

RESEARCH ARTICLE

The Strategies of Invitation Speech Act in Turkish

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Abstract

This study examines the strategies on invitation speech act in Turkish based on the speech act theory in pragmatics which fundamentally positions that when people use language they actually perform a kind of action. The purpose of the present study is to investigate the strategies employed on invitation speech act by native speakers of Turkish. To accomplish the goal, an online Written Discourse Completion Task (DCT) was employed with an aim to delineate the strategies Turkish speakers use while inviting. Another method was examining several different Turkish television series. Following the implication of the quantitative technique of conversation analysis, the utterances in data from invitation acts were analyzed in terms of the patterns of the semantic formulas categorized in the taxonomy by Suzuki (2009). The findings of the study revealed that invitation acts used in Turkish have their unique patterns. Direct invitations (84.90%) were more frequent than indirect ones (15.09%). Moreover, the most predominant type of head act was declarative (40.33%) and query on hearer's plan (17.64%) had the highest frequency among preparatory acts. The most common supportive move was description of event by 48.44% of Turkish invitations.

Keywords: speech acts, invitation speech act, invitation strategies, Turkish, TV series

Öz

Bu çalışma, temel olarak insanların dili kullandıklarında aslında bir tür eylem gerçekleştirdiklerini öne süren edimbilimdeki söz edim/eylem kuramını temel alarak Türkçedeki davet söz eylemine ilişkin stratejileri incelemektedir. Bu çalışmanın amacı ana dili Türkçe olan kişilerin davet söz edimine/eylemine yönelik kullandıkları stratejileri araştırmaktır. Bu amaca ulaşmak için Türkçe konuşanların davet ederken kullandıkları stratejileri belirlemek amacıyla çevrimiçi bir Yazılı Söylem Tamamlama Testi (YSTT) kullanılmıştır. Bir diğer veri toplama tekniği olarak birkaç farklı Türk televizyon dizisi serisinden birçok bölüm izlenerek dökümü çıkartılmıştır. Söylem tamamlama testinden ve dizilerden elde edilen veriler, öncelikle konuşma çözümlemesi ile daha sonra ise Suzuki (2009) tarafından kategorize edilen çerçeve kullanılarak analiz edilmiştir. Araştırmanın bulguları, Türkçede kullanılan davet söz ediminin kendine özgü kalıplara sahip olduğunu ortaya koymuştur. Türkçede doğrudan davetler (%84.90) dolaylı olanlardan (%15.09) daha sık tercih edilmektedir. Ayrıca, en belirgin ana davet eylemi türü bildirim cümleleri olup (%40.33), hazırlık eylemleri arasında en sık kullanılan strateji 'dinleyicinin planını sorma' olmuştur (%17.64). Türkçe davetlerde en yaygın destekleyici hamle ise yüzde 48.44 ile etkinliğin tanımlanması olarak kendini göstermektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: söz eylem teorisi, davet söz eylemi, davet stratejileri, Türkçe, TV dizileri

Introduction

Together with meaning, pragmatics studies the relationship between the structure of a language, and how it is used in context. Pragmatics is the study of meaning that focuses specifically on implicit meaning, inference, the unsaid, and how language structure operates on the assumed and the inferred (Levinson, 1983). Under this discipline, there are several subject areas, one of which is speech acts. Speech act theory is a foundational framework for comprehending how language functions beyond simple exchanging of information. According to this view, language is used for a variety of activities and tasks, including making requests, providing commands, making claims, and making promises (Austin, 1962). Austin argued that language is not solely about describing the world but is a means of performing actions. He introduced the notion of 'illocutionary acts,' which are the underlying intentions or purposes behind an utterance. For instance, saying "I promise to be there" is not just describing an event; it is the act of making a promise.

Speech acts are deeply embedded in social contexts, and their interpretation is often influenced by cultural norms, social hierarchies, and individual backgrounds. The same speech act may be received differently in various social settings. For instance, a request made by a subordinate to a superior might carry a different illocutionary force than the same request made between peers. Politeness theory, a key topic within speech act theory has been suggested and further developed by various scholars such as Brown & Levinson (1978), Goffman (1967), Grice (1975), Lakoff (1973), Leech (1983), Spencer-Oatey (2000) yet the most influential and prevalently used politeness theory is Brown and Levinson's face-saving theory. The model assumes that all adult members of society have 'face,' the public self-image that each member wishes to claim for himself, comprising two related aspects: negative face, which is the desire to be unimpeded and free from imposition, and positive face, which is the desire for one's self-image to be valued and accepted.

Politeness also refers to the capacity to communicate in a way that improves the environment of a social contact. Although all human contacts involve the potential for conflict and disagreement, according to Lakoff (1973), politeness is a set of social norms aimed at making interpersonal communication simpler. Interlocutors could be polite with avoidance of conflict by satisfying hearer's feelings and not imposing. Kasper (1990) regards politeness as attainable through conversational methods that allow conversation participants to avoid risk and reduce resentment. Leech (1983) provides a pragmatic principle whose purpose is to maintain social balance and relationships, allowing us to believe that our communications are cooperative. Goffman (1981) focused on politeness as a social value and "face" as an image of self. Brown and Levinson (1987) define the face as "the public self-image that every member wishes to establish for himself," adopting Goffman's concept of social self. As a result, Goffman, Brown, and Levinson contend that in social interactions, the face is something to be established, maintained, enhanced, misplaced, and rebuilt.

One of the latest models for politeness is Rapport Management Theory which was proposed and expanded over time and extensively used in a variety of majors. Rapport Management Framework (Spencer-Oatey 2000), which expanded from Brown and Levinson's (1987) Politeness Theory (PT), provides a broader approach by focusing on rapport-building in areas other than speech acts, which are the primary focus of politeness theory. Spencer-Oatey's rapport management theory (RMT), which emphasizes mainly the use of language to promote, maintain, or threaten harmonious social ties, tries to investigate how harmonious or disharmonious relationships are formed. Her approach takes social rights into account in addition to the idea of face and has been extensively employed in studies on intercultural communication, pragmatics, and intercultural business communication.

1. Background Information About Invitation Speech Act

The study of speech acts, particularly the act of extending invitations, has been a subject of great interest in the field of linguistics and communication. Invitations represent a fundamental component of human interaction, serving as a means to bring individuals together, foster social bonds, and facilitate various social activities. Understanding the intricacies of how invitations are formulated, interpreted, and responded to is essential for unraveling the complexities of human communication.

Invitation Speech Act

The invitation speech act is defined as an illocutionary act used when the inviter asks the invitee to come to an event and is prepared to accept the invitee's participation at a specific time and location for an immediate or future occasion. According to Wijaya & Helmie (2019), an invitation is categorized as assertive by Austin (1962) and as a directive speech act by Searle (1979), as it obliges the hearer to act and reflects the speaker's intention. Based on this interpretation, invitations are comparable to requests, directives, and commands as they all require listeners to take certain acts.

Although studies on the invitation speech act are limited, the existing literature is summarized as follows. In Russian, Vlasyan & Kozhukhova (2019) aimed to determine the politeness strategies used in Russian invitations in both formal and informal settings across three age groups. The study associated the strategies with the Russian communicative culture and the idea of politeness using DCT (Discourse Completion Task) and anthropological observations. Differences in formal and informal invitations regarding politeness strategies and linguistic means of expression were reported. The study also revealed that making an invitation was not seen as a face-threatening act in Russian culture; instead, direct invitations are preferred and the imposition of the inviter was typically received favorably (Vlasyan & Kozhukhova, 2019).

Garcia (1992) studied the invitation speech act in Hispanic culture and found that invitation-refusal and insistence-acceptance are the language use guidelines for Peruvians in the inviting-declining process. Spanish speakers use some techniques to lessen the impact of rejection during the invitation-refusal stage. Sociolinguistic principles guide that in the insistence-acceptance stage, an invitation must appear to be accepted even though it has already been declined (García, 1992).

In Greek, Bella (2009) studied two age groups' linguistic behavior in issuing invitations and refusals within the politeness framework. The data was drawn from role plays. Findings showed that age is a determining parameter in issuing invitations and their realizations. While older age informants conceive invitations as face-threatening acts and barely insist on favoring negative politeness contrary to traditional expectations, the younger age group envision invitations as face-enhancing and insist more during invitations preferring positive politeness. Moreover, she also found that it is difficult to distinguish between positive and negative politeness techniques since the negative ones are mixed with the positive strategies or they act as such in the setting.

Suzuki (2009) explored the pragmatic techniques used by native English speakers studying in the USA universities to deliver an English invitation speech act by analyzing linguistic strategies at the lexical, grammatical, and discourse levels. Findings suggest that participants frequently invite others to a party, a meal, an event (e.g. concert), their houses, a movie, etc. Lexical and grammatical analysis indicates that some significant keywords that are unique to this speech act included phrases like *come, would, like, party, want, tonight, having, if, house, doing, or weekend*. Addresses (vocatives and interjections etc.), supportive move (description of event), head act (interrogative, hypothetical + interrogative) and preparatory act (query on hearer's plan) were the most employed strategies.

Some researchers focus on how the invitation act is structured, such as Yu and Wu (2017) in Mandarin Chinese. The study investigates the

relationship between making an invitation and its linguistic realization in terms of turn design and sequential development. Researchers collected data using the conversation analysis methodology and audio recordings of everyday Mandarin conversations. They found out that inviting in Mandarin is primarily implemented through three syntactic forms of imperatives, declaratives, and interrogatives and the inviter's expectation of the possibility that an invitation would be accepted is systematically correlated with the distributional pattern of certain grammatical variants.

Speech acts were also examined from a cross-cultural pragmatics standpoint. Choraih (2022) conducted a contrastive analysis between Moroccan Arabic (MA) and American English (AE) in the invitation speech act highlighting the similarities and differences between the two languages. The results of the study showed similarities in the use of direct and indirect strategies. However, several differences were also reported. For instance, the strategies of conditional, welcoming expressions, desire, time consideration, imperative form, and possibility were utilized in MA for someone of higher status (their boss) whereas modality, conditional, request for time, suggestion, permission, and want or wish were used in AE.

In addition to providing a thorough analysis of the invitation speech act, they identified potential causes of variations in the speech act realization strategies used during conversations, such as pragmatic or linguistic factors, cultural values, or social parameters. Comparison between cultural values in invitation act in English and Iraqi Arabic (Al-Darraj et al., 2013); German, Greek, Polish, and Russian (Ogiermann & Bella, 2020); Chinese and American (Lu, 2001); English, Persian, and Arabic (Vahid Dastjerdi & Nasri, 2012); the role of social status in realization refusal speech act for invitation, suggestion and offer among Yemenis and American native speakers (Al-Ghamdi & Alrefae, 2020); in terms of Speech acts, facework, and politeness theory (Cheng, 2012) were some contemporary researches.

Understanding the phenomenon of issuing invitations and answers to invitations in any language is essential to understanding how

speakers of other languages and cultures comprehend and perform these speech actions appropriately. It is beneficial for future linguistics and pragmatics studies as well. Invitations are used frequently in daily conversation, although they haven't been studied as much as speech acts namely, request, apology, and refusal. The responses and the form of the invitation speech act were examined in various world languages. Research on the invitation made by Turkish speakers is scarce.

Speech acts such as invitation, acceptance, rejection, suggestion, apology, request, and compliment are intensively studied across different languages. Nonetheless, they have not been thoroughly examined in Turkish. A few speech acts were examined in the context of the ability of recognition and production as Turkish speakers of English, or it has been studied in the context of pragmatic competence, or pragmatic (negative) transfer from the native language among EFL/ESL learners rather than investigating them directly in Turkish (Asmali, 2012; Çapar, 2019; Çiftçi, 2016; Demirkol, 2015; Gungormezler, 2016; Han & Burgucu-Tazegül, 2016; Marti, 2006; Sadler & Eröz, 2002).

To the best of the author's knowledge, there is no study targeting the strategies used in invitation speech acts in Turkish. Thus, this study aims to fill this gap and reveal the strategies employed in Turkish invitations. The present study is expected to stand in the breach in the literature and contribute to the field in this respect since there has been no study on the invitation speech act in Turkish before. Being the first in the Turkish literature, the current paper manifests the strategies used in Turkish invitations based on comprehensive data and it can be a basis for subsequent cross-cultural and multilingual studies. Therefore, our objective was to explore the strategies of invitation speech act in Turkish.

2. Methodology

Research Design and Participants

DCT was sent to participants online through a link using a

the snowball data collection method. The very same link also provided participants access to the consent form. The volunteer participation form cannot be collected by hand because the study's data-gathering method is shared by everyone with their contacts and is conducted online through the snowball technique. As a result, the consent section was added to the questionnaire's initial part to create the "Consent form". Participants needed to continue by confirming their participation in the study choosing from the options • Yes, I consent to voluntarily participate in the study or • No, I do not approve of participating in the study. The age of subjects is assured to be 18 or above.

Table 1. An overview of the participants' demographic parameters that were used to identify the most popular invitation-related activities within the Turkish community.

Social Parameters	values
Participants	279
Gender	125 (man) -154 (woman)
The number of Jobs	49
The number of Provinces	46
Regions	7 (Mediterranean, Black Sea, Central Anatolia, Aegean, Marmara, Southeastern Anatolia, Eastern Anatolia)
Education Level	8 (Primary), 11 (Middle School), 40 (High School), 163 (University), 56 (Graduate)

Data Collection

The study includes two different methods to gather data, a written Discourse Completion Task (DCT) and a secondary data collection tool through Turkish soap operas broadcasted on various TV channels. Written DCT was prepared as described in (Nadar, 2009) and consisted of two steps.

First, a quick online preliminary survey was applied to about 200 native Turkish speakers to determine what are the most frequent activities native speakers of Turkish invite others to. The gathered data was subjected to frequency analysis. The most frequent activities were determined as inviting someone to have a coffee, have a meal such as dinner, breakfast, etc., and hang out together.

In the second phase of the DCT, the task was prepared and presented online, and a link was sent

to adult participants to elicit the answers using the snowball technique. The same link also provided participants access to the consent forms. The respondents were instructed to read and respond to three invitation scenarios as if they were in a real situation. In the end, 279 volunteers participated the DCT and after elimination of false and missing answers, data obtained from approximately 200 individuals were subjected to further analysis and classification.

The researcher also watched 114 episodes of 11 different up-to-date and highly rated TV series to explore the invitation acts and record what strategies are utilized on TV series. Our aim here was to use two different data collection tools to both increase our data count and benefit from their complementary features. The aim was not to compare the two data/ tools but to ensure that one tool provided features that the other did not. This technique was also used extensively in previous studies that evaluated speech acts in various languages (Fahurrozi, 2015; Fernández-Guerra, 2008; Yazdanfar & Bonyadi, 2016).

An ethical committee approval for the study was obtained from Hacettepe University (E-35853172-300-00002846808 in 05.09.2023), the DCT was subsequently implemented about 200 volunteer participants online, and the data was gathered for downstream analyses.

Data analysis

In terms of data evaluation, scenarios in discourse completion task presented to participants were analyzed through a quantitative technique. All the sentences produced by the participants and the TV series were analyzed using the Conversation Analysis (CA) technique, the method for the study of language. Conversational analysis refers to any human activity that involves taking turns, small talk, and engaging in meaningful conduct. CA research could be based on the data on informal interactions such as everyday talk of friends, family, and neighbors or data from informal settings namely, courtrooms, hospitals, classrooms, etc.(Jefferson, 1972; Sacks, 1992; Sacks et al., 1974; Schegloff, 1968; Schegloff & Sacks, 1973).

In the second phase, the invitation utterances were examined based on semantic formulas developed by Suzuki, (2009). He classifies strategies into four categories, namely address, head act, preparatory act, and supportive move. The taxonomy that was adapted is given below:

1. Address (voc/intj etc)
2. Head act (interrogative)
3. Head act (declarative)
4. Head act (imperative)
5. Head act (present option)
6. Head act (hypothetical + interrogative)
7. Head act (hypothetical + declarative)
8. Preparatory act (query on h's plan)
9. Preparatory act (specification of reason)
10. Preparatory act (s's want)
11. Preparatory act (query on h' will)
12. Preparatory act (query on h' situation)
13. Preparatory act (s's readiness)
14. Supportive move (directions)
15. Supportive move (description of events)
16. Supportive move (encouragement)
17. Supportive move (present option)
18. Supportive move (s's want to have h)
19. Supportive move (s's want to have h)
20. Supportive move (specify what h can do)

DCT data collected from the participants were analyzed by two researchers to provide interrater reliability. The interrater was informed about the study and trained regarding the strategies. After deliberation the interrater evaluated a total of 25% of all the data and recorded the results. The first step to be followed in data analysis was the classification of invitation steps according to certain taxonomies by the researcher, a second evaluator was included in the study to ensure the reliability of the analysis, and it was tested with Cohen's Kappa value (Cohen, 1968) for inter-rater reliability and guaranteed. The comparisons of all the data were subsequently performed and both percentage agreement between the investigator and interrater as well as Cohen's Kappa statistics were estimated using *vcd* package in R (Meyer et al., 2020).

The relative frequency of each category of the abovementioned taxonomy were quantified and reported.

3. The findings and discussion about invitation speech act

The two data gathering tools, DCT and TV series were analyzed, and findings and discussion of strategies are presented.

In DCT, participants were requested to perform an invitation to someone *to have a coffee, to have a meal such as dinner, breakfast etc., and to hang out together*. As a second data collection tool, invitation excerpts are gathered from 114 episodes of a variety of TV series. Invitation patterns were analyzed by Suzuki's (2009) taxonomy. Invitation patterns of head acts, preparatory acts, and supportive moves combined from both data collection methods are displayed in Table 2.

Table 2. The frequency and percentages of invitation strategies used by native speakers of Turkish

Invitation	n:709	
	Freq.	%
Direct invitation	602	84.90
Indirect invitation	107	15.09
Addressee terms	172	24.25
Head act	697	98.30
Imperative	240	33.85
Declarative	286	40.33
Interrogative	128	18.05
Hypothetical declarative	23	3.24
Hypothetical interrogative	12	1.69
Hypothetical imperative	7	0.98
Declarative +imperative	5	0.70
Declarative + interrogative	2	0.28
Imperative + interrogative	2	0.28
Preparatory acts	279	39.35
Preparatory act (query on hearer's plan)	144	20.31
Preparatory act (specification of reason)	102	14.38
Preparatory act (query on hearer's will)	12	1.69
Preparatory act (s's readiness)	10	1.41
Preparatory act (speaker's want)	8	1.12
Preparatory act (query on hearer's situation)	3	0.42
Supportive moves	455	64.17
Supportive move (description of event)	320	45.13
Supportive move (speaker's want to have hearer)	94	13.25
Supportive move (query on hearer's availability)	21	2.96
Supportive move (encouragement)	11	1.55
Supportive move (present option)	5	0.70
Supportive move (specify what h can do)	2	0.28
Total	709	100

Table 2 shows the frequencies and percentages of invitation strategy patterns used by native Turkish speakers. As can be discerned from the table, most of the invitations were issued through direct

strategies (84.90%) and a relatively smaller percentage included indirect invitations (15.09%). Direct acts are generally issued directly and explicitly without any implication or hesitation. Direct invitations are also syntactically obvious, as in imperatives, or performatives e.g. *come to my party*. Indirect acts, on the other hand, are realized through either partial reference to elements or contextual clues. One such example is “*There is a concert on Friday night and I have an extra ticket, I would be delighted if you would consider coming along if you have time.*” The examples of direct invitations from our data were presented in (1) and (2) and those for the indirect invitations are given in (3) and (4).

- (1) **Buyurun, bugün yemeği bizde yiyelim.**
Come on, let's have dinner in our place today. (DCT)
- (2) A:Nişanlandığından nasıl haberim yok.
Bozuldum doğrusu. – I did not know you were engaged. I'm actually upset.

B: Bozulmana gerek yok, bu gece zaten. Serkan'ın evinde. **İstersen sen de gel.** -There's no need to be upset, it's tonight anyway. At Serkan's house. Come, if you want. (TV-SÇK)

In the first and second examples, inviters directly invite the invitee to the dinner that day. But in 3 and 4 the invitations are not explicit rather they are implicit since parts of the utterances did not include inviting act directly but via implication.

- (3) **Bugün bizde akşamlayalım.** –today-usLOC-we spend. –Let's have dinner at ours today. (DCT)
- (4) A:Çok yorgunum. Beni bekleme demiştim.
–very-I tired.meACC-you not wait-I said. – I am very tired. I told you not to wait for me.

B: **tadına bakmayacak mısınız? Lütfen** (masaya davet ederek) – taste-you notFUT?
–won't you taste it? Please. (inviting him to the table) (TV-EHH)

The direct invitation is an element that appears prominently. Direct strategies were the majority of

invitations made. This shows us that invitations are generally made more directly in Turkish culture. The directness of the invitations issued in Turkish is consistent with the studies conducted in Arabic by Al-Hamzi et al., (2020); Al-Khatib (2006); Ghazzoul (2019). The reason why direct invitations are mostly used is that in Turkish culture invitees are not offended by direct invitations.

Directness in invitation in Turkish could be further interpreted as inviting is not something face threatening or an imposition culturally, on the contrary, it is a gesture that indicates that the invitee would be considered and that s/he is loved. Therefore, Turks generally feel honored to be invited to an event and to be a part of such an organization. Russian also shows similarity in that respect. The study conducted by Vlasyan & Kozhukhova (2019) highlighted some distinctions in politeness strategies and language used between formal and informal invitation. It also demonstrated that making an invitation is not seen as a speech act that threatens someone's face in Russian culture; instead, direct invitations are preferred in social circumstances.

Directness also implies not an imposition but *affiliation*, *closeness* and *solidarity* as discussed in some languages in previous studies (Al-Darraj et al., 2013; Alfalig, 2016; Al-Marrani & Sazalie, 2010). For this reason, Al-Darraj recommends that facilitating cross-cultural communication would be made easier by recognizing and comprehending these distinctions. Similarly, regarding directness and the syntactic form, Lubecka (2000) concluded that Polish participants used imperative forms and direct invitations more than English speakers in the study in which English and Polish were compared with some speech acts, such as requests, invitations, compliments, and apologies. The directness that Polish speakers choose is explained as a reflection of their sociocultural politeness. Al Marrani & Suraih's study (2019) had similar results in that Yemeni EFL students favored using direct invitation strategies and yes/no questions strategy indicating that mother tongue influenced their answers since direct invitations are common in their society.

Another important strategy in the present study was the use of addressee terms. The *addressee terms*

were moderately frequent (24.25%). This could be attributed to the fact that address terms play an important role in shaping intimacy and hierarchy and are culturally imbued markers (Kiaer et al., 2022). The related examples are displayed in (5) and (6):

(5) *Cerenciğim geliyor musun? Bebekteki suşiciye gidiyoruz.* – dear Ceren-you comePROG?

– Dear Ceren, are you coming? We're going to the sushi shop in Bebek (İstanbul). (TV-SÇK)

(6) *Canım bugün müsait misin? Seni yemeğe bekliyorum.* –my dear-today-you available? YouACC-to mealDAT-I expectPROG.

– My dear, are you available today? I'm expecting you for dinner. (DCT)

Head acts are core parts of the invitation acts in which actual performing invitation takes place. In our data, almost all the sentences included head acts (98.30%). One example is in (7):

(7) *Bu akşam müsaitsen bana yemeğe gelsene.*
This evening-if you available-meLOC-dinner-you come.

– If you are free this evening, come to me for dinner.

The most prevalent way of constructing invitations is *declaratives*. About 40.33% of the head acts were formed in declarative form and one example is shown in (8):

(8) *Sizi yemeğe bekliyorum.*-youDAT-dinnerLOC-I waitPROG. – I am expecting you for dinner.

Using *imperatives* is the second most frequently employed strategy to invite others. Of the head acts, 33.85% were issued using imperatives. The regarding example can be seen in (9).

(9) *Yarın için yoksa bana yemeğe gel.* – tomorrow-your work-if you don't have-to meDAT-dinnerDAT-comeIMP.

– If you are available tomorrow, come to my house for dinner.

The reason why speakers employed more direct speech acts of imperative phrases in head acts is that the speakers believe that close hearers should not be subject to the politeness principle and/or as Mohammed (2020) pointed out, to demonstrate close bonds and familiarity, speakers prefer to be straightforward. This could provide a good enough reason to choose imperative.

The three most common forms for generating invitations in the present study were *declaratives*, *imperatives*, and *interrogatives*. This finding coincides with the results of Yu and Wu's (2017) study in which the distributional pattern of the three primary formats in Chinese (Mandarin) invitations was found to be declarative, imperative, and interrogative. On the other hand, interrogatives were the most preferred invitation form in Suzuki's (2009) study regarding invitations in American English.

Interrogative form in the present study was also included in closer proportions by 18.05% as stated in the example (10):

(10) *Akşam müsaitsen benim evimde yemek yiyebilir miyiz?* -evening-if available-my house-we-have-mealPOSSIB?

- If you are free in the evening, can we have dinner at my house?

Hypothetical declarative (3.24%), *Hypothetical interrogative* (1.69%), hypothetical imperatives, and the combination of *declarative + imperative* (0.70%), *declarative + interrogative*, *imperative + interrogative* were strategies used much less frequently in the present study.

(11) *Akşam yemeğinde bize katılmak ister misin?* - Dinner-to usDAT-would you like to attend? -Would you like to join us for dinner? (hypothetical interrogative)

We found out that in terms of preparatory acts, Turkish speakers preferred asking mostly on *hearer's plan* with a frequency of 20.31%. These are the strategies that inviter asks if hearer has any plan for the day and time. Suzuki (2009) states that using *the query on hearer's plan* is assumed to be more elaborated because the Speaker is asking

Hearer if he/she can spare time for his/her invitation. Because the speaker can stop performing this speech act if H gives a negative answer, this is also a smart face-saving move on S's part. Suzuki (2009, p.95) explains that

"an if-clause is frequently used as an alternative to the question form in several speech acts (e.g. offering, suggesting and requesting) asking Hearer about his/her willingness to accept the invitation. This conditionality can be recognized as a phenomenon related to linguistic politeness (especially in Leech's framework) in showing S's tentativeness and giving H an option".

According to Brown and Levinson (1987) and Sifianou (1999), the conditional phrase "if you are free" further weakens the illocutionary force of the statement and gives the invitee the impression that s/he is not being forced.

Specification of reason (14.38%) was the second most often employed strategy in our study. Treanor (2015) explained the reason why preparatory acts were used often with cultural preferences for specific rhetorical styles. Additionally, we could propose that the preparation phase and the reasons given for inviting might be considered as strategies to reduce the likelihood of rejection. According to Brown and Levinson (1987), justifying a forced transferable agreement (FTA) is a positive politeness strategy that allows the speaker to involve the hearer in the event or activity, assume reflexivity, and persuade the hearer that the FTA is acceptable. These two strategies are shown in the examples (12-13):

(12) **Bugün müsaitsen bize gelir misin? Birlikte vakit geçiririz.** Today-if you available-usDAT-you comePRES. Together-time-we spend. -If you are available today, will you come to us? We spend time together.

(13) **Arkadaşım sana anlatacağım şeyler var; bunu akşam bir yemekle konuşalım mı? –** my friend-youDAT-I talkFUT-I have; this-evening-a-dinner-we discussFUT?

–My friend, I have things to tell you; Shall we talk about this over dinner tonight?

Some of the preparatory act strategies such as *query on hearer's will*, *query on hearer's situation* *speaker's readiness*, and *speaker's want* appeared less than 2%. Supportive moves were the third element of examining invitation speech acts. Supportive moves were present among 64.17% of all the invitations. Out of 455 supportive moves, *description of event* had the percentage of 45.13. Treanor (2015) also found out that *description of events* was employed the most frequently both by English and Chinese speakers. *Description of event* generally includes the information about time, place, and attendees of the invited event. The reason for the frequent use of *description of event* is to give information about the invitation, thus providing the necessary information and avoiding producing a shallow, superficial invitation. At the same time, it is an attempt to be polite, with the idea of not causing trouble by imposing invitees to have to come. According to Suzuki (2009), using a *description of the event* is regarded as a better and politer approach because it offers a separate reason for the occasion. The example (14) shows the *description of event*:

(14) **Bu akşam bir programın var mı? Yoksa akşam bize yemeğe gelir misin?** –this evening-a-programme-you have? If not-evening-usDAT-dinnerDAT-you come?

– Do you have a program this evening? If not, will you come to dinner with us tonight?

With a percentage of 13.25, *speaker's want to have hearer* was the second most common supportive move. The current study has some similarities with Suzuki's (2009) in this regard. Both strategies were the highest-ranked strategies. An example is presented in (15):

(15) **Akşam yemeğe bekliyorum, itiraz istemem.** –evening-dinnerDAT-I expectPROG, objection-I not wantPRES.

- I'm expecting you for dinner, I don't want any objections. (DCT)

Query on hearer's availability (3%), *encouragement*, *present option*, and *specify what hearer can do* (< 2%) were rather rare strategies attained in the present study.

There are also head acts without any preparatory acts or supportive moves both in DCT and TV series with a total of 10.71%. This type of utterance is structured as nothing, but invitation sentences as shown in (16):

(16) **Yemeğe bize gelsene.** –dinnerDAT-usDAT-come. –why don't you come over for dinner.

(17)

To summarize the prominent features, *direct strategies* were used in most invitations made (84.90%) whereas *indirect invitations* were rather infrequent (15.09%). The frequent use of declaratives and direct strategies might be indicative of a cultural norm in Turkish society that values clarity and directness in social interactions. This could be reflective of broader societal values such as hospitality and straightforwardness, where being clear and direct is seen as a sign of respect rather than imposition. The most common method of the head acts for generating invitations is to use *declarative* (40.33%). *Asking question about hearer's plan* was the most common preparatory act among Turkish speakers (20.31%). With a percentage of 14.38, *specification of reason* was the second most often employed strategy. The final component of analyzing invitation speech acts was supportive move and they were used in 34.17% of cases. About 45.13% of the supportive moves included a *description of event*.

4. Conclusion

The present study aims to delineate the invitation strategies employed in Turkish spoken invitations. For this purpose, data was gathered by using DCT and TV series. One of the first findings of the present study is the usage of addressee phrases. It is evident that addressee terms are employed implying that it is traditionally common in Turkish to address individuals with dignity and respect. When speaking to everyone, regardless of status,

Turkish speakers are accustomed to using addressee phrases. According to Suzuki (2009), the use of the addressee terms is an indication of intimacy and camaraderie.

Another key finding is that invitations are issued *directly*. This might be seen as a sign that the invitee is valued rather than being perceived as a cultural imposition or a face-threat. *Declaratives*, *imperatives*, and *interrogatives* are the most frequently used forms for issuing invitations. The most common preparatory acts among Turkish speakers are *asking question about hearer's plan* and *specification of reason*. Moreover, *description of events* and *speaker's want to have hearer* were the most frequently occurring supportive moves.

Direct strategies were used in most of invitations performed. In line with studies completed in Arabic (Al-Hamzi et al., 2020; Al-Khatib, 2006; Ghazzoul, 2019), the invitations issued in Turkish were direct. Sincere relationships are valued more highly in Turkish culture, and straightforward invites do not cause offense, this explains why they are typically extended to people of close equal status. According to Amelia (2015), speakers typically use a more direct approach in more intimate, close relationships than in formal, distant ones. When the speaker has a strong connection to the hearer, they invite the listener and use a direct approach. Lubecka (2000) also found that Polish speakers preferred direct acts over indirect ones to satisfy social politeness.

By being more direct than indirect in their approach, Turks are not impolite when they issue invitations; rather, they are straightforward to the point where they require an answer. In that regard, Russian exhibits a resemblance to Turkish. Some differences between formal and informal invites' language and politeness methods were brought to light by Vlasyan & Kozhukhova's (2019) study. It also showed that straightforward invites are preferred in social situations and are not viewed as a speech act that threatens someone's face in Russian culture.

Almost half of the head acts contained *declaratives* which are the most widely used technique for issuing invitations and *imperatives* follow declaratives as the second prevalent form of head acts. This finding aligns with the findings of

Yu and Wu's (2018) investigation which outlines the three main formats—declarative, imperative, and interrogative—that are present in Chinese (Mandarin) invitations. However, interrogatives were the most popular type in American English invitations (Suzuki, 2009).

Preparatory acts were frequent in invitations. Among those, *query on hearer's plan* and *specification of reason* were the two most common strategies. Asking hearer's about his/her plan to accept the invitation, according to Suzuki (2009), can be identified as a phenomenon connected to linguistic politeness in that illustrates Speaker's hesitancy and it gives Hearer an option. The conditional structure of "if you are free" further reduces the illocutionary impact of the remark and gives the invitee the appearance that they are not being forced, according to Brown and Levinson (1987) and Sifianou (1999).

When supportive move is considered, they were more abundant than preparatory acts and the most common strategies used include *description of events* and *speaker's want to have hearer*. According to Suzuki (2009), using a description of the event is regarded as a better and politer approach because it offers a separate reason for the occasion. The current study has some similarities with Suzuki's (2009) in this regard. Both strategies were the highest ranked two strategies as preparatory act and supportive moves in the study. In Treanor's study (2015), it is also found out that *description of events* was employed the most both by English speakers and Chinese partakers.

As pioneering research in the field, the study will be a guide for future research and will shed light on both pragmatics and applied linguistics in Turkish. The study has implications for cross-cultural communication since Turkish speakers use the conventions of their native tongue to express meaning in the target language, the findings of the present study will clear up foreign languages studied as well as for studies on teaching Turkish as a foreign language. Speaking Turkish with an awareness of the language will help avoid misunderstandings. To avoid misinterpreting communications or losing important points that are being delivered, it is significant that one understands and uses

language appropriately for the context. One of the limitations of the present study is that only the data obtained by DCT and TV have been examined, which poses a limitation to the current study. Thus, it is primarily restricted to the responses of about 200 participants and the lines in soap operas. Gender, age, and cultural background have not been considered and this could be noted as another limitation of the study. Consequently, additional research on the invitation act in Turkish that accounts for all relevant variables would further enhance the extent of the knowledge on the subject.

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