Developing Pragmatic Competence through Teaching Requests in English Classrooms

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the effect of pedagogical intervention in pragmatics on Turkish learners of English. More specifically, the study examines how pragmatics-based instruction on the speech act of request in English influences Turkish learners of request strategy use in English. Additionally, it explores students' overall perceptions on their pragmatics-based classes. The study embraces a single group quasi-experimental design with multiple data sources: a discourse completion test (DCT), a survey, students' reflective papers, and the researcher's field notes. The analysis of request realizations in the pre-test and post-test DCTs indicates that there was not a statistically significant difference between the overall number of request strategies in pre-test and post-test. However, Turkish learners of English had more variety in their use of request strategies and decrease in directness after the treatment. They also expressed mainly positive perceptions with regard to activities and materials in the instructional plan. Finally, the study discusses the future directions and pedagogical implications with regard to instructional pragmatics teaching in L2 context.

Key Words: Speech act, Instructional pragmatics, Pragmatic competence, Teaching requests.

İngilizce Sınıflarında Rica Söz Eylemlerini Öğreterek Pragmatik Yeterliği Geliştirme

ÖZET

Bu çalışma pragmatik öğretiminin İngilizce öğrenen Türk öğrenciler üzerindeki etkisini araştırmayı amaçlar. Özellikle, İngilizce'deki rica söz eylemlerinin öğretiminin, İngilizce öğrenen Türk öğrencilerin bu rica söz eylemlerinin İngilizce'de kullanımını nasıl etkilediğini inceler. Ayrıca, bu çalışma İngilizce öğrenen Türk öğrencilerin pragmatik odaklı derslere yönelik algılarını araştırır. Çalışma, tek gruplu ve birkaç veri kaynaklı yarı deneysel araştırma modelini kapsar: söylem tamamlama testi, anket, öğrenci görüş yansıtma yazıları ve araştırmacı alan gözlem notlarını içerir. Öğretim planı öncesi ve sonrası uygulanan ilk ve son söylem tamamlama testlerinin analizi, Türk öğrencilerinin rica söz eylemi genel sayısında önemli bir fark olmadığını ortaya koymuştur. Fakat, pragmatik öğretimine dayalı eğitsel dersler sonrasında, rica söz eylem stratejilerini kullanımlarında çeşitlilikte artış ve doğrudan anlatımda azalma olduğu gözlemlendi. Aynı zamanda, bu analizler öğrencilerin bu eğitsel plandaki sınıf içi etkinlikleri ve kullanılan materyallere yönelik algılarının olumlu olduğunu gösterir. Son olarak, bu çalışma ikinci dil, öğretiminde pragmatik öğretimi ile ilgili gelecek görüşleri ve pedagojik önerileri tartışır.

Anahtar Sözcükler: Konuşma eylemi, Pragmatik öğretimi, Pragmatik yeterlik, Ricaların öğretimi.

INTRODUCTION

Pragmatic competence refers to ability to use language appropriately in our communicative activities. As defined by LoCastro (2003), pragmatics is "the study of speaker and hearer meaning created in their joint actions that include both linguistic and non-linguistic signals in the context of socioculturally organized activities" (p.15). Such ability then involves not only the linguistic choices we make but also various social and situational factors, such as the social status of the interlocutors and power relationships among them. These factors create the sociocultural context that is not the same for every culture where a certain language is used (Kasper, 1997).

One primary conceptualization of pragmatic competence was initially proposed by Leech (1983) and Thomas (1983). They both introduced two sub-categories of pragmatics: pragmalinguistics and sociopragmatics. Pragmalinguistics can be explained with its relevance to grammar. It involves the resources for conveying act of communication. Pragmatic strategies, directness, indirectness, a variety of linguistic forms

can be regarded among these resources. Sociopragmatics, on the other hand, deals with the social matters as namely addressed to the culture and the context of communicative behavior. It refers to social perceptions underlying participants' interpretation. Social relations, distance, degree of imposition, the speaker's and hearer's rights and obligations are changeable and negotiable contextual factors in communication.

Another oft-cited definition of pragmatic competence belongs to Bachman (1990). In Bachman's (1990) approach, language competence is divided into two components: organizational and pragmatic competence. Organizational competence is related with grammar, knowledge of linguistic units, and the rules of joining them together in the sentence and discourse level. Pragmatic competence, on the other hand, is subdivided into two competences: Illocutionary competence and sociolinguistic competence. Illocutionary competence is defined as knowledge of communication and the way to carry it out. Sociolinguistic competence is namely concerned with the context. The ability to choose appropriate communicative acts and appropriate strategies is considered as pragmatic competence. The model clearly shows that pragmatic competence is not redundant.

As for second language (L2) learners, learning pragmatics or developing pragmatic competence in their L2 becomes a much more challenging and demanding endeavor because of the complexity of the relationship among form, meaning, function, and the social context. Especially adult language learners, unlike children who develop language competence naturally, build on their already existing first language (L1) and cultural background while learning an L2, and they actually have competence in their L1 linguistic and pragmatic domains (Kasper, 1997; Mey, 2001; Taguchi, 2015). For example, they have the knowledge of organizational principles in conversation turn taking and internal structures in speech events; and knowledge of contextual factors in communication such as social power, psychological power and distance and imposition degree as important aspects of politeness and pragmatic competence (Kasper, 1997; Kasper & Rose, 2002). However, this does not mean that the learners make use of that free pragmatic information they possess in every situation or communicative activities but only when there are similarities between their L1 and L2. Indeed, they encounter "a unique challenge in their pragmatic development' stemming from the co-existence if first language (L1) and L2-based pragmatic systems" (Taguchi, 2015, p.1).

Such a challenge in developing L2 pragmatic competence applies to high school students in Turkey or similar contexts as well mainly because

they are still in the process of acquiring several aspects of English language. Even though they possess a certain level of general language proficiency in English, this might not necessarily prevent them from experiencing breakdown in their communication with other speakers of English. Additionally, considering the worldwide influence of English as an international language (Coleman, 2006; Kirkgoz, 2005, 2009), the role of English in contexts such as Kachru's (1997) Expanding Circle has moved beyond its norm-dependent nature. In other words, the spread of English as the dominant foreign language is felt prevalently and English language competence has become much more important both in Turkey and throughout the rest of Europe in the last few decades (Brutt-Griffler, 2002; Crystal, 2003) for communication not only with native speakers but also among nonnative speakers. Thus, the constellation of all these complexities for L2 learners of English brings up the importance of instructional pragmatics in English language instruction since it is the major way L2 learners acquire a second or foreign language.

The theoretical framework in this study is multilayered in the sense that it consists of two major broad areas: pragmatic competence and instructional pragmatics. We operationalize our understanding of pragmatic competence through politeness and speech acts, and more specifically the speech act of requests. In order for L2 learners to gain pragmatic competence, the emphasis on speech acts has a significant role. It is proposed that the minimal units of communication are constructed by the performance of certain types of acts such as making invitations, giving directions, thanking, apologizing; and the sentence I am hungry can be interpreted in a few different ways depending on the conditions and the setting. It may refer to a real desire to eat or it may be used as a request for attention (Blum Kulka et al., 1989). In that sense, one main distinction in speech acts is the directness and indirectness. Directness in speech acts refers to the speech acts in which the speaker says the thing he/ she intends, while indirect speech acts refer to the ones where the meaning is beyond what he /she says. As for instructional pragmatics, Schmidt's (1990, 1995, 2001) Noticing Hypothesis as one of the SLA theories informs our understanding of L2 pragmatics instruction. The major premise of hypothesis claims that it is necessary to "notice the relevant material in the linguistic data afforded by the environment" to learn many aspects of L2 including pragmatics (Ortega, 2009, p. 63). The term noticing refers to registering the new material by bringing it into focal attention, and as Schmidt (1994) argues, "more noticing leads to more learning" (p.18). Relying on this, teaching L2 pragmatics to learners will give them

opportunities to notice and create awareness of several aspects of pragmatic competence.

In instructional pragmatics, speech acts have been one of the main learning targets up to date as Rose (2005) mentioned. Among various speech acts, specifically requests have received high interest in teaching pragmatics (Taguchi, 2015). Since they require the knowledge of interpersonal politeness and related concepts belong to a language community, the use of requests is closely linked to the notion of face and linguistic politeness. Scollon, Scollon, and Jones (2012) suggest two aspects of face: Involvement and independence. The first one refers to the participant's contribution to communication. It is represented by discourse strategies, such as showing attention and interest to others. Involvement strategy can be any indication that speaker is closely related with the hearer. Involvement is also named as positive face. On the other hand, the second aspect of face, independence, refers to the individuality of speakers. It indicates a desire to be free from imposition of others. The discourse strategies that show independence can be making minimal assumptions towards the interests or needs of other participants. Respect to autonomy, respect to others' rights using formal names and titles in the communication act are the features of independence strategy. It is also called as negative face.

Not surprisingly, the notion of face is central to the understanding of linguistic politeness. The two sides of face are defined as involvement and independence. The involvement aspect of face is about any indication that the speaker is asserting that he/ she is connected to the hearer, such as showing agreement. Independence reduces the imposition on the hearer and emphasizes the individuality of the participants. Both aspects of face, namely independence and involvement, greatly influence the linguistic choices the speakers make. In other words, as stated by Scollon et al. (2012), "there is no faceless communication" (p.48). Keeping this in mind, the general uses and persistent regularities in the face relationships could be described as politeness system. Addressing people by first names or adding Mr. or Mrs. relies on the relation between the participants and related social factors. There are three main factors which create such politeness systems; power, distance, and the weight of imposition. Power indicates to the vertical disparity in a hierarchical structure; distance is more about the closeness in the participants' relationships; and finally, weight of imposition is concerned with the importance of the topic of discussion.

With regard to politeness systems, Scollon et al. (2012) refer to three main systems and these are primarily based upon the power and distance

differences among participants. First, deference politeness system is the system in which the participants are equal but act each other at distance. Relation between colleagues, who do not know each other well, can be given as an example for that kind politeness system. Second, solidarity politeness system indicates a relationship between two participants who see themselves as being equal socially and equal in terms of closeness. Friendships among close colleagues can be considered as an example for this system. Finally, hierarchical politeness system indicates the social differences. The relationships are asymmetrical and that means speakers might need to use different politeness strategies to each other (e.g. higher social status and lower social status).

Turning our attention back to the role of instructional pragmatics or pedagogical intervention, it is our assumption in this study that teaching pragmatics and speech act of requests may also have an impact on pragmatic awareness of Turkish learners of English. Teaching L2 pragmatics has gained tremendous attention with the continual increase in research in pragmatic competence and a bulk of studies have provided insights into L2 learning in pragmatics and instructional issues (Alcón-Soler & Martínez-Flor, 2005; Ishihara & Cohen, 2010; Schauer, 2006). Research on the effectiveness of L2 instruction on pragmatics, whether explicit or implicit, also contributes to the rationale for teaching L2 pragmatics. In their condensed version of meta-analysis on type of L2 instruction, Norris and Ortega (2001) have found that focused L2 instruction leads to more gains throughout the intervention. Similarly, many studies have confirmed the robustness of explicit instruction, importance of metapragmatic explanation, and durability of intervention effects (Ishihara, 2004; Jeon & Kaya, 2006; Takahashi, 2010; Tateyama, 2001) as well as the impact of implicit studies as well (See Taguchi, 2015 for a more recent review).

In a similar vein, several studies have investigated or addressed request strategies from various aspects in learning L2 pragmatics (Crandall & Basturkmen, 2004; Eslami & Eslami-Rasekh, 2008; Fukuya & Zhang, 2002; Halenko & Jones, 2011; Johnson & deHaan, 2013; Martínez–Flor, 2007, 2008; Rose, 2005; Safont, 2004; Salazar, 2003; Tan & Farashaiyan, 2012). In teaching L2 requests, for instance, Martínez–Flor (2007) suggests that using video clips, films and TV shows might be a good way to bring contextual and real pragmatic examples to L2 classrooms. In that sense, she studied on request modification devices and the study indicated that request modification devices existed in most of the request moves. Two subtypes of devices as internal and external were employed. Most importantly, the study indicated that the sociopragmatic factors as politeness degree and/or

relationship of the participants play a big role in the choice and use of correct request modification devices. Crandall and Basturkmen (2004) also addressed request strategies in university context. The study examined the efficacy of materials, students' perceptions of the materials, and the influence of materials in the awareness of requests. The study concluded with results supporting the inadequacy of textbooks. The way that speech acts presented can be changed for positive outcomes of instructional materials. They suggested that the conventional approach, which employs speaking textbooks to teach speech acts, were not sufficient. The developed pragmatics–focused materials proved that the learners benefited from them as well as they enjoyed such type of instruction. The speech act of requests has been studied in Turkey as well. Requests and politeness were also studied in Turkey. Dikilitaş (2004), for instance, investigated the acquisition of pragmatics by English language learners through politeness level achieved in the production of request speech act. The study targeted to find the ways that may facilitate language teaching in politeness, and demonstrated that EFL learners tend to use conventional indirect speech act rather than direct speech acts. Upper intermediate learners utilized more modifiers than their advanced counterparts. It also indicated that native and non-native speakers perceived politeness differently. It was also agreed that the traditional ways such as showing only formal and informal types of requests cannot be sufficient for students to learn politeness and appropriateness in requests in order to teach speech act of requests.

In line with the existing literature, this study aims to investigate the role of pedagogical intervention on requests in English with Turkish high school students. To do so, pragmatic language use were taught in classrooms through a set of both explicit and implicit pragmatic instruction including pragmatic awareness raising activities, providing pragmatic information about requests, and students' data collection of requests (Taguchi, 2015). Additionally, the study explores learners' preliminary perceptions on their pragmatics-focused classes.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study utilized a single group quasi-experimental research design in order to investigate the effect of pedagogical intervention on the speech act of requests with Turkish EFL high school students. The following research questions were answered in this study:

1. What is the effect of pedagogical intervention on request strategy use by Turkish learners of English at a state high school?

2. What are the overall perceptions of Turkish learners of English on pragmatics-based   language classes at a state high school?

As the primary data collection instrument, DCTs were used before and after the pedagogical intervention consisting of three sessions of teaching of request strategies in English. The production data through DCTs were analyzed by conducting a paired samples *t* test; and using number and frequency for each strategy type as well as syntactic modifiers as a commonly employed method in analyzing speech acts (Martinez-Flor, 2008; Sykes, 2013, 2009; Taguchi, 2015). Additionally, the study explored the perceptions of the students on pragmatics-focused instruction through reflection papers, researcher's field notes, and a short survey. The reflection papers, field notes, and the open-ended questions provided qualitative data and these were analyzed through content analysis.

Participants

The participants in this study involved twenty-six 9th grade Turkish learners of English in a state high school in the northwest of Turkey. The participants were 16 male and 10 female students at the age of 15-16. The primary researcher in this study was the teacher of that class at the time of the study.

Data Collection Tools and Data Analysis

Four instruments were used as a means of data collection in this study: a DCT, a survey, students' reflective papers, and researcher's field notes. In order to examine the impact of pragmatics-based instruction on requests, a DCT with 8 different situations was utilized as the pre- and post-tests. These situations involved various contexts with regard to the age, social status and relationships of the participants, and two of them (1st and 4th) were adopted from the study of Blum-Kulka et al. (1989). In order to comply with the theoretical framework of politeness embraced in this study, the situations reflected the politeness systems (see Appendix A for a sample DCT).

To investigate students' perceptions of pragmatics-integrated instruction, the students were given a survey adapted from Crandall and Basturkmen (2004) (see Appendix B); and 10 out of 26 wrote reflection papers at the end of the instruction. The students were free to choose to write their reflective papers in their L1 (Turkish) or in English. Finally, the

instructor took notes during the instructional treatment. The observations and the notes during the instructional period were written in an organized reflective paper format. These ideas from the point of the teacher together with the students' reflective papers added to the qualitative data in order to determine certain themes in the perceptions through content analysis.

The DCTs were analyzed by means of coding according to the categories defined in the CCSARP coding manual by Blum-Kulka et al. (1989), which is still utilized in similar studies**.** There are nine strategy types for requests as shown in Table 1. The utterance involving the illocutionary force of request is called head act and it is defined as the request proper by Blum- Kulka et al. (1989). The strategies were ordered according to the directness level in the coding manual. In other words, it started from Mood Derivable as the most direct strategy, and ended with Hints as the least direct strategy. In this directness/indirectness scale, the categories of Hedged Performatives and Obligation are also considered direct strategies. Additionally, Want Statements and Query Preparatory are the conventionally indirect strategies.

The elicited data from DCTs were also coded according to syntactic modifiers, and supportive moves in terms of variety and frequency. The coding manual CCSARP presents internal modifications that modify the force of request head act. In that sense, downgraders mitigate or soften the impositive force of a request head act whereas upgraders increase the force of requests. Syntactic downgraders in CCSARP coding manual are listed as Subjunctive, Conditional, Aspect, Tense and the combinations of these. As for lexical and phrasal downgraders, Politeness Markers (e.g. *please*), Understaters (e.g. *Could you help me a bit?*), Hedges (e.g. *kind of*), Subjectivizers (e.g. *I think*), Downtoners (*just, maybe*, etc.), Cajoler (*you know)*, and Appealers (e.g. *Why don't we talk for a bit okay? Right?*) are included. Upgraders include intensifiers *really, importantly*, expletive *Clean up that disgusting mess*, time intensifier *do it right now*, lexical up-toner and the combinations of these.

In addition to request strategy types and modifiers, requests might also incorporate supportive moves. Such moves can be placed before or after head-act, and are considered external modification. These moves also have specific types as mitigating or aggravating the request. Mitigating supportive moves are namely Preparators, Getting a Precommitment, Grounder, Disarmer, which prepare the hearer to the request, Promise of Reward, and Imposition Minimizer. Preparators are the sentences that prepare the hearer for the request (e.g. *Have you got a few minutes sir?)*. Getting a Pre-

commitment is the act of trying to commit the hearer in checking any potential refusal such as *Could you do me a favor and bring your notes tomorrow?* Grounders are the utterances where the speaker expresses reasons or explanations for the request as in *I missed the class yesterday. Could I borrow your notes?* Disarmer is the attempt to remove any potential refusal or objection of the hearer (e.g. *I hope you don't think I'm being forward but is there any chance of a lift home?*). Promise of Reward as clear from its name as another type of supportive move involves utterances of promising something as a reward for the request (e.g. *I'll finish your homework if you can tidy my room).* Finally, Imposition Minimizer is the utterance that the speaker uses to reduce the imposition on the hearer such as *Can you give me a lift, if you are going my way?*

Table 1. Request Strategy Types, Definitions, and Tokens*

Strategy types	Definitions	Tokens
Mood Derivable	Imperative utterances that shows the grammatical mood of the verb with its illocutionary force	*Pass it to me.* *Stay inside.*
Performatives	Utterances where illocutionary force is explicitly stated	*I am asking you not to leave your stuff here.*
Hedged Performatives	Utterances where illocutionary force is modified by hedging expressions	*I would like to ask you to attend the meeting today.*
Obligation Statements	Utterances indicating the obligation of the hearer to do the act.	*You will have to finish that paper.*
Want Statements	Utterances that represent the speaker's desire such as *I want..*, *I really wish…*, etc.	*I'd really wish you'd stop doing that to me.*
Suggestory Formula	Utterances that include a suggestion of speaker for the hearer.	*How about having lunch together?*
Query Preparatory	Utterances that refer to preparatory conditions like ability, willingness as conventionalized for any specific language.	*Could you open the window? Would you mind moving your chair?*
Strong Hints	Utterances that include reference to one of the object of requested action.	*You have left the kitchen in a right mess.*
Mild Hints	Utterances that have no reference to the request head act but they are predictable from the context.	*I'm a nun* (in response to a persistent hassler)

*from Blum-Kulka et al. (1989)

On the other hand, some requests might involve aggravating supportive moves, and they are listed as Insulting, Threat, and Moralizing.

As can be understood, insulting includes utterances that strengthen the need for the request by insulting words. Threat clearly involves such words or sentences as *I'll call the police if you don't stop this noise.* Finally, Moralizing includes the expressions and utterances that refer to moralistic norms (e.g. *You are at school, can you be quiet?)*

As stated earlier, the overarching goal of this study was to examine the impact of teaching pragmatics, more specifically requests in English by Turkish students. Therefore, the instructional plan was implemented through various techniques and a number of activities adapted from many studies (Crandall and Basturkmen, 2004; Eslami-Rasekh, 2005; Gass, 1996; Judd,1999; Rose, 1999; Washburn, 2001). Additionally, two main techniques (presentation and discussion of research findings on speech acts, and a student- discovery method through observations, surveys, and/or interviews) were employed during the instructional period. Finally, planning the lessons and designing the activities are based on the suggestions and the numerous techniques for learning, teaching, and assessing pragmatic competence in L2 from the valuable source of Ishihara and Cohen (2010). In what follows, a brief timeline of instructional plan for teaching requests is presented for three weeks.

Table 2. Timeline for Pedagogical Intervention

Weeks	Number of Lessons	Duration per week	Activities
Week 1	3	120 min.	Pre-test and + 7 main activities for Intro Phase
Week 2	3	120 min.	6 main activities
Week 3	4	160 min.	5 main activities + Post-test + Survey + Reflection Papers
Total	10	400 min.	18 activities

In Week 1, seven main activities were implemented and it was considered as the *Introductory Phase*. In this very first week, the goal was to draw students' attention to the role of appropriate language use by presenting some real examples of pragmatic failure and having them discuss these interactions. After warm-up, listening, reading and discussion activities, the teacher, also the primary researcher in this study, made a brief overview of the focal speech act, which is requests in our context. Thus, the students were provided with a basic introduction of requests. The strategies for performing requests along with the idea of directness and indirectness were

shown aiming a better understanding and appropriate usage of the request strategies in English. These request strategies were then utilized as a guide for identifying and categorizing the request samples for the next activities in the instructional plan. It was our assumption that the learners had a general idea of what pragmatic knowledge refers to by the help of this introductory phase.

In Week 2, five main activities were implemented. In the second week, our goal was to provide learners examples from real uses of requests, to show them various forms of requests and situations where they were used through presenting videos from sitcoms and movies. Some activities involved writing up a script for the clip and then comparing with the real one; taking notes of the request strategies or samples they heard while watching; and discussing the the form of speech, such as status, social status, setting, and the urgency of situation with regard to the use of requests. Thus, the second week consisted of a series of watching videos activities. The students, for instance, watched a very popular sitcom clip that was selected regarding this age group's interests. They watched a scene in which they can find the examples of hints in a request, direct requests, and an indirect request. This activity enabled them to become more aware of the requests in English and contextual factors that affect directness/indirectness and related strategy choice through this entertaining part of the sitcom. All in all, the activities in Week 2 aimed to provide more and meaningful input related with request strategies and social context where they are used.

In Week 3, five main activities were implemented and it was considered as the *Practice and Production Phases*. In this last week, our goal was to give students more opportunities to use language actively through analyzing and synthesizing activities. One such activity was the analysis of the students' notes on requests while watching sitcoms. They were asked to find the speech act of requests; define it according to directness/indirectness; find some other units such as alerters, head acts and supportive moves. Another activity implemented in the third week was based on students' production of requests. They wrote situations that needed requests on a blank sheet with necessary contextual information and then they swapped their papers to produce answers using appropriate request types. Later in Week 3, they also prepared their own request interactions for the given situations.

FINDINGS

Request Strategies

In order to investigate the effect of pragmatics-based instruction on requests, a paired-samples t-test was conducted to compare the overall number of request strategies by Turkish students before and after the pragmatics-based instruction. There was not a significant difference in the number of request strategies in the pre-test (M= 6.35, SD= 1.41) and post-test (M= 6.73, SD= 1.64) conditions; t(25)= 0.84, p = 0.40.

The responses in the pre- and post-treatment DCTs were also comparatively analyzed in terms of their number and frequency to examine each strategy use before and after the treatment. Table 3 presents the type and frequency of request strategies in English by Turkish 9th graders in both tests. As can be seen from Table 3, the most frequent type of requests was Query Preparatory (e.g. *Can you repeat it for me?*) both in pre-tests (50%) and post-tests (57%). However, it needs to be underlined that the students increased their use of Query Preparatory 7% in post-tests. As presented earlier, Query Preparatory strategy type contains utterances that refer to preparatory conditions such as ability and willingness. The following are the typical examples of the category of Query Preparatory that were mostly utilized in the dataset by Turkish students in this study:

Can you repeat it for me?

Could you please extend the due?

Would you mind giving me a lift to my friend's home?

However, although Want Statements and Mood Derivable were the second most frequent strategies in pre-tests (18% for both), the first one did not change whereas the latter dropped to certain extent in the post-tests. As presented previously, Mood Derivable requests involves imperative utterances (*e.g., Be quiet!*). In pre-test results, the total number of the head acts involving Mood Derivable strategy was 30 while it was 17 in post-test results. In other words, there was a decrease (8%) in the use of Mood Derivable requests in the post-tests.

Table 3. The Number and Frequency of the Request Head Acts in Pre-tests
and Post-tests

Strategies	Numbers (N)		Frequency (%)	
	Pre	Post	Pre	Post
Mood Derivable	30	17	18	10
Performatives	0	0	0	-
Hedged Performatives	1	5	1	3
Obligation Statements	10	5	6	3
Want Statements	30	30	18	17
Suggestory Formulae	6	10	4	6
Query Preparatory	84	101	50	57
Strong Hint	3	2	2	1
Mild Hints	1	5	1	3
Total	165	175	100	100

The number of Want Statements was the same in both tests. However, the linguistic choices of the participants for Want Statements showed a remarkable difference in both tests. In the pre-tests, Turkish students overwhelmingly realized a want statement by employing *I want you to* whereas they evidently switched to more indirect forms of this category in the post-tests. In other words, the difference was not observed in the number or frequency but variety of linguistic choices for this category. The request head acts that were coded as Want Statement in post-tests were the following:

> *I would like you to give us more time.*

> *I'd like to change it.*

Similarly, Obligation Statements were also lower in post-tests (3%) than pre-tests (6%). The obligation statements such as *You mustn't talk here* and *I think you should obey the rules* were used more in pre-tests. Similarly, not any considerable increase was observed in other categories of request strategies used by Turkish students in this study. Hedged Performatives, for example, increased only from one to five in total (%1 in pre-tests and %3 in post-tests). Here are some samples from the data:

> *I was hoping to talk to you about an extension for the performance tasks.*

> *I'd like to ask you about the extension for our performance works.*

The category of Suggestory Formulae was employed in the post-tests only 2% more than pre-tests (% 4 in pre-tests and % 6 in post-tests). One example from the data would be *Shall we go on to see the new film on Saturday?* However, the use of hints was very rare when compared to other request strategies. Strong hints (e.g. *You know, I do have a phone number*) were used 3 times in total in pre-tests while they were used only twice in post-tests. Finally, Mild Hints were also very low (% 1 in pre-tests and % 3 in post-tests) both in pre-tests and post-tests. Mild hints, including no reference to the request proper but are apparent from the context, were utilized 5 times in post-tests, and only once in pre-tests. For example*, here is a library* was used to imply *you should be quiet* or *could you be quiet* in Situation 7, in which the conversation took place between students who do not know each other. The category of Performatives (e.g. *I suggest*) was never used by Turkish students in this study.

Syntactic Modifiers

As for syntactic modifiers in CCSARP, 12 types of syntactic modifiers were analyzed. The total number of the modifiers used in pre-tests was 72 and 172 in post-tests. Overall, the number of each modifier in pre-tests was either none or very limited except for the category of Politeness Markers. Turkish students in this study employed seven types of modifiers in their pre-tests (72 in pre-test and 172 in post-test). As presented above, these were namely Politeness Markers, Conditionals, Subjectivizers, Understaters, Hedges, Time Intensifiers, and Cajolers. However, the findings indicate that the students remarkably used more syntactic modifiers in their post-tests. The participants in this study employed 12 types of modifiers in post-test. The modifiers used in post-tests in addition to the seven modifiers in pre-tests were Downtoners, Tense, Appealer, Aspect, and Upgrader. Unlike pre-test results, we were able to observe considerable increase in each type of modifier as well.

The most frequent five categories of syntactic modifiers in the post-tests were Downtoners, Politeness Markers, Tense, Conditionals, and Subjectivizers. First of all, the number of Downtoners in all situations employed in post-tests reached to 49 from zero (0 % in pre-tests and 28 % in post-tests). Secondly, the total number of Politeness Markers was 55 in pre-tests and 47 with a small decrease in post -tests. In pre-tests, there was no use of Tense but this modifier was utilized totally 20 times in post-tests (e.g. *I wanted to ask for a change*). Similarly, the use of Conditional types increased to 17 from 6 in post- tests. Finally, even though the number of Subjectivizers in pre-tests increased in post-tests, the percentage was lower

in post-test (6 % in pre-tests and 4 % in post-tests), and this might relate to the overall increased number of syntactic modifiers in post-test. The followings are two such examples of Subjectivizers from the data.

I think we should meet again. I think you should be quiet.

Table 4. The Number, Frequency and Types of Syntactic Modifiers

Syntactic Modifiers	Numbers (N)		Frequency (%)	
	Pre	Post	Pre	Post
Downtoners	0	49	0	28
Politeness Markers	55	47	76	27
Tense	0	20	0	12
Conditionals	6	17	8	10
Subjectivizers	4	7	6	4
Understaters	5	6	7	4
Hedges	1	6	1	4
Appealers	0	6	0	4
Aspects	0	5	0	3
Time Intensifiers	1	4	1	2
Upgraders	0	2	0	1
Cajolers	1	2	1	1
Total	72	172	100	100

Moreover, the number of the hedge as a modifier type increased only to 6 from 1 after instruction (1 % in post-test and 4 % in post-tests). The modifiers Appealer, Aspect, and Upgrader emerged in the data after the instruction while none of them were used in any situations in the pre-tests. The modifier category of Aspect, for instance, was utilized 5 times (3 %) in post-tests while it was not used in pre-tests. The number of Upgraders (e.g. *As you know, we're in the library, be quiet!*) and Cajolers (e.g. *I really need you to give more time, this is very important.*) used in post -tests increased one or two times more suggesting almost not any change in their use. Overall, the findings demonstrated that there was an increase in the variety and the number of certain modifiers employed after instructional treatment whereas a few of them either remained same or showed very slight difference in the post-tests.

Supportive Moves

The responses of participants to the situations in the DCT indicated that the students made use of various supportive moves before and after the instruction. These supporting moves include both mitigating and aggravating devices. As Table 5 presents, the total number of supportive moves in pre-tests was 114 and 199 in post-tests, suggesting that there was an overall increase in post-tests except for the category of Grounders.

Table 5. The Variety and Number of Supportive Moves in Pre-tests and Post-tests

Supportive Moves	Pre Test		Post Test	
	N	%	N	%
Preparator	9	8	45	23
Getting a Precommitment	0	0	4	2
Grounder	85	75	85	25
Disarmer	12	11	44	22
Promise of Reward	1	1	5	3
Imposition Minimizer	1	1	0	0
Threat	1	1	4	2
Moralizing	5	4	12	6
Total	114	100	199	100

The most remarkable increase was observed in the use of Preparators in post-test. Whereas the number of the supportive moves was 9 in pre-tests, they were employed 45 times in post-tests (8 % in pre-tests and 23 % in post-tests). Some of the most frequent examples of Preparators in post-tests include:

> *Have you got a few minutes sir?*
>
> *I was wondering if you had a moment.*
>
> *Could I have quick word with you?*

None of the Turkish students in this study used the category of Getting a Precommitment in pre-tests, but they used it 4 times in post-tests after instruction. For example, *Could you do me a favor and tell your son to be quiet?* was one of these responses in Situation 3 in the DCT. Similarly, the supportive move of Promise of Reward was only used once in pre-tests but it was utilized five times in post- tests. For instance, for Situation 2 in the

DCT, the utterance *if you do this for me, I promise I'll finish all my homework tomorrow* was provided by the student and coded as this type of supportive move. In a similar way, the category of Moralizing was used more in post-tests. Majority of this supportive move was used in Situation 7 that takes place in the library. One such response was *We are in library and library has rules.*

Additionally, the participants employed 12 Disarmers in pre-tests while the number increased to 44 in post-tests (11 % in pre-tests and 22 % in post-tests). The responses, such as *I know you are always busy with meetings,* and *I know you don't like this situation,* were samples of Disarmers from the DCTs as post-tests. Furthermore, the students used the supportive move of Threat only once in pre-tests whereas it appeared 4 times in the post-tests. Some of these threats were *You must obey the rules or I'll call the security!* and if *you don't make him stop I'll speak to the manager!*

Perceptions of Turkish L2 Learners on Pragmatics-based Instruction

With regard to the perceptions of students in this study**,** it is possible to consider mainly the activities and materials in the pragmatics-based instruction. The analysis of surveys showed that the answers to the first question reveals if they found the lessons interesting or not. In that sense, 15 students out of 26 gave four points, while none of them strongly disagreed or strongly agreed. In the second question, which was checking the students' opinion about the usefulness of the lessons, 20 students thought that the lessons were useful. As for the third question, the students were asked if the lessons were fun. More than half of them graded positively while only 2 of them were strongly disagreed. Finally, the fourth question was about the comparison of the instructional lessons with the usual lessons in terms of enjoyment. The idea that supported the superiority of the instructional period to traditional lessons was agreed by 20 students while 6 of them thought negatively.

Students also referred to the usefulness of focus on pragmatics while learning requests in English in their reflective papers. They all agreed with the idea that these lessons were useful for them. They expressed that learning different ways and purposes of requests in English and how speakers make requests in daily or real life is very important to be able to communicate effectively. All 10 students who kept reflective journals stated that the lessons were different, enjoyable, and useful for learning real or authentic language. A similar note was also recorded in the researcher's logs indicating a higher amount of participation and interests in these pragmatics-based classes.

Similarly, the students also made a comparison between two types of lessons, traditional English lessons versus pragmatics-based instruction to teach requests, in their reflection papers. The activities, such as writing dialogues and acting out in front of class as well as watching sitcom clips, were very enjoyable for some students. They thought that the information was quite new, and they were good at producing nice dialogues. Some also agreed that the lessons were effective and the activities in these lessons made them realize and be aware of the requests they heard in English movies. Some even mentioned that they had not known certain similarities between requests in English and Turkish. They also suggested that this kind of teaching should be integrated into the traditional English lessons more often. As for a pessimistic stance on these pragmatics-oriented lessons, only one student mentioned in the reflective paper that the 3-week period was long, while a few students thought that such lessons could have been more. Yet, considering the whole dataset, the study indicates that overall perceptions of students were positive.

DISCUSSION and CONCLUSION

The primary goal of this study was to examine the effect of teaching pragmatics with a specific focus on the speech act of requests in English on Turkish learners' request strategy use. This was accomplished through analyzing the pre- and post-treatment DCTs in terms of overall number, request types, internal modifiers that mitigate or increase the force and imposition, and supportive moves used either before or after the request head act.

The study showed that pragmatics-based instruction on requests in English did not have any effect on the overall number of requests used by Turkish learners. One reason for such an outcome might be the duration of pragmatics-based instruction, and a longer period of teaching requests or pragmatics might result in a different outcome. Yet, it could be argued that pragmatics-based instruction still had some changes in certain request strategies and directness/indirectness as well as other aspects of request strategy use (e.g. syntactic modifiers and supportive moves). The findings, for instance, indicate a decrease in direct strategies, such as Mood Derivable and Obligation Statements in the post-tests when compared with the use in pre-tests. We argue that this is mostly because of the activities and materials in pragmatics-oriented lessons, and the students have become more aware of a variety of different request strategies depending on the social status of interactants. This also might relate to the situation that imperatives and

obligation statements are usually the most familiar strategies for Turkish EFL students to express their wants and wishes especially in their earlier stages of the 9th grade curriculum of English lessons in such state schools. Before the pedagogical intervention, the Turkish EFL 9th grade learners used these two strategies more than they did in the post-test responses. This finding is also considered as the evidence of the positive effect of instruction on the variety of request types available to them.

Our argument is also supported by an increase in the number and frequency of indirect strategies, such as Hedged Performatives, Suggestory Formula, and Mild Hints. In other words, after our 3-week pragmatics-oriented instruction, Turkish students in this study preferred to be indirect more often than being direct. In a similar vein, regarding the overall use of internal syntactic modifiers, an important increase is observed in the total number of their use in post-tests again indicating the impact of treatment on their ability to modify their requests in the given situations. The pre-test responses showed that except for Politeness Marker *please*, the number of other modifiers were very limited in pre-tests. However, the participants benefited from instruction in terms of learning and using new modifiers in the act of requests for different situations in post-tests. Thus, our study aligns with previous studies on the impact of instruction in pragmatics or requests (Rose, 2005; Safont, 2004; Salazar, 2003). Therefore, the increase in indirect strategies and the decrease in direct strategies portray the relation between the pedagogical intervention and the politeness and directness level of the requests produced by learners. The increase in more indirect strategies, and decrease in direct strategies indicate that instruction effected students' requests in terms of politeness and directness.

Another important aspect with regard to the impact of instruction relates to observed variety in the use of requests strategies in post-test. In other words, the variety of the strategies, modifiers, and supportive moves indicated an observable increase. Apart from the numbers, the linguistic choices differed in number. For instance, the number of Want Statements did not change at all but the students were able to use mitigated forms of Want Statements. We then argue that the meaningful input in our pedagogical intervention have had impact not only on the number but also variety of linguistic choices available to Turkish EFL students in this study. Additionally, relying on such increase in the number and variety in Turkish EFL learners' requests as well as internal modifiers and supportive moves, we also assume that they started to consider the social and contextual factors more and selected appropriate request strategies, modifiers and mitigating or aggravating utterances accordingly to make their speech acts more

appropriate to the situations given in the DCTs. Thus, the study also created awareness in Turkish EFL students in this study with regard to sociopragmatic aspects or factors.

The present study showed that teaching pragmatics could make a change on the performance of Turkish EFL students' requests in terms of variety and directness/indirectness. Teaching requests in traditional English lessons is implemented by utilizing only textbook dialogues and explanation of requests in formal and informal settings in such textbooks. Therefore, the methodology for teaching how to perform a request in English in different situations remains very limited, and potentially obstructs the learner to use appropriate forms of language in different contexts. To overcome this challenge, language learners should be instructed pragmatically. Drawing on the impact of pedagogical intervention on learners as portrayed in this study, we also feel the urge to highlight certain pedagogical implications for the English teachers in Turkey. Language teachers should prepare pragmatics-based lessons in order to enable students to use language appropriately and facilitate effective communication in various settings. English language teachers in Turkey should consider the fact that it is possible to use and benefit from a number of instructional activities in a language classroom in order to provide our learners with pragmatic aspect of language (see Ishihara & Cohen, 2010). More specifically, it would be beneficial to demonstrate the variety of uses of a speech act. This conclusion apparently supports Martinez-Flor (2007) in the sense that such authentic activities provide excellent opportunities and appropriate input for EFL learners to develop their pragmatic competence. Explicit teaching of request types, the strategies and the use of modifiers can be useful to develop language learners' pragmatic ability in the performance of request act. Judging by the findings of the study, it should be noted that the instruction received positive perceptions from the students. The instructional plan helped raise The EFL learners' pragmatic awareness, which was the initial aim of the treatment.

In accordance with the implications discussed above, pragmatic language teaching should be encouraged in Turkey and L2 contexts. Improving pragmatic competence helps the development of language learners' communicative competence in the target language. Therefore, teachers of English should be informed, trained and encouraged in the field of teaching pragmatics.

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Appendix A: DCT

A Discourse Completion Test

Age: Gender:

When did you start to learn English? _____

Have you ever been to abroad? : _____

In which situation(s) outside the school do you use English?

Please read the following descriptions of situations below. Then think of an appropriate answer(s) to each and write in the blanks. Ask your teacher for any kind of vocabulary or misunderstandings.

1. You have been elected as the class representative this semester. You are the one who bridges with the administration/teachers and the students in your class. Your class wants you to go and ask for an extension for the performance tasks from your Math teacher. What would you say to your teacher?

2. Your parents are about to leave for a dinner on Saturday night and they are in a hurry. You want them to give you a lift to your friend's home and pick you up on the way back at night. What would you say to your parents?

3. Your neighbors upstairs have a 5 year-old boy who keeps running whole day. You have to study for tomorrow's exam but the noise from upstairs makes it impossible. You go and knock the door. What would you say to your neighbors?

4**.** You want to learn about the English project's topic and about the details of the teacher's requirements since you were not in class when she explained all. Now you need her to repeat all for you. You go to her room after the lesson. What would you say to your teacher?

5. You are at a friend's birthday party. You have met a boy/girl that you have wanted to meet for a long time. You find a way to approach and ask him /her to meet again. What would you say to him/her?

6. You have bought a scarf from a big store for your mother but she wants you to change the color because she already has the same. You go to the store and ask the manager for exchange it. What would you say to the manager?

7. You are studying at the school library. Two students that you don't know are chatting in a noisy way and disturbing other students. You decide to go and ask them to obey the rules. What would you say?

8. You need to interview the school principal for the school magazine. Although you know he is always busy with meetings, you go and ask him to for an hour for the interview. What would you say to him?

Appendix B: Survey*

In class

	Strongly Disagree				Strongly Agree
1. The lessons were interesting.	1	2	3	4	5
2. The lessons were useful	1	2	3	4	5
3. The lessons were fun	1	2	3	4	5
4. The lessons were more enjoyable than usual classes	1	2	3	4	5

Out of the class

Did you

1. tell your friends or family about in- class activities	yes	no
2. pay attention when other people make requests	yes	no
3. re-read the worksheets given you in class	yes	no

Comments

Have you learnt anything new about making requests in English? If yes, what was it?

Write the activity through which you learned most about requests in English?

Any suggestions about sessions teaching requests in L2?

*Adapted from Crandall and Basturkmen (2004)