

T.C.  
GAZI UNIVERSITY  
INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION SCIENCES  
DEPARTMENT OF FOREIGN LANGUAGES  
ELT DEPARTMENT

**AN INVESTIGATION ON THE SOCIOLINGUISTIC COMPETENCE OF ENGLISH  
LANGUAGE TEACHING TRAINEES: A COMPARATIVE STUDY ON NATIVE  
AND NON-NATIVE ENGLISH SPEAKERS**

**MA THESIS**

**By**  
**Nihal KOLUKIRIK**

**ANKARA**  
**2013**

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**Eđitim Bilimleri Enstitüsü M¼d¼rl¼đ¼ne,**

Nihal KOLUKIRIK’a ait “An Investigation on the Sociolinguistic Competence of English Language Teaching Trainees: A Comparative Study on Native And Non-Native English Speakers” adlı alıřma j¼rimiz tarafından İngiliz Dili Anabilim Dalında **Y¼KSEK LİSANS TEZİ** olarak kabul edilmiřtir.

**Adı Soyadı**

**İmza**

**Baskan:** .....

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**¼ye:** .....

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Nihal KOLUKIRIK

## **ABSTRACT**

The aim of the present study was to investigate sociolinguistic abilities of Turkish EFL learners who studied in 4th grade of ELT departments in comparison to native speakers of English.

50 Turkish and 25 American students participated in the study. The study was carried out in three aspects: (1) The differences of refusal and complaint strategies , (2) the differences in modality markers and (3) how their performances were perceived by a native interlocutor for the same social situations with two variables of interlocutors: higher – equal, familiar – unfamiliar.

The data were collected qualitatively and quantitatively by means of two tools; a DCT involving 6-paired situations with two interlocutors, in total 12 items, separated as 3 refusal and 3 complaint situations was used for the qualitative analysis. The responses of all participants for each pair were coded, analysed and compared in SPSS program. Quantitative analysis was done by a communicative rating scale. An American rater graded Turkish students responses according to the 5-point scale to assess their performances in sociocultural, sociolinguistic and register appropriateness criteria.

The results showed that Turkish EFL learners could use a range of speech act strategies and modality markers, but they deviate from native speakers in content. Also it was seen that they lacked some sociolinguistic and sociocultural knowledge that might cause sociopragmatic failure.

## ÖZET

Bu çalışmanın amacı, İngilizceyi yabancı dil olarak öğrenen, İngilizce Öğretmenliği 4. sınıf Türk öğrencilerinin sosyal dil becerilerini, ana dili İngilizce olanlarla kıyaslayarak incelemektir.

Çalışmaya 50 Türk 25 Amerikalı öğrenci katılmıştır. Çalışma, aynı sosyal durumda iki farklı dinleyici değişkeni (üst-eşit ve ya tanınan-tanınmayan) için (1) kullanılan reddetme ve şikâyet etme stratejilerindeki farklılıklar, (2) kullanılan kip belirteçleri arasındaki farklar ve (3) performansların ana dili İngilizce olan bir dinleyicinin nasıl algılandığı olmak üzere üç farklı açıdan yürütülmüştür.

Veriler hem nitel hem de nicel olarak iki şekilde toplanmıştır; nitel analiz olarak, 3 reddetme ve 3 şikâyet etme olmak üzere, 6 eşli durumdan yani toplamda 12 durumdan oluşan bir Söylem Tamamlama Testi kullanılmıştır. Her bir durum için bütün katılımcıların cevapları kodlanmış, SPSS programında analiz edilmiş ve karşılaştırılmıştır. Nicel analiz ise bir iletişimsel beceri ölçeği ile yapılmıştır. Amerikalı bir puanlayıcı Türk öğrencilerinin cevaplarını 5-puanlı ölçeğe göre, sosyokültürel, sosyo-dilbilimsel ve stil uygunluğu kriterleri bakımından değerlendirmiştir.

Sonuçlar, İngilizceyi yabancı dil olarak öğrenen Türk öğrencilerinin farklı çeşitlerde konuşma stratejileri ve kipleri kullanabildiğini, fakat içerik bakımından ana dili İngilizce olanlardan farklılık gösterdiğini ortaya koymuştur. Ayrıyeten, onların sosyopragmatik hatalara yol açabilecek derecede bazı sosyodilbilimsel ve sosyokültürel bilgilerden yoksun oldukları görülmüştür.

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.0 Introduction

This chapter introduces the underlying issues leading to conduct the present study. The main purpose and research questions of the research and its importance will be explained. There are some limitations of the research that needs to be stated. Finally some definitions of the terms and abbreviations will be given as they are used in this paper.

#### 1.1 General Background of the Study

*“When two people talk to each other, they do not just speak to the other to exchange information, they also see the other as an individual and as someone who belongs to a specific social group, for example a 'worker' and an 'employer' or a 'teacher' and a 'pupil'. This has an influence on what they say, how they say it, what response they expect and how they interpret the response. In other words, when people are talking to each other their social identities are unavoidably part of the social interaction between them”.* (Byram et. all, 2002, p. 9)

This quotation explains how language and society is related and what sociolinguistics, pragmatics and many other related research areas have tried to investigate so far. Even in a small society speaking the same language, people use various styles of speech according to the situation they are in or the people they are talking to. The way a student talks to his teacher is not the same as the way he talks to his mother. Or an employee's way of talking is not as formal to his colleagues as it is to his employer. Variety of language is shaped by society, culture and social identities. Native speakers naturally acquire this ability to make shifts in their language and to speak in a culturally and socially appropriate way as they are raised in that culture and develop identities in that society. The ability to use a language appropriately in a community is known as their *sociolinguistic competence* (Holmes, 2008).

Today the world is a place where we are likely to see a Chinese in a restaurant, French in the same office or a European studying in the same classroom. Countries are becoming more interconnected with international business, science, politics and economics. Learning a second language has moved from being a personal goal to being a significant means of intercultural relationships for a better position in local and global market, for a quality education and for awareness of rapid changes in technology and science.

The globalization of the world and the ease of reaching any person around the world has promoted the need for language learners to have interaction with people for various purposes and in many contexts; to understand the essence of language, communication, and culture; and to be able to use the new language for much the same purposes that can be served easily by the first language. In language education, the notion of 'communicative competence' addresses this matter by suggesting that language learners need to acquire not just linguistic competence but also the knowledge of what is 'appropriate' language, that is, *pragmatic competence* (Bachman, 1990). As an intercultural speaker, a second or foreign language learner should know when, why and how to say what to whom in an accurate, fluent and appropriate way (Hymes, 1972).

Sociolinguistic competence is one of the pillars of communicative competence and a component of *pragmatic competence* which also includes linguistic repertoire to use language functions, known as *speech acts*, appropriately in a social situation. However developing sociolinguistic competence in a second or foreign language is not as easy as in native language because cultural rules of speaking change greatly from one society to another; in other words, what is appropriate to say in one culture may be completely inappropriate in another culture in the same situation. The learners generally do not know these rules and use the rules of their native culture while communicating in the foreign language. This process may result in misunderstandings between the speech participants, and cause serious breakdowns in communication, which is known as *pragmatic failure* (Beebe, Takahashi, & Uliss-Weltz, 1990; Bouton, 1994; Eisenstein & Bodman, 1993; Kasper & Schmidt, 1996; Takahashi & Beebe, 1987; Thomas, 1983; Wolfson, 1989).

As an illustration of pragmatic failure, Rubin (1983) writes about an Arab student who visits an American family for the first time. During his visit, the host serves him some delicious sandwiches. When the host offers him more sandwiches, the Arab student refuses. But the host does not repeat the offer as he expected and consequently, “the Arab student sat there, confronted by some lovely sandwiches which he couldn’t eat” (p. 14). It can be easily understood that the confusion experienced by the student is a reflection of deep cultural behaviour as Arabs are taught to refuse food and drink repeatedly, and they expect that their host will also repeat the offer; indeed, offering just once can be interpreted as an insincere offer by Arab culture.

Another example of pragmatic failure as reported in *The New York Times* happened on April 17, 1996 caused a more disastrous airline crash that resulted in 160 people’s deaths. The Colombian air traffic controller misinterpreted the request of an American pilot for assistance over the Andean mountains in Colombia and so could not assist them, leading to the crash. It was found that the air traffic controller had “above average” grades on English proficiency tests, but his pragmatic competence was clearly ‘below average’ as indicated by the event (Hofmann, 2003).

Cultural variations in language are most obvious in the functional use of language known as speech acts such as requests, apology, complaints, compliments, invitations, thanking, etc. A number of cross cultural investigations of speech acts designed to measure learners’ sociolinguistic and pragmatic abilities in the target language showed a significant difference between native speakers’ and language learners’ speech act performances confirming that pragmatic failure is highly possible among speakers from different cultures (Cohen & Olshtain, 1981; Rubin, 1983; Blum-Kulka et al., 1989; Olshtain & Weinbach, 1993; Eisenstein & Bodman, 1993; etc.).

## **1.2 Statement of the Problem**

It is acceptable that social and cultural aspects of language are endless and cannot be learnt totally. Pragmatic failures occur even among native speakers in the same society because of individual differences in perceptions. Besides, English does not only belong to its native speakers but it is also a means of communication all around the world. Language speakers can meet and communicate with people from many varied cultures via English. This does not necessitate them to know all the cultural features of

the people they are talking to. However, they still need to be able to adjust their styles of speech according to the social context considering the universal rule of being polite.

It is a fact that learners of English as a foreign language (henceforth EFL) are more disadvantageous in acquiring sociolinguistic competence than the learners of English as a second language (henceforth ESL) since they do not have any interaction with the target culture and they only study the sociocultural concepts limited to the resources in their learning environment such as course books, teachers, media, etc. In the case of Turkey, where students start to learn English from their 4th year in the elementary level until they graduate from universities, it is still common to see that even students or graduates of English Language Teaching (henceforth ELT) departments with advanced linguistic skills report being unable to fully communicate in English despite all those years' work.

The present study is inspired from an experience of a Turkish graduate student who went to USA to study in a Master program of Applied Linguistics. She was accepted to the university with a high score on the TOEFL examination. Even with an advanced level of English knowledge, she stated that she faced many problems in daily conversations in the first weeks of her move to the USA. One of the most irritating situations she faced was when she asked an address to a group of boys on a train. After she asked the address, she said she heard boys laughing after her whispering that she was talking like a 'book'. This situation has raised the question whether EFL learners in Turkey with a perfect linguistic knowledge have difficulty in applying various language strategies in order to make their speech appropriate to the situation in terms of social distance, politeness and formality. Therefore this research has aimed to investigate sociolinguistic competence of Turkish EFL learners.

### **1.3 The Purpose of the Research**

The main purpose of the present study is to understand the sociolinguistic competence of 4<sup>th</sup> grade Turkish ELT students in responding to various social situations. The research is designed to investigate whether they can vary their speech according to the social distance and status of the hearer as well as being polite in both situations. To achieve this main goal, the research will be aimed at finding answers to the following questions:

Q1: How do Turkish EFL speakers deviate from the norms produced by native English speakers in their productions of the speech act sets of refusal and complaint;

a) in terms of variation in their preferences of strategies depending on the social distance or status of the Hearer?

b) in terms of variation in their use of sociolinguistic markers depending on the social distance or status of the Hearer?

Q2: How will the production of the non-native speakers be perceived by native speakers?

#### **1.4 The Importance of the Research**

Language teaching has gone far beyond teaching of pure grammar. Now with the ultimate purpose of communicative language teaching, language teachers are expected to bring social and cultural aspects of the target language to educate their students fully competent in communication. For such a purpose, the language teacher himself or herself has to be communicatively competent, that is, also sociolinguistic competent as an essential skill of good communication and communicative teaching.

Although there has been a substantial body of research on speech act strategies of both native and non-native speakers in Interlanguage pragmatics, these studies were rather narrow with their focus on one or two speech acts investigated by means of elicited data. While most studies investigated developmental effects on L2 speech act production (proficiency, time spent in target culture, age), some studies examined learners' pragmatic awareness and assessment of speech acts, but the most important Second Language Acquisition (henceforth SLA) issue that has constantly been referred in Interlanguage pragmatic research has been pragmatic transfer. (Kasper & Rose, 1999).

What is interesting about the results of these cross-sectional studies is that learners can provide similar speech act realization strategies, or conventions of means as native speakers, regardless of their proficiency level. They only differ from native



speakers in their lexical and structural preferences to apply these strategies. (Kasper & Rose, 1999).

Furthermore, most of these studies have been carried on ESL speakers but EFL learners are generally ignored where English is taught away from its culture. In Turkey a few studies and MA theses have been submitted on pragmatic competence of Turkish EFL learners but they are not enough in number to provide a development in Interlanguage pragmatics in Turkey.

The present study differs from these studies in that it does not only focus on one single aspect of speech acts. The focus is on how Turkish EFL speakers are different from native speakers in their speech act strategies in similar situations but for different hearers and how they modify the face-effects of their utterance using modality markers. Moreover, how these strategies are perceived by native speakers will be another aspect to be analyzed in this study.

### **1.5 Limitations of the Research**

The main limitation of the study is about the generalizability of the research because the research is limited to participants of the 50 4<sup>th</sup>-year students of the English Language Teaching Department at Gazi University and 25 American native speakers of English who are undergraduate students.

Another limitation of this research is that sociolinguistic features of language are too broad to test all of them. 12 discourse completion test items will be selected from some common contexts and social situations that a language learner can face while communicating in the target culture. Also, as the test will be in written form to test sociolinguistic competencies of learners, the actual communication performances are not discussed in this study.

As the selected data collection method of the study, Discourse Completion Tests have been criticized by researchers as it does not reveal real performances in an actual conversation. However, they are the most common methods in IP studies as they can provide extensive amount of data from more participants, thus giving more generalizable results and less time-consuming compared to other methods such as role plays, observations, tape recording etc. Still this test limits the results to only written

productions of participants, but as both groups have the same conditions, the validity of the research is increased.

## 1.6 Assumptions

There are some assumptions that have been considered throughout the study as follows:

- Turkish participants are assumed to be advanced-level English speakers as they are 4<sup>th</sup> year ELT students in the same university.
- Native participants are assumed to have similar cultural background and social status as they live in the same region and their ages range between 20 - 25.
- The Discourse Completion test to be administered will test actual success of the participants.
- All the participants are believed to give honest responses to the test.
- The American raters who will grade the participants' responses are assumed to be honest in their ratings.

## 1.7 Definition of the Terms

**Sociolinguistics:** In the most simple terms, sociolinguistics is the study of language and society relations. It is the study of the effect of any and all aspects of society, including cultural norms, expectations, and context, on the way language is used, and the effects of language use on society (Tamilenthi & Junior, 2011, p.12).

**Pragmatics:** It is usually defined as a subfield of linguistics which studies the ways in which context contributes to meaning.

**Pragmatic Competence:** It is defined as the knowledge of the linguistic resources available in a given language for realizing particular illocutions, knowledge of the sequential aspects of speech acts, and finally, knowledge of the appropriate contextual use of the particular language's linguistic resources. (Barron, 2003)

**Sociolinguistic Competence:** Sociolinguistic competence is the ability to interpret the social meaning of the choice of linguistic varieties and to use language with the appropriate social meaning for the communication situation. Sociolinguistics is a very broad discipline and the term *sociolinguistic competence* could be used much more broadly than it is here, where we have restricted its use to refer to the recognition and usage of appropriate varieties of language.

**Sociocultural Competence:** Sociocultural competence is the ability to use the appropriate sociocultural rules of speaking, by reacting in a culturally acceptable way in context and by choosing stylistically appropriate forms for that context.

**Speech Act:** A speech act is an act that a speaker performs when making an utterance that serves a function in communication such as apologizing, requesting, complimenting, refusing, etc. Speech acts include real-life interactions and require not only knowledge of the language but also appropriate use of that language within a given culture.

**Modality Markers:** They are defined as the linguistic resources that reflect the speaker's attitudes and opinions and serve certain function in a speech act as well. (Ho, 2006)

**Downgraders:** They are modality markers which play down the impact the speaker's utterance is likely to have on the hearer. (House & Kasper, 1981)

**Upgraders:** They are modality markers which increase the force of the impact an utterance is likely to have on the hearer. (House & Kasper, 1981)

## 1.8 Abbreviations

**ELT:** English Language Teaching

**ESL:** English as a Second Language

**EFL:** English as a Foreign Language

**TOEFL:** Test of English as a Foreign Language

**CEFR:** Common European Framework of Reference for Languages

**TSEFLs:** Turkish Speakers of English as a Foreign Language

**ENSs:** English Native Speakers

**FTA:** Face-threatening Acts

**DCT:** Discourse Completion Test

## **CHAPTER II**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **2.0 Introduction**

This chapter presents a selected review of theoretical and empirical studies related to the present study. The chapter begins with an overview of Sociolinguistics, Language Variation and a discussion of Communicative Competence which constitute the main framework of social studies of language use in its broadest terms. Then the field of Interlanguage Pragmatics and the notion of Pragmatic Competence are introduced for a better understanding of the origins of sociolinguistic competence studies in second and foreign language.

The chapter goes on with a detailed definition of sociolinguistic competence and its components. Finally, an amount of previous research and their results are presented and discussed in order to clarify the main purpose of the present study.

#### **2.1 Sociolinguistics and Language Variation**

On the basis of formal linguistics, a person endowed with a perfect linguistic knowledge could know the structural rules of a language and could show this knowledge in his performance for an ideal communication in a homogeneous community where everyone speaks alike. Chomsky was the first person who introduced the term `competence` in contrast to `performance` in his linguistic theory as a major development in formal linguistics. He described his linguistic theory in words which have been extensively quoted:

Linguistic theory is concerned primarily with an ideal speaker–listener, in a completely homogeneous speech-community, who knows its language perfectly and is unaffected by such grammatically irrelevant conditions as memory limitations, distractions, shifts of attention and interest, and errors (random or characteristic) in applying his knowledge of the language in actual performance (Chomsky, 1965, p. 3–4).

With the inception of sociolinguistics in the 1960s, the notion of linguistic competence and context-free treatment of language by formal linguistics has been strongly challenged by sociolinguistic theory since sociolinguistics has studied ‘language-in-use’ as it is used in its social context rather than ‘language-as-system’ removed from its social context (Moscoe, 1993, p. 6). The language of two people with the same knowledge of grammar even in a small society can vary according to many factors such as their identities, powers, genders, social backgrounds, cultures and situational factors. Also the same language has varieties from country to country, from region to region and even from individual to individual.

Sociolinguistics, therefore, has grown upon the idea to go beyond the mere syntactic investigation of linguistic systems and the interest to identify the factors that cause this variety of language in and inter societies. Sociolinguistics is the field that studies “the relation between language and society with the goal of better understanding of the structure of language and of how languages function in communication”. (Wardhaugh, 2006, p. 13).

Holmes (2008, p. 16) states that “the sociolinguist’s aim is to move towards a theory which provides a motivated account of the way language is used in a community, and of the choices people make when they use language”. According to Chambers (2003, p. 3), it is “the study of the social uses of language, and the most productive studies in the four decades of sociolinguistic research have emanated from determining the social evaluation of linguistic variants”. For Chambers (2003, p. 226), the central questions of sociolinguistics are: What is the purpose of the variation? How is it evaluated in the community? What do its variants symbolize in society? Fishman (1972, p. 46) suggests that everything about ‘who speaks (or writes) what language (or what language variety) to whom and when and to what end’ should be encompassed in the studies of Sociolinguistics.

The study of the language variation falls into two main types in Sociolinguistics (Downes, 1998). The first type involves looking at the large-scale social patterning of variation and change which seeks to investigate how language correlates across groups of speakers (inter-speaker variation) in terms of social categories such as gender, age, geography, ethnicity, power, etc. These large scale studies are also called *Correlational Sociolinguistics*, *Variation studies*, *Modern Urban Dialectology* or *Sociolinguistics*

*Proper* etc. which are largely associated with quantitative variation studies such as those conducted by Labov (1966) and Trudgill (1974). Labov investigated the pronunciation of /r/ after vowels in New York City and Trudgill investigated sixteen phonological differences in Norwich, England. They both suggested that variants are mostly determined by the level of formality of the situation as well as the influence of social class.

The second type of sociolinguistic studies looks at small-scale situational variations in the speech of individual speakers ('intra-speaker variation'; Schilling-Estes, 2002, p. 375). This type covers the fields of *Pragmatics*, *Conversation Analysis*, *The Ethnography of Communication*, *Discourse Analysis*, *Social Semiotics* and *Critical Linguistics*, etc. (Downes, 1998, p. 15).

The interest of research on intra-speaker variation is focused on stylistic variations. Style shifts occur on all the different levels of language organization, "ranging from the phonological and morpho-syntactical to the lexical and pragmatic/interactional, to paralinguistic features such as intonation, to non-linguistic elements of style such as hair, clothing, makeup, body positioning, and use of space" (Schilling-Estes 2002, p. 377). In his "Attention to Speech" model, Labov (1972) attempted to explain stylistic variation in terms of the amount of attention speakers pay to their speech. He found that speakers paid less attention to their speech in casual situations, resulting in a more informal speech style while in more formal situations, they were more careful to use a formal style.

Second Language Acquisition (SLA) studies have benefitted greatly from Sociolinguistics in various perspectives. Tarone (2007, p. 837) comments that Sociolinguistics is a well-established branch of linguistics that has a focus on the influence of society and social contexts on the way language is used. SLA studies with a sociolinguistic approach attempt to understand the connection between such social contextual variables such as addressee, subject or situation and the formal features of interlanguage production. (Tarone, 2007, p. 837).

In search of answers for a wide range of questions about second language acquisition and use, researchers have put into account theoretical grounds and research methods used in several related subfields, comprising Language Socialization, Cross-

cultural Communication, Conversation Analysis and Interlanguage Pragmatics (Bayley & Regan, 2004).

## 2.2 The Notion of Communicative Competence

There is clearly a wide range of variation in the speech of any one individual, but it is definite that variation also has certain bounds; “people are not free to do just exactly what he or she pleases so far as language is concerned. They cannot pronounce words or alter word order in sentences as they want or cannot use every word or sentence in the same way with every person” (Wardhaugh, 2006, p. 5). Native speakers of a language naturally acquire the sociopragmatic norms of the language as they grow up in the society of the language and they are highly sensitive to language variation, so they can easily make judgments of individuals according to their language use with their stereotypical regional/social dialects such as educated/uneducated, literate/illiterate, cool/nerd, rude/polite, intelligent/stupid, macho/effeminate (Moscoe, 1993, p. 9).

Learning a language in a way that enables one to use that language for a range of purposes requires more than learning lists of vocabulary items, syntactic paradigms, and native-like pronunciations (Schiffrin, 1996, p.323). What one acquires is knowledge that governs appropriate use of language in concrete situations of everyday life; one learns how to engage in conversation, shop in a store, be interviewed for a job, pray, joke, argue, tease, and warn, and even when to be silent (Gumprez, 1982).

In the field of language teaching, therefore, social aspects of language and language variation are one of the most important matters for both second and foreign language learners since native speakers are more tolerant to linguistic errors than violation of sociolinguistic rules. If a non-native speaker speaks fluently and accurately but not appropriately, native speakers see this lack of knowledge as impolite or unfriendly. (Trosborg, 1995).

In an attempt to explain how people acquire these social norms of linguistic behavior, Hymes (1972) introduced the term `*communicative competence*` with a strong criticism of `*linguistic competence*` of being inadequate to explain native speakers' ability to handle language variations and various uses of language in different contexts. Communicative competence includes both linguistic competence as knowledge of

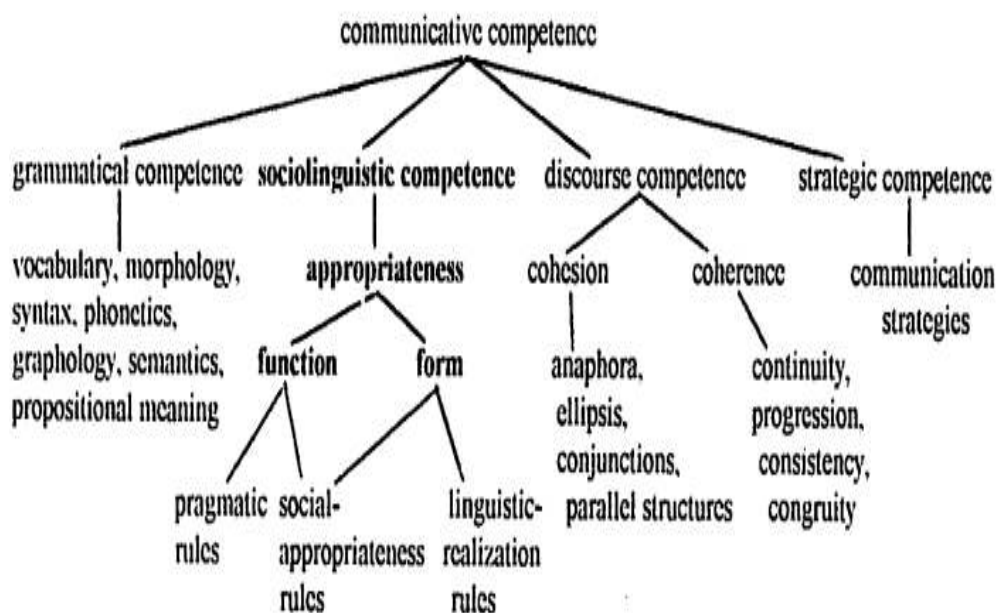


syntactic, semantic, phonological, morphological and lexical rules of language and sociolinguistic competence as the knowledge of appropriate language use in social context (Hymes, 1972). In line with Hymes' view, Halliday (1975, p. 145) asserts that only by looking at language in use or in its context of situation are we able to understand the functions served by a particular grammatical structure. Therefore, communicative competence has gained much attention and theoretically defined and remodeled by many applied linguists (Canale & Swain, 1980; Harley et. al., 1990; Bachman, 1990).

Canale & Swain (1980, p.20) made a broader description of communicative competence in the context of SLL as “a synthesis of knowledge of basic grammatical principles, knowledge of how language is used in social settings to perform communicative functions and knowledge of how utterances and communicative functions can be combined according to the principles of discourse”.

Later Canale (1983) divided communicative competence into four components as grammatical, sociolinguistic, discourse and strategic competencies. *Grammatical competence* is the mastery of L2 phonological and lexico-grammatical rules of sentence formation; that is, to be able to express and interpret literal meanings of utterances (e.g., acquisition of pronunciation, vocabulary, word and sentence meaning, construction of grammatical sentences, correct spelling). *Sociolinguistic competence* is the mastery of sociocultural rules of appropriate use of L2; that is, how utterances are produced and understood in different sociolinguistic contexts (e.g., understanding of speech act conventions, awareness of norms of stylistic appropriateness, the use of a language to signal social relationships, etc.). *Discourse competence* is the mastery of rules concerning cohesion and coherence of various kinds of discourse in L2 (e.g., use of appropriate pronouns, synonyms, conjunctions, substitution, repetition, marking of congruity and continuity, topic-comment sequence, etc.). Lastly *strategic competence* is the mastery of verbal and non-verbal communication strategies in L2 used when attempting to compensate for deficiencies in the grammatical and sociolinguistic competence or to enhance the effectiveness of communication (e.g., paraphrasing, how to address others when uncertain of their relative social status, slow speech for rhetorical effect, etc.)(Fig 1)

Canale (1983) - also the basis of Harley et. al. (1990)

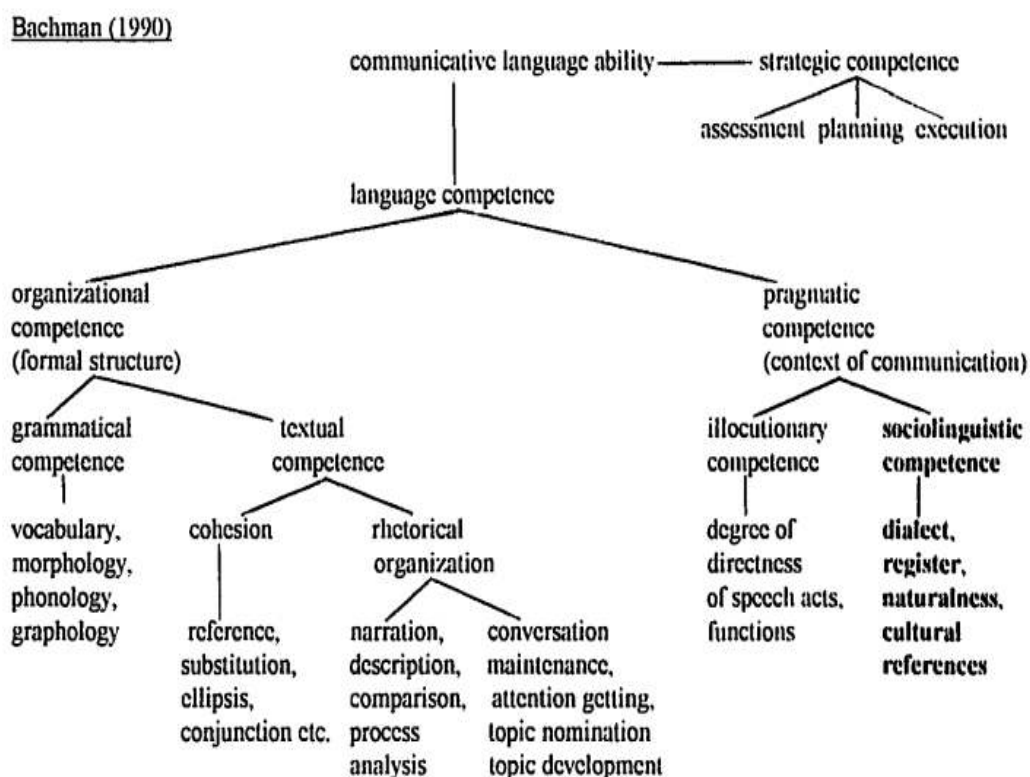


*Fig 1: Communicative Competence Model of Canale (1983)*

Bachman (1990) also proposed a more comprehensive framework of communicative language ability including three components; language competence, strategic competence and psycho-physiological mechanisms. In his framework, language competence refers to a set of specific knowledge used in communication. Strategic competence is the mental capacity to use language competencies and psycho-physiological mechanisms are described as the neurological and psychological processes involved in the actual use of language.

He also classifies language competence into two main types; organizational and pragmatic competencies as he demonstrates in a tree diagram to represent the hierarchical relationship among the components of language competence (Fig 2). Organizational competence refers to grammatical competence which includes the knowledge of vocabulary, morphology, syntax and phonology and textual competence which includes cohesion and rhetorical organization abilities. On the other hand, pragmatic competence covers sociolinguistic and illocutionary competencies. In his model, Bachman describes sociolinguistic competence as the sensitivity to dialectal varieties, registers, natural language and cultural norms and references in speech while

illocutionary competence is the degree of directness in using speech acts and communicative functions.



*Fig 2: Communicative Competence Model of Bachman (1990)*

All of the descriptions and models of communicative competence put a strong emphasis on the pragmatic, social and cultural aspects of language and include the component of sociolinguistic competence unexceptionally though they differ in their definitions and classifications. However, still none of them are clear enough at all since the field of sociolinguistics is a descriptive discipline and does not provide any explicit and concrete theories.

### 2.3 Interlanguage Pragmatics

Pragmatics has its foundations in language philosophy, which was developed as a result of ideas concerning the functions and use of language by philosophers such as Wittgenstein (1953: cited in Schauer, 2009, p. 6) and its first definition was developed by Morris (1938) with the words generally quoted as "the scientific study of the properties of signaling systems, whether natural or artificial" (quoted by Levinson,

1983, p. 1). Later the term was developed into Sociolinguistics and many other disciplines with various definitions from various perspectives according to researchers' theoretical backgrounds and research goals. It began to establish itself as an independent area of linguistic research only about 40 years ago (Schauer, 2009, p. 6).

As one of the fields which studies appropriate language use in terms of intraspeaker variation, *Pragmatics* tries to investigate speech "from the point of view of users, especially of the choices they make, the constraints they encounter in using language in social interaction and the effects their use of language has on other participants in the act of communication" (Crystal 1991, p. 240). It describes how people comprehend and produce speech acts in social interaction situations. It is not only focused on linguistic features but also investigates meaning in language use for the purpose of determining the relation and the difference between the intention and meaning of the utterances.

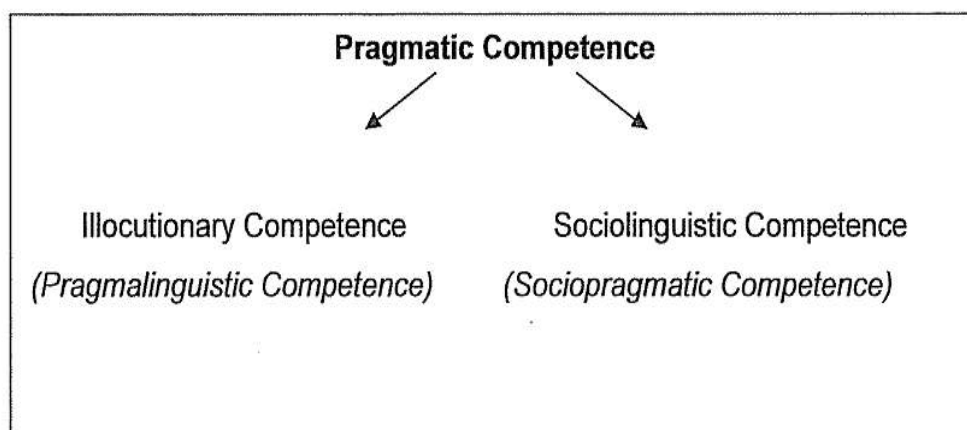
Interlanguage Pragmatics (henceforth ILP) is a subfield of Pragmatics which is defined as "the study of non-native speaker's use and acquisition of linguistic action patterns in a second language" (Kasper & Blum-Kulka, 1993, p. 3). It is regarded as a second-generation hybrid derived from two research traditions: second-language acquisition (SLA) and pragmatics (Kasper & Blum-Kulka, 1993). ILP is a sociolinguistic, psycholinguistic, or simply linguistic depending on the definition of the scope of pragmatics. So Kasper and Blum-Kulka, (1993) offer a broader definition of ILP arguing that "tying Interlanguage pragmatics to NNSs, or language learners may narrow its scope too restrictively" (p. 3), and include into ILP "the study of intercultural styles brought about through language contact, the conditions for their emergence and change, the relationship to their substrata, and their communicative effectiveness" (p. 4).

## **2.4 Pragmatic Competence**

Pragmatic competence as one of the key components of communicative competence models, is understood as "the knowledge of linguistic resources available in a given language for realizing particular illocutions, knowledge of the sequential aspects of speech acts and finally, knowledge of appropriate contextual use of the particular languages' linguistic resources" (Barron, 2003, p.10).

In communicative competence model of Canale and Swain (1980), pragmatic competence is termed as sociolinguistic competence and illustrated as the knowledge in terms of contextual appropriate language use, including “illocutionary competence or the knowledge of the pragmatic conventions for performing acceptable language functions. Bachman (1990, p. 90), in his model, assigns a strong position of pragmatic competence which embraces illocutionary and sociolinguistic competence.

In parallel with Bachman’s (1990) illocutionary and sociolinguistic competence, Leech (1983) introduces two dimensions of general pragmatics one of which is *pragmalinguistic features* and the other *sociopragmatic norms*.



In reference to Leech’s terms, Kasper and Rose (2002), defines pragmalinguistic competence as “the knowledge of particular linguistic resources which a given language provides for conveying communicative functions such as form, meaning and context including pragmatic strategies such as directness and indirectness, routines and a large range of linguistic forms which can intensify or soften communicative acts while sociopragmatic competence, which is the focus of the present study, is the ability to determine when or how to employ these resources in social contexts depending on a variety of factors, such as the interlocutors’ age, relative power, and level of familiarity as well as their goals and attitudes (Trosborg 1998, p. 239).

## 2.5 A definition of Sociolinguistic Competence

The models of communicative competence do not really provide a clear positioning of sociolinguistic competence since all pragmatic, sociolinguistic and discoursal elements play a great role in the appropriateness of speech in social contexts. It is impossible to consider and define sociolinguistic competence apart from other components of a larger discourse. Within the chaos of terms referring to appropriate speech in social context such as pragmatic, pragmalinguistic, sociopragmatic and sociolinguistic competence, the present study chooses to use the term ‘sociolinguistic competence’ as the domain of investigation since it refers to the manner in which elements of the social structure are encoded in language structure which is the main focus of this study.

Tarone and Swain (1995) define sociolinguistic competence as the ability of the members of a speech community to adapt their speech to the context in which they find themselves. According to Parkinson (1985), the social meaning of a communicative act expresses “who the speaker believes he is, who he believes the addressee is, what he thinks their relationship is, and what he thinks he is doing by saying what he is saying” (p. 5). Sociolinguistic competence is a precondition for being able to choose appropriate linguistic features as required by the situational context or being aware of the different variants one may select for communicative intent.

In his definition of sociolinguistic competence as the learner’s “knowledge of the sociocultural rules of language and discourse”, Brown (2000, p. 247) includes learners’ sensitivity to dialect or variety, choice of register, naturalness and knowledge of cultural references and figures of speech. As far as second or foreign language learners are concerned, dialectal differences are far beyond the scope of communicative language pedagogy as they are endless across societies. On the other hand, the concepts of ‘style’ and ‘register’, which are central elements of sociolinguistic competence in most communicative competence models, can be seen as significant features for investigating sociolinguistic appropriateness.

A speech community usually has formal and vernacular language styles and different language functions require different language forms and structures. This competence encompasses the understanding of the sociocultural principles that

determine the norms of appropriate behaviour and language use of a specific community, which is so difficult to teach in a classroom (Hinkel, 2001). Though, with the emergence of communicative language teaching, as Auger (2003) states, “many pedagogues now explicitly acknowledge that learners should be equipped to use the target language in a variety of different settings” (p. 79). Thus, many researchers have been interested in looking at this competence in order to define second or foreign language speakers’ difficulties in acquiring and using register or to develop “stylistic variation” (Dewaele, 2004).

### **2.5.1 CEFR and Sociolinguistic Competence**

In an attempt to define pedagogical objectives regarding the teaching and learning of intercultural competence, the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (henceforth CEFR) was published by the Council of Europe in 2001. The main purpose of the CEFR is to provide a "common basis for the elaboration of language syllabuses, curriculum guidelines, examinations, books, etc. across Europe", thus promoting international co-operation in the field of modern languages (Council of Europe, 2001, p. I).

CEFR devoted a detailed chapter on learners’ competences to define all the knowledge and requirements in the process of becoming an intercultural language user. As it states, “All human competences contribute in one way or another to the language user’s ability to communicate and may be regarded as aspects of communicative competence.” (Council of Europe, 2001, p. 101). The document includes two major groups of learners’ competences: general and communicative, recognizing that communicative competence alone is not sufficient for language learners to become efficient communicators.

General knowledge and competences closely related to language are:

–knowledge of the world (such as 'factual knowledge concerning the country or countries in which the language is spoken, such as its major geographical, environmental, demographic, economic and political features" (Council of Europe, 2001, p. 102);

–sociocultural knowledge (such as knowledge about everyday living, interpersonal relations, values, beliefs, attitudes, body language, social conventions and ritual behaviour);

–intercultural awareness (which entails "knowledge, awareness and understanding of the relation (similarities and distinctive differences) between the 'world of origin' and the 'world of the target community'", which, again, "includes an awareness of regional and social diversity in both worlds" (Council of Europe, 2001, p. 103);

–social skills, living skills, vocational and professional skills, leisure skills and intercultural skills that are closely related to the intercultural awareness

–existential competence (such as attitudes, motivations, values, beliefs, cognitive styles and personality factors);

–ability to learn, which includes language and communication awareness, general phonetic awareness and skills, study and heuristic skills.

Communicative language competences in CEFR include linguistic, sociolinguistic and pragmatic competences. Linguistic competences include lexical, grammatical, semantic, phonological, orthographic and orthoepic competences all of which describe linguistic resources that an intercultural speaker needs to have.

CEFR makes a clear distinguish between 'sociolinguistic competence' and 'pragmatic competence' although there is some overlap, especially where 'functional competence' is concerned. Two concepts treated in pragmatic competence are; 'discourse competence' which is the ability "to arrange sentences in sequence so as to produce coherent stretches of language" and includes both 'text coherence and cohesion' and 'turn-taking" and 'functional competence' which includes speech acts such as identifying, reporting, correcting, asking for information, answering, making suggestions or requests, warning, asking for help, etc. with a stress on the importance of spoken fluency defined in terms of the length of utterances and speech rate / tempo.



As for sociolinguistic competence, on the other hand, CEFR states that;

Sociolinguistic competence is concerned with the knowledge and skills required to deal with the social dimension of language use. As was remarked with regard to sociocultural competence, since language is a sociocultural phenomenon, much of what is contained in the Framework, particularly in respect of the sociocultural, is of relevance to sociolinguistic competence. The matters treated here are those specifically relating to language use and not dealt with elsewhere: linguistic markers of social relations; politeness conventions; expressions of folk-wisdom; register differences; and dialect and accent (Council of Europe, 2001, p. 118).

As linguistic markers of social relations, politeness conventions and register differences comprise the basis of the present study, they will be discussed in the following with more focus on their implications for second language studies.

Two other components of sociolinguistic competence in CEFR which will not be discussed in the scope of this study are `expressions of folk wisdom` and `dialect and accent`. `Expressions of folk wisdom` are mostly seen in idiomatic language and proverbs as a reflection of culture, values, clichés and beliefs. `Dialect and accent` includes the ability to recognize the linguistic markers of, for example, social class, regional provenance, national origin, ethnicity and occupational group. These linguistic markers are mostly lexical, phonological and grammatical elements of dialectal variation including vocal characteristics (rhythm, loudness, etc.), paralinguistics and body language (Council of Europe, 2001, p. 121).

Although it was found to be quite problematic to formulate, CEFR managed to provide a scale which incorporates elements of sociolinguistic appropriateness in order to define what abilities an intercultural speaker needs to have. (Fig. 3). According to the scale, the first two levels concerns only markers of social relations and politeness conventions. From Level B2, users begin to acquire an ability to cope with variation of speech, plus a greater degree of control over register and idiom.

Since the different levels are not easy to define, the CEPR also adds that, where necessary, teachers and users should consider supplementing the above scale indicating which forms learners should recognize, understand or use, as politeness conventions, registers, greetings and terms of address, it also states that during the first learning

phases, until about the B1 level, a fairly neutral register is the most suited, with learners gradually increasing their control over more formal or more colloquial registers, first as a receptive skill (Lochtman & Kappel, 2008, p. 57).

|   | SOCIOLINGUISTIC APPROPRIATENESS                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
|---|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 2 | <p>Has a good command of idiomatic expressions and colloquialisms with awareness of connotative levels of meaning.</p> <p>Appreciates fully the sociolinguistic and sociocultural implications of language used by native speakers and can react accordingly.</p> <p>Can mediate effectively between speakers of the target language and that of his/her community of origin taking account of sociocultural and sociolinguistic differences.</p>                                                                                                                       |
| 1 | <p>Can recognize a wide range of idiomatic expressions and colloquialisms, appreciating register shifts; may, however, need to confirm occasional details, especially if the accent is unfamiliar.</p> <p>Can follow films employing a considerable degree of slang and idiomatic usage.</p> <p>Can use language flexibly and effectively for social purposes, including emotional, allusive and joking usage.</p>                                                                                                                                                      |
| 2 | <p>Can express him or herself confidently, clearly and politely in a formal or informal register, appropriate to the situation and person(s) concerned</p> <p>Can with some effort keep up with and contribute to group discussions even when speech is fast and colloquial.</p> <p>Can sustain relationships with native speakers without unintentionally amusing or irritating them or requiring them to behave other than they would with a native speaker.</p> <p>Can express him or herself appropriately in situations and avoid crass errors of formulation.</p> |
| 1 | <p>Can perform and respond to a wide range of language functions, using their most common exponents in a neutral register.</p> <p>Is aware of the salient politeness conventions and acts appropriately.</p> <p>Is aware of, and looks out for signs of, the most significant differences between the customs, usages, attitudes, values and beliefs prevalent in the community concerned and those of his or her own.</p>                                                                                                                                              |
| 2 | <p>Can perform and respond to basic language functions, such as information exchange and requests and express opinions and attitudes in a simple way.</p> <p>Can socialize simply but effectively using the simplest common expressions and following basic routines.</p> <p>Can handle very short social exchanges, using every day polite forms of greeting and address. Can make and respond to invitations, suggestions, apologies, etc</p>                                                                                                                         |
| 1 | <p>Can establish basic social contact by using the simplest everyday polite forms of: greetings and farewells; introductions; saying please, thank you, sorry, etc.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |

*Fig. 3 Sociolinguistic Appropriateness Scale (Council of Europe, 2001)*

The present study will try to investigate sociolinguistic competence in terms of register, style and politeness conventions because the other elements, `expression of

folk wisdom` and `dialect and accent` are the components which are difficult for language learners to acquire in a classroom environment without engaging with the language in various social groups. In the following a brief overview of the concepts used in literature of sociolinguistic and pragmatic competence and related research will be given with reference to second or foreign language learning.

### **2.5.2 Linguistic Markers of Social Relations**

Linguistic markers of social relations are described in CEFR as the appropriate use and choice of greetings (*hello, hi, see you, etc.*), address forms (*sir, madam, Mr., Mrs., darling, etc.*) and expletives (*Oh my God!, what the hell!, etc.*) and conventions for turn-taking. These markers are divergent in different languages and cultures but choices of appropriate linguistic markers depend universally on the power and the solidarity between the speaker and the addressee. Hudson (1996, p. 122) states that these terms reflect the social relation between the speaker and the hearer in terms of power and solidarity which concern the social distance between people and how much experience and how many social characteristics they have shared (religion, gender, age, race, occupation, etc.).

### **2.5.3 Register**

Register is one of the basic terms in Sociolinguistics and many definitions for the term has been suggested in the literature so far. In its most common sense, Crystal (1991) describes the term as a variety of language defined according to its use in social situations. In addition to the term register, the terms *genre*, *text type*, and *style* have been used to refer to language varieties associated with situational uses. All these terms are distinguished from dialect, which is used to refer to language varieties associated with groups of users (as determined by geographic region, education, social class, sex, and so on) (Lochtman & Kappel, 2008).

According to the basic working assumption implicit in the sociolinguistic study of register variation, “a communication situation that recurs regularly in a society (in terms of participants, setting, communicative functions, and so forth) will tend overtime to develop identifying markers of language structure and language use, different from the language of other communication situations” (Biger & Finegan, 1994, p. 20). Linguistic differences correlate with different occasions of use depending on whether people are

addressing someone older or younger, of the same sex or opposite sex, of the same or higher or lower status, and so on; whether they are speaking on a formal occasion or casually; whether they are participating in a religious ritual, a sports event, or a courtroom scene.

Register has many linguistic classifications in language variation studies of sociolinguistics such as standard vs. non-standard speech, formal vs. informal, written vs. spoken, monologues and sermons and registers of specific fields like law, medicine, sports etc.

For language learners, acquaintance with registers and ability to make shifts in registers is a part of their sociolinguistic competence. According to Tarone and Swain (1995, p. 172), they need to be able to say “Well, come on guys, let’s go get some burgers’ and stuff like that” To interpret this utterance, at the very least learners need to understand that the invitation is casual and, in vernacular US and Canadian English, “guys” may include both males and females.

In CEFR, register shifts is only dealt with in terms of levels of formality in CEFR for language learners as follows:

- frozen, e.g. Pray silence for His Worship the Mayor!
- formal, e.g. May we now come to order, please.
- neutral, e.g. Shall we begin?
- informal, e.g. Right. What about making a start?
- familiar, e.g. O.K. Let’s get going.
- intimate, e.g. Ready dear?

CEFR suggests that “in early learning (say up to level B1), a relatively neutral register is appropriate, unless there are compelling reasons otherwise. It is generally that register that native speakers are likely to use towards and expect from foreigners” (Council of Europe, 2001, p. 120). Formal and informal registers should be practiced in the class to avoid inappropriate use of them but more frozen or intimate registers may be a receptive competence for a long period of time and may be developed through the

reading of different text-types, particularly novels or long time usage of the language in its real social environment.

#### **2.5.4 Speech Acts**

Speech acts play a vital role as a means of defining what sociolinguistic and pragmatic competence actually refers in cross cultural communication. Successful communication, whether within a culture or between people of different cultures, requires an understanding of the meaning of speech acts within a community as well as the ability to interpret the meaning of speakers' uses of different linguistic forms, many of which are variable. (Bayley, 2007, p. 142).

A speech act is defined as linguistic action, or an utterance that serves a function in communication. J. L. Austin (1962) was the first to design a classification system of the various speech acts. Austin's statement that "in saying something we are doing something" (p. 12) constitutes the basis of speech act theory. Austin argues that the nature of utterances is in fact performative rather than constative, that is to say, "the minimal unit of human communication is not a linguistic expression but rather the performance of certain types of acts (e.g., requesting, apologizing, promising, and thanking)". That is, by saying "thank you", one is not only stating a fact that can be verified as either true or false but also performing an act of thanking; in other words, utterances are in themselves acts.

Austin (1962, p. 120) distinguished "the locutionary act (and within it the phonetic, the phatic, and the rhetoric acts) which has a meaning; the illocutionary act which has a certain force in saying something; the perlocutionary act which is the achieving of certain effects by saying something". For example, in the utterance, "it is cold in here," the locutionary act is the speaker's statement about the temperature in a certain location. At the same time, the illocutionary act is a possible request for the door to be opened. It becomes a perlocutionary act if someone is persuaded to go and open the door (Mey, 2001, p. 96).

In an attempt to repair and develop Austin's work on speech acts, Searle (1969), accepted as the founder of speech act theory, defined speech acts as Austin's 'illocutionary acts' and he defined five categories of illocutionary acts as follows:

1. Representatives, which commit the speaker to the truth of the expected proposition (e.g., asserting, concluding);

2. Directives, which are attempts by the speaker to get the addressee to do something (e.g., requesting, questioning);

3. Comissives, which commit the speaker to some future course of action (e.g., promising, threatening, offering);

4. Expressives, which express a psychological state (e.g., thanking, apologizing, complimenting, welcoming);

5. Declarations, which affect immediate change in the institutional state of affairs and which tend to rely on elaborate extralinguistic institutions (e.g., christening, declaring war).

Searle (1969) provided twelve criteria for a better classification of speech acts but he only used four out of twelve in his five-part classification:

- Illocutionary point (the force of speech act)
- Direction of fit (the way the speech fits in the world)
- Expressed psychological state (of the speaker: a belief may be expressed as a statement, an assertion, a remark etc.)
- Content (what the speech act is about: eg., 'promise' or 'refusal' to attend the party has the same content.) (Mey, 2001, p. 119).

Mey (2001, p. 120) comments that two other criteria of Searle that he never used should be included for a pragmatic understanding of speech acts:

- Reference (to both speakers and hearers)
- Contextual conditions of speech acting, that is, the societal framework in which a speech act has to be performed in order to be valid).

In accordance with Austin's framework, Searle (1969, p.66 - 67) also systematized a set of rules called *felicity conditions* which performatives must meet. These felicity conditions are:

- preparatory conditions, (related to whether the person performing a speech act has the authority to do so
- sincerity conditions (relate to the degree of sincerity with which a speech act is performed), and
- propositional content conditions (refers to the content of what is being uttered)
- Essential conditions relate to the way the speaker, having performed a speech act, is committed to a certain kind of belief or behavior.

Austin's speech acts and Searle's speech act theory have been criticized by many linguists for their incompleteness, fallacies and contradictions (see Strawson, 1969; Geis, 1995; Thomas, 1995; Barron, 2003; Masaki, 2004; Levinson, 1983; Mey, 2001; Wierzbicka, 1991; etc.), though, it is still the basic framework of functional analysis of language. Speech act studies have contributed greatly to the development of interlanguage pragmatics and sociolinguistics by providing useful insights into cultural and cross-cultural variation of language use.

A considerable amount of research into the production and realization of different speech act sets shows that certain functions are formulaic, e.g. apologies, compliments and invitations, but that in all cases, the role and relative status of the interlocutors constrain the selection of various linguistic structures in particular social contexts. In general, this shows that the second language performer must be aware of underlying values of the speech to communicate effectively (Piotrowska, 1987).

As Gass and Selinker (1994, p. 183) states:

All languages have a means of performing speech acts and presumably speech acts themselves are universal, yet the 'form' used in specific speech acts varies from culture to culture. Thus, the study of second language speech acts is concerned with the linguistic possibilities available in languages for speech act realization and the effect of cross-cultural

differences on second language performance and on interpretation by native speakers of second language speech acts.

#### **2.5.4.1 Speech Act of Refusals**

One of the speech acts which have the tendency to cause communication breakdowns is the speech act of refusal. They are recognized as face-threatening acts (Brown & Levinson, 1987) because the speaker tries to say `no` directly or indirectly to engage in an act initiated by an interlocutor and pragmatic failure is highly possible when the speaker cannot use an appropriate level of directness, and the refused person is offended (Chen, Ye, & Zhang, 1995).

The level of directness and strategies preferred depend on the culture ( a refusal can be regarded as rude while in another, it can be something normal.), the content (e. g. refusing an offer, request, invitation or suggestion) and some sociolinguistic variables such as social status of the interlocutor (e. g. high, equal or low status) (Wannaruk, 2008). According to Searle, “the illocutionary point for refusals is the intention of the speaker that the hearer takes the speaker`s utterance as violating his expectation or lack of appreciation of the hearer`s acknowledgement” (Bach & Harnish, 1979, p.53).

Interlanguage Pragmatics has provided many contrastive studies of refusal strategies contributing to understand the classification and cultural variation of refusal strategies (Beebe, Takahashi & Uliss-Weltz, 1990; Bardovi – Harlig & Hartford, 1991; Chen, 1996).

The major contribution was done by Beebe, Takahashi & Uliss-Weltz, 1990 who proposed a taxonomy of refusal strategies (see Table 3). In their study, which was carried out with a DCT and applied to 20 Japanese native speakers and 20 Japanese & 20 American English speakers to assess pragmatic transfer, they found evidence of pragmatic transfer from Japanese in the sequencing of semantic formulas, the frequency of semantic formulas and the content of semantic formulas.



#### **2.5.4.2 Speech act of Complaints**

Complaints are another face-threatening speech act which “a speaker expresses displeasure or annoyance-censure- as a reaction to a past or ongoing action, the consequences of which are perceived by the speaker as affecting her unfavorably” as defined by Olstain and Weinbach (1993, p. 108).

Complaints are not easy to express because they might be offensive or even destroy the relationship. It is difficult for the speaker to choose between uttering his/her feelings or keeping the harmony. So the speaker has to decide what realization pattern to use for doing the speech act when faced with that choice. S/he can prefer between direct or indirect complaint strategies and even avoid complaining at all. Direct complaining is more risky as it is mostly confrontational while indirect complaints function as social strategies to keep rapport and solidarity (Ruhil, 1998, p. 64).

A number of cross cultural studies on complaint strategies have been carried out including the studies of Murpy and Neu (1996), Olstain and Weinbach (1993), and House and Kasper (1981). A general finding of these studies is that proficiency is a factor in the severity and length of the complaints. Lower level speakers are less offensive and face-threatening than advanced speakers. Another general finding is that the complaint patterns are changed according to the social distance or status of the hearer. While talking to a person who has equal or lower-status in the relationship, more direct complaints are preferred whereas indirect complaints are more common with a socially-higher class.

Complaints are not polite by nature and the way of expressing a complaint or its influence is culture-dependent. A complaint can be regarded as rude or intolerable in a society while the same complaint does not give any harm to the relationship. But the tendency of L2 speakers to make pragmatic transfer from their L1 might lead to serious consequences which they did not actually intend.

#### **2.5.4.3 Modality Markers**

Many speech act realization studies have found that speech acts may sometimes turn out universal but it is the linguistic choices of speakers which make difference among native and non-native speakers.

As the speech act is concerned about doing things in language as defined by Austin (1962), people can modulate their speech behaviour directly or aggressively according to their opinion or attitude towards the proposition or event. Modality markers can be described as linguistic forms which are chosen by the speaker reflecting his / her opinion or attitude and serving certain functions affecting the politeness of speech (Ho, 2006).

House and Kasper (1981), in their investigation of politeness conventions in German and English, elicited data from German and English students by asking them to role play for 24 situations varying along authority and social distance parameters. They identified eight levels of directness and certain politeness markers which differentiated the level of directness. Borrowing the classification of House and Kasper, Trosborg (1987) made her major classification of linguistic markers and concluded that use of modality markers increased with proficiency and she also claimed that “the reason why learners did not appear as polite as native speakers even though the same apology strategy was used was due to inferior linguistic means for modulating attitudinal tone of a given strategy” (p. 162). Modality markers are distinguished in two main categories;

Downgraders serve to reduce the impact of a face-threatening speech act on the hearer (Trosborg, 1995, p. 327) or reduce the severity or directness level of a refusal or complaint in an attempt to seem more polite.

Upgraders, on the contrary, increases the impact of a speech act on the hearer (Trosborg, 1995, p. 327), helping to make a complaint more direct or severe or convince the hearer about an excuse or regret for a speech act of request or refusal.

### **2.5.5 Politeness**

After the emergence of speech act theory, the notion of politeness became one of the most disputed elements of speech act studies of pragmatics. Although it is a fact that every culture has its own way of being polite, it is the universal fact that one must be polite for a regular communication no matter what language he or she uses. As Koike (1992) notes, politeness is a social phenomenon that constitutes the interrelationship between linguistic form, function and sociocultural norms.

Over the past two decades, many researchers (e.g., Leech, 1983; Brown & Levinson, 1987; Fraser, 1990 etc.) have studies on politeness strategies in various cultural contexts to provide a universal definition of politeness.

Lakoff defines politeness as forms of behavior that have been developed in societies in order to reduce friction in personal interaction (1973). Similarly, according to Leech, politeness is the ability of people to engage in socio-communicative interactions in communities in an atmosphere of relative harmony (1983, p. 104). Brown and Levinson (1987) suggest that communication consists of possibly challenging and face-threatening acts and politeness is the 'readdressive action taken to counter-balance the disruptive effect of these acts'. Another similar definition is that politeness is "one of the constraints on human interaction, whose purpose is to consider others' feelings, establish levels of mutual comfort, and promote rapport" (Hill, Ide, Ikuta, Kawasaki, & Ogino, 1986, p. 149).

There are four major perspectives on the treatment of politeness: the social-norm view; the conversational-maxim view; ; the conversational-contract and view the face- saving view.

Social norm view assumes that each society has its own standards with more or less explicit rules that determine people's behaviors, states of affairs, or ways of thinking in a cultural context. Politeness occurs when an action is in accord with these rules but impoliteness arises when action is to the contrary. (Fraser 1990, p. 220).

Conversational-maxim view is based on Grice's (1975) influential work on the cooperative principle (CP) and its conversational maxims. Grice (1975) argued that because individuals mutually share common goals in their conversations, like conveying the message clearly, their conversations are governed by a CP as Grice suggests "make your contribution such as is required, at the stage at which it occurs, by the accepted purpose or direction of the talk exchange in which you are engaged" (cited in Fraser 1990, p. 221). Four maxims are associated with the CP:

1. Maxim of Quantity: Make your contribution as informative as is required; do not make your contribution more informative than is required.

2. Maxim of Quality: Do not say what you believe to be false; do not say that for which you lack adequate evidence.

3. Maxim of Relation: Be relevant.

4. Maxim of Manner: Avoid obscurity of expression; avoid ambiguity; be brief; be orderly. (Mey, 2001, p. 72).

Fraser (1990, p. 221) explains CP in a simpler way that if a speaker wants to communicate, s/he should say what s/he wants to say, when s/he needs to say and in a way that s/he would like to say.

Grice (1975) related a set of more specific maxims and sub-maxims with CP which serve as guidelines for 'rational' linguistic usage as distinct from grammatical rules. Fraser explains that with the words "Whereas the violation of a grammar rule results in ungrammaticality and the assessment not 'knowing' the language, violation of a conversational maxim may be accepted as signaling certain speaker intentions" (1990, p. 222). According to Grice, violating or "flouting" one or more of the maxims signals the use of conversational implicatures, defined as "non-explicit messages intended by the speaker to be inferred by the hearer" (Fraser, 1990, p. 222).

In line with Grice's CP, the third approach, the conversational-contract view was developed by Fraser (1975) and Fraser and Nolen (1981). This view claims that what speakers can expect from one another is initially determined by certain rights and obligations that they bring with themselves and these rights and obligations may deviate greatly in the course of time and according to the context (cited in Fraser, 1990, 223). A child, for example, is not allowed to authorize a parent to do something; two close friends do not give orders to each other; an employee cannot criticize an employer. In short, we start and continue a conversation with the awareness of our current conversational contract. Current terms and conditions of the conversational contract between speakers constitute the framework of being polite at every turn and the violation of the contract can be considered as impolite or rude (Fraser 1990, p. 233).

The last approach, the face-threatening view which is definitely the best known of the recent approaches on account of politeness was developed by Brown and

Levinson (1987). The term 'face' was first defined by Goffman (1967) as "the public self-image that every member wants to claim for himself" (as cited in Brown & Levinson, 1987, p. 61). Based on Goffman's concept of face, Brown & Levinson proposed two principal types of politeness as *negative face* and *positive face*, which reflect two basic and universal desires:

*Negative Face* is "the want of every 'competent adult member' that his action be unimpeded by others" (Brown & Levinson, 1987, p. 62) ... [the] want to have his freedom of action unhindered and his attention unimpeded" (p. 129).

*Positive Face* is "the want of every member that his wants be desirable to at least some others" (p. 62) ... [the] perennial desire that his wants (or the actions/acquisitions/values resulting from them should be thought of as desirable" (p. 101).

Since face is so vulnerable that it can be lost, maintained, or enhanced, most participants will defend their face if threatened, the assumption is made that it is generally in everyone's best interest to maintain each other's face and to act in such ways that others are made aware that this is one's intention. Although everyone is motivated to maintain each other's positive or negative face individuals; requesting, disagreeing, complaining or criticizing are included in the nature of human interaction. Brown and Levinson (1987) claim that these kinds of acts are inherently face-threatening acts (FTAs). They proposed four kinds of FTAs as follows:

1. Acts threatening to the hearer's negative face, that is, the claim to privacy, freedom of action, and other elements of personal autonomy (e.g., requesting, ordering, advising, or threatening).
2. Acts threatening to the hearer's positive face, that is, the self-image and the self-respect a person has (e.g., complaining, criticizing, or disagreeing).
3. Acts threatening to the speaker's negative face (e.g., accepting an offer or accepting thanks).
4. Acts threatening to the speaker's positive face (e.g., apologizing or accepting compliments). (p. 65–68).

Brown & Levinson (1987, p. 74ff) also proposed three interdependent variables to determine the degree of seriousness of a face-threatening act and to assess the degree of politeness required in a given interaction. These variables are; the social distance, the relative power, and the absolute ranking. Social distance indicates the shared familiarity and solidarity between communicators. Relative power refers to the degree of which the speaker may impose on the hearer due to the power difference between the two parties. Finally, absolute ranking stands for the right of the speaker to perform the act, and the degree to which the hearer welcomes the imposition. Brown and Levinson (1987) suggest that speakers apply some strategies to manage FTAs. (Fig. 4)

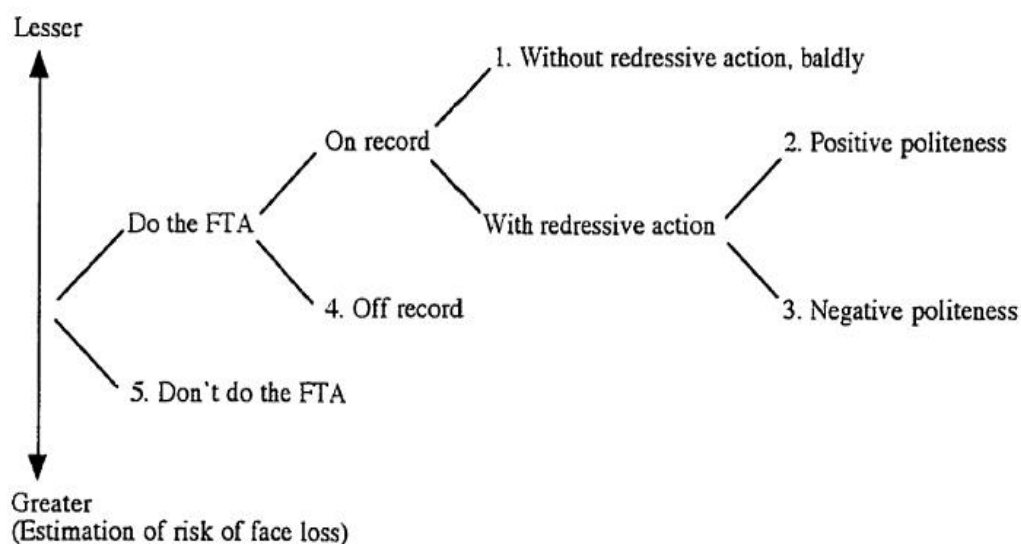


Figure 4. Possible FTA strategies (Brown & Levinson, 1987, p. 60).

The first stage is to decide whether to perform the FTA or not. If the speaker decides to perform the FTA, the next decision is to use off-record, or on-record strategy. Off-record strategies are usually performed by means of an indirect speech act. On-record strategy without redressive action is performed by means of a direct speech act (e.g., "Turn on the TV"). On the other hand, on-record acts with redressive action can be performed with either positive politeness strategies or negative politeness strategies. Positive politeness strategies are used to satisfy the listener's desire to be liked or approved, (e.g., "How about turning on the TV?"). Negative politeness strategies are used to signal regard for the listener's freedom of action (e.g., "Can you turn on the TV?").

Although several researchers (e.g., Hill et al., 1986; Ide, 1989; Matsumoto, 1988) have criticized Brown and Levinson's theory of politeness as being not universal but specific to European and American cultures in some aspects, it is still the most commonly accepted theory of politeness.

In line with this theory, CEFR (Council of Europe, 2001, p. 119) suggests negative and positive politeness conventions as a component of sociolinguistic competence of second or foreign language speakers. Since they vary from one culture to another and are a common source of inter-ethnic misunderstanding, CEFR lists some conventions that a learner needs to be aware of and be able to use:

1. 'positive' politeness, e.g.:

- showing interest in a person's well being;
- sharing experiences and concerns, 'troubles talk';
- expressing admiration, affection, gratitude;
- offering gifts, promising future favours, hospitality;

2. 'negative' politeness, e.g.:

- avoiding face-threatening behaviour (dogmatism, direct orders, etc.);
- expressing regret, apologising for face-threatening behaviour (correction, contradiction, prohibitions, etc.);
- using hedges, etc. (e.g. 'I think', tag questions, etc.);

3. appropriate use of 'please', 'thank you', etc.;

4. impoliteness (deliberate flouting of politeness conventions), e.g.:

- bluntness, frankness;
- expressing contempt, dislike;
- strong complaint and reprimand;

- venting anger, impatience;
- asserting superiority.

## 2.6 Pragmatic Failure

Research in ILP has shown that native speakers and nonnative speakers are different in their speech act performances because of different sociolinguistic skills. This difference can sometimes cause misunderstanding or a breakdown in a conversation between the two group of speakers which is called as pragmatic failure in the literature.

Pragmatic failure occurs when the hearer perceives the speaker's force of utterance as other than the speaker actually intended (Thomas, 1983). Thomas draws on two principle types of pragmatic failure.

The first one is pragmalinguistic failure which is caused by gaps in the linguistic encoding of pragmatic force, resulting from inaccurate or inappropriate linguistic forms. Pragmalinguistic failure can stem from interlanguage-specific errors as well as pragmatic transfer which is the interference of the L1 of the speaker (Barron, 2003). As an example, introducing oneself on the phone by saying "Hi, I'm Sarah!" instead of "Hi, this is Sarah!" is a pragmalinguistic failure because of the wrong choice of linguistic form (Nelson, Carson, Al Batal & El Bakary, 2002).

"Sociopragmatic failure", the second type of pragmatic failure is about knowing "what to say" and "whom to say it to" (Thomas, 1983). Many misunderstandings can occur as a result of cross-culturally different perceptions of what constitutes appropriate linguistic behaviour regarding what Thomas (1983) terms "size of imposition," "taboos, cross-culturally different assessments of relative power or social distance," and "value judgments."

Sociopragmatic failure is seen as more serious than pragmalinguistic failure since lack of knowledge about sociocultural conventions and norms can cause one to be valued as impolite, rude, arrogant, etc. Sociocultural conventions are encoded in language and they cannot be separated. Therefore, a language learner needs to know



social implications of the language they use in order to be able to express themselves better.

## **2.7 Studies on Measuring Sociolinguistic Competence**

Current interest in the communicative competence of second and foreign language learners has resulted in the development of research into the pragmatic rules determining speech act components, the sociolinguistic rules which affect the choices open to a speaker when producing these speech acts in different social contexts and into how sociocultural constraints can be transferred across cultures.

After the advent of communicative approaches to language teaching, researchers have concentrated on finding ways of testing the components of communicative competence including learners' sensitivity to sociolinguistic appropriateness. The first study to test whether a sociolinguistic trait can be identified as an independent component in learners' language proficiency was conducted by Bachman and Parker (1982).

In their study, Bachman and Parker (1982) examined the construct validity of some tests of components of communicative competence and of a hypothesized model. Three distinct traits-linguistic competence, pragmatic competence and sociolinguistic competence- were regarded as components of communicative competence. They used a multitrait - multimethod design, in which each of the three hypothesized traits was tested using four methods: an oral interview, a writing sample, a multiple-choice test and a self-rating. 116 adult non-native speakers of English from various language and language-learning backgrounds participated in the study. The oral interview included a short formal oral presentation on a given topic in front of a formal listener and a role-play with an informal interviewer. The writing task consisted of several writing samples like a formal letter, a picture description, a love letter and etc. They were analysed with a five-point rating scale and a four-point Likert scale was used to elicit subjects' perception of their sociolinguistic ability. Confirmatory factor analysis was used to examine the plausibility of several causal models, involving from one to three trait factors. The results indicate that the model which best fits the data includes a general and two specific trait factors-grammatical/pragmatic competence and sociolinguistic

competence. The relative importance of the trait and method factors in the various tests used is also indicated.

Tanaka and Kawade (1982) investigated the notion of politeness as perceived by native speakers of English and advanced learners of English. They produced interactional situations and then gave six possible responses for each situation. The subjects were also given ten people with different distance and social status to whom they were to respond. Subjects were to choose the most appropriate strategy for each relationship. The results suggested that the learner's ability of judging politeness in the target language does not necessarily mean that he can use politeness strategies appropriately in actual communication situations.

Raffaldini (1988) discussed that Oral Proficiency Interview (OPI), a popular test to measure the ability of learners to communicate in a foreign language, failed to measure important aspects of communicative ability. As an alternative measure, he applied two types of Situation Tests, a multiple-choice situation test and an oral situation test, to American university students who had spent a year abroad studying French. The objective was to determine the changes in the communicative skills of the students during the year after their return to the United States. The multiple-choice test included 30 situations with 4 items one of which is correct response formed by the most common responses of native speakers and three items were selected according to non-native speakers' incorrect responses. In the oral test, subjects were given 20 situations for which students were to give 3 or 4-sentence responses. Five-point or three-point rating scales were used to analyze sociolinguistic competence of the subjects in four dimensions: overall appropriateness, tone, cohesion and coherence of appropriateness. According to the results, the researcher claimed that Situation Tests can provide a more complete assessment of communicative ability.

As another large-scale project using multitrait - multimethod analysis to assess sociolinguistic competence of non-native speakers, The Development of Bilingual Proficiency Project (Harley, Allen, Cummins & Swain, 1990) was conducted to determine whether the traits hypothesized as key components of bilingual proficiency - grammatical, discourse and sociolinguistic competence-, could be established empirically. The test designed to evaluate the sociolinguistic trait assessed students' ability to produce and recognize socially appropriate language in context. 6 French

immersion students were given an oral test which consisted of 12 slides of situations with different levels of formality. Subjects were supposed to give appropriate responses to the situations with a request, an offer or a complaint. It was aimed to determine how subjects could shift register, using formal markers of politeness in formal situations and being less formal but still polite in informal situations. In the multiple-choice test, subjects were to choose the most appropriate response among three grammatically accurate choices for expressing a given speech act. The writing task required subjects to write three notes, one formal letter to a higher-status person and two informal notes to a close friend and a family member. Taking the native speaker responses as the baseline for analysis, the results showed that the differences between the formal and informal situations in the responses of French immersion students were smaller than native speakers'. Subjects were found to be more likely to use formal markers in both formal and informal situations.

Baker (1990) investigated the level of sociolinguistic competence of E.S.L. students in their responses for various situational contexts and the effects of age, gender, cultural group, the amount of time spent in the U.S., amount of time spent studying English, the students' perception of their own English language proficiency on one's level of sociolinguistic competence. His study employed a quasi-experimental post-test control group design which examined factors that affect sociolinguistic competence of E.S.L. students in the target language and culture. One hundred and sixty international ESL students and forty-eight U.S. native English speaking students participated in the study. Responses of US native English speakers were used as the baseline data to form the test items selected according to their 80% agreement as to what they considered appropriate or inappropriate for each given situation, then ESL students were to make judgments of each item as appropriate or not. The results showed that while age and gender had negligible effects, the amount of time studying English and staying in the US, cultural backgrounds were significant for their sociolinguistic competence.

Dzakiria (1996) also attempted to validate the feasibility of a multiple-choice test as a possible easy testing tool to test sociolinguistic proficiency. He used techniques of test development and evaluation to prepare a multiple-choice proficiency test. The test included four types of speech act situations and the participants were expected to

choose the appropriate item. The criteria of the answers were collected from native English speakers. The results of the study show that such a test has a low but a usable degree of feasibility.

## **2.9 Studies on Sociolinguistic Aspects of Speakers` Discourse**

Interlanguage pragmatics has emerged as a distinct branch of Sociolinguistics, which has yielded a great amount of research on language learners` acquisition of sociolinguistic abilities. The studies have typically focused on one or two speech act behaviours of learners investigated by means of elicited data. Requests, apologies, complaints, expressions of gratitude, refusals are among the most common speech acts in the literature. Kasper and Rose (1999) listed the sociolinguistic aspects researched in Interlanguage Pragmatics as the following:

1. The perception and comprehension of illocutionary force and politeness;
2. The production of linguistic action;
3. The impact of context variables on choices of conventions of means (semantic formulae or realization strategies) and form (linguistic material used to implement strategic options);
4. Discourse sequencing and conversational management;
5. Pragmatic success and failure;
6. The joint negotiation of illocutionary, referential, and relational goals in interpersonal encounters and institutional settings.

In an early study, Cohen and Olshtain (1981) researched the speech act of apology. The research question that prompted the study was, "Can a rating scale be developed for assessing sociocultural competence?" The subjects were 32 native Hebrew speakers, 20 of whom served as informants for apologies in English L2 and 12 as informants in Hebrew LI, and 12 Americans who served as informants in English LI. These subjects were asked to role-play their responses in eight situations in which an apology was expected. The findings showed that it was possible to identify culturally and stylistically inappropriate L2 utterances in apology situations. The authors

concluded, however, that the results so far provided at best a crude measure of sociocultural competence and that further work with this speech act and with others is called for.

Blum-Kulka et al.'s (1989) Cross-cultural Speech Act Realization Project (CCSARP) was one of the most important studies set up to examine cross-cultural and intra-lingual variation in two speech acts - requests and apologies. In the CCSARP project they attempted to compare the realization modes of two specific speech acts in seven different languages and language varieties (American English, Australian English, British English, Canadian French, Danish, German and Hebrew) and have provided a rich source of data on cross-cultural pragmatics as well as developing a well-tested methodology, involving the use of discourse completion tests. This project focused on the cultural differences between native and non-native speakers' production of requests and apologies. The findings of this project provided insights into the differences and similarities between the speech act productions of native and non-native speakers who come from different cultural backgrounds. Although they did not make any claims about the universality of the common features they found in the ways native speakers realized requests and apologies, they achieved to prove that there were certain pragmatic regularities underlying requestive and apologizing behavior in all the languages examined. Therefore Coding Manual provided semantic formulas used by native speakers which to constitute a request or apology, leading researchers to analyze speech acts with these formulas and find new ones for different speech acts.

Olshtain and Weinbach (1993) investigated and compared apology and complaint productions of intermediate and advanced learners of Hebrew. They compared the results of the analysis of the non-native productions with the productions of the native speakers. The findings of this study showed that the productions of the non-native learners were longer and they were affected by the social distance of the interlocutors.

In another study, Eisenstein & Bodman (1993) investigated expression of gratitude used by native and non-native speakers of American English who come from various linguistic backgrounds. As a result of this study non-native speakers were found to have certain difficulties in adjusting complex linguistic forms to certain contexts. That is, language learners' use of expressions of gratitude appeared to be culture-bound.

They found that the learners display a high degree of variability in their responses, but the linguistic structures used by them are not appropriate. Results of the both studies show that learners do not have the necessary pragmatic conventions required for native-like speech act productions, and in general learners' productions are longer than the native speakers'.

Bardovi-Harlig and Dörnyei (1998) studied pragmatic and grammatical awareness in two groups of EFL and ESL classes with two levels of each as high- and low-proficiency by means of videotaped scenarios. In each of the scenarios, a female and a male student engaged in typical interactions in college, using a request, suggestion, apology, or refusal. Subjects were asked to judge whether the target utterance marked on the screen and appeared on the answer sheet was appropriate or not and then, to rate the gravity of the problem on a six-part scale from *not bad at all* to *very bad*. All the test items used for the scenarios were collected from learners' and NS responses and used to form a standard discourse completion task comprising three categories: pragmatically appropriate but ungrammatical items, grammatical but pragmatically inappropriate items, and both grammatical and appropriate items. The scores revealed that ESL and EFL learners did not show the same degree of awareness towards grammatical and pragmatic issues. There were clear differences between learning settings (EFL - ESL) and between proficiency levels (high – low) in their responses. The ESL groups gave significantly higher scores on pragmatic appropriateness judgments than did the EFL groups while grammatical errors had higher ratings from EFL groups. Thus, Bardovi-Harlig and Dörnyei (1998) attributed the deficit of pragmatic competence of EFL speakers to possible lack of input and overemphasis on grammatical issues.

In Turkey, there are also some researches on speech act performances of Turkish EFL learners. Akinci-Akkurt (2007) investigated pragmatic awareness of Turkish EFL learners. Native speakers of English and Turkish EFL learners were compared from the aspect of the choice of complaint strategies. The study elicited judgments of appropriateness and acceptability of various complaint formulations in two different situations the context of one of which is formal and the other informal. The findings from this study indicate that aspects of complaints may cause difficulties for TEFL

learners. This study suggested the need to raise their pragmatic awareness of Turkish EFL learners regarding the use of complaint strategies in particular contexts.

Doğançay Aktuna and Kamışlı (1997) examined pragmatic variation across Turkish and American English in the speech act of chastisement to determine occurrence of pragmatic transfer in the Interlanguage of Turkish ESL learners. Data was collected from role plays of participants and results indicated both similarities and difference in the groups in the choice of strategies for dealing with the same speech act. They concluded that advanced ESL learners could diverge from target language norms, indicating a lack of sociolinguistic competence in that language.

Kılıçkaya's (2010) research investigated the pragmatic knowledge of Turkish EFL students in using certain request strategies. Data were collected through a type of DCT, open item- verbal response only production questionnaire from 40 undergraduate students. The results showed that the EFL students in this study had the linguistic means in order to operate pragmatically in various contexts while requesting. However, their success in the use of the request strategies in situations requiring certain level of politeness was relatively not satisfactory. He suggested that the results can be closely related with learning contexts and textbook contents.

Many other studies, articles and theses have been written on the speech act production and realization of language learners to assess their pragmatic competence with several elicitation methods including discourse completion tasks role plays, writing samples, multiple-choice tests both in Turkey and around the world. As distinct from these studies, this research will apply a two-dimensional discourse completion test to investigate sociolinguistic variations in the speech act productions of Turkish EFL speakers and how they deviate from native speaker norms.

## **CHAPTER III**

### **METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.0 Introduction**

In this chapter, the model of the research, participants and data analysis materials and procedures will be presented.

#### **3.1 Research Model**

The present study applied both qualitative and quantitative research methods. Firstly, content analysis has been carried out for the analysis of the data collected by a DCT test. Then qualitative results were obtained through the coding of the data and assessing communicative ability by a rating scale.

#### **3.2 Participants**

The data of the present study was collected from two different groups of participants. The first group consisted of 50 advanced Turkish EFL learners who study English Language Teaching in the Education Faculty of Gazi University in Turkey. The second group consisted of 25 native speakers of English studying at the University of Cincinnati in the USA.

The reason why these participants were chosen for the study is based on the purpose of the research. The Turkish EFL learners are the 4<sup>th</sup> year students in English language teaching departments who have studied English for at least 8 years. So they were defined as advanced speakers of English and grammatical mistakes were not expected and not dealt with here.

For the selection of the Turkish participants, some factors which are thought to be effective on sociolinguistic competence were taken into consideration. As the effect of interaction with the target language, both through native-speaker contact in general and, more particularly, in the target-language community is important for the development of sociolinguistic competence which is not in the scope of this study, Turkish EFL learners who had spent more than one year in abroad were excluded from the study.



Also the participants who had a close family member or relative whose native language was English were not included in the analysis.

Secondly, although language learners are not expected to or need to have native-like skills in the target language, native speakers of English were chosen for the comparison with the belief that a language is shaped by the sociocultural elements of its society and always contains cultural implications within itself. So language learners need to recognize the cultural implications in the language to be able to understand and convey the message of communication without any failure caused by cultural conflicts. Native speakers are the best representatives of the culture in which the language is used.

For the selection of native speakers, there were also some factors which were taken into account. The main factor was their age and status. They were all students at the same American University and their ages were in the range of 22-28 because age and social status are intra-lingual elements of language variation and comparing the responses of participants with different ages and different social status would not provide reliable and valid results. Also, the ones who had spent more than one year in another country or who had a family from another culture were excluded from the study.

### **3.3 Data Collection Materials**

In the present study, a two-phased data collection method was used. Firstly, a discourse completion task was applied for data elicitation from the participants and then discourse completion tasks were rated by two native speakers by means of a rating scale. A detailed explanation of these materials is given in the following.

#### **3.3.1 Discourse Completion Task**

The main instrument of the study is a Discourse Completion Task (DCT) which is a data elicitation method commonly used in the field of Interlanguage Pragmatics. It is defined as a written questionnaire containing short descriptions of several situations with a space -and sometimes including a dialogue- for the production of the target speech act being studied (Kasper & Dahl, 1991). The first developers of the format were Levenston and Blum who studied lexical simplification, but its first use for the investigation of speech act realization was adapted by Blum-Kulka (1982, as cited in

Kasper & Dahl, 1991). Despite much criticism, it became one of the major instruments in the most important studies of speech acts such as requests (Blum-Kulka, 1982), complaints (Olshtain & Weinbach, 1987), refusals (Takahashi & Beebe, 1987), apologies (Cohen & Olshtain, 1983), compliments (Billmyer, 1990), and many others.

The reliability of DCT has been questioned by many researchers and both the advantages and disadvantages have been proved. Kasper and Dahl (1991) suggest that the most reliable way to collect data to attain actual linguistic performance is authentic discourse obtained from spontaneous speeches, unlike DCT which produces “artificial” linguistic action. To investigate the reliability of DCT, Rintell and Mitchell (1989) compared the use of DCT and closed role plays in speech act studies and collected very similar data. Similarly Beebe and Cummings (1996) compared the use of DCT and natural speech data collection in relation to the amount of talk and semantic formulas used by participants in refusal speech act. The results proved that the content expressed in DCT does not have much difference from the content expressed in natural data. The only significant difference was found in the amount of talk and the range of formula such as avoidance strategies.

The weaknesses of DCT still cannot be denied. While supporting the continuation of DCTs, Beebe and Cummings (1996, p. 80) listed some strengths and weaknesses of DCTs that should be taken into consideration before using them in a research.

According to Beebe and Cummings (1996, p. 80-81), DCTs are a highly effective means of:

1. gathering a large amount of data quickly;
2. creating an initial classification of semantic formulas and strategies that will occur in natural speech;
3. studying the stereotypical, perceived requirements for a socially appropriate (though not always polite) response;
4. gaining insight into social and psychological factors that are likely to affect speech and performance; and

5. ascertaining the canonical shape of refusals, apologies, partings, etc., in the minds of the speakers of that language,

However, discourse completion responses do not adequately represent, :

1. the actual wording used in real interaction;
2. the range of formulas and strategies used (some, like avoidance, tend to be left out);
3. the length of response or the number of turns it takes to fulfill the function;
4. the depth of emotion that in turn qualitatively affects the tone, content, and form of linguistic performance;
5. the number of repetitions and elaborations that occur; or
6. the actual rate of occurrence of a speech act—e.g., whether or not someone would naturalistically refuse at all in a given situation.

There are two types of DCTs commonly used in speech acts analysis: open-ended and close-ended. In close-ended DCTs, the situations are followed by a dialog in which the participants' responses will be directed by a beginning prompt and followed by a final response provided by their imaginary interlocutor. However, in open-ended DCTs, the participants are only presented the situations which they are free to choose how to respond without the limitation of the utterance following. Thus, taking into consideration that many data collection methods have drawbacks and strengths, open-ended DCTs were chosen as the instrument of present study because of its practicality and convenience for the purpose of the research.

The DCT used in this research was mostly developed by the researcher. Views of experts from the field were also taken on the appropriateness and quality of the test. The DCT included 6 paired situations with a total of 12 situations (3 refusals + 3 complaints). 'Pair situations' mean that each situation was asked twice in the same way but only the hearers were different.

For example,

9. *Your neighbors are very old and cannot hear the TV well so they watch it very loudly. You need to study for the exam but you are disturbed by the noise. So you want to ask them to lower the voice.*

10. *Your neighbors are young boys and they often watch the TV or listen to music very loudly. You need to study for the exam but you are disturbed by the noise. So you want to ask them to lower the voice.*

In these situations, the problem is the same but the only difference is that in the 9<sup>th</sup> situation, the participants are supposed to complain to an old couple, whereas, the 10<sup>th</sup> situation is about complaining to some teenagers for the same problem. The different hearers were selected according to some sociolinguistic variables which are thought to be effective in strategy selection as suggested by Brown and Levinson's Politeness Theory (1987). It is expected that the utterances will vary according to the variable of hearers' status (higher – equal). How the participants change their speech and their politeness levels and how the native and non-native groups will differ from each other in their variations will be the goal of the analysis of the DCT.

The DCT items used in this study included situations where these variables were carefully controlled. Table 2 shows the distribution of speech acts and variables of social distance and status.

**Table 1: Speech act situations and Sociolinguistic Variables**

|          | Speech act                | Hearers                          | Status           |
|----------|---------------------------|----------------------------------|------------------|
| 1<br>2   | Refusal of an Invitation  | A friend<br>A Professor          | Equal<br>Higher  |
| 3<br>4   | Refusal of an Offer       | A mother<br>A friend's mother    | Higher<br>Higher |
| 5<br>6   | Refusal of a Request      | A boss<br>A friend               | Higher<br>Equal  |
| 7<br>8   | Complaint for an Accident | An adult woman<br>A young boy    | Higher<br>Equal  |
| 9<br>10  | Complaint for loud TV     | An old couple<br>Some young boys | Higher<br>Equal  |
| 11<br>12 | Complaint for a lost book | A professor<br>A friend          | Higher<br>Equal  |

### 3.3.2 Rating Scale

Murphy and Neu (1996: 194) suggest that native speaker's acceptability judgment can help us gain insight into how and why non-native speakers fail to communicate effectively. For that purpose, two native English speakers, who live in the same region in the USA and had been in Turkey for three months, were chosen to grade each response of the participants of both groups for each situation in terms of politeness, register and appropriateness in a 5-point Likert scale.

An adapted version of the rating scale designed by Cohen (1994) to assess communicative ability was used to understand the effects of responses on the hearer. The scale was originally designed to assess verbal performances, but it was thought to be applicable to assess the written responses of DCTs as they stimulated what would be said. It consisted of three criteria; sociocultural ability, sociolinguistic appropriateness and grammatical ability. As the present study is not intended to assess grammatical ability, it was excluded from the scale. Instead, as one of the main goal of the research, a register criterion (formal – neutral - informal) was added. Each criterion was rated as highest 5 and lowest 1.

### 3.4 Data Analysis Methods

In order to analyze the data collected from the DCT, the content analysis technique was used. Content analysis is defined as “a systematic attempt to examine some form of verbal or image communication such as newspapers, diaries, letters, speeches, movies or television shows.” (Gray, Williamson, Karp, and Dalphin, 2007, p. 283). Neuendorf (2002, p. 10) defines content analysis with six aspects:

"Content analysis is a summarizing, quantitative analysis of messages that relies on the scientific method (including attention to objectivity, intersubjectivity, a priori design, reliability, validity, generalizability, replicability, and hypothesis testing) and is not limited as to the types of variables that may be measured or the context in which the messages are created or presented."

Content analysis is primarily a kind of a quantitative research method, with the coding of into explicit categories and then counting the codes and describing in statistics. It can also be referred to as quantitative analysis of qualitative data (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005, p.15).

For the coding of the data, a coding scheme allowing for representation of detailed refusal and complaint strategies based on classifications of previous studies on the speech act of refusals and complains was used.

In order to analyse refusal strategies, a sequence of semantic formulae provided by Beebe, Takahashi and Uliss-Weltz (1990) was adapted and rearranged according to the obtained data. Table 3 shows the categorization of refusal strategies adapted for the study.

**Table 2: Coding Scheme of Refusal Strategies**

| Type                                    | Semantic Formulas                                                                                          | Examples from the Data                                                  |
|-----------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b><i>I. Direct Refusals</i></b>        | <b><i>Explicitly refusing the suggestion/offer/invitation/request by the speaker.</i></b>                  |                                                                         |
| a. Performative                         | Usually expressed by “I refuse.”                                                                           | “I will have to refuse your offer.”                                     |
| b. Nonperformative Statement            | Usually expressed by direct “No” or negative willingness/ability: “I can’t, I won’t, I don’t think so” ... | “I don’t think we will be able to make it”;<br>“I can’t make it today.” |
| <b><i>II. Indirect Refusals</i></b>     | <b><i>Implicitly refusing the suggestion / offer / invitation / request by the speaker.</i></b>            |                                                                         |
| a. Statement of Regret                  | Usually expressed by “I’m sorry”, “I feel terrible” ...                                                    | “Sorry”; “I’m really sorry”;<br>“Unfortunately”;                        |
| b. Wish                                 | Usually expressed by “I wish I could”                                                                      | “I wish I could but I need them myself.”                                |
| c. Excuse/Reason/Explanation            | Usually expressed by “I have a headache”; “I have to work”                                                 | “I actually have already made plans for Saturday night”;                |
| d. Statement of Alternative             | Usually expressed by “I can do X instead of Y”; “I’d rather, prefer”; “Why don’t you do X instead of Y?”   | “I’d rather stay at home”; “Why don’t you call someone else”            |
| e. Condition for Future/Past Acceptance | Usually expressed by if clauses: “If “If you sell more,                                                    | “If you told me earlier, I would definitely help”                       |

|                                       |                                                                                                        |                                                                                           |
|---------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| f. Promise or Future Acceptance       | Usually expressed by using “will of promise” or “promise”.                                             | “I promise I will in the following times”; If it is not emergency, I may help you later.” |
| g. Statement of Principle             | Usually expressed by “I never...”; “I always...”                                                       | “I don’t like it”, “I never eat that”                                                     |
| h. Statement of Philosophy            | Usually expressed by generalizations: “One can’t be too careful.”                                      | “Accidents happen”; “Anyone can have an accident”                                         |
| i. Statement of Negative Consequences | Usually expressed by using “would” or past simple to exemplify the past actions.                       | “I’d probably lose the notes as well”; “It makes me feel dizzy and angry.”                |
| j. Criticize the Request/Requester    | Usually expressed by a negative feeling or idea.                                                       | “You should have come to the classes”; “I have the feeling that you’re taking advantage.” |
| k. Let Interlocutor off the Hook      | Usually expressed by disembarassing and relieving messages to the speaker.                             | “Don’t worry about it, it wasn’t expensive”; “It’s just a vase, you don’t have to pay”    |
| l. Self Defense                       | Usually expressed by advocating one’s self.                                                            | “I never forget anything”;                                                                |
| m. Verbal Avoidance                   | Usually expressed by unclear responses such as repetition of part of request, postponement or hedging. | “Sunday night?”; “I’ll consider the possibilities”; “Maybe another time”;                 |
| <b>III. Adjuncts</b>                  | <b><i>Expressions used for completing the Refusals</i></b>                                             |                                                                                           |
| A1. Statement of Positive Opinion     | Usually expressed by “That’s a good idea...”; “I’d love to...”                                         | “I’d love to take you up on the offer”; “It’s very kind of you...”                        |
| A2. Statement of Empathy              | Usually expressed by “I realize you are in a difficult situation”                                      | “I know you really need it but”;                                                          |
| A3. Pause Fillers                     | Uuh... well... ohn...uhm...                                                                            | “Oh...”; “Well...”; “I see”; “Oh, well...”                                                |
| A4. Gratitude/ Appreciation           | “Thank you”; “I appreciate the suggestion”; “I really appreciate the offer.”                           |                                                                                           |

For the coding of complaint strategies, a coding scheme was arranged and adapted based on the semantic formulae developed by Trosborg (1995). Table 4 shows the categorization of complaint strategies adapted for the study.

**Table 3: Coding Scheme of Complaint Strategies**

| <i>Category</i>                                | <i>Strategy</i>                     | <i>Example</i>                                                                                    |
|------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| .....                                          | Str 1. Opting out                   | N/A I would say nothing                                                                           |
| <b><i>Cat. 1<br/>No Explicit Reproach</i></b>  | Str. 2 Hints                        | Don't see much of you these days, do I?                                                           |
|                                                | Str. 3 Annoyance                    | You know I don't like dust, I am allergic to dust, didn't you know?                               |
| <b><i>Cat. 2 Expression of Disapproval</i></b> | Str. 4. Neg. Consequences           | Now, I will probably fail the exam.                                                               |
| <b><i>Cat. 3 Accusation</i></b>                | Str. 5. Indirect                    | Look at that mess, how did you get your driving licence?                                          |
|                                                | Str. 6. Direct                      | Why don't you look in front of you?<br>You just hit my car!                                       |
| <b><i>Cat. 4 Blame</i></b>                     | Str. 7. Modified Blame              | You know, if somebody borrows something, it means you need to bring it back                       |
|                                                | Str. 8. Explicit Blame on behaviour | You drive so carelessly;<br>You don't care about the people around, right?                        |
|                                                | Str. 9. Explicit Blame on Person    | One can never trust you a damn!<br>You are so mean!                                               |
| <b><i>Cat. 5. Directive Acts</i></b>           | Str. 10. Request for Repair         | Can you replace the book you lost?<br>Would you mind turning down the music, so I can study.      |
|                                                | Str. 11 Threat                      | I will never give you anything any more; I will call the police now if you go on with the party!. |

The data were coded by the researcher and reviewed by a colleague. Then, the coding for both refusal and complaint strategies were separately transferred to SPSS program with variables of the speakers (native –non-native), and social variables of power (higher – equal).



For the first research question, the mean number of refusal strategies and complaint strategies used in each scenario was calculated and compared by one-way ANOVA Post Hoc Tukey analysis in respect to how frequently each group used each individual strategy.

For the second research question, the same analysis was performed to measure the occurrence of downgraders and upgraders that were coded according to the coding scheme designed by House and Kasper (1981) (see Appendix B). *Grounders*, a downgrader defined by House and Kasper (1981), were excluded in the coding in order to avoid repetition because it has the same function with *the excuse / reason / explanation* strategy defined in refusal strategies by Beebe, Takahashi and Uliss-Weltz (1990),

Finally, for the third research questions, a communicative ability scale developed by Cohen (1994) and adapted by the researcher was used (Appendix C). The ratings of the responses from two native raters in the five-point Likert type scale were analysed.

### **3.5 Reliability and Validity**

The face, construct and content validity of the DCT items were determined by receiving expert opinion. Necessary changes were made according to assessments and evaluations made by two experts, one of whom is an American professor and the other is a Turkish professor in English language teaching departments. Two colleagues who are American native speakers also helped through the construction and coding of the DCT.

A pilot study of the DCT was carried out on 15 Turkish ELT students to determine the unclear and problematic statements of DCT items, so as to increase the reliability and validity of the instrument. Necessary changes were made according to pilot study, and evaluations made by two experts.

The reliability and validity of the ratings were obtained by making use of two raters although only one of them will be used for the analysis and calculated using a PC version of the GENOVA program which was especially developed for generalizability analysis by Brennan (2001).

As the data collection method, raters rate each student for each item and for each criterion. So, the design for the generalizability analysis is a crossed design. Here is expected that the ability ratings of students will not change according to the forms, the raters will be consistent and variations will mostly be caused by the differences of students' performances.

Table 4 shows the Generalizability values obtained by variance analysis of students, raters and communicative ability criteria.

**Table 4: Generalizability Values according to the Analysis**

| Source of Variance                        | N   | Sum of Squares (SS) | Means of Squares (MS) | Variance           | %     |
|-------------------------------------------|-----|---------------------|-----------------------|--------------------|-------|
| <i>Student (S)</i>                        | 50  | 9209,33333          | 187,94558             | 28,77061           | 50,2  |
| <i>Rater (R)</i>                          | 2   | 1,08000             | 1,08000               | -0,03531           | 0,0   |
| <i>Criteria (C)</i>                       | 3   | 4029,14667          | 2014,57333            | 19,93286           | 34,8  |
| <i>SxR</i>                                | 100 | 38,92000            | 0,79429               | -0,12803           | 0,0   |
| <i>SxC</i>                                | 150 | 1539,18667          | 15,70599              | 7,26381            | 12,7  |
| <i>RxC</i>                                | 6   | 13,52000            | 6,76000               | 0,11163            | 0,2   |
| <i>SxRxC</i>                              | 300 | 115,48000           | 1,17837               | 1,17837            | 2,1   |
| Absolute Error                            |     |                     |                       | ( $\Delta$ )       | 3,046 |
| Relative Error                            |     |                     |                       | ( $\delta$ )       | 1,617 |
| Absolute Error Variance                   |     |                     |                       | $\sigma^2(\Delta)$ | 9,280 |
| Relative Error Variance                   |     |                     |                       | $\sigma^2(\delta)$ | 2,617 |
| Generalizability Coefficient ( $\delta$ ) |     |                     |                       | $E\rho^2$          | 0,92  |
| Decision Coefficient ( $\Delta$ )         |     |                     |                       | $\Phi$             | 0,76  |

According to the results of generalizability analysis in Student/ Rater / Criteria design, as seen in Table 5, when examining estimated variance and total variance, variance caused by students is 50,2 and criteria-based variance is 34,8. That means the main differences are caused by the differences between students and the differences between their abilities in each criteria. Raters (R) and student- rater correlation (SxR)

did not cause any variance (0%), so this can be interpreted as there is no subjectivity between raters.

As for the reliability values of the analysis, Generalizability Coefficient is 0,92, which is a very high value. And the Decision Coefficient which is used to make generalization for the universe is 0,76, which is also in acceptable level.

## CHAPTER IV

### FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

#### 4.0 Introduction

The present study aimed at investigating the sociolinguistic abilities of TSEFLs by comparing their speech act strategies with native speakers with the purpose of understanding the complexities of appropriate speech and the possibility of pragmatic failure between native and non-native speakers. This chapter presents the findings of the analyzed data according to the variables of the research questions which are presented in Chapter I.

The chapter was divided into three sections, each section corresponding to a research question. The first section, which also has two subdivisions, presents the statistical findings collected from Turkish and American participants in terms of variations in the frequencies of their strategies used in the speech acts of refusals and complaints in each paired situations, respectively.

With more focus on the content of speech act strategies, the second section compares the frequencies of sociolinguistic markers in the responses provided by the participants.

In the last section, a sociolinguistic appropriateness measure of the communicative abilities of the participants was presented. Some of the responses from the DCT and their evaluations were provided to illustrate cross-cultural differences in refusal and complaint behaviors.

#### 4.1 Analysis and Comparison of Speech Act Strategies

Research Question 1a: How do Turkish EFL learners deviate from the norms produced by the native English speakers in their productions of the speech act sets of refusal and complaint depending on the social distance or status of the hearer, in terms of variation in their preferences of strategies?

#### 4.1.1 Analysis and Comparison of Refusal Strategies

##### 4.1.1.1 Refusal of an Invitation

The first paired situation was an invitation to a party from a professor in the first situation and a friend in the second situation. The frequencies of refusal strategies for each pair were compared across groups of native speakers and Turkish EFL speakers and their differences were interpreted.

Table 5 shows the frequencies of the strategies used by the participants (TSEFLs= Turkish Speakers of English as Foreign Language; ENSs- English Native Speakers) in the act of refusing an invitation from a professor (S1) and from a friend (S2).

**Table 5 – Most Frequently Used Refusal strategies for Situation 1 and Situation2 by ENSs and TSEFLs**

| <i>Strategies</i>                        |    |        | <i>Frequency</i> | <i>Mean</i> | <i>Std. Deviation</i> | <i>Std. Error</i> |
|------------------------------------------|----|--------|------------------|-------------|-----------------------|-------------------|
| <i>Direct Refusals/ Negative Ability</i> | S1 | TSEFLs | 19               | ,38         | ,490                  | ,069              |
|                                          | S1 | ENSs   | 20               | ,80         | ,408                  | ,082              |
|                                          | S2 | TSEFLs | 30               | ,60         | ,535                  | ,076              |
|                                          | S2 | ENSs   | 17               | ,68         | ,476                  | ,095              |
| <i>Statement of Regret</i>               | S1 | TSEFLs | 33               | ,66         | ,479                  | ,068              |
|                                          | S1 | ENSs   | 16               | ,64         | ,490                  | ,098              |
|                                          | S2 | TSEFLs | 35               | ,70         | ,505                  | ,071              |
|                                          | S2 | ENSs   | 16               | ,64         | ,490                  | ,098              |
| <i>Excuse / Reason / Explanation</i>     | S1 | TSEFLs | 41               | ,82         | ,388                  | ,055              |
|                                          | S1 | ENSs   | 11               | ,44         | ,507                  | ,101              |
|                                          | S2 | TSEFLs | 47               | ,94         | ,314                  | ,044              |
|                                          | S2 | ENSs   | 16               | ,64         | ,490                  | ,098              |
| <i>Statement of Alternative</i>          | S1 | TSEFLs | 8                | ,16         | ,370                  | ,052              |
|                                          | S1 | ENSs   | 6                | ,24         | ,436                  | ,087              |
|                                          | S2 | TSEFLs | 1                | ,02         | ,141                  | ,020              |
|                                          | S2 | ENSs   | 1                | ,04         | ,200                  | ,040              |
| <i>Promise or Future Acceptance</i>      | S1 | TSEFLs | 4                | ,08         | ,274                  | ,039              |
|                                          | S1 | ENSs   | 0                | 0,00        | 0,000                 | 0,000             |
|                                          | S2 | TSEFLs | 1                | ,02         | ,141                  | ,020              |
|                                          | S2 | ENSs   | 4                | ,16         | ,374                  | ,075              |
| <i>Verbal Avoidance</i>                  | S1 | TSEFLs | 7                | ,14         | ,351                  | ,050              |
|                                          | S1 | ENSs   | 4                | ,16         | ,374                  | ,075              |
|                                          | S2 | TSEFLs | 1                | ,02         | ,141                  | ,020              |
|                                          | S2 | ENSs   | 1                | ,04         | ,200                  | ,040              |
| <i>Positive Opinion</i>                  | S1 | TSEFLs | 6                | ,12         | ,328                  | ,046              |
|                                          | S1 | ENSs   | 6                | ,24         | ,436                  | ,087              |
|                                          | S2 | TSEFLs | 12               | ,24         | ,431                  | ,061              |
|                                          | S2 | ENSs   | 12               | ,48         | ,510                  | ,102              |
| <i>Gratitude / Appreciation</i>          | S1 | TSEFLs | 9                | ,18         | ,388                  | ,055              |
|                                          | S1 | ENSs   | 13               | ,52         | ,510                  | ,102              |
|                                          | S2 | TSEFLs | 17               | ,34         | ,479                  | ,068              |
|                                          | S2 | ENSs   | 18               | ,72         | ,458                  | ,092              |

As clear in Table 5, in the act of refusing an invitation, the most preferred strategy set by all the participants was “*regret + excuse/reason/explanation + Non-performative statement + gratitude / appreciation*” and sometimes a *positive opinion*. For example, typically, ENSs responded as “*I’m sorry I won’t be able to make it I have a lot going on tonight thanks anyways; Thank you for the invitation, but unfortunately, I won’t be able to come; Thanks, but I’m afraid I won’t be able to make it this time. Have fun; Ohh, I’d love to, thanks but unfortunately I already have other plans. I’m sorry.*”. Similarly the typical responses of TSEFLs were “*Ohh sorry, I can’t come, I have things to do, Have fun; sorry I’d like to but I don’t feel good for tonight; Thank you for the invitation but I am very tired, I won’t be able to come*”.

These examples show that both TSEFLs and ENSs provide similar realization patterns in the act of refusing an invitation. However, significant variations were apparent in the frequencies of strategies used for refusal to a higher person and to an equal person as demonstrated by multiple comparisons of the variables measured by One-Way ANOVA Post Hoc Tukey analysis (Table 6)

**Table 6 – Multiple Comparisons of the Strategies with Significant Mean Difference across groups and paired situation1 and situation2**

Tukey HSD

| <i>Dependant Variables</i>                       | <i>Participant I</i> | <i>Participant J</i> | <i>Mean Dif.</i> |
|--------------------------------------------------|----------------------|----------------------|------------------|
| <b><i>Direct Refusals / Negative Ability</i></b> | S1 TSEFLs            | S1 ENSs              | -,420*           |
|                                                  |                      | S2 TSEFLs            | -,220            |
|                                                  |                      | S2 ENSs              | -,300            |
| <b><i>Excuse/ Reason/Explanation/</i></b>        | S1 ENSs              | S1 TSEFLs            | -,380*           |
|                                                  |                      | S2 TSEFLs            | -,500*           |
|                                                  |                      | S2 ENSs              | -,200            |
|                                                  | S2 ENSs              | S1 TSEFLs            | -,180            |
|                                                  |                      | S1 ENSs              | ,200             |
|                                                  |                      | S2 TSEFLs            | -,300*           |
| <b><i>Positive Opinion</i></b>                   | S2 ENSs              | S1 TSEFLs            | ,360*            |
|                                                  |                      | S1 ENSs              | ,240             |
|                                                  |                      | S2 TSEFLs            | ,240             |
| <b><i>Gratitude</i></b>                          | S1 TSEFLs            | S1 ENSs              | -,340*           |
|                                                  |                      | S2 ENSs              | -,540*           |
|                                                  | S2 TSEFLs            | S1 TSEFLs            | ,160             |
|                                                  |                      | S1 ENSs              | -,180            |
|                                                  |                      | S2 ENSs              | -,380*           |
|                                                  |                      |                      |                  |

\*. The mean difference is significant at the 0.5 level.

As the mean difference is regarded as significant at the 0.500, In S1, the realization strategies of direct refusals (-,420), Excuse/Reason/ Explanation (-,380) and Gratitude (-,340) showed a significant difference between TSEFLs and ENSs. In S2, the mean differences of Excuse/Reason/ Explanation and Gratitude between TSEFLs and ENSs were -,300 and -,380, respectively.

ENSs used much more direct refusals than TSEFLs in the first situation but in the second situation they were similar. On the other hand, TSEFLs responded with more excuse / reason / explanation strategies to both the professor and the friend with a similar percentage but ENSs used fewer excuse / reason / explanation strategies in the first invitation by a friend. Additionally, expressing positive opinion or wish used by ENSs such as *"I'd love to; I wish I could; It sounds like fun,..."* were used by TSEFLs less frequently. Another significant variance was in the frequency of thanking. Unlike ENSs, TESLs (18%) hardly ever thanked to their friends for the invitation while 50% of ENSs offered thanks for the invitation. Similarly, in the second situation of refusing a professor's invitation, 34% of TSEFLs responded with gratitude but still less than ENSs who applied appreciation with a percentage of 72%.

The findings may be proof that refusing an invitation from a higher person and from an equal friend requires different realization strategies in both cultures. TSEFLs were successful in applying and polite and indirect strategies and varying their strategies in accordance with the situation although TSEFLs and ENSs showed difference in their preferences of refusal strategies.

#### **4.1.1.2 Refusal of an Offer**

The second paired situations were refusing some food offered by their own mothers at home and by a friend's mother whose house they had been invited for the dinner. Table 3 presents the strategies used by the TSEFLs and ENSs in the Situation 3 (S3) and Situation 4 (S4) respectively.

Social distance proved to be an important factor in their refusal strategies for both groups of participants. Their responses to their mothers, who are higher but closely familiar, were significantly different than those to a friend's mother, who is higher and unfamiliar. Besides, 36% of ENSs rejected the idea of refusing the food in S4, so accepting is added to coding scheme as another strategy in Table 7.

**Table 7 - Most frequently used refusal strategies for Situation3 and Situation4 by ENSs and TSEFLs**

| <i>Strategies</i>                         |    |        | <i>Frequency</i> | <i>Mean</i> | <i>Std. Deviation</i> | <i>Std. Error</i> |
|-------------------------------------------|----|--------|------------------|-------------|-----------------------|-------------------|
| <b>Direct Refusals / Negative Ability</b> | S3 | TSEFLs | 27               | ,54         | ,503                  | ,071              |
|                                           | S3 | ENSs   | 10               | ,40         | ,500                  | ,100              |
|                                           | S4 | TSEFLs | 21               | ,42         | ,499                  | ,071              |
|                                           | S4 | ENSs   | 8                | ,32         | ,476                  | ,095              |
| <b>Statement of Regret</b>                | S3 | TSEFLs | 3                | ,06         | ,240                  | ,034              |
|                                           | S3 | ENSs   | 4                | ,16         | ,374                  | ,075              |
|                                           | S4 | TSEFLs | 16               | ,32         | ,471                  | ,067              |
|                                           | S4 | ENSs   | 9                | ,36         | ,490                  | ,098              |
| <b>Excuse/Reason / Explanation</b>        | S3 | TSEFLs | 5                | ,10         | ,303                  | ,043              |
|                                           | S3 | ENSs   | 2                | ,08         | ,277                  | ,055              |
|                                           | S4 | TSEFLs | 30               | ,60         | ,495                  | ,070              |
|                                           | S4 | ENSs   | 4                | ,24         | ,436                  | ,087              |
| <b>Statement of Alternative</b>           | S3 | TSEFLs | 13               | ,26         | ,443                  | ,063              |
|                                           | S3 | ENSs   | 3                | ,12         | ,332                  | ,066              |
|                                           | S4 | TSEFLs | 7                | ,14         | ,351                  | ,050              |
|                                           | S4 | ENSs   | 4                | ,16         | ,374                  | ,075              |
| <b>Statement of principle</b>             | S3 | TSEFLs | 24               | ,48         | ,505                  | ,071              |
|                                           | S3 | ENSs   | 12               | ,48         | ,510                  | ,102              |
|                                           | S4 | TSEFLs | 10               | ,20         | ,404                  | ,057              |
|                                           | S4 | ENSs   | 9                | ,36         | ,490                  | ,098              |
| <b>Criticizing</b>                        | S3 | TSEFLs | 12               | ,24         | ,431                  | ,061              |
|                                           | S3 | ENSs   | 3                | ,12         | ,332                  | ,066              |
|                                           | S4 | TSEFLs | 0                | 0,00        | 0,00                  | 0,00              |
|                                           | S4 | ENSs   | 0                | 0,00        | 0,00                  | 0,00              |
| <b>Statement of Positive Opinion</b>      | S3 | TSEFLs | 3                | ,06         | ,240                  | ,034              |
|                                           | S3 | ENSs   | 5                | ,20         | ,408                  | ,082              |
|                                           | S4 | TSEFLs | 25               | ,50         | ,505                  | ,071              |
|                                           | S4 | ENSs   | 10               | ,40         | ,500                  | ,100              |
| <b>Expressing Gratitude</b>               | S3 | TSEFLs | 6                | ,12         | ,328                  | ,046              |
|                                           | S3 | ENSs   | 12               | ,48         | ,510                  | ,102              |
|                                           | S4 | TSEFLs | 20               | ,40         | ,495                  | ,070              |
|                                           | S4 | ENSs   | 9                | ,36         | ,490                  | ,098              |
| <b>Accept</b>                             | S4 | ENSs   | 9                | ,36         | ,489                  | ,097              |

According to the Table 7, it is clear that in S3, both TSEFLs and ENSs were more direct and impolite towards their mother and used shorter refusal strategies. The most common response was “Mum, you know I don’t like that food. Can I have something else?” or “Mum, don’t you know that I hate it. I won’t eat that”. And they hardly ever expressed regret.



On the other hand, in S4, both groups applied more refusal strategies to avoid being rude. 60% of TSEFLs preferred giving an excuse for not eating the food such as “*Sorry, I am full; I can’t eat anymore, I am on a diet; thanks but I am allergic to it.*” etc... while ENSs were more realistic in their responses by stating their principles (36%) but adding a positive opinion with the expressions like: “*It looks delicious but I actually don’t like it, thanks anyway*”; “*I am so sorry but I never eat it. Can I have something else?*”; “*Thank you for preparing the dinner, but I actually don’t eat this. I’m sorry for the inconvenience*”. However, as 36% of ENSs told that they would not refuse the food but eat it, the percentages of other strategies shown are just out of the 64% of ENSs.

Table 8 shows multiple comparisons of the strategies with a significant mean difference used by TSEFLs and ENSs in S3 and S4 analyzed by One Way ANOVA Post Hoc Tukey analysis.

**Table 8 - Multiple Comparisons of the Strategies with Significant Mean Difference across groups and paired situation3 and situation4**

Tukey HSD

| <i>Dependent Variable</i>      | <i>Participant I</i> | <i>Participant J</i> | <i>Mean Diff (I-J)</i> |
|--------------------------------|----------------------|----------------------|------------------------|
| <b><i>Regret</i></b>           | S3 TSEFLs            | S3 ENSs              | -,100                  |
|                                |                      | S4 TSEFLs            | -,260*                 |
|                                |                      | S4 ENSs              | -,300*                 |
| <b><i>Excuse</i></b>           | S4 TSEFLs            | S3 TSEFLs            | ,500*                  |
|                                |                      | S3 ENSs              | ,520*                  |
|                                |                      | S4 ENSs              | ,360*                  |
| <b><i>Criticize</i></b>        | S3 TSEFLs            | S3 ENSs              | ,120                   |
|                                |                      | S4 TSEFLs            | ,240*                  |
|                                |                      | S4 ENSs              | ,240*                  |
| <b><i>Positive Opinion</i></b> | S3 TSEFLs            | S3 ENSs              | -,140                  |
|                                |                      | S4 TSEFLs            | -,440*                 |
|                                |                      | S4 ENSs              | -,340*                 |
| <b><i>Gratitude</i></b>        | S3 TSEFLs            | S3 ENSs              | -,360*                 |
|                                |                      | S4 TSEFLs            | -,280*                 |
|                                |                      | S4 ENSs              | -,240                  |

\*, The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

As seen in Table 8, higher numbers of regret and gratitude expressions were used by both TSEFLs and ENSs for the 4th situation than the 3th situation. On the other hand, while TSEFLs hardly ever thanked to their mothers for the food or gave an

excuse, 48% of ENSs thanked and gave some positive opinions about the food before refusing it (with a mean difference of 0.360).

The results show that many ENSs show appreciation or regret while refusing an offer no matter who they are talking to as a part of their culture. Furthermore, refusing food as a guest can be regarded as rude or offensive. TSEFLs tried to be polite by giving excuses or expressing negative ability and positive opinion while being more direct towards their mothers, which prove the influence of cultural difference on the variation of their refusal strategies according to familiar and distant relationship with the hearer.

#### **4.1.1.3 Refusal of a Request**

The last paired situations were refusals of a request for help with work at the weekend from the interlocutors of a boss in Situation5 (S5) and of a friend in Situation6 (S6). The refusal strategies used by TSEFLs and ENSs in both situations were presented in Table 9.

In both situations, the TSEFLs and ENSs used similar set of strategies. Usually they started with regret or positive opinion and they refused directly with an excuse. To illustrate, here are some common responses; *"I am so sorry, but I can't, I have other plans for the weekend."*; *"I'd love to but I promised to meet friends, sorry"*; *I'm sorry Mr. Benneth I already have plans or I would"*; *"I really want to help you but I feel really sick"*.

Almost all of the participants stated an excuse for not helping both interlocutors. To soften their refusals, they also added some other indirect refusal strategies such as a *promise for future acceptance* like *"if you need me later, I can help"*; *If it is emergency, I may try to cancel"*; or *conditions for past acceptance* like *"I would like to if you asked me earlier"*; or *wish* like *"I wish I could help, but..."*, though their frequencies varied across the groups and interlocutors.

**Table 9 - Most Frequently used refusal strategies for Situation5 and Situation6 by ENSs and TSEFLs**

| <i>Strategies</i>                               |           | <i>N</i> | <i>Mean</i> | <i>Std. Deviation</i> | <i>Std. Error</i> |
|-------------------------------------------------|-----------|----------|-------------|-----------------------|-------------------|
| <b><i>DirectRefusals / Negative Ability</i></b> | S5 TSEFLs | 16       | ,32         | ,471                  | ,067              |
|                                                 | S5 ENSs   | 13       | ,52         | ,510                  | ,102              |
|                                                 | S6 TSEFLs | 17       | ,34         | ,479                  | ,068              |
|                                                 | S6 ENSs   | 11       | ,44         | ,507                  | ,101              |
| <b><i>Statement of Regret</i></b>               | S5 TSEFLs | 30       | ,60         | ,495                  | ,070              |
|                                                 | S5 ENSs   | 22       | ,88         | ,332                  | ,066              |
|                                                 | S6 TSEFLs | 24       | ,48         | ,505                  | ,071              |
|                                                 | S6 ENSs   | 19       | ,76         | ,436                  | ,087              |
| <b><i>Wish</i></b>                              | S5 TSEFLs | 1        | ,02         | ,141                  | ,020              |
|                                                 | S5 ENSs   | 4        | ,20         | ,408                  | ,082              |
|                                                 | S6 TSEFLs | 9        | ,18         | ,388                  | ,055              |
|                                                 | S6 ENSs   | 0        | 0,00        | 0,00                  | 0,00              |
| <b><i>Excuse/ Reason / Explanation</i></b>      | S5 TSEFLs | 48       | ,96         | ,198                  | ,028              |
|                                                 | S5 ENSs   | 20       | ,80         | ,408                  | ,082              |
|                                                 | S6 TSEFLs | 45       | ,90         | ,303                  | ,043              |
|                                                 | S6 ENSs   | 18       | ,72         | ,458                  | ,092              |
| <b><i>Past – Future Acceptance</i></b>          | S5 TSEFLs | 8        | ,16         | ,370                  | ,052              |
|                                                 | S5 ENSs   | 7        | ,28         | ,458                  | ,092              |
|                                                 | S6 TSEFLs | 4        | ,08         | ,274                  | ,039              |
|                                                 | S6 ENSs   | 6        | ,24         | ,436                  | ,087              |
| <b><i>Future promise</i></b>                    | S5 TSEFLs | 3        | ,06         | ,240                  | ,034              |
|                                                 | S5 ENSs   | 6        | ,24         | ,436                  | ,087              |
|                                                 | S6 TSEFLs | 7        | ,14         | ,351                  | ,050              |
|                                                 | S6 ENSs   | 4        | ,16         | ,374                  | ,075              |
| <b><i>Verbal Avoidance</i></b>                  | S5 TSEFLs | 0        | 0,00        | 0,000                 | 0,000             |
|                                                 | S5 ENSs   | 4        | ,16         | ,374                  | ,075              |
|                                                 | S6 TSEFLs | 2        | ,04         | ,198                  | ,028              |
|                                                 | S6 ENSs   | 10       | ,40         | ,500                  | ,100              |
| <b><i>Statement of Positive Opinion</i></b>     | S5 TSEFLs | 18       | ,36         | ,485                  | ,069              |
|                                                 | S5 ENSs   | 2        | ,08         | ,277                  | ,055              |
|                                                 | S6 TSEFLs | 9        | ,18         | ,388                  | ,055              |
|                                                 | S6 ENSs   | 1        | ,04         | ,200                  | ,040              |

Multiple comparisons of strategy frequencies by On-way ANOVA Post Hoc Tukey analysis showed that there were significant variations in the use of *statement of regret* and *verbal avoidance* and adjuncts as *statement of positive opinion* as seen in Table 10.

**Table 10 – Multiple Comparisons of the Strategies with Significant Mean Difference across groups and paired situation5 and situation6**

Tukey HSD

| <i>Dependent Variable</i> | <i>Participant I</i> | <i>Participant J</i> | <i>Mean Difference (I-J)</i> |
|---------------------------|----------------------|----------------------|------------------------------|
| <b>Regret</b>             | S5 ENSs              | S5 TSEFLs            | ,280                         |
|                           |                      | S6 TSEFLs            | ,400*                        |
|                           |                      | S6 ENSs              | ,120                         |
| <b>Excuse</b>             | S5 TSEFLs            | S5 ENSs              | -,160                        |
|                           |                      | S6 TSEFLs            | -,060                        |
|                           |                      | S6 ENSs              | ,240*                        |
| <b>Verbal Avoidance</b>   | S5 TSEFLs            | S5 ENSs              | -,160                        |
|                           |                      | S6 TSEFLs            | -,040                        |
|                           |                      | S6 ENSs              | -,400*                       |
| <b>Positive Opinion</b>   | S5 TSEFLs            | S5 ENSs              | ,280*                        |
|                           |                      | S6 TSEFLs            | ,180                         |
|                           |                      | S6 ENSs              | ,320*                        |

\*. The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

According to the Table 10, it is clear that both TSEFLs and ENSs preferred saying “*I am sorry*” to their boss more frequently than to a friend, but still in both situations ENSs used regret more than TSEFLs. Another difference was that verbal avoidance was more frequent than making an excuse among ENSs when refusing a friend with expressions like “*Maybe next time*”; “*I may help later*”; *you can call (another person)*” while TSEFLs usually preferred expressing positive opinion and making an excuse in both situations.

That is to say, the social power of the interlocutor has an impact on their strategy frequencies as it is apparent that in refusing a boss, both groups applied more strategies than to their friends and TSEFLs were in alignment with ENSs in their strategy frequencies and lengths of their responses. The difference can be seen in their linguistic choices and use of their modality markers to manipulate the impact of refusing act as will be discussed later.

## 4.1.2 Analysis of Complaint Strategies

### 4.1.2.1 Complaint for an Accident

The fourth paired situation presented the complaint strategies of TSEFLs and ENSs in the case of a car accident in which the participants' car is hit by careless drivers, one of whom is a young boy in the first situation (S7) and an old woman in the second (S8). Table 11 shows the frequencies of strategies used by TSEFLs and ENSs.

**Table 11 – The Complaint Strategies for Situation 9 and Situation 10 used by ENSs and TSEFLs**

|                                           |           | <i>N</i> | <i>Mean</i> | <i>Std. Dev.</i> | <i>Std. Error</i> |
|-------------------------------------------|-----------|----------|-------------|------------------|-------------------|
| <b><i>Opting Out</i></b>                  | S7 TSEFLs | 0        | 0,00        | 0,00             | 0,00              |
|                                           | S7 ENSs   | 0        | 0,00        | 0,00             | 0,00              |
|                                           | S8 TSEFLs | 7        | ,14         | ,351             | ,050              |
|                                           | S8 ENSs   | 13       | ,56         | ,507             | ,101              |
| <b><i>Annoyance</i></b>                   | S7 TSEFLs | 7        | ,14         | ,351             | ,050              |
|                                           | S7 ENSs   | 8        | ,32         | ,476             | ,095              |
|                                           | S8 TSEFLs | 5        | ,10         | ,303             | ,043              |
|                                           | S8 ENSs   | 6        | ,24         | ,436             | ,087              |
| <b><i>Consequences</i></b>                | S7 TSEFLs | 8        | ,16         | ,370             | ,052              |
|                                           | S7 ENSs   | 7        | ,28         | ,458             | ,092              |
|                                           | S8 TSEFLs | 9        | ,18         | ,388             | ,055              |
|                                           | S8 ENSs   | 4        | ,16         | ,374             | ,075              |
| <b><i>Indirect Accusation</i></b>         | S7 TSEFLs | 8        | ,16         | ,370             | ,052              |
|                                           | S7 ENSs   | 7        | ,28         | ,458             | ,092              |
|                                           | S8 TSEFLs | 8        | ,16         | ,370             | ,052              |
|                                           | S8 ENSs   | 3        | ,12         | ,332             | ,066              |
| <b><i>Direct Accusation</i></b>           | S7 TSEFLs | 7        | ,14         | ,351             | ,050              |
|                                           | S7 ENSs   | 8        | ,32         | ,476             | ,095              |
|                                           | S8 TSEFLs | 3        | ,06         | ,240             | ,034              |
|                                           | S8 ENSs   | 0        | ,20         | ,408             | ,082              |
| <b><i>Modified Blame</i></b>              | S7 TSEFLs | 14       | ,28         | ,454             | ,064              |
|                                           | S7 ENSs   | 3        | ,12         | ,332             | ,066              |
|                                           | S8 TSEFLs | 12       | ,24         | ,431             | ,061              |
|                                           | S8 ENSs   | 9        | ,36         | ,490             | ,098              |
| <b><i>Explicit Blame on Behaviour</i></b> | S7 TSEFLs | 14       | ,28         | ,454             | ,064              |
|                                           | S7 ENSs   | 11       | ,44         | ,507             | ,101              |
|                                           | S8 TSEFLs | 17       | ,34         | ,479             | ,068              |
|                                           | S8 ENSs   | 7        | ,28         | ,458             | ,092              |
| <b><i>Explicit Blame on Person</i></b>    | S7 TSEFLs | 21       | ,42         | ,499             | ,071              |
|                                           | S7 ENSs   | 1        | ,04         | ,200             | ,040              |
|                                           | S8 TSEFLs | 11       | ,22         | ,418             | ,059              |
|                                           | S8 ENSs   | 5        | ,20         | ,408             | ,082              |
| <b><i>Request for Repair</i></b>          | S7 TSEFLs | 0        | 0,00        | 0,00             | 0,00              |
|                                           | S7 ENSs   | 2        | ,08         | ,277             | ,055              |
|                                           | S8 TSEFLs | 2        | ,04         | ,198             | ,028              |
|                                           | S8 ENSs   | 4        | ,16         | ,374             | ,075              |
| <b><i>Threat</i></b>                      | S7 TSEFLs | 6        | ,12         | ,328             | ,046              |
|                                           | S7 ENSs   | 5        | ,16         | ,374             | ,075              |
|                                           | S8 TSEFLs | 4        | ,08         | ,274             | ,039              |
|                                           | S8 ENSs   | 0        | 0,00        | 0,00             | 0,00              |

As seen in Table 10, the most frequent strategies used by both groups were types of blaming but in general their responses varied greatly both in terms of content and strategy used which precludes the chance to generalize and make inference. Still there are some striking variations in their strategies which are influenced by the social statuses of the interlocutors. Typically TSEFLs applied similar strategies in both situations but the content of their strategies were very different. The most frequent strategies used by TSEFLs were blaming (modified, both on person and behaviour) and direct - indirect accusations.

On the other hand, the responses of ENSs varied greatly according to the person to whom they complained. They were more direct and severe while talking to the boy in S7, but their complaints were much more polite and indirect to the woman in S8.

In Table 12, multiple comparisons of the strategies with significant mean difference obtained by One Way ANOVA Post Hoc Tukey analysis were displayed.

**Table 12– Multiple Comparisons of Strategies of TSEFLs and ENSs with Significant Mean Difference used in S7 and S8**

Tukey HSD

| Dependent Variable              |           | Mean Difference (I-J) |        |
|---------------------------------|-----------|-----------------------|--------|
| <b>Opting Out</b>               | S7 TSEFLs | S8 TSEFLs             | -,140* |
|                                 | S7 ENSs   | S8 ENSs               | -,560* |
|                                 | S7 TSEFLs | S7 ENSs               | ,000   |
|                                 | S8 ENSs   | S8 TSEFLs             | ,420*  |
| <b>Annoyance</b>                | S7 TSEFLs | S8 TSEFLs             | ,040   |
|                                 | S7 ENSs   | S8 ENSs               | ,080   |
|                                 | S7 TSEFLs | S7 ENSs               | -,180* |
|                                 | S8 ENSs   | S8 TSEFLs             | -,140  |
| <b>Direct Accusation</b>        | S7 TSEFLs | S8 TSEFLs             | ,080   |
|                                 | S7 ENSs   | S8 ENSs               | ,120   |
|                                 | S7 TSEFLs | S7 ENSs               | -,180* |
|                                 | S8 ENSs   | S8 TSEFLs             | ,120   |
| <b>Explicit Blame on person</b> | S7 TSEFLs | S8 TSEFLs             | ,200*  |
|                                 | S7 ENSs   | S8 ENSs               | -,160, |
|                                 | S7 TSEFLs | S7 ENSs               | ,380*  |
|                                 | S8 ENSs   | S8 TSEFLs             | -,020  |

\*. The mean difference is significant at the 0.5 level.

The highest mean difference was the opting out preferences of ENSs in S8 with a mean difference of 0,560 from their responses in S7 and from TSEFLs in S7; with a mean difference of 0,420 from TSEFLs in S8.

More than half of the native participants did not complain in S8, instead they expressed concern for the health of the woman and asked if she is all right, but only 14% of the TSEFLs chose opting out in S8. Besides, none of the participants avoided complaining to the boy.

Another strategy with a high difference is explicit blame on person. It is mostly used by TSEFLs, especially in S7 more than in S8, still more than ENSs in both situations. Very few of the ENSs blamed the person but they blamed the behavior.

Some typical responses of TSEFLs for S7 were: *"Hey boy, are you crazy? Don't you see where you are going?"*; *"Hey! What the hell are you doing?"*; *"How careless you are! My car is ruined because of you!"*; *"Come on, where did you get your driving license? It is your fault, you know that right?"*.

Their responses for S8 were typically: *"Ma'am, why are you driving so carelessly? What are we going to do now?"*; *Oh my God! Ma'am you know it is your fault, you should pay for it!"*, *Ohh what are you doing, Ma'am? Why don't you look in front of you?"*, *Ohh no, ma'am, you should not be driving any more"*.

To illustrate the strategies used by ENSs, here are some common responses for S7: *"Damn it!"*; *"Are you serious don't you know how to drive!"*; *"Kid what in the hell were you thinking?; I can't believe this (swear word). Why is wrong with you?"*; *"Did you not look before turning?"*; *"Were you not paying any attention!? You just run right into my car and now I'm going to be late for school. Unbelievable!"*.

However, they replied to S8 with expressions like: *"Ohh no, are you alright?"*; *"Hi, are you okay? The police are on their way, but would you like me to call an ambulance?"*; *"Hey. Are you alright? Did you not look before turning? Can I get your insurance information?"*.

In such a situation which causes a serious problem for the speakers, the complaints might be very direct and severe. However, the consequences of an accident in the USA and in Turkey may be different and the easiness of dealing with the problem

may influence the severity of the complaint. Turkish speakers complained severely in both situations with only a little difference with no care about the person who they were talking to. On the other hand, most of the ENSs avoided offending an old woman with severe complaints even though the accident was her fault. Social status of the woman is higher than the young boy in terms of age and the ENSs varied their complaints according to this factor while TSEFLs did not, which may be seen as rude and unacceptable in the target culture.

#### 4.1.2.2 Complaint for the TV noise

For those paired situations, the participants were supposed to complain to their neighbors about the loud TV volume as they need to study for an important exam. In the first situation (S9), the neighbours are described as an old couple who cannot hear well; in the second (S10), they are some teenager students. The strategies used for each situation are presented below in Table 13.

**Table 13 – Complaint Strategies used by TSEFLs and ENSs for the Situation9 and Situation10**

|                   |     |        | <i>N</i> | <i>Mean</i> | <i>Std. Deviation</i> | <i>Std. Error</i> |
|-------------------|-----|--------|----------|-------------|-----------------------|-------------------|
| <b>Opting Out</b> | S9  | TSEFLs | 0        | 0,00        | 0,00                  | 0,00              |
|                   | S9  | ENSs   | 4        | ,16         | ,374                  | ,075              |
|                   | S10 | TSEFLs | 0        | 0,00        | 0,00                  | 0,00              |
|                   | S10 | ENSs   | 0        | 0,00        | 0,00                  | 0,00              |
| <b>Hints</b>      | S9  | TSEFLs | 41       | ,82         | ,388                  | ,055              |
|                   | S9  | ENSs   | 17       | ,68         | ,476                  | ,095              |
|                   | S10 | TSEFLs | 25       | ,50         | ,505                  | ,071              |
|                   | S10 | ENSs   | 16       | ,64         | ,490                  | ,098              |
| <b>Annoyance</b>  | S9  | TSEFLs | 12       | ,24         | ,431                  | ,061              |
|                   | S9  | ENSs   | 4        | ,16         | ,374                  | ,075              |
|                   | S10 | TSEFLs | 1        | ,02         | ,141                  | ,020              |
|                   | S10 | ENSs   | 16       | ,64         | ,490                  | ,098              |
| <b>Request</b>    | S9  | TSEFLs | 46       | ,92         | ,274                  | ,039              |
|                   | S9  | ENSs   | 21       | ,84         | ,374                  | ,075              |
|                   | S10 | TSEFLs | 20       | ,40         | ,495                  | ,070              |
|                   | S10 | ENSs   | 12       | ,48         | ,510                  | ,102              |
| <b>Threat</b>     | S9  | TSEFLs | 0        | 0,00        | 0,00                  | 0,00              |
|                   | S9  | ENSs   | 0        | 0,00        | 0,00                  | 0,00              |
|                   | S10 | TSEFLs | 6        | ,12         | ,328                  | ,046              |
|                   | S10 | ENSs   | 8        | ,32         | ,476                  | ,095              |
| <b>Ordering</b>   | S9  | TSEFLs | 0        | 0,00        | 0,00                  | 0,00              |
|                   | S9  | ENSs   | 0        | 0,00        | 0,00                  | 0,00              |
|                   | S10 | TSEFLs | 24       | ,48         | ,505                  | ,071              |
|                   | S10 | ENSs   | 4        | ,16         | ,374                  | ,075              |



As seen in Table 13, the most frequently used strategies were hints and requests in both situations. Still there were variations according to the hearers. As many TSEFLs and some ENSs used imperatives to tell the students to volume down the TV, it was coded separately from requests.

In the first situation, TSEFLs and ENSs were very similar in their responses. They usually started with an expression of regret like *“sorry, but...”*, *excuse me, sir*” and continued with a hint to explain why they came and then requested to volume the TV down. Only a few of the participants expressed annoyance to the couple. Some typical responses of TSEFLs were: *“Excuse me, I have an exam, so could you please lower the TV volume for tonight?”*; *“I am sorry to disturb, but would you mind lowering the voice, because I cannot study”*.

The responses of ENSs were not very different: *“Excuse me, I have an exam tomorrow, and I am trying to study. Would you mind reducing the volume a little bit, so I can study? Thank you”*; *“Hi, I am sorry to bother you but I have a very important exam tomorrow, so if you don’t mind I was gonna ask to turn the TV down”*; *“Excuse but can you please lower the volume. I am trying to a very important exam. I can really hear you TV like it in my room. Thanks”*.

While talking to the teenagers, none of the participants were so polite. ENSs usually expressed their annoyance about the noise but TESLs preferred giving order rather than requesting in a question form. Also 32% of ENSs and 12% of TSEFLs treated the students by saying that they will call the police if they continue. *“hi, guys, I need to study, so lower the voice, Ok?”*; *“Hi, I have an exam tomorrow but I cannot study because of your noise. No one has to listen to you, right?”* are some sample responses of TSEFLs.

And here are various responses from ENSs for S10: *“Excuse me, boys, but I need to do some work and the volume on your television is so high that I can hear it all the way in my apartment. Would you mind turning it down?”*; *“Hey, I am really sick of your loud TV, turn it off or I’ll call the police”*; *“Guys, you need to turn down the TV NOW! Who in the hell do you think you are? I am trying to study and I gotta hear this crap. SHUT IT DOWN NOW! Don’t make me call the police. Now you all have a good*

night”. “Hey guys, I need to study and I am really disturbed by the noise. Please turn that (swear word) TV off!”.

The variations of strategies between the paired situations and the participants are presented in Table 14 with the mean differences.

Table 14 shows that the variations of TSEFLs strategies between S9 and S10 do not have a significant mean difference from the variations of ENSs strategies. The highest significant difference is between the frequency of annoyance of TSEFLs and ENSs (-,620) in S10 and requests of TSEFLs in S9 and S10 (,520). Although ENSs expressed their annoyance, they still used requesting structures while TSEFLs hardly ever expressed annoyance but used imperatives to ask the students to lower the volume.

**Table 14 – Multiple Comparisons of the Complaint Strategies of TSEFLs and ENSs with significant mean differences in Situation9 and Situation10**

Tukey HSD

| Dependent Variable | Participant I | Participant J | Mean Difference (I-J) |
|--------------------|---------------|---------------|-----------------------|
| <b>Hints</b>       | S9 TSEFLs     | S9 ENSs       | ,140                  |
|                    | S9 TSEFLs     | S10 TSEFLs    | ,320*                 |
|                    | S9 ENSs       | S10 ENSs      | ,040                  |
|                    | S10 TSEFLs    | S10 ENSs      | -,140                 |
|                    | S9 TEFLs      | S9 ENSs       | -,080                 |
| <b>Annoyance</b>   | S9 TEFLs      | S10 TEFLs     | ,220*                 |
|                    | S9 ENSs       | S10 ENSs      | -,320*                |
|                    | S10 TEFLs     | S10 ENSs      | -,620                 |
|                    | S9 TSEFLs     | S9 ENSs       | ,080                  |
| <b>Request</b>     | S9 TSEFLs     | S10 TSEFLs    | ,520*                 |
|                    | S9 ENSs       | S10 ENSs      | ,360*                 |
|                    | S10 TSEFLs    | S10 ENSs      | ,080                  |
|                    | S9 TSEFLs     | S9 ENSs       | ,000                  |
| <b>Threat</b>      | S9 TSEFLs     | S10 TSEFLs    | -,120                 |
|                    | S9 ENSs       | S10 ENSs      | -,320*                |
|                    | S10 TSEFLs    | S10 ENSs      | -,200                 |
|                    | S9 TSEFLs     | S9 ENSs       | ,000                  |
| <b>Order</b>       | S9 TSEFLs     | S10 TSEFLs    | -,480*                |
|                    | S9 ENSs       | S10 ENSs      | -,160                 |
|                    | S10 TSEFLs    | S10 ENSs      | ,320*                 |
|                    | S9 TSEFLs     | S9 ENSs       | ,000                  |

\*. The mean difference is significant at the 0.5 level.

These findings show that in a complaint situation which is bearable and not very severe, TSEFLs were more careful about their strategy preferences while talking to an

older person. And they could express their annoyance and complaints as much as ENSs did towards the young boys with similar strategies.

#### 4.1.2.3 Complaint for the Lost Book

The last paired situations of the present study is a response to a friend in situation 11 (S11) and to a professor in situation 12 (S12) who apologizes for a book s/he borrowed and lost. The complaint strategies of TSEFLs and ENSs used for the lost book to a higher-status person and to an equal-status person showed great variance as seen in Table 15.

**Table 15 - Complaint Strategies used by TSEFLs and ENSs for the Situation11 and Situation12**

|                                    |     |        | <i>N</i> | <i>Mean</i> | <i>Std. Deviation</i> | <i>Std. Error</i> |
|------------------------------------|-----|--------|----------|-------------|-----------------------|-------------------|
| <b>Opting Out</b>                  | S11 | TSEFLs | 7        | ,14         | ,351                  | ,050              |
|                                    | S11 | ENSs   | 0        | 0,00        | 0,00                  | 0,00              |
|                                    | S12 | TSEFLs | 30       | ,60         | ,495                  | ,070              |
|                                    | S12 | ENSs   | 7        | ,28         | ,458                  | ,092              |
| <b>Hints</b>                       | S11 | TSEFLs | 11       | ,22         | ,418                  | ,059              |
|                                    | S11 | ENSs   | 9        | ,36         | ,490                  | ,098              |
|                                    | S12 | TSEFLs | 14       | ,28         | ,454                  | ,064              |
|                                    | S12 | ENSs   | 17       | ,68         | ,476                  | ,095              |
| <b>Annoyance</b>                   | S11 | TSEFLs | 12       | ,24         | ,431                  | ,061              |
|                                    | S11 | ENSs   | 1        | ,04         | ,200                  | ,040              |
|                                    | S12 | TSEFLs | 0        | 0,00        | 0,00                  | 0,00              |
|                                    | S12 | ENSs   | 0        | 0,00        | 0,00                  | 0,00              |
| <b>Consequences</b>                | S11 | TSEFLs | 7        | ,14         | ,351                  | ,050              |
|                                    | S11 | ENSs   | 4        | ,16         | ,374                  | ,075              |
|                                    | S12 | TSEFLs | 7        | ,14         | ,351                  | ,050              |
|                                    | S12 | ENSs   | 4        | ,16         | ,374                  | ,075              |
| <b>Modified Blame</b>              | S11 | TSEFLs | 8        | ,16         | ,370                  | ,052              |
|                                    | S11 | ENSs   | 4        | ,16         | ,374                  | ,075              |
|                                    | S12 | TSEFLs | 4        | ,08         | ,274                  | ,039              |
|                                    | S12 | ENSs   | 3        | ,12         | ,332                  | ,066              |
| <b>Explicit Blame on Behaviour</b> | S11 | TSEFLs | 9        | ,18         | ,388                  | ,055              |
|                                    | S11 | ENSs   | 5        | ,20         | ,408                  | ,082              |
|                                    | S12 | TSEFLs | 0        | 0,00        | 0,00                  | 0,00              |
|                                    | S12 | ENSs   | 0        | 0,00        | 0,00                  | 0,00              |
| <b>Explicit Blame on Person</b>    | S11 | TSEFLs | 7        | ,14         | ,351                  | ,050              |
|                                    | S11 | ENSs   | 4        | ,16         | ,374                  | ,075              |
|                                    | S12 | TSEFLs | 0        | 0,00        | 0,00                  | 0,00              |
|                                    | S12 | ENSs   | 0        | 0,00        | 0,00                  | 0,00              |
| <b>Request</b>                     | S11 | TSEFLs | 19       | ,38         | ,490                  | ,069              |
|                                    | S11 | ENSs   | 14       | ,56         | ,507                  | ,101              |
|                                    | S12 | TSEFLs | 17       | ,34         | ,479                  | ,068              |
|                                    | S12 | ENSs   | 17       | ,68         | ,476                  | ,095              |
| <b>Threat</b>                      | S11 | TSEFLs | 4        | ,08         | ,274                  | ,039              |
|                                    | S11 | ENSs   | 8        | ,32         | ,476                  | ,095              |
|                                    | S12 | TSEFLs | 0        | 0,00        | 0,00                  | 0,00              |
|                                    | S12 | ENSs   | 0        | 0,00        | 0,00                  | 0,00              |

In Situation 11, TSEFLs and ENSs were not considerably different in their strategies while complaining to a friend. Both groups blamed their friends or expressed annoyance and requested a replacement of the book even though their linguistic preferences were changed. So typical examples for S11 from ENSs were: *“You need to get me a new one.”*; *“Well, I really need the copy. I would like you to replace the one you lost.”*; *“I don’t know how you think I am going to study for the exam tomorrow without my book. When you borrow something, it is implied that you will return it. I won’t be lending you anything in the future either”*.

TSEFLs’ complaint examples to their friends were: *“It’s my fault to trust you. How can you lose it?”*; *“How can I study now? Don’t you know I have an exam?”*; *“I can’t believe in you! Now because of you, I’ll fail!”*.

A clear difference between TSEFLs and ENSs was seen in S12 in which they complaint to a professor. Most of the TSEFLs did not say anything about the lost book. They just preferred to find a solution for the problem themselves with the expressions like: *“It’s not a problem teacher. I can find it from another friend to study.”*; *“Do you think I can find it in the library?”*; *Ok, not important, I will buy a new one”*.

In contrast, ENSs used hints to explain the importance of the book for them and politely requested a replacement for the book or money to buy a new one. Some examples were: *“I’m sorry to hear that, but I do really need a copy of that book. Is there any way that the school could replace it for me?”*; *“Unfortunately I have an exam tomorrow and need to buy another copy of it. Would you mind reimbursing me once I find out the price?”*; *“I really need that book to study for an exam tomorrow. Could you either give me money to buy a new a copy, or could you please buy me a new copy?”*.

Table 16 shows multiple comparisons of the complaint strategies of TSEFLs and ENSs for the S11 and S12.

As seen in Table 16, there is not any significant mean difference between TSEFLs and ENSs in S11. In S12, the mean difference between TSEFLs and ENSs is significant in opting out (,320), hints (,400) and requests (,340). While ENSs did not show any significant variance in their complaint strategies to a professor and to a friend, TSEFLs changed their *opting out* and *annoyance* preferences greatly between S11 and S12.

**Table 16 – Multiple Comparisons of the Complaint Strategies of TSEFLs and ENSs with significant mean differences in Situation11 and Situation12**

| Tukey HSD          |               |        |               |        |                       |
|--------------------|---------------|--------|---------------|--------|-----------------------|
| Dependent Variable | Participant I |        | Participant J |        | Mean Difference (I-J) |
| Opting Out         | S11           | TSEFLs | S11           | ENSs   | ,140                  |
|                    | S11           | TSEFLs | S12           | TSEFLs | -,460*                |
|                    | S11           | ENSs   | S12           | ENSs   | -,280                 |
|                    | S12           | TSEFLs | S12           | ENSs   | ,320*                 |
| Hints              | S11           | TSEFLs | S11           | ENSs   | -,140                 |
|                    | S11           | TSEFLs | S12           | TSEFLs | -,060                 |
|                    | S11           | ENSs   | S12           | ENSs   | -0,32                 |
|                    | S12           | TSEFLs | S12           | ENSs   | -,400*                |
| Annoyance          | S11           | TSEFLs | S11           | ENSs   | ,200*                 |
|                    | S11           | TSEFLs | S12           | TSEFLs | ,240*                 |
|                    | S11           | ENSs   | S12           | ENSs   | 0,04                  |
|                    | S12           | TSEFLs | S12           | ENSs   | 0                     |
| Request            | S11           | TSEFLs | S11           | ENSs   | -,180                 |
|                    | S11           | TSEFLs | S12           | TSEFLs | ,040                  |
|                    | S11           | ENSs   | S12           | ENSs   | -,120                 |
|                    | S12           | TSEFLs | S12           | ENSs   | ,340*                 |
| Threat             | S11           | TSEFLs | S11           | ENSs   | -,240*                |
|                    | S11           | TSEFLs | S12           | TSEFLs | ,080                  |
|                    | S11           | ENSs   | S12           | ENSs   | ,320*                 |
|                    | S12           | TSEFLs | S12           | ENSs   | 0                     |

\*. The mean difference is significant at the 0.5 level.

These findings prove that Turkish English speakers avoid face-threatening acts like complaints to a familiar person with a higher status possibly on the grounds of their relationships with professors in their own culture. Another reason for this avoidance may be their hesitation about how to use the foreign language to complain in such a way that they will neither be rude nor be non-communicative.

## 4.2 Coding and Analysis of Modality Markers

Research Question 1b: How do Turkish EFL learners deviate from the norms produced by the native English speakers in their productions of the speech act sets of refusal and complaint depending on the social distance or status of the hearer, in terms of variation in their use of modality markers?

### 4.2.1 Modality Markers in Refusals

The use of modality markers in speech act of refusing functions as linguistic elements to manipulate the impact of refusals on the hearer. Downgraders are used to soften the act by playing down the language and upgraders are used to increase the persuasiveness of the explanations or excuses.

#### 4.2.1.1 Refusal of an Invitation

The mean use of modality markers by the participants in the first paired situations (Situation1 and Situation2) were displayed in Table 17.

*Table 17 – The Mean Use of Downgraders and Upgraders by TSEFLs and ENSs for Situation1 and Situation2*

| <i>Participants</i>     |           | <i>Politeness Marker</i> | <i>Understater</i> | <i>Downtoner</i> | <i>M. Committer</i> | <i>Hasitator</i> | <i>Cajolers</i> | <i>Overstater</i> | <i>Intensifier</i> |
|-------------------------|-----------|--------------------------|--------------------|------------------|---------------------|------------------|-----------------|-------------------|--------------------|
| <b>Sit 1<br/>TSEFLs</b> | Mean      | ,12                      | ,06                | ,16              | ,20                 | ,08              | ,08             | 0,00              | ,12                |
|                         | N         | 50                       | 50                 | 50               | 50                  | 50               | 50              | 50                | 50                 |
|                         | Std. Dev. | ,328                     | ,240               | ,370             | ,404                | ,274             | ,274            | 0,00              | ,328               |
| <b>Sit 1<br/>ENSs</b>   | Mean      | 0,00                     | ,12                | ,36              | ,32                 | 0,00             | 0,00            | 0,00              | ,32                |
|                         | N         | 25                       | 25                 | 25               | 25                  | 25               | 25              | 25                | 25                 |
|                         | Std. Dev. | 0,0                      | ,332               | ,490             | ,476                | 0,00             | 0,00            | 0,00              | ,476               |
| <b>Sit 2<br/>TSEFLs</b> | Mean      | ,36                      | ,12                | 0,00             | ,10                 | ,04              | ,02             | ,04               | ,40                |
|                         | N         | 50                       | 50                 | 50               | 50                  | 50               | 50              | 50                | 50                 |
|                         | Std. Dev. | ,485                     | ,328               | 0,00             | ,303                | ,198             | ,141            | ,198              | ,495               |
| <b>Sit 2<br/>ENSs</b>   | Mean      | 0,00                     | 0,00               | ,12              | ,20                 | ,08              | 0,00            | 0,00              | ,64                |
|                         | N         | 25                       | 25                 | 25               | 25                  | 25               | 25              | 25                | 25                 |
|                         | Std. Dev. | 0,00                     | 0,00               | ,332             | ,408                | ,277             | 0,00            | 0,00              | ,490               |

In the use of downgraders, differences are observed for *politeness markers*, *downtoners* and *minus committers*. While none of the ENSs used politeness markers in either situation, TSEFLs used them in both, especially in the S2. They started their speech with a polite expression like “*you`re so kind / nice but,...*” or “*please, forgive me but I can`t...*” *Downtoners* and *minus committers* were mostly used by ENSs for the S1 with means of ,36 and ,32, respectively. However, the use of downgraders in total does not provide a significant difference between TSEFLs and ENSs in both situations.

*Intensifier* was the only upgrader used by the participants except for the two TSEFLs who used *overstaters*. They used intensifiers either to emphasize the importance of their excuses (*I have lots of things to do, I have a very important exam, etc*) or to intensify their regret (*I am so sorry.*) As a similar feature, both TSEFLs and ENSs increased their intensifiers while refusing the professor.

In refusing an invitation, TSEFLs proved to be able to manipulate their utterances as ENSs do. As there is not any significant difference in use of modality markers, it can be deduced that TSEFLs are highly competent in choosing various linguistic patterns according to situation and social relationship.

#### 4.2.1.2 Refusal of an Offer

For the Situation3 and Situation4, the use of downgraders and upgraders does not show an important variance between TSEFLs and ENSs (Table 18).

**Table 18 - The Mean Use of Downgraders and Upgraders by TSEFLs and ENSs for Situation3 and Situation4**

| <i>Participants</i>     |           | <i>Hedge</i> | <i>Understater</i> | <i>Downtoner</i> | <i>Cajolers</i> | <i>Appealers</i> | <i>Overstater</i> | <i>Intensifier</i> | <i>Plus committer</i> | <i>Aggr. Interrog.</i> |
|-------------------------|-----------|--------------|--------------------|------------------|-----------------|------------------|-------------------|--------------------|-----------------------|------------------------|
| <b>Sit 3<br/>TSEFLs</b> | Mean      | 0,00         | ,04                | ,04              | ,38             | 0,00             | 0,00              | 0,00               | 0,00                  | ,36                    |
|                         | N         | 50           | 50                 | 50               | 50              | 50               | 50                | 50                 | 50                    | 50                     |
|                         | Std. Dev. | 0,00         | ,198               | ,198             | ,490            | 0,00             | 0,00              | 0,00               | 0,00                  | ,485                   |
| <b>Sit 3<br/>ENSs</b>   | Mean      | ,08          | 0,00               | ,12              | ,16             | ,12              | 0,00              | ,24                | 0,00                  | ,12                    |
|                         | N         | 25           | 25                 | 25               | 25              | 25               | 25                | 25                 | 25                    | 25                     |
|                         | Std. Dev. | ,277         | 0,00               | ,332             | ,374            | ,332             | 0,00              | ,436               | 0,00                  | ,332                   |
| <b>Sit 4<br/>TSEFLs</b> | Mean      | ,04          | ,12                | 0,00             | ,08             | 0,00             | ,06               | ,32                | ,12                   | 0,00                   |
|                         | N         | 50           | 50                 | 50               | 50              | 50               | 50                | 50                 | 50                    | 50                     |
|                         | Std. Dev. | ,198         | ,328               | 0,00             | ,274            | 0,00             | ,240              | ,471               | ,328                  | 0,00                   |
| <b>Sit 4<br/>ENSs</b>   | Mean      | ,12          | ,24                | ,16              | ,16             | 0,00             | 0,00              | ,40                | 0,00                  | 0,00                   |
|                         | N         | 25           | 25                 | 25               | 25              | 25               | 25                | 25                 | 25                    | 25                     |
|                         | Std. Dev. | ,332         | ,436               | ,374             | ,374            | 0,00             | ,510              | 0,00               | ,500                  | 0,00                   |

While talking to their mothers in S1, 36% of the TSEFLs upgraded their refusals with aggressive Interrogative expressions such as “*Mum, why did you cook it again?*”, “*don`t you know I hate that*”. Also they used cajolers more frequently than ENSs.

In Situation4, both groups used more *intensifiers* than in Situation3. They intensified their explanations (“I am really full”, “I’ve eaten a lot”) or their positive opinions (it looks very delicious but”, thanks a lot”).

However, in both situations, ENSs used more *downgraders* (hedges, understaters, downtoners and appealers) and intensifiers in total to soften their refusals in contrast to TSEFLs.

The results indicate a cultural difference about the status of a mother for their children. Many TSEFLs complained for the food aggressively and used less downgraders to soften their refusal in contrast to ENSs who were as kind to their mothers as they are to their friend` with similar rates of downgraders and upgraders in both situations. However, increased number of modality markers in TSEFLs for S4 is a token of their ability to vary their speech and apply a politer approach to a socially-distant and higher person.

#### **4.2.1.3 Refusal of a Request**

In refusing a request, the use of downgraders and upgraders differed according to the social status of the hearer for both groups of participants (Table 19).

In Situation5, in which they refuse the request of their bosses, TSEFLs and ENSs provided similar mean score of intensifiers and total use of downgraders were close. Both groups used intensifiers (TSEFLs - 50%; ENSs – 56%) to exaggerate the emergency or importance of their excuses or the intensity of their regret as a way to play down the impact of their refusals to help. 28% of TSEFLs used hesitators to refuse their bosses.

On the other hand, in Situation6, in which they refused a request of their friends, ENSs had increased the number of downgraders and upgraders with more intimate and softer expressions as opposed to TSEFLs who used less downgraders and upgraders.



**Table 19 - The Mean Use of Downgraders and Upgraders by TSEFLs and ENSs for Situation5 and Situation6**

| Participants            |           | <i>Consultative device</i> | <i>Downtoner</i> | <i>Committer</i> | <i>Hasitator</i> | <i>Cajolers</i> | <i>Appealers</i> | <i>Overstater</i> | <i>Intensifier</i> | <i>Plus committer</i> |
|-------------------------|-----------|----------------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|-----------------|------------------|-------------------|--------------------|-----------------------|
| <b>Sit 5<br/>TSEFLs</b> | Mean      | ,08                        | ,16              | 0,00             | ,28              | ,10             | 0,00             | ,06               | ,50                | 0,00                  |
|                         | N         | 50                         | 50               | 50               | 50               | 50              | 50               | 50                | 50                 | 50                    |
|                         | Std. Dev. | ,274                       | ,370             | 0,00             | ,456             | ,303            | 0,00             | ,240              | ,505               | 0,00                  |
| <b>Sit 5<br/>ENSs</b>   | Mean      | 0,00                       | ,20              | ,20              | 0,00             | 0,00            | 0,00             | ,12               | ,56                | ,09                   |
|                         | N         | 25                         | 25               | 25               | 25               | 25              | 25               | 25                | 25                 | 23                    |
|                         | Std. Dev, | 0,00                       | ,408             | ,408             | 0,00             | 0,00            | 0,00             | ,332              | ,507               | ,288                  |
| <b>Sit 6<br/>TSEFLs</b> | Mean      | 0,00                       | ,14              | ,04              | ,04              | ,12             | ,04              | 0,00              | ,20                | 0,00                  |
|                         | N         | 50                         | 50               | 50               | 50               | 50              | 50               | 50                | 50                 | 50                    |
|                         | Std. Dev. | 0,00                       | ,351             | ,198             | ,198             | ,328            | ,198             | 0,00              | ,404               | 0,00                  |
| <b>Sit 6<br/>ENSs</b>   | Mean      | 0,00                       | ,48              | 0,00             | ,12              | ,12             | 0,00             | 0,00              | ,64                | ,08                   |
|                         | N         | 25                         | 25               | 25               | 25               | 25              | 25               | 25                | 25                 | 25                    |
|                         | Std. Dev. | 0,00                       | ,510             | 0,00             | ,332             | ,332            | 0,00             | 0,00              | ,490               | ,277                  |

In the strategy analysis, it was seen that there was not a significant difference between the groups who used higher number of strategies in S5. The difference between TSEFLs and ENSs can be seen in their linguistic choices to modulate their speech. The difference can be interpreted as an indication of cultural difference of relationships with bosses and friends, which suggest that while ENSs tried to be more polite to their friends and not to offend by refusing their ask for help by using downtoners and intensifiers more frequently but TSEFLs were more careful as they were talking to their bosses and more direct to their friends.

## 4.2.2 Modality Markers in Complaints

### 4.2.2.1 Complaint for an Accident

Complaint strategies of participants were varied according to the social status of the hearers as analysed in the first research question. The use of modality markers also varied as seen in Table 20.

**Table 20 – The Mean Use of Downgraders and Upgraders by TSEFLs and ENSs for Situation7 and Situation8**

| <i>Participants</i>          |           | <i>Understater</i> | <i>Downtoner</i> | <i>Scope-stater</i> | <i>Overstater</i> | <i>Intensifier</i> | <i>Plus<br/>commiter</i> | <i>Lexical<br/>Intensifier</i> | <i>Aggressive<br/>Interrog.</i> |
|------------------------------|-----------|--------------------|------------------|---------------------|-------------------|--------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| <b>Sit 7<br/>TSEFL<br/>s</b> | Mean      | ,06                | 0,00             | ,16                 | 0,00              | ,14                | 0,00                     | ,12                            | ,84                             |
|                              | N         | 50                 | 50               | 50                  | 50                | 50                 | 50                       | 50                             | 50                              |
|                              | Std. Dev. | ,240               | 0,000            | ,370                | 0,000             | ,351               | 0,000                    | ,328                           | ,370                            |
| <b>Sit 7<br/>ENSs</b>        | Mean      | 0,00               | ,20              | ,36                 | 0,00              | ,32                | 0,00                     | ,40                            | ,92                             |
|                              | N         | 25                 | 25               | 25                  | 25                | 25                 | 25                       | 25                             | 25                              |
|                              | Std. Dev. | 0,00               | ,408             | ,490                | 0,000             | ,476               | 0,000                    | ,500                           | ,277                            |
| <b>Sit 8<br/>TSEFL<br/>s</b> | Mean      | 0,00               | 0,00             | ,06                 | 0,00              | ,10                | ,08                      | ,12                            | ,58                             |
|                              | N         | 50                 | 50               | 50                  | 50                | 50                 | 50                       | 50                             | 50                              |
|                              | Std. Dev. | 0,00               | 0,000            | ,240                | 0,000             | ,303               | ,274                     | ,328                           | ,499                            |
| <b>Sit 8<br/>ENSs</b>        | Mean      | 0,00               | ,08              | ,24                 | ,12               | ,04                | ,12                      | ,04                            | ,20                             |
|                              | N         | 25                 | 25               | 25                  | 25                | 25                 | 25                       | 25                             | 25                              |
|                              | Std. Dev. | 0,000              | ,272             | ,430                | ,326              | ,196               | ,326                     | ,196                           | ,408                            |

The severity of complaints was higher in Situation7 in which they complained to a young boy. Upgraders including *intensifiers*, *aggressive interrogative* and even *lexical intensifiers* were much commonly used by ENSs in Sit7. The use of downgraders by ENSs in Sit7 was also higher. 36% of ENSs used *scope staters* and %20 used *downtoners*.

In Situation8 in which the complaint was to an adult woman, the use of aggressive interrogative expressions was higher among TSEFLs while ENSs used downgraders a few more than TSEFLs.

These results, supporting the findings of strategy analysis, indicate that social status determined by age in a society has a great effect on language used. ENSs were rather polite and unflustered towards the old lady even though she was responsible for the accident while they were extremely angry towards the boy. However, TSEFLs were aggressive and rude in both situations, yet a little less in S8, which is very likely to be inappropriate in the target society.

#### 4.2.2.2 Complaint for TV noise

For Situation9 and Situation10, downgraders were frequently but dissimilarly used by both TSEFLs and ENSs. Table 21 shows the mean use of downgraders and upgraders by TSEFLs and ENSs for Situation9 and Situation10.

**Table 21 – The Mean Use of Downgraders and Upgraders by TSEFLs and ENSs for Situation9 and Situation10**

| <i>Participants</i>      |           | <i>Politeness Marker</i> | <i>Play-down</i> | <i>Consultative device</i> | <i>Understater</i> | <i>Downtoner</i> | <i>Scope-stater</i> | <i>Appealers</i> | <i>Intensifier</i> | <i>Lexical Intensifier</i> | <i>Aggressive Interrog.</i> |
|--------------------------|-----------|--------------------------|------------------|----------------------------|--------------------|------------------|---------------------|------------------|--------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| <b>Sit 9<br/>TSEFLs</b>  | Mean      | ,76                      | 0,00             | ,28                        | ,42                | ,06              | ,04                 | 0,00             | 0,00               | ,02                        | 0,00                        |
|                          | N         | 50                       | 50               | 50                         | 50                 | 50               | 50                  | 50               | 50                 | 50                         | 50                          |
|                          | Std. Dev. | ,431                     | 0,00             | ,454                       | ,499               | ,240             | ,198                | 0,00             | 0,00               | ,141                       | 0,00                        |
| <b>Sit 9<br/>ENSs</b>    | Mean      | ,40                      | ,40              | ,28                        | ,68                | 0,00             | 0,00                | 0,00             | ,52                | 0,00                       | 0,00                        |
|                          | N         | 25                       | 25               | 25                         | 25                 | 25               | 25                  | 25               | 25                 | 25                         | 25                          |
|                          | Std. Dev. | ,500                     | ,500             | ,458                       | ,476               | 0,00             | 0,00                | 0,00             | ,510               | 0,00                       | 0,00                        |
| <b>Sit 10<br/>TSEFLs</b> | Mean      | ,26                      | 0,00             | ,06                        | ,06                | 0,00             | ,04                 | ,04              | ,06                | ,08                        | ,44                         |
|                          | N         | 50                       | 50               | 50                         | 50                 | 50               | 50                  | 50               | 50                 | 50                         | 50                          |
|                          | Std. Dev. | ,443                     | 0,00             | ,240                       | ,240               | 0,00             | ,198                | ,198             | ,240               | ,274                       | ,501                        |
| <b>sit 10<br/>ENSs</b>   | Mean      | ,32                      | 0,00             | ,24                        | ,24                | 0,00             | ,32                 | 0,00             | ,24                | ,08                        | ,24                         |
|                          | N         | 25                       | 25               | 25                         | 25                 | 25               | 25                  | 25               | 25                 | 25                         | 25                          |
|                          | Std. Dev. | ,476                     | 0,00             | ,476                       | ,436               | 0,00             | ,476                | 0,00             | ,436               | ,277                       | ,436                        |

For Situation9 and Situation10, downgraders were used frequently by both TSEFLs and ENSs, but still varied according to the hearers. In Situation9, as the problem is caused by an old couple, it turned out to be a polite request rather than a complaint. 76% of TSEFLs and 40% of ENSs used politeness markers in their requests.

Both groups used *consultative device* (would you mind..?), *understaters* (could you turn it down a little bit?). As an important aspect, *intensifiers* used by ENSs with a percentage of 52% in S9 were not in order to intensify their complaint but to intensify their regrets ( I am so sorry to disturb but...,) or excuses (I have a very important exam but I cannot study, ). Another point is that *play-down* ( I was wondering if ...) was only used by ENSs in S9.

Situation10 included more complaint strategies, so the modality markers used were also different. As an upgrader, *aggressive interrogative* was used both TSEFLs and ENSs with means of 44% and 24%, respectively. Still ENSs were more polite towards the young people by using more downgraders such as *politeness markers* (32%), *consultative device* (20%), *understaters* (24%) and *scope staters* (32%).

In such problematic situations, the social status determined the speech act, as for an old couple, it was an act of requesting but for the young boys, it was a clear complaint for both TSEFLs and ENSs. The contents varied greatly but TSEFLs were highly capable of recognizing and applying different speech acts appropriate for the situation in the target language as similar to ENSs.

#### 4.2.2.3 Complaint for the Lost Book

A similar variation can be seen in the use of modality markers for the complaint of a lost book to a teacher and to a friend (Table 22).

For Situation11 in which the participant complained to a friend, there is also not a significant difference between TSEFLs and ENSs in their use of modality markers as except for intensifiers, but still the numbers were higher for ENSs. Generally, ENSs requested their friend to replace the book as can be seen in Table 14. That is why they used *politeness markers* (please, can you find the book or buy a new one?). 60% of ENSs intensified the emergency of getting the book (you know, I really need book, so can you buy a new one?) or their annoyance (how can you be so reckless?). They also used *scope staters* more than TSEFLs (I am really disappointed that you lost my book). TSEFLs were able to express their annoyance (32%)

**Table 22 – The Mean Use of Downgraders and Upgraders by TSEFLs and ENSs for the Situation11 and Situation12**

| <i>Participants</i>  |          | <i>Politeness Marker</i> | <i>Play-down</i> | <i>Consultative device</i> | <i>Understater</i> | <i>Hasitator</i> | <i>Scope-stater</i> | <i>Cajolers</i> | <i>Appealers</i> | <i>Overstater</i> | <i>Intensifier</i> | <i>Aggressive Interrog.</i> |
|----------------------|----------|--------------------------|------------------|----------------------------|--------------------|------------------|---------------------|-----------------|------------------|-------------------|--------------------|-----------------------------|
| <b>Sit 11 TSEFLs</b> | Mean     | ,16                      | 0,0              | 0,00                       | 0,00               | ,04              | ,12                 | ,08             | ,08              | ,04               | ,08                | ,32                         |
|                      | N        | 50                       | 50               | 50                         | 50                 | 50               | 50                  | 50              | 50               | 50                | 50                 | 50                          |
|                      | Std. Dev | ,370                     | 0,00             | 0,00                       | 0,00               | ,198             | ,328                | ,274            | ,274             | ,198              | ,274               | ,471                        |
| <b>Sit 11 ENSs</b>   | Mean     | ,32                      | 0,00             | ,08                        | ,12                | 0,00             | ,32                 | ,16             | 0,00             | ,12               | ,60                | ,36                         |
|                      | N        | 25                       | 25               | 25                         | 25                 | 25               | 25                  | 25              | 25               | 25                | 25                 | 25                          |
|                      | Std. Dev | ,476                     | 0,00             | ,277                       | ,332               | 0,00             | ,476                | ,374            | 0,00             | ,332              | ,500               | ,490                        |
| <b>Sit 12 TSEFLs</b> | Mean     | ,12                      | 0,00             | ,04                        | ,12                | ,18              | 0,00                | ,12             | 0,00             | 0,00              | ,10                | 0,00                        |
|                      | N        | 50                       | 50               | 50                         | 50                 | 50               | 50                  | 50              | 50               | 50                | 50                 | 50                          |
|                      | Std. Dev | ,328                     | 0,00             | ,198                       | ,328               | ,388             | 0,00                | ,328            | 0,00             | 0,00              | ,303               | 0,00                        |
| <b>Sit 12 ENSs</b>   | Mean     | ,36                      | ,20              | ,12                        | 0,00               | ,16              | 0,00                | ,24             | 0,00             | 0,00              | ,56                | 0,00                        |
|                      | N        | 25                       | 25               | 25                         | 25                 | 25               | 25                  | 25              | 25               | 25                | 25                 | 25                          |
|                      | Std. Dev | ,485                     | ,408             | ,332                       | 0,00               | ,374             | 0,00                | ,436            | 0,00             | 0,00              | ,507               | 0,00                        |

In Situation12, ENSs used polite requests for the replacement of the book by using *politeness markers* (36%; e.g Can you please find the book for me?), *play down* (20%; e.g. I was wondering if you can buy another copy?) *consultative device* (12%; e.g. would you mind giving me money to buy a new copy?), *hesitators* (16%) and *cajolers* (24%). On the other hand, as most TSEFLs preferred not to say anything but just “*It’s OK*”, “*It’s not a problem, teacher*”, the use of modality markers was very rare.

This might be caused by the status of teachers in Turkey. Students are usually shy about asking something of their teachers. This is not a probable cause of pragmatic failure but TSEFLs may have difficulty in expressing their needs and complaints to a teacher in a target country.

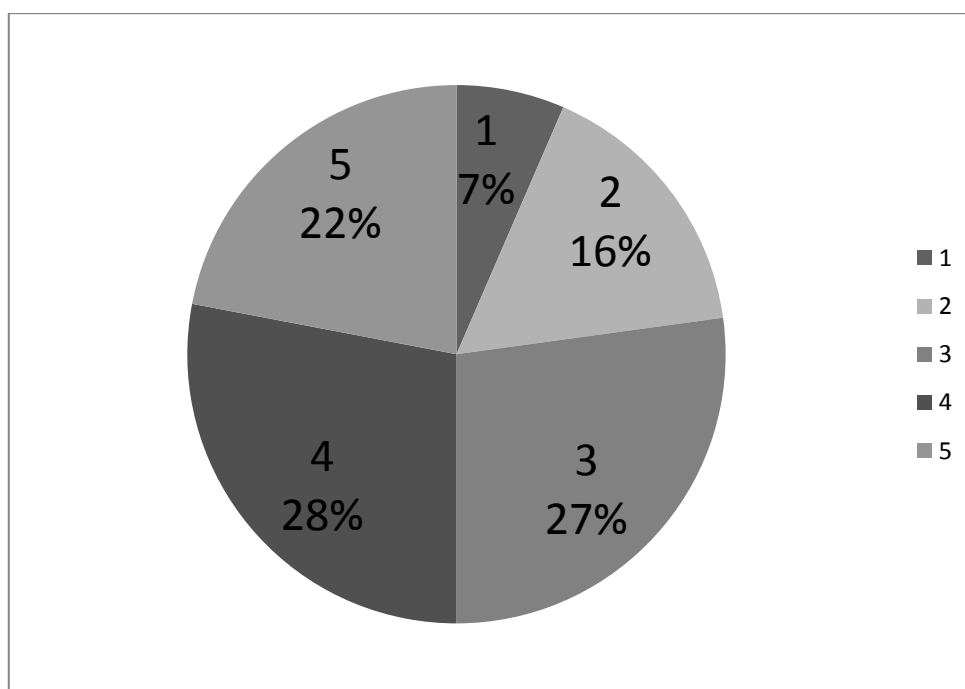
### 4.3 Analysis of Communicative Ability Ratings of TSEFLs

*Research Question 2:* How will the production of the non-native speakers be perceived by native speakers?

The final data was collected from a rater who graded Turkish participants' responses in a 5-point Likert Scale in three categories; sociocultural ability, sociolinguistic ability and appropriate register. The distribution of scores in each situation and in total is presented in the following.

#### 4.3.1 Sociocultural Abilities of Turkish Speakers of English as a Foreign Language

The first category was the assessment of sociocultural ability. The scores of ratings show that most of the TSEFLs have sociocultural ability, meaning that they can apply appropriate cultural variations in their speech. Figure 4 shows the total means of scores of ratings for all situations in the DCT.



*Fig.5 The Percentages of Total Sociocultural Ability Scores of TSEFLs in DCT*

As seen in Fig. 4, the highest percentage of the scores belongs to 3 (27%), 4 (28%), 5 (22%). That means for the most part, participants provided socioculturally appropriate speech, but somehow may need interpretation or clarification to be totally understood. However, 21% of participants gave responses which lacks sociocultural

appropriateness and are not clear with too little information. It may be because of less usage of thanking and regretting expressions or shallow excuses.

To make a better interpretation, it is better to see the distribution of scores in each situation (see Table 23).

**Table 23 - The Frequencies of Sociocultural Ability Scores in Each Situation**

| <i>Frequencies</i> |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |            |            |            |
|--------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|------------|------------|------------|
| <i>Scores</i>      | <i>S1</i> | <i>S2</i> | <i>S3</i> | <i>S4</i> | <i>S5</i> | <i>S6</i> | <i>S7</i> | <i>S8</i> | <i>S9</i> | <i>S10</i> | <i>S11</i> | <i>S12</i> |
| <b>5</b>           | 20        | 18        | 22        | 11        | 7         | 21        | 3         | 3         | 10        | 3          | 8          | 6          |
| <b>4</b>           | 18        | 18        | 19        | 15        | 16        | 17        | 7         | 6         | 15        | 14         | 11         | 12         |
| <b>3</b>           | 8         | 10        | 7         | 12        | 17        | 6         | 19        | 13        | 16        | 21         | 16         | 18         |
| <b>2</b>           | 4         | 1         | 2         | 9         | 8         | 5         | 15        | 20        | 6         | 8          | 12         | 8          |
| <b>1</b>           | 0         | 3         | 0         | 3         | 2         | 1         | 6         | 8         | 3         | 4          | 3          | 6          |
| <b>total</b>       | 50        | 50        | 50        | 50        | 50        | 50        | 50        | 50        | 50        | 50         | 50         | 50         |

As seen in Table 22, Turkish students had the highest scores in refusals (S1 - S6). Lower sociocultural ability scores (3,2,1) in refusals were most frequent in S4 and S5 which means that refusing a food offered by a friend's mother, where the situation requires a polite response, some Turkish students failed to give appropriate response. For example, a student who responds as "*I am sure, it is delicious but I never eat it*" in S4 is graded 1. Although the student expressed a positive opinion, with no thank and regret, this response is regarded as rude and socioculturally inappropriate.

Also although they were able to use appropriate language while refusing the request of a boss, their scores were lower for refusing a friend, which means that politeness were not very significant while talking to a friend. To illustrate, "*sorry, dude, I have other plans to do.*" is a response with (1) score in S6.

In complaints situations (S7- S12), the scores were relatively low, especially in S7 and S8, in which they complained for an accident to a young boy and an adult woman, respectively. The response "*did you get your license form a butcher*" which is a clear demonstration of pragmatic transfer was graded (1), as it does not a meaning in English culture. The scores showed once again that while complaining to an adult

woman, most Turkish participants did not decrease the severity of their complaints, and Americans took it as a rude way of complaining.

In S12, although most students did not complain to the teacher for the lost book, it is also graded low by Americans because it does not include the real message and lack the appropriate request or complaint as expected in the situation. On the other hand, in S11, the responses who did not complain or who complained very aggressively got the score of 1-2. For example, *“Ok, so I need to buy a new one”, you are really irresponsible, bring my book back!*” are the ones which were graded as not appropriate.

These results show that many students have the sociocultural ability with an average level as the most frequent score was 3, which signals that their speech act is somewhat lacking sociocultural appropriateness, calls for some interpretation to be understood or contains too much or too little information. A conclusion can be made that the social status of the person who they are talking to were not a determinant in their sociocultural abilities, that is to say, they were able to apply necessary changes to their speech according to the interlocutor. But cultural differences were the cause of low sociocultural scores.

#### **4.3.2 Sociolinguistic Abilities of Turkish Speakers of English as a Foreign Language**

The second category was sociolinguistic ability which assesses whether the participants have the required and appropriate linguistic forms to convey the intended message. Fig 5 shows the percentages of total scores of TSEFLs.

As seen in Fig 5, generally TSEFLs were able to use appropriate linguistic forms to express their intended speech act with an average level which means that they also some inappropriate or incorrect linguistic items as the most frequent rating was 3.



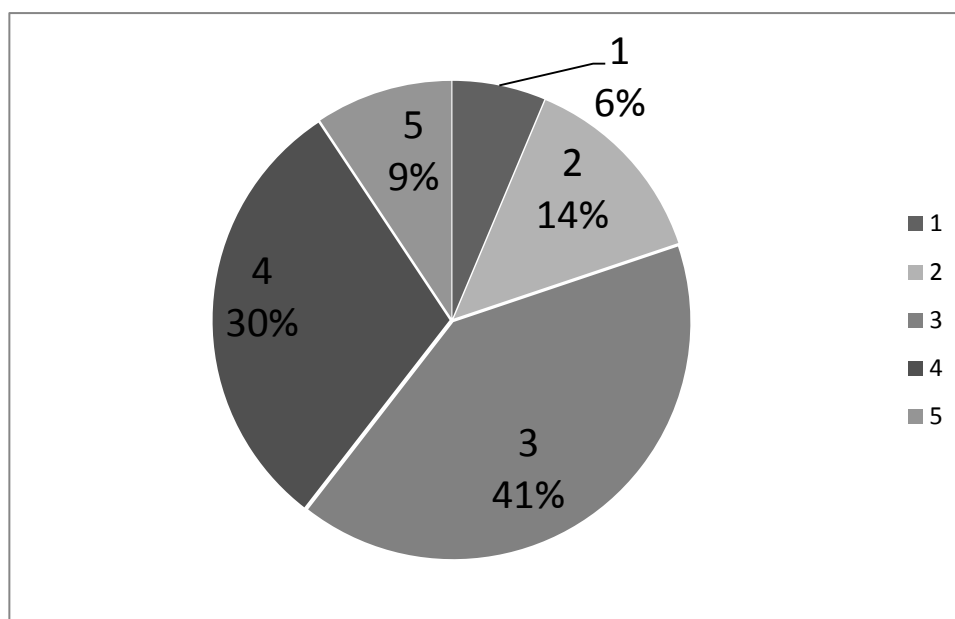


Fig 6. The Percentages of Total Sociocultural Ability Scores of TSEFLs in DCT

Table 24 shows the distribution of scores in each situation for a better understanding of their performances in speech acts.

**Table 24 – The Frequencies of Sociolinguistic Ability Scores in Each Situation**

| <i>Frequencies</i> |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |            |            |            |
|--------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|------------|------------|------------|
| <i>Scores</i>      | <i>S1</i> | <i>S2</i> | <i>S3</i> | <i>S4</i> | <i>S5</i> | <i>S6</i> | <i>S7</i> | <i>S8</i> | <i>S9</i> | <i>S10</i> | <i>S11</i> | <i>S12</i> |
| <b>5</b>           | 6         | 4         | 7         | 4         | 2         | 5         | 7         | 5         | 5         | 1          | 5          | 5          |
| <b>4</b>           | 29        | 23        | 24        | 14        | 13        | 22        | 6         | 8         | 12        | 13         | 8          | 9          |
| <b>3</b>           | 13        | 18        | 17        | 23        | 25        | 19        | 22        | 14        | 23        | 24         | 22         | 24         |
| <b>2</b>           | 1         | 2         | 2         | 5         | 8         | 3         | 9         | 16        | 7         | 8          | 13         | 7          |
| <b>1</b>           | 1         | 3         | 0         | 4         | 2         | 1         | 6         | 7         | 3         | 4          | 2          | 5          |
| <b>total</b>       | 50        | 50        | 50        | 50        | 50        | 50        | 50        | 50        | 50        | 50         | 50         | 50         |

TSEFLs' refusal productions were also better in terms of their linguistic choices, as seen in Table 23. It means that they have the linguistic tools necessary to perform refusal speech act. But the use of inappropriate linguistic items was also common. "Thank you, but I am very tired, please let me get relaxed for some days." is socioculturally appropriate but the underlined phrase is not a linguistic form that is

appropriate. As another example, “*your meals are too perfect, but I never eat this meal*”. Here the student intended to give a positive opinion and express his/her principle, but too perfect gives a negative meaning, so makes it inappropriate for the situation.

“*It would be very enjoying, but I must go another meeting, forgive me!*” (S2), *Mum, don’t you know I don’t like it? Is there any other choice to eat?*” (S3), *Jessica, I would like to help you but I have other plans, in this aspect, I cannot help you.*”(S6), *I am upset that I cannot eat help you.*” (S5) are some examples with inappropriate linguistic forms.

In complaints, low scores of sociolinguistic ability were more frequent, too. “*Sir, Why don’t you be careful?*” (S7), “*Damn it! Are you blind?*” (S8), “*I have to study but your TV’s noise is irritating me. Please help me!*” (S9), “*Can you listen or watch the TV less loudly* (S10),”, “*The blame is mine, I shouldn’t give it you!*”(S11), “*it is Ok, not important*”(S12), are responses which got both sociocultural and sociolinguistic low scores.

According to these results, it can be said that Turkish students of English may experience sociopragmatic failure when communicating in English because they are liable to misuse the words and forms which are not appropriate for the social situation. This is not caused by their lack of English linguistic abilities but their lack of interaction and communication in real situations and opportunity to use what they know. They usually learn the language from dictionaries, books and teachers so they are not aware of social meanings and functions of the linguistic forms they have learnt.

#### **4.3.3 Appropriateness of Register used Turkish Speakers of English as a Foreign Language**

The last category of the rating scale was the register used by TSEFLs. The scale assesses whether TSEFLs used appropriate register for the situation or not and they could vary their styles. Fig 6 shows percentages of the registers used by TSEFLs in total.



In S1 and S2, the registers were distributed as it supposed to be, that is to say, TSEFLs were successful in using more formal speech in S2 and S4 while they used more neutral or casual speech to their friend and mother. Interestingly 10 students used formal and too formal register to their mothers. Neutral register can be regarded as appropriate as it is this register that native speakers are likely to use towards and expect from foreigners and strangers generally. (Council of Europe, 2001, p.120). However higher number of informal register towards a boss in S5 instead of S6 with higher number of formal and neutral speech towards a friend is kind of problematic.

TSEFLs were mostly informal in their complaints. S7 and S8 have the highest number of informal (33, 18) and impolite (9, 22) speech. In S9, in which they complaint to an old couple, 28 students used appropriate register for the situation but 22 students used casual and inappropriate register. 12 students were formal and 9 students were neutral in complaining to young boys, this is normal because as they do not know them, social distance is the factor that affects their register preferences. In complaining for the lost book, only 12 students were formal towards their teacher and 27 responses were casual and inappropriate in S12. Their responses such as “*Ok, teacher, no problem*”, “*That’s OK*”, “*not important*” are all casual and not appropriate.

As an overall evaluation of communicative ability results, it can be said that although most of the students have a good knowledge of linguistic forms in English, They have difficulty in applying and appropriate strategies, forms and styles to their speech and variations in social situations. Their responses are mostly understandable, conveying the intended message but they lack some sociolinguistic and sociocultural appropriate elements such as little amount of “thanks”, “please” or “I am sorry”, or polite linguistic forms.

## **CHAPTER V**

### **CONCLUSION**

#### **5.0 Introduction**

In the final chapter, the overall discussion and summary of the goals and results of the present research will be presented in reference to similar studies done previously and literature in the field. Then, some conclusions related to the teaching of English will be drawn. Finally, opinions and recommendations will be given for further studies that may help further understanding of sociolinguistic abilities of Turkish language learners.

#### **5.1 Overall Summary and Discussion of the Study**

The current study attempted to investigate sociolinguistic variations in the refusal and complaint behaviors of Turkish students of English towards different people, who have higher or equal social status determined by their age, distance and social power, in similar situations by comparing them to native speakers of English.

Multi-dimensional nature of sociolinguistic competence which is closely tied with social and cultural behavioral norms and individual identities makes it difficult to reach at a single conclusion about whether a person has it or not. Therefore, the present study was limited to investigate two aspects of sociolinguistic competence; speech act strategy variations and use of modality markers. Three types of analysis were used for the research, each of which corresponded to a research question.

The first research question was set out to find variations in refusal and complaint strategies of Turkish learners of English and their differences from native speakers. Six situations including refusing an invitation, an offer and a request, and complaining for an accident, for loud TV and for a lost book were paired into two according to two interlocutors who has different social status. The second research question was how effectively Turkish students can use modality markers compared to native speakers. To do this, downgraders and upgraders in their responses to the given situations were coded and compared with the native speakers'. The final research question was about to investigate the perceived appropriateness of speech act utterances of Turkish learners of English. It was done by a communicative ability scale which was rated by two native speakers.

We cannot be sure that the linguistic behavior which the Turkish learners demonstrated in discourse completion tests corresponds to their behavior in real communicative situations. The following picture which seems to emerge from the current research can provide a general idea, but must be treated with circumspection.

In general, the findings show that Turkish learners of English with high proficiency level can successfully differentiate their refusal and complaint strategies according to interlocutors with different social status as similar to the L2 learners in Matsumura's (2007) and Chang's (2010) study, who used the strategies in a context-sensitive manner, have more linguistic resources such as varying their apology strategies, linguistic forms in the same strategy, and contents of reason when apologizing to the hearers with different social status to demonstrate sociopragmatic variation in their apology strategies. Though, as this variation was based on their own cultural values and thinking systems, they showed differences from native speakers in their varied responses between high and equal status interlocutors. These differences makes clear how cultural backgrounds may affect the language used and may cause sociopragmatic failures.

One of the important findings of the refusal strategies analysis was that Turkish participants used more specific and longer excuses for their refusals in every situation (increased in formal situations) compared to native speakers who used direct strategies more in both pairs of situations. However, *thanking* was not as common among the Turkish as it was among the American. For example, almost none of the Turkish students thanked to their mothers for the food she offered. Eisenstein and Bodman (1993) stated that in several cultures, among family members, if one has performed a particular act which is a part of a social role, another person does not need to say 'thank you' to express appreciation. This statement proved to be true for Turkish culture but not American culture. Many of them even did not perform the refusing act for the food offered by the host woman in a friend's house.

Another notable finding was that the use of intensifiers as a means of intensifying the excuses in refusals increased with higher status, which is in parallel with Cohen and Olshtain's (1983) finding that intensification increases with lower status in apology situations. However, while refusing a request from a boss and a friend, English native speakers used more intensifiers and expressing regret was also higher than the Turkish.

This supports the findings of Beebe, Takahashi, and Uliss-Weltz (1990) who reported on the differences between Japanese ESL learners' and Americans' refusals in English and found that in general, the Japanese were more inclined to differentiate their refusals according to whether they were addressing a higher or lower status person, whereas the Americans differentiated according to how well they knew the addressee.

In complaint strategies, significant differences were observed between Turkish and American participants in some situations. One striking difference was that when complaining for an accident, Turkish participants made explicit and severe complaints both to a young man and to an adult woman (equal – high, respectively) by putting the blame directly on the person. The complaints were short, direct and aggressive. On the other hand, native speakers used more implicit and less severe complaint in both situations, putting the blame on the behavior or modifying the blame and even half of them refused to complain to the adult woman for the accident. They increased the intensity of their complaints by lexical intensifiers and aggressive expressions to the young boy, but they also softened their complaints by using downgraders to the adult woman. Similarly, Trosborg (1995) found that non-native speakers tended to use more upgraders increasing the severity of expressions. Also House and Kasper (1981) concluded from their study comparing native speakers and German English speakers that the Germans were more direct and severe in their complaints.

The last paired situation, which involved a complaint to a teacher and a friend who lost an important book, provided a controversial result, indeed. Americans expressed their need for book, their complaints and their requests for the replacement both to the friend and to the teacher, used intensifiers to upgrade the emergency of getting the book and applied polite request strategies by using downgraders. However, Turkish participants avoided complaining to the teacher while they complained to their friends. This finding suggest that familiarity is also an important factor in their strategy preferences as they did not care about their politeness while complaining to an adult woman in the accident situation, they did not complain to a high status person who they knew. This is in contradiction to Bikmen's (2011) findings in his master thesis that Turkish speakers complained more to authority figures and less to friends and family, and to strangers, with respect to the ENSs.

There might be some other underlying factors causing this discrepancy which needs further attention. As Bonikowska (1988) who studied complaints and the opting-out choice stated, one reason for opting out could be contextual factors such as the relationship of the speaker and the hearer.

The final research question was about how native speakers see and evaluate Turkish students' responses to understand the perspective of the hearer. A word about the scale is in order here. Although two raters may not be enough to make generalizations for the hearer perspective, the results provided an idea about how their responses are understood, providing more information about their performances. The results showed that Turkish students have sociocultural and sociolinguistic abilities to some extent. However, although they can apply formal and informal strategies and apply variations, because of their lack and differences of cultural knowledge, they tend to use inappropriate linguistic forms and expressions which are not acceptable in the target culture.

## **5.2 Conclusion**

According to the findings of this study, some conclusions and attributions can be made in the theoretical framework.

Turkish learners of English with high level of proficiency proved to be able to use many various strategies and modality markers in order to refuse and complain, and to vary their strategies according to the interlocutors' status, age and gender. It means that they have the necessary pragmalinguistic tools and abilities for a communicative act, which is supported by many studies and theses done in Turkey focusing on cross-cultural and cross-linguistic differences of Turkish students (Onalan, 2009; Cimen, 2009; Balci, 2009; Deveci, 2010; Bikmen, 2011, etc.). But these differences were caused by individual perceptions and values, as a lack of sociolinguistic competence.

Values governing appropriateness of particular speech behaviors are culturally specific. But language learners usually use their own values and beliefs about what is appropriate or not, which is highly prone to cause breakdowns in cross-cultural communication. Muniandy (2010) suggests that an overall understanding of the significant role of cultural variables in cross-cultural interactions will act as a bridge to mutual understanding and acceptance in situations of cultural conflict. Students must be



aware that in certain cultures, the people are expected to respond to certain utterances in an appropriate way, which is of the linguistic norm (p.149).

To sum up, the present study suggests that language cannot be separated from its creator, the culture. Speech always includes social implications which somehow reflect the cultural background, status and identity of the speaker. Therefore, a language learner needs to know these social implications in the new language so that s/he can be free to choose how to express himself/herself and can avoid prejudice and misinterpretations. And in Turkey, where students are away from the target culture, it is the responsibility of ESL and EFL teachers to endeavor to make their students aware of and sensitive to the sociolinguistic variables of English.

### **5.3 Pedagogical Implications**

The present study has demonstrated learners' difficulties with adjusting their responses to the parameters of social distance and social power in English culture. There were significant differences between Turkish and American speakers of English in their speech act productions and the effect of the hearer on their speech act productions were not also very similar, which calls for a deeper understanding of social and cultural differences and their effects on language.

First of all, the results evince the necessity of implementing some aspects of sociolinguistic competence in the curriculum of a second / foreign language teaching. The prospective language teachers of the study who were generally experts on linguistic rules of English showed a lack of sociolinguistic ability in some situations although they are the ones who are expected to teach communicatively. Therefore, the most important thing for a language teacher is to be aware of these differences and apply them in their teaching. Instead of teaching and learning fixed patterns of functional speech in the target language, learners need to comprehend and concord with the flexibility of language that will fit to the situation.

Widdowson (1978, p.90) points out that language teaching should "affect the transfer from grammatical competence, knowledge of sentences, to what has been called communicative competence, knowledge of how sentences are used in the performance of communicative acts of different kinds". Sociopragmatic failures are not caused by the lack of linguistic elements but the inability to adjust learners' thinking

systems in terms of beliefs to the culture of the language being learned (Thomas, 1983, p.10).

There are some effective ways of providing opportunities for learners to notice crucial social aspects of second language in the classroom which have been proposed by a number of applied linguists. These effective ways include “explicit instruction drawing attention to target features, practice, repetition, stimulated self-reflection, reflective interviews and focused feedback”.(Holmes and Riddiford, 2011).

Through explicit instruction of pragmatics, it may be possible to draw learners’ conscious attention to the way in which language is used to encode social meanings (Ellis, 1992). In a study carried out by Cohen and Olsain (1991), learners, who had taken a 20-minutes of explicit instruction on apology strategies, showed great improvement in the types of “intensifications and downgrading” used in the post-test. Felix-Brasdefer (2005) also studied the effect of explicit instruction of refusal strategies in formal and informal setting, and found that appropriateness and the use of modifiers were improved.

Arguing the benefits of direct instruction, Kasper and Rose (2002: 233) note that: Teachers can explicitly model and guide students in their use of target practices, engage students in awareness-raising activities of L2 pragmatics such as observational activities involving assignments outside the classroom with a focus on pragmatic and sociolinguistic features, and provide feedback on students’ productions. Such activities may help students integrate linguistic forms and their functions in context.

Another important factor which contributes to the acquisition of sociocultural and sociolinguistic abilities in a second language is the opportunity for social interaction. Classroom learning is a social activity, and teachers can exploit this to assist in developing learner’s socio-pragmatic proficiency by benefiting from artificial social environments created in class. (Holmes & Riddiford, 2011).

Although explicit and implicit teaching of pragmatics may prove helpful for the communicative development of language learners, it should not be the main goal of teaching pragmatics to transform learners into native speakers or to impose native sociocultural norms and behaviors. Medgyes (1992) argues against the possibility of non-natives turning into natives by claiming that non-natives are, by their very nature,

norm-dependent. Their use of English is an imitation of some form of native use and they can never be as creative and original as native speakers. Still, they need to be given the tools to apply pragmatic conventions and to express their own beliefs and values. In other words, the main goal should be to inform them about what the consequences of their speech are so that they can be free to choose when to be polite or rude, formal or informal, etc. intentionally rather than unwittingly.

To sum up, in accordance with the other scholars, the present study has some methodological recommendations for language teachers;

- First of all, in order to know and teach English communicatively, the language teacher should be aware of the importance and functions of sociolinguistic and cultural elements of language use himself or herself.

- To draw students' attention to variations, language teacher should introduce a speech act in different social situations which are used in formal and informal settings according to various social factors such as gender, age, familiarity, status or power.

- Language teachers should design classroom activities which involve contextual real-like situations and encourage students to perform speech acts and give feedback.

- Students should be exposed to authentic use of language or conversations in the target language through social media, films, TV series, songs, newspapers or literature which are rich sources of sociolinguistic elements.

- Language teachers may have discussion sessions with students about various uses of language and their appropriateness and the differences in their own language and in the target language.

- Textbooks should include sociocultural and sociolinguistic norms that can be implemented in the curriculum.

- Students should be encouraged to interact with native speakers in any possible ways including travelling abroad, having friends, etc.

- Both teachers and learners should be willing to observe how sociopragmatic principles operate in the target community and to investigate the meanings of certain speech act styles and how lexical preferences may affect the intended meaning.

As the present study is the only study in Turkey which investigates the sociolinguistic variations in refusal and complaint behaviours of Turkish learners of

English, it is hoped that the results of the study raise awareness about the significant of teaching pragmatics and social-cultural norms of language use so that further improvements in the field of language teaching can be achieved.

#### **5.4 Recommendations for Further Research**

The present study has many limitations in scope, both in terms of its content and data collection methods. Therefore, for a better understanding of sociolinguistic abilities of language learners and for the improvement of literature in the field of Interlanguage Pragmatics, further research can be done in many aspects;

- Recognition and production of other types of speech acts and their variations in different settings can be investigated.
- Researchers can study the effect of proficiency level on speech act performances and the use of sociolinguistic elements by applying the test to participants with different levels.
- Other types of data collection methods especially oral data, such as role-plays, authentic speech, may be a better choice to determine the actual performances of learners.
- Other aspects of sociolinguistic competence, such as phonological, dialectical and lexical variations of native and non-native speakers, can be investigated and compared.
- An experimental study can be carried out to investigate the effects of various classroom activities on sociolinguistic competence of learners.
- There is a clear lack of longitudinal studies on sociolinguistic developments of Turkish learners of English, which can be very difficult but important to research.

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## APPENDICES

## APPENDIX A

### Discourse Completion Test

#### RECRUITMENT SPEECH

I am here to invite you to participate in a study that explores the use of English by speakers of English as a second or foreign language in the situations of intercultural communication. You are asked to participate because you are the native speakers of English, and your participation in this study will be invaluable. It will enrich the data and will help improve the teaching of English as a foreign language and will help English language learners to develop English language skills that would help them communicate better.

Your participation will be highly appreciated, but it is completely voluntary. You can be sure that there will be no risks for you while participating in this study, and there will be no direct benefits to you from this study. You don't need to write your name on the questionnaire. So your responses will be completely anonymous.

In the study, there will be a questionnaire which you will be asked to write how you would behave and what you would say if you were in several situations that could happen with a person. Your answers do not correspond to any right or wrong answers. But as your responses will constitute the basic data for the scientific analysis, please try to be natural and regardful in your responses.

If you agree to participate in this study, please sign the agreement below. Also feel free to contact me at any time if you have any questions about this study or your participation in it.

Here is email address: [nihalkolukirik@gmail.com](mailto:nihalkolukirik@gmail.com)

I AGREE TO BE A PART OF THIS RESEARCH STUDY.

Signature : \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

*Thank you for your participation and valuable contributions to this research in advance.*

**Nihal KOLUKIRIK**

**Amasya University / TURKEY  
English Language Instructor**

**APPENDIX A (continued)****QUESTIONNAIRE**

1. School / Department:
2. Gender:
3. Age:
4. Your native language:
5. Other languages you speak:

**This questionnaire will be used for a scientific research and your responses will be invaluable for the study. Below you will see some situations that you might experience in daily life. You are expected to give responses to these situations. So please be honest with your answers. Please try to write all the things that you would exactly say for the situations below and be natural as if you were really in that situation.**

1. A friend, John invites you to a party in his house. But you don't feel like going. So you refuse the invitation by saying:

.....

2. One of your professors, Mary Johnson invites you to a party in her house. But you don't feel like going. So you refuse the invitation by saying:

.....

3. You are having dinner with your family. Your mum served you a kind of food that you do not like and you don't want to eat it. You refuse to eat by saying:

.....

4. You are having dinner with one of your friends' family. Her mother served you a kind of food that you do not like and you don't want to eat it. You refuse to eat by saying:

.....

**APPENDIX A (continued)**

5. Your boss, Michael Benneth asks you to help him with work that you are not responsible on a weekend. You have other plans for the day and you don't want to help. So you refuse by saying:

.....

6. Your close friend Jessica asks you to help her for her homework on a weekend. But you have other plans for the day and you don't want to help. So you refuse by saying:

.....

7. You are driving your car on the way to school or work. And suddenly a car turned very fast in front of you on the crossroad and you hit it. Your car is damaged and you are going to be late for school. The other driver is a young boy. You get out the car angrily to complain. What would your first words to complain?

.....

8. You are driving your car on the way to school or work. And suddenly a car turned very fast in front of you on the crossroad and you hit it. Your car is damaged and you are going to be late for school. The other driver is an old woman. You get out the car angrily to complain. What would your first words to complain?

.....

9. Your neighbors are very old and cannot hear the TV well so they watch it very loudly. You need to study for the exam but you are disturbed by the noise. So you want to ask them to lower the volume.

.....

10. Your neighbors are young boys and they often watch the TV or listen to music very loudly. You need to study for the exam but you are disturbed by the noise. So you want to ask them to lower the voice.

.....

**APPENDIX A (continued)**

11. Your classmate who you are not very close with borrowed a book from you a few weeks ago. He promised to bring it back last week but he did not. Now you need that book to study for the exam tomorrow. So you asked him/her to bring it back but s/he said s/he lost the book and s/he was so sorry. What would you say:

.....

12. Your teacher borrowed a book from you a few weeks ago. He promised to bring it back last week but he did not. Now you need that book to study for the exam tomorrow. So you asked him/her to bring it back but s/he said s/he lost the book and s/he was so sorry. What would you say:

.....

**Thank you for the interest you have  
shown!**

**NIHAL KOLUKIRIK**

## APPENDIX B

### Definitions of Downgraders and Upgraders as per House & Kasper (1981)

**Downgrader** : Markers which play down the impact X's (speaker's) utterance is likely to have on Y (hearer).

#### Types of Downgraders

##### 1. *Politeness Marker*

optional element added to an act to show deference to the interlocutor and to bide for cooperative behaviour,

*e.g., please*

##### 2. *Play-down*

syntactical devices used to tone down the perlocutionary effect an utterance is likely to have on the addressee,

*e.g., I wondered if / I was wondering if / etc.*

##### 3. *Consultative Device*

optional devices by means of which X seeks to involve Y and bid for Y's cooperation; frequently these devices are ritualized formulas,

*e.g., Would you mind if..?*

##### 4. *Hedge*

adverbials – excluding sentence adverbials – by means of which X avoids a precise propositional specification thus circumventing the potential provocation such as specification might entail; X leaves the option open for Y to complete his utterance and thereby imposes his own intent less forcefully on Y.

*e.g., kind of, sort of, somehow, and so on, and what have you, more or less, rather*

##### 5. *Understater*

adverbial modifiers by means of which X underrepresents the state of affairs denoted in the proposition.

*e.g., a little bit, a second, not very much, just a trifle.*

##### 6. *Downtoner*

Sentence modifiers which are used by X in order to modulate the impact his utterance is likely to have on Y

*e.g., just, simply, possibly, perhaps, rather.*

### **7. (“minus”) Committer**

Sentence modifiers which are used to lower the degree to which X commits himself to the state of affairs referred to in the proposition. X thus explicitly characterizes his utterance as his personal opinion.

*e.g., I think, I believe, I suppose, in my opinion*

### **8. Forewarn**

A kind of anticipatory disarmament device used by X to forewarn is a metacomment about what X is about to do, a compliment paid to Y as a preliminary to a potentially offensive utterance, or an invocation of a generally accepted cooperative principle which is about to flout.

*e.g., far be it for me to belittle your efforts, but ...., you're a nice guy, Jim, but...., this may be a bit boring to you, but....*

### **9. Hesitator**

Deliberately employed malformations, used to impress on Y the fact that X has qualms about performing the ensuing act,

*e.g., erm, ...er,*

### **10. Scoper – Stater**

Elements in which X explicitly expresses his subjective opinion vis-à-vis the state of affairs referred to in the proposition, thus lowering the assertive force of his utterance

*e.g., I am afraid, you are in my seat; I am a bit disappointed that you did....; I am not happy about the fact that you did P.*

### **11. Cajolers**

Elements used to increase, establish or restore harmony between the interlocutors.

*e.g., you know, you see, I mean, actually*

### **12. Appealers**

Appealers appeal to the hearer and function to elicit a hearer signal, an uptaker.

*e.g., okay, right, yeah*

### **13. Preparators**

X indicates or suggests what type of intent he is going to make manifest without, however, specifying the nature of the proposition following the preparator;

*e.g., I would like to ask you a question*

### **14. Grounder**

X gives reasons for his intent ( as expressed in his central move). Grounders may precede or follow the central move;



*e.g., God, I am thirsty, Get me a beer, will you?*

**Upgraders:** Modality markers which increase the force of the impact an utterance is likely to have on the addressee.

### **Types of Upgraders**

#### **1. Overstater**

Adverbial modifiers by means of which X overrepresents the reality denoted in the proposition in the interests of increasing the force of his utterance.

*e.g., absolutely, purely, terribly, frightfully*

#### **2. Intensifier**

Adverbial modifier used by X to intensify certain elements of the proposition of his utterance

*e.g., very, so, such, quite, really, just, indeed*

#### **3. +("plus") Committer**

Sentence modifiers by means of which X indicates his heightened degree of commitment vis-à-vis the state of affairs referred to in the proposition,

*e.g., I am sure, certainly, obviously, really*

#### **4. Lexical Intensifier**

Lexical items which are strongly marked for the negative social attitude.

*e.g., swear words*

#### **5. Aggressive Interrogative**

Employment by X of interrogative mood to explicitly involve Y and thus to intensify the impact of his utterance on Y.

*e.g., Why haven't you told me before?*

## **APPENDIX C**

### **Rating Scale For Assessing Communicative Language Ability**

[Adapted from Cohen, A. D. (1994) *Assessing Language Ability in the Classroom*. Heinle & Heinle: Boston]

#### **A. Sociocultural Ability**

5 – the message is socioculturally appropriate, reflects the situation clearly, and contains the proper amount of information

4 – the message is for the most part socioculturally appropriate, reflects the situation relatively clear, and / or contains the proper amount of information.

3 – the message is somewhat lacking in sociocultural appropriateness, calls for some interpretation to be understood, and or contains too much or too little information.

2 – the message is mostly lacking sociocultural appropriateness, calls for much interpretation to be understood, and / or contains too much or too little information (e.g., no thanks / apology supplied where required etc.)

1 – the message is completely lacking in sociocultural appropriateness, is not clear, and / or contains far too much or too little information.

#### **B. Sociolinguistic Ability**

5 – the subject uses linguistic forms that are fully appropriate for expressing the intended speech act (e.g., choice of lexical items to express oneself like I'm mortified, / I appreciate your offer for help, / I am so sorry, etc. )

4 – the subjects uses linguistic forms that are mostly appropriate for expressing the intended speech. (e.g., thanks are supplied but not intensified, / or an apology is given but only a cursory one).

3 – there is some of inappropriate linguistic forms for expressing the speech act. (e.g., Excuse me, the bill is inaccurate. Please fix it).

2 – there is substantial use of inappropriate linguistic forms for expressing the speech.

1 – there is continuous use of inappropriate linguistic forms for expressing the speech.

**C. The Ability to Use Appropriate Register**

5 – too formal, abnormal and for the situation and insincere in tone.

4 – formal – with no reductions and polite and formal linguistic forms

3 – neutral – standard patterns with both daily-spoken and formal expressions

2 – casual / informal – a sincere tone with reductions and daily speech forms

1 – too informal / inappropriate – a very informal tone with slang or rude lexical items and impolite style