

# Pragmatic Failure of Turkish EFL Learners in Request Emails to Their Professors

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## Abstract

In an established convention regarding the e-mail communication setting, the e-mails should be linguistically polite to facilitate interaction by reducing the likelihood of conflicts and preventing pragmatic failure regarding the comprehension of any meaning conveyed by what is stated. These are potential problems for most English-as-a-foreign-language (EFL)/English-as-a-second-language (ESL) learners. Therefore, it is the aim of this study to investigate the issue in Turkish EFL context (i.e. the English request emails of Turkish EFL university students to their non-native professors). Specifically, the extent of directness used and the extent and nature of lexical modification employed by Turkish EFL students to mitigate their requests were examined by using authentic data. The data is a part of natural e-mail corpus of 34 Turkish EFL students' e-mail requests to their two non-native foreign professors over a period of 2 months at English-medium University in Turkey. First, the corpus was coded via coding schemes, (see Appendices A and C) and ranked with a rubric (Appendix B). The results indicated that the Turkish EFL students' e-mails involved a) direct strategies rather than conventional indirect strategies, b) overusing direct questions and 'want' statements, c) underused query preparatory questions, d) insufficient mitigation causing directness and impoliteness, and e) inappropriate greetings and closing statements affecting degree of direction. It is implicated that e-mail instruction (to recipient in various degrees) should be included in EFL books and curricula.

**Keywords:** pragmatic competence, pragmatic failure, EFL learners, request e-mails

## 1. Introduction

E-mail is a widespread and versatile communication channel between students and their professors rather than office-meeting, students can get feedback, clarification and information without visiting professor offices. This has become customary among the faculty members and their students, according to Biesenbach-Lucas (2006), recently "student-faculty interactions at the university level have undergone a shift from face-to-face office hour consultations and brief before/after class meetings to more and more 'cyber-consultations' between students and faculty" (p. 81). Additionally, the researcher also emphasizes in his study, however there are not any conventions for linguistic senses in communication through e-mails. Linguistic politeness is another non-established convention in this setting (Crystal, 2001; Barron, 2000, 2002, 2003). The meaning of linguistic politeness, as stated by Lakoff (1990, p. 34), refers to "a system of interpersonal relations designed to facilitate interaction by minimizing the potential for conflict and confrontation inherent in all human interchanges". It can be said that politeness affects e-mail communication directions. Thomas (1983) emphasized that direct or unrevised e-mails might be sensed impolite and that could cause pragmatic failure that indicates the failure to comprehend any meaning conveyed by what is said especially for those who learn English as a foreign language. Thomas (1983) also describes that pragmatic failure happens once "the pragmatic force mapped on to a linguistic token or structure is systematically different from that normally assigned to it by native speakers" (p. 101). Although there are some universals in language usage concerning politeness, there are still some specific politeness phenomena across cultures (Aridah, 2001).

Many studies related to pragmatic failure have generally been conducted on spoken language (e.g. Blum-Kulka,

1982; Blum-Kulka & Olshtain, 1986; Takahashi, 2010). However, little research has been conducted on written language such as e-mail politeness of students to university authorities (Hardford & Bardovi-Harlig, 1996; Biesenbach-Lucas, 2006, 2007); likewise, little research has investigated the foreign language context, especially the non-native students' request emails to faculty interaction or international correspondences (Biesenbach-Lucas, 2006; Chen, 2006; Bjorge, 2007; Economidou-Kogetsidis, 2011). To our best knowledge, no research has examined the issue of EFL students in Turkish context (i.e. the English request emails sent by Turkish EFL university students to their non-native professors). For this reason, this study aims at bridging this research gap by investigating the extent of directness used and the extent and nature of lexical modification employed by Turkish EFL students to mitigate their requests. Direct or unmodified e-mails may lead to pragmatic failures as they are superficially regarded as impolite or lacking politeness (Thomas, 1983).

E-mail communication has turned its users into digital natives (Prensky, 2001). They have learned e-mail language, which is "dynamic, interactive and of ephemeral nature (Danet, 2001 cited in Economidou-Kogetsidis, 2011, p. 3194). Barron (1998) states that "the most useful telecommunication device is electronic mail ('email'), which conveys messages written at a computer keyboard, again, in near-real time" (p. 134) and "email and contemporary writing, more generally, tend to be characterized by informality of style, a psychological assumption that the medium is ephemeral and a high level of candor" (Baron, 2001, p. 10).

A number of studies show that e-mail has become a crucial element in various settings (e.g. business, international, educational) and academic setting is one of them (Barron, 2000, Gains, 1999; Gatz & Hirt, 2000; Gimenez, 2000; Hardford & Bardovi-Harlig, 1996; Partee, 1996). To investigate e-mail communication of students and professors in academic setting, some studies were carried out (Brotherton, 2001; Poling, 1994; Hassini, 2006). The results indicate that e-mail use has contributed to promoting academic interaction in learning environments; on the contrary Gatz and Hirt (2000) state that benefiting from e-mail communication has no instructive value in academic and learning settings. While this particular finding observed the contribution of e-mail communication on students' learning development issues, nowadays, e-mail emerges as a frequently used type of student-faculty interaction in terms of communication (Danielewicz-Betz, 2013). In other words, the interaction between students and their professors in academia has changed from consultations through brief meetings and office hours before or after class to e-mails (Biesenbach-Lucas, 2006). Typically, in student-to-faculty e-mails, these are more frequent reasons: requesting, forming an opinion, asking for advice or help, talking about assignments, theses, social and informal exchanges of information as well as job search (Bloch, 2002; Waldeck, Orrego, Plax, & Kearney, 1997).

Biesenbach-Lucas (2006) investigates students' e-mail messages to their professors in terms of level of directness. To find out this level, a possible explanation for the e-mail directness, Social Context Cues Theory by Sproull and Kiesler (1986) and also Social Presence Theory by Short, Williams and Christie (1976) come to scene. These theories show social context clues such as age, gender, position and location and lack of visual cues in e-mail communication. Therefore, the absence of these cues leads to pragmatic failure and impoliteness between e-mail writers and the addressees. Biesenbach-Lucas's (2006) findings revealed "a wide stylistic range, from greatly informal to overtly ceremonial" in student-to-faculty e-mail messages (p.83). As exemplified by Biesenbach-Lucas (2006, pp. 83-84), the following samples show a significant difference among messages:

"(1) Pls advise.

(2) Any comments?

(3) I would appreciate your feedback.

(4) I'd now like to request your approval to do a research paper on fossilization"

It can be noted that whereas some students' use informal and casual languages, others follow a more formal and academic language. Another study in this setting was done by Punyanunt-Carter and Hemby (2007). They focused on gender differences regarding student-to-faculty e-mail communication. The results reveal a significant difference with regard to perceptions and attitudes between females and males. While females prefer to use direct language through certain syntactic features and shorthand in their e-mail messages such as 'boss or professor', males are more likely to use emoticons and more conventional indirectness and greater mitigation. According to Biesenbach-Lucas (2006), in the academic setting, faculty members might expect some formality and status congruence among themselves and even in students' e-mail messages.

### *1.1 Requests in E-Mail Communication and Students' Form of Address*

Request is "a directive speech act" (Félix-Brasdefer, 2005; p. 66) and "its illocutionary point being defined as the speaker's effort to get the hearer to do something" (Danielewicz-Betz, 2013; p. 26). When the distance, status

between speaker and hearer/receiver is reduced, directness is legitimate (Danielewicz-Betz, 2013). In terms of student-to-faculty interaction, there are the lower-status interlocutors and the higher-status interlocutors. The interaction (face-to-face) is characterized with kindness, politeness and the synchronicity nature between interlocutors. On the other hand, the lack of synchronicity, that is an asynchronous environment and monologue style, might affect the quality of kindness and politeness. Some studies have focused on this effect in the non-face-to-face setting: a number of them investigated the link between e-mail communication and oral discourse in the second language (L2) learning (e.g. Chapman, 1997; Warschauer, 1996), whereas others examined the link between non-native speakers' e-mail exchanges with native speakers and assisting L2 learning (Chen, 2001; Li, 2000). Requests in students' authentic e-mail messages and the way of addressing faculty were also focused on regarding pragmatic perspectives in this field; however, few studies searched how non-native students express their requests in an L2 through emails and their way of addressing their professors in university setting (Biesenbach-Lucas, 2007; Danet, 2001; Danielewicz-Betz, 2013; Economidou-Kogetsidis, 2011; Hardford & Bardovi-Harlig, 1996).

First, in 1996, Hardford and Bardovi-Harlig investigated how requesting happens in the e-mail exchange from students to faculty. The researchers investigated the perlocutionary effect; for example, the impact of an utterance upon its addressee (Ford, 2003) of request e-mails of native and non-native graduate students' sent to two professors. The level of imposition, linguistic form and content of e-mails were examined. The results showed that non-native students' requests did not include the use of mitigation (i.e., politeness aspects) which negatively affected perlocution. They used, in general, individual inquiries and frames rather than institutional claims; for instance, formulating the request as "I need" instead of "the department requires", as in this sentence: "I need your memo saying like my outside minor department does not require an examination" (a non-native student) (p. 57). Similarly, Chen (2001) focused on native and non-native students' e-mail compositions. The researcher studied with Taiwanese and American graduate students, they requested for a special consideration, appointment, and recommendation letter. On the contrary, Chen (2001) investigated the compared email requests made to the faculty by Taiwanese students (NNSs) and American students (NSs). Specifically, it was tried to identify what request email strategies were used by the two distinct cultural groups in the academic setting; analyses were made based on culture-specific notions of politeness and students' socio-cultural identities reflected in their e-mails. The comparison was made through comparing general e-mail textual features of the openings and closings, information sequencing of requestive events, linguistic realizations of requestive acts. It was found that both groups preferred query preparatory strategies (e.g. 'Can you/could you') and want statements (e.g. 'I want/would like to') but with varying amounts of lexical and syntactic adjustments. The native students used more lexico-syntactic adjustments which made their requests more indirect and polite. Further, discourse style of requests was demonstrated in the institutional e-mail requests.

In the studies of Biesenbach-Lucas (2004) and Chen (2006), native speakers were also found to use more syntactic modifiers while non-natives opted for more external modifications through lexical downgraders, such as the marker "please".

Danielewicz-Betz (2013) only focused on non-native speakers. In her recent study, she investigated the effects of the lack of clear guidelines and (mis)use of status-incongruent and pragmatic markers on English request e-mails written by German, Japanese and Arabian students. The researcher provided a corpus consisted of 1200 student-to-faculty e-mails, she used pragmatic analysis of speech acts with their illocutionary force, and their effect on the perlocution (receiver) has been researched. The author concluded that the lack of pragmatic competence was found in all three groups of students, the students were not aware of the role that their e-mail messages play in creating an impression on faculty and on the pragmatic failure occurred consequently (Thomas, 1983). Economidou-Kogetsidis (2011) investigated how Greek students make e-requests to faculty in university with English-medium instruction. The author analyzed salutations, the degrees of directness, and lexical/syntactic modifications used by non-native students. The results were similar to Danielewicz-Betz's (2013) findings; e-mail languages were impolite and characterized by significant directness causing pragmatic failure.

Even though previous studies reveal that similar findings on the student-to-faculty requests interaction via email in relation to degree of directness, syntactic/lexical modification, status-(in)congruence, pragmatic markers in academic setting, there has been no study about this issue carried out in Turkey setting. To fill this gap, the researcher has focused on the following research questions: How direct and what amount of lexical modification is used in e-requests of undergraduate level Turkish EFL students?

## 2. Method

### 2.1 E-mail Data

The data for the present study consist of authentic materials; it is a part of natural e-mail corpus of 34 Turkish students' (who were studying at EFL education) e-mail requests to their two non-native foreign professors over a period of 2 months at English-medium University in Turkey. The e-requests concerned a number of various data, such as feedback on an assignment, requests for an appointment, information about previous or upcoming lecture (any handouts, missing class, deadlines of some tasks, lecture notes etc.). Given that natural e-mails were used, the author did not define a specific request topic. All the e-mails were thorough and intrinsic requests, not follow-up requests.

To avoid ethical issues and preserve confidentiality, it was explained that students' and faculty members' e-mails would be used only for this study and no personal information would be disclosed.

### 2.2 Participant Characteristics

All participants were Turkish undergraduate students of English language at an English-medium university. Due to the data collection method and procedure, the researcher did not focus on students' age and their English language proficiency. However, with regard to the nature of the institution, the students' age range between 17 and 25 and from intermediate level of English to advance.

The e-mail receivers were two female lecturers, who were between 38 and 50 years old. They are non-native speakers of English with a doctorate degree and full-time English teaching lecturers at the same faculty (native-like proficiency level in English). They had a formal communication style with students only during lectures and in office hours. Therefore, it could be noted that degree of directness and status-distance were established automatically between students and professors.

### 2.3 Sampling Procedures

To collect the data, first of all, the concerned faculty members were contacted and asked to participate and share their students' emails for the current study along with explaining the details of the study and also ensuring them about ethical confidentiality. The professors also informed their students about this study, after taking students' permission, all the e-mail data were stored.

### 2.4 Research Design

The next stage consisted of creating e-request corpus (moves of students' e-requests), coding the corpus via coding schemes, (see Appendices A and C) and ranking it with a rubric (see Appendix B). The scoring rubric and e-request moves were adapted and integrated from Baugh's (2011) and Ho's (2011) studies. It shows how the author could analyze students' e-requests according to their statements, and the scoring rubric measured EFL students' e-requests on a nine-point scale in each of the same facets with the moves of student request scheme.

## 3. Results

### 3.1 Degree of Directness in Students' English Request E-mails

Some students' e-request lexical modification moves and English request e-mail for information were analyzed to explore degrees of directness. The findings indicated that the students employed largely indirect strategies in English e-mail requests for information.

Table 1. Summary of e-request lexical-modification features

	Dear +FN*, [no greeting], <i>sharing personal info</i> , <i>Attending to Recipient's Status</i> , <i>Elaborating</i> , <i>Closing Thanks</i> , <i>Sign off</i>
E-mail	"Dear Professor (First Name)
1	<i>I am sorry about missing your last class. Unfortunately, I was unable to attend due to a family emergency. Meanwhile, I don't want to miss out on any subjects dealt within your course. Therefore, I'd appreciate your advice on which topics I should focus on while studying. Do you advise me a specific subject? Thank you for your time, [student's name]"</i>

E-mail 2	[Zero form of address], [no greeting], <i>Providing Background Info, Justifying.</i> “I have an excuse. I’m sorry, I couldn’t attend the last class because of my illness. Only I need the notes. I asked my friends but they did not help me. Do you post me the notes as soon as possible?” [no student’s name]”
E-mail 3	[Zero form of address], [no greeting], Requesting, Providing Progress Info, Closing “My name is..... from your English Language Literature 406 class. I hope all is well. Can you do a favor for me please? I need some materials or some resources papers for my thesis. Can you please help me at that point to inform me in which way I should take a role if you have time? The subject of my thesis is: <i>The Role of Age on Second Language Acquisition (SLA)</i> . Best wishes”
E-mail 4	[Zero form of address], [no greeting], Justifying, [no closing] “Excuse me sir, I need notes. I asked my classmates but they didn’t give me. Do you tell me where can I find them or if u have them, I want to take copies” [no student’s name]
E-mail 5	Addressing (Dr. LN**), Providing Background Info, Requesting, Attending to Recipient’s Status, Closing Thanks “Dr. [professor’ last name] As I am studying on your final exam, there are some points that I need to inquire. Could you please kindly explain (.....)? I am not sure if I got it correctly, and perhaps I clarify it by consulting you. Would it be wise to focus on this subject or should I concentrate more on (.....)? I’d appreciate any suggestions. Thanks”

\*FN = First Name.

\*\*LN = Last Name.

Table 1 summarizes moves of internal modification of some e-mail requests using lexical downgrading and intensifiers. The findings showed that the students used frequently bare of any lexical modification for downgrading the effect of the request (zero marking) in their request e-mails (see e-mail examples 2, 3, 4). The second finding concerned “consultative devices-Could you...? Can you...?” This form was found to be the most commonly used as a query preparatory mitigation which was made in 35.5% of the students’ request e-mails. “Subjectivisers-I’m sorry..., Unfortunately... and downtoners-therefore, perhaps, only, meanwhile” were the second most preferred mitigation that were employed in 26.5% of cases. The marker ‘please’ was the less commonly used mitigation as it was used in 5.5% of the students’ e-mail requests.

The rest of the lexical downgradings were very rarely used, “understates/hedges, phatic relational forms”. Further, the students employed several intensifiers (e.g. ‘I’d appreciate’, ‘as soon as possible’) to reflect the gladness and urgency of their requests (see e-mail examples 1 and 2).

Table 2 shows the analysis of Turkish students’ e-request for information. The findings indicated the following quantitative results. According to this result, the majority of the students employed a great deal of direct strategies in their e-mail request for information.

Table 2. Degree of requestive directness: request for information (N=34)

Types of Requesting	Direct questions	14/34 (41.17%)
	Imperatives	0
	Performative	3/34(8.82%)
	Want statement	9/34 (26.47%)
	Need Statement	3/34 (8.82%)
Indirect request (conventional)	Query preparatory	5/34 (14.70%)

The total percentage of direct requests for action was 41.17% made up of ‘direct questions’, 8.82% ‘performatives’, 26.47% ‘want statements’, and 8.82% ‘need statements’; on the other hand, indirect requests consisted of ‘query preparatory’ 14.70%. To sum up, the great majority of the e-mail requests used a direct

strategy (e.g. 85.30%) and 14.70% were conventionally indirect requests.

Table 3. Distribution of the moves in the students' emails

Moves	Percentage
greeting/addressing	32.35%
the subjectivisers-reasons and justification	52.94%
closing thanks	35.29%
e-mail closing markers	23.52%
sign off.	17.64%
The zero form of addressing	33.5%
'incorrect academic title + LN or FN	38.23%

Table 3 shows the percentage of the moves used in the students' emails. While only 32.35% of the e-mails involved a greeting/addressing, the majority of students' e-mails employed the subjectivisers-reasons and justification with 52.94%. Mostly, the e-mails included closing thanks (35.29%) and e-mail closing markers (23.52%). Only 17.64% of the students wrote their names as a sign off. A further interesting finding concerned the use of addressing (Dear/Dr./Sir/ Professor) after the form of greeting. The participants frequently used the zero form of addressing in majority of their e-mails (33.5%). Some of the students also used 'incorrect academic title + LN or FN' (38.23%).

#### 4. Discussion

This study tried to examine English e-requests by Turkish EFL learners to find out the degree of directness and the amount of lexical modification in the requests used by the Turkish (NNS of English) undergraduate students in their English e-mails to two of their professors (The professors are not Turkish, but they are non-native English speakers). The present study revealed that the common tendency of the students' e-requests appealed to direct strategies, with direct questions and want statement being the most preferred sub-strategies. The findings are in line with the results of Biesenbach-Lucas's (2006), Chen's (2006), Danielewicz-Betz's (2013), Economidou-Kogetsidis's (2011) studies, which similarly found that non-native students tended to employ direct strategies and sub-strategies such as direct questions, want statements and mitigations (i.e. only, perhaps, I'm sorry, unfortunately etc.). However, even though imperatives were one of the most frequently used statements in some studies (Biesenbach-Lucas, 2006; Chen's, 2006; Danielewicz-Betz, 2013; Economidou-Kogetsidis, 2011), Turkish EFL students did not resort to use imperatives in the current study. Economidou-Kogetsidis (2011) states that non-native students use 'imperative' with 'please' added; however the use of imperatives always sounds harsh and irritates even when a 'please' is added. In addition, according to Bardovi-Harlig's (1996), the marker 'please' does not serve as a sufficient downgrader to soften the force of direct statements. The present study also revealed that the marker 'please' was employed with 'query preparatory' questions, for instance "Could you please kindly explain ... ? Can you please help me at that point to inform me...?"

Hartford and Bardovi-Harlig (1996) state that the addressees/recipients (professors) do not acknowledge these pragmatic infelicities, significantly the imperative forms and direct questions. Therefore, the e-mails which were written directly, were evaluated and interpreted as negative and impolite by the professors. This result is in line with Danielewicz-Betz (2013), who similarly stated direct e-mail languages were impolite and characterized significant directness causing pragmatic failure. Another reason for pragmatic failure was explained by Economidou-Kogetsidis (2011) and additionally was revealed in the current study. The majority of the e-requests were bare of any lexical modifications for downgradings, this incompetent usage of lexical modification moves was also the cause of pragmatic failure.

The present study further found that the students mostly used giving reasons, justifications and explanations for their e-mail excuse, information or whatever it was. Some examples below were chosen to show moves of e-mail requests.

... "I missed the last lecture because of a family emergency" ...

... "I make a research for my thesis and I need some specific source about my subject."...

... "I am sorry about missing your last class. Unfortunately, I was unable to attend due to a family emergency."...

...“I couldn’t attend the last class because of my illness.”...

Greeting/Addressing–Closing thanks/Closing also represent and increase degree of directness. According to Brown and Levinson (1987), ‘greetings’ usually show a ‘positive politeness strategy’. The results of this study showed that e-mails were largely employed few greetings and few closings. This politeness strategy has a positive function for softening request, but the Turkish students of the current study ignored it and it decreased degree of directness.

The present study aims to investigate the degree of directness used and the amount and type of lexical modification employed by Turkish students to soften their requests. According to the results of this study, the Turkish EFL students’ e-mails were typically modified by significant directness, the students used more direct strategies than conventional indirect strategies. In other words, while direct questions and want statements were overused, query preparatory questions were underused. The ignorance of degree of direction and insufficient mitigation usage caused directness and impoliteness. Additionally, inappropriate greetings and closing statements or omission of these markers also affected the degree of direction.

To sum up, the general results indicated that e-mails to authorities, in this setting, ‘from students to professors’ were mostly done directly. In other words, it seemed status-incompatible and impolite. The results of this study suggest that e-mail instruction (to recipients in various degrees) should be included in EFL books and curricula. Additionally, non-native students should have interaction with people of target language and culture and acquire politeness settings.

The limitation addressed in this study is that the data only involved non-native students’ English request e-mails and no comparison was investigated with native speakers’ e-mails in the same setting. Additionally, Turkish students’ Turkish e-mails could be used as baseline data as well to compare their English request e-mails. Further research is also needed to be carried out on professor side of the e-mails to see how professors attitudinize the direct or impolite students’ e-requests.

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## Appendix A

### Moves of Student Request Email-Lexical modification (Adapted from Baugh, 2011, Blum-Kulka, 1989)

Move	Code	Purpose
Addressing form of address	[ADR]	Start email, address recipient. Realized with greeting + name "hello, dear.."
Acknowledging	[ACK]	Thank teacher for what they have done "thanks for the article..., please..."
Referencing Earlier Communication	[REC]	Refer to previous email or conversation "following our conversation..."
Providing Background Info	[PBI]	Give information 'around' the request, allowing student to make request more easily. Can be realized through attached drafts/ outlines, etc. "I would like to..."
Requesting	[REQ]	Ask for something (main purpose of email) "I would be grateful , Could you..." (Consultative devices)
Elaborating	[ELA]	Give additional qualifying info about request "possibly, perhaps, at all, just, rather, maybe, therefore" (Downtoners)
Justifying	[JUS]	Give reasons for making request " I wonder, I would like to ask..."( Subjectivisers)
Providing Progress Info	[PPI]	Keep teacher abreast of student's current and future academic work
Phatic Relational	[PHR]	Attend to relationship with teacher. Often realized through enquiring about health, holidays, etc. "I hope you're feeling"
Sharing Personal Info	[SPI]	Explain student's feelings, personal situation "I am so happy." (Subjectivisers)
Attending to Recipient's Status	[ARS]	Acknowledge teacher's issues (often realized through apologizing) , appeal to teacher's status "I'm sorry..., Unfortunately.." (Subjectivisers)
Closing Thanks	[CLT]	Show gratitude, end message " Thank you"
Closing	[CLO]	End email, show politeness " Best wishes, regards, sincerely..."
Sign Off	[SOF]	Give student's name

**Appendix B****Scoring rubric for e-requests (Adapted from Baugh, 2011; Ho, 2011)**

Subject (heading)		SCORE
	Clear	1
	Too long	0.5
	Absent	0
Addressing (form of address)		
	Correct and appropriate name form, greeting	1
	Incorrect name form/ inappropriate greeting	0.5
	Absent	0
Request Appropriacy		
	Appropriate to student role	1
	Somewhat appropriate	0.5
	Absent	0
Request of action		
	Receiver can directly act on request	1
	Receiver can act on some of request/ answer somewhat	0.5
	Receiver cannot act on request - needs clarification	0
Succinctness		
	Succinct	1
	Slightly wordy/repetitive	0.5
	Needlessly wordy/repetitive	0
Tone (Politeness)		
	Politeness, level of formality appropriate to S/T relationship	1
	Somewhat appropriate to S/T relationship	0.5
	Inappropriate to S/T relationship	0
Language		
	Very minor or no mistakes	1
	A few mistakes or unclear phrasings	0.5
	Many mistakes or unclear phrasings	0
Closing Phrase (thanks)		
	Present	1
	Absent	0
Sender's Name (Student's name)		
	Present	1
	Absent	0

**Appendix C****Degree of directness–coding categories for e-requests for information (Adapted from Economidou-Kogetsidis, 2011)**

Directness level	Request strategies	Examples
Most direct	Direct questions	-Did you get my project?
	Elliptical	-Any news? -Please let me know if you have to withdraw me from class.
	Mood derivable	
	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.

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