REQUESTIVE E-MAILS OF TURKISH EFL LEARNERS:
A COMPARISON WITH NATIVE SPEAKERS OF ENGLISH AND
NATIVE SPEAKERS OF TURKISH

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Abstract:

This study aims to investigate the degree of directness and amount of lexical / phrasal internal and external modifications employed by 20 Turkish EFL learners, 10 native speakers of English, and 10 native speakers of Turkish. It also aims to explore whether there is a difference across three groups while making requests. The participants were asked to write two requestive e-mails to a friend and a professor. The e-mails were analyzed and classified based on Economidou-Kogetsidis's (2011) framework which relies on Blum- Kulka et al. (1989) and Biesenbach-Lucas (2006, 2007). The results indicated that these three groups had both similarities and differences with respect to the degree of directness, the amount of internal and external modifications. Turkish EFL learners and native speakers of Turkish resorted to more direct strategies, while native speakers of English performed more conventionally indirect strategies. None of the participants utilized non-conventionally indirect strategies. Turkish EFL learners were very similar to native speakers of Turkish in the formation of their request head act. They showed strong similarities in the formation of certain structures as the basis of request. However, the internal and external modification indicated that the phrases Turkish EFL learners utilized were similar to native speakers of English.

Keywords: requestive e-mails, directness, Turkish EFL learners

1. Introduction

What a person states through speaking or writing is an act, and this act is in the center of the speech act theory (Birner, 2013). This theory is a pragmatic theory which focuses

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on the intention of the speaker and the inference of the hearer (Birner, 2013). While people are intending or inferencing something in an interaction, they resort to face-saving strategies that came to the ground with Brown and Levinson (1978)'s politeness theory. This theory proposed face-threatening acts which are seen as threats to the self-image of the hearer. Due to the threatening nature of the utterances, using face-saving strategies appropriately to overcome the difficulties the speaker and the hearer encounter is in the center of politeness theory. According to this theory, people have positive and negative faces, and when a person's utterances focus on the intimacy between the speaker and the hearer, then that person appeals to the positive face of the hearer. On the other hand, when a person's utterances give the hearer possibility to refuse intimacy or interaction, then that person appeals to the negative face of the hearer (Birner, 2013). From the point of politeness theory, requests are crucial because they have the face-threatening potential (Brown & Levinson, 1978). Thus, the speaker has to resort to redressive actions to decrease the face threatening nature of requests (Shim, 2012). Blum-Kulka, House, and Kasper (1989, p. 11-12) stated that:

> *"Requests are face-threatening by definition: hearers can interpret requests as intrusive impingements on freedom of action, or even as a show in the exercise of power; speakers may hesitate to make the request for fear of exposing a need or risking the hearer's loss of face. The abundance of linguistic options available for requesting behavior testifies to the social intricacies associated with choice in mode of performance".*

Though face threatening in nature, requests are indispensable part of people's lives and people make requests for many purposes through various ways. One way of making requests is via e-mails.

2. Literature Review

2.1. E-mail Communication

Requests are frequently utilized by people in their daily lives. One way of making requests is through e-mails owing to the development of technology and increasing number of e-mails as a tool for communication. Though it has become a popular means of communication, and used a lot in everyday life, writing an e-mail creates certain problems in every context. Since e-mails are relatively new way of communication, there are not any existing conventions for e-mail writing (Biesenbach-Lucas, 2006). These non-existent conventions lead to uncertainties with respect to styles and strategies in e-mail writing (Crystal, 2001). In one hand, e-mail writing is considered to

be related to speaking because it is dynamic and interactive (Danet, 2011, cited in Economidou- Kogetsidis, 2011); on the other hand, it has some features from writing because the speaker and the hearer cannot see each other while writing e-mails (Collot & Belmore, 1996).Thus, e-mail writing shares some features with both speaking and writing; thus, it is regarded as a "hybrid medium" of communication (Crystal, 2001).

People may send e-mails for a variety of purposes ranging from e-mails to friends to professors. While writing e-mails to friends, people feel free about how to write their e-mails. If the hearer is a person from the workplace, people are inclined to feel uncomfortable while writing e-mails, because that person in the workplace is somebody who has either the same status as the speaker or a higher status (Barron, 1998). The other context where e-mails are utilized extensively is university context in which e-mail exchanges between students and professors are frequent. Students have difficulty in writing e-mails to their professors who have higher social status than the students, thus the relationship students and professors have is asymmetrical (Economidou- Kogetsidis, 2011). In addition to the influence of the hearer on the writing style of e-mails, another problem appears when a non-native speaker is writing an e-mail in the target language, as it will put more burden on the non-native speaker student's shoulder and be more challenging for that student to write an e-mail appropriately. Chen (2006, p.36) stated that challenge in writing e-mails occurs because *"non-native speakers often lack the sophisticated pragmatic competence in the L2 and critical language awareness of how discourse shapes and is shaped by power relations, identity, and ideologies established in the target culture"*.

2.2. Pragmatic Transfer

Kasper and Rose (2001, p. 2) defined pragmatics as the "study of communicative action in sociocultural context". According to this definition, pragmatics focuses on the usage of language in context. Leech (1983, p. 1) stated that it is not possible to comprehend the nature of language itself if we do not comprehend pragmatics by drawing attention to the importance of pragmatics. A component of pragmatics is cross-cultural pragmatics that basically deals with the similarities and differences in pragmatic strategies between at least two languages and / or cultures (Blum-Kulka, House, and Kasper, 1989).

Interlanguage Pragmatics mainly focuses on the study of non-native speakers' use and acquisition of linguistic action patterns in a second language, and interlanguage pragmatics' theoretical and empirical foundation is based on cross-cultural pragmatics according to Kasper and Blum-Kulka (1993).

As a subfield of interlanguage pragmatics is the pragmatic transfer (Kasper & Blum-Kulka, 1993). Zegarac and Pennington (2000) stated that pragmatic transfer helps

people in comprehending and handling with the problems in cross-cultural communication.

Furthermore, Kasper (1992, cited in Eliçin, 2011) uttered that when learners resort to the strategies in their mother tongue while speaking L2, the target language, then pragmatic transfer occurs.

2.3. Related Studies

Requests have been the subject of many studies up to now in the literature. Economidou-Kogetsidis (2011) investigated the degree of directness and amount of internal and external modifications in 200 e-mails of 200 Greek Cypriot students. A modified version of Blum-Kulka, House, and Kasper (1989) and a revised request data (Biesenbach-Lucas, 2006, 2007) was used for the analysis of the study. The findings revealed that the participants made use of direct strategies most, followed by conventionally indirect strategies. Among the direct strategies, the most frequently used ones were imperatives, direct questions, and want statements. In terms of internal modifications, the most frequently used downgraders were please, and consultative devices. For the external modifications, most of the e-mails were extremely modified using a supportive move. Among these, grounders (reasons, justifications) and pre-closings / thanks were the most widely used modifiers followed by e-mail closing and apology. Hallajian (2014) also investigated 128 e-mails from 20 Iranian post-graduate students to their Malaysian supervisors. Economidou-Kogetsidis (2011)'s framework, which was based on Blum-Kulka, House, and Kasper (1989) and Biesenbach-Lucas (2006, 2007), was utilized for the data analysis. The most used strategy was direct strategy, and then conventionally indirect strategy. Direct questions, imperatives / mood derivables, and expectation statements were the most frequently used direct strategies by the learners. In terms of internal modifications, please, downtoners, and time intensifiers were used most. With respect to external modifications, e-mail closing, salutation, pre-closing / thanks, and grounders were utilized most.

Eliçin (2011) also explored and compared requests across three groups, and investigated how three groups (55 EFL learners, 47 native speakers of English, 47 native speakers of Turkish) differed with respect to their strategy use while making requests, and further investigated if there was pragmatic transfer for EFL learners. The participants employed different strategies in discourse completion tasks and e-mails. Both groups made use of conventionally indirect strategies most. The least frequently used strategy type is non-conventionally indirect strategies. EFL learners group used mood derivable (31.81%) strategy more when compared to native speakers of English group (6.38%). Besides, preparatory strategy is the most frequently resorted type, but

the percentages differ a lot (EFL learners- 51.8%, native speakers of English- 78.72%). For pragmatic transfer, it can be concluded that EFL learners transfer their mother language knowledge into their target language use.

Most of the studies up to now have investigated requests and request strategies with a more descriptive point of view. Thus, to shed more light on this issue, this study aims to investigate the degree of directness and amount of lexical / phrasal internal and external modifications employed by Turkish EFL learners, native speakers of English, and native speakers of Turkish. It also aims to explore whether there is a difference between EFL learners and native speakers of English while making requests, and EFL learners and native speakers of Turkish while making requests.

With these aims, the following research questions will be addressed throughout the study.

1. What is the degree of directness and amount of lexical / phrasal internal and external modification employed by a) Turkish EFL learners? b) native speakers of English? c) native speakers of Turkish?
2. How do EFL learners differ from native speakers of English and Turkish while making requests?

3. Methodology

3.1. Research Design

This study is both quantitative and qualitative in nature. For qualitative analysis, the classification of each request head act was determined and sorted out by the researcher manually. After this classification, for quantitative analysis, descriptive analysis was employed to calculate the occurrences of the request strategies in the e-mails. The frequencies of these occurrences with respect to directness level, internal and external modification were provided through descriptive statistics.

3.2. Participants

The data were collected from three groups of participants. Each group included closer number of females and males to be homogeneous. All the participants were between 19 and 24 for the comparability of the language use of the participants across the groups.

First group included 10 native speakers (NSs) of Turkish (5 female and 5 male). These students were studying Turkish Language and Literature at a state university in Turkey, and were selected on purpose due to their low proficiency level of English in order to diminish the possible effect of English on their mother tongue.

Second group was the interlanguage group including 20 Turkish EFL learners (11 male and 9 female). They were taught the courses in this department by means of English, thus the medium of instruction was English for that group. 20 students whose scores were above 80 were selected based on the proficiency test score they got.

The last group included 10 native speakers (NSs) (6 male, 4 female) of English. They were originally American, and they had been to Turkey for teaching English to Turkish students.

3.3. Data Collection

The data were collected through e-mails from each and every group. The participants were given two situations (see Appendix A) in which they were expected to write a request e-mail to a close friend in another city, and another request e-mail to a professor in order to ask for an appointment. The situations were designed by the researcher based on three factors in Brown and Levinson's politeness theory (1978) which are social distance, social power, and rank of imposition. First request e-mail (to a friend with same status as the speaker) does not require high imposition. On the other hand, second request e-mail (to a professor with a higher status than the speaker) requires high imposition, and there is also power asymmetry between the speaker and the hearer. English versions of the situations were checked by two native speakers of English who did not take part in this study for the validity of the e-mails. Besides, Turkish version of the situations was checked by two Turkish professors at Turkish Language and Literature Department. Five Turkish EFL learners and five native speakers of Turkish who were not included in this study were asked for the clarity and comprehensibility of the situations for piloting, and they stated that there were not any ambiguous parts.

3.4. Data Analysis

Each learner wrote two e-mails, and sent them to the researcher. These 80 e-mails, in total, were analyzed and classified based on Economidou-Kogetsidis's (2011) framework which relies on Blum- Kulka et al. (1989) and Biesenbach-Lucas (2006, 2007). This study followed the same path with Hallajian (2014), and put the addressee as a type of strategy under the external modification. For the analysis, the first step was to identify the request head acts in each e-mail and categorize them under the suitable request strategy. The differences between the situations were also analyzed for each group in terms of the degree of directness. Table 2 presents this coding scheme in terms of the degree of directness. Table 3 presents the classification of lexical/internal modifications. Table 4 presents the classification of external modifications. Based on this

classification, each request head act was identified and sorted out manually by the researcher. After that, the frequencies and percentages were provided for each category and subcategory with respect to three groups of participants. After that, based on the frequencies and percentages, Turkish EFL learners were compared to the other groups which were baseline data in this study. All the classifications of the researcher based on this coding scheme were also cross-checked by a colleague who was holding a PhD in ELT. Among 80 e-mails, there was an agreement on the 67 of them; however, no agreement was reached on 13 e-mails. These 13 e-mails were shown to a native speaker, and her opinions on these were obtained, and then resolution was reached regarding these 13 e-mails.

Table 2: The degree of directness

Directness level	Request strategies	Examples
Most Direct	Imperatives/mood derivable	- Please note what changes should be made.
	Elliptical requests	- Any comments?
	Performatives	- I have to ask for an extension for a week.
	Want statements	- I would like your suggestion
		- I want to have an extension
	Need statements	I will need a little more time
	Expectation statements	- I hope you'll give me the weekend to finish my assignment
		- I look forward to hearing from you.
	Reminder requests[5]	- I would like to remind you of my reference letter
	Pre-decided statements[6]	- I will hand my assignment in tomorrow.
Conventionally indirect	Query preparatory (ability, willingness, permission)	- Can/could…/Would you mind…
		- I would appreciate it if….
Hints	Strong hints/mild hints	- Attached is a draft of my work.
		- I have some trouble understanding the essay question.

Most direct	Direct questions	- Did you get my project?
	Elliptical	-Any news?
	Mood derivable	- Please let me know if you have to withdraw me from class.
	Performative	- I would like to ask if …
	Want statements	- I would like to know what your policy is on grading students for the Degree Equivalence Program
	Need statements	- I will need to know….
Conventionally indirect	Query preparatory (ability, willingness, permission)	- Could you tell me….
Hints	Strong hints/mild hints	- I tried very hard to find your office but couldn't find it.

Table 3: Lexical/phrasal internal modification

Name	Explanation	Devices
Marker 'please'	"An optional element added to a request to bid for cooperative behavior" (Blum-Kulka et al., 1989:283).	'please'
Consultative devices	"expressions by means of which the speaker seeks to involve the hearer directly bidding for cooperation" (Blum-Kulka et al., 1989:283).	'would you mind', 'do you think', 'would it be all right if', 'is it/would it be possible', 'do you think I could…', 'is it all right?'
Downtoners	"modifiers which are used by a speaker in order to modulate the impact his or her request is likely to have on the hearer" (Blum-Kulka et al., 1989:284).	'possibly', 'perhaps', 'just', 'rather', 'maybe', 'by any chance', 'at all'
Understaters/hedges	"adverbial modifiers by means of which the speaker underrepresents the state of affairs denoted in the proposition" (Blum-Kulka et al., 1989:283).	'a bit', 'a little', 'sort of', 'a kind of'
Subjectivisers	"elements in which the speaker explicitly expresses his or her subjective opinion vis-à-vis the state of affairs referred to in the proposition, thus lowering the assertive force of the request" (Blum-Kulka et al., 1989:284).	'I'm afraid', 'I wonder', 'I think/suppose'
Cajolers	"conventionalized, addressee-oriented modifiers whose function is to make things clearer for the addressee and invite him/her to metaphorically participate in the speech act" (Sifianou, 1992:180).	'You know', 'You see…'
Appealers	Addressee-oriented elements occurring in a syntactically final position. They may signal turn-availability and "are used by the speaker whenever he or she wishes to appeal to his or her hearer's benevolent understanding" (Blum-Kulka et al., 1989:285).	'Clean the table dear, will you?.............ok/right?')

Intensifier	"Adverbial moodier that stresses specific elements of the request" (Schauer, 2009:91)	- I *truly/really* need this extension. - I had *such a* high fever
Time intensifier	"employed to emphasise the temporal aspect of the speaker's request" (Schauer, 2009:91)	- as soon as possible - urgently - right now
Overstater	"Exaggerated utterances that form part of the request and are employed by the speaker to communicate their need of the request being met" (Schauer, 2009:91)	- I'm in *desperate* need of material for my essay.

Table 4: External modification

Name	Explanation	Example
Greeting/opening	The writer opens the e-mail with a greeting	- Hi/Hello/Good morning - How are you? - I am sorry to hear that you are not well.
Self introduction	The writer introduces himself/herself	I'm Maria K. from your LALI-141 class
Grounder	A clause which can either precede or follow a request and allows the speaker to give reasons, explanations, or justifications for his or her request	'I would like an assignment extension *because I could not deal the typing time.*'
Disarmer	A phrase with which "the speaker tries to remove any potential objections the hearer might raise upon being confronted with the request" (Blum-Kulka et al., 1989:287)	*'I know that this assignment is important but could you....?'* *'I hope you understand my situation...'*
Preparator	The speaker prepares the hearer for the ensuing request.	'I really need a favor ....'
Getting a precommitment	The speaker checks on a potential refusal before performing the request by trying to get the hearer to commit	'Could you do me a favor?'.
Promise	The speaker makes a promise to be fulfilled upon completion of the requested act	'Could you give me an extension? *I promise I'll have it ready by tomorrow.*'.
Imposition minimizer	"The speaker tries to reduce the imposition placed on the hearer by his request" (Blum-Kulka et al., 1989:288).	'I would like to ask for an extension. *Just for a few days.*'
Apology	The speaker apologises for posing the request and/or for the imposition incurred.	*'I'm very sorry* but I need an extension on this project.'
Orientation move	Opening discourse moves which serve an orientation function but do not necessarily mitigate or aggravate the request in any way	'You know the seminar paper I'm supposed to be giving on the 29th ....' 'It about our midterm exam' 'I have a question about the essay...'
Complement/sweetener	"Employed to flatter the interlocutor and to put them into a positive mood" (Schauer, 2009:92)	'Your opinion counts' 'I hope you feel better'
Pre-closings/thanks		'Thanks for your time' 'I look forward to hearing from you'
E-mail closing		Best, Sincerely,

4. Results

4.1. The results of the first research question

Total numbers for degree of directness, internal and external modification used in e-mails were presented in the following section for each group of learners. The comparison of two e-mails was also provided at the end of each section for that group of participants, and the differences were provided with respect to the degree of directness.

4.1.1. Turkish EFL learners
4.1.1.1. The degree of directness

In terms of the degree of directness, Turkish EFL learners employed 93 request head acts in total. They produced direct strategies most, whose frequency is 63. The secondly used strategy was conventionally indirect strategies, and they were produced 30 times

by the learners. None of the learners resorted to non-conventionally indirect strategies. Table 5 presents the frequencies and percentages for the strategies used by the learners.

Table 5: The degree of directness in the e-mails of Turkish EFL learners

the degree of directness level	frequency	percentage
direct strategies	**63**	**67.7%**
1. need statements	19	20.4%
2. expectation statements	16	17.2%
3. want statements	11	11.8%
4. performatives	9	9.6%
5. direct questions	5	5.3%
6. imperatives/mood derivable	3	3.2%
7. elliptical requests	0	0
conventionally indirect strategies	**30**	**32.3%**
non-conventionally indirect strategies	0	0
in total	**93**	**100%**

What is interesting in the e-mails of Turkish EFL learners is that they made use of several request head acts, most of the time combining both conventionally indirect and direct strategies in a single e-mail. They also performed various types of direct strategies instead of sticking to a single type in a single e-mail. The examples for each of these categories are as follows:

(1) *Dear X,*

I am writing about a book. I searched that book, but I couldn't find it. I would be grateful if you could search that book (conventionally indirect strategy). I look forward to hearing from you (expectation statement-direct strategy).

Best Here, the student made use of a conventionally indirect strategy, which is accepted as a polite form of requesting. That student utilized another request head act which is a direct strategy.

(2) *Dear Professor,*

I have got a few questions for my midterm exam. I studied for the exam but I still don't understand some points. I need your help (need statement-direct strategy). I would like to ask you some questions (want statement-direct strategy), so I am writing to request an appointment from you (performatives-direct strategy). Thank you in advance for your help. I wish you a good day.

The learner resorted to three different direct strategies so as to make a request from her/his professor.

4.1.1.2. The amount of lexical / phrasal internal modification

In terms of internal modification, Turkish EFL learners produced 23 internal modifications in total. To produce these, they employed eight different moves. Among the downgraders, the most commonly preferred one was the politeness marker-please. Please was used with imperatives / mood derivables and conventionally indirect strategies. Downtoners, cajolers, subjectivisers or appealers were not preferred by Turkish EFL learners while making a request to a friend or a professor. Table 6 presents the frequency and percentage for each subcategory.

Table 6: The frequency distribution of lexical / phrasal internal modification used by Turkish EFL learners

lexical / phrasal internal modification	frequency	percentage
downgraders	**15**	**65.2%**
1. politeness marker please	11	47.8%
2. consultative devices	2	8.6%
3. understaters/hedges	2	8.6%
4. downtoners	0	0
5. subjectivisers	0	0
6. cajolers	0	0
7. appealers	0	0
upgraders	**8**	**34.8%**
1. intensifiers	4	17.3%
2. time intensifiers	3	13%
3. overstaters	1	4.3%
in total	**23**	**100%**

The examples for these categories utilized by the learners are provided below:

(3) *Hi X,*

….I want you to look for the book n your city. Please reply (politeness marker please-downgrader + imperatives / mood derivable) as soon as possible (time intensifier-upgrader) because I really (intensifier-upgrader) need it ……

 (4) *Mr Professor,*

….. I should ask you for a convenient time in advance for an appointment. If this Monday is ok for you (consultative device-downgrader), I wanna come to your office…

4.1.1.3. The amount of external modification

Turkish EFL learners produced 139 external modification strategies to make a request by making use of nine different moves. Of these 139 external modifications, 135 of them belonged to supportive moves. Greeting/opening was the most commonly used one

which was employed 39 times. None of the learners used apology, disarmer, promise or getting a precommitment. For the greetings/opening, they tended to use "Dear Professor" while writing to a professor, and "Hello/Hi/My dear friend" while writing e-mail to a friend. For e-mail closings, most of them preferred "Yours Respectfully and Yours Sincerely" in the e-mail to a professor, and "best wishes, with love" to a friend. Table 7 presents the amount of external modifications with respect to each subcategory.

Table 7: The frequency distribution of external modifications used by
Turkish EFL learners

external modification	frequency	percentage
supportive moves	**135**	**97.1%**
1. greeting/opening	39	28%
2. grounder	33	23.7%
3. e-mail closing	24	17.2%
4. pre-closing/thanks	19	13.6%
5. orientation move	12	8.6%
6. preparator	6	4.3%
7. imposition minimizer	1	0.7%
8. compliment/sweetener	1	0.7%
9. apology	0	0
10.disarmer	0	0
11.getting a precommitment	0	0
12. promise	0	0
aggravating moves	**4**	**2.9%**
1. complaint/criticism	0	0
2. emphasis on urgency/positive outcome	4	2.9%
in total	**139**	**100%**

Below are the examples for the moves in external modification.

(5) *Hello X, (greeting-supportive moves)*

…. I could not find the book which is required for the course. I looked for it everywhere, but I couldn't (grounder-supportive moves). I am dead sure that a hardworking student like you can find this book very easily (emphasis on positive outcome-aggravating moves)….

(6) *Dear Professor, (greeting-supportive moves)*

….. I am taking your Math class. I have a problem about derivatives (consultative device-supportive moves). I asked them to my classmates, but we did not find any solutions about this issue (grounder-supportive moves). The exams are soon (emphasis on urgency-aggravating moves). Could you please help me about this issue?......

Sincerely (e-mail closing-supportive moves)

4.1.1.4. The comparison between e-mail to a friend and e-mail to a professor in terms of the degree of directness

The two e-mails were analyzed based on the degree for directness, and the results are as follows:

Table 8: The comparison between e-mail to a friend and e-mail to a professor in terms of the degree of directness

the degree of directness level	e-mail to a friend		e-mail to a professor	
	frequency	percentage	frequency	percentage
direct strategies	**36**	**72%**	**27**	**62.8%**
1. need statements	13	26%	6	13.9%
2. expectation statements	12	24%	4	9.3%
3. want statements	5	10%	6	13.9%
4. imperatives / mood derivable	2	4%	1	2.3%
5. direct question	4	8%	1	2.3%
6. performatives	0	0	9	20.9%
7. elliptical requests	0	0	0	0
conventionally indirect strategies	**14**	**28%**	**16**	**37.2%**
non-conventionally indirect strategies	0	0	0	0
in total	**50**	**100%**	**43**	**100%**

The findings revealed that Turkish EFL learners used direct strategies more in both e-mails. They indeed utilized more direct strategies when writing e-mail to a friend. Though they utilized more conventionally indirect strategies to their professors, the difference did not seem very significant. None of the learners produced non-conventionally indirect strategies. The number of the strategies they employed was very close to each other. They made use of the same strategies most, which were need, want and expectation statements, in order to make a request to a friend and a professor, although their frequencies were a little different from each other. Need and expectation statements were much more employed by Turkish EFL learners while making a request to a friend. The most striking difference was the use of performatives while writing an e-mail to a professor.

4.1.2. Native speakers of English
4.1.2.1. The degree of directness

Native speakers of English produced 39 request head acts in total. The most frequently used strategy was indirect strategy for the native speakers of English, followed by direct strategies. No non-conventionally indirect strategies were employed by these

participants. Table 9 provides the frequency and percentage for each subcategory in detail.

Table 9: The degree of directness in the e-mails of native speakers of English

the degree of directness level	frequency	percentage
direct strategies	**18**	**46.2%**
1. expectation statements	6	15.3%
2. need statements	5	12.8%
3. want statements	3	7.6%
4. imperatives/mood derivable	2	5.2%
5. direct questions	2	5.2%
6. performatives	0	0
7. elliptical requests	0	0
conventionally indirect strategies	**21**	**53.8%**
non-conventionally indirect strategies	0	0
in total	**39**	**100%**

The examples for these subcategories are as follows:

(7) *Hey X,*

I am having a hard time finding a book for my course. Could you check out the bookstores by you and see if they have it? (conventionally indirect strategy) You are the best! Looking forward to hearing from you soon! (expectation statement)   xoxoxo,

 (8) *Professor,*

I am wondering if you would be available to meet before the midterm exam to discuss a few questions I have (conventionally indirect strategy). Please let me know your office hours or other convenient time (imperatives / mood derivable –direct strategy). Thank you so much.
Best,

4.1.2.2. The amount of the internal modification
Native speakers of English made use of internal modifications 15 times, and they made use of five different strategies in total.

Table 10: The frequency distribution of lexical / phrasal internal modification used by native speakers of English

lexical / phrasal internal modification	frequency	percentage
downgraders	**12**	**80%**
1. politeness marker please	5	33.3%
2. understaters/hedges	5	33.3%
3. consultative devices	2	13.4%
4. downtoners	0	0

5. subjectivisers	0	0
6. cajolers	0	0
7. appealers	0	0
upgraders	**3**	**20%**
1. intensifiers	3	20%
2. time intensifiers	0	0
3. overstaters	0	0
in total	**15**	**100%**

The examples are provided below:

(9) *Hi X,*

I have problems with the concepts covered last week (consultative device-downgrader). They seem to be a little unclear on the topic (understate / hedges-downgrader). …Thanks.

 (10) *Dear X,*

Would it be possible for me to come to see you to discuss some questions I have about the course? (understaters / hedges-downgraders) If it is, please let me know which day and time (consultative device-downgraders; politeness marker please-downgraders)….Many thanks in advance.

Regards,

4.1.2.3. The amount of the external modification

Native speakers of English produced 74 external modifications in total.

Table 11: The frequency distribution of external modification used by
native speakers of English

external modification	frequency	percentage
supportive moves	**70**	**94.5%**
1. greeting/opening	17	22.9%
2. pre-closing/thanks	14	18.9%
3. grounder	13	17.5%
4. e-mail closing	9	12.1%
5. preparator	7	9.4%
6. compliment/sweetener	7	9.4%
7. orientation move	6	8.1%
8. imposition minimizer	1	1.3%
9. apology	0	0
10. disarmer	0	0
11. getting a precommitment	0	0
12. promise	0	0
aggravating moves	**4**	**5.5%**
1. complaint/criticism	0	0
2. emphasis on urgency/positive outcome	4	5.5%
in total	**74**	**100%**

The examples are as follows:

(11) *Professor X, (greeting/ opening)*

…..I have a few questions (orientation move-supportive moves) for the upcoming exams (emphasis on urgency-aggravating moves)….. Have a nice day (pre-closing-supportive moves)

(12) *Hey, (greeting / opening-supportive moves)*

I have a favor to ask (preparatory). I'm looking for a book, but I can't find it anywhere here! (grounder) ……… Thanks so much! (pre-closing / thanking) You're the best☺ (compliments / sweetener)

Best, (e-mail closing-supportive moves)

4.1.2.4. The comparison between e-mails of native speakers of English to a friend and to a professor in terms of the degree of directness level

The comparison of the e-mails of native speakers of English to a friend and to a professor showed certain similarities and differences which are presented in Table 12.

Table 12: The comparison between e-mails of native speakers of English to a friend and to a professor in terms of the degree of directness level

the degree of directness level	e-mail to a friend		e-mail to a professor	
	frequency	percentage	frequency	percentage
direct strategies	**10**	**50%**	**8**	**42.1%**
1. need statements	4	20%	1	5.2%
2. expectation statements	1	5%	5	26.3%
3. want statements	1	5%	2	10.5%
4. imperatives / mood derivable	2	10%	0	0
5. direct questions	2	10%	0	0
6. performatives	0	0	0	0
7. elliptical requests	0	0	0	0
conventionally indirect strategies	**10**	**50%**	**11**	**57.9%**
non-conventionally indirect strategies	0	0	0	0
in total	**20**	**100%**	**19**	**100%**

The findings indicated that native speakers of English performed similar amounts of direct and indirect strategies in order to make a request to a friend and a professor. They employed the same strategies in both e-mails such as expectation, need and want statements. One difference was that they did not prefer any direct questions or imperatives/mood derivable while requesting to a professor. They also produced more expectation statements while writing to a professor. When the overall amount of the strategies used in each e-mail was taken into consideration, it is clear that while writing

an e-mail to a professor, the participants utilized slightly more strategies than the e-mails to a friend.

4.1.3. Native speakers of Turkish
4.1.3.1. The degree of directness
Native speakers of Turkish produced 42 request head acts in total. Table 13 provides the frequency and percentage of each category.

Table 13: The degree of directness in the e-mails of native speakers of Turkish

the degree of directness level	frequency	percentage
direct strategies	**26**	**61.9%**
1. want statements	10	23.8%
2. need statements	8	19.1%
3. expectation statements	4	9.5%
4. performatives	4	9.5%
5. imperatives/mood derivable	0	0
6. direct questions	0	0
7. elliptical requests	0	0
conventionally indirect strategies	**16**	**38.1%**
non-conventionally indirect strategies	0	0
in total	**42**	**100%**

The related examples are provided below:

(13) *Merhaba Hocam (Hello/Hi Professor),*

Geçtiğimiz hafta anlattığınız bir konuyu anlamadım (I could not understand the topic you covered last week). Uygun bir gününüzde bana anlatabilir misiniz? (Could you explain it to me at a convenient time?) (conventionally indirect strategy)Teşekkür ederim (Thank you).

(14) *Merhaba X (Hello/ Hi X),*

......Acilen bu kitabı almam gerekiyor (I need to buy this book urgently) (need statement-direct strategies). Benim için bulunduğun şehirdeki kitapçılara bakabilir misin? (Could you please look for this book in the bookstores in your city?) (conventionally indirect strategies) Senden haber bekliyorum (I look forward to hearing from you) (expectation statement-direct strategies). Hoşçakal (Bye).

4.1.3.2. The amount of internal modification
Native speakers of Turkish made use of only one internal modification which is worth mentioning. Only one student resorted to overstater which is a move in upgraders. Nobody resorted to downgraders while making a request.

The only example for this category is as follows:

(15) *Merhaba Hocam (Hello/Hi Professor),*

....Herkese sordum, ama kimse cevap veremedi (I asked it everybody, but nobody could answer my questions). Bunu anlamadığım için de sınavda yapamayacağım (As I could not understand it, I won't be able to do it in the exam) (overstater-upgraders). Teşekkür ederim (Thank you/ Thanks).

4.1.3.3. The amount of external modification

Native speakers of Turkish produced 65 external modifications in total. Table 14 displays frequencies and percentages of all these categories.

Table 14: the frequency distribution of external modification used by native speakers of Turkish

external modification	frequency	percentage
supportive moves	**61**	**93.8%**
1. greeting/opening	20	30.7%
2. grounder	20	30.7%
3. pre-closing/thanks	14	21.6%
4. orientation move	4	6.2%
5. preparator	3	4.6%
6. compliment/sweetener	0	0
7. e-mail closing	0	0
8. imposition minimizer	0	0
9. apology	0	0
10. disarmer	0	0
11. getting a precommitment	0	0
12. promise	0	0
aggravating moves	**4**	**6.2%**
1. complaint/criticism	0	0
2. emphasis on urgency/positive outcome	4	6.2%
in total	**65**	**100%**

Below are the examples for resorted strategies by the students:

 (16) *Sevgili arkadaşım (My dear friend (greeting / opening-supportive moves),*

Bir kitap arıyorum, ama bulamadım (I'm looking for a book, but I couldn't find it) (grounder-supportive moves). Bu maili senden bu kitabı bulman için yazıyorum (I am writing this mail to ask you to find this book) (performatives-supportive moves). Sevgilerimle (Best) (e-mail closing-supportive moves).

(17) *Merhaba Hocam (Hello/Hi Professor) (greeting / opening-supportive moves),
......Bildiğiniz üzere sınavlara az bir zaman kaldı ve benim bu soruları size sormam gerekiyor (As you know, there is little time left for the exams and I need to ask these questions to you) (emphasis on urgency). .... Teşekkürler (Thank you/Thanks).*

4.1.3.4. The comparison between the e-mails of native speakers of Turkish to a friend and to a professor in terms of the degree of directness level

The e-mails of native speakers of Turkish were analyzed with respect to both situations, and the results were provided in Table 15.

Table 15: The comparison between the e-mails of native speakers of Turkish to a friend and to a professor in terms of the degree of directness level

the degree of directness level	e-mail to a friend		e-mail to a professor	
	frequency	percentage	frequency	percentage
direct strategies	**11**	**47.8%**	**15**	**79%**
1. need statements	7	30.4%	1	5.2%
2. expectation statements	1	4.3%	3	15.7%
3. want statements	2	8.6%	8	42.1%
4. imperatives / mood derivable	0	0	0	0
5. direct questions	0	0	0	0
6. performatives	1	0	3	15.7%
7. elliptical requests	0	0	0	0
conventionally indirect strategies	**12**	**52.1%**	**4**	**21%**
non-conventionally indirect strategies	0	0	0	0
in total	**23**	**100%**	**19**	**100%**

The findings displayed that there were some differences between two e-mails. While writing a request e-mail to a professor, native speakers of Turkish utilized direct strategies much more than the e-mails to a friend. They also utilized much more conventionally indirect strategies to a friend. While writing these request e-mails to a professor, they mostly performed want statements. They also used expectation statements and performatives to a great extent, and more than the e-mails to a friend. However, while writing an e-mail to a friend they made use of both strategies in a balanced way so that their frequencies and percentages were close to each other. In the e-mails to a friend, they produced a great deal of need statements.

4.2. The results of the second research question
4.2.1. The comparison between Turkish EFL learners and native speakers of English

In terms of the degree of directness, the findings revealed that Turkish EFL learners produced direct strategies, followed by conventionally indirect strategies. On the other hand, for native speakers of English, the most frequently employed strategies were conventionally indirect strategies, followed by direct strategies. Both groups did not resort to any non-conventionally indirect strategies. As the numbers of two groups were not the same (20 Turkish EFL learners, 10 native speakers of English), the results would be discussed by referring to the percentages of each group for the comparability.

Table 16: The comparison between Turkish EFL learners and native speakers of
English with respect to the degree of directness

the degree of directness level	Turkish EFL learners		native speakers of English	
	frequency	percentage	frequency	percentage
direct strategies	**63**	**67.7%**	**18**	**46.2%**
1. need statements	19	20.4%	5	12.8%
2. expectation statements	16	17.2%	6	15.8%
3. want statements	11	11.8%	3	7.6%
4. imperatives / mood derivable	3	3.2%	2	5.2%
5. direct question	5	5.3%	2	5.2%
6. performatives	9	9.6%	0	0
7. elliptical requests	0	0	0	0
conventionally indirect strategies	**30**	**32.3%**	**21**	**53.8%**
non-conventionally indirect strategies	0	0	0	0
in total	**93**	**100%**	**39**	**100%**

As is seen in the table above, Turkish EFL learners and native speakers of English differed in their use of request strategies with respect to the degree of directness. As conventionally indirect strategies are considered as more polite than direct strategies, it can be concluded that native speakers of English seem to be kinder than Turkish EFL learners while making requests. When the request head acts were analyzed in a more detailed way, the structures both groups used also differed. What is worth mentioning is that even if indirect strategies were utilized by 32.3% of Turkish EFL learners, the structure they utilized consisted of the same type of sentence structure which "Could you please….?". Only one learner made use of "I would be grateful if you could…" structure to make a request. However, this structure by using "Could/Can" was only performed by one native speaker of English. The other native speakers of English (nine people) used the structure "I would be grateful/pleased/appreciate if you could help me". Thus, how they formed their request head acts, even if they are using conventionally indirect strategies, are different. When the subcategories in the direct strategies were analyzed, what is important is that though 9.6 % of Turkish EFL learners

made use of performatives, none of the native speakers of English used them. On the other hand, native speakers of English (35%) utilized expectation statements more than Turkish EFL learners (17.2%). What is similar between these groups is that both groups employed the same direct strategies most, which are need statements and want statements. However, Turkish EFL learners resorted to need statements and want statements more than native speakers of English.

In terms of lexical / phrasal internal modifications, Table 17 presents the frequency and percentage of each move employed by both groups.

Table 17: The comparison between Turkish EFL learners and native speakers of English with respect to the lexical/phrasal internal modification

lexical / phrasal internal modification	Turkish EFL learners		native speakers of English	
	frequency	percentage	frequency	percentage
downgraders	**15**	**65.2%**	**12**	**80%**
1. politeness marker please	11	47.8%	5	33.3%
2. consultative devices	2	8.6%	2	13.4%
3. understaters/hedges	2	8.6%	5	33.3%
4. downtoners	0	0	0	0
5. subjectivisers	0	0	0	0
6. cajolers	0	0	0	0
7. appealers	0	0	0	0
upgraders	**8**	**34.8%**	**3**	**20%**
1. intensifiers	4	17.3%	3	0
2. time intensifiers	3	13%	0	0
3. overstaters	1	4.3%	0	0
in total	**23**	**100%**	**15**	**100%**

As is displayed in the table above, Turkish EFL learners performed much more upgraders than native speakers of English. In parallel with this, native speakers of English employed more downgraders than Turkish EFL learners. Politeness marker please was the most commonly used move by both groups (Turkish EFL learners-47.8%; native speakers of English-33.3). What is striking is that understaters/hedges were more frequently produced strategy by native speakers of English (33.3%) when compared to Turkish EFL learners (8.6%). In other words, both groups differed in their use of understaters/hedges while making requests. Apart from these, the other downgraders were not applied by both groups. Regarding upgraders, both groups used time intensifiers. What is different is that 4.3% of Turkish EFL learners employed overstaters; however, none of the native speakers of English used overstaters. To conclude, it could be said that Turkish EFL learners share similarities in the preference of internal

modifications while they are making requests though there exist certain differences in the amount of the use of these strategies.

In terms of external modification, Table 18 provides the frequencies and percentages for each move with respect to both groups.

Table 18: The comparison between Turkish EFL learners and native speakers of English with respect to the external modification

external modification	Turkish EFL learners		native speakers of English	
	frequency	percentage	frequency	percentage
supportive moves	**135**	**97.1%**	**70**	**94.5%**
1. greeting/opening	39	28%	17	22.9%
2. grounder	33	23.7%	13	17.5%
3. pre-closing/thanks	19	13.6%	14	18.9%
4. e-mail closing	24	17.2%	9	12.1%
5. orientation move	12	8.6%	6	8.1%
6. preparator	6	4.3%	7	9.4%
7. imposition minimizer	1	0.7%	1	1.3%
8. compliment/sweetener	1	0.7%	7	9.4%
9. apology	0	0	0	0
10.disarmer	0	0	0	0
11.getting a precommitment	0	0	0	0
12. promise	0	0	0	0
aggravating moves	**4**	**2.9%**	**4**	**5.5%**
1. complaint/criticism	0	0	0	0
2. emphasis on urgency/positive outcome	4	2.9	4	5.5%
in total	**139**	**100%**	**74**	**100%**

As the percentages were not very different from each other, it could be said that there was not a significant difference between Turkish EFL learners in terms of external modifications. When the subcategories of supportive and aggravating moves were analyzed, it is clear that the first fourth supportive moves employed by both groups were the same. Of these four supportive moves, Turkish EFL learners employed more greeting/opening, grounder, and e-mail closing than native speakers of English. There is one exception which is that only pre-closing among these four moves was more frequently produced one by native speakers of English. The most striking difference is in their use of compliment/sweetener. Native speakers of English used "you are the best" seven times. It can be concluded that Turkish EFL learners and native speakers of English show similarities in the use of their external modifications in making requests. What is more, along with the use of certain strategies, the amount both groups used in these strategies were also alike.

4.2.2. The comparison between Turkish EFL learners and native speakers of Turkish

In terms of the degree of directness, the frequencies and percentages regarding each strategy are provided in Table 19.

Table 19: The comparison between Turkish EFL learners and native speakers of Turkish with respect to the degree of directness

the degree of directness	Turkish EFL learners		native speakers of Turkish	
	frequency	percentage	frequency	percentage
direct strategies	**63**	**67.8%**	**26**	**61.7%**
1. need statements	19	30.1%	8	19%
2. expectation statements	16	25.3%	4	9.5%
3. want statements	13	20.6%	10	23.8%
4. imperatives / mood derivable	3	4.7%	1	2.3%
5. direct question	5	7.9%	0	0
6. performatives	9	14.2%	3	7.1%
7. elliptical requests	0	0	0	0
conventionally indirect strategies	**30**	**32.2%**	**16**	**38.3%**
non-conventionally indirect strategies	0	0	0	0
in total	**93**	**100%**	**42**	**100%**

Both Turkish EFL learners and native speakers of Turkish employed direct strategies most, followed by conventionally indirect strategies. None of the participants in both groups produced non-conventionally indirect strategies. Turkish EFL learners employed more direct and conventionally indirect strategies than native speakers of Turkish during the production of requests. The sentence structure of both groups while making requests by making use of conventionally indirect strategies is similar to each other. Turkish EFL learners produced "Could /Can you please….?", and similarly native speakers of Turkish performed "Lütfen bana yardımcı olabilir misiniz?". Detailed analysis indicated that though they looked similar at first, the amounts they utilized in these strategies were different from each other. What is interesting is that Turkish EFL learners resorted to need and want statements more than native speakers of Turkish. Furthermore, while Turkish EFL learners utilized direct questions, they were not employed by any of native speakers of Turkish.

Regarding the amount of lexical / phrasal internal modification utilized by these groups, Table 20 presents the frequencies and percentages.

Table 20: The comparison between Turkish EFL learners and native speakers of Turkish with respect to the lexical/phrasal internal modification

lexical/phrasal internal modification	Turkish EFL learners		native speakers of Turkish	
	frequency	percentage	frequency	percentage
downgraders	**12**	**80%**	**0**	**0**
1. politeness marker please	5	33.3%	0	0
2. consultative devices	2	13.4%	0	0
3. understaters/hedges	5	33.3%	0	0
4. downtoners	0	0	0	0
5. subjectivisers	0	0	0	0
6. cajolers	0	0	0	0
7. appealers	0	0	0	0
upgraders	**3**	**20%**	**1**	**100%**
1. intensifiers	3	20%	0	0
2. time intensifiers	0	0%	0	0
3. overstaters	0	0%	1	0
in total	**15**	**100%**	**1**	**100%**

There is one striking finding that native speakers of Turkish produced only one internal modification which is overstaters. Only one participant made use of overstaters while making a request. They did not employ any other supportive moves. What can be regarded as a similarity between these groups is that one learner in each group resorted to overstaters. Despite this small similarity, it can be concluded that there is a difference between Turkish EFL learners and native speakers of Turkish in terms of the use and amount of internal modification.

With respect to the amount of external modification, Table 21 provided all the details about the moves both groups employed.

Table 21: The comparison between Turkish EFL learners and native speakers of Turkish with respect to the external modification

external modification	Turkish EFL learners		native speakers of Turkish	
	frequency	percentage	frequency	percentage
supportive moves	**135**	**97.1%**	**61**	**93.8%**
1. greeting/opening	39	28%	20	30.7%
2. grounder	33	23.7%	20	30.7%
3. pre-closing/thanks	19	13.6%	14	21.6%
4. e-mail closing	24	17.2%	0	0
5. orientation move	12	8.6%	4	6.2%
6. preparator	6	4.3%	3	4.6%
7. imposition minimizer	1	0.7%	0	0
8. compliment/sweetener	1	0.7%	0	0
9. apology	0	0	0	0

10.disarmer	0	0	0	0
11.getting a precommitment	0	0	0	0
12. promise	0	0	0	0
aggravating moves	4	**2.9%**	4	**6.2%**
1. complaint/criticism	0	0	0	0
2. emphasis on urgency/positive outcome	4	2.9	4	6.2%
in total	**139**	**100%**	**65**	**100%**

Both groups have certain similarities. Their most frequently used strategies were greeting/opening and grounder. Regarding these two strategies, what is different is that native speakers of Turkish made use of more greeting/opening and grounder than Turkish EFL learners. Though e-mail closing is a commonly used strategy by Turkish EFL learners, it was not performed by native speakers of Turkish. Both groups performed only one aggravating move that is emphasis on urgency. Turkish EFL learners made use of more varied strategies while making requests when compared to native speakers of Turkish. The findings revealed that Turkish EFL learners and native speakers of Turkish share common features in terms of the strategies they used for external modification. These similarities were also shared by native speakers of English. Thus, all three groups share common features while making requests. However, when the amount of the strategies performed by the learners was also taken into consideration, it can be claimed that Turkish EFL learners share more similarities with native speakers of English rather than native speakers of Turkish, because the percentages of the moves used by Turkish EFL learners are closer to the percentages of the moves employed by native speakers of English.

5. Discussion

5.1. The degree of directness and amount of lexical / phrasal internal and external modification employed by Turkish EFL learners

The findings revealed that Turkish EFL learners made use of more direct strategies than conventionally indirect strategies. Of all the strategies they employed, 67.7% of them were direct, and 32.3% of them were conventionally indirect strategies. This result is in line with the study of Economidou-Kogetsidis (2011) who concluded that Greek-Cypriot non-native speakers of English tended to use more direct strategies than conventionally indirect strategies while requesting via e-mails. Hallajian (2011) also demonstrated that Iranian EFL learners utilized more direct strategies than indirect strategies. The findings of this study are also in parallel with the findings of Shim (2012) who pointed out that Korean EFL learners performed direct strategies most. When each strategy under direct strategies was analyzed, it was found that Turkish EFL learners

resorted to need statements which were the most commonly used strategy, followed by expectation, and want statements. However, in the studies conducted by Economidou-Kogetsidis (2011) and Shim (2012), the participants utilized imperatives/mood derivables most, followed by want statements and direct questions.

Hallajian (2011) also found that Iranian EFL learners preferred direct questions most, followed by imperatives/mood derivables and expectation statements. Thus, it is obvious that though the findings of this study showed parallelism with these previously mentioned studies, they indicated certain differences with respect to the most frequently used direct strategies. In terms of internal modification, this study revealed that Turkish EFL learners resorted to downgraders more than upgraders. Among the downgraders, they utilized politeness marker 'please' most. The other utilized strategies were consultative devices and understaters/hedges. These results are in line with the results of Economidou-Kogetsidis (2011) who concluded that 'please' was the most frequently used downgrader, followed by consultative devices, and upgraders were preferred less than downgraders. For the upgraders, the findings of this study are in contrast with the findings of Economidou-Kogetsidis (2011) in which the participants rarely used aggravating moves. However, in this study though Turkish EFL learners utilized aggravating moves less than supportive moves, the amount they utilized is significant. The results of this study also show similarities with the findings of Hallajian (2011) who revealed that 'please' was the most frequently used internal modification, followed by downtoners and time intensifiers. The different point is that though Turkish EFL learners preferred time intensifiers, they did not use any downtoners. Another similarity is present with the study of Shim (2012) who concluded that 'please' was the most commonly used internal modification. For the external modification, this study displayed that Turkish EFL learners mostly used supportive moves, and they rarely used aggravating moves to make a request through e-mails. Among the supportive moves, they favoured greeting/opening, grounder, pre-closing and e-mail closing most. These findings showed strong similarities with the findings of Hallajian (2014). The order of the moves was the same in both studies. Even though the findings are in line with the findings of Economidou-Kogetsidis (2011)'s study, there is one difference between two studies in terms of external modifications. Greek-Cypriot EFL learners used apology very frequently, but it was not used by any of the participants in this study.

5.2. The degree of directness and amount of lexical / phrasal internal and external modification employed by native speakers of English

This study came up with the result that native speakers of English made use of more conventionally indirect strategies than direct strategies. This finding was also found in the study of House-Kasper (1981, cited in Trosborg, 1995) who stated that native speakers of English used more conventionally indirect strategies in their study. Eliçin (2011) also found that native speaker of English who participated in her study tended to use much more conventionally indirect strategies than direct strategies. What is also similar is that want statements were one of the most frequently used strategies by native speakers of English in both studies. However, the findings of this study are in contrast to the findings of Eliçin (2011)'s study in the sense that the participants in this study were inclined to use need and expectation statements more; however, the participants in Eliçin (2011)'s study resorted to imperatives/mood derivables a lot. Jallifar (2009) also found out that the native speakers of English in his study resorted to indirect strategies more than direct strategies. Thus, it can be concluded that native speakers of English tend to be more polite while making requests.

5.3. The degree of directness and amount of lexical / phrasal internal and external modification employed by native speakers of Turkish

The findings of this study showed that native speakers of Turkish performed direct strategies most, followed by conventionally indirect strategies. The difference between the use of direct strategies (61.9%) and conventionally indirect strategies (38.1%) is really significant. It is clear that native speakers of Turkish favoured direct strategies. This finding supports Eliçin (2011)'s study in which native speakers of Turkish utilized direct strategies most. The difference occurs when the direct strategy types were analyzed. The results in this study indicated that want statements were the most commonly used one; however, it is in contrast to the finding of Eliçin (2011) in which native speakers of Turkish utilized obligatory statements most.

5.4. The comparison of the request strategies used by Turkish EFL learners with native speakers of English and native speakers of Turkish

The findings of this study yielded certain similarities and differences among three groups. The strategies in terms of directness used by Turkish EFL learners are closer to the strategies used by native speakers of Turkish. Both groups made use of more direct strategies than conventionally indirect strategies. Even the structure both groups formed was alike. They performed the same kind of structure which is "Can/Could you please…?" and native speakers of Turkish used "Lütfen yardımcı olabilir misiniz?".

Both sentences have the same meaning. Thus, it can be concluded that the structures Turkish EFL learners used were like the translated version of the structures used in the e-mails of native speakers of Turkish.

The structure native speakers of English utilized was totally different from the structures used by Turkish EFL learners and native speakers of Turkish. Native speakers of English did not make use of can or could to make a request, instead, they employed "I would be grateful if you could." Indeed, it may be possible not to see this structure in the e-mails of Turkish EFL students' e-mails, because in Turkish, people do not use such structures while making request even if the hearer is somebody superior to the speaker. In other words, it sounds weird if a Turkish would utter this sentence. In terms of internal and external modifications, the results showed variations across groups. With respect to internal modifications, as native speakers of Turkish did not use any internal modifications except for one overstater, Turkish EFL learners were not similar to native speakers of Turkish. Hence, Turkish EFL learners were significantly different from the native speakers of Turkish. Even though they were not very similar, Turkish EFL learners and native speakers of English showed certain similarities in the sense that both groups favored downgraders more. However, the use of downgraders for native speakers of English was more than Turkish EFL learners. It can be said that this finding is not surprising because native speakers of English tended to be more polite, thus, they made use of more downgraders, and they avoided using upgraders such as really, as soon as possible as these expressions are not very welcomed by the hearer, and the request may be regarded as more face-threatening. Hence, it can be concluded that in terms of internal modification, Turkish EFL learners were a little similar to native speakers of English, but to a certain extent. Regarding external modifications, three groups share certain similarities with respect to use and amount of the moves. However, more similarities were found between Turkish EFL learners and native speakers of English. Their use and amount of moves are very similar to each other.

With respect to the degree of directness, the findings of this study were in line with Eliçin (2011) who found out that Turkish EFL learners transferred their L1 knowledge into their target language while making a request, and Turkish EFL learners and native speakers of English differed a lot with respect to mood derivables and preparatory, which were used more commonly by native speakers of English. While Turkish EFL learners and native speakers of English indicated significant differences in terms of direct and indirect strategies, Turkish EFL learners and native speakers of Turkish shared similarities, suggesting a transfer from their L1. The results were also parallel with Dendenne (2014)'s study which revealed that Algerian EFL learners made

use of their L1 while making requests in English with respect to the degree of directness. The similarities were very clear regarding the employment of linguistic structure in English which seemed to be word by word translation of their mother tongue.

To conclude, Turkish EFL learners were very similar to native speakers of Turkish in the formation of their request head act. They showed strong similarities in the formation of certain structures as the basis of request. However, the internal and external modification indicated that the phrases Turkish EFL learners utilized were similar to native speakers of English.

6. Conclusion and Suggestions

This research study aimed to investigate the strategies used by Turkish EFL learners, native speakers of English and native speakers of Turkish, and find out in what aspects Turkish EFL learners were similar to or different from two baseline data which are native speakers of English and native speakers of Turkish. The analysis of 80 e-mails revealed that these three groups had both similarities and differences with respect to the degree of directness, the amount of internal and external modifications. Turkish EFL learners and native speakers of Turkish resorted to more direct strategies, while native speakers of English performed more conventionally indirect strategies. None of the participants utilized non-conventionally indirect strategies. What is worth mentioning related to Turkish EFL learners is that Turkish EFL learners favored need, expectation and want statement most, made use of downgraders more when compared to upgraders, please was the most frequently preferred downgrader. What can be concluded related to the native speakers of English is that they utilized expectation, need and want statements most, they utilized three downgraders which are please, consultative devices, and understaters/hedges, and they employed a great deal of supportive moves. They also used a lot of compliments/sweetener by stating "You are the best". What is most striking about native speakers of Turkish is that they did not use any internal modifications except for one overstate performed by only a participant. In terms of the similarities and differences among these groups, Turkish EFL learners are very much like to native speakers of Turkish with respect to the degree of directness. Both groups used direct strategies by employing the same strategies. Their indirect strategies were also were similar, and Turkish EFL learners' indirect strategies seemed to be translated versions of the sentences of native speakers of Turkish. In terms of internal modifications, it is clear that Turkish EFL learners did not resemble native speakers of Turkish, because native speakers of Turkish hardly ever used internal

modifications. However, there seem certain similarities between Turkish EFL learners and native speakers of English. They made use of only three strategies for internal modification to request, and the strategies were the same for both groups though there were small differences between the percentages. In terms of external modifications, though all groups share strong similarities, Turkish EFL learners and native speakers of English share much more similarities. The strategies they used, and even the amounts they utilized these strategies were very much alike. Thus, it can be concluded that Turkish EFL learners resort to their mother tongue while making a request through e-mails in terms of the structure of the request head act which is how the request is carried out. It seems that while they are making requests, they base their request head act choices, structures, on their mother tongue. However, they share strong similarities with native speakers of English in terms of their lexical/phrasal language choices.

The study has certain limitations, thus based on these limitations, some research implications would be provided by the researcher for further research studies. First of all, the number of the participants is limited. With a larger scale study with more participants having different levels of English, richer data could be obtained. Secondly, a limited number of e-mails were collected from the participants and studies that would focus on more and richer data would yield better results. Thirdly, the influence of other variables such as gender, various social powers and social distance, which were not the focus of this study, on learners' request strategies should also be investigated. Finally, this study obtained certain similarities between Turkish EFL learners and two other baseline data. More studies could be carried out to find out to whether such similarities/differences could be the indication of L1 pragmatic transfer or not.

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Appendix A: Situations in English and in Turkish

Situation 1 (in English)

You have not understood a topic covered in one of your previous courses. In a couple of weeks, your mid-term exams are going to start. You asked your questions to your friends, but their answers were not satisfactory enough for you. You need to ask your questions to the professor who is teaching the course. To ask your questions, you should ask him for a convenient time in advance for an appointment.

You are going to write a request e-mail to your professor and ask for an appointment for your questions.

Situation 2 (in English)

Your best friend is a university student in a big city. You and she were classmates in high school, and you are both hard-working students. You are looking for a course book. Even though you looked for it in all bookshops in your city, you could not find it. Now, you want her to look for the book in her city.

You are going to write a request e-mail to your best friend and ask her to look for the book.