pragmatic competence develop in bilinguals? *International Journal of Multilingualism, 12*(4), 419-434. https://doi.org/10.1080/14790718.2015.1071018

Matsumura, S. (2001). Learning the rules for offering advice: A quantitative approach to second language socialization. *Language Learning, 51*(4), 635–679. https://doi.org/10.1111/0023-8333.00170

Morrow, P. R. (2006). Telling about problems and giving advice in an internet discussion forum: Some discourse features. *Discourse Studies, 8*(4), 531-548. https://doi.org/10.1177/1461445606061876

Muthusamy, P., & Farashaiyan, A. (2016). Situational variations in request and apology realization strategies among international postgraduate students at Malaysian universities. *English Language Teaching*, *9*(3), 181-196. http://dx.doi.org/10.5539/elt.v9n3p181

Nababan, P. W. J. (1974). Language, culture and language teaching. *RELC Journal, 5*(18),18-30. https://doi.org/10.1177/003368827400500203.

Nida, C. F. (2020). Comparative study of speech act advice-giving in Indonesian culture and American culture found in Television series. *CaLLs, 6*(2), 238-253. http://dx.doi.org/10.30872/calls.v6i2.4731

Rueda, Y.T. (2006). Developing pragmatic competence in a foreign language. *Colombian Applied Linguistics Journal*, (8), 169–182. https://doi.org/10.14483/22487085.177

Salsbury, T., & Bardovi-Harlig, K. (2000). Oppositional talk and the acquisition of modality in L2 English. In B. Swierzbin, F. Morris, M. E. Anderson, C. A. Klee, & E. Tarone (Eds.), *Social and cognitive factors in second language acquisition: Selected proceedings of the 1999 second language research forum* (pp. 57-76). Cascadilla Press.

Sánchez-Hernández, A., & Barón, J. (2022). Teaching second language pragmatics in the current era of globalization: An introduction. *Language Teaching Research, 26*(2), 163–170. https://doi.org/10.1177/13621688211064931

Shemshadsara, Z. G. (2012). Developing cultural awareness in foreign language teaching. *Canadian Center of Science and Education, 5*(3), 95-99. http://dx.doi.org/10.5539/elt.v5n3p95

Spencer-Oatey, H. (1993). Conceptions of social relations and pragmatics research. *Journal of Pragmatics, 20*, 27-47. https://doi.org/10.1016/0378-2166(93)90105-X

Stern, H. H. (1992). *Issues and options in language teaching*. Oxford University Press.

Sykes, J. M. & Cohen, A. D. (2018). Strategies and interlanguage pragmatics: Explicit and comprehensive. *Studies in Second Language Learning and Teaching, 8*(2), 381-402. https://doi.org/10.14746/ssllt.2018.8.2.9

Taguchi, N. (2017). Interlanguage pragmatics. In A. Barron, P. Grundy, & G. Yueguo (eds.), *The Routledge Handbook of Pragmatics* (pp. 153–167). Routledge.

Tavakoli, M., & Tavakoli, A. (2010). A cross-cultural study of advice and social pressure. *Procedia Social and Behavioral Sciences, 5*, 1533–1539. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2010.07.321

Tomlinson, B., & Musuhara, H. (2004). Developing cultural awareness. *Modern English Teacher, 13*(1), 1–7.

Xiao, F. (2015). Adult second language learners' pragmatic development in the study-abroad context: A review. *Frontiers: The Interdisciplinary Journal of Study Abroad, 25*(1), 132–149. https://doi.org/10.36366/frontiers.v25i1.349

Zalaltdinova, L. (2018). "Stop doing this at once!": The preferred use of modality for advice-giving by English language learners. *Intercultural Pragmatics, 15*(3), 349-372. https://doi.org/10.1515/ip-2018-0010

Zeyrek, D. (2001). Politeness in Turkish and its linguistic manifestations: A socio-cultural perspective. In A. Bayraktarogly & M. Sifianou (Eds.), *Linguistic politeness across boundaries: The case of Greek and Turkish* (pp. 43- 75). John Benjamins.