



REPUBLIC OF TÜRKİYE
ÇANAKKALE ONSEKİZ MART UNIVERSITY
SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES

DEPARTMENT OF FOREIGN LANGUAGE EDUCATION

INVESTIGATION OF PALESTINIAN AND TURKISH
EFL LEARNERS' PRAGMATIC COMPETENCE
IN REQUEST AND APOLOGY SPEECH ACTS

PhD DISSERTATION

ADHAM MOHAMED ABUHHATTAB

SUPERVISOR
ASSOC. PROF. DR. SEVİM İNAL

ÇANAKKALE – 2025



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T.C.
ÇANAKKALE ONSEKİZ MART ÜNİVERSİTESİ
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Adham Mohamed ABUHHATTAB tarafından Doç. Dr. Sevim İNAL yönetiminde hazırlanan ve **20/01/2025** tarihinde aşağıdaki jüri karşısında sunulan "**Investigation of Palestinian and Turkish EFL Learners' Pragmatic Competence in Request and Apology Speech Acts**" başlıklı çalışma, Çanakkale Onsekiz Mart Üniversitesi Lisansüstü Eğitim Enstitüsü **Yabancı Diller Eğitimi Anabilim Dalı**'nda **DOKTORA TEZİ** olarak oy birliği ile kabul edilmiştir.

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ETHICAL DECLARATION

In this thesis, which I prepared in accordance with the Thesis Writing Rules of Çanakkale Onsekiz Mart University Graduate Education Institute, I obtained the data, information, and the related documents according to the academic and ethical rules, and I strictly followed scientific, ethical and moral rules in presenting all the information, evaluations and results. I have cited all the works by making appropriate references, and I have not made any changes in the data used. I declare that the work I have presented in this thesis is original, otherwise I undertake and declare that I accept all the loss of rights that may arise against me.

ADHAM MOHAMED ABUHHATTAB

20/01/2025

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Curiosity is the hidden magic that ignites the mind and fuels passion for achievements. Obstacles are created to challenge our patience, persistence, and solidity. My academic journey has not followed a normal path, including crucial challenges in being away from my family at the beginning of my journey in 2019, then witnessing with them one of the most genocidal acts of violence against humanity, the Israeli war against Gaza in 2023. Having to escape death from one city to another while carrying my fears, concerns, and dreams will be a bloody scene saved in my mind forever, yet I believe that countries are built by knowledge rather than surrendering to ignorance.

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ADHAM MOHAMED ABUHHATTAB

Çanakkale, January 2025

ÖZET

İNGİLİZCEYİ YABANCI DİL OLARAK ÖĞRENEN FİLİSTİNLİ VE TÜRK ÖĞRENCİLERİN EDİMBİLİM YETİLERİNİN SORU SORMA VE ÖZÜR DİLEME SÖZEYLEMLERİ AÇISINDAN İNCELENMESİ

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Bu araştırma, İngilizce istek ve özür ifadeleri üretiminde İngilizceyi yabancı dil olarak öğrenen bireylerin edimbilim yeterliklerini incelemeyi ve pragmatik yeterlikleri arasındaki olası ilişkiyi belirlemeyi amaçlamaktadır. Çalışma ayrıca, Filistin'deki AlAqsa Üniversitesi ile Türkiye'deki Çanakkale Onsekiz Mart Üniversitesi (ÇOMÜ) öğrencilerinin istek ve özür ifadelerinin üretiminde kullandıkları stratejileri, doğrudanlık ve dolaylılık açısından belirlemeyi ve karşılaştırmayı hedeflemiştir.

Çalışma, aynı zamanda sosyal güç, sosyal mesafe ve rica ifadelerinin, İngilizceyi yabancı dil olarak öğrenen bireylerin istek ve özür ifadelerini dile getirme biçimleri üzerindeki olası etkilerini incelemeyi amaçlamaktadır. Araştırmacı, Karma yöntemlerin sıralı açıklayıcı araştırma desenini kullanmıştır. Çalışma örneklemini, AlAqsa Üniversitesi'nden 153 ve Çanakkale Onsekiz Mart Üniversitesi'nden 125 İngilizce öğretmen adayından oluşmaktadır.

Veri toplama araçları, çoktan seçmeli söylem tamamlama testi (ÇSSTT), yazılı söylem tamamlama testi (YSTT) ve değerlendirme ölçeğinden oluşmuştur. Bulgular, her iki grup arasında en sık kullanılan istek stratejisinin geleneksel olarak dolaylı (dinleyici odaklı) strateji olduğunu, buna karşın, en sık kullanılan özür stratejisi eyleyici güç belirten araç (Illocutionary Force Indicating Device) olduğunu göstermiştir.

İki bağımsız örneklem t-testinin sonuçları, birinci sınıf ve son sınıf öğrencilerinin istek ve özür ifadelerinde pragmatik ve sosyopragmatik yeterlikleri arasında anlamlı farklılıklar olduğunu, ancak Türkiye bağlamında erkek ve kadın öğrenciler arasında bir fark bulunmadığını fakat Filistin bağlamındaki sonuçlarda farklılık gösterdiğini ortaya koymuştur. Son olarak, her iki bağlamda da istek ve özür ifadelerinde pragmatik ve sosyopragmatik yeterlik arasında güçlü bir korelasyon olduğu saptanmıştır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Edimsel Yeterlilik; Pragmatik Yeterlilik; Sosyopragmatik Yeterlilik; İstek; Özür; Dolaylılık



ABSTRACT

INVESTIGATION OF PALESTINIAN AND TURKISH EFL LEARNERS' PRAGMATIC COMPETENCE IN REQUEST AND APOLOGY SPEECH ACTS

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The present research seeks to investigate EFL learners' pragmatic competence in producing English request and apology speech acts and identify the potential correlation between pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic competence, besides identifying and comparing the strategies employed by EFL learners at Alaqsa University in Palestine and Çanakkale Onsekiz Mart University (ÇOMÜ) in Türkiye when producing English requests and apologies in terms of (in)directness. Moreover, it aims at investigating the potential influence of social power, social distance, and rank of imposition on EFL learners' way of expressing requests and apologies.

The researcher adopted the mixed-methods sequential explanatory research design. The study sample consisted of 153 students from Alaqsa University and 125 from ÇOMÜ. Data collection tools consisted of a multiple-choice discourse completion test (MDCT), written discourse completion test (WDCT), and rating scale.

The results of the two-independent samples t-test showed that there were significant differences between freshmen and senior students' pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic competence in producing English requests and apologies in the Turkish context, which deviated from the results in the Palestinian context, and there was a strong correlation between pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic competence in the two contexts. Findings indicated that the most frequently utilized request strategy among the two groups was the *conventionally indirect (hearer-based)*, and the illocutionary force-indicating device (*IFID*).

was the most employed apology strategy. Finally, findings indicated that the influence of social power, distance, and imposition in the participants' ways of expressing requests and apologies varied in the two contexts.

Keywords: Pragmatic competence; Pragmalinguistic competence; Sociopragmatic competence; Request; Apology; Indirectness



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SYMBOLS AND ABBREVIATIONS

EFL	EFL English as a Foreign Language
TEFL	TEFL Teaching English as a Foreign Language
ESL	English as a Second Language
ELT	English Language Teaching
ÇOMÜ	Çanakkale Onsekiz Mart University
WDCT	Written Discourse Completion Test
MDCT	Multiple-choice Discourse Completion Test
SPSS	Statistical Package for Social Sciences
IFIDs	Illocutionary Force Indicating Devices
FTAs	Face-Threatening Acts
P	Social Power
D	Social Distance
R	Rank of Imposition

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Language learning and acquisition are not centered around possessing and mastering linguistic components only. Although important, possessing grammar, vocabulary, and other linguistic components cannot guarantee effective communication because language is not a stand-alone product but rather a highly context-bound issue. Thus, the context in which the language is used affects the track of communication, and the whole message is vulnerable to being ruined if the context (which encompasses both linguistic and non-linguistic variables) is ignored. Many interlanguage pragmatic studies indicated that being linguistically competent does not guarantee effective communication, and even English as a foreign language (EFL) and English as a second language (ESL) speakers who have high English proficiency levels still have insufficient pragmatic competence and encounter problems when communicating with native speakers (Arghamiri and Sadighi, 2013; Banikalef and Maros, 2013).

The tendency towards placing more emphasis on the pragmatic competence of EFL and ESL learners evolved naturally as a response to the discussion of linguistic competence, advocated by Chomsky (1965), and communicative competence, advocated by Hymes (1972). Pragmatic competence is defined as the user's ability to use and interpret language in context and to use language for communicating different purposes (Brock and Nagasaka, 2005). According to Thomas (1983), pragmatic competence refers to the speaker's ability to use language effectively for achieving specific purposes and understanding the language in the context where it appears.

The significance of pragmatic competence can be realized by understanding what pragmatic competence comprises. According to Leech (1983), pragmatic competence includes pragmalinguistics and sociopragmatics. The latter is concerned with the role of social context in affecting 1. the linguistic resources employed by language users, 2. the interpersonal meanings conveyed, and 3. the actions taken in a situation (Kasper 1992, 2001), while the former is concerned with the available linguistic resources used to achieve communicative acts (Kasper and Rose, 2002).

According to Thomas (1983), pragmatic competence comprises two distinctive components, namely pragmalinguistic competence and sociopragmatic competence. The latter focuses on a language user's ability to perform and realize utterances with reference to specific illocutionary forces with careful consideration of the social context rules. On the other hand, pragmalinguistic competence focuses on making and understanding an utterance under a specific illocutionary force.

Similarly, Bachman (1990) designates pragmatic competence as involving illocutionary competence and sociolinguistic competence. The latter (termed sociopragmatic competence according to Thomas) focuses on performing and interpreting speech acts by considering the features of the social context in which the language appears, while illocutionary competence (termed pragmalinguistic competence according to Thomas) focuses on the ability of a language user to perform and realize speech acts.

As far as effective communication is concerned in EFL contexts, language learners need to develop their ability of producing and interpreting language according to the context in which it is used to achieve communicative purposes and avoid communication breakdowns. In fact, pragmatic competence is an overlooked topic in research and practice in teaching English as a second language (TESL) and teaching English as a foreign language (TEFL) context (Crandall and Basturkmen, 2004; Alco'n and Safont, 2001). Thus, pragmatic competence imposes itself as an urgent need for language learners, and it should be integrated as an essential part with linguistic competence in the language teaching process, especially when producing and realizing speech acts.

Speech acts are defined by Dawson and Phelan (2016) as “actions that are performed only through using language” (p.710). The theory of speech acts was introduced by Austin (1962) and developed by several scholars, e.g., Searle (1979), Leech (1983), etc. It represents a new perspective on language that highlights the relationship between language and action (Baktir, 2013).

According to Fauziati (2016), the major focus of speech act theory is the interlocutors' real meaning of their utterances rather than the language they use to deliver the utterances. Halupka-Rešetar (2014) stated that the speech act theory is about the speaker's

ability to fulfill certain actions by the language and the hearer's ability to grasp the intended meaning of the discourse. Learning how to use speech acts appropriately is essential for EFL learners to facilitate a better understanding of functional needs (Derakhshan and Arabmofrad, 2018); consequently, language users can communicate effectively.

According to Searle's classification (1979) and Cohen's (1996), there are five categories of speech acts (representatives, directives, commissives, expressives, and declarations). Request and apology speech acts fall under different categories. Falling under the "directive" category, requests are widespread speech acts both in everyday communication and in language learning classes, especially for new learners (Alzeebaree and Yavuz, 2017). On the other hand, apologies are classified under the "expressive" category. Jucker and Taavitsainen (2008) consider apology as one of the most important expressive speech acts.

According to Levinson (1983), speech acts can be performed either directly or indirectly. Yule (1996) stated that in direct speech acts, the meaning of the act is directly related to the utterance or the actual semantic meaning; in other words, there is a direct association between the utterance and the function; however, there is no direct connection between the structures produced and the functions in indirect speech acts. According to Leech (1983), indirectness is a widely used strategy in conversation and is closely related to politeness. Leech states that "the more indirect an utterance is, the more polite it is" (p. 13).

Speech acts are not independent of their own: the production of speech acts is influenced by several social variables, including social power (P), social distance (D), and rank of imposition (R). Brown and Levinson, who introduced what is known as politeness theory (1978, 1987), emphasize that social power, social distance, and imposition are the most influential factors that affect the speakers' linguistic choices, particularly in request speech acts (Brown and Levinson, 1978). These factors are considered universal factors; however, their manifestations differ from one speech community to another (Brown and Levinson, 1987; Clyne, 1994; Morand, 1995).

Another variable that is claimed to influence students' way of expressing requests and apologies is gender. Gender is a very exclusive variable, and the decision of whether it affects the language users' way of apology is still debatable, even in contexts that share high levels of similarity, as this issue is more pertinent to the idiosyncratic cultural norms rather than the linguistic levels of proficiency. Some studies argued that females' speech differs from that of males (Holmes, 1995; Macaulay, 2001; Coates, 2013; Ja'afreh, 2023; Alzebaree and Yazuv, 2017; Karagöz and İşisağ, 2019; Abu Humeid, 2013; Batainah and Batainah, 2008); however, this issue needs further investigation.

The current research is expected to fill a gap of knowledge through reflecting on how ELT programs contribute to enabling EFL students possess essential competence, namely pragmatic competence, besides identifying the potential correlation between the two components of pragmatic competence, i.e., pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic competence. Furthermore, the current study contributes to providing knowledge on how cross-cultural variables (social power, social distance, and rank of imposition, and gender) influence ELT students' way of expressing request and apology speech acts in terms of (in)directness, which is a totally ignored issue in research and practice in Palestinian context.

This research devotes greater attention to study two different EFL contexts in Palestine and Türkiye, namely Alaqsa University (Palestine) and ÇOMÜ (Türkiye) Despite the existence of some limited similarities between the two English language teaching (ELT) programs (e.g., the two countries teach English as a foreign language, and the two universities offer a four-year ELT program), there are a number of differences related to students' cultural backgrounds, the academic staff, the academic plans, etc. Additionally, the current research explores two divergent levels, i.e., freshmen and senior students, as the comparison between these two divergent levels is expected to reveal where ELT programs stand.

1.1. Statement of the Problem

The current research addresses a number of serious problems in EFL contexts in Palestine and Türkiye, and it seeks to bridge a gap of knowledge related to the research topic under scrutiny. Firstly, through reviewing the outlines of the English language courses in

ELT department programs at the two universities, the researcher found that developing students' pragmatic competence was notably an ignored objective, and rarely was it clearly focused on in most of the related courses. For example, pragmatic competence at Alaqsa University was introduced as a subsidiary topic in very few courses (e.g., Introduction to Linguistics, and Selective Linguistic Topics), and it was not introduced as an objective or a skill to be developed among ELT students. Similarly, at ÇOMÜ pragmatic competence was introduced marginally in courses such as Linguistics (2), and Verbal Communication courses, but again there was not a single objective addressing the need for developing students' pragmatic competence which is a serious issue to be considered and highlighted.

Secondly, ELT programs at the two universities stated that developing students' communication skills is one of the major objectives of the ELT programs, yet it is obvious that more emphasis is devoted for developing students' linguistic ability at the expense of their pragmatic competence ability, which will not guarantee proper communication and can expose EFL students to conversation breakdowns and miscommunication. According to Rose (1999), the problem of placing more emphasis on linguistic competence at the expense of pragmatic competence appears in EFL contexts; consequently, the opportunities of providing EFL learners with the tools to achieve pragmatic competence are limited.

In the same vein, many interlanguage pragmatic studies indicated that being linguistically competent does not guarantee effective communication, and even EFL and ESL speakers who have high English proficiency levels still have insufficient pragmatic competence and encounter problems when communicating with native speakers (Arghamiri and Sadighi, 2013; Banikalef and Maros, 2013).

Thirdly, researchers indicated that flouting pragmatic rules in a given language could lead to more serious undesirable effects than doing so grammatically (Eslami-Rasekh, 2005; Murray, 2010). Thus, it is essential to increase the awareness of pragmatics instruction in EFL classes and call teachers' attention to the importance of placing much focus on the two components of pragmatic competence, namely pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic competence, as pragmatic competence is ignored in EFL contexts when compared to other competencies (Crandall and Basturkmen, 2004; Alco'n and Safont, 2001).

Fourthly, identifying EFL learners' ways of expressing requests and apologies in terms of (in)directness and investigating the potential influence of socio-cultural variables, i.e., social power, social distance, rank of imposition, and gender on freshmen and senior students' selection of these strategies can contribute to the body of knowledge that tackles EFL learners' development on many levels, including the cultural level and can draw EFL learners' attention to the importance of considering the context of discourse, which is very crucial to the meaning.

Güneş and Ortaçtepe (2019) asserted that the realization of speech acts is a culturally bound issue that is highly dependent on the speakers' own culture. Thus, EFL and ESL learners need to learn how to properly use speech acts, i.e., expressions of apology, requests, refusals, invitations, etc., in order to communicate effectively in the target language (Derakhshan and Arabmofrad, 2018).

Finally, the researcher has done a thorough review of related literature and found that EFL learners' realization and production of English request and apology speech acts, EFL learners' pragmatic competence, and interlanguage pragmatics were absent topics in research and practice in the Palestinian context, which motivates the researcher not only to contribute in this regard but also to link the present investigation to another EFL context, i.e., the Turkish context in an attempt to provide in-depth understanding of the present research topic from different cultural perspectives and also to encourage comparative studies with the Turkish context in which there is scarcity of research efforts related to the current research topic.

1.2. Significance and Purpose of the Study

Investigating the current topic imposes itself as a serious concern that should be addressed thoroughly. The current study holds considerable significance that is valuable for a number of sectors, including researchers, ELT university programs, ELT students and lecturers, and policies of TEFL. Firstly, the current research bridges a gap of knowledge in the EFL contexts in Palestine and Türkiye. There is a scarcity of knowledge in the literature related to EFL students' pragmatic competence in producing English request and apology speech acts and the influence of socio-cultural variables on students' ways of expressing

these speech acts are overlooked areas of research (Crandall and Basturkmen, 2004; Alco'n and Safont, 2001; Rose, 1999).

Secondly, the current research work can contribute to the development of ELT programs in Palestine and Türkiye through spotting the need of including more courses that are expected to develop students' pragmatic competence. Unfortunately, through reviewing the course outlines in the two ELT programs at Alaqsa University and ÇOMÜ, the researcher found that the two ELT programs place more focus on courses such as grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, translation, etc., at the expense of pragmatics-related courses. However, Pragmatics is not even introduced as an elective course, which indicates that other courses are prioritized over it. Additionally, pragmatic competence was marginally introduced in very few courses, e.g., linguistics, and Verbal Communication, and developing students' pragmatic competence was not clearly stated as an objective to be achieved.

Thirdly, the current study can contribute to raising ELT lecturers' awareness of the crucial role of pragmatics instruction (whether implicitly or explicitly) in EFL classes; consequently, they can adopt teaching strategies that can help students to communicate more effectively and enable them to enhance their pragmatic competence level through focusing on the proper realization and production of speech acts. According to Phuong (2006), if learners' pragmatic competence is sufficient, then learners are expected to produce and comprehend speech acts properly, and communication breakdowns are less likely to appear (2006). In the same vein, Zayed (2014) emphasized that teaching different forms of speech acts for EFL learners is significant because it can enhance learners' ability to communicate properly and smoothly.

Fourthly, this study is expected to be beneficial for ELT students because it can contribute to raising their awareness of the importance of developing their pragmatic competence level as they do with their linguistic competence level. ELT students are prospective English language teachers who are required to expose accurate and appropriate forms of communication, which cannot be achieved without possessing a proper level of pragmatic competence.

Furthermore, exploring the production of request and apology speech acts comparatively between two different cultures (Palestine and Türkiye) helps in understanding the role of socio-cultural variables in foreign language learning and teaching. Thus, this study highlights the significant role of socio-cultural variables in the EFL contexts and encourages prospective English language teachers to carefully consider their students' cultural backgrounds in the process of communication.

Finally, the present research work holds substantial significance for reviewing the policies of foreign language education in Palestine and Türkiye and encourages the adoption of training programs that enable prospective English language teachers to possess a proper level of pragmatic competence, which is necessary for effective communication, and pay more attention to the socio-cultural variables included in different discourses.

The present research seeks to investigate ELT students' pragmatic competence in producing English request and apology speech acts, identify the potential correlation between pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic competence, compare the strategy patterns that ELT students employ in the production of request and apology speech acts in terms of (in)directness, and examine the potential influence of socio-cultural variables on ELT students' selection of request and apology strategies. Below is a detailed explanation of the current research purposes:

1. Compare and contrast freshmen and senior ELT students' pragmatic competence (both pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic competence) in producing English request and apology speech acts at ÇOMÜ and Alaqsa University in order to provide evidence on ELT students' level of pragmatic competence and identify potential gaps between freshmen and senior learners.
2. Investigate the potential relationship between pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic competence in the production of English request and apology speech acts by freshmen and senior ELT students at ÇOMÜ and Alaqsa University in order to identify a potential relationship between the two competencies.
3. Compare and contrast the strategies that freshmen and senior ELT students at ÇOMÜ and Alaqsa University employ when producing English requests and apologies in terms of (in)directness.

4. Investigate the potential influence of socio-cultural variables, i.e., gender, social power, social distance, and rank of imposition/severity of offence on ELT students' way of expressing English requests and apologies as produced by EFL students at ÇOMÜ and Alaşsa University.

The researcher posed three major questions and a number of related minor questions to address the study objectives:

RQ1: Are there significant differences between freshmen and senior ELT students' pragmatic competence in producing English request and apology speech acts at ÇOMÜ and Alaşsa University?

1a: Are there significant differences between freshmen and senior ELT students in the production of English request speech acts in terms of pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic competence?

1b: Are there significant differences between freshmen and senior ELT students in the production of apology speech acts in terms of pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic competence?

1c: Are there significant differences between ELT male and female students' pragmatic competence in the production of request and apology speech acts?

RQ2: To what extent are pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic competence interrelated in the production of English request and apology speech acts by ELT students at ÇOMÜ and Alaşsa University?

RQ3: Are there differences between freshmen and senior ELT students' selection of request and apology strategies, and to what extent is their selection influenced by social power, distance, and imposition?

3a: How similar and different are the strategies employed by freshmen and senior ELT students in producing requests in terms of (in)directness?

3b: How similar and different are the strategies used by freshmen and senior ELT students in producing apology speech acts in terms of (in)directness?

3c: To what extent is freshmen and senior ELT students' selection of request and apology strategies influenced by social power, social distance, and imposition/severity of offence?

3d: Are there differences between freshmen and senior ELT students' selection of request and apology strategies attributed to gender?

1.3. Limitations of the Study

It is expedient to recognize that the generalizability of the current research is limited to several issues related to research context. Firstly, the current study targeted two state universities, namely Alaqsa University in Palestine and Çanakkale Onsekiz Mart University (ÇOMÜ) in Türkiye. Thus, the conclusions drawn from these two contexts may not be transferable to other private or state universities, as each university has its exclusive entity and system, including the academic staff, students' proficiency levels, teaching modes, etc. Secondly, this study targeted freshmen and senior ELT students in the two universities. The researcher chose two divergent levels, as the comparison between these two divergent levels is expected to reveal where ELT programs stand. Hence, the findings may not be fully valid to reflect the status of sophomore and junior ELT students and also may not be applicable to other EFL programs at the two universities, namely the English Language and Literature (ELL) program.

Thirdly, the current study was conducted in the academic year 2023-2024. The researcher had no chance to elicit models of spoken language from the study participants, and most of the data were collected online due to the limited accessibility options, as the researcher lives in the Gaza Strip, which witnessed a war in October, 2023 and could not physically reach the study participants either in Palestine or in Türkiye. Consequently, the current study's findings may not fully be applicable to other contexts in which authentic spoken language is employed.

Fourthly, since the current research addressed ELT students' ways of expressing English requests and apology speech acts and the potential influence of socio-cultural variables, which are exclusively culturally bound issues, the findings may not be adequately generalizable to other contexts that have different representations of socio-cultural variables.

To sum up, the limitations of the current study involve place, time, data, and scope of study constraints. Nevertheless, the current research seeks to scrutinize a serious and overlooked topic in the EFL arena, namely ELT students' pragmatic competence and the potential influence of the socio-cultural variables on their way of expressing English requests and apologies. By doing so, it seeks to highlight the significant role of pragmatics instruction

and the importance of paying more attention to the context of the language to avoid communication breakdowns. Lastly, the above-mentioned limitations should be thoroughly considered when reviewing the current study's findings in border ELT-related contexts.

1.4. Assumptions

The motivation behind investigating the current research problem stemmed from the researcher's observation of EFL students' ways of communicating and expressing English requests and apologies that are not only considered fundamental in our daily communication but also face-threatening acts, which require a high level of sensitivity when producing them. The researcher works as an English language lecturer at Alaqsa University (Palestine) and teaches several Listening and Speaking courses, Conversation courses, Linguistics courses, and other TEFL courses. The researcher noticed that EFL students' ways of expressing English requests and apologies, especially senior students, are remarkably influenced by their L1 pragmatic knowledge, which is reflected negatively in their communication, and that EFL students neither pay attention to the context in which language is used nor consider the socio-cultural variables that influence the discourses.

The major focus of the ELT program at Alaqsa University was placed on developing students' linguistic competence at the expense of pragmatic competence, which is considered a serious problem. Additionally, rarely did pragmatics-related topics appear in the ELT courses outlines; consequently, developing students' pragmatic competence was a neglected objective in almost all the English language courses at Alaqsa University. Similarly, at ÇOMÜ pragmatic competence was introduced marginally in courses such as Linguistics (2) and Verbal Communication, but hardly can we find clear and direct learning objectives related to developing students' pragmatic competence.

According to Nelson et al. (2002), lacking pragmatic competence can cause serious problems related to misunderstanding, impatience, looking rude, etc. Finally, the researcher sought to investigate the same issue, i.e., students' pragmatic competence and the way they express English requests and apologies in two different EFL contexts, in an attempt to draw possible conclusions related to EFL contexts and find out how similar and different these issues are.

1.5. Definitions of Key Terms

The researcher presents the key definitions related to the current topic of research such as pragmatics, interlanguage pragmatics, pragmatic competence, pragmalinguistic competence, sociopragmatic competence, speech acts, apology, and request.

1.5.1. Pragmatics

There are a number of various definitions of pragmatics depending on the perspective through which it is approached. For example, Yule (1996) defined pragmatics as “the study of speaker meaning as distinct from word or sentence meaning” (p. 133). Cutting (2008) stated that pragmatics is concerned with studying language variations according to the context in which language is used. Pragmatics is defined as the study of how language users infer meanings from the contextual information that is associated with the semantic structure (Jaszczolt, 2002).

1.5.2. Interlanguage Pragmatics

According to Kasper (1996), interlanguage pragmatics refers to "the study of nonnative speakers' use and acquisition of L2 pragmatics knowledge" (p.145).

1.5.3. Pragmatic Competence

Thomas (1983) states that being pragmatically competent means possessing the ability of using the language effectively for achieving specific purpose and understanding the language in context.

1.5.4. Pragmalinguistic Competence

The ability of using the language appropriately for accomplishing a speech act (Thomas, 1983).

1.5.5. Sociopragmatic Competence

The ability of using a speech act appropriately according to a particular context (Thomas, 1983).

1.5.6. Speech Acts

Speech acts are defined by Dawson and Phelan (2016) as “actions that are performed only through using language” (p.710).

1.5.7. Apology

Marquez-Reiter (2000) defines apology as “compensatory action for an offense committed by the speaker which has affected the hearer” (p.44).

1.5.8. Request

Ellis (2008) defines requests as 'attempts on the part of a speaker to get the hearer to perform or to stop performing some kind of action in the interests of the speaker' (p.172).

CHAPTER TWO

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND THE LITERATURE REVIEW

Chapter two introduces the related theoretical framework that helps readers conceptualize the topics under scrutiny more comprehensively and provides a deeper understanding of the current research. Chapter two is divided into two main sections; each section is divided into further interconnected subsections.

2.1. Theoretical Framework

The first subsection of the theoretical framework section introduces the historical and philosophical background of pragmatics, the early introduction of pragmatics, the chronological development of pragmatics, the second section introduces the definition of pragmatics, trends, pragmatics instruction, and other related topics. The third section introduces topics such as pragmatic competence, models of pragmatic competence, pragmatics instruction in EFL and ESL contexts, the interrelation between pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic competence, pragmatic transfer, etc. The fourth section introduces the theory of speech acts, request and apology speech acts, request and apology strategies and taxonomies. The fifth section discusses politeness theory, and the concepts of indirectness, social power, social distance, and imposition. The last subsection discusses the status of English in Palestine and Türkiye and ELT programs in Alaqa University and Çanakkale Onsekiz Mart University.

The second main section reviews the studies conducted to investigate the production and realization of English request and apology speech acts and how similar and different the strategies are utilized by EFL learners in producing and realizing them, besides reviewing the studies addressing the potential influence of gender, social power, distance, and imposition on EFL learners' production of request and apology speech acts. It is divided into three subsections: the first deals with request speech acts, the second views the studies related to apology, and the third deals with the studies that combine the two speech acts.

2.1.1. Pragmatics: Philosophical and Historical Background

It may be surprising for some readers to know that the basis of pragmatics, as a linguistic discipline, did not originate in the field of linguistics; rather, it emerged as a development of pragmatic thinking through the philosophy of language, which shaped the emergence of pragmatics as a linguistic discipline (Arif, 2012; Mey, 2013). Thus, discussing how pragmatics found its way through the philosophical and historical contexts is quite expedient for the readers to have a comprehensive view of the origins of pragmatics.

Tracing the origin of pragmatics as a branch of language cannot be separated from the context of the philosophy of language, which discusses the origin of language as one of the fundamental issues that it covers (Haung, 2007). There are two traditions of the philosophy of language, namely the Ideal School of Philosophy led by Frege, Russell, and their followers (e.g., David Lewis), who developed formal semantics, which focused on the interpretation of symbolic language with the construction of rules. The other tradition is the Ordinary School of Philosophy (1950), which focused on the natural language as opposed to the symbolic forms of language. The ordinary school of philosophy was led by Austin, Grice, and their followers, such as Searle, Ludwig Wittgenstein, and others (Haung, 2007; Recanati, 2004).

The pragmatic thinking of language can be traced back to the early beginnings of classical history, starting from the Greek Sophists, followed by the pre-medieval and medieval nominalists, and the subsequent nineteenth-century thinkers, reaching to the works of the twentieth-century pragmatic scholars. The Greek Sophists' rationale of language considered language as a tool of real interaction, which contradicted the conventional mode that emphasized the role of language as a tool for teaching morals through storytelling. The pre-medieval and medieval rational were concerned with the representation of the world through the language that humans utilized: they considered language as a tool that serves logic (Mey, 2013).

The Early Introduction of Pragmatics: Aristotle and Thomas Aquinas

The early introduction of how important it is to connect words and arguments with their users was initiated by Aristotle, whose rationale was pragmatic according to the recent sense. However, Aristotle's conception of rhetoric and how the users obtained their arguments was neither considered relevant nor perceived as important as how the users organized their arguments (Mey, 2013).

Aristotle's philosophy had its influence on Thomas Aquinas, one of the medieval scholars (Randau and Medinskaya, 2015). Aquinas, who had a remarkable contribution to theology, explored language in context, which is the major concern of pragmatics, discussed the nature of language, and contended that there are three types of language: the first type is termed univocal language, which indicates that the meaning of the same word does not change even if it is used in different contexts. The second type is known as equivocal language, which postulates that the meaning of the same word differs according to the context in which it is used. The third type is termed analogous language, which assumes that although the same word can have different meanings according to different contexts, still there is a sense of connection between the different meanings in the different contexts.

Pragmatics: Chronological Development

The feature of one of the most basic pragmatic issues, namely words have no meaning in isolation but rather when they are used in context, can be ascribed to the philosophers of the Middle Ages who criticized nominalism which doubted the existence of abstract concepts reflecting by that the materialistic view which contradicted with realism (Mey, 2013).

John Locke (1632-1704), the founder of British Empiricism, emphasized the role of language as a necessary vehicle for communication and a way for representing people's thoughts. Locke paid special attention discussing the role of words and signs in human interaction. He asserted that the signification of words is nothing unless words are associated with the ideas that the users seek to express. Subsequently, Thomas Reid (1710-1796) asserted that language has a primary function, which is to help people perform social acts,

such as requests, commands, etc. However, the notion of meaning in context is credited to Frege (1848-1925), who developed pragmatic thoughts and whose ideas had an impact on Ludwig Wittgenstein (1889-1951), who addressed logic and language.

Although Charles Sander Peirce (1839-1914), a well-known American philosopher, logician, and semiotician, is considered a leading figure of the nineteenth-century pragmatics. Peirce did not develop his ideas about language in real contexts but rather in a context of philosophy. Thus, citing Peirce's name as the founder of pragmatics is dubious (Mey, 2013). Charles William Morris (1901-1979), an American philosopher, whose desire to establish connections between different philosophical stands helped him in developing the theory of signs (or what is known as semiotics). Morris made a distinction between syntactics, semantics, and pragmatics. The first use of the term pragmatics is credited to Morris (Arif, 2016).

The ordinary school of philosophy (mentioned above) encompassed two trends: the first trend explored language and context as used naturally in communication (not as symbolic or abstract forms). This trend was led by J.L. Austin and his follower, H.P. Grice, who developed the speech act theory and conversational implicatures (known as Grice's Cooperative Maxims). The other trend of the ordinary school of philosophy was led by Searle, Wittgenstein, and others who focused on exploring language aspects (e.g., meaning, forms, etc.) in a scientific mode of analysis rather than exploring the symbolic logic of language aspects (Recanati, 2004).

2.1.2. Pragmatics

Pragmatics, a subfield of linguistics, focuses on how the speakers communicate their intended meaning(s) and how the listeners interpret those intended meaning(s) (Roberts et al., 1992). Pragmatics is concerned more with the sociocultural context in which language appears (Kasper and Rose, 2001). According to Fromkin et al. (2017), pragmatics focuses on meaning through context. It is the study of how meanings are influenced by the context and situation in which they occur.

As a field of linguistics, pragmatics is concerned with studying language variations according to the context in which they are used (Cutting, 2008). According to Levinson (1983), pragmatics is concerned with the study of language users' capacity of pairing sentences with the appropriate context. In the same vein, May (1993) stated that pragmatics studies human language usage as it is influenced by the context. Yule (1996) introduced four definitions of pragmatics. The first one of these definitions focuses on the utterances produced by the speaker and the how they are interpreted by the hearer. The other definition focuses on the recognition of the unsaid as a part of what is communicated. Yule also views pragmatics as the study of linguistic forms and how they are used. The last definition of pragmatics focuses on the contextual meaning. From all the above-mentioned definitions of different authors, it can be concluded that the context in which language occurs is an essential pillar around which the definitions of pragmatics are centered.

Trends in Pragmatics

The term pragmatics was initiated by Charles Morris, an American philosopher, to refer to a subfield of semiotics (Levinson, 1983). Horn and Kecskes (2013) stated that the introduction of speech act theory by Austin (1962), Grice's cooperative maxims (1975), and Relevance theory, introduced by Sperber and Wilson, contribute to the development of pragmatics. As an utterance-based field, pragmatics is more concerned with the utterance meaning. However, the utterance meaning cannot only be determined by the linguistic components of the utterance, but also by the successive utterances. Therefore, three distinct approaches to pragmatics emerged, namely: pragma-semantics, pragma-dialogue, and pragma-discourse (Horn and Kecskes, 2013).

Pragma-semantics focuses on the role of cognitive and formal models in creating meaning (de Saussure, 2007). Pragma-dialogue focuses on the dialogic nature in the process of interaction emphasizing that the interactants not only interpret utterances but also react to them. Thus, a dialogue is a series of actions and reactions (Horn and Kecskes, 2013). The third trend emerged in pragmatics is the pragma-discourse which places more emphasis on linguistic behaviors that are influenced by social context (Horn and Kecskes, 2013).

Pragmalinguistics and Sociopragmatics

According to Leech (1983), there are two major components of pragmatics (see Figure 1). The first is the pragmalinguistics, which is concerned with the use of appropriate forms of language. Leech (1983) considers pragma-linguistics as language-specific. Kasper and Rose (2002) affirm that pragma-linguistics represents the knowledge of the linguistic patterns and strategies that are employed to facilitate the production and interpretation of communicative acts. The second component of pragmatics is the sociopragmatics which focuses on how appropriate the meaning is in the social context. Socio-pragmatics represents the sociological aspect of pragmatics. It is cultural-specific. Locastro (2012) states that socio-pragmatics is oriented toward the pragmatic meaning, therefore, it is concerned with the effect of the speakers' social identity on the pragmatic meaning.

Pragmatic knowledge comprises both pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic knowledge. The pragmalinguistic competence refers to the learners' ability to perform communicative acts and express relational and interpersonal meaning. It is concerned with the learners' ability of choosing what is known as pragmatic strategies, e.g., directness, softeners, hedges, etc. Sociopragmatic competence is concerned with the social perceptions which involved in learners' performance and interpretation of communicative acts (Kasper and Rose, 2001). It is about the learners' ability to maintain proper social parameters of the target language (e.g., social distance, power, imposition, etc.). Furthermore, the integration between pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic aspects is of paramount importance for intercultural communication.

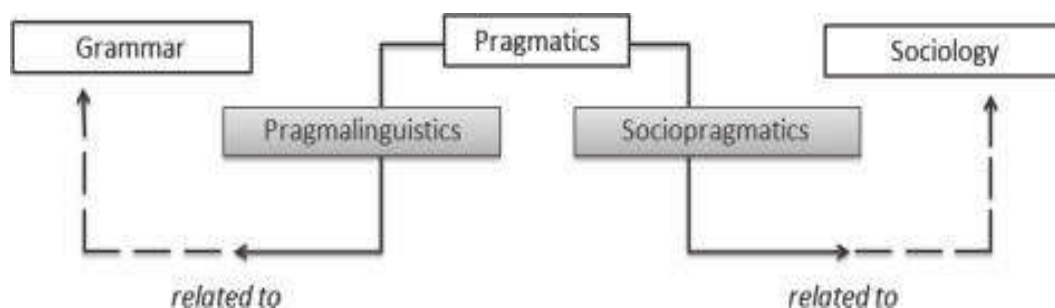


Figure 1. Components of pragmatics (Leech 1983: 11)

Pragmatic Transfer

People's L1 influences the process of learning or acquiring a foreign or second language. According to Spencer-Oatey (2008), transfer is defined as “the systematic influences of existing knowledge on the acquisition of new knowledge” (p.142). The influences can be positive, which facilitates learning the target language, or negative, which conflicts with the linguistic or pragmatic rules of the target language. According to Kasper and Blum-Kulka (1993), negative transfer refers to the application of L1 norms that are inconsistent with those of L2. According to Kasper (1992), learners of a foreign language develop their own pragmatic interlanguage when they have limited knowledge of L2 pragmatic knowledge; consequently, they transfer the pragmatic rules from L1 to L2, which may lead to what is called pragmatic failure in communication.

Thomas (1983) indicates that learners' inability of using appropriate linguistic means and their limited abilities to realize cross-cultural differences are the main reason that lead to pragmatic failure. Thomas (1983) distinguishes between pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic transfer. The latter refers to the transfer of social and cultural norms governing language behaviors in a given speech community. For example, the perception of social distance or social power in discourses. Pragmalinguistic transfer is related to the transfer of L1 linguistic patterns that are syntactically and semantically comparable with the target language but are understood differently in the two cultures (Thomas, 1983).

It is worth-mentioning that EFL learners may not be able to produce or interpret language successfully in intercultural communicative exchanges. According to Muir and Xu (2011), EFL learners' failure can be attributed to productive pragmalinguistic failure, productive sociolinguistic failure, interpretive pragmalinguistic failure, and interpretive sociolinguistic failure.

Pragmatics and Language Teaching and Learning

Speaking about the ties between pragmatics and language teaching, Rose and Kasper (2001) emphasize the necessity of maintaining close relationship between them. Pragmatics is considered as one of the four communicative competences that should not be overlooked

in the learning and teaching process (Canale, 1983). Learning pragmatics is truly beneficial because it helps learners have better understanding of the meaning of language from a broader perspective which does not lose sight on culture and other contextual variables. The knowledge of the underlying pragmatic rules is never less important than grammatical and lexical knowledge (Izadi and Ziliae, 2015). Thus, learning pragmatics helps learners to be responsive to the intended meanings of the interlocutors which facilitates a better, natural, interactive communication. Additionally, pragmatics is fundamentally involved in communication because it is concerned with matching the what is uttered and what is really meant.

The process of successful communication is not only centered around what is said and what is heard but also what is meant (Lo Castro, 2003). What is meant is heavily dependent on the context which contributes to the interlocutors' interpretation of the utterances (Leech, 1983). Having clear idea of the context (where utterances appear) is essential for realizing the speaker's intended meaning (Ishihara and Cohen, 2010). Thus, pragmatics is inescapable as most authors highlight the relationship between the interlocutors and the given context of utterances (Savignon, 2003).

Pragmatics Instruction in EFL Contexts

EFL learners suffer from their limited ability to use appropriate expressions, structures, vocabulary, and grammar in the target language, especially when structuring speech acts (Hiani, 2015; Muthusamy and Farashaiyan, 2016). Additionally, research has emphasized the significance role of pragmatic instruction in EFL classes (Al-Shar, 2017; Eslami and Liu, 2013; Ghobadi and Fahim, 2009; Hassaskhah and Ebrahimi, 2015; Kasper and Schmidt, 1996). Therefore, language learning necessitates not only acquiring linguistic competence (including grammar, vocabulary, etc.), but also acquiring pragmatic competence which involves the knowledge of how and when. More explicitly, using the language appropriately according to the situation (Alerwi and Alzahrani, 2020).

With the emergence of communicative language teaching (CLT) in 1970, the tendency towards teaching the culture of the target language increased immensely. Thus, EFL and ESL contexts witnessed a notable shift towards placing more focus on teaching

speech acts which was believed to enhance learners' and teachers' awareness of the target culture.

Language teaching and learning cannot be separated from L2 cultural and social norms. Similarly, speech acts realization is different depending on the culture in which is used (Güneş and Ortaçtepe, 2019). Therefore, EFL learners need to improve their level of pragmatic competence, which facilitates appropriate use of language and facilitates the process of communication among language users. In the same vein, Derakhshan and Arabmofrad (2018) assert that learning how to use speech acts appropriately facilitates learners' realization of proper ways for achieving various communicative purposes and fulfilling their basic communicative needs.

2.1.3. Pragmatic Competence

It is expedient to introduce linguistic and communicative competence before delving into pragmatic competence. In the mid-1960s Chomsky introduced the theory of generative grammar, which includes several concepts related to language. Among the key concepts is the linguistic competence theory, which focuses on the linguistic forms and structures. However, Chomsky's theory was challenged by a number of linguists and theorists such as Hymes (1972), who criticized Chomsky's concept of competence, which is based on the premise that one's knowledge of linguistic system is never sufficient for maintaining successful communication. On the contrary, Hymes claimed that language competence is not only limited to sets of grammar rules and structures, but it is a combination of the knowledge of the target language's grammar rules and the sociocultural knowledge.

It is worth mentioning that the initiation of communicative competence, advocated by Dell Hymes (1972), led to the development of new language teaching methods, which are centered around communication-based dimensions instead of grammar-based ones (TULGAR, 2016). In the same vein, Canal and Swain discussed communicative competence and proposed the first model of communicative competence (1980-1981) which comprised three components, but later (1983-1984) they developed their model to be composed of four components (see Figure 2). Therefore, with the shift towards focusing on communicative competence, the tendency towards investigating pragmatic competence increased notably.

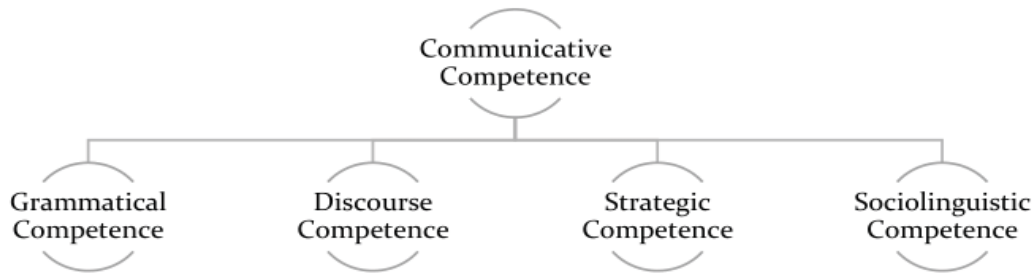


Figure 2. Components of communicative competence (Canal and Swain 1984)

Linguistic and Pragmatic Competence

Language learning and acquisition are not centered around possessing and mastering linguistic components only. Although important, possessing grammar, vocabulary, and other linguistic components cannot guarantee effective communication because language is not a stand-alone product but rather a highly context-bounded issue. The interconnection between grammatical and pragmatic competence is contested. For example, Barron (2003) states that grammatical competence is a requirement for the pragmatic competence, and they are interconnected. On the contrary, Bardovi-Harlig (1999b) claims that there is connection between them despite the fact that a deficiency in grammatical competence may impact the utterance. In fact, the significance of pragmatic competence cannot be contested nor it can be considered as having a subsidiary importance.

Pragmatic competence refers to speaker's ability to use language effectively for achieving specific purposes and understanding the language in the context in which it appears (Thomas, 1983). A similar definition was presented by Brock and Nagasaka (2005) stated that the term pragmatic competence refers to one's ability of using and realizing language in context, and using language for communicating different purposes. Taguchi (2009) views pragmatic competence as the ability of using the language properly in a social context. From the above-mentioned definitions, it can be concluded that pragmatic competence is an essential aspect that goes hand in hand with the linguistic competence towards achieving effective communication.

Models of Pragmatic Competence

There are several models introduced to provide in-depth explanation of what pragmatic competence implies. Fraser (1983) asserts that pragmatic competence is the ability to communicate an attitude. Fraser states that communication refers to the interplay between the meaning intended by the speaker and the effect recognized by the hearer. Thus, successful communication is achieved when the speakers convey their attitudes to the hearers, and the hearers interpret the speakers' attitudes.

Faerch and Kasper (1984) proposed a model in which pragmatic competence comprises two types of knowledge (Morkus,2009). The first is declarative knowledge including six categories of knowledge, i.e., socio-cultural, context, linguistic, discourse, speech act, and knowledge of the world. The second type of knowledge is the procedural knowledge which refers to selecting and combining declarative knowledge from six categories identified in the declarative knowledge.

Another model was introduced by Bachman (1990), as illustrated in Figure 3. According to Bachman's model, there are two components of language competence. The first is organizational competence, which is concerned with the knowledge and rules of linguistic units and how to employ them when producing language. The second component is pragmatic competence, which comprises the knowledge of how to carry out communicative actions (illocutionary competence) and the to perform language functions appropriately in a form that corresponds to the context (sociolinguistic competence).

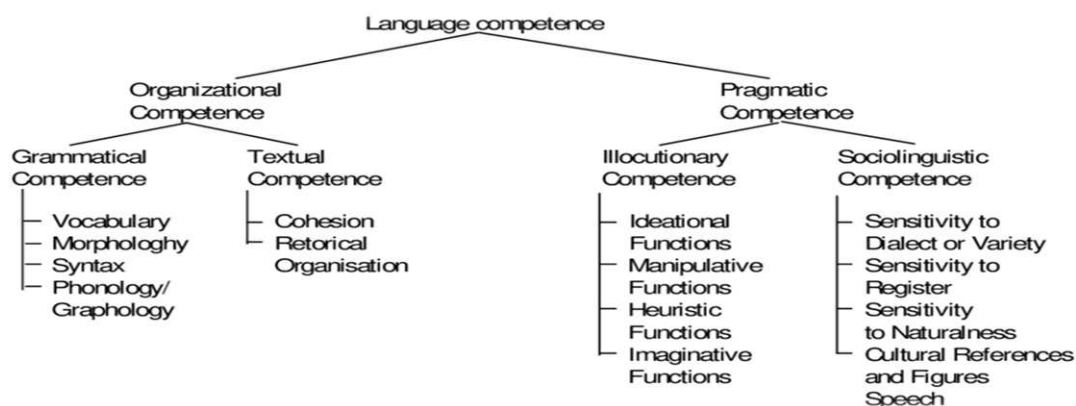


Figure 3. Components of language competence (Bachman 1990: 87)

Communicative and Pragmatic Competence in ESL and EFL

The ultimate goal of the communicative approach is help language learners communicate effectively through providing learners with socio-cultural rules of the target language. According to Kaburise (2011), communicative competence is more concerned with the message than the knowledge related to the rules of language. In other words, it focuses on conveying the message properly according to the social context in which it appears by considering the content of the message, the way the message is conveyed, the addressee, etc. Thus, communicative competence involves being aware of the social and cultural dimensions implied in conversations, besides having enough knowledge of language rules.

With the shift towards focusing on communicative competence, advocated by Dell Hymes (1972), the tendency towards investigating pragmatic competence increased notably. However, when compared to other language competencies, pragmatic competence seems to be an overlooked area of teaching in EFL contexts (Crandall and Basturkmen, 2004; Alco'n and Safont, 2001). Language users must develop their pragmatic competence, which represents a vital construct in interactional exchanges. Suffice it to say that developing pragmatic competence does not only aid appropriate language use but also facilitates the interlocutors' understanding of the social variables and context (Taguchi, 2009; Thompson, 1997).

Teaching Pragmatic Competence

Despite the shift towards the adoption of communicative approach in language teaching, pragmatic competence, as a major aspect of communicative competence, is still an overlooked area of language teaching in EFL contexts (Koran, 2015). Based on their classroom observations and experiences, many EFL experts highlighted how significant teaching pragmatic competence is in EFL and ESL contexts. It is claimed that pragmatic competence is the most difficult facet to master in second language learning (Blum-Kulka and Sheffer, 1993). Bardovi-Harlig and Mahan-Taylor (2003) emphasized that if the students rely exclusively on their own exposure to language, the acquisition of pragmatics is unlikely to occur.

There are a number of constraints in the way of teaching pragmatic competence. According to Koran (2015), the most dominant constraint is that EFL teachers lack the adequate pragmatic knowledge of the target language. Thus, prospective EFL and ESL teachers need to possess enough pragmatic knowledge which facilitates presenting pragmatically appropriate patterns to their students. According to Rueda (2006), teaching pragmatic competence should include proper input and authentic activities as well as teachers should raise students' awareness about the crucial role of enhancing their level of pragmatic competence in order to communicate effectively.

Language and Culture in ESL and EFL in Palestine and Türkiye

Language can be viewed as a reflection of the community, for it is a medium of communication through which people convey their ideas, express their wishes, and fulfil their needs. Language is not isolated from the social and cultural context. In fact, many authors emphasized the bidirectional relationship between language and culture (Ardila-Rey, 2008; Brown, 2007). Scarcella and Oxford (1992) asserted that language and culture are indispensable and are considered as synonyms to one another due to the close link between them. Brown (2007) showed the interrelation between language and culture through describing each one as a part of the other.

As one of the most international and widely-spoken languages, English is considered a dominant language of communication (Bamgbose, 2001; McKay, 2002). Therefore, the need for English language learning imposes itself as a key requirement for exchanging knowledge and experiences, besides enhancing cross-cultural communication among people. However, mastering the language does not guarantee effective communication. According to Hinkel (1999), communicating effectively is achieved not only by the mastery of linguistic structures but also by using these structures appropriately according to social situations. Thus, considering the social and cultural context are of paramount significance for language users.

Since every language has its own cultural norms, people from different linguistic and cultural backgrounds use different ways of conveying meaning. The key factor determining the speakers' production and interpretation of the utterance is the culture (Nureddeen, 2008).

Thus, it is of paramount importance to realize the variations of communication patterns in the target language and the context-related meanings of the utterances.

With the emergence of communicative language teaching, the tendency towards teaching the culture of the target language increased greatly, and more attention was given to the context and the sociolinguistic factors involved in the communication. Roh (2001) stated that learning a foreign language entails understanding both language and culture. In further explanation of how language and culture are closely related in the field of language learning, Brown (1986) stated that acquiring a second language involves acquiring a second identity. Moreover, Brown (2007) claimed that second language acquisition involves second culture acquisition.

Producing the language is not a process of switching on or off a machine; it is an interactive process through which the message is not always determined by strings of utterances but by a number of other factors including the social context which is very decisive for framing the type of discourse and interaction among the interlocutors. Hence, effective communication is not dependent only on the speakers' linguistic competence. In fact, the interlocutors' ability to produce and realize the language under relevant social factors proves to be as essential as the interlocutors' linguistic competence.

Pragmatic Competence Acquisition and Learning

The development of L1 people's pragmatic competence depends basically on the kind of their immersion in the communication process. Additionally, there is interconnection between L1 and social development because L1 people can have a direct access to the socio-cultural context, which shapes their beliefs, norms, and values. Unlike L1 people, L2 learners have limited access to the socio-cultural environment (Kecskes, 2014).

Maintaining pragmatically appropriate utterances is essential in communication, especially with native speakers. Nelson et al. (2002) assert that native speakers interpret pragmatic inaccuracies as rudeness and consider pragmatic errors as a form of annoyance. According to Kasper (1992), learners of a foreign language develop their own pragmatic interlanguage when they have limited knowledge of L2 pragmatic knowledge; consequently,

they transfer the pragmatic rules from L1 to L2, which may lead to what is called pragmatic failure in communication. Therefore, Kasper (1996) introduced three basic requirements for the pragmatic acquisition of L2, namely; the input to be relevant, the input to be noticed, and enough opportunities to achieve a high level of control.

It is worth mentioning that pragmatic awareness is the stepping stone to building pragmatic knowledge (Bardovi-Harlig, 2001; Kasper, 1996). According to Schmidt (1995), it is necessary to increase L2 learners' awareness because it contributes to L2 pragmatics learning. Current studies emphasize that exposing learners to pragmatic rules through explicit instruction of pragmatics has positive effects on learners' achievement compared to those who receive linguistic input only (Bardovi-Harlig, 2001; Olshtain and Cohen, 1990).

Pragmatics Instruction and Schmidt's Noticing Hypothesis

Pragmatics instruction can be practiced either implicitly or explicitly. Though, the possibility of integrating both approaches is also valid. Implicit and explicit approaches prove to be effective, however the explicit approach proves to be more effective (Salemi and Mitra Rabiee, 2012; Kasper and Rose, 2001; Trosborg, 2003). The explicit approach is a good representation of the noticing hypothesis proposed by Schmidt (1995).

Schmidt (1995) postulates that noticing is the first step in the process of language acquisition, and learning takes place when learners notice the linguistic features they are exposed to. Schmidt also distinguishes three concepts: input, intake, and output. The input is the language that learners are exposed to, while the intake is the part of that language that learners notice. Researchers emphasize the importance of pragmatic instruction in the context of EFL (Al-Shar, 2017; Eslami and Liu, 2013; Ghobadi and Fahim, 2009; Hassaskhah and Ebrahimi, 2015; Kasper and Schmidt, 1996). In EFL classes, Schmidt's noticing hypothesis should be utilized in pragmatic instruction, and teachers should provide learners with ample opportunities to notice the pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic features of the language along with the knowledge of language (Bardis et al., 2021).

Pragmatic Competence in EFL Context and Research

Pragmatic competence imposes itself as a serious issue for enquiry through Interlanguage pragmatics (ILP). ILP emerged as an area of research that focuses on the acquisition, use, and development L2 pragmatic knowledge (Kasper and Blum-Kulka, 1993; Kasper, 1992). The research endeavors for scrutinizing pragmatic competence started with the work of Bachman (1990) who introduced pragmatic competence as a separate entity that is considered as a unit of communicative competence. Bachman (1990) pointed out that pragmatic competence aims at ensuring effective communication through the coordination between the functional and the formal aspects of language use.

As a major component of communicative competence, pragmatic competence is regarded as a basic pillar of language ability (Bachman, 1990). Many scholars place substantial attention to the importance of pragmatic competence; they believe that learning the language is not only about acquiring the linguistic competence but developing pragmatic competence (Alerwi and Alzahrani, 2020). Hence, pragmatic competence should not be ignored because it has a direct impact on the communication process.

Lacking pragmatic competence can cause serious problems related to misunderstanding, impatience, looking rude, etc. (Nelson et al., 2002). It is worth-mentioning that pragmatic competence does not develop simultaneously with the language acquisition unless learners pay attention to the pragmatic features underlying the language they use. Thus, learners should be aware of the linguistic input they are exposed to, and they should first build what is known as pragmatic awareness for the acquisition of pragmatic knowledge (Bardovi-Harlig, 2001). Li et al., (2015) define pragmatic awareness as " L2 learners' conscious and explicit knowledge about the appropriateness of language use constrained by communication contexts" (p.103).

In language teaching classes, pragmatic competence is often ignored for a number of reasons including teachers' inadequacy of pragmatic knowledge (Koran, 2015). Consequently, EFL learners' pragmatic competence is negatively influenced by the pragmatic inaccuracies they are exposed to in language learning classes which increases the unfavorable chances of misunderstanding.

Additionally, EFL learners' pragmatic errors can be caused by one or both of the following reasons: 1. Lack of learners' sociopragmatic awareness, or 2. Lack of using appropriate linguistic tool (pragmalinguistic competence) (Lenchuk and Ahmed, 2019). In order to reduce learners' pragmatic errors, EFL teachers need to draw language learners' attention towards the crucial role of pragmatic features included in the language they are exposed to.

Pragmatics, Speech Act Theory and Context

Pragmatics covers topics such as conversational implicature, conversational structure, deixis, presupposition, and speech acts (Levinson, 1983). In the same vein, it is stated that that speech act is a central domain in the study of pragmatics and in interlanguage pragmatics (Austin, 1962; Trosborg, 2010). As long as pragmatics is concerned with the speaker's meaning and the way that the hearer interprets meaning, context is fundamental in the study of pragmatics. It is stated that the context in which language is used is significant as a source of information which facilitates hearers' interpretation of the implicatures of the speaker's utterances (Allott, 2010).

The crucial functions of the context include eliminating ambiguity, clarifying conversational implicatures, and identifying referents (Song, 2010). According to Yule (1996), there are two types of contexts, namely; the linguistic context and physical context. All words that appear in phrases or sentences are referred to as the linguistic context (also known referred to as co-text). Yule used the term "physical environment" to refer to the physical context. According to Yule, physical context helps people interpret the meaning of utterances and helps them avoid misinterpretations.

The theory of speech acts is a one of the basic topics discussed in pragmatics. It is not doubted that the production and interpretation of speech acts are not determined by the linguistic context only, but also by the situational context. Cutting (2002) accentuates the influential role of context in the function of speech acts. Holmes (2001) postulates that the situational context in which the speech takes place affects the way the speaker uses the language. Holmes emphasizes that the speaker's choice of language and ways of speaking

are highly influenced by the social context. According to Holmes, there four components are involved in social context, i.e., the participants, the setting, the topic, and the function.

2.1.4. Speech Act Theory

The discussion of speech act was first introduced by Austin through a series of lectures, held at Oxford University in 1952. Austin introduced the theory of speech acts in 1962. It is worth mentioning that the speech acts theory represents a new perspective on language that highlights the relationship between language and action (Baktir, 2013). Based on Austin's presentation of the speech acts theory, a number of scholars such as Searle (1979) and Leech (1983) developed the speech acts theory. According to Fauziati (2016), the major focus of speech act theory is the interlocutors' real meaning of their utterances rather than the language they use to deliver the utterances. Halupka-Rešetar (2014) stated that the speech act theory is about the speaker's ability of fulfilling certain actions by the language and the hearer's ability to grasp the intended meaning of the discourse.

In his influential contribution, Austin (1962) who introduced a book entitled "*How to Do Things with Words*" asserted that language is not only used to state something rather it is used to perform actions. Thus, Austin distinguished between three types of acts that are involved in an utterance (Kroger, 2018). The first act is known as locutionary act. It refers to the semantic meaning of the word(s)/sentence(s). Illocutionary act is the second one and it refers to the intended meaning of the speaker. Illocutionary act is defined as a specific language function through which the speaker's communicative intentions such as offer, refusal, request, apology, etc., are conveyed (Achiba, 2003). The third is the "perlocutionary act" which is about how the speaker's message has effect on the receiver (the hearer). Levinson (1983) stated that Austin uses the term speech act to exclusively refer to the illocutionary act.

Speech Acts and EFL

Speech acts are defined as actions which the speaker performs through verbal communication acts (Kroger, 2018). In TEFL, investigating speech acts is a worth-researching topic in that it touches a serious issue, i.e., appropriate language use in

communication, and it also helps in identifying the speakers' communication strategies, and preferences which are different not only among the language users who have different cultural backgrounds but also among those who share the same culture. Additionally, investigating speech acts contributes in raising EFL learners' attention to the importance of considering the pragmatic features underlying the language use in different social contexts and for different purposes.

Zayed (2014) emphasizes that teaching different forms of speech acts for EFL learners is significant because it can enhance learners' ability to communicate properly and smoothly. In other words, if learners' pragmatic competence is sufficient, then learners are expected to produce and comprehend speech acts properly, and there of communication breakdowns are less likely to appear (Phuong, 2006).

Although learners achieve success in completing language programs, they still show inadequacies in language use, particularly in producing and realizing speech acts (Bardovi-Harlig, 1996; Kasper and Rose, 1999). Fatah et al., (2020) stated that for EFL learners at the university level, the knowledge of using speech acts (whether in written or communication) is very significant and helps them to communicate better and understand the content of the texts.

Speech Acts Realization in EFL Context

The realization of speech acts between native speakers of English and EFL learners varies depending on a number of reasons including the proficiency level, the input, the amount of exposure, and transfer (Bardovi-Harlig, 2001a). As one of the major topics discussed in pragmatics, speech acts production and perception is considered as an indispensable topic in interlanguage pragmatic studies (Aksoyalp and Toprak 2015).

As long as communication is concerned, English language learners need to develop their abilities to use speech acts properly in order to achieve various communicative purposes (Afghari, 2007). Hence, realizing speech acts can help in raising ESL and EFL learners' and teachers' awareness of incorporating culture in language learning. For many decades, the knowledge of grammar and vocabulary were considered as the major pillars of L2

curriculum. As a result, there was no space for including pragmatics teaching in foreign language programs. However, in the recent era, the significant role of pragmatic competence imposes itself as a major substance for language learning and teaching (Kecskes,2014; Majeed and Janjua, 2014).

Güneş and Ortaçtepe (2019) asserted that the realization of speech acts is a culturally-bound issue that is highly dependent on the speakers' own culture. Thus, EFL and ESL learners need to learn how to properly use speech acts, i.e., expression of apology, requests, refusals, invitations, etc., in order to communicate effectively in the target language (Derakhshan and Arabmofrad, 2018).

Speech Acts in Research

According to Morkus (2009), the empirical study of speech acts, which are recognized differently in different cultures, is supported by a number of theories and notions, such as the theory of communicative competence, the notion of pragmatic competence (Leech, 1983; Thomas, 1983), the politeness theory, which was introduced by Brown and Levinson (1987), Grice's cooperative principle (1975), and intercultural communication theories (Hofstede, 1980, 1991).

Through the review of related literature, there are four categories under which the studies of speech acts can be grouped. The first group is the intra-lingual studies, which scrutinize the speech acts realization in one given speech community. The second group is the studies that focus on the speech acts realization in two or more languages. Those studies are referred to as cross-cultural studies. The third group is interlanguage pragmatic studies (also known as learner-centered studies). These studies aim at investigating the language learners' pragmatic competence.

Interlanguage pragmatics (ILP) emerged as an area of research which focuses on the acquisition, use, and development L2 pragmatic knowledge (Kasper and Blum-Kulka, 1993; Kasper, 1992). The last category comprises the studies which aim at comparing the tools or methods used for collecting the data related to the realization of speech acts.

Classification of Speech Acts

According to Austin (1962), the theory of speech act views language as a series of actions rather than a series of distinct utterances. In the early introduction of speech act theory, Austin claimed that there are two basic acts of speech, i.e., constative and performative speech acts. Constatives are described as statements that entails no actions, and they can be evaluated in terms of truth. In contrast, performative speech acts can be judged in terms felicity or action. Austin also distinguished between two types of performatives, namely: explicit and implicit performatives.

Austin (1962) developed his classification of speech acts and introduced five distinct categories, namely verdictives, expressives, commissives, behabitives, and expositives (Oluremi, 2016). Austin's classification was based on the effect of communication on the listeners and speakers (Celce - Murcia and Olshtain, 2007).

Searle's Classification of Illocutionary Acts

A subsequent development of Austin's classification was initiated by Searle (1976). According to Searle's classification of illocutionary acts, there are five distinct categories of illocutionary acts. The first one is "representatives", which are defined as speech acts that comprise factual statements or descriptions of objects. Those kinds of speech acts include claims about whether something is true or false or what the speakers believe to be the case or not. The statements are intended to represent a situation in the world; hence, they may be true or false. Some of the verbs denoting the " representatives" are guess, conclude, predict, tell, insist, etc. Representatives in Searle's classification contain most of Austin's expositives and verdictives.

Another category is "directives". As the name implies, directive speech acts are attempts by the addresser, which vary in degree, to get the addressee to do or refrain from doing something. Directives are very frequent in our daily communication, in which a speaker tries to direct another person's action(s). in other words, the speakers try to change the world to match their words or utterances. Directives range from modest attempts to very fierce ones. Some of the verbs denoting the " directives" are request, order, command, warn,

permit, advise, etc. Directives in Searle's classification contain most of Austin's list of perlocutionary acts.

The third category is "expressives", which are defined as acts that express a speaker's psychological state in a situation. Expressives do not imply any attempt to change the events but to express the speaker's inner feelings about the events. Thus, they aim to reinforce social relationships among the interlocutors. Some of the verbs denoting "expressives" are welcome, greet, congratulate, apologize, thank, etc.

The fourth category is "commissives". The speech acts in this category commit the performer of the utterance (the speaker) to do future action/s. Like directives, commissives imply an attempt to change the world to fit the speaker's utterances. Commissives impose a threat on the speaker's negative face. In other words, they restrict the speaker's desire of being independent. The verbs denoting this category include promise, intend, vow, pledge, etc.

"Declarations" is the fifth category according to Searle's classification. What makes the speech acts belonging to this category special is that the successful performance of a given act generates the correspondence between the proposed content, which is performed by the speaker's utterance, and reality. However, the successful performance of declaratives depends on having institutional status. Celce-Murcia and Olshtain (2000) demonstrated the following example: if the jury declares that the defendant is not guilty, the jury's utterance changes the state of the addressee from one state (being guilty) to another (being innocent). Some of the verbs denoting declaratives are declare, dismiss, appoint, nominate, name, etc.

Direct and Indirect Speech Acts

According to Levinson (1983), speech acts can be performed either directly or indirectly. In the direct speech acts, the meaning of the act is directly related to the utterance or the actual semantic meaning, in other words there is a direct relation between the utterance and the function. Holtgraves (1986) stated that in the direct speech act the meaning of the sentence conforms with the intended meaning of the speaker. On the other hand, in the indirect speech acts, no direct association between the structure of the language with the the

intended function (Yule, 1996). Thus, the meaning intended by the speaker and the sentence meaning can differ. According to Leech (1983), indirectness is a widely used strategy in conversation and is closely related to politeness. Leech states that "the more indirect an utterance is, the more polite it is" (p.13).

According to Searle (1976), the types of illocutionary acts are different from each other in at least twelve dimensions, including differences in the purpose of each type (also known as the illocutionary point), differences in the direction of fit, differences in the speakers' psychological states, differences in the force with which the speaker presents the illocutionary point, differences in the position of the addresser and the addressee, differences in the way the utterances relate to the interests of the addresser and the addressee, differences related to the rest of the discourse, differences related to the illocutionary force-indicating devices on the propositional content, etc.

Hymes' Taxonomy of Speech Acts

Hymes (1962) postulated that in communication, speech acts are considered functional units that are not isolated from the socio-cultural rules of a given speech community. Hymes' major contribution is represented by drawing the attention to the significant role of social and cultural norms that are involved in the production and interpretation of speech acts. Therefore, Hymes proposed a taxonomy that contributes to our understanding of the speech analysis.

Hymes' taxonomy (1974) comprises three levels of speech: speech situations, speech events, and speech acts. As for the speech situations, they are represented by all actions that take place in a given community (e.g., lectures, parties, meetings, etc.). The speech event is included in the speech situation and it refers to any activity through which participants interact by using the language (e.g., a conversation in a party, giving a speech, etc.). The speech act is included in the speech event and is considered as functional unit of communication (e.g., make a request, apology, suggest, etc.). Hymes indicated that the relationship between the three levels is hierarchical, i.e., the speech acts are included in the speech events and the speech events, in turn, are included in the speech situations.

Request Speech Acts

People use various speech acts to fulfil communicative purposes. In fact, requests are the most commonly produced speech acts in all languages (Trosborg, 1995). According to the classification of Searle (1979), requests are directive speech acts. According to Verschuren (1999), directive speech act is an attempt to get the hearer to do something. However, understanding the speaker's intention is a crucial issue, particularly in request speech acts. In the same vein, Alcón and Safont (2001) emphasize the importance of understanding the speaker's intended meaning because the hearers' fulfilment of the action is dependent on their acceptance of the speaker's intention.

Request are widespread speech acts both in everyday communication and in language learning classes, especially for new learners (Alzeebaree and Yavuz, 2017). Requests are defined by Ellis (2008) as 'attempts on the part of a speaker to get the hearer to perform or to stop performing some kind of action in the interests of the speaker' (p.172).

Since request speech acts are impositive acts, which means that they are performed by the speaker(s) in order to achieve benefit for the speaker at the cost of the hearer (Trosborg, 1995), they are considered as a face threatening acts (FTAs), which entails the speaker to lessen the potential pressure imposed on the hearer and to save the speaker's public image (Achiba, 2003). Additionally, request speech acts are linked with the concepts of politeness and indirectness which have been discussed lengthily in the field of pragmatics.

Trosborg's Taxonomy of Request Realization Strategies

Successful realization and production of speech act facilitate communication and lessen the undesirable chances of conversation breakdowns or pragmatic failure. Since request speech acts are produced differently depending on every language's unique cultural norms, speakers should be aware of how to appropriately produce speech acts. Therefore, language users need to follow appropriate strategies to mitigate any potential offence perceived by the hearer (Achiba, 2003).

Reviewing the previous work of Austin (1962), Searle (1969), Brown and Levinson (1978, 1987), Trosborg (1995) introduced a taxonomy of request realization strategies (see Figure 4) that comprises four categories with a number of request strategies. The first category is "direct category", which comprises three request strategies (obligation, performatives, and imperatives). The second category is "conventionally indirect (hearer-based) category" which comprises four strategies, i.e., ability, willingness, permission, and suggestion formula. The third category is "conventionally indirect (speaker-based) category" including two strategies (wishes and desires/needs). The last category is "indirect category" including one request strategy, i.e., hints.

Categories	Request strategies	Examples
Direct	Obligation	You must/have to lend me your car.
	Performatives	I would like to ask you to lend me your car.
	Imperatives	Lend me your car (please)
Conventionally indirect (hearer-based)	Ability	Can/could you lend me your car?
	Willingness	Would you lend me your car?
	Permission	May I borrow your car?
	Suggestion formula	How about lending me your car?
Conventionally indirect (speaker-based)	Wishes	I would like to borrow your car.
	Desires/needs	I want/need to borrow your car.
Indirect	Hints	I have to be at the airport in half an hour.

Figure 4. Taxonomy of request realization strategies (Trosborg, 1995: 205)

Apology Speech Acts

The act of apology is frequently used to maintain harmonious and respectful relations among people, and it has a considerable weight in levelling the resentment that may occur through people's interaction (Intachakra, 2004; Wipprecht, 2006). Jucker and Taavitsainen (2008) claim that apology is one of the most important expressive speech acts. According to Searle's classification (1976), expressive speech acts (as the name denotes) aim at expressing the speaker's feelings in different situations (Yule, 1996).

Apology is related to one's reaction towards causing problems or unfavorable behavior. Marquez-Reiter (2000) defines apology as "compensatory action for an offense committed by the speaker which has affected the hearer" (p.44). Apology aims to support the hearer who was negatively affected by actual or potential transgression (Brown and

Levinson, 1987). Leech (1983) considers apology as an amicable speech act which aims to maintain harmonious relations between the speakers and the listeners.

Apologies are cultural-oriented speech acts; therefore, the strategies used to produce them vary according to the culture and the situations in which they appear (Salago 2011, as cited in Kitao and Kitao, 2013). Furthermore, apology strategies are influenced by a number of variables including social differences existing in each culture. Apology implies the speaker's admission of violating social norms. Thus, it is considered as a face-threatening act because it exposes threats to the speaker's face/ public image (Blum-Kulka and Olshtain, 1984).

Different Classifications of Apology

There are a number of different classifications of apology strategies that are employed by the speakers. The reason for having different classifications is that apologies are culture-oriented which are recognized differently. Olshtain and Cohen (1983) introduced five main categories which comprise a number of strategies (see Figure 5). Blum-Kulka, House and Kasper (1989). Introduced another classification consisted of five categories that are very similar to those introduced by Olshtain and Cohen (Wolfson et al., 1989).

Fraser (1981) introduced another classification of apology strategies that comprises nine strategies: asking for acceptance of the apology; emphasizing responsibility; offering apology; expressing of regret; acknowledging of the responsibility; asking for forgiveness for the offense; promising forbearance; announcing that apology is forthcoming, and offering compensation.

Holmes (1990) introduced a classification of apology strategies that comprises four major categories with eight sub categories. The major categories are: 1. Explicit expression of apology (including three strategies), 2. Explanation or account, 3. Acknowledgment of responsibility (including five strategies) and 4. Promise for forbearance. On the other hand, Bergman and Kasper (1993) introduced a classification of seven different apology strategies, namely: Illocutionary Force Indicating Device (IFID); taking responsibility; presenting

reasons for conducting the behavior; minimizing the seriousness of the action; offering compensation; presenting verbal redress; and minimization of actions.

Olshtain and Cohen's Taxonomy of Apology Strategies

Olshtain and Cohen's classification of apology strategies (1983) is the most widely accepted set for identifying apology strategies (Sami Hou, 2006). Olshtain and Cohen's classification introduced five main categories which comprise a number of strategies as illustrated below in Figure 5.

Olshtain and Cohen (1983) introduced a classification of English apology strategies which includes both direct and indirect strategies. As the name suggests, direct apology carries explicit, direct, and overt expression of regret and apology, and it can be expressed by formulaic utterances (e.g., be sorry, apologize, forgive), thus direct apology can be identified according to Olshtain and Cohen (1983) under the first strategy that signifies overt illocutionary force indicating devices (*IFIDs*).

The direct apology encompasses *an expression of regret, an offer of apology, and a request for forgiveness*. On the other hand, indirect apology can be expressed by other strategies included in the classification: *1. an explanation of the situation or account, 2. Acknowledging responsibility, which can be expressed by different ways (e.g., accepting the blame, expressing self-deficiency, expressing the lack of intent, and recognizing of person's worth of apology), 3. Offer of repair, and 4. Promise for forbearance*.

Strategy		Example
1. Expression of apology	Expression of regret Offer of apology Request for forgiveness	I'm sorry Excuse me Excuse me
2. Explanation or account of the situation		The bus was late
3. Acknowledgement of responsibility	Accepting the blame Expressing self-deficiency Recognising the other person as deserving apology Expressing lack of intent	It's my fault I wasn't thinking You are right I didn't mean to
An offer of repair		I'll pay for the broken vase
Promise for forbearance		It won't happen again

Figure 5. Taxonomy of apology strategies (Olshtain and Cohen's taxonomy, 1983)

Expressing apology as other speech acts is determined by a number of variables that can be grouped under an umbrella term called context. For example, the social context, which includes social power, distance, and severity of offence, gender, etc. is considered influential in the way the speaker structures apology and other speech acts, especially face threatening acts.

2.1.5. Politeness Theory

As a major topic discussed in the study of pragmatics, politeness received considerable interest during the last three decades (Thomas, 2013). In fact, politeness is a universal phenomenon that is commonly investigated among different languages and cultures, and it occurs in people's daily courses of communication (Brown and Levinson, 1987). According to Leech (2014), polite behavior implies showing respect to others. Politeness is defined as being aware of people's feeling and their face. (Yule, 1996; Holmes, 1992). According to Escandell (2006), politeness is viewed as a set of social rules that are adopted by a given society with the aim of controlling the society member's conducts.

Several theories were proposed to provide a framework for the phenomenon of politeness. One of the first attempts was that of Goffman (1967) who, within the framework of the behavior theory, introduced the concept of face which was utilized later in the by Brown and Levinson. Another attempt was that of Lakoff's (1975) who proposed three maxims for reducing the friction in social communication through the use of syntactic and lexical strategies. Similarly, Leech (1983) asserts that the aim of politeness is to boost harmonious relations among the society members. Thus, Leech introduced a number of politeness maxims (tact, modesty, sympathy, approbation, generosity, and agreement maxims) through which politeness can be maintained (Leech, 1983).

Theory of Politeness as Introduced by Brown and Levinson

The theory of politeness that was introduced by Brown and Levinson is one of the most influential theories in pragmatics. It is based on the premise that the purpose of politeness is to reduce the imposition on the addressee. Unlike Lakoff's theory (1975), Brown and Levinson's theory was flexible in that it is valid for different cultural contexts. It is worth

mentioning that Brown and Levinson's theory was utilized widely as a theoretical framework for most of the cross-cultural studies.

Brown and Levinson's theory incorporated the concept of face, introduced by Goffman (1967), which refers to one's public self-image (how to be perceived by the others). Brown and Levinson distinguished between positive and negative face. The former refers to people's need to be recognized and appreciated by others, whereas the latter refers to their desire of being independent and not being imposed by others.

The concept of face paved the way towards introducing two associated types of politeness, i.e., positive and negative politeness. Positive politeness can be achieved through expressing that the speaker's desires and wants are not contradicting with those of the hearer; consequently, the speaker maintains his/her positive face (their desire to be liked and accepted). On the other hand, negative politeness can be achieved by expressing that the speaker has no intention to invade the hearer's desire to be autonomous nor to invade the hearer's personal space; consequently, the speaker shows consideration to the hearer's desire to be independent which facilitates to maintain the negative face.

In Brown and Levinson's theory, another important concept was introduced, namely the face-threatening speech acts (FTAs). According to Goffman (1959), FTAs refer to any act that threatens the speaker's or hearer's positive or negative face. For example, the speech act of request is considered as FTA related to the hearer's negative face because the speaker, by requesting, threatens the hearer's desire of being free of imposition. Regarding the apology speech act, it is related to the speaker's positive face through which the speaker tries to achieve his/her desire to be liked and accepted by others. Thus, the speech act of apology threatens the speaker's positive face because if the speaker opts not to apologize for the hearer, the speaker's chances of being liked or accepted are very little. Hence, when people decide to perform FTA, they need to employ what is called "politeness strategies" through which the potential effects of FTAs are mitigated.

Politeness Strategies

Brown and Levinson (1987) suggested four strategies to mitigate the potential effect associated with the production of FTAs, namely on-record, off-record, positive politeness, and negative politeness strategies. The first strategy "on-record" implies the performance of the FTA directly. When the speaker decides to go on-record, his/her intent is stated very clearly: no other possible interpretations are expected by the hearer. The speaker can go on-record and do the FTA without a redressive action (baldly) or with a redressive action. Doing the FTA baldly without redressive means that the speaker performs the FTA without any attempt to reduce the potential impact of the FTA on the hearer's face as there is a close social distance among the speaker and the hearer or there is a kind of authority by the speaker over the hearer, whereas doing the FTA with redressive implies showing care of the hearer's face and trying to mitigate the potential threat associated with the FTA through the use of softeners, mitigators, hedges, etc.

The second strategy is "off-record" which implies the production of the FTA indirectly with the aim of minimizing the potential threat of the FTA on the hearer's face. Off-record strategies include the use of metaphor, irony, hints, rhetorical questions, etc. Thus, since the speaker does not state his/her intent obviously, the meaning is negotiable between the speaker and the hearer.

The positive politeness strategy is associated with the hearer's positive face, in which the hearer's desire to be liked and accepted is recognized and respected by the speaker. Therefore, when the speaker does the FTA, he/she tries to show respect and minimize the social distance with the hearer in an attempt to emphasize that the speaker and the hearer have expectations of reciprocity and that the speaker's FTA is not meant to reflect a negative evaluation of the hearer's face. Negative politeness strategies aim to minimize the degree of imposition on the hearer's negative face. Negative politeness can be achieved by expressing that the speaker has no intention to invade the hearer's desire to be autonomous nor to invade the hearer's personal space; consequently, the speaker shows consideration to the hearer's desire to be independent which facilitates to maintain the hearer's negative face (Brown and Levinson, 1987).

Relative Power, Social Distance, and Rank of Imposition

The seriousness of the FTAs is affected by three factors, namely, the relative power (P) of the speaker and the hearer, the social distance (D) of the speaker and the hearer, and the ranking (R) of imposition in a particular culture. These factors are considered as universal factors; however, their manifestations differ from one speech community to another (Brown and Levinson, 1987; Clyne, 1994; Morand, 1995). According to Brown and Levinson (1987), the relative power (P) refers to the relative authority of the speakers over the hearers. The second factor is "distance" which refers to the degree of intimacy and social closeness among the interlocutors. The third is "rank" or imposition which refers to the degree of obligation imposed on the addressee, or the extent to which the action is considered to interfere with the hearer's desire of self-determination (Brown and Levinson, 1987).

The Speech Act Theory, Politeness Theory and Indirectness

The speech act theory is based on the premise that the linguistic context is not the only determining factor of the utterance meaning and the socio-cultural context in which language is used cannot be overlooked. According to Fauziati (2016), the major focus of speech act theory is the interlocutors' real meaning of their utterances rather than the language they use to deliver the utterances. Thus, if the real meaning is successfully conveyed and received, effective communication is very likely to take place among the interlocutors. Similarly, ensuring effective communication and maintaining social relation is the goal of the politeness theory. As a result, the relationship between the theory of politeness and the theory of speech act is inseparable. According to Sifianous (1992) there is a direct relationship between the two theories.

It is worth-mentioning that the notion of indirectness is strongly connected to the theory of politeness. In conversational interactions, people turn to be indirect in their speech: the main reason is that they want to maintain polite behavior (Brown and Levinson, 1978; Lakoff, 1973). However, the discussion of the two interconnected concepts related to speech act theory, i.e., politeness and indirectness is debatable. Some linguists such as Brown and Levinson (1987) and leech (1983) argued that there is a shared relationship between indirectness and politeness, suggesting that the less direct the language is, the more polite

the attitude will be. However, Blum-Kulka (1987) claimed that the bond between the two concepts does not necessarily go in the same direction which Brown and Levinson and leech suggested as Blum-Kulka (1987) reinvestigated indirectness and politeness in requests speech acts with native speakers of Hebrew and English which indicated that the indirect request strategies were not considered as signifying high level of politeness.

2.1.6. English As a Foreign Language in Palestine and Türkiye

English is taught officially at the governmental schools in Palestine (Tushyeh, 1990). It is taught as a compulsory subject in all basic education stages. The compulsory basic Education in Palestine includes ten grades divided into three stages: the primary stage, the preparatory stage, and the secondary stage (Ministry of Education [MOE], 2020). According to Amara (2003), English, as a foreign language, is the most prevailing language in Palestine. As for the tertiary level, students who succeed in the secondary school can enroll in English language departments in the universities after meeting a number of already-set requirements of admission.

The universities in Palestine offer a number of English language programs that aim at enabling the learners to possess the required competencies for work and life. EFL learners who join the English language programs in different universities in Palestine use English for a number of purposes including (but not limited to) communication with people around the world, seeking local job opportunities, working with international organizations, etc.

Türkiye's strategic geographical location creates an urgent need for wider communication with the outer world, which is achieved through using English as one of the most widely-spread and recognized international languages (Sarıçoban and Sarıçoban, 2012) g1/2. It is worth-mentioning that the status of foreign languages in Türkiye can be traced back to Ottoman Empire. English language entered the race of foreign languages among French and German in 1863 after establishing what is known as Robert College (Eskicumalı and Türedi, 2010).

Although French was widely used in Türkiye in various fields (e.g., diplomacy, education, etc.), English gained popularity and became dominant over other languages (Kırkgöz, 2007). Furthermore, the wide spread of English in Türkiye came as natural response for meeting the requirements of globalization; consequently, the educational policies in dealing with English language in Türkiye had responded interactively to the real need of placing more emphasis on English language learning and teaching (Eskicumalı and Türedi, 2010).

ELT Program at Alaqsa University in Palestine

Established in 1955, Al Aqsa University in the Gaza strip is one of the biggest state universities in Palestine. The faculty of arts and human sciences offers a variety of English Language programs including the department of English Language Teaching (ELT) and English Language Literature (ELL). ELT is an officially accredited program at Alaqsa University. The normal duration of graduation is four years after successfully completing all the program requirements.

The ELT program offers a number of courses in a total of 132 credit hours covering 76 credit hours of obligatory English language courses taught in English and 60 credit hours of general university requirements. The students of ELT program study a variety of courses including English language skills courses, linguistics courses, teaching methodologies courses, translation courses, and literature courses.

ELT Program at ÇOMÜ University in Türkiye

ÇOMÜ is one the state universities in Türkiye. It was established in 1992. ELT department at ÇOMÜ is one of the foreign languages departments. The faculty of education at ÇOMÜ offers a number of English language programs including English Language Teaching Department and English language Literature Department. ELT program started in the year of 1993-1994: It is a four-year program where students can enroll to the ELT program after meeting the admission requirements. ELT students can have their BA certificate after successfully completing the program requirements. ELT program offer a number of courses in a total of 52 credit hours covering obligatory English language courses

taught and other general and educational university courses. The students of ELT program study a variety of courses including English language skills courses, linguistics courses, teaching methodologies courses, translation courses, and literature courses.

2.2. Literature Review

In pragmatics-based studies, investigating request and apology speech acts has always been associated with a number of contextual factors including (but not limited to) gender, cultural values, social power, social distance, degree of imposition, etc. In the Turkish context, the focus of the pragmatics-based studies was heavily placed on comparing the speech acts produced by EFL Turkish speakers and those native speakers of English (Akpınar,2009; Alzebaree and Yavuz, 2017; Balçi, 2009; Çimen, 2009).

In the Palestinian context, where English is introduced as a foreign language, the pragmatics-based studies investigating request and apology speech acts seem to be absent and unattended except for that of Abuarrâh et al. (2013). For the researcher's knowledge, very limited research attempts are reported in the discussion of speech acts both in the Palestinian context and in the Palestinian and other contexts.

This section is divided into three subsections: the first deals with request speech act, the second views the studies related to apology, and the third deals with the studies that combine the two speech acts together. The three subsections explore the studies that were conducted in Türkiye, Palestine, and other EFL and ESL contexts comparing them with other EFL/ESL contexts and also with the studies involving native speakers of English. Table 1 below outlines of the reviewed studies in the present research.

Table 1

Overview of the related studies

Speech Act	Number of Studies	Relevant Studies
Request	12	Hammadi, 2019; Karatepe, 2016; Öztürk, 2017; Kılıçkaya, 2010; Abuarrah et al., 2013; Jalilifar, 2009; Umar, 2004; Sharfan, 2019; Karagöz and İşisağ, 2019; Al-Marrani, 2010; Aribi, 2012.
Apology	13	Çetin et al., 2021; İstifçi, 2009; Tabatabaei et al., 2018; Aydın, 2013; Asmali and Yavuz, 2014; Al-Zumor, 2011; Ja'afreh, 2023; Soliman, 2003; Al-Sobh, 2013; Batainah and Batainah, 2008; Canli and Canli, 2013; Ezzaoua, 2020; Al-sallal and Ahmed, 2020.
Request and Apology	3	Alzebaree and Yazuv, 2017; Olshtain and Cohen, 1983; Muthusamy and Farashaiyan, 2016

2.2.1. Studies Related to Request Speech Act in EFL/ESL Contexts

Karagöz and İşisağ (2019) carried out a mixed-methods study that aimed at exploring Turkish ELT senior students' pragmatic competence and identifying the strategies they utilized in producing English requests. The study also investigated gender differences in relation to the production of appropriate requests. A number of 120 senior ELT students at a state university in Türkiye participated in the study. The qualitative data collected through DCTs, and subsequently a rating scale was utilized by three experts to evaluate the participants' responses in terms of appropriateness. The researchers utilized the coding framework of Blum- Kulka et al. (1989) to analyze the data. According to the findings, the most favored request strategy was the *conventionally indirect* strategy. Findings also indicated that the participants faced difficulties in producing appropriate request forms when addressing people with high social power level. Finally, findings indicated that female

students showed better performance of requests in terms of politeness and appropriacy compared to that of male students.

Hammadi (2019) conducted an inter-language pragmatic study to investigate request speech acts produced by Turkish and Iraqi EFL undergraduates. The study focused on uncovering the cultural factors affecting the participants' production and perception of request speech acts. Findings indicated a number of similarities (e.g., the tendency towards using indirect request strategies to show politeness) and other differences among the participants. Findings also showed that religion and the geographical location are among the factors affecting the production of English request speech acts.

Shafran (2019) Investigated the production of English requests by L1 Hebrew speakers (14 participants) and L1 Arabic speakers (16 participants) of English. The study aimed at identifying the request strategies utilized by the two groups with reference to the concept of in/directness and the impact of social power on participants' production of requests. Additionally, the study examined how social power impact speakers' language. Data were through a DCT consisting of nine request situations that vary in terms of the social power variable. Utilizing the coding system introduced by Blum-kulka and Olshtain (1984) for determining the indirectness level, the researcher analyzed the collected data and concluded that both groups shared a number of similarities. For example, they both utilized the same request strategy, i.e., *conventionally indirect* and that there was influence of the social power status on the level of in/directness (*conventionally indirect* strategies increased when the social power status of the address in relation to the status of the speaker increases). However, L1 Arabic group utilized "please" as a politeness marker in English requests disregarding the addressee's level of social power (high or low), whereas L1 Hebrew speakers did when the addressee's level is low.

Öztürk (2017) conducted a study to investigate directness and the parallels and divergences in the production of requestive e-mail by three groups, i.e., English native speakers, Turkish native speakers, and EFL Turkish speakers. The study adopted Economidou-Kogetsidis's framework (2011). Findings revealed a number of similarities in relation to the strategies utilized by the three groups.

Karatepe (2016) conducted a study to examine making requests in English in complaint letters. The study aimed to compare the request forms employed by EFL Turkish students and native speakers of English in terms of indirectness. The study sample consisted of 295 prospective teachers of English language studying at ELT department at one of the Turkish universities and 38 English language teachers who are native speakers of English. The researcher utilized the framework of Blum-Kulka et al 1989 to analyze the participants' responses to a task where they were asked to provide a written response to one hypothetical request scenario. Findings revealed that there are differences between the two study groups, i.e., the Turkish prospective English language teachers and native speakers of English in that the latter tend to use more conventionally indirect request strategies compared to the former group, i.e., the prospective English language teachers who utilized explicit performatives, want statement, and suggested formula strategies. Findings also showed that native speakers of English employed mitigated language which Turkish prospective English language teachers could not display in their responses.

In the Palestinian context, investigating pragmatic competence, speech act theory, and another pragmatics-related topics seem to be absent in research. For the researcher's knowledge, almost no other study except that of Abuarrah et al. (2013) has explored the speech act of request and apology. Abuarrah et al. (2013) conducted a cross cultural study between Palestinian Arabic and British English language comparing the level of indirectness and the strategy patterns used in requests. The researchers aimed at investigating the differences in request realizations between the two languages besides finding out the impact of P, D, and R on the speakers' choice of indirect strategies. The study attempted to identify the differences between the two languages with reference to a number of cultural concepts such as collectivism and individualism concepts, positive and negative politeness, etc. The study findings indicated that social power, social distance, and imposition influence the speakers' choice of strategy patterns in both languages. Findings also revealed that Palestinian Arabic speakers (unlike British English speakers) tend to use positive politeness strategies and that the cultural schema of collectivism is highly represented in the Palestinian Arabic production of requests.

Aribi (2012) investigated Tunisian EFL students' production of English requests in terms of in/directness with reference to socio-cultural variables, i.e., social power, distance, and imposition. The study sample consisted of 67 female students enrolled in the master's program in one of the state universities in Tunisia. The researcher utilized the coding framework of Blum-Kulka et. Al (1989) to analyze the participants' responses to six request situations introduced through a discourse completion test (DCT). Findings showed that the socio-cultural variables were influential on the choice of the request strategies. For example, the participants utilized *direct* strategies when the addressee had a lower social position (power), but they utilized *indirect* strategies when addressing people with high social power. Findings also indicated that they favored *conventionally indirect* strategies when requesting from friends and when the rank of imposition is high. The study also indicated that the participants' responses were influenced by their linguistic and cultural background. The researcher recommended calling the EFL students' attention to the pragmatic variations between L1 (Arabic) and English.

Al-Marrani (2010) carried out a study that aimed at investigating Yemeni EFL learners' (YEFLLs) request strategies in relation to socio-cultural variables (social power, distance, and imposition). The study sample consisted of 196 YEFLLs. The researcher collected the data through WDCTs and utilized the framework introduced by Blum-Kulka (1989) to analyze the YEFLLs' responses. Findings revealed that YEFLLs employed diverse request strategies and means of mitigation according to the variation of the socio-cultural variables in request scenarios included in the DCTs. For example, YEFLLs employed *conventionally indirect* strategies when addressing people with high social power, distance, and imposition. However, they employed *direct* strategies when P and D between the interlocutors are equal or low.

Kılıçkaya (2010) conducted a study to explore request strategies employed by 40 undergraduate EFL Turkish students. Data were collected by DCT. Findings indicated that the study participants were pragmatically competent only in terms of having linguistic means for producing English requests; however, they lack means of sociopragmatic competence that enable them to maintain appropriate level of politeness. The researcher attributed this failure to the limited practice and notable absence of culturally-appropriate forms that textbooks did not sufficiently provide to Turkish EFL learners. Findings also showed that

the most frequently employed strategy is the *conventional direct strategy*, whilst the *nonconventional indirect strategies* were not used at all.

Jalilifar (2009) conducted a cross-sectional study that aimed to investigate the production of request speech act between Irani EFL students and Australian native speakers of English. The study population consisted of 110 participants. Data were collected by DCT including situations with varied social power and distance levels. The study findings revealed that advanced Irani EFL learners overused indirect requests compared to those who are at lower proficiency levels, whilst the Australian native speakers of English balance between direct and indirect strategies. Findings also revealed that Irani EFL Learners pay more attention to social power than to social distance.

Umar (2004) conducted a sociolinguistic study that aimed at contrasting the request strategies utilized by 20 EFL Arab students (from 4 different universities) and 20 British students (from three British universities). The researcher elicited the participants' responses through DCTs. Findings indicated that both groups shared a number of similarities and differences. For example, both groups employed conventionally indirect strategies when addressing people of equal or high social power. Unlike the British group, Arab participants resorted to direct strategies when addressing people of lower positions despite the fact that the Arab group have divergent social and cultural norms.

2.2.2. Studies Related to Apology Speech Act in EFL/ESL Contexts

A recent contrastive pragmatic study was conducted by Ja'afreh (2023). The study investigated apology strategies in Arabic and English as used by EFL university students in Jordan. The data collection tool was written discourse completion task (WDCT) consisting of twelve hypothetical apology scenarios. The researcher utilized Olshtain's model of apology strategies (1989) for analyzing the participants' responses. Results indicated that apology strategies produced in Arabic deviate from those in English in many respects. For example, in Arabic, the participants varied their strategies compared to English, and also, they employed direct and short expressions when apologizing in English. However, similar apology strategies between Arabic and English were *expression of regret* and *offer of apology* which are grouped under one category, i.e., *expression of apology (IFID)*.

Findings in Ja'afreh's study (2023) also signified positive and negative transfer from Arabic to English across the twelve situations. Additionally, the participants showed awareness of the social power variable and utilized varied strategies according to the status of the social power among the interlocutors, and also there was influence of gender on the participants' responses where female participants showed more polite attitude than male ones. Finally, findings indicated that the participants' selection of the apology strategies was shaped by the influence of their religious dimension.

Çetin et al. (2021) conducted a research that aimed at identifying and comparing apology strategies employed by two groups of EFL learners, namely Turkish and Arab learners of English, besides investigating potential correlation between the participants' language proficiency level and their preference of the apology strategies. The number of the participants were 110 students (64 Turkish and 46 Arab) registering at the Turkish universities in Türkiye. The researchers collected the data through a discourse completion task validated from different studies. The collected data were analyzed according to the classification of Olshtain and Cohen's (1983). The study findings revealed that the most preferred apology strategy among the two groups was *Illocutionary Force Indicating Devices*. Furthermore, findings show that the participants' choice of the apology strategies is influenced by their language proficiency levels and social norms.

More recently in Türkiye, CEBİ and BABAYİĞİT (2021) conducted a cross-cultural investigation into apology speech acts. The study addressed the realization of apology speech acts between non-western cultures (represented by Turkish and Kurdish EFL postgraduate learners) compared to English native speakers as representatives of western culture. The study sample consisted of 12 participants (four participants in each group) who were postgraduate students. The data was collected through DCTs. The study results revealed a number of similarities related to the utilized strategies (e.g., the most utilized apology strategies were *expression of apology*, *offering repair*, and *explanation*). These three commonly used strategies are independent from the participants' linguistic variation (L1). However, native speakers of English tend to use the *expressions of regret* more than those of apology. Furthermore, the study showed that the second language proficiency levels are indicators of native-like responses.

Ezzaoua (2020) investigated the production of apology speech act among 133 students distributed almost equally under three groups: 1. Moroccan EFL students, 2. Moroccan native speakers of Arabic, and 3. American native speakers. As a cross-cultural study, the researcher aimed at identifying the most-frequently utilized apology strategy among the study participants, examining the occurrence of pragmatic transfer, and investigating the potential influence of the socio-cultural variables, namely social power and distance on the participants' selection of the apology strategies. The researcher collected the data through DCTs, which were analyzed according to Olshtain and Cohen's classification of apology strategies (1983). Results revealed that the most commonly utilized strategy among the study participants were *illocutionary force indicating devices (IFID)* and *explanation of account (situation)* strategy. Findings also showed that socio-cultural variables affected Moroccan EFL student's choice of apology strategy which reflects the fact that Morocco is among the countries in which the society members are affected to high level of social power.

On the gender differences, Al-sallal and Ahmed (2020) explored apology strategies utilized by 40 Jordanian native speakers of Arabic. The study aimed at exploring the strategies utilized in apology and identifying whether there are differences among male and female participants in producing apology in Arabic. The researchers collected the data through a DCT adopted from Harb's study (2016). The DCT consisted of ten apology situations. Utilizing the framework of Blum Kulka and Olshtain (1989), the researchers analyzed the data and concluded that there were no significant differences among the two groups and there were more similarities than differences. For example, both groups utilized a combination of apology strategies in the same situation for apologizing, and the most utilized apology strategy was an *expression of apology*.

According to Al-sallal and Ahmed's study (2020), female students showed more polite attitude in apology through using euphemism while male participants tend to use direct expression that were expected to be convincing. Additionally, the effect of culture reflected clearly in both group's way of apology. For example, female participants who are considered to be more committed to family and friends, utilized *direct* apology strategy with family members, friends, and relatives more than males who are more committed to be more involved with non-relative links (according to the Arab culture).

Tabatabaei et al. (2018) conducted a small-scale study that aimed at identifying and comparing the apology strategies used by EFL Turkish students and English language native speakers, besides identifying the most commonly used combinations of apology strategies. The study consisted of 32 participants: 16 EFL Turkish students and 16 native speakers of English who are students at one of the State universities in Türkiye. The researchers collected the data through Oral Discourse Completion Test adopted from İstifçi's study (2009). Utilizing the framework of Olshtain and Cohen classification of apology strategies (1983), the researchers transcribed and analyzed the collected data.

Results in the study of Tabatabaei et al. (2018) revealed that *IFIDs* were the most frequently favored strategy among the stud participants. However, Turkish EFL learners seemed to have limited linguistic ability for expressing apology and they emphasized the structures they use much. Results also showed that all the participants in the two groups preferred *Repair* strategy followed by *Explanation*. However, unlike native speakers of English, Turkish EFL learners provided less detailed information for explanation. Regarding the most frequently combinations of strategies used by the two groups, it seems that there are a number of differences in this regard. For example, native speakers of English preferred *IFID* and *repair* only followed by *IFID* and *repair* with some other strategies, while Turkish EFL learners preferred *IFID* and *repair* with some other strategies followed by *IFID* and *repair* only. Findings also indicated that both groups of participants use explicit strategy of apology through using *IFIDs*. Finally, the study indicated that differences among the study groups can be attributed to the possible effect of both L1 and the participants' cultural backgrounds.

Asmali and Yavuz (2014) conducted a cross-cultural study which aimed at investigating apology strategies employed by fourth year ELT students who share different L1 besides examining the participants' pragmatic competence in terms of appropriateness. The study sample consisted of 45 ELT students from three different universities in Türkiye, Poland, and Latvia (15 students from each university). The researchers utilized two tools, namely a written discourse completion test consisting of four hypothetical apology scenarios and a rating scale for appropriateness. Findings indicated that despite the great differences among the participants' cultural background, they all employed very similar apology strategies (e.g., *illocutionary force indications devices (IFID)* and *offer of repair*). However,

Polish ELT students utilized variety of strategies compared to those of the Turkish and Latvian ELT students. Additionally, results indicate that there were no significant differences related to students' pragmatic competence attributed to their nationality according to the rating scale results evaluated by native English speaker of English.

Aydin (2013) conducted a cross-cultural study on apology speech acts. The researcher compared the strategy patterns used by three groups (30 Turkish-speaking participants, 29 English native speakers and 15 EFL Turkish speakers). Data were collected through DCTs. Findings showed different strategy patterns used by Turkish-speaking participants compared to English native speakers. For example, native speakers of English tend to use *Illocutionary Force Indicating Device* more frequently (I am sorry, excuse me, etc.). Findings also show that there are similarities between EFL Turkish speakers and Turkish-speaking participants in terms of the general strategy patterns used in apology speech act. However, advanced non-native speakers of English in Türkiye employed some forms of L1 which reflected L1 pragmatic interference.

Canli and Canli (2013) conducted a small-scale case study investigating apology strategies utilized by EFL teachers of Turkish and English in one of the state universities in Türkiye. The researcher collected the data through a WDCT consisting of 8 hypothetical situations. The researcher utilized the classification of Olshtain and Cohen (1983) for data analysis. Findings indicated that there was no differences among the study participants in the apology strategies they utilized in Turkish and English. *IFIDs* were the most preferred apology strategy. Findings also identified aspects of negative L1 pragmatic transfer on the production of English apology speech acts. Finally, the researcher recommended pedagogical implications related to the importance of teaching pragmatic.

Al-Zumor (2011) conducted an inter-language pragmatic study which aimed at identifying the apology strategies employed by Arab learners of English comparing and contrasting them with those of English native speakers in addition to comparing the apology strategies produced in English language with those produced in Arabic in order to identify features of potential pragmatic transfer. The study sample consisted of 70 Arab learners of English, 16 American native speakers and 16 British native speakers. The data collected by a discourse completion questionnaire designed by the researcher. The researcher analyzed

the received data (utilizing the model of Olshtain and Cohen) and concluded that the deviations among the study participants are caused by the speakers' different realizations of values and concepts related to the context of the apology situation and that the selection of apology strategy varies according to cross-culturally-bounded issues. For example, English and Arab participants assign divergent degrees of the severity of offence to the same situation. Findings in Al-Zumor's study (2011) also indicate that the Arab group in the present study who share different cultural backgrounds (some are Palestinians others are Yemenis, Algerians, and Jordanians) were keen on employing *IFID* much, showing tendency towards acknowledging responsibility, and employing more than one strategy, and emphasizing the expression of apology on the syntactic, semantic, and stylistic levels. Similarly, findings signified differences among American and British native speakers of English.

Istifçi (2009) conducted a study which targeted 40 EFL Turkish students. The study aimed at comparing and contrasting the strategies which Turkish EFL learners utilize for realizing apology speech acts compared to those of native speakers of English. Moreover, the study attempts to compare and contrast the realization of apology speech acts among the Turkish EFL learners attributed to the proficiency level variable. The study findings show a number of similarities and other differences related to the frequency of strategies occurrence among the participants in the two levels: Turkish EFL learners on the one hand and native speakers of English on the other hand. Additionally, the study revealed that L1 affects the participants' choice of apology strategies particularly among intermediate levels.

Batainah and Batainah (2008) conducted a contrastive study between Jordanian Arabic speakers and native speakers of English aiming at analyzing apology strategies and investigating culture differences in gender between the two languages. The study consisted of 200 participants (100 participants for each group). Data were collected through a fifteen-hypothetical apology scenario questionnaire. The study findings indicated a number of discrepancies among the study participants. For example, unlike American native speakers, Jordanian Arabic speakers utilized a combination of two or more strategies in the same situation when making apology. For the influence of gender, there are substantial differences between Jordanian female and male participants: the former group utilized more sensitive and caring expressions for apology compared to those of male participants. However, there

was a very limited and insignificant difference among male and female American participants attributed to gender.

Soliman (2003) conducted a contrastive pragmatic study that aimed at comparing the apology strategies utilized by Egyptian and American speakers. The study findings showed a number of similarities and differences among the study participants. The similarities included using intensifiers and interjection to show sincerity and caring for the addressee's face. Additionally, in both cultures, the participants had clear tendency towards expressing embarrassment for the wrong behavior/action they did. One of the prominent differences was that Arab Egyptian way of apology is clearly influenced by the religious dimension.

2.2.3. Studies Related to Request and Apology in EFL/ESL Contexts

The early investigation of request and apology speech acts was conducted by Olshtain and Cohen (1983) through a study known as "Cross Cultural Speech Act Realization project". It is a cross-cultural study that investigated the speech acts of request and apology and it aimed at uncovering the interlingual variations in seven languages. The study findings revealed that all the seven languages under scrutiny employed indirect requests and there were cross-cultural differences in the production of request and apology speech acts such as social constraints and cultural factors.

Another study was conducted by Alzebaree and Yazuv (2017). The study aimed at comparing and contrasting the strategies used by Kurdish EFL learners and those used by native speakers of English in producing request and apology speech acts. The study participants consisted of two groups: the Kurdish EFL learners (83 undergraduate students from five state and private university in the Iraqi Kurdistan area), and the second group is 14 native speakers of English with different academic degrees. The study tools were a discourse completion task and a rating scale. For the analysis of apology speech acts, the researcher adopted the framework of Olshtain and Cohen (1983), while the framework of Blum-Kulka et al. (1989) was utilized to analyze request speech acts.

According to the study of Alzebaree and Yazuv (2017), findings revealed that the two groups of the study utilized *conventionally indirect* strategies when producing requests. However, Kurdish EFL learners employed *direct* and *explicit* strategies more than participants of the other group, i.e., native speakers of English. Furthermore, the strategies utilized by the two groups in producing apology speech acts were similar. However, differences were reported between male and female EFL Kurdish students in producing request and apology speech acts, e.g., males employed more *direct* strategies than females in requests. It is worth mentioning that the differences between males and females in the strategies utilized for producing apology speech acts were not significant. Finally, findings indicated that the responses of EFL Kurdish students were generally appropriate in terms of pragmatic competence.

Muthusamy and Farashaiyan (2016) conducted a study that aimed at identifying the strategies utilized by postgraduate students in producing request and apology strategies besides investigating the students' interlanguage pragmatic knowledge through examining the effects of non-contextual (situational) variables, i.e., social power, distance, and imposition on the participants' choice of apology and request strategies and modifications in requests. Additionally, the study aimed at identifying the difficulties that the students face in producing request and apology speech acts. The study participants consisted of 130 postgraduate students (with different nationalities) studying at 3 different Malaysian universities. Utilizing the mixed-methods research design, the researchers collected quantitative and qualitative data through two tools, namely Written Discourse Completion Test (WDCT) and semi-structured interview.

The major findings of Muthusamy and Farashaiyan's study (2016) revealed that *Illocutionary Force Indicating Devices* (IFID) was the most frequently preferred strategies utilized for producing apology speech acts, while the *conventionally indirect* expressions were more frequently used for producing request speech acts. Findings also revealed that the social power, distance, and imposition had no influence on the participants' selection of the apology and request strategies; however, these situational factors influence the use of the mitigating strategies. For the modifications in requests, the participants utilized external modifiers (e.g., please) more than internal ones. The results of the interviews showed that there are a number of difficulties that postgraduate students face in producing speech acts

including grammar, vocabulary and expressions, and language structure. Finally, the study presented some implications for SLA research.

To sum up, the literature review section introduced the previous related studies which covered request and apology speech acts in EFL/ESL contexts not only in Palestine and Türkiye but also in other ESL and EFL contexts worldwide. After reviewing the related previous studies, it became evident that there is a wide gap in research related to EFL learners' realization and production of request and apology speech acts in many respects as follows:

1. There is scarcity in the studies comparing and contrasting the two contexts under scrutiny, namely the Palestinian and Turkish contexts.
2. There is scarcity in the pragmatics-based studies in the Palestinian context.
3. Most of the studies conducted in Türkiye focused on comparing Turkish EFL students with native speakers of English; however, these are small-scale studies.
4. There is scarcity in the studies investigating pragmatic competence in relation to speech acts theory in the Turkish context.
5. Most of the studies conducted in Türkiye covered a limited number of socio-cultural variables in relation to request and apology speech acts.
6. Most of the studies conducted in the Turkish context utilized insufficient data collection tools.
7. There is scarcity in the studies that cover the sociolinguistic aspects in relation with pragmatic competence or speech act theory.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

Chapter three presents a comprehensive description of research design, the study context and sample, the data collection instruments and how they are designed, validated, piloted and administrated, data collection procedures, data analysis procedures, ethical attentions, and trustworthiness-related issues.

3.1. Research Design

The researcher adopts the mixed-methods explanatory sequential research design, which allows the integration of quantitative and qualitative methods in a single study. The use of mixed methods design can help in investigating the research topic thoroughly. According to Creswell and Plano Clark (2011), mixed-methods explanatory sequential design utilizes both quantitative and qualitative data in two independent rounds/stages.

The first phase starts with collecting and analyzing quantitative data, while in the second phase, qualitative data is collected and analyzed. The rationale for using this design is that the quantitative data provides a general picture of the issue under scrutiny, and the qualitative data helps in giving a more elaborate explanation of this general picture. Furthermore, employing mixed-methods research designs helps in achieving triangulation, which refers to the use of multiple approaches in investigating the research questions in order to ensure confidence in the research findings (Bryman, 2004).

3.2. The Scope of the Research

The present research seeks to investigate EFL learners' pragmatic competence in producing English requests and apologies and identify the potential correlation between pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic competence, besides identifying and contrasting the strategies which EFL learners at Alaqsa university in Palestine and ÇOMÜ in Türkiye employ in producing request and apology in terms of (in)directness. Moreover, it aims at investigating the potential influence of P, D, and R/severity of offence on EFL learners' way of expressing requests and apologies.

The current study was conducted in the first and second semesters of the academic year 2023-2024. The researcher selected two state universities in two different EFL contexts, namely Alaqsa University in Palestine and Çanakkale Onsekiz Mart University in Türkiye in order to comparatively investigate the research topics under scrutiny.

Alaqsa University in the Gaza strip is one of the biggest state universities in Palestine. It offers a variety of English Language programs such as ELT and ELL programs. ELT is an officially accredited program at Al-Aqsa University. The normal duration of graduation is four years after successfully completing all the program requirements. The ELT program offers a number of courses in a total of 132 credit hours covering 76 credit hours of obligatory English language courses taught in English and 60 credit hours of general university requirements. The students of ELT program study a variety of courses including English language skills courses, linguistics courses, teaching methodologies courses, translation courses, and literature courses.

On the other hand, ÇOMÜ is one of the state universities in Türkiye. It was established in 1992. The ELT department at ÇOMÜ is one of the foreign language departments. The faculty of education at ÇOMÜ offers ELT and ELL programs. ELT program started in the year of 1993-1994: It is a four-year program where students can enroll in the ELT program after meeting the admission requirements. The ELT students can have their BA certificate after successfully completing the program requirements. The ELT program offers a number of courses in a total of 130 credit hours covering 63 credit hours of obligatory English language courses taught in English and 67 credit hours of general and educational university courses. The students of ELT program study a variety of courses, including English language skills courses, linguistics courses, teaching methodologies courses, translation courses, and literature courses.

Through reviewing the outlines of the English language courses in the ELT department programs at the two universities, the researcher found that developing students' pragmatic competence was notably an ignored objective, and rarely was it clearly focused on in most of the related courses. For example, at Alaqsa University, pragmatic competence was introduced as a subsidiary topic in very few courses (e.g., Introduction to Linguistics, and Selective Linguistic Topics). An example of discussing pragmatics (marginally) in

Introduction of Linguistics course is that it only focuses on the definition of pragmatics. Additionally, pragmatic competence was not introduced as an objective or a skill to be developed. Similarly, at ÇOMÜ, pragmatic competence was marginally introduced in few courses such as Linguistics (2), and Verbal Communication. For example, in Linguistics (2) in ÇOMÜ, there is only one topic (in the course outline) that introduces pragmatics: it is entitled "The analysis of pragmatics", and in Verbal Communication course, there is a broad objective stating "developing students' ability to communicate effectively", which may be considered a relevant objective that focuses on pragmatic competence. Furthermore, Pragmatics as a university course was neither introduced as an obligatory course nor as an elective one in either of the two programs in the two universities.

3.3. Sample of the Study

The researcher employs one of the non-probability sampling techniques, namely the convenience sampling, which is a very frequently utilized sampling techniques in research (Dörnyei and Csizer, 2012). Additionally, convenience sampling is widespread in intercultural studies (Saunders et al., 2012). The present study consisted of two groups. The first group consisted of 153 EFL students at the ELT department from Alaqsa University, Palestine. The other group consisted of 125 EFL students at the department of English language at ÇOMÜ, Türkiye. The students in each group are either first-year students (freshmen) or fourth-year (senior) students. Each group encompasses male and female students. Table 2 presents the participants' characteristics in each context.

Table 2
Distribution of the study sample

University	Level	Male	%	Female	%	Total
Alaqsa University	Freshmen	16	(18.6%)	70	(81.4%)	86
	Senior	11	(16.4%)	56	(83.6%)	67
	Total	27	(17.7%)	126	(82.3%)	153
ÇOMÜ	Freshmen	22	(33.8%)	43	(66.2%)	65
	Senior	24	(40.0%)	36	(60.0%)	60
	Total	46	(36.8%)	79	(63.2%)	125

3.4. Data Collection Instruments

The type of data that the current research is concerned with entails appropriate instruments in order to collect as relevant, authentic, and adequate data as possible; otherwise, the trustworthiness of the findings is vulnerable to losing reliability if the data collection instrument is inadequately utilized. In order to achieve the study objectives and ensure confidence in the study findings, the researcher collected as much authentic data as possible through using a number of quantitative and qualitative tools as follows:

1. Multiple-choice discourse completion test (MDCTs).
2. Written discourse completion test (WDCTs).
3. Rating scale.

The researcher selected MDCTs (as the first study tool), which are extensively used as instruments for pragmatics research. MDCTs allow collecting as much data as possible without being a time-consuming tool. Brown (2001) asserted that MDCTs are commonly utilized in the field of pragmatics because they allow the participants to choose what they believe is the best alternative for a written description of a situation.

In the same vein, DCTs are one of the major data-collection instruments in pragmatics-based research works. If adequately designed, DCTs can provide valuable data related to pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic competence (Spencer-Oatey, 2008; Kasper and Rose, 2002). DCTs are advantageous and practical in that they help in collecting data from large-sized samples (Hartford and Bardovi-Harlig, 1992).

DCTs are not independent of drawbacks; e.g., they may not reflect the naturally occurring discourses (Ogiermann 2009). Yet, Yuan (2001) asserts that despite the limitations of DCTs, they are useful tools in the initial investigation of speech acts realization strategies. Finally, the use of rating scales, Cohen, Manion, and Morrison (2007) stated that rating scales are flexible tools because they provide a number of options through which the respondents have enough space to decide what to choose.

3.4.1. The First Instrument (MDCTs)

The researcher developed the first study tool through several steps in order to achieve the best level of rigor in the study results through validating the study tools. The first step was generating the scenarios. Having reviewed the related previous studies and literature, the researcher, along with three English language experts (university staff) in Palestine and Türkiye, participated in this phase through proposing a number of hypothetical scenarios covering request and apology speech acts.

The second step was introducing the suggested scenarios (a pool of scenarios) to a number of ELT students at Alaqsa University and Türkiye. The aim of this step was to check the likelihood of each scenario in reality as viewed by the learners. A number of 30 students were asked to choose the most likely occurring scenarios by numbering the scenarios provided to them in a form of a list.

A subsequent step was reaching consensus on what scenarios to include and forming the alternatives (options) for each scenario. A fourth step was the initial piloting by introducing the scenarios to ELT staff and students. After a thorough review of the steps followed in initiating the first study instrument, the researcher designed a multiple-choice discourse completion test consisting of 12 English request and apology scenarios (see Appendix 2). All the hypothetical scenarios are different in terms of social distance (D), social power (P), rank of imposition (R)/severity of offence as explained in Table 3.

Table 3
Distribution of social distance, power, and imposition in request and apology situations in the MDCTs and WDCTs

Variables	Situation1	Situation2	Situation3	Situation4	Situation5	Situation6
Social	Higher	Equal	Low	Higher	Equal	Low
Power	(S>H)	S=H	S<H	S>H	S=H	S<H
Social	Not close	Close	Close	Close	Not close	Not close
Distance	(D+)	(D-)	(D-)	(D-)	(D+)	(D+)
Imposition	Low	Low	High	High	High	Low
	(L)	(L)	(H)	(H)	(H)	(L)

Each hypothetical scenario is followed by a number of alternatives from which learners are asked to choose how they would respond to the scenario. Each alternative represents a strategy pattern. For example, request scenarios are followed by four patterns according to Trosborg's taxonomy of request realization strategies (1995), as shown in Table 4 below. As for apology scenarios, there are five alternatives representing five different strategy patterns (see Table 5) according to Olshain and Cohen's classification of apology strategies (1983). EFL learners' selection of the strategy in each scenario indicates the level of indirectness. The quantitative data obtained from the MDCT will be utilized for comparing and contrasting the strategy used by freshmen and senior EFL learners in Palestine and in Türkiye.

Table 4

Sub-strategies represented in the alternatives of the request scenarios in MDCTs

Scenario	Alternative 1	Alternative 2	Alternative 3	Alternative 4
1	Performatives	Willingness	Desire/needs	Hints
2	Imperatives	Permission	Wishes	Hints
3	Performatives	Suggestion formula	Desire/needs	Hints
4	Obligation	Ability	Desire/needs	Hints
5	Performatives	Permission	Desire/needs	Hints
6	Imperatives	Ability	Desire/needs	Hints

Table 5

Sub-strategies represented in the alternatives of the apology scenarios in MDCTs

Alternative 1	Alternative 3
1. Expression of regret	Expressing lack of intent
2. Request for forgiveness	Accepting the blame
3. Request for forgiveness	Expressing self-deficiency
4. Offer of apology	Accepting the blame
5. Offer of apology	Recognizing the other person as deserving apology
6. Expression of regret	Expressing lack of intent

The second, fourth, and fifth alternatives are *explanation of the situation, an offer of repair, and promise for forbearance* in all the six scenarios

3.4.2. The Second Instrument (WDCTs)

The WDCTs consist of 12 hypothetical scenarios signifying request and apology speech acts equally. The aim of the WDCTs is to invite the participants to write by using their own language their way of expressing English request and apology in a number of scenarios that vary in P, D, and R /severity of offence (see Table 3). The 12 scenarios included in the WDCTs are the same as those of the MDCTs in term of the inclusion of the same socio-cultural variables but different in their content.

The WDCTs (see Appendix 3) allowed the researcher to collect qualitative data that are utilized for two purposes: firstly, through students' responses to the WDCTs, the researcher can support and elaborate the quantitative data collected previously through the MDCTs which allows the integration of both quantitative and qualitative data and also provide comprehensive understanding of the students' responses of the first tools (MDCTs). Secondly, the data obtained from the WDCTs can be utilized as authentic language through which raters can evaluate students' responses in light of the objectives of the present research. The researcher followed the same steps that were explained in the MDCTs for designing and validating the WDCTs.

3.4.3. The Third Instrument (Rating Scale)

The current study seeks to scrutinize EFL learners' pragmatic competence (pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic competence) and also examines whether they are correlated. Depending on the study objectives and the conceptualization of pragmatic competence and its components (pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic competence), the researcher designed a five-point Likert scale consisting of two sub-scales as follows:

1. The first subscale focuses on the participants' pragmalinguistic competence, which focuses on using appropriate linguistic elements (including lexical resources and grammatical accuracy). The guiding rubrics for evaluating pragmalinguistic competence are adapted from those of the IELTS writing rubrics (*How IELTS Is Assessed* | *Take IELTS, n.d.*). (see Appendix 4)
2. The second subscale focuses on the participants' sociopragmatic competence, which is concerned with using socially appropriate language in different contexts that vary

in social power, social distance, and imposition. The guiding rubrics for evaluating sociopragmatic competence are based on the assessment rubrics introduced by Ishihara and Cohen (2010).

The two expert raters were kindly asked to read the participants' responses to twelve situations, which were elicited from WDCTs, and then tick the number that represents their evaluation of the participants' responses in each situation according to the scale that ranges from 1 (entirely inappropriate) to 5 (entirely appropriate).

3.5. Research Procedures

The current research was carried out in the academic year 2023-2024, and it targeted two different groups belonging to two different EFL contexts, namely EFL students at Alaqsa University and ÇOMÜ. Through adopting the mixed-methods sequential explanatory design, the researcher collected quantitative then qualitative data through independent states (two successive phases). Firstly, the researcher collected quantitative data through the rating scale (based on participants' responses to WDCTs); subsequently, qualitative data were collected through WDCTs, and then quantitative data were collected one month later through MDCTs.

The researcher utilized Google Forms to change the hard copies of the study tools to soft copies that can be flexibly sent to the participants, especially because the researcher could not travel to Türkiye and also because of the blockade in the Gaza Strip due to the war that broke out in 2023. The researcher started collecting the data after obtaining formal permission from the ethical committee at ÇOMÜ (see Appendix 1) by contacting students online and sending them the first study tool (MDCTs), and then a month later the second tool (WDCTs) was sent to them.

The researcher could contact EFL learners at Alaqsa University in Palestine, as the researcher works there, and also the researcher could contact the Turkish students by contacting the staff members who encouraged the students to cooperate voluntarily with the researcher. Subsequently, the same qualitative data were utilized by the researcher who sent students' responses of the WDCTs to two expert raters (an American native speaker and a

PhD academic staff specialized in linguistics and pragmatics) who evaluated them according to clear and concise rubrics that were explained in the rating scale form.

3.6. Data Analysis Procedures

The researcher adopted several descriptive and inferential statistical treatments that suit the nature of the data collected through the study tools. For example, frequencies and percentages were utilized to identify and compare the occurrences of the strategies that EFL students utilize when producing requests and apologies and also to find whether there are differences between the participants' selection of the strategies attributed to gender.

The qualitative data obtained from the WDCTs were coded by the researcher and another coder in order to ensure the trustworthiness of the data coding process. The coding process was conducted according to the framework of Trosborg's classification of request strategies (1995) and Olshtain and Cohen's classification of apology strategies (1983). Thus, the qualitative data were utilized quantitatively through counting the frequencies and percentages of the request and apology strategies that students employed. The results obtained from the WDCTs elaborated on those obtained from the MDCTs.

The researcher utilized the same qualitative data to achieve another study objective, namely investigating students' pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic competence. Consequently, the researcher and the coder first transcribed a total number of 2844 of sentences obtained from 237 students' responses to WDCTs (1836 sentences from 153 EFL students at Alaqa University and 1008 sentences from 84 EFL students at ÇOMÜ).

Subsequently, the transcribed data were sorted into separate sheets (12 separate sheets for the 12 scenarios of the WDCT in each context). For example, all the responses of the first scenario were listed in one sheet and then sent to the raters for conducting the evaluation process according to the rating scale, and so was done for the rest of the scenarios in both contexts. The data received from the raters were entered into SPSS (Version 25); subsequently, the researcher conducted a t-test after calculating the inter-rater agreement between the two raters and ensured the normal distribution of the data. Additionally,

Pearson's r was utilized to identify the correlation between pragmalinguistic competence and sociopragmatic competence.

3.7. Summary of Data Collection and Analysis

Research Questions	Data Collection Instrument	Statistical Treatment
RQ1: Are there significant differences between freshmen and senior ELT students' pragmatic competence in producing English request and apology speech acts at ÇOMÜ and Alaşsa University?	- WDCTs - Rating Scale	Independent Samples t-test
RQ2: To what extent are pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic competence interrelated in the production of English request and apology speech acts by ELT students at ÇOMÜ and Alaşsa University?	- WDCTs - Rating Scale	Pearson's r correlation test
RQ3: Are there differences between freshmen and senior ELT students' selection of request and apology strategies and to what extent is their selection influenced by social power, distance, and imposition?	- MDCTs - WDCTs	Frequencies and Percentages

3.8. Ethical Considerations

Before starting the data collection stage, the researcher applied the necessary forms that are required to obtain an official permission from the Ethical Committee at ÇOMÜ. The researcher received an approval in December 2022, by which the researcher was able to conduct the current research and collect the required data from the students at ÇOMÜ. Believing that participating in research activities is voluntary, the researcher stated a clear statement in all the study tools indicating that participation is not mandatory and has no relation to any university evaluation or grading system. The researcher received the participants' consent to voluntarily participate as respondents in the present study. Confidentiality was also clearly stated in the introductory part of all the tools. As for the

rater, they volunteered to work with the researcher and welcomed any future reference by any institution.

3.9. Trustworthiness

Through all the steps of current research, the researcher documented all the details related to the research processes, particularly those of research instrument design and validation, data collection steps, data analysis, results presentation and analysis, and findings in order to ensure trustworthiness not only in the study findings but also in all the preceding steps. According to Guba and Lincoln (1989) trustworthiness can be ensured through four criteria, namely credibility, dependability, confirmability, and transferability.

The researcher achieved credibility by ensuring the adequacy of the data collected, which was established by employing more than one tool for data collection, e.g., data related to identifying request strategies were collected through both MDCTs and WDCTs. Credibility also can be achieved through prolonged engagement and member checks. The researcher spent considerable time collecting, coding, transcribing, and analyzing the data with the assistance of member checks.

Secondly, the researcher ensured dependability through detailed audit, which refers to documenting all the research processes, e.g., design, analysis, results, etc. For example, the researcher provided a detailed audit of the process of designing the current study instrument. Thirdly, the researcher achieved confirmability, which refers to minimizing biases, through presenting the results and spotting some limitations in the current research work. Finally, the researcher provided a thick description and freed the space for the readers to decide whether the findings are applicable to their context, which represents the fourth criteria, namely transferability.

The researcher employed different forms of triangulation, which were introduced by Denzin (1978). For example, the researcher utilized data source triangulation by collecting quantitative and qualitative data from different contexts, namely freshmen and senior EFL learners in two different universities in Palestine and Türkiye. Moreover, the method triangulation that was achieved through the use of more than one method for gathering the

required data (e.g., MDCTs, WDCTs, and rating scales). The researcher also utilized the investigator triangulation, which is achieved through the cooperation of other researchers (as inter-raters and inter-coders) in the research process.

3.10. Chapter Summary

Chapter three explains comprehensively the methodology adopted in the current research. It introduces the research design and describes the scope and sample of the study. The current research utilized the mixed-methods explanatory sequential research design, which allows the integration of both quantitative and qualitative data. Chapter three also introduces the data collection instruments that the researcher utilized and how the study instruments were designed and validated to collect as much reliable data as possible. Subsequently, chapter three presents the procedures of the data collection and how data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistical treatments. Finally, it presents the ethical issues that the researcher considered in the current research and explains the trustworthiness criteria that the researcher followed throughout the whole research process.

CHAPTER FOUR

FINDINGS

This chapter views the results of the present research, which aims at investigating pragmatic competence among ELT students at Alaqsa University and ÇOMÜ, identifying the potential interrelation between the two integral components of pragmatic competence, namely pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic competence, comparing the strategies and sub-strategies that freshmen and senior ELT utilized in the production of English request and apology speech acts, and investigating the potential influence of some variables such as gender, social power, social distance, and imposition on ELT students' selection of English request and apology strategies.

4.1. Findings Related to Research Question 1

The first question in the current research examines whether there are differences between freshmen and senior ELT students' pragmatic competence in producing request and apology speech acts, besides investigating whether there are differences among the study participants attributed to gender. It is formed as follows: "Are there significant differences between freshmen and senior ELT students' pragmatic competence in the production of request and apology speech acts at ÇOMÜ and Alaqsa University?".

The researcher posed three minor questions whose answers will lead to the answer of the first major question. The minor questions seek to examine ELT students' pragmatic competence through examining pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic competence, which are the two components of pragmatic competence. The researcher collected the data through the WDCTs, which allow students to express in writing their responses to a number of request and apology scenarios. The researcher utilized the students' responses and introduced them to two raters, including an American native speaker and an expert in the field of pragmatics.

The raters evaluated the students' responses through a five-point Likert scale (see APPENDIX 4), which is divided into two subscales, each of which ranges from 1 (entirely inappropriate response) to 5 (entirely appropriate). The two subscales evaluate pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic competence according to clear rubrics (see

APPENDIX 4). The researcher conducted an independent samples t-test to compare freshmen students' scores in pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic competence with those of senior students at the two contexts, i.e., Alaşsa University and OMÜ.

4.1.1. Findings Related to the First Minor Question

The first minor question is formulated as follows: "Are there significant differences between freshmen and senior ELT students in the production of request speech acts in terms of pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic competence?". An independent samples t-test was conducted to compare freshmen students' mean scores in pragmalinguistic competence in six request scenarios ($M = 24.73$, $SD = 2.94$) with senior students' mean score ($M = 25.04$, $SD = 2.60$) and subsequently freshmen students' mean score in sociopragmatic competence ($M = 22.01$, $SD = 3.52$) with those of senior students' ($M = 23.0$, $SD = 3.12$) at Alaşsa University. The results showed that no significant difference was identified among freshmen and senior ELT students in their pragmatic competence in terms of pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic competence when producing requests (see Table 6).

Table 6

Independent Samples T-Test of pragmatic competence among ELT students at Alaşsa University (Request) ($n=153$)

Competence	Level	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>p</i>
Pragmalinguistic	Freshmen	86	24.73	2.94	-.684	151	0.49
	Senior	67	25.04	2.60			
Sociopragmatic	Freshmen	86	22.01	3.52	-1.807		0.73
	Senior	67	23.0	3.12			

According to the Turkish context, freshmen students' mean scores and standard deviation in pragmalinguistic competence is ($M = 22.16$, $SD = 2.11$), while senior students' score is ($M = 26.33$, $SD = 1.80$) and freshmen students' mean score in sociopragmatic competence is ($M = 20.20$, $SD = 2.49$), whereas senior students' mean score is ($M = 24.30$, $SD = 2.21$). The results in Table 7 indicate that there is statistically significant difference among freshmen and senior ELT students at OMÜ in favor of senior students in terms of

pragmalinguistic competence ($M = 26.33$, $SD = 1.80$) $t(84) = -9.49$ -, $p < .001$ and sociopragmatic competence ($M = 24.30$, $SD = 2.21$), $t(84) = -6.99$ -, $p < .001$.

Table 7

Independent Samples T-Test of pragmatic competence among ELT students at ÇOMÜ (Request) ($n=84$)

Competence	Level	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>p</i>
Pragmalinguistic	Freshmen	48	22.16	2.11	-9.49-	82	.000
	Senior	36	26.33	1.80			
Sociopragmatic	Freshmen	48	20.20	2.94	-6.99-		.000
	Senior	36	24.30	2.21			

4.1.2. Findings Related to the Second Minor Question

The second minor question is formulated, "Are there significant differences between freshmen and senior ELT students in the production of apology speech acts in terms of pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic competence?". An independent samples t-test was conducted to compare freshmen students' mean score in pragmalinguistic competence in six apology scenarios ($M = 19.02$, $SD = 3.16$) with senior students' mean score ($M = 20.35$, $SD = 2.07$) and subsequently freshmen students' mean scores in sociopragmatic competence ($M = 17.55$, $SD = 2.78$) with those of senior students ($M = 18.50$, $SD = 1.86$) at Alaqsa University.

The results revealed significant differences between freshmen and senior ELT students in favor of senior student in terms of pragmalinguistic competence ($M = 20.35$, $SD = 2.07$) $t(153) = -2.99$, $p < .001$ and sociopragmatic competence ($M = 18.50$, $SD = 1.86$) $t(153) = -2.34$, $p < .05$ (see Table 8).

Table 8

Independent Samples T-Test of pragmatic competence among ELT students at Alaqa University (Apology) ($n=153$)

Competence	Level	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>p</i>
Pragmalinguistic	Freshmen	86	19.02	3.16	-2.99	151	.003
	Senior	67	20.35	2.07			
sociopragmatic	Freshmen	86	17.55	2.87	-2.34		.020
	Senior	67	18.50	1.86			

Regarding the Turkish context, freshmen students' mean score in pragmalinguistic competence in the apology scenarios is ($M = 20.25$, $SD = 3.36$) and senior students' mean score is ($M = 22.27$, $SD = 2.64$). In contrast, freshmen students' mean score in sociopragmatic competence is ($M = 19.18$, $SD = 3.00$) and senior students' sociopragmatic mean score is ($M = 20.52$, $SD = 2.31$). The results in table 9 indicate that there is statistically significant difference between freshmen and senior ELT students in favor of senior student in terms of pragmalinguistic competence ($M = 22.27$, $SD = 2.64$) $t(84) = -2.98$, $p < .005$ and sociopragmatic competence ($M = 20.52$, $SD = 2.31$). $t(84) = -2.22$, $p < .05$.

Table 9

Independent Samples T-Test of pragmatic competence among ELT students at ÇOMÜ (apology) ($n=84$)

Competence	Level	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>p</i>
Pragmalinguistic	Freshmen	48	20.25	3.36	-2.989-	84	.004
	Senior	36	22.27	2.64			
sociopragmatic	Freshmen	48	19.18	3.00	-2.225-		.029
	Senior	36	20.52	2.31			

4.1.3. Findings Related to the Third Minor Question

The third minor question is formulated, "Are there significant differences between ELT male and female students' pragmatic competence in the production of request and apology speech acts in terms of pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic competence?".

In order to examine whether there are significant differences among ELT students' scores in pragmatic competence attributed to gender, the researcher utilized the raters' evaluations of the ELT students in the WDCTs and held a comparison between freshmen and senior male students with freshmen and senior female students in request and apology speech acts.

In the Palestinian context, results in Table 10 indicate that there is no statistically significant difference between male and female students in terms of pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic competence in request speech act. However, results indicated statistically significant differences in apology speech acts in favor of male students in pragmalinguistic competence ($M = 20.14$, $SD = 2.59$) $t(153) = -2.99$, $p < .005$, whereas the differences were in favor of female students in sociopragmatic competence ($M = 17.98$, $SD = 2.65$). $t(153) = -2.34$, $p < .005$.

Table 10

Independent Samples T-Test of pragmatic competence among male and female students at Alaqsa University ($n=153$)

		Request					
	Gender	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>p</i>
Pragmalinguistic	Male	27	24.92	2.71	-.684-	151	.495
	Female	126	24.85	2.82			
Sociopragmatic	Male	27	23.40	3.12	-1.80-		.073
	Female	126	22.23	3.40			
		Apology					
	Gender	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>p</i>
Pragmalinguistic	Male	27	20.14	2.59	-2.99-	151	.003
	Female	126	19.49	2.85			
sociopragmatic	Male	27	17.92	1.83	-2.34-		.020
	Female	126	17.98	2.65			

The results related to the Turkish context (see Table 11) indicate that there is no statistically significant difference between male and female students in terms of pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic competence in request and apology speech acts.

Table 11

Independent Samples T-Test of request and apology among male and female students at ÇOMÜ ($n=84$)

		Request					
	Gender	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>p</i>
Pragmalinguistic	Male	27	23.59	2.56	-.790-	82	.432
	Female	57	24.12	3.00			
Sociopragmatic	Male	27	22.11	2.95	.276		.783
	Female	57	21.89	3.52			
		Apology					
	Gender	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>p</i>
Pragmalinguistic	Male	27	21.22	2.66	.201	82	.841
	Female	57	21.07	3.47			
sociopragmatic	Male	27	19.66	2.71	-.214-		.831
	Female	57	19.80	2.85			

4.2. Findings Related to the Second Major Question

The second major question aims at identifying whether there is a correlation between the two components of pragmatic competence, i.e., pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic competence. It is formulated as follows: "To what extent are pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic competence interrelated in the production of request and apology speech acts by ELT students at ÇOMÜ and Alaqsa University?". The researcher utilized ELT students' responses to the WDCTs which were evaluated by expert raters who evaluated students' responses according to two sub scales (pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic).

In order to examine the potential correlation between pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic competence, the researcher utilized Pearson's correlation coefficient as shown in Table 12 below. For request scenarios, Pearson's r revealed a medium positive correlation, $r = .51$ between pragmalinguistic competence ($M = 24.86$, $SD = 2.79$) and sociopragmatic competence ($M = 22.44$, $SD = 3.38$) among ELT students at Alaqsa University.

However, in apology speech act, Pearson's r indicated a strong positive correlation, $r = .85$ between pragmalinguistic competence ($M = 19.60$, $SD = 2.81$) and sociopragmatic competence ($M = 17.97$, $SD = 2.52$).

Table 12

Correlation between pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic competence among ELT students at Alaqa University ($n = 153$)

		Request	Apology
Pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic competence	Pearson Correlation	.512**	.850**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 13 shows the results in the Turkish context. For request scenarios, Pearson's r revealed strong positive correlation, $r = .79$ between pragmalinguistic competence ($M = 23.95$, $SD = 2.86$) and sociopragmatic competence ($M = 21.96$, $SD = 3.33$) among ELT students at ÇOMÜ. Similarly, in apology speech act, Pearson's r indicated a strong positive correlation, $r = .88$ between pragmalinguistic competence ($M = 21.11$, $SD = 3.22$) and sociopragmatic competence ($M = 19.76$, $SD = 2.79$).

Table 13

Correlation between pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic competence among ELT students at ÇOMÜ ($n = 84$)

		Request	Apology
Pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic competence	Pearson Correlation	.796**	.887**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000

4.3. Findings Related to Research Question 3

The third major question is formulated, "Are there differences between freshmen and senior ELT students' selection of request and apology strategies, and to what extent is their selection influenced by social power, distance, and imposition?". The researcher posed four minor questions, whose answers will provide a comprehensive picture of the third question, as follows:

1. How similar and different are the strategies employed by freshmen and senior ELT students in producing requests in terms of (in)directness?
2. How similar and different are the strategies used by freshmen and senior ELT students in producing apology speech acts in terms of (in)directness?
3. To what extent is freshmen and senior students' selection of request and apology strategies influenced by social power, social distance, and imposition?
4. Are there differences among freshmen and senior ELT students' selection of request and apology strategies attributed to gender?

4.3.1. Findings Related to the First Minor Question

To thoroughly investigate how similar and different the strategies employed by the study participants are, the researcher collected both quantitative and qualitative data, which suits the nature of the mixed-methods sequential explanatory research design that combines quantitative then qualitative data in two successive phases. In the first phase, the researcher collected and analyzed the quantitative data through MDCTs utilizing Trosborg's Taxonomy (1995) for analyzing the request strategies which ELT students chose in six different situations. Then, the second phase started by collecting and analyzing the qualitative data through WDCTs (utilizing the same taxonomy of Trosborg's).

All the scenarios in the MDCTs invite the study participants to choose one out of four given alternatives that best represents their response to make request in six situations that vary in the degree of social distance, social power, and imposition. Each alternative represents a sub-strategy that belongs to one of four general strategies according to Trosborg's taxonomy. Similarly, the WDCTs contains six scenarios that are similar to those

in the MDCTs in terms of social power, distance, and imposition but different in their content which allows the participants to express -by writing- their response to a number of different situations that are likely to occur in their daily life.

Findings of the First Request Scenario in the MDCTs

The first request scenario in the MDCTs invites the participants to choose one out of four given alternatives that represents the participants' potential response when making a request at a restaurant. The context of the first scenario assumes that the requester (the participant in the six scenarios) does not know the requestee, which means that there is social distance among them (D+). The context also assumes that the requester has power over the requestee (S>H). For the degree of imposition, the first scenario represents a low level of imposition (R). Below is the first request scenario as appeared in the MDCTs:

Scenario One: Imagine that you are having lunch at a restaurant, and you want the waiter/waitress to bring you another bottle of water. What would you say to her or him?

1. I would like to ask you to bring me another bottle of water, please.
2. Would you bring me another bottle of water, please?
3. I need you to bring me another bottle of water, please.
4. Excuse me. It seems that I am very thirsty and one bottle of water is not enough.

The results of the participants' responses to the MDCTs show that the most frequently-utilized strategy among freshmen ELT students at Alaqa University is *conventionally indirect (hearer-based)* strategy 34 (39.6%), followed by the *direct* strategy 27 (31.3%), then *indirect* strategy 24 (27.9%), while senior ELT students selected the *direct* strategy 36 (53.7%), followed by the *conventionally indirect (hearer-based)* strategy 16 (23.9%), then *indirect* strategy 14 (20.9%) as shown in Table 14. However, in ÇOMÜ, both freshmen and senior ELT students favored the *conventionally indirect (hearer-based)* strategy 58 (89.2%), 50 (83.3%), respectively. Unlike the results concluded from freshmen and senior ELT students at Alaqa University, none of the two groups at ÇOMÜ utilized the *indirect* strategy except one freshmen student.

Table 14

General request strategies used by the two groups in the MDCTs (Request1)

Strategy	Alaqa University		ÇOMÜ	
	Freshmen N=86	Senior N=67	Freshmen N= 65	Senior N= 60
Direct	27 (31.3%)	36 (53.7%)	6 (9.2%)	10 (16.7%)
CI (h-b)	34 (39.6%)	16 (23.9%)	58 (89.2%)	50 (83.3%)
CI (s-b)	1 (1.2%)	1 (1.5%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)
Indirect	24 (27.9%)	14 (20.9%)	1 (1.7%)	0 (0.0%)
Total	86 (100%)	67 (100%)	65(100%)	60 (100%)

CI (h-b): Conventionally indirect (Hearer-based)

CI (s-b): Conventionally indirect (Speaker-based)

For the sub-strategies that ELT students chose in the MCDTs at Alaqa University, Table 15 shows that freshmen ELT students chose *willingness* strategy 33 (38.4%), followed by *performatives* strategy 24 (27.9%), and then *hints* strategy 23 (26.7%). However, senior ELT students chose *performatives* strategy 24 (35.8%), followed by *willingness* strategy 14 (20.9%) then *hints* strategy 13 (19.4%). In ÇOMÜ, both groups utilized *willingness* most 58 (89.2%), 50 (83.3%), followed by *performatives* 6 (9.2%), 10 (16.7%), respectively.

Table 15

Sub-strategies used by the two groups in the MDCTs (Request1)

Sub-strategy	Alaqa University		ÇOMÜ	
	Freshmen N=86	Senior N=67	Freshmen N=65	Senior N=60
Obligation	2 (2.3%)	10 (14.9%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)
Performatives	24 (27.9%)	24 (35.8%)	6 (9.2%)	10 (16.7%)

Table 15 (Continued)

Imperatives	2 (2.3%)	2 (3.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)
Ability	1 (1.2%)	3 (4.5%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)
Willingness	33 (38.4%)	14 (20.9%)	58 (89.2%)	50 (83.3%)
Wishes	1 (1.2%)	1 (1.5%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)
Hints	23 (26.7%)	13 (19.4%)	1 (1.5%)	0 (0.0%)
Total	86 (100%)	67 (100%)	65 (100%)	60 (100%)

The Results of the First Request Scenario in the WDCTs

On the other hand, the first request scenario in the WDCTs is similar to the first request in the MDCTs in terms of the context (e.g., social distance, power, and imposition) but different in the content, which invites the participants to express (in writing) their response when they want to ask about the location of the closest bookshop. Below is first request scenario as appeared in the WDCTs:

Scenario One: Imagine that you have moved to a new flat, and you want to know where to find the closest bookshop. You have met your neighbor, a young teenager whom you met for the first time, and you want to ask her or him where the closest bookshop is. What would you say?

The analysis of the participants' responses to WDCTs shows that both freshmen and senior ELT students at Alaqa University employed *conventionally indirect (hearer-based) strategy* 56 (65.1%), 45 (67.2%) respectively followed by *conventionally indirect (speaker-based)* 7 (8.1%), 6 (9.0%) respectively (see Table 16). It is worth mentioning that both freshmen and senior ELT students at Alaqa University employed a strategy that is not listed in Trosborg's taxonomy, namely "*asking direct questions*" (e.g., where is the closest bookshop?) 16 (18.6%), 11 (16.4%) respectively. Moreover, they employed a combination of two strategies in the same response, i.e., *the conventionally indirect (hearer-based)* and *the conventionally indirect (speaker-based)* 2 (2.3%) and 2 (3.0%). Similarly, both freshmen and senior ELT students at ÇOMÜ favored *the conventionally indirect (hearer-based)*

strategy, 21 (43.8%), 19 (52.8%), followed by *asking direct question* 20 (41.7%), 15 (41.7%), respectively. Additionally, the two groups utilized similar combination of strategies that was utilized by their counterparts at Alaqa University.

For the sub-strategies employed by both freshmen and senior ELT students at Alaqa University, table 17 show that both groups preferred *ability* strategies 51 (59.3%), 35 (52.2%), followed by *asking direct question* 11 (16.4%), 16 (18.6%). However, freshmen and senior students at ÇOMÜ deviated in their selection: freshmen students utilized *asking direct question* strategy 20 (41.7%) followed by *ability* 16 (33.3%), whereas the most utilized strategy among senior students was *ability* 16 (44.4%) followed by *asking direct question* 15 (41.7%).

Table 16

Request strategies used by the two groups in the WDCTs (Request 1)

Strategy	Alaqa University		ÇOMÜ	
	Freshmen N=86	Senior N=67	Freshmen N= 48	Senior N =36
Direct	4 (4.7%)	2 (3.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)
CI (h-b)	56 (65.1%)	45 (67.2%)	21 (43.8%)	19 (52.8%)
CI (s-b)	7 (8.1%)	6 (9.0%)	6 (12.5%)	2 (5.6%)
Asking direct question	16 (18.6%)	11 (16.4%)	20 (41.7%)	15 (41.7%)
Total	86 (100%)	67 (100%)	48 (100%)	36 (100%)

Table 17

Sub-strategies used by the two groups in the WDCTs (Request1)

Sub-strategy	Alaqa University		ÇOMÜ	
	Freshmen <i>N</i> =86	Senior <i>N</i> =67	Freshmen <i>N</i> = 48	Senior <i>N</i> =36
Ability	51 (59.3%)	35 (52.2%)	16 (33.3%)	16 (44.4%)
Willingness	0 (0.0%)	6 (9.0%)	3 (6.3%)	1 (2.8%)
Permission	5 (5.8%)	4 (6.0%)	2 (4.2%)	4 (11.1%)
Desires/needs	7 (8.1%)	5 (7.5%)	2 (4.2%)	0 (0.0%)
Asking direct question	16 (18.6%)	11 (16.4%)	20 (41.7%)	15 (41.7%)

Findings of the Second Request Scenario in the MDCTs

The second request in the MDCTs invites the participants to choose one out of four given alternatives that represents the participants' potential response when asking a trainer to repeat a part of what he/she has said in an online workshop. The context of the second scenario assumes that the requester/speaker (the participant) knows the requestee/ hearer very well, which means that there is no social distance among them (D-). The context also assumes that the requester/speaker (the participant) has equal power as the hearer does (S=H). For the degree of imposition, the second scenario represents low level of imposition (R). Below is the second request scenario as appeared in the MDCT:

Scenario Two: Imagine that you are a participant in an online workshop and you want the trainer, who is a close friend of yours, to explain what he or she has said about earning money online. What would you say?

1. Please repeat what you have said about earning money online.
2. May I ask you to repeat what you have said about earning money online, please?
3. I would like to know again how to earn money online, please.
4. It will be great if you repeat what you have said about earning money online.

The results of the participants' responses to the MDCTs show that freshmen ELT students at Alaḡsa University selected *direct* strategy 27 (31.4%) followed by *indirect strategy* 25 (29.1%) and then *conventionally indirect (hearer-based)* strategy 21 (24.3%), while senior ELT students selected *direct* strategy 36 (53.7%) followed by *conventionally indirect (hearer-based) strategy* 12 (18.0%) and *indirect* strategy 10 (16.4%) as shown in Table 18. However, the comparison is never the same at OMÜ in which the most-frequently selected strategy among freshmen students was *indirect* strategy 28 (43.1%) followed by *conventionally indirect (hearer-based)* strategy 17 (26.2%), whereas senior students utilized *conventionally indirect (hearer-based)* strategy most 21 (35.0%) followed by *direct* strategy 15 (25.0%).

For the sub-strategies which ELT students chose in the MCDTs at Alaḡsa University, Table 19 shows that freshmen ELT students chose *imperatives* strategy 27 (31.4%) followed by *hints* strategy 19 (22.1%) then *permission* strategy 14 (16.3%). However, senior ELT students chose *imperatives and performatives* 18 (26.9%), 14(20.9%), followed by *hints* 10 (14.9%). Results indicated that the most frequently-utilized sub strategy among freshmen students at OMÜ was *hints* 28 (43.1%) followed by *permission* 17 (26.2%), however, senior students utilized *permission* 21 (35.0%) then *imperatives* 15 (25.0%).

Table 18

General Request strategies used by the two groups in MDCTs (Request 2)

Strategy	Alaḡsa University		OMÜ	
	Freshmen N=86	Senior N=67	Freshmen N=65	Senior N=60
Direct	27 (31.4%)	36 (53.7%)	14 (21.5%)	15 (25.0%)
CI (h-b)	21 (24.3%)	12 (18.0%)	17 (26.2%)	21 (35.0%)
CI (s-b)	13 (15.2%)	9 (13.4%)	6 (9.2%)	11 (18.3%)
Indirect	25 (29.1%)	10 (16.4%)	28 (43.1%)	13 (21.7%)
Total	86 (100%)	67 (100%)	65 (100%)	60 (100%)

Table 19

Sub-strategies used by the two groups in the MDCTs (Request 2)

Sub-strategy	Alaqa University		ÇOMÜ	
	Freshmen N=86	Senior N=67	Freshmen N=65	Senior N=60
Obligation	4 (4.7%)	4 (6.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)
Performatives	4 (4.7%)	14 (20.9%)	0 (0.0%)	5 (8.3%)
Imperatives	27 (31.4%)	18 (26.9%)	14 (21.5%)	15 (25.0%)
Ability	5 (5.8%)	6 (9.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)
Permission	14 (16.3%)	6 (9.0%)	17 (26.2%)	21 (35.0%)
Wishes	12 (14.0%)	9 (13.4%)	6 (9.2%)	6 (10.0%)
Desires/needs	1 (1.2%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)
Hints	19 (22.1%)	10 (14.9%)	28 (43.1%)	13 (21.7%)
Total	86 (100%)	67 (100%)	65 (100%)	60 (100%)

Findings of the Second Request Scenario in the WDCTs

The second request scenario in the WDCTs is similar in context to that of the MDCTs (e.g., social distance, power, and imposition) but different in the content which invites the participants to express (write) their response when they want to use their close friend's phone to make a call. Below is the second scenario as appeared in the WDCT:

Scenario Two: Imagine that you are having lunch with one of your closest friends. You want to use your friend's phone to make a call because your phone is out of charge (runs out of battery). What would you say to her or him?

The analysis of the participants' responses to the WDCTs shows that both freshmen and senior ELT students at Alaqa University employed *the conventionally indirect (hearer-based)* strategy 56 (65.1%), 45 (67.2%) followed by *the conventionally indirect (speaker-*

based) strategy 13 (15.1%), 7 (10.4%), then *direct* strategy 12 (14.0%), 6 (9.0%) respectively (see Table 20). Moreover, both freshmen and senior ELT students employed a combination of two strategies in the same response, i.e., *the conventionally indirect (hearer-based)* and *the conventionally indirect (speaker-based)* 5 (5.9%), 5 (7.5%) respectively. At ÇOMÜ, both groups utilized *conventionally indirect (hearer-based)* more frequently 43 (89.6%), 34 (94.4%) followed by a different combination of two strategies. Unlike senior students, who selected a combination of two strategies, freshmen students utilized *conventionally indirect (speaker-based)* strategy 3 (6.3%) then the combination of two strategies.

For the sub-strategies employed by both freshmen and senior ELT students, at Alaşsa University (see Table 21) shows that both groups preferred *permission* strategies 38 (44.2%), 32 (47.8%), *ability* 16 (18.6%), 12 (17.9%), and *willingness* 1 (1.5%), 2 (2.3%) respectively (all belong to the same category), followed by *desire/needs* 7 (10.4%), 13 (15.1%), then *imperatives* 6 (9.0%), 12 (14.0%) respectively. However, freshmen students at ÇOMÜ utilized *permission* 38 (79.2%) followed by *ability* 4 (8.3%) more frequently than senior students who chose *ability* then *permission* 20 (55.6%), 10 (27.8%), respectively.

Table 20

General request strategies used by the two groups in WDCTs (Request 2)

Strategy	Alaşsa University		ÇOMÜ	
	Freshmen N=86	Senior N=67	Freshmen N = 48	Senior N=36
Direct	12 (14.0%)	6 (9.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)
CI (h-b)	56 (65.1%)	45 (67.2%)	43 (89.6%)	34 (94.4%)
CI (s-b)	13 (15.1%)	7 (10.4%)	3 (6.3%)	0 (0.0%)
Direct + CI (s-b)	0 (0.0%)	4 (6.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)
CI (h-b) + CI (s-b)	5 (5.9%)	5 (7.5%)	2 (4.2%)	2 (5.6%)
Total	86 (100%)	67 (100%)	48 (100%)	36 (100%)

Table 21

Sub-strategies used by the two groups in the WDCTs (Request 2)

Sub-strategy	Alaqa University		ÇOMÜ	
	Freshmen <i>N=86</i>	Senior <i>N=67</i>	Freshmen <i>N=48</i>	Senior <i>N=36</i>
Imperatives	12 (14.0%)	6 (9.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)
Ability	16 (18.6%)	12 (17.9%)	4 (8.3%)	20 (55.6%)
Permission	38 (44.2%)	32 (47.8%)	38 (79.2%)	10 (27.8%)
Desires/needs	13 (15.1%)	7 (10.4%)	3 (6.3%)	0 (0.0%)
Permission + Needs	3 (3.5%)	4 (6.0%)	2 (4.2%)	1 (2.8%)
Total	86 (100%)	76 (100%)	48 (100%)	36 (100%)

Findings of the Third Request Scenario in the MDCTs

The third request scenario in the MDCTs invites the participants to choose one out of four given alternatives that represents the participants' potential response when asking their brother to pay the rent for two months instead of them. The context of the third scenario assumes that the requester/speaker (the participant) knows the requestee/ hearer very well, which means that there is no social distance among them (D-). The context also assumes that the requestee/hearer has higher level of social power than the requester (S<H). For the degree of imposition, the third scenario represents high level of imposition. Below is the third request scenario as appeared in the MDCT:

Scenario Three: Imagine that you and your elder brother share a rented flat, and you want him to pay the rent for the next two months so you can save money for your new project. What would you say?

1. I would like to ask you to pay the rent for the next two months.
2. How about paying the rent for the next two months?
3. I need you to pay the rent for the next two months.
4. I will be able to start the new project if I have the chance of not paying the rent for the next two months.

The results of the participants' responses to the MDCTs show that freshmen ELT students at Alaqa University utilized *indirect* strategy 30 (34.9%) followed by the *conventionally indirect (hearer-based)* strategy 25 (29.1%), then *direct* strategy 21 (24.4%), while senior ELT students utilized *indirect* strategy 20 (29.8%) followed by *direct* strategy 19 (28.4%), then *conventionally indirect (hearer-based)* strategy 16 (23.9%) as shown in Table 22. However, at ÇOMÜ, freshmen students utilized *conventionally indirect (speaker-based)* more frequently 27 (41.5%) followed by *indirect* strategy 23 (35.4%) compared to senior students who utilized *indirect* strategy more frequently 28 (46.7%) followed by *conventionally indirect (speaker-based)* 15 (25.0%).

For the sub-strategies which ELT students chose in the MCDTs at Alaqa University, Table 23 shows that both freshmen and senior ELT students utilized *hints* strategy 30 (34.9%), 19 (28.4%) respectively, followed by *imperatives* 15 (17.4%); However, freshmen ELT students utilized two sub strategies that belong to the same category, i.e., *suggestion formula* 14 (16.3%) and *ability* 11 (12.8%). On the other hand, senior ELT students utilized *ability* 15 (22.4%), followed by *desire/needs* 12 (17.9%).

Table 22

General request strategies used by the two groups in the MDCTs (Request 3)

Strategy	Alaqa University		ÇOMÜ	
	Freshmen N=86	Senior N=67	Freshmen N=65	Senior N=60
Direct	21 (24.4%)	19 (28.4%)	11 (16.9%)	8 (13.3%)
CI (h-b)	25 (29.1%)	16 (23.9%)	4 (6.2%)	9 (15.0%)
CI (s-b)	10 (11.6%)	12 (17.9%)	27 (41.5%)	15 (25.0%)
Indirect	30 (34.9%)	20 (29.8%)	23 (35.4%)	28 (46.7%)
Total	86 (100%)	67 (100%)	65 (100%)	60 (100%)

Table 23

Sub-strategies used by the two groups in the MDCTs (Request 3)

Sub-strategy	Alaqa University		ÇOMÜ	
	Freshmen N=86	Senior N=67	Freshmen N= 65	Senior N=60
Obligation	3 (3.5%)	2 (3.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)
Performatives	15 (17.4%)	9 (13.4%)	12 (18.5%)	8 (13.3%)
Imperatives	3 (3.5%)	9 (13.4%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)
Ability	11 (12.8%)	15 (22.4%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)
Suggestion formula	14 (16.3%)	1 (1.5%)	4 (6.2%)	9 (15.0%)
Desires/needs	10 (11.6%)	12 (17.9%)	27 (41.5%)	15 (25.0%)
Hints	30 (34.9%)	19 (28.4%)	22 (33.8%)	28 (46.7%)
Total	86 (100%)	67 (100%)	65 (100%)	60 (100%)

Findings of the Third Request Scenario in the WDCTs

The third request in the WDCTs is similar in context to the third request scenario in MDCTs (e.g., social distance, power, and imposition) but different in the content which invites the participants to express (write) their response when they want to use their elder brother's laptop for few days.

Scenario Three: Imagine that you have online exams but your laptop has broken down. Your elder brother has a new laptop, which he uses daily. You need to use his laptop for a few days to be able to finish your exams. What would you say to him?

The participants' responses to WDCTs shows that both freshmen and senior ELT students at Alaqa University employed *the conventionally indirect (hearer-based)* strategy 57 (66.4%), 35 (52.3%) followed by *the conventionally indirect (speaker-based)* strategy 20 (23.3%), 23 (34.3%) respectively (see Table 24). Moreover, both groups employed a

combination of two strategies in the same response, i.e., *conventionally indirect (hearer-based)* and *conventionally indirect (speaker-based)* 6 (7.0%), 6 (9.0%) respectively. Similarly, the most-frequently utilized strategies among ELT students at ÇOMÜ were the same as those of Alaşsa University: Freshmen senior students utilized *conventionally indirect (hearer-based)* strategy 26 (54.2%), 18 (50.0%) followed by *conventionally indirect (speaker-based)* strategy 10 (20.8%), 10 (27.8%), and the two groups utilized a combination of two strategies. However, both groups at ÇOMÜ utilized *indirect strategy and asking direct question* strategy which were not employed by Alaşsa University students.

Table 25 shows that both freshmen and senior students at Alaşsa University utilized *permission* 36 (41.9%) and 23 (34.3%), followed by *desires/needs* 20 (23.3%) and 20 (29.9%). They also utilized a combination of two sub strategies, e.g., *ability and needs* 3 (4.5%) and 4 (4.7%). Similarly, freshmen and senior students at ÇOMÜ utilized *permission* 10 (27.8%) and 23 (47.9%) followed by *desires/needs* 9 (18.8%) and 8 (22.2%). Unlike, the two groups at Alaşsa University, both groups at ÇOMÜ utilized *hints* followed by *asking direct questions*.

Table 24

General request strategies used by the two groups in the WDCTs (Request 3)

Strategy	Alaşsa University		ÇOMÜ	
	Freshmen N=86	Senior N=67	Freshmen N=48	Senior N=36
Direct	3 (3.5%)	2 (3.0%)	4 (8.3%)	1 (2.8%)
CI (h-b)	57 (66.4%)	35 (52.3%)	26 (54.2%)	18 (50.0%)
CI (s-b)	20 (23.3%)	23 (34.3%)	10 (20.8%)	10 (27.8%)
CI (h-b) + CI (s-b)	6 (7.0%)	6 (9.0%)	5 (10.4%)	5 (13.9%)
Asking direct question	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	2 (4.2%)	1 (2.8%)
Total	86 (100%)	67 (100%)	48 (100%)	36 (100%)

Table 25

Sub-strategies used by the two groups in the WDCTs (Request 3)

Sub-strategy	Alaqa University		ÇOMÜ	
	Freshmen	Senior	Freshmen	Senior
	N=86	N=67	N=48	N=36
Ability	17 (19.8%)	13 (19.4%)	2 (4.2%)	6 (16.7%)
Permission	36 (41.9%)	23 (34.3%)	23 (47.9%)	10 (27.8%)
Suggestion formula	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	1 (2.1%)	0 (0.0%)
Desires/needs	20 (23.3%)	20 (29.9%)	9 (18.8%)	8 (22.2%)
Hints	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	1 (2.1%)	1 (2.8%)
Ability + Needs	4 (4.7%)	3 (4.5%)	1 (2.1%)	4 (11.1%)
Permission + Needs	2 (2.3%)	3 (4.5%)	3 (6.3%)	2 (5.6%)
Asking direct question	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	2 (4.2%)	1 (2.8%)
Total	86 (100%)	76(100%)	48 (100%)	36 (100%)

Findings of the Fourth Request Scenario in the MDCTs

The fourth request scenario in the MDCTs invites the participants to choose one out of four given alternatives that represents the participants' response when they (as heads of the department) invite some students to participate in a voluntary program for two months. The context of the fourth scenario assumes that the requester/speaker (the participant) knows the requestee/ hearer very well, which means that there is no social distance among them. The context also assumes that the requester has higher level of social power than the requestee ($S>H$). For the degree of imposition, the fourth scenario represents high level of imposition. below is the fourth request scenario as appeared in the MDCTs:

Scenario Four: Imagine that you are the head of English language department and you are having a meeting with the top three students whom you know very well. What would you say if you wanted them to participate in a two-month voluntary teaching project for young learners?

1. As top students, you have to participate in that voluntary teaching project.
2. Could you participate in that voluntary teaching project for young learners?
3. I want you to participate in that voluntary teaching project for young learners.

4. Participating in the teaching projects for young learners is a great experience for excellent students.

The results of the participants' responses to the MDCTs show that the most frequently utilized strategy among freshmen and senior ELT students at Alaqa University was *conventionally indirect (hearer-based)* strategy, 33 (38.4%) and 25 (37.3%), respectively. However, freshmen ELT students utilized *indirect* strategy 28 (32.6%) followed by *direct* strategy 14 (16.3%), while senior ELT students utilized *direct* strategy 24 (35.9%) followed by *indirect* strategy 12 (17.9%), as shown in Table 26.

The comparison at ÇOMÜ is different. Freshmen students utilized *conventionally indirect (speaker-based)* strategy 29 (44.6%) followed by *conventionally indirect (hearer-based)* and *indirect* strategies which were equally utilized by 17 (26.2%). However, senior students employed *indirect* strategy 22 (36.7%) and *conventionally indirect (hearer-based)* almost similarly, 21 (35.0%).

Table 26

General request strategies used by the two groups in the MDCTs (Request 4)

Strategy	Alaqa University		ÇOMÜ	
	Freshmen N=86	Senior N=67	Freshmen N= 65	Senior N=60
Direct	14 (16.3%)	24 (35.9%)	2 (3.1%)	2 (3.3%)
CI (h-b)	33 (38.4%)	25 (37.3%)	17 (26.2%)	21 (35.0%)
CI (s-b)	11 (12.8%)	6 (9.0%)	29 (44.6%)	15 (25.0%)
Indirect	28 (32.6%)	12 (17.9%)	17 (26.2%)	22 (36.7%)
Total	86 (100%)	67 (100%)	65 (100%)	60 (100%)

For the sub-strategies that ELT students chose in the MCDTs at Alaqa University, Table 27 shows that both freshmen and senior ELT students utilized *ability* strategy 31 (36.0%) and 24 (35.8%), respectively. However, freshmen ELT students utilized *hints* strategy 28 (32.6%) followed by two sub-strategies that belong to the same category, i.e., *obligation* 9 (10.5%) and *performatives* 5 (5.8%), then another different sub-strategy that is *desires/needs* 11 (12.8%). In contrast, senior ELT students utilized *ability* 24 (35.8%), followed by *obligation* 12 (17.9%). At ÇOMÜ, freshmen students utilized *desire* 30 (46.2%) followed by *ability* 17 (26.2%), whereas senior students utilized *ability* 22 (36.7%) and *indirect* strategy 21 (35.0%) similarly.

Table 27
Sub-strategies used by the two groups in the MDCTs (Request 4)

Sub-strategy	Alaqa University		ÇOMÜ	
	Freshmen N=86	Senior N=67	Freshmen N=65	Senior N=60
Obligation	9 (10.5%)	12 (17.9%)	2 (3.1%)	2 (3.3%)
Performatives	5 (5.8%)	6 (9.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)
Imperatives	0 (0.0%)	6 (9.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)
Ability	31 (36.0%)	24 (35.8%)	17 (26.2%)	22 (36.7%)
Willingness	1 (1.2%)	1 (1.5%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)
Suggestion formula	1 (1.2%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)
Desires/needs	11 (12.8%)	6 (9.0%)	30 (46.2%)	15 (25.0%)
Hints	28 (32.6%)	6 (9.0%)	16 (24.6%)	21 (35.0%)

Findings of the Fourth Request Scenario in the WDCTs

The fourth request scenario in the WDCTs invites the participants to express (write) their response when they (as university lecturers) ask one of the students to receive other students' assignments for a month. Below is the fourth request scenario as it appeared in the WDCTs:

Scenario Four: Imagine that you are a university lecturer who is about to travel for a month, and you want to ask one of your students, whom you have known well for a long time, to receive other students' assignments till you come back. What would you say to her or him?

The analysis of the participants' responses to WDCTs shows that both freshmen and senior ELT students at Alaqa University utilized *the conventionally indirect (hearer-based)* strategy 49 (57%), 45 (67.1%) followed by *the conventionally indirect (speaker-based)* strategy 24 (27.9%), 10 (14.9%) respectively (see Table 28). Moreover, both freshmen and senior ELT students employed a combination of two strategies in the same response, i.e., *conventionally indirect (hearer-based)* and *conventionally indirect (speaker-based)* 5 (5.9%), 4 (6.0%) respectively.

However, the most frequently utilized strategy among ÇOMÜ students was *conventionally indirect (hearer-based)* 37 (77.1%), 28 (77.8%). However, freshmen students employed *direct* strategy 4 (8.3%) and also employed *asking direct questions* strategy, whereas senior students employed *conventionally indirect (speaker-based)* 4 (11.1%). Both groups at ÇOMÜ employed a combination of two strategies similar to that employed by Alaqa University students.

Table 28

General Request strategies used by the two groups in the WDCTs (Request 4)

Strategy	Alaqa University		ÇOMÜ	
	Freshmen N=86	Senior N=67	Freshmen N= 48	Senior N=36
Direct	7 (8.2%)	8 (12.0%)	4 (8.3%)	1 (2.8%)
CI (h-b)	49 (57%)	45 (67.1%)	37 (77.1%)	28 (77.8%)
CI (s-b)	24 (27.9%)	10 (14.9)	1 (2.1%)	4 (11.1%)
CI (h-b) + CI (s-b)	5 (5.9%)	4 (6.0%)	3 (6.3%)	2 (5.6%)

For the sub-strategies employed by both freshmen and senior ELT students at Alaqa University, Table 29 shows that both freshmen and senior ELT students utilized *ability* strategy 40 (46.5%), 29 (43.3%). However, freshmen students utilized *desires/needs* strategy 22 (25.6%), whereas senior students utilized *willingness* 8 (11.9%). On the other hand, freshmen and senior students at ÇOMÜ utilized *ability* more frequently 30 (62.5%), 18 (50.0%). Unlike freshmen students, who employed *imperatives* 4 (8.3%) as the second most-utilized strategy, senior students employed *willingness* 6 (16.7%), instead. Asking direct question was employed only by freshmen students at ÇOMÜ 2 (4.2%).

Table 29

Sub-strategies used by the two groups in the WDCTs (Request 4)

Sub-strategy	Alaqa University		ÇOMÜ	
	Freshmen N=86	Senior N=67	Freshmen N=48	Senior N=36
Imperatives	4 (4.7%)	5 (7.5%)	4 (8.3%)	0 (0.0%)
Ability	40 (46.5%)	29 (43.3%)	30 (62.5%)	18 (50.0%)
Willingness	4 (4.7%)	8 (11.9%)	3 (6.3%)	6 (16.7%)
Permission	2 (2.3%)	7 (10.4%)	2 (4.2%)	3 (8.3%)
Desires/needs	22 (25.6%)	7 (10.4%)	1 (2.1%)	4 (11.1%)
Hints	1 (1.2%)	0 (0.0%)	1 (2.1%)	0 (0.0%)
Ability + Needs	4 (4.7%)	4 (6.0%)	2 (4.2%)	2 (5.6%)
Asking direct question	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	2 (4.2%)	0 (0.0%)

Findings of the Fifth Request Scenario in the MDCTs

The fifth request scenario in the MDCTs invites the participants to choose one out of four given alternatives that represents the participants' potential response when they (as language trainers) ask a technician to help students download some applications. The context of the fifth scenario assumes that the requester/speaker (the participant) does not know the requestee/ hearer very well, which means that there is social distance among them (D+). The context also assumes that both the requestee/hearer and the requester share an equal level of social power (S=H). For the degree of imposition, the fifth scenario represents a high level of imposition. Below is the fifth request scenario as it appeared in the MDCTs:

Scenario Five: Imagine that you work as a language trainer in a private center, and you want to ask one of the IT technicians who seems to be very busy to help the trainees download some applications. What would you say to the technician?

1. I would like to ask you to help some trainees download the applications, please.
2. May I ask you to help some trainees download the applications, please?
3. I need you to help some trainees in downloading the applications, please.
4. Our trainees need help, and I know that great people like you do not hesitate to help whoever needs help.

The results of the participants' responses to the MDCTs show that both freshmen and senior ELT students at Alaqa University utilized *conventionally indirect (hearer-based)* strategy 30 (34.9%), 32 (47.8%) followed by *direct* strategy 26 (30.1%), 23 (34.4%) then *indirect* strategy 20 (23.4%), 10 (14.9%) respectively as shown in Table 30. Similarly, the most frequently utilized strategy among both groups at ÇOMÜ is *conventionally indirect (hearer-based)* strategy. However, freshmen students employed *direct* strategy 7 (10.8%), whereas senior students employed *conventionally indirect (speaker-based)* 8 (13.3%).

Table 30

General request strategies used by the two groups in the MDCTs (Request5)

Strategy	Alaqa University		ÇOMÜ	
	Freshmen <i>N=86</i>	Senior <i>N=67</i>	Freshmen <i>N=65</i>	Senior <i>N=60</i>
Direct	26 (30.1%)	23 (34.4%)	7 (10.8%)	5 (8.2%)
CI (h-b)	30 (34.9%)	32 (47.8%)	48 (73.8%)	41 (68.3%)
CI (s-b)	10 (11.6%)	2 (3.0%)	6 (9.2%)	8 (13.3%)
Indirect	20 (23.4%)	10 (14.9%)	4 (6.2%)	6 (10.0%)
Total	86 (100%)	67 (100%)	65 (100%)	60 (100%)

For the sub-strategies that ELT students chose in the MCDTs at Alaqa University, Table 31 shows that both freshmen and senior students utilized *permission* 25 (29.1%), 19 (28.4%), *performatives* strategy 23 (26.7%), 16 (23.9%). Freshmen utilized *hints* 20 (23.3%) more frequently, while senior students utilized *ability* 12 (17.9%). Regarding the participants at ÇOMÜ, freshmen students utilized *permission* 48 (73.8%), followed by *performatives* 7 (10.8%), but senior students utilized *permission* 41 (68.3%), followed by *desire/needs* 8 (13.3%).

Table 31

Sub-strategies used by the two groups in the MDCTs (Request 5)

Sub-strategy	Alaqa University		ÇOMÜ	
	Freshmen N=86	Senior N=67	Freshmen N=65	Senior N=60
Obligation	3 (3.5%)	4 (6.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)
Performatives	23 (26.7%)	16 (23.9%)	7 (10.8%)	5 (8.3%)
Imperatives	0 (0.0%)	3 (4.5%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)
Ability	3 (3.5%)	12 (17.9%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)
Willingness	2 (2.3%)	1 (1.5%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)
Permission	25 (29.1%)	19 (28.4%)	48 (73.8%)	41 (68.3%)
Desires/needs	10 (11.6%)	2 (3.0%)	6 (9.2%)	8 (13.3%)
Hints	20 (23.3%)	10 (14.9%)	4 (6.2%)	6 (10.0%)
Total	86 (100%)	67 (100%)	65 (100%)	60 (100%)

Findings of the Fifth Request Scenario in the WDCTs

The fifth request scenario in the WDCTs is similar in context to that of the MDCTs in terms of social distance, power, and imposition but different in the content which invites the participants to express (write) their response when they (as language trainers) want to

ask another trainer to give the students a two-hour training session. Below is the fifth request scenario as it appeared in the MDCTs:

Scenario Five: Imagine that you are an English language trainer, and you want to ask another trainer, who has newly started working at the same center, to give your students a two-hour training session instead of you because you have an urgent meeting. What would you say to him or her?

The analysis of the participants' responses to WDCTs shows that both freshmen and senior ELT students at Alaqa University utilized *conventionally indirect (hearer-based)* strategy 71 (82.6%), 62 (92.5%) followed by *conventionally indirect (speaker-based)* strategy 7 (8.1%), 5 (7.5%) respectively (Table 32). Moreover, freshmen ELT students employed a combination of two strategies in the same response, i.e., *conventionally indirect (hearer-based)* and *conventionally indirect (speaker-based)* 7 (8.1%). Similarly, freshmen students at ÇOMÜ utilized *conventionally indirect (hearer-based)* more frequently 44 (91.7%), 31 (86.1%), followed by *conventionally indirect (speaker-based)* strategy 2 (4.2%), 2 (5.6%), respectively. Asking direct question was a strategy employed by freshmen students at ÇOMÜ 2 (4.2%).

Table 32

General request strategies used by the two groups in WDCTs (Request 5)

Strategy	Alaqa University		ÇOMÜ	
	Freshmen N=86	Senior N=67	Freshmen N=48	Senior N=36
CI (h-b)	71 (82.6%)	62 (92.5%)	44 (91.7%)	31 (86.1%)
CI (s-b)	7 (8.1%)	5 (7.5%)	2 (4.2%)	2 (5.6%)
CI (h-b) + CI (s-b)	7 (8.1%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	1 (2.8%)

For the sub-strategies employed by both freshmen and senior ELT students, Table 33 mmm shows that both freshmen and senior ELT students at Alaqa University utilized *ability* strategy 51 (59.3%), 43 (64.2%), *willingness* strategy 11 (12.8%), 9 (13.4%), which all

belong to the same general strategy, namely *conventionally indirect* (hearer-based). Freshmen students utilized *desire/needs* 7 (8.1%), whereas senior students utilized *permission* 8 (11.9%). In the Turkish context, both freshmen and senior ELT students utilized *ability* more frequently 37 (77.1%), 24 (66.7%). However, freshmen students utilized willingness 5 (10.4%), but senior students utilized *permission* 3 (8.3%).

Table 33

Sub-strategies used by the two groups in the WDCTs (Request 5)

Sub-strategy	Alařsa University		ÇOMÜ	
	Freshmen N=86	Senior N=67	Freshmen N=48	Senior N= 36
Ability	51 (59.3%)	43 (64.2%)	37 (77.1%)	24 (66.7%)
Willingness	11 (12.8%)	9 (13.4%)	5 (10.4%)	2 (5.6%)
Permission	6 (7.0%)	8 (11.9%)	1 (2.1%)	3 (8.3%)
Desires/needs	7 (8.1%)	4 (6.0%)	1 (2.1%)	1 (2.8%)
Hints	1 (1.2%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	1 (2.8%)
Ability + Needs	7 (8.1%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	1 (2.8%)

Findings of the Sixth Request Scenario in the MDCTs

The sixth request scenario in the MDCTs invites the participants to choose one out of four given alternatives that represents the participants' potential response when they (as freshmen students) want to ask other senior-level students to turn on the air conditioner at the class. The context of the sixth scenario assumes that the requester/speaker (the participant) does not know the requestee/ hearer very well, which means that there is social distance among them (D+). The context also assumes that the requester/speaker (the participant) has a lower level of social power than the requestee/hearer (S<H). For the degree of imposition, the sixth scenario represents a low level of imposition. Below is the sixth request scenario as it appeared in the MDCTs:

Scenario Six: Imagine that you are a freshman student, and you give an oral presentation in front of a group of senior students whom you meet for the first time. You want one of them to turn on the air conditioner. What would you say?

1. Turn on the air conditioner, please.
2. Could you turn on the air conditioner, please?
3. I need you to turn on the air conditioner, please.
4. I think nobody can bear this hot weather; I am surprised to see the air conditioner has not been turned on yet!

The results of the participants' responses to the MDCTs show that both freshmen and senior ELT students at Alaqa University utilized *conventionally indirect (hearer-based)* strategy 58 (67.4%), 31 (46.3%) followed by *direct* strategy 16 (18.6%), 28 (41.8%) then *indirect* strategy 8 (9.3%), 5 (7.5%) respectively as shown in Table 34. Results indicated that the most frequently utilized strategy among freshmen and senior students at ÇOMÜ was *conventionally indirect (hearer-based)* strategy 62 (95.4%), 51 (85.0%). However, freshmen students utilized *conventionally indirect (speaker-based)* 2 (3.1%), whereas senior students utilized *direct* strategy 4 (6.7%).

Table 34

General Request strategies used by the two groups in MDCTs (Request 6)

Strategy	Alaqa University		ÇOMÜ	
	Freshmen N=86	Senior N=67	Freshmen N=65	Senior N=60
Direct	16 (18.6%)	28 (41.8%)	0 (0.0%)	4 (6.7%)
CI (h-b)	58 (67.4%)	31 (46.3%)	62 (95.4%)	51 (85.0%)
CI (s-b)	4 (4.7%)	3 (4.5%)	2 (3.1%)	3 (5.0%)
Indirect	8 (9.3%)	5 (7.5%)	1 (1.5%)	2 (3.4%)
Total	86 (100%)	67 (100%)	65 (100%)	60 (100%)

For the sub-strategies that ELT students chose in the MCDTs at Alaqa University, Table 35 shows that both freshmen and senior ELT students utilized *ability* strategy 58 (67.4%), 31 (46.3%) followed by *performatives* strategy 13 (15.1%), 21 (31.3%). Both

freshmen and senior students utilized *hints* 8 (9.3%), 5 (7.5%) respectively. In ÇOMÜ, both freshmen and senior students utilized *ability* more frequently 62 (95.4%), 52 (86.7%), but for freshmen students, they utilized *needs* 2 (3.1%) while senior students utilized *imperatives* 3 (5.0%). Similarly, both groups utilized *hints* less frequently.

Table 35

Sub-strategies used by the two groups in the MDCTs (Request 6)

Sub-strategy	Alaqa University		ÇOMÜ	
	Freshmen N=86	Senior N=67	Freshmen N=65	Senior N=60
Obligation	2 (2.3%)	1 (1.5%)	0 (0.0%)	1 (1.7%)
Performatives	13 (15.1%)	21 (31.3%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)
Imperatives	1 (1.2%)	6 (9.0%)	0 (0.0%)	3 (5.0%)
Ability	58 (67.4%)	31 (46.3%)	62 (95.4%)	52 (86.7%)
Desires/needs	4 (4.7%)	3 (4.5%)	2 (3.1%)	2 (3.3%)
Hints	8 (9.3%)	5 (7.5%)	1 (1.5%)	2 (3.3%)
Total	86 (100%)	67 (100%)	65 (100%)	60 (100%)

Findings of the Sixth Request Scenario in the WDCTs

The sixth request in the WDCTs invites the participants to express (write) their response when they (as freshmen students) want to ask one of the IT technicians at their university to show them how to use the university application. Below is the sixth request scenario as it appeared in the WDCTs:

Scenario Six: Imagine that you are a freshman student, and you want to know how to use the university application for registering your courses. You go to the IT center to ask for help. What would you say to the employee?

The analysis of the participants' responses to WDCTs shows that both freshmen and senior ELT students utilized *conventionally indirect (hearer-based)* strategy 73 (84.9%), 51 (76.1%) respectively. Unlike senior ELT students who utilized *conventionally indirect (speaker-based)* strategy 10 (14.9%), freshmen ELT students utilized a strategy that is not listed in Trosborg's taxonomy, namely "*Asking direct question*" (e.g., *how can I use the university application because I am a freshman student?*), 9 (10.5%). Moreover, only one student from each group employed a combination of two strategies in the same response, i.e., *conventionally indirect (hearer-based)* and *conventionally indirect (speaker-based)* 1 (1.2%), 1 (1.5%) respectively (Table 36).

At ÇOMÜ, both freshmen and senior students employed *conventionally indirect (hearer-based)* more frequently 28 (58.3%), 25 (69.4%). However, freshmen students utilized asking direct questions 8 (16.7%), while senior students utilized a combination of two strategies.

Table 36

General request strategies used by the two groups in WDCTs (Request 6)

Strategy	Alaqa University		ÇOMÜ	
	Freshmen N=86	Senior N=67	Freshmen N=48	Senior N=36
CI (h-b)	73 (84.9%)	51 (76.1%)	28 (58.3%)	25 (69.4%)
CI (s-b)	1 (1.2%)	10 (14.9%)	5 (10.4%)	2 (5.6%)
CI (h-b) + CI (s-b)	1 (1.2%)	1 (1.5%)	6 (12.5%)	7 (19.4%)
Asking direct question	9 (10.5%)	2 (3.0%)	8 (16.7%)	1 (2.8%)

For the sub-strategies employed by ELT students, Table 37 shows that both freshmen and senior ELT students at Alaqa University utilized *ability* strategy 63 (73.3%), 35 (52.2%). However, freshmen students employed *asking direct question* more frequently 9 (10.5%), but senior students employed *willingness* 13 (19.4%), instead.

For the ELT students at ÇOMÜ, *ability* was the most frequently-utilized strategy among both freshmen and senior students 25 (52.1%), 19 (52.8%) respectively. Unlike freshmen students who employed *asking direct question* frequently 8 (16.7%), senior students employed it less frequently and utilized a combination of *ability* and *needs* 7 (19.4%), instead.

Table 37

Sub-strategies used by the two groups in the WDCTs (Request 6)

Sub-strategy	Alağsa University		ÇOMÜ	
	Freshmen N=86	Senior N=67	Freshmen N=48	Senior N=36
Ability	63 (73.3%)	35 (52.2%)	25 (52.1%)	19 (52.8%)
Willingness	5 (5.8%)	13 (19.4%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)
Permission	5 (5.8%)	3 (4.5%)	3 (6.3%)	5 (13.9%)
Wishes	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	1 (2.1%)	1 (2.8%)
Desires/needs	1 (1.2%)	10 (14.9%)	4 (8.3%)	1 (2.8%)
Ability + Needs	1 (1.2%)	1 (1.5%)	7 (14.6%)	7 (19.4%)
Asking direct questions	9 (10.5%)	2 (3.0%)	8 (16.7%)	1 (2.8%)

4.3.2. Results Related to the Second Minor Question

The second minor question aims at comparing and contrasting the apology strategies utilized by ELT students at Alağsa University and ÇOMÜ. It is formed as follows: "How similar and different are the strategies used by freshmen and senior ELT students in producing apology speech acts in terms of indirectness?".

The researcher utilized the classification of apology strategies that was introduced by Olshtain and Cohen (1983) for analyzing the apology strategies that ELT students utilized in expressing apologies. The researcher designed two different tools for collecting the data from the target groups, i.e., MDCTs and WDCTs. The quantitative data collected through the MDCTs were further supported by qualitative data collected through the WDCTs, which suits the mixed-methods sequential explanatory research design that combines quantitative then qualitative data in two successive phases. It is worth mentioning that the researcher

adopted one of the apology strategies introduced by Tuncel (1991), namely "request", because Olshtain and Cohen's classification (1983) did not cover all the participants' responses.

All the apology scenarios in the MDCTs invite the study participants to choose one out of five given alternatives that represents the participants' potential response when expressing apology in six different scenarios. Each alternative represents a different sub-strategy which belongs to a unique general strategy according to Olshtain and Cohen (1983). Moreover, each apology scenario represents an exclusive context that varies in P, D, and R /severity of offence (see Table 3). Similarly, the second tool, i.e., the WDCTs contains six apology scenarios that are similar to the socio-cultural variables in the MDCTs but different in their content which allows the study participants to express -by writing- their response to a number of different scenarios that are likely to occur in their daily life.

Findings of the First Apology Scenario in the MDCTs

The first apology scenario in the MDCTs invites the participants to choose one out of five given alternatives that represents the participants' potential response when they (as newly-appointed headmasters) want to apologize to the school staff for being late to a meeting. The context of the first apology scenario assumes that the apologizer (speaker) does not know the hearer very well, which means that there is social distance among them (D+). The context also assumes that the apologizer (speaker) has power over the hearer (S>H). and the severity of offence level is low. Below is the first apology scenario as it appeared in the MDCTs:

Scenario One: Imagine that you were a new school headmaster, and you asked the school staff to gather for the first meeting, but you were half an hour late. When you arrived, you decided to apologize for being late. What would you say to the staff?

1. I am sorry for being late.
2. I am late because I had an urgent situation with some students.
3. I did not intend to be late to our first meeting.
4. I will not take much of your time in the meeting and let you leave early.
5. I promise not to be late again.

The results of the participants' responses to the MDCTs in the first apology scenario show that the most frequently utilized strategy among freshmen and senior ELT students at Alaqa University is *expression of apology (IFID)* 41(47.7%), 38 (56.7%). However, freshmen students utilized *explanation or account of the situation (EXPL)* 24 (27.9%), followed by *acknowledgement of responsibility (RESP)* strategy 10 (11.7%), whereas senior students utilized two strategies equally, i.e., *EXPL* and *RESP* 9 (13.4%), followed by an *offer of repair* strategy (*REPR*) 7 (10.4%) as shown in Table 38.

Similarly, both freshmen and senior students at ÇOMÜ utilized IFID more frequently 41 (63.1%), 27 (45.0%), respectively. However, it is followed by RESP for freshmen students 15 (23.1%) and EXPL for senior students 12 (20.0%). Results show that the least frequent apology strategy was FORB among both groups.

Table 38

General apology strategies used by the two groups in the MDCTs (Apology 1)

Strategy	Alaqa University		ÇOMÜ	
	Freshmen N=86	Senior N=67	Freshmen N=65	Senior N=60
IFID	41 (47.7%)	38 (56.7%)	41 (63.1%)	27 (45.0%)
EXPL	24 (27.9%)	9 (13.4%)	4 (6.2%)	12 (20.0%)
RESP	10 (11.7%)	9 (13.5%)	15 (23.1%)	11 (18.3%)
REPR	6 (7.0%)	7 (10.4%)	3 (4.6%)	7 (11.7%)
FORB	5 (5.8%)	4 (6.0%)	2 (3.1%)	3 (5.0%)
Total	86 (100%)	67 (100%)	65 (100%)	60 (100%)

For the sub-strategies that ELT students chose in the MCDTs at Alaqa University, Table 39 shows that the most frequently utilized sub strategies among freshmen and senior ELT students are *expression of regret* 34 (39.5%), 28 (41.8%), respectively, followed by *explanation of the situation* 24 (27.9%), 9 (13.4%). However, freshmen students utilized

expressing lack of intent strategy 9 (10.5%), while senior students utilized an offer of apology and an offer of repair equally 7 (10.4%).

Like Alaşsa University students, freshmen and senior students at OMÜ utilized an expression of regret more frequently 41 (63.1%), 27 (45.0%). However, freshmen students favored expressing lack of intent 15 (23.1%), whereas senior students favored explanation of the situation 12 (20.0%) and expressing lack of intent 11 (18.3%).

Table 39

Sub-strategies used by the two groups in the MDCTs (Apology 1)

Sub-strategy	Alaşsa University		OMÜ	
	Freshmen N=86	Senior N=67	Freshmen N=65	Senior N=60
Expression of regret	34 (39.5%)	28 (41.8%)	41 (63.1%)	27 (45.0%)
Offer of apology	6 (7.0%)	7 (10.4%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)
Request for forgiveness	1 (1.2%)	3 (4.5%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)
Explanation of situation	24 (27.9%)	9 (13.4%)	4 (6.2%)	12 (20.0%)
Accepting the blame	1 (12.0%)	4 (6.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)
Expressing lack of intent	9 (10.5%)	5 (7.5%)	15 (23.1%)	11 (18.3%)
An offer of repair	6 (7.0%)	7 (10.4%)	3 (4.6%)	7 (11.7%)
Promise for forbearance	5 (5.8%)	4 (6.0%)	2 (3.1%)	3 (5.0%)
Total	86 (100%)	67 (100%)	65 (100%)	60 (100%)

Findings of the First Apology Scenario in the WDCTs

The first apology scenario in the WDCTs, which is similar in the context to that in the MDCTs in terms of P, D, and severity of offence, invites the participants to express (in writing) their response when they (as language trainers) want to apologize for unintentionally ignoring a student's turn in introducing him/her self in a class. Below is the first apology scenario as it appeared in the WDCTs:

Scenario One: Imagine that you were a language trainer who started a new speaking course. When the trainees were introducing themselves, you unintentionally ignored one of them, and then you realized that. What would say to her or him?

The analysis of the participants' responses to the WDCTs shows that both freshmen and senior ELT students at Alaqa University utilized a combination of two strategies (sometimes more than two) in the same response (see Table 40). For example, the most utilized combination of apology strategies among freshmen and senior ELT students is *IFID+RESP* 36 (41.9%), 23 (34.3%) respectively, followed by *IFID* 17 (19.8%), 16 (23.9%). Similarly, both groups utilized a combination of two strategies, i.e., *IFID+EXPL* 7 (8.1%), 12 (17.9%) respectively, and a number of other combinations.

Regarding the Turkish context, it is similar to that of the Palestinian in the most frequently utilized combination of strategies, i.e., *IFID + RESP*. However, freshmen students utilized a combination of three strategies *IFID + RESP+ Request* 8 (16.7%) including a new strategy adopted from Tuncel's study (1991), namely "request", because Cohen and Olshtain's classification did not cover all the participants' responses. On the contrary, senior students at ÇOMÜ utilized *IFID* frequently 7 (19.4%).

Table 40

General Apology strategies used by the two groups in the WDCTs (Apology 1)

Strategy	Alaqa University		ÇOMÜ	
	Freshmen N=86	Senior N=67	Freshmen N=48	Senior N=36
IFID	17 (19.8%)	16 (23.9%)	6 (12.0%)	7 (19.4%)
IFID + RESP	36 (41.9%)	23 (34.3%)	10 (20.8%)	8 (22.2%)
IFID + REPR	6 (7.0%)	6 (9.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)
IFID + EXPL	7 (8.1%)	12 (17.9%)	7 (14.6%)	6 (16.7%)
IFID + Request	4 (4.7%)	5 (7.5%)	6 (12.6%)	2 (5.6%)
IFID + EXPL+ Request	2 (2.3%)	1 (1.5%)	5 (10.4%)	5 (13.9%)
IFID + RESP+ Request	2 (2.3%)	0 (0.0%)	8 (16.7%)	3 (8.3%)

Regarding the analysis of the sub-strategies in the WDCTs, Table 41 shows that the most frequently utilized combination of sub-strategies among freshmen and senior ELT students at Alaşsa University are *expression of regret* and *expressing lack of intent* 26 (30.3%), 19 (28.4%). Results also show that both groups utilized *expression of regret* 15 (17.4%), 12 (17.9%) respectively. However, freshmen students utilized a combination of *expression of regret* and *accepting the blame* 8 (9.3%), while senior students utilized *expression of regret* and *explanation of the situation* 11 (16.4%).

In OMÜ, the most frequently utilized strategy among freshmen was *expression of regret* and *lack of intent* 9 (18.8%), followed by a combination of *expression of apology + explanation + request* 8 (16.7%), whereas senior students utilized *expression of regret* 7 (19.4%) followed by *expression of regret + explanation of the situation* 6 (16.7%).

Table 41

Sub-strategies used by the two groups in the WDCTs (Apology 1)

Sub-strategies	Alaşsa University		OMÜ	
	Freshmen N=86	Senior N=67	Freshmen N=48	Senior N=36
Expression of regret	15 (17.4%)	12 (17.9%)	5 (10.4%)	7 (19.4%)
Expression of regret + Expressing lack of intent	26 (30.3%)	19 (28.4%)	9 (18.8%)	4 (11.1%)
Expression of regret + Accepting the blame	8 (9.3%)	2 (3.0%)	0 (0.0%)	3 (8.3%)
Expression of regret + An offer of repair	6 (7.0%)	6 (9.0%)	0 (0.0%)	1 (2.8%)
Expression of regret + Explanation of the situation	7 (8.1%)	11 (16.4%)	6 (12.5%)	6 (16.7%)
Expression of apology + request	4 (4.7%)	5 (7.5%)	6 (12.5%)	2 (5.6%)
Expression of apology + explanation+ request	2 (2.3%)	1 (1.5%)	8 (16.7%)	5 (13.9%)

Findings of the Second Apology Scenario in the MDCTs

The second apology scenario in the MDCTs invites the participants to choose one out of five given alternatives that represents the participants' potential response when they want to apologize to their close friends for not returning their notes back on time. The context of the second apology scenario assumes that the apologizer (speaker) knows the hearer very well, which means that there is no social distance among them (D-). The context also assumes that the apologizer (speaker) and the hearer share an equal status of social power (S=H). For the severity of the offence level, the second apology scenario represents a low level of severity of offence. Below is the second apology scenario as it appeared in the MDCTs:

Scenario Two: Imagine that you borrowed your close friend's notes, but you forgot to bring them back on time because you were busy. A few days later, you met your friend and decided to apologize for what you did. What would you say?

1. May I ask you to forgive me for not bringing your notes back?
2. I forgot to bring your notes back because I was working all week.
3. I should not have forgotten to bring the notes back to you. It is my fault.
4. I can bring the notes back to you whenever and wherever you like.
5. This will not happen again.

The results of the participants' responses to the MDCTs in the second apology scenario show that the most frequently utilized strategy among both freshmen and senior ELT students at Alaqsa University is *IFID* 26 (30.2%), 37 (55.2%), followed by *EXPL* 24 (27.9%), 10 (14.9%) and *RESP* 22 (25.6%), 11 (16.4%), as shown in Table 42. However, in ÇOMÜ, both freshmen and senior ELT students utilized *RESP* more frequently 32 (49.2), 35 (58.3%), respectively. Results also show that freshmen utilized *EXPL* frequently 19 (29.2%), whereas senior students employed *EXPEL* and *IFID* equally 10 (16.7%).

For the sub-strategies that ELT students chose in the MCDTs at Alaqsa University, Table 43 shows that the most frequently utilized sub-strategies among freshmen *explanation of the situation* 24 (27.9%) followed by *accepting the blame* 22 (25.6%), while senior students utilized *request for forgiveness* 17 (25.4%) followed by *offer of apology* 14 (20.9%). On the contrary, both senior and freshmen students at ÇOMÜ utilized *accepting the blame*

more frequently 32 (49.2%), 35 (58.3%), followed by *explanation of the situation* 9 (29.2%), 10 (16.7%), respectively.

Table 42

General apology strategies used by the two groups in the MDCTs (Apology 2)

Strategy	Alaqa University		ÇOMÜ	
	Freshmen <i>N</i> =86	Senior <i>N</i> =67	Freshmen <i>N</i> =65	Senior <i>N</i> =60
IFID	26 (30.2%)	37 (55.2%)	5 (7.7%)	10 (16.7%)
EXPL	24 (27.9%)	10 (14.9%)	19 (29.2%)	10 (16.7%)
RESP	22 (25.6%)	11 (16.4%)	32 (49.2)	35 (58.3%)
REPR	10 (11.6%)	4 (6.0%)	3 (4.6%)	2 (3.3%)
FORB	4 (4.7%)	5 (7.5%)	6 (9.2%)	3 (5.0%)

Table 43

Sub-strategies used by the two groups in the MDCTs (Apology 2)

Sub-strategies	Alaqa University		ÇOMÜ	
	Freshmen <i>N</i> =86	Senior <i>N</i> =67	Freshmen <i>N</i> =65	Senior <i>N</i> =60
Expression of regret	2 (2.3%)	6 (9.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)
Offer of apology	8 (9.3%)	14 (20.9%)	0 (0.0%)	1 (1.7%)
Request for forgiveness	16 (18.6%)	17 (25.4%)	5 (7.7%)	9 (15.0%)
Explanation	24 (27.9%)	10 (14.9%)	9 (29.2%)	10 (16.7%)
Accepting the blame	22 (25.6%)	11 (16.4%)	32 (49.2%)	35 (58.3%)
An offer of repair	10 (11.6%)	4 (6.0%)	3 (4.6%)	2 (3.3%)
Promise for forbearance	4 (4.7%)	5 (7.5%)	6 (9.2%)	3 (5.0%)
Total	86 (100%)	67 (100%)	65 (100%)	60 (100%)

Findings of the Second Apology Scenario in the WDCTs

The second apology scenario in the WDCTs invites the participants to express (in writing) their response when they want to apologize for canceling an already-decided meeting with their close friends. Below is the second apology scenario as it appeared in the WDCTs:

Scenario Two: Imagine that you had a meeting with one of your best friends. On the way to see her or him, you remembered that you had another meeting with your doctor. So, you called your friend to apologize for not being able to see her or him. What would you say?

The analysis of the participants' responses to the WDCTs shows that both freshmen and senior ELT students at Alaqa University utilized a combination of two strategies in the same response (See Table 44). For example, the most utilized combination of apology strategies among freshmen and senior ELT students is *IFID+EXPL* 62 (72.1%), 38 (56.7%) respectively. Results also show that both groups of participants utilized *EXPEL* 9 (10.5%), 11 (16.4%). However, freshmen and senior students at ÇOMÜ utilized a combination of three strategies, i.e., *IFID+EXPL+RESP* 18 (37.5%), 14 (38.9%), followed by a combination of *IFID+EXPL* 16 (33.3%), 13 (36.1%), respectively.

Table 44

General apology strategies used by the two groups in the WDCTs (Apology 2)

Strategy	Alaqa University		ÇOMÜ	
	Freshmen <i>N=86</i>	Senior <i>N=67</i>	Freshmen <i>N=48</i>	Senior <i>N=36</i>
IFID	6 (7.0%)	5 (7.5%)	6 (12.5%)	0 (0.0%)
EXPL	9 (10.5%)	11 (16.4%)	3 (6.3%)	2 (5.6%)
IFID + EXPL	62 (72.1%)	38 (56.7%)	16 (33.3%)	13 (36.1%)
IFID + EXPL + Request	6 (7.0%)	8 (11.9%)	18 (37.5%)	14 (38.9%)

Regarding the analysis of the sub-strategies in the WDCTs, Table 45 shows that the most frequently utilized combination of sub-strategies among freshmen and senior ELT students at Alaşsa University are *expression of regret* and *explanation of the situation* 56 (65.1.8%), 32 (47.8%), followed by *an explanation of the situation* 9 (10.5%), 11 (16.4%) respectively. Similarly, freshmen and senior students utilized a combination of three sub strategies (*expression of regret + explanation+ request*) 6 (7.0%), 8 (11.9%). As for the students at OMÜ, both freshmen and senior students utilized a combination of *expression of regret + explanation+ request* more frequently 18 (37.5%), 14 (38.9%), followed by expression of regret and explanation of the situation 16 (33.3%), 13 (36.1%).

Table 45
Sub-strategies used by the two groups in the WDCTs (Apology 2)

Sub-strategies	Alaşsa University		OMÜ	
	Freshmen N=86	Senior N=67	Freshmen N=48	Senior N=36
Expression of regret	6 (7.0%)	1 (1.5%)	5 (10.4%)	0 (0.0%)
Offer of apology	0 (0.0%)	4 (6.0%)	1 (2.1%)	0 (0.0%)
Explanation	9 (10.5%)	11 (16.4%)	3 (6.3%)	2 (5.6%)
Expression of regret + Explanation	56 (65.1.8%)	32 (47.8%)	16 (33.3%)	13 (36.1%)
Offer of apology + Explanation of the situation	4 (4.7%)	5 (7.5%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)
Expression of regret + Explanation of the situation + Request	6 (7.0%)	8 (11.9%)	18 (37.5%)	14 (38.9%)

Findings of the Third Apology Scenario in the MDCTs

The third apology scenario in the MDCTs invites the participants to choose one out of five given alternatives that represents their potential response when they want to apologize for their sisters for causing a technical problem to their laptop. The context of the third scenario assumes that there is no social distance among the speaker and the hearer (D-). It also assumes that the hearer has a higher social power than the apologizer (S<H), and it represents a high severity of offence level. Below is the third apology scenario as it appeared in the MDCTs:

Scenario Three: Imagine that your elder sister asked you to check (scan) her laptop. Unfortunately, you were not aware of the threatening messages that appeared on the screen. Eventually, your sister's laptop stopped working because of what you did. What would you say to her?

1. May I ask you to forgive me for the problem that I caused to your laptop?
2. Your laptop has broken down because I unintentionally ignored the threatening messages.
3. I did not realize that the threatening messages were serious. It is my fault.
4. I will pay whatever it costs for repairing your laptop.
5. I promise not to try any risky procedures that may damage your laptop.

The results of the participants' responses to the MDCTs in the third apology scenario show that the most frequently utilized strategy among freshmen ELT students at Alaqsa University is *an offer of repair* 24 (27.9%), followed by two strategies that are utilized equally, i.e., *RESP* and *IFID* 19 (22.1%), then *EXPL* 13 (15.1%). On the other hand, the most frequently utilized strategy among senior ELT students is *IFID* 32 (47.7%), followed by *RESP* 19 (28.4%), then *EXPL* 9 (13.4%), as shown in Table 46.

On the contrary, both freshmen and senior students at ÇOMÜ employed similar strategies. For example, the most frequently utilized strategies among them were *RESP* 28 (43.1%), 30 (50.0%), followed by *EXPL* 21 (32.3%), 12 (20.0%). The least utilized strategy among the four groups was *FORB*.

Table 46

General Apology strategies used by the two groups in the MDCTs (Apology 3)

Strategy	Alaqa University		ÇOMÜ	
	Freshmen <i>N</i> =86	Senior <i>N</i> =67	Freshmen <i>N</i> =65	Senior <i>N</i> =60
IFID	19 (22.1%)	32 (47.7%)	3 (4.6%)	4 (6.7%)
EXPL	13 (15.1%)	9 (13.4%)	21 (32.3%)	12 (20.0%)
RESP	19 (22.1%)	19 (28.4%)	28 (43.1%)	30 (50.0%)
REPR	24 (27.9%)	3 (4.5%)	11 (16.9%)	11 (18.3%)
FORB	11 (12.8%)	4 (6.0%)	2 (3.1%)	3 (5.0%)
Total	86 (100%)	67 (100 %)	65 (100%)	60 (100 %)

For the sub-strategies that ELT students chose in the MCDTs at Alaqa University, Table 47 shows that the most frequently utilized sub-strategies among freshmen students are *an offer of repair* 24 (27.9%), *expressing self-deficiency* 19 (22.1%), and *request for forgiveness* 17 (19.8%) with *offer of apology* 2 (2.3%). However, senior students utilized *request for forgiveness* 21 (31.3%), *expressing self-deficiency* 15 (22.4%) with *accepting the blame* 4 (6.0%), followed by *an explanation or account of the situation* 9 (13.4%).

On the contrary, students at ÇOMÜ utilized different strategies. For example, freshmen students utilized *expressing self-deficiency* 28 (43.1%), followed by *explanation of the situation* 21 (32.3%) more frequently, whereas senior students utilized *accepting the blame* 24 (40.0%) followed by *explanation of the situation* 12 (20.0%).

Table 47

Sub-strategies used by the two groups in the MDCTs (Apology 3)

Sub-strategy	Alaqa University		ÇOMÜ	
	Freshmen N=86	Senior N=67	Freshmen N=65	Senior N=60
Expression of regret	0 (0.0%)	2 (3.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)
Offer of apology	2 (2.3%)	9 (13.4%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)
Request for forgiveness	17 (19.8%)	21 (31.3%)	3 (4.6%)	4 (6.7%)
Explanation	13 (15.1%)	9 (13.4%)	21 (32.3%)	12 (20.0%)
Accepting the blame	0 (0.0%)	4 (6.0%)	0 (0.0%)	24 (40.0%)
Expressing self- deficiency	19 (22.1%)	15 (22.4%)	28 (43.1%)	6 (10.0%)
An offer of repair	24 (27.9%)	3 (4.5%)	11 (16.9%)	11 (18.3%)
Promise for forbearance	11 (12.8%)	4 (6.0%)	2 (3.1%)	3 (5.0%)
Total	86 (100%)	67 (100%)	65 (100%)	60 (100%)

Findings of the Third Apology Scenario in the WDCTs

The third apology scenario in the WDCTs invites the participants to express (in writing) their response when they want to apologize for forgetting to bring some important documents for their fathers. Below is the third apology scenario as it appeared in the WDCTs:

Scenario three: Imagine that your father asked you to bring some important documents from the company where he worked. Because you were busy, you forgot to bring them. Your father felt anger with you. What would you say to him?

The analysis of the participants' responses to the WDCTs shows that the most utilized combination of apology strategies among freshmen students at Alaqa University is *IFID and EXPL* 36 (41.7%), followed by *IFID* 22 (25.6%), then another combination of *IFID and an offer of repair* 9 (10.5%). However, senior ELT students at Alaqa University utilized *expression of apology* 17 (25.4%), followed by a combination of *IFID and EXPL* 15 (22.4%), and then a combination of *IFID and an REPR* 13 (19.4%), as shown in Table 48.

In ÇOMÜ, both freshmen and senior students utilized the same strategies more frequently. They both employed *IFID* and *EXPL* 16 (33.3%), 11 (30.6%) followed by *IFID* 9 (18.8%), 7 (19.4%), respectively.

Table 48

General apology strategies used by the two groups in the WDCTs (Apology 3)

Strategy	Alaqa University		ÇOMÜ	
	Freshmen <i>N</i> =86	Senior <i>N</i> =67	Freshmen <i>N</i> =48	Senior <i>N</i> =36
IFID	22 (25.6%)	17 (25.4%)	9 (18.8%)	7 (19.4%)
IFID + REPR	9 (10.5%)	13 (19.4%)	2 (4.2%)	1 (2.8%)
IFID + EXPL	36 (41.7%)	15 (22.4%)	16 (33.3%)	11 (30.6%)
IFID + RESP	4 (4.7%)	0 (0.0%)	1 (2.1%)	5 (13.9%)
IFID + EXPL + REPR	8 (9.3%)	12 (17.9%)	7 (14.6%)	5 (13.9%)

Regarding the analysis of the sub-strategies in the WDCTs, Table 49 shows that the most frequently utilized combination of sub-strategies among freshmen and senior ELT students at Alaqa University is *expression of regret* and *explanation of the situation* 38 (44.2%), 19 (28.4%). Freshmen and senior students utilized *expression of regret* 13 (15.1%), 14 (20.9%). Regarding students both freshmen and senior students utilized a combination of *expression of regret* and *explanation of the situation* 16 (33.3%), 11 (30.6%) most frequently, followed by *expression of regret* 9 (18.8%), 7 (19.4%).

Table 49

Sub-strategies used by the two groups in the WDCTs (Apology 3)

Sub-strategy	Alaqa University		ÇOMÜ	
	Freshmen	Senior	Freshmen	Senior
	<i>N</i> =86	<i>N</i> =67	<i>N</i> =48	<i>N</i> =36
Expression of regret	13 (15.1%)	14 (20.9%)	9 (18.8%)	7 (19.4%)
Request for forgiveness	5 (5.8%)	1 (1.5%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)
Expression of regret + An offer of repair	5 (5.8%)	12 (17.9%)	2 (4.2%)	2 (5.6%)
Expression of regret + Explanation of the situation	38 (44.2%)	15 (22.4%)	16 (33.3%)	11 (30.6%)
Expression of regret + Explanation of the situation + an offer of repair	7 (8.1%)	12 (17.9%)	7 (14.6%)	6 (16.7%)

Findings of the Fourth Apology Scenario in the MDCTs

The fourth apology scenario in the MDCTs invites the participants to choose one out of five given alternatives that represents their potential response when they want to apologize for unintentionally breaking an expensive item in the store owned by their nephews. The context of the fourth scenario assumes that there is no social distance between the speaker and the hearer (D-). It also assumes that the apologizer (speaker) has a higher social power than the hearer (S>H), and there is a high severity of offence level. Below is the fourth scenario as it appeared in the MDCTs:

Scenario Four: Imagine that you went to a gift store which is owned by your nephew. You wanted to buy an expensive gift for your friend. When you were holding the gift in the store, it fell down and was broken. What would you say to your nephew?

1. I apologize for breaking that gift.
2. I was not holding the gift tightly because I was carrying two gifts in one hand.
3. It is my fault. I should not have carried so many items in one hand.
4. I am going to pay whatever it costs.
5. I promise to be more attentive.

The results of the participants' responses to the MDCTs in the fourth apology scenario show that the most frequently utilized strategy among freshmen students at Alaqa University is *RESP* 24 (27.9%), followed by *IFID* 22 (25.6%), and then *REPR* 18 (20.9%), as shown in Table 50. However, senior ELT students at Alaqa University utilized *IFID* 26 (38.7%), followed by *RESP* 15 (22.4%), and then *REPR* 14(20.9) . However, in ÇOMÜ both freshmen and senior students utilized *REPR* most frequently, 42 (64.6%), and 31 (51.7%), respectively. Unlike freshmen students who employed *RESP* strategy 14 (21.0%), senior students utilized *IFID* 13 (21.7%). Results also showed that *FORB* is the least utilized strategy.

Table 50
Apology strategies used by the two groups in the MDCTs (Apology 4)

Strategy	Alaqa University		ÇOMÜ	
	Freshmen <i>N</i> =86	Senior <i>N</i> =67	Freshmen <i>N</i> =65	Senior <i>N</i> =60
IFID	22 (25.6%)	26 (38.7%)	8 (12.3%)	13 (21.7%)
EXPL	15 (17.4%)	9 (13.4%)	1 (1.5%)	3 (5.0%)
RESP	24 (27.9%)	15 (22.4%)	14 (21.0 %)	12 (20.0%)
REPR	18 (20.9%)	14 (20.9%)	42 (64.6%)	31 (51.7%)
FORB	7 (8.1%)	3 (4.5%)	0 (0.0%)	1 (1.7%)
Total	86 (100%)	67 (100%)	65 (100%)	60 (100%)

For the sub-strategies that ELT students chose in the MCDTs at Alaqa University, Table 51 shows that the most frequently utilized by freshmen and senior students are *accepting the blame* 23 (26.7%), 15 (22.4%), followed by *an offer of repair* 18 (20.9%), 14 (20.9%), respectively. However, at ÇOMÜ the situation is completely different. Both freshmen and senior students utilized *an offer of repair* as the most utilized 41 (63.1%), strategy 31 (51.7%), then accepting the blame 14 (21.5%), 12 (20.0%).

Table 51

Sub-strategies used by the two groups in the MDCTs (Apology 4)

Sub-strategy	Alaqa University		ÇOMÜ	
	Freshmen	Senior	Freshmen	Senior
	N=86	N=67	N=65	N=60
Expression of regret	3 (3.5%)	9 (13.4%)	0 (0.0%)	7 (11.7%)
Offer of apology	14 (16.3%)	8 (11.9%)	9 (13.8%)	6 (10.0%)
Request for forgiveness	5 (5.8%)	9 (13.4%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)
Explanation of the situation	15 (17.4%)	9 (13.4%)	1 (1.5%)	3 (5.0%)
Accepting the blame	23 (26.7%)	15 (22.4%)	14 (21.5%)	12 (20.0%)
An offer of repair	18 (20.9%)	14 (20.9%)	41 (63.1%)	31 (51.7%)
Promise for forbearance	7 (8.1%)	3 (4.5%)	0 (0.0%)	1 (1.7%)
Total	86 (100%)	67 (100%)	65 (100%)	60 (100%)

Findings of the Fourth Apology Scenario in the WDCTs

The fourth apology scenario in the WDCTs invites the participants to express (in writing) their response when they want to apologize for accidentally dropping the juice on their younger brother's shirt. Below is the fourth scenario as it appeared in the WDCTs:

Situation Four: Imagine that you and your younger brother were participating in the graduation ceremony at your university. During the event, you accidentally dropped the juice on your brother's shirt. What would you say to him?

The analysis of the participants' responses to the WDCTs shows that both freshmen and senior ELT students at Alaqa University utilized a combination of two strategies in the same response (see Table 52). For example, the most utilized combination of apology strategies among freshmen and senior ELT students is *IFID* and *REPR* 25 (29.0%), 22 (32.8%), followed by *an IFID* and *RESP* 19 (22.0%), 16 (23.9%) respectively. Results also show that freshmen and senior students utilized *an IFID* 15 (17.4%), and 14 (20.9%), respectively. Like the most frequently utilized strategies among Alaqa University students, freshmen and senior students at ÇOMÜ utilized *IFID* and *REPR* 25 (52.1%), 16 (44.4%). However, they utilized *IFID* as the second most utilized strategy 12 (25.0%), 8 (22.2%).

Table 52

General apology strategies used by the two groups in the WDCTs (Apology 4)

Strategy	Alaqa University		ÇOMÜ	
	Freshmen N=86	Senior N=67	Freshmen N=48	Senior N=36
IFID	15 (17.4%)	14 (20.9%)	12 (25.0%)	8 (22.2%)
REPR	3 (3.5%)	1 (1.5%)	2 (4.2%)	2 (5.6%)
IFID + RESP	19 (22.0%)	16 (23.9%)	4 (8.3%)	6 (16.7%)
IFID + REPR	25 (29.0%)	22 (32.8%)	25 (52.1%)	16 (44.4%)
IFID + EXPL	7 (8.2%)	4 (6.0%)	0 (0.0%)	2 (5.6%)
IFID + RESP + REPR	12 (14.0%)	2 (3.0%)	4 (8.3%)	0 (0.0%)

Regarding the analysis of the sub-strategies in the WDCTs, Table 53 shows that the most frequently utilized combination of sub-strategies among freshmen and senior ELT students at Alaqa University are *expression of regret* and *an offer of repair* 22 (25.6%), 22 (32.8%), followed by *expression of regret* and *expressing lack of intent* 16 (18.6%), 14 (20.9%). Freshmen students utilized *expression of regret* 11 (12.8%), *offer of apology* 2 (2.3%), and *request for forgiveness* 2 (2.3%), which all belong to the same general strategy (Expression of apology IFID).

Moreover, freshmen utilized three different strategies together, as shown below. Similar to the first most frequently utilized strategy among Alaqa students, freshmen and senior students utilized *expression of regret* and *an offer of repair* 25 (52.1%), 16 (44.4%). However, they utilized *expression of regret* as the second most utilized 12 (25.0%), strategy 8 (22.2%).

Table 53

Sub-strategies used by the two groups in the WDCTs (Apology 4)

Sub-strategy	Alaqsu University		ÇOMÜ	
	Freshmen	Senior	Freshmen	Senior
	<i>N</i> =86	<i>N</i> =67	<i>N</i> =48	<i>N</i> =36
Expression of regret	11 (12.8%)	11 (16.4%)	12 (25.0%)	8 (22.2%)
Expression of regret + Expressing lack of intent	16 (18.6%)	14 (20.9%)	4 (8.3%)	3 (8.3%)
Expression of regret + Accepting the blame	3 (3.5%)	2 (3.0%)	0 (0.0%)	3 (8.3%)
Expression of regret + An offer of repair	22 (25.6%)	22 (32.8%)	25 (52.1%)	16 (44.4%)
Request for forgiveness + An offer of repair	3 (3.5%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)
Expression of regret + Explanation of the situation	7 (8.1%)	4 (6.0%)	0 (0.0%)	2 (5.6%)
Expression of regret + expressing lack of intent + an offer of repair	12 (14.0%)	1 (1.5%)	1 (2.1%)	0 (0.0%)

Findings of the Fifth Apology Scenario in the MDCTs

The fifth apology scenario in the MDCTs invites the participants to choose one out of five given alternatives that represents their potential response when they (as students) want to apologize for shouting at some other students who were inactive during the presentation in a class. The context of the fifth apology scenario assumes that there is social distance between the speaker and the hearers (D+). It also assumes that the apologizer (speaker) and the hearers share an equal level of social power (S=H), and the level of severity of offence is high. Below is the fifth apology scenario as it appeared in the MDCTs:

Scenario Five: Imagine that you were a student giving a presentation to other students from a different class. You were angry with them for not being active during the presentation, so you started shouting at them and left the class. A few seconds later, you realized that what you did was a mistake, and you decided to apologize. What would you say?

1. I am sorry. I apologize for misbehaving with you.
2. I could not control myself because I was under stress, sorry!
3. It is my fault. I should not have shouted at anyone for any reason.
4. I will do whatever it takes to make you feel satisfied.
5. I promise not to misbehave again, sorry.

The results of the participants' responses to the MDCTs in the fifth apology scenario show that the most frequently utilized strategies among freshmen and senior ELT students at Alaşsa University are *IFID* 42 (48.8%), 34 (50.7%), *EXPL* 8 (32.6%), 16 (23.9%), and *RESP* 12 (14.0%), 11 (16.4%), respectively (see Table 54). On the contrary, both freshmen and senior students at OMÜ utilized *RESP* as the most frequently utilized strategy 28 (43.1%), 22 (36.7%), followed by *IFID* 23 (35.4%), 20 (33.3%). The least utilized strategy among all the groups is *FORB*.

Table 54

General apology strategies used by the two groups in the MDCTs (Apology 5)

Strategy	Alaşsa University		OMÜ	
	Freshmen <i>N</i> =86	Senior <i>N</i> =67	Freshmen <i>N</i> =65	Senior <i>N</i> =60
<i>IFID</i>	42 (48.8%)	34 (50.7%)	23 (35.4%)	20 (33.3%)
<i>EXPL</i>	28 (32.6%)	16 (23.9%)	12 (18.5%)	14 (23.3%)
<i>RESP</i>	12 (14.0%)	11 (16.4%)	28 (43.1%)	22 (36.7%)
<i>REPR</i>	3 (3.5%)	2 (3.0%)	0 (0.0%)	2 (3.3%)
<i>FORB</i>	1(1.2%)	4 (6.0%)	2 (3.1%)	2 (3.3%)
Total	86 (100%)	76 (100%)	65 (100%)	60 (100%)

For the sub-strategies that ELT students utilized in the MCDTs at Alaqa University (see Table 55), results show that the most frequently utilized sub-strategies among freshmen and senior ELT students are *an offer of apology* 34 (39.5%), 21 (31.3%), and *an explanation or account of the situation* 28 (32.6%), 16 (23.9%). Unlike freshmen students who utilized *recognizing the other person as deserving apology* 12 (14.0%), senior students utilized *expression of regret* 12 (17.9%). Regarding ÇOMÜ students, freshmen utilized *recognizing the other person as deserving apology* 28 (43.1%) followed by *offer of apology* 23 (35.4%), however, senior students utilized *accepting the blame* as the most frequently utilized strategy 19 (31.7%) followed by *expression of regret* 17 (28.3%).

Table 55
Sub-strategies used by the two groups in the MDCTs (Apology 5)

Sub-strategy	Alaqa University		ÇOMÜ	
	Freshmen N=86	Senior N=67	Freshmen N=65	Senior N=60
Expression of regret	3 (3.5%)	12 (17.9%)	0 (0.0%)	17 (28.3%)
Offer of apology	34 (39.5%)	21 (31.3%)	23 (35.4%)	3 (5.0%)
Request for forgiveness	5 (5.8%)	1 (1.5%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)
Explanation of the situation	28 (32.6%)	16 (23.9%)	12 (18.5%)	14 (23.3%)
Accepting the blame	0 (0.0%)	2 (3.0%)	0 (0.0%)	19 (31.7%)
Recognizing the other person as deserving apology	12 (14.0%)	9 (13.4%)	28 (43.1%)	3 (5.0%)
An offer of repair	3 (3.5%)	2 (3.0%)	0 (0.0%)	3 (5.0%)
Promise for forbearance	1 (1.2%)	4 (6.0%)	2 (3.1%)	1 (1.7%)
Total	86 (100%)	67 (100%)	65 (100%)	60 (100%)

Findings of the Fifth Apology Scenario in the WDCTs

The fifth apology scenario in the WDCTs, invites the participants to express (in writing) their response when they (as students) want to apologize for laughing at a question asked by their new classmate. Below is the fifth apology scenario as it appeared in the WDCTs:

Scenario Five: Imagine that you were a university student giving a presentation in front of your classmates. During the discussion, you laughed at a question asked by a new student. You realized that you embarrassed your classmate and decided to apologize for him or her. What would you say?

Results show that the most utilized combination of apology strategies among freshmen and senior ELT students at Alaqa University are *IFID* and *RESP* 52 (60.5%), 33 (49.2). Results also show that freshmen and senior students utilized *IFID* 15 (17.4%), 20 (29.8%) respectively. However, freshmen students utilized *RESP* 7 (8.1%), while senior students utilized two combinations of two strategies equally (see Table 56). Similarly, the most frequently utilized strategies at ÇOMÜ were *IFID and RESP* 19 (39.6%), and 14 (38.9%).

Table 56

General apology strategies used by the two groups in the WDCTs (Apology 5)

Strategy	Alaqa University		ÇOMÜ	
	Freshmen <i>N</i> =86	Senior <i>N</i> =67	Freshmen <i>N</i> =48	Senior <i>N</i> =36
IFID	15 (17.5%)	20 (29.8%)	14 (29.2%)	6 (16.7%)
RESP	7 (8.1%)	0 (0.0%)	1 (2.1%)	0 (0.0%)
IFID + RESP	52 (60.5%)	33 (49.2)	19 (39.6%)	14 (38.9%)
IFID + FORB	2 (2.3%)	5 (7.5%)	1 (2.1%)	3 (8.3%)
IFID + EXPL	4 (4.7%)	5 (7.5%)	12 (25.0%)	10 (27.8%)

Regarding the analysis of the sub-strategies in the WDCTs (see Table 57), results show that the most frequently utilized combination of sub-strategies among freshmen and senior ELT students at Alaqa University are *expression of regret* and *expressing lack of intent* 41 (47.7%), 23 (34.3%). Freshmen students utilized a combination of *offer of apology* 6 (7.0%), 9 (13.4%), *expressing lack of intent* 8 (9.3%), whereas senior students utilized *offer of apology* 9 (13.4%). Regarding the results of the ELT students at ÇOMÜ, freshmen students utilized *expression of regret* 15 (31.3%) as the most frequently utilized strategy followed by *expression of regret* and *explanation of the situation* 12 (25.0%), whereas senior students utilized a combination of two strategies, namely *expression of regret* and *expressing lack of intent* 14 (38.9%) followed by another combination, *expression of regret* and *explanation of the situation* 10 (27.8%).

Table 57

Sub-strategies used by the two groups in the WDCTs (Apology 5)

Sub-strategy	Alaqa University		ÇOMÜ	
	Freshmen N=86	Senior N=67	Freshmen N=48	Senior N=36
Expression of regret	5 (5.8%)	8 (11.9%)	15 (31.3%)	6 (16.7%)
Offer of apology	6 (7.0%)	9 (13.4%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)
Expression of regret + Expressing lack of intent	41 (47.7%)	23 (34.3%)	0 (0.0%)	14 (38.9%)
offer of apology + Expressing lack of intent	8 (9.3%)	5 (7.5%)	12 (25.0%)	0 (0.0%)
Expression of regret + Accepting the blame	3 (3.5%)	2 (3.0%)	6 (12.5%)	0 (0.0%)
Expression of regret + Explanation of the situation	4 (4.7%)	3 (4.5%)	12 (25.0%)	10 (27.8%)
Expression of regret + Promise for forbearance	2 (2.3%)	5 (7.5%)	1 (2.1%)	3 (8.3%)

Findings of the Sixth Apology Scenario in the MDCTs

The sixth apology scenario in the MDCTs invites the participants to choose one out of five given alternatives that represents their potential response when they (as students) accidentally drop the lecturer's bag in the class, and they want to offer their apology. The context of the sixth apology scenario assumes that there is social distance among the speaker and the hearer (D+). It also assumes that the hearer has a higher level of social power than the apologizer (the speaker) (S<H), and the level of severity of offence is low (L). Below is the sixth scenario as it appeared in the MDCTs:

Situation Six: Imagine that you were a university student who had just enrolled on a speaking course. During the lecture, you were invited to speak about yourself. When you got to the teacher's desk, you accidentally dropped the teacher's bag. What would you say to the lecturer?

1. Excuse me, I am sorry for dropping your bag.
2. I was moving a bit fast. That's why I did not see your bag.
3. I did not mean to cause any annoyance.
4. I will handle the fallen bag.
5. I promise to be more watchful.

The results of the participants' responses to the MDCTs in the sixth apology scenario show that the most frequently utilized strategy among freshmen and senior ELT students at Alaşsa University is *IFID* 53 (61.6%), 49 (73.1%). The results in Table 58 also show that freshmen students utilized 10 (11.7%), followed by *FORB* 9 (10.5%), while senior students utilized *EXPL* 7 (10.4%), followed by *RESP* 6 (9.0%). As for OMÜ students, both groups utilized *IFID* as the most frequently utilized strategy 56 (86.2%), 41 (68.3%). For both freshmen and senior students, the least utilized strategy is *FORB* 2 (3.1%), 1 (1.7%).

Table 58

General apology strategies used by the two groups in the MDCTs (Apology 6)

Strategy	Alaqa University		ÇOMÜ	
	Freshmen <i>N</i> =86	Senior <i>N</i> =67	Freshmen <i>N</i> =65	Senior <i>N</i> =60
IFID	53 (61.6%)	49 (73.1%)	56 (86.2%)	41 (68.3%)
EXPL	6 (7.0%)	7 (10.4%)	0 (0.0%)	7 (11.7%)
RESP	10 (11.7%)	6 (9.0%)	3 (4.6%)	4 (6.7%)
REPR	8 (9.3%)	3 (4.5%)	4 (6.2%)	7 (11.7%)
FORB	9 (10.5%)	2 (3.0%)	2 (3.1%)	1 (1.7%)
Total	86 (100%)	67 (100%)	65 (100%)	60 (100%)

For the sub-strategies that ELT students utilized in the MCDTs at Alaqa University (see Table 59), results show that the most frequently utilized sub-strategy among freshmen and senior ELT students is *an expression of regret* 51 (59.3%), 41 (61.2%). Results also show that freshmen students utilized two sub-strategies equally, i.e., *expressing lack of intent* and *promise for forbearance FORB* 9 (10.5%), followed by *an offer of repair* 8 (9.3%), whereas senior students equally utilized *an offer of apology* and *explanation or account of the situation EXPL* 7 (10.4%), followed by *expressing lack of intent* 5(7.5%).

As for students, both freshmen and senior students utilized expression of regret 29 (48.3%), 56 (86.2%) as the most frequently utilized strategy. Unlike freshmen students, senior students utilized *offer of apology* 12 (20.0%) as the second most utilized strategy.

Table 59

Sub-strategies used by the two groups in the MDCTs (Apology 6)

Sub-strategy	Alaqa University		ÇOMÜ	
	Freshmen N=86	Senior N=67	Freshmen N=65	Senior N=60
Expression of regret	51 (59.3%)	41 (61.2%)	56 (86.2%)	29 (48.3%)
Offer of apology	2 (2.3%)	7 (10.4%)	0 (0.0%)	12 (20.0%)
Request for forgiveness	0 (0.0%)	1 (1.5%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)
Explanation of the situation	6 (7.0%)	7 (10.4%)	0 (0.0%)	7 (11.7%)
Accepting the blame	1 (1.2%)	1 (1.5%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)
Expressing lack of intent	9 (10.5%)	5 (7.5%)	3 (4.6%)	4 (6.7%)
An offer of repair	8 (9.3%)	3 (4.5%)	4 (6.2%)	7 (11.7%)
Promise for forbearance	9 (10.5%)	2 (3.0%)	2 (3.1%)	1 (1.7%)
Total	86 (100%)	67 (100%)	65 (100%)	60 (100%)

The Results of the Sixth Apology Scenario in the WDCTs

The sixth apology scenario in the WDCTs invites the participants to express (in writing) their response when they (as students) kept chatting with their classmates during the lecture, and they want to apologize for misbehaving that way. Below is the sixth scenario as it appeared in the WDCTs:

Scenario Six: Imagine that you were a freshman student. During the lecture, you kept chatting with your classmates. The lecturer asked you to keep quiet or leave the class. At the end of the class, you went to the lecturer to apologize. What would you say?

The analysis of the participants' responses to the WDCTs (see Table 60) shows that the most utilized combination of apology strategies among freshmen and senior ELT students at Alaqa University is *IFID* and *FORB* 38 (44.2%), 30 (44.8%). Results also show that freshmen students utilized *an IFID* 17 (19.8%), while senior students utilized a combination of *IFID and EXPL* 12 (11.9%). Both freshmen and senior ELT students utilized a combination of *expression of apology IFID and RESP* 14 (16.3%), 10 (14.9%), respectively.

Like the most frequently utilized strategy among Alaşsa University students, both freshmen and senior students at OMÜ utilized *IFID and FORB 25* (52.1%), 14 (38.9%) followed by *IFID 14* (29.2%), 7 (19.4%), respectively.

Table 60

General apology strategies used by the two groups in the WDCTs (Apology 6)

Strategy	Alaşsa University		OMÜ	
	Freshmen <i>N</i> =86	Senior <i>N</i> =67	Freshmen <i>N</i> =48	Senior <i>N</i> =36
IFID	17 (19.8%)	7 (10.5%)	14 (29.2%)	7 (19.4%)
IFID + RESP	14 (16.3%)	10 (14.9%)	3 (6.3%)	6 (16.7%)
IFID + FORB	38 (44.2%)	30 (44.8%)	25 (52.1%)	14 (38.9%)
IFID + EXPL	7 (8.1%)	12 (11.9%)	3 (6.3%)	4 (11.1%)
IFID + RESP + FORB	5 (5.7%)	3 (4.5%)	3 (6.3%)	3 (8.3%)

Regarding the analysis of sub strategies in the WDCTs (see Table 61), results show that the most frequently utilized combination of sub-strategies among freshmen and senior ELT students at Alaşsa University is *expression of regret and promise for forbearance* 38 (44.2%), 30 (44.8%). Freshmen students utilized *an expression of regret* 9 (10.5%), whereas senior students utilized a combination of *expression regret and explanation of the situation* 10 (14.9%).

Table 61

Sub-strategies used by the two groups in the WDCTs (Apology 6)

Sub-strategy	Alaqa University		ÇOMÜ	
	Freshmen <i>N=86</i>	Senior <i>N=67</i>	Freshmen <i>N=48</i>	Senior <i>N=36</i>
Expression of regret	9 (10.5%)	5 (7.5%)	11 (22.9%)	7 (19.4%)
Offer of apology	5 (5.8%)	1 (1.5%)	3 (6.3%)	0 (0.0%)
Expression of regret + Expressing lack of intent	3 (3.5%)	5 (7.5%)	3 (6.3%)	2 (5.6%)
Expression of regret + Accepting the blame	8 (9.3%)	3 (4.5%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)
Expression of regret + Promise for forbearance	38 (44.2%)	30 (44.8%)	25 (52.1%)	14 (38.9%)
Expression of regret + Explanation	6 (7.0%)	10 (14.9%)	3 (6.3%)	3 (8.3%)
Expression of regret + accepting the blame + promise for forbearance	5 (5.8%)	1 (1.5%)	0 (0.0%)	1 (2.8%)

4.3.3. Results Related to the Third Minor Question

The third minor question seeks to examine how likely ELT students' selection of request and apology strategies is influenced by the socio-cultural variables, namely social power, distance, and imposition. It is formed as follows: "To what extent is freshmen and senior students' selection of request and apology strategies influenced by social power, social distance, and imposition?".

The interconnectedness between these socio-cultural variables and the speech acts of request and apology is a worth-investigating issue, as the production and realization of requests, apologies, or other speech acts are likely to be influenced not only by what is said but also by other variables, including -but not limited to- the social position of the speakers, the degree of social familiarity among the interlocutors, and the level of imposition.

Investigating the potential influence of these variables can be examined by making different sets of comparisons among different scenarios that are included in the MDCTs and WDCTs. The comparisons can be organized (see Table 62).

Table 62

Comparison sets of request and apology scenarios in the MDCTs and WDCTs

Scenario	Differences	Similarity
1+3	P, D, and R/severity of offence	—
1+4	D, and R/severity of offence	P
1+2	P, and D	R/severity of offence
2+3	P and R/severity of offence	D

1. The first group involves three aspects of differences (e.g., P, D, and R/severity of offence) For example, the first and the third scenarios are completely different in the P, D, and R/severity of offence.
2. The second group of comparisons involves two aspects of differences.
 - 2.1 The first and fourth scenarios are different in terms of D and R/severity of offence but they share the same level of P.
 - 2.2 The first and the second request scenarios are different in terms of P and D but share the same low level of R/severity of offence.
 - 2.3 The second and the third scenarios are different in P and R/severity of offence, but they share the same status of D.

Findings Related to the Potential Influence of Socio-cultural Variables on Request

Investigating the potential influence of the socio-cultural variables on ELT students' selection of request strategies was realized by holding comparisons among four sets of request scenarios as shown above (see Table 62), The four sets of comparisons cover different presentations of P, D, and R/severity of offence across the scenarios. The first set of comparisons is established between two scenarios, i.e., the first and third scenarios, which represent two completely different variations.

The context of the first scenario assumes that the requester does not know the requestee, which means that there is social distance among them and that the requester has power over the requestee. For the degree of imposition, the first scenario represents a lower level of imposition. On the contrary, the context of the third scenario assumes that the requester knows the requestee very well, which means that there is no social distance among them, and that the requester has a lower level of social power than the requestee. For the degree of imposition, the third scenario represents a high level of imposition.

Through comparing the participants' responses at Alaqsa University in the MDCTs (see Table 63), results show that there is a potential influence of these variables on senior students' selection of request strategies in the Palestinian context, signifying that senior students change their way of requesting according to the changing variables represented in the two scenarios. Senior students selected *direct* strategy in the first scenario and *indirect* strategy in the third scenario. However, freshmen students utilized *indirect* strategies across the two scenarios. As for the Turkish students, there is no difference between freshmen and senior students in their selection of the request strategies, i.e., both employed *indirect* request strategies despite the changing variables between the two scenarios.

The second set of comparisons is established between the first and fourth scenarios, which are different in social distance and imposition but share the same level of social power. Unlike the first scenario, the fourth scenario assumes that there is no distance between the interlocutors (they know each other well) and the level of imposition is high.

In the second set of comparisons (scenarios 1 and 4), findings indicated that there is a potential influence of the rank of imposition on senior students' selection of request strategies at Alaqsa University, where they utilized *indirect* strategy in the fourth scenario because the rank of imposition is high disregarding that they have higher social power over the requestee. Regarding the Turkish context, freshmen students' selection of request strategies was not influenced by the socio-cultural variables (they utilized the same strategy pattern in the two scenarios); however, senior students utilized *direct* request strategy in the fourth scenario but *indirect* strategy in the first, implying that the way the produce request changes by the changing variables in the two scenarios.

In the third set of comparison (scenario 2 and 3), findings indicated that there is potential influence of P and R /severity of offence on freshmen and senior students' selection of request strategies at Alaqsa University where they both utilized *direct* strategy in the second scenario and *indirect* strategy in the third scenario which signifies high level of R and low level of P. Nevertheless, both freshmen and senior students in the Turkish context utilized *indirect* request strategy despite having close relation with the requestee, they chose *indirect* request strategy (considerable level of politeness) as the rank of imposition is high.

Finally, in the last set of comparison (scenario 1 and 2), findings indicated that senior students' selection of request strategies at Alaqsa University was not influenced by the existence of the social distance and social power variables represented in the first scenario, whereas freshmen students employed *direct* strategy in the second scenario which represents no social distance and equal level of social power. However, they employed *indirect* strategy in the first scenario disregarding having high level of social power over the requestee. In the Turkish context, both freshmen and senior students utilized *indirect* request strategy disregarding the fact that they have close relationship with the requestee.

Table 63

Request strategies employed by ELT students at Alaqsa University and ÇOMÜ (MDCTs)

Scenario	Strategy	Alaqsqa University (N=153)		Strategy	ÇOMÜ (N=125)	
Scenario 1	CI (h-b)	Freshmen N=86	34 (39.6%)	CI (h-b)	Freshmen N=65	58 (89.2%)
	Direct	Senior N=67	36 (53.7%)	CI (h-b)	Senior N=60	50 (83.3%)
Scenario 2	Direct	Freshmen N=86	27 (31.4%)	Indirect	Freshmen N=65	28 (43.1%)
	Direct	Senior N=67	36 (53.7%)	CI (h-b)	Senior N=60	21 (35.0%)

Table 63 (Continued)

Scenario 3	Indirect	Freshmen N=86	30 (34.9%)	CI (s-b)	Freshmen N=65	27 (41.5%)
	Indirect	Senior N=67	20 (29.8%)	Indirect	Senior N=60	28 (46.5%)
Scenario 4	CI (h-b)	Freshmen N=86	33 (38.4%)	CI (s-b)	Freshmen N=65	29 (44.6%)
	CI (h-b)	Senior N=67	25 (37.3%)	Indirect	Senior N=60	22 (36.7%)
Scenario 5	CI (h-b)	Freshmen N=86	30 (34.9%)	CI (h-b)	Freshmen N=65	48 (73.8%)
	CI (h-b)	Senior N=67	32 (47.8%)	CI (h-b)	Senior N=60	41 (68.3%)
Scenario 6	CI (h-b)	Freshmen N=86	58 (67.4%)	CI (h-b)	Freshmen N=65	62 (95.4%)
	CI (h-b)	Senior N=67	31 (46.3%)	CI (h-b)	Senior N=60	51 (85.0%)

Findings indicated that there is no potential influence of social power, distance, and imposition on freshmen and senior students' selection of request strategies at Alaşsa University and ÇOMÜ in all the request scenarios (see Table 64).

Table 64

Request strategies employed by ELT students at Alaşsa University and ÇOMÜ (WDCTs)

Scenario	Strategy	Alaşsa University (N=153)		Strategy	ÇOMÜ (N=84)	
1	CI (h-b)	Freshmen N=86	56 (65.1%)	CI (h-b)	Freshmen N= 48	21 (43.8%)
	CI (h-b)	Senior N=67	45 (67.2%)	CI (h-b)	Senior N= 36	19 (52.8%)

Table 64 (Continued)

Scenario	CI (h-b)	Freshmen	56	CI (h-b)	Freshmen	43
2		N=86	(65.1%)		N= 48	(89.6%)
	CI (h-b)	Senior	45	CI (h-b)	Senior	34
		N=67	(67.2%)		N= 36	(94.4%)
Scenario	CI (h-b)	Freshmen	57	CI (h-b)	Freshmen	26
3		N=86	(66.4%)		N= 48	(54.2%)
	CI (h-b)	Senior	35	CI (h-b)	Senior	18
		N=67	(52.3%)		N= 36	(50.0%)
Scenario	CI (h-b)	Freshmen	49 (57%)	CI (h-b)	Freshmen	37
4		N=86			N= 48	(77.1%)
	CI (h-b)	Senior	45	CI (h-b)	Senior	28
		N=67	(67.1%)		N= 36	(77.8%)
Scenario	CI (h-b)	Freshmen	71	CI (h-b)	Freshmen	44
5		N=86	(82.6%)		N= 48	(91.2%)
	CI (h-b)	Senior	62	CI (h-b)	Senior	31
		N=67	(92.5%)		N= 36	(86.2%)
Scenario		Freshmen	73		Freshmen	28
6	CI (h-b)	N=86	(84.9%)	CI (h-b)	N= 48	(58.2%)
		Senior	51		Senior	25
		N=67	(76.1%)		N= 36	(69.8%)

Findings Related to the Potential Influence of Socio-cultural Variables on Apology

The researcher conducted comparisons of four sets that cover the three socio-cultural variables investigated in the current study. Findings of the first set of comparisons (scenarios 1 and 3) indicated that there is potential influence of these variables on freshmen students' way of expressing apology in the Palestinian context signifying, that freshmen students change their way of apology according to the changing variables represented in the two scenarios. They employed *IFID* as a direct apology strategy in the first scenario in which there is a high level of P and D between the speakers, and the severity of offence level is low, whereas they employed *REPR* strategy in the third scenario. However, the influence of

these variables seems to leave no impact on senior students who employed *IFID* in the two scenarios.

As for the Turkish context, there is no indication of the potential influence of these variables on senior students' way of expressing apology. Senior students utilized *IFID* in the two scenarios, while freshmen students' way of expressing apology was influenced by these variables as they employed different strategies in the first and third scenarios (*IFID* and *RESP*). Findings in the two contexts revealed that the influence of these variables has impact on freshmen students' way of apology rather than senior students.

In the second set of comparisons (scenarios 1 and 4), findings related to Alaqsa University students indicated that there is potential influence of the severity of offence level on freshmen students' way of expressing apology where they utilized *RESP* strategy in the fourth scenario because the severity of offence level is high. On the contrary, senior students utilized the same apology strategy *IFID*, which is considered as a direct apology. In the Turkish context, both groups' way of expressing apology was influenced by the socio-cultural variables in the two scenarios as they both utilized *IFID* in the first scenario and *REPR* in the fourth one. Through examining the two contexts, namely Palestine and Türkiye, findings revealed that the influence of these variables have impact on freshmen students' way of apology in the two contexts, whereas it impacts senior students in Türkiye only.

In the third set of comparisons (scenarios 2 and 3), findings indicated that there is a potential influence of social power and severity of offence level on freshmen students' way of expressing apology at Alaqsa University, where they utilized *REPR* in the third scenario in which the severity of offence level is high and the social power level is low. However, they utilized *IFID* in the second scenario. Regarding the Turkish context, there was no influence of the socio-cultural variables on freshmen and senior students' way of expressing apology in the two scenarios. They both utilized *RESP*, which functions as a fault-bridging means in social relations. Through examining the two contexts, namely Palestine and Türkiye, findings revealed that the influence of these variables has an impact on freshmen students' way of producing apology in Palestine only, whereas no influence can be identified among other groups.

In the last set of comparisons (scenarios 1 and 2), findings indicated that both freshmen and senior students' way of expressing apology at Alaşsa University was not influenced by the existence of the social distance variable and the social power represented in the first scenario. They employed *IFID* in the two scenarios.

In the Turkish context, both groups utilized *IFID* in the first *apology* and *RESP* in the second one, signifying that the change that appeared in freshmen and senior students' way of expressing apology is likely pertinent to the influence of the socio-cultural variables that vary across the two scenarios. Through examining the two contexts, namely Palestine and Türkiye, findings (see Table 65) revealed that the influence of these variables has an impact on freshmen and senior students' way of apology in Türkiye only.

Table 65

Apology strategies employed by ELT students at Alaşsa University and ÇOMÜ (MDCTs)

Scenario	Strategy	Alaşsa (N=153)		Strategy	ÇOMÜ (N=125)	
Scenario 1	IFID	Freshmen N=86	41 (47.7%)	IFID	Freshmen N=65	41 (63.1%)
	IFID	Senior N=67	38 (56.7%)	IFID	Senior N=60	27 (45.0%)
Scenario 2	IFID	Freshmen N=86	26 (30.2%)	RESP	Freshmen N=65	32 (49.2)
	IFID	Senior N=67	37 (55.2%)	RESP	Senior N=60	35 (58.3%)
Scenario 3	REPR	Freshmen N=86	24 (27.9%)	RESP	Freshmen N=65	28 (43.1%)
	IFID	Senior N=67	32 (47.7%)	RESP	Senior N=60	30 (50.0%)
Scenario 4	RESP	Freshmen N=86	24 (27.9%)	REPR	Freshmen N=65	42 (64.6%)
	IFID	Senior N=67	26 (38.7%)	REPR	Senior N=60	31 (51.7%)

Table 65 (Continued)

Scenario 5	IFID	Freshmen	42 (48.8%)	RESP	Freshmen	28 (43.1%)
		N=86			N=65	
	IFID	Senior	34 (50.7%)	RESP	Senior	22 (36.7%)
		N=67			N=60	
Scenario 6	IFID	Freshmen	53 (61.6%)	IFID	Freshmen	56 (86.2%)
		N=86			N=65	
	IFID	Senior	49 (73.1%)	IFID	Senior	41 (68.3%)
		N=67			N=60	

Regarding the participants' responses to the WDCTs (see Table 66), results indicated that there is a potential influence of P, D, and severity of offence level on freshmen and senior students' way of expressing apology in the first and third scenarios at Alaqa University.

Both freshmen and senior students utilized a combination of *IFID* and *RESP* in the first scenario; however, freshmen students utilized a combination of *IFID* and *EXPL* in the third scenario, while senior students utilized *IFID* only in both scenarios. As for the Turkish context, both groups utilized different apology strategies in the two scenarios, i.e., *IFID* and *RESP* (in the first scenario) and *IFID* and *EXPL* (in the third scenario), which can be attributed to the changing socio-cultural variables included in the two scenarios.

In the second set of comparisons (scenario 1 and 4), findings indicated a potential influence of the socio-cultural variables on freshmen and senior students' way of expressing apology at Alaqa University. Both groups utilized a combination of *IFID* and *RESP* in the first scenario but *IFID* and *REPE* in the fourth scenario. Similarly, in the Turkish context, freshmen and senior students' selection of apology strategies was influenced by the changing variables in the two scenarios. Both groups utilized *IFID* and *RESP* in the first scenario, and *IFID* and *REPE* in the fourth one.

In the second and third scenarios, results indicate that there is a potential influence of social power and severity of offence level on senior students' way of expressing apology. Senior students utilized a combination of *IFID* and *EXPL* in the second scenario but *IFID*

only in the third one. As for the Turkish context, both groups' selection was influenced by the socio-cultural variables, which interpret their different ways of choosing a combination of three strategies in the second scenario *IFID + EXPL + Request* but a combination of two strategies in the third scenario (*IFID + EXPL*).

The potential influence of P and D on freshmen and senior students' way of expressing apology can be traced in the last set of comparisons, i.e., the first and second scenarios. Both students utilized a combination of *IFID and RESP* in the first scenario but *IFID and EXPL* in the second one. Similarly, at ÇOMÜ, ELT students' way of expressing apology was influenced by the changing variables in the two scenarios. Table bb presents holistic view on the apology strategies utilized by all the study groups.

Table 66

Apology Strategies employed by ELT students at Alaşsa University and ÇOMÜ (WDCTs)

Scenario	Strategy	Alaşsa University (N=153)		Strategy	ÇOMÜ (N=84)	
Scenario 1	IFID + RESP	Freshmen N=86	36 (41.9%)	IFID + RESP	Freshmen N=48	10 (20.8%)
		Senior N=67	23 (34.3%)		Senior N=36	8 (22.2%)
Scenario 2	IFID + EXPL	Freshmen N=86	62 (72.1%)	IFID + EXPL + Request	Freshmen N=48	18 (37.5%)
		Senior N=67	38 (57.7%)		Senior N=36	14 (38.9%)
Scenario 3	IFID + EXPL	Freshmen N=86	36 (41.7%)	IFID + EXPL	Freshmen N=48	16 (33.3%)
		Senior N=67	17 (25.4%)		Senior N=36	11 (30.6%)
Scenario 4	IFID + REPR	Freshmen N=86	25 (29.0%)	IFID + REPR	Freshmen N=48	25 (52.1%)
		Senior N=67	22 (32.8%)		Senior N=36	16 (44.4%)

Table 66 (Continued)

Scenario		Freshmen	52		Freshmen	19
5	IFID + RESP	N=86	(60.5%)	IFID + RESP	N=48	(39.6%)
		Senior	33 (49.2)		Senior	14
		N=67			N=36	(38.9%)
Scenario		Freshmen	38		Freshmen	25
6	IFID + FORB	N=86	(44.2%)	IFID + FORB	N=48	(52.1%)
		Senior	30		Senior	14
		N=67	(44.8%)		N=36	(38.9%)

4.3.4. Results Related to the Fourth Minor Question

One of the study's objectives is to examine whether ELT students' selection of request and apology strategies in terms of (in)directness is influenced by gender. Thus, the fourth minor question is framed as it follows: "Are there differences among freshmen and senior ELT students' selection of request and apology strategies attributed to gender in terms of indirectness?" In order to provide an answer to this question, the researcher examined the frequencies and percentages of the strategies utilized by male and female participants in each request and apology scenario included in the two tools, i.e., the MDCTs and WDCTs.

Findings Related to the Effect of Gender on Producing Request

The analysis of the participants' responses at Alaqsa University indicates that there are a number of significant differences between male and female students in their selection of the request strategies in all the request scenarios in terms of indirectness. The results in the MDCTs revealed that females used more implicit and indirect strategies in all the request scenarios except the second one, while male students utilized *direct* request strategy too much and did not utilize any indirect strategy in all the request situations except in the third and fourth request scenarios, in which they utilized *conventionally indirect (hearer-based)* strategy a bit more than the direct strategy. The results indicate that female students have a strong tendency towards adopting polite request strategies compared to male students.

The results show that there are no differences between male and female students at ÇOMÜ in their selection of request strategies in terms of (in)directness (see Table 67). Both groups utilized indirect request strategies. Comparing the two contexts, there is a difference between male students in the two groups. As for the Turkish students, they tend to utilize a more indirect request strategy, indicating politer attitudes in requests.

Table 67

Request strategies employed by male and female ELT students at Alaqsa University and ÇOMÜ (MDCTs)

Scenario	Strategy	Alaqa University (N=153)		ÇOMÜ (N=125)	
		Male (N=27)	Female (N=126)	Male (N= 46)	Female (N= 79)
Scenario 1	Direct	24 (88.9%)	39 (31.0%)	5 (10.9%)	11 (13.9%)
	CI(h-b)	3 (11.1%)	47 (37.3%)	40 (87.0%)	68 (86.1%)
	CI(s-b)	0 (0.0%)	2 (1.6%)	1 (2.2%)	0 (0.0%)
	Indirect	0 (0.0%)	38 (30.2%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)
Scenario 2	Direct	21 (77.8%)	42 (33.3%)	10 (21.7%)	19 (24.1%)
	CI(h-b)	6 (22.2%)	27 (21.4%)	14 (30.4%)	24 (30.4%)
	CI(s-b)	0 (0.0%)	22 (17.5%)	5 (10.9%)	12 (15.2%)
	Indirect	0 (0.0%)	35 (27.8%)	17 (37.0%)	24 (30.4%)
Scenario 3	Direct	12 (44.4%)	28 (22.2%)	6 (13.0%)	13 (16.5%)
	CI(h-b)	14 (51.9%)	27 (21.4%)	5 (10.9%)	8 (10.1%)
	CI(s-b)	0 (0.0%)	22 (17.5%)	16 (34.8%)	26 (32.9%)
	Indirect	1 (3.7%)	49 (38.9%)	19 (41.3%)	32 (40.5%)
Scenario 4	Direct	11 (40.7%)	27 (21.4%)	4 (8.7%)	0 (0.0%)
	CI(h-b)	16 (95.3%)	42 (33.3%)	14 (30.4%)	24 (30.4%)
	CI(s-b)	0 (0.0%)	17 (13.5%)	16 (34.8%)	28 (35.4%)
	Indirect	0 (0.0%)	40 (31.7%)	12 (26.1%)	27 (34.2%)
Scenario 5	Direct	20 (74.1%)	29 (23.0%)	8 (10.9%)	7 (8.9%)
	CI(h-b)	7 (25.9%)	55 (43.7%)	30 (65.2%)	59 (74.7%)
	CI(s-b)	0 (0.0%)	12 (9.5%)	7 (15.2%)	7 (8.9%)
	Indirect	0 (0.0%)	30 (23.8%)	4 (8.7%)	6 (7.6%)

Table 67 (Continued)

	Direct	23 (85.2%)	21 (16.7%)	3 (6.5%)	1 (1.3%)
Scenario 6	CI(h-b)	4 (14.8%)	85 (67.5%)	41 (98.1%)	72 (91.1%)
	CI(s-b)	0 (0.0%)	7 (5.6%)	2 (4.3%)	3 (3.8%)
	Indirect	0 (0.0%)	13 (10.3%)	0 (0.0%)	3 (3.8%)

According to the results of the WDCTs (see Table 68), the results show that there are no differences among male and female students in their selection of the request strategies in all six request scenarios in terms of indirectness (in the Palestinian context). The most frequently utilized strategy was *conventionally indirect (hearer-based)* in all the scenarios except in the fourth scenario, in which male students utilized *conventionally indirect (speaker-based)* most while female students utilized *conventionally indirect (hearer-based)*.

It is worth mentioning that both male and female students utilized different combinations of two strategies in all the scenarios. Similarly, in the Turkish context, results indicated that both male and female students utilized the same request strategy in five situations but different strategies in one scenario only, where males utilized asking direct questions and female students utilized indirect strategies.

Table 68

Request strategies employed by male and female ELT students at Alaqsa University and ÇOMÜ (WDCTs)

Scenario	Strategy	Alaqsa University (N=153)		ÇOMÜ (N = 84)	
		Male (N =27)	Female (N=126)	Male (N=27)	Female (N=57)
Scenario 1	Direct	3 (11.1%)	3 (2.4%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)
	CI (h-b)	12 (44.4%)	89 (70.6%)	10 (37.0%)	30 (52.6%)
	CI (s-b)	3 (11.1%)	10 (7.9%)	3 (11.1%)	5 (8.8%)
	Asking question	7 (25.9%)	20 (15.9%)	13 (48.1%)	22 (38.6%)

Table 68 (Continued)

Scenario 2	Direct	2 (7.4%)	16 (12.7%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)
	CI (h-b)	17 (63.0%)	84 (66.7%)	24 (88.9%)	53 (93.0%)
	CI (s-b)	6 (22.2%)	14 (11.1%)	1 (3.7%)	2 (3.5%)
	CI (h-b) + CI (s-b)	2 (7.4%)	8 (6.3%)	2 (7.4%)	2 (3.5%)
Scenario 3	CI (h-b)	17 (63.0%)	75 (59.5%)	17 (63.0%)	27 (47.4%)
	CI (s-b)	7 (25.9%)	36 (28.6%)	7 (25.9%)	13 (22.8%)
	CI (h-b) + CI (s-b)	2 (7.4%)	10 (7.9%)	2 (7.4%)	8 (14.0%)
Scenario 4	Direct	0 (0.0%)	11 (8.7%)	1 (3.7%)	4 (7.0%)
	CI (h-b)	4 (14.8%)	75 (59.5%)	20 (74.1%)	45 (78.9%)
	CI (s-b)	19 (70.4%)	31 (24.6%)	2 (7.4%)	3 (5.3%)
	Indirect	0 (0.0%)	1 (0.8%)	1 (3.7%)	0 (0.0%)
	CI (h-b) + CI (s-b)	3 (11.1%)	8 (6.3%)	2 (7.4%)	3 (5.3)
Scenario 4	CI (h-b)	23 (85.2%)	110 (87.3%)	26 (96.3%)	49 (86.0%)
	CI (s-b)	3 (11.1%)	9 (7.1%)	1 (3.7%)	3 (5.3%)
	CI (h-b) + CI (s-b)	1 (3.7%)	6 (4.8%)	0 (0.0%)	1 (1.8%)
Scenario 6	CI (h-b)	19 (70.4%)	105 (83.3%)	15 (55.6%)	38 (66.7%)
	CI (s-b)	3 (11.1%)	8 (6.3%)	4 (14.8%)	3 (5.3%)
	Asking question	3 (11.1%)	8 (6.3%)	3 (11.1%)	6 (10.5%)
	CI (h-b) + CI (s-b)	0 (0.0%)	2 (1.6%)	4 (14.8%)	9 (15.8%)

Findings Related to the Effect of Gender on Producing Apology

Table 69 shows that the most utilized strategy among male students in all the apology scenarios was *IFID*. Although female students utilized *IFID* in most of the scenarios (e.g., 1, 2, 5, and 6), there are differences between male and female students in utilizing *IFID* strategy. Results indicate that male students utilize a limited number of apology strategies in all the apology scenarios. For example, male students did not utilize an *offer of repair* strategy or *promise for forbearance* strategy in all six scenarios, whereas female students utilized all the apology strategies in all the scenarios.

In the Turkish context, there are no differences between male and female students in terms of indirectness. Both groups utilized the same apology strategies in all six scenarios and balanced using indirect apology strategies.

Table 69

Apology strategies employed by male and female ELT students at Alaşsa University and ÇOMÜ (MDCTs)

Scenario	Strategy	Alaşsa University (N=153)		ÇOMÜ (N=84)	
		Male (N =27)	Female (N=126)	Male (N =46)	Female (N=79)
Scenario 1	IFID	21 (77.8%)	58 (46.0%)	21 (45.7%)	47 (59.5%)
	EXPL	5 (18.5%)	28 (22.2%)	5 (10.9%)	11 (13.9%)
	RESP	1 (3.7%)	18 (14.3%)	10 (21.7%)	16 (20.3%)
	REPR	0 (0.0%)	13 (10.3%)	6 (13.0%)	4 (5.1%)
	FORB	0 (0.0%)	9 (7.1%)	4 (8.7%)	1 (1.3%)
Scenario 2	IFID	27 (100%)	36 (28.6%)	7 (15.2%)	8 (10.1%)
	EXPL	0 (0.0%)	34 (27.0%)	9 (19.6%)	20 (25.3%)
	RESP	0 (0.0%)	33 (26.2%)	25 (54.3%)	42 (53.2%)
	REPR	0 (0.0%)	14 (11.1%)	1 (2.2%)	4 (5.1%)
	FORB	0 (0.0%)	9 (7.1%)	4 (8.7%)	5 (6.3%)
Scenario 3	IFID	18 (66.7%)	33 (26.2%)	2 (4.3%)	5 (6.3%)
	EXPL	6 (22.2%)	16 (12.7%)	10 (21.7%)	23 (29.1%)
	RESP	3 (11.1%)	35 (27.8%)	19 (41.3%)	39 (49.4%)
	REPR	0 (0.0%)	27 (21.4%)	14 (30.4%)	8 (10.1%)
	FORB	0 (0.0%)	15 (11.9%)	1 (2.2%)	4 (5.1%)
Scenario 4	IFID	18 (66.7%)	30 (23.8%)	7 (15.2%)	14 (17.7%)
	EXPL	9 (33.3%)	15 (11.9%)	22 (4.3%)	2 (2.5%)
	RESP	0 (0.0%)	39 (31.0%)	9 (19.6%)	17 (21.5%)
	REPR	0 (0.0%)	32 (25.4%)	28 (60.9%)	45 (57.0%)
	FORB	0 (0.0%)	10 (7.9%)	0 (0.0%)	1 (1.3%)
Scenario 5	IFID	26 (96.3%)	51 (40.5%)	14 (30.4%)	29 (36.7%)
	EXPL	1 (3.7%)	43 (34.1%)	9 (19.6%)	17 (21.5%)
	RESP	0 (0.0%)	22 (17.5%)	21 (45.7%)	29 (36.7%)
	REPR	0 (0.0%)	5 (4.0%)	1 (2.2%)	1 (1.3%)
	FORB	0 (0.0%)	5 (4.0%)	1 (2.2%)	3 (3.8%)

Table 69 (Continued)

	IFID	24 (88.9%)	78 (61.9%)	32 (69.6%)	65 (82.3%)
	EXPL	2 (7.4%)	11 (8.7%)	4 (8.7%)	3 (3.8%)
Scenario 6	RESP	1(3.7%)	15 (11.9%)	1 (2.2%)	6 (7.6%)
	REPR	0 (0.0%)	11 (8.7%)	8 (17.4%)	3 (3.8%)
	FORB	0 (0.0%)	11 (8.7%)	1 (2.2%)	2 (2.6%)

According to the results of the WDCTs (see Table 70), there are no differences between male and female students at Alaqsa University in their selection of the apology strategies in all the apology scenarios. Both groups utilized the same combination of two apology strategies in all the scenarios except in the fourth scenario, where the most frequently utilized strategy among male students was *IFID* while female students utilized a combination of two strategies, i.e., *IFID* and *REPR*. However, there are differences among male and female students at Alaqsa University in the number of apology strategies that each group utilized. Results indicate that female students utilize more apology strategies in all six scenarios than male students.

The only similarity among male and female students is that both groups utilized a combination of two strategies or more than one strategy in all the apology scenarios. As for the Turkish context, there are limited differences between male and female students. For example, both groups utilized the same combination of apology strategies in four scenarios, whereas they employed different strategies in two scenarios (the first and fifth scenario). Furthermore, *IFID* was very frequently utilized in all the scenarios by the two groups.

Table 70

Apology strategies employed by male and female ELT students at Alaqsa University and ÇOMÜ (WDCTs)

Scenario	Strategy	Alaqa University (N=153)		ÇOMÜ (N=84)	
		Male (N =27)	Female (N=126)	Male (N =46)	Female (N=79)
	IFID	5 (18.5%)	28 (22.2%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)
Scenario 1	IFID + EXPL	4 (14.8%)	15 (11.9%)	5 (18.0%)	8 (14.0%)
	IFID + RESP	7 (25.9%)	52 (41.3%)	8 (29.6%)	0 (0.0%)
	EXPL+RESP	0 (0.0%)	2 (1.6%)	0 (0.0%)	10 (17.5%)

Table 70 (Continued)

Scenario 2	IFID	3 (11.1%)	8 (6.3%)	0 (0.0%)	5 (8.8%)
	EXPL	1 (3.7%)	19 (15.1%)	5 (18.5%)	0 (0.0%)
	IFID + EXPL	17 (63.0%)	83 (65.9%)	8 (29.8%)	21 (36.7%)
	IFID + EXPL +Request	4 (14.8%)	9 (7.1%)	9 (33.3%)	23 (40.4%)
Scenario 3	IFID	1 (3.7%)	38 (29.9%)	5 (18.5%)	11 (19.8%)
	IFID + EXPL	12 (44.4%)	39 (31.0%)	9 (33.3%)	18 (31.9%)
	IFID + REPR	2 (7.4%)	20 (15.9%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)
	IFID + EXPL + REPR	7 (25.9%)	13 (10.3%)	0 (0.0%)	9 (15.8%)
Scenario 4	IFID	9 (33.3%)	20 (15.9%)	5 (18.5%)	15 (26.3%)
	IFID + EXPL	1 (3.7%)	10 (7.9%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)
	EXPL + RESP	5 (18.5%)	30 (23.8%)	0 (0.0%)	7 (12.3%)
	IFID + REPR	6 (22.2%)	41 (32.5%)	17(63.0%)	24 (42.1%)
	IFID + RESP + REPR	2 (7.4%)	12 (9.5%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)
Scenario 5	IFID	6 (22.2%)	29 (23.0%)	5 (18.5%)	15 (26.3%)
	RESP	1 (3.7%)	7 (5.6%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)
	IFID + EXPL	2 (7.4%)	7 (5.6%)	10(37.2%)	12 (21.1%)
	EXPL + RESP	13 (48.1%)	71 (56.3%)	10(37.2%)	0 (0.0%)
	IFID + REPR	1 (3.7%)	4 (3.2%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)
	IFID + RESP	0 (0.0%)	1 (0.8%)	0 (0.0%)	23 (40.3%)
Scenario 6	IFID	3 (11.1%)	25 (19.8%)	8 (29.8%)	13 (22.2%)
	IFID + EXPL	6 (22.2%)	8 (6.3%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)
	EXPL + RESP	2 (7.4%)	23 (18.3%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)
	IFID + RESP	1 (3.7%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	5 (8.8%)
	IFID + FORB	11 (40.7%)	57 (45.2%)	10 (37.0%)	29 (50.9%)
	IFID + RESP + FORB	3 (11.1%)	5 (4.0%)	0 (0.0%)	5 (8.8%)

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

This chapter recaps the research objectives and concisely discusses the results of the three research questions linking them to the related theoretical standpoints and previous research studies in an attempt to discuss the current research topic comprehensively. The researcher believes that contextualizing the results proves to be a contributory endeavor forming a significant contribution to the body of knowledge related to the topic under scrutiny. Additionally, the researcher presents conclusions, implications, and suggestions.

The first research question seeks to examine ELT students' level of pragmatic competence in terms of pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic competence. The researcher linked the results of the first question with topics such as pragmatics instruction in EFL contexts, Schmidt's noticing hypothesis, and language and culture. Similarly, the researcher contextualized the results of the second research question, which aims at identifying the potential correlation between pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic competence, with the interconnectedness of linguistic, communicative, and pragmatic competence (taking into consideration the potential role of gender).

The researcher established connections between the results of the third question and several topics, including the speech act theory, politeness theory, language and culture, and sociocultural variables (e.g., social power, distance, imposition). The third research question aims at identifying and comparing the strategies utilized by freshmen and senior ELT students in producing request and apology speech acts with reference to the concept of (in)directness in two different EFL contexts (Palestine and Türkiye). Additionally, it aims at investigating the potential influence of socio-cultural variables on students' selection of the request and apology strategies and also seeks to examine the potential influence of students' gender on the strategy selection.

5.1. EFL Students' Pragmatic Competence

One of the most significant concerns that the current research seeks to investigate is ELT students' pragmatic competence, which encompasses two integral parts, namely pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic competence. The current research examines whether there are differences among freshmen students who are expected to show a different level of pragmatic competence compared to senior students who were exposed to more language courses, which were expected to increase their awareness of pragmatic competence and consequently reflect on their pragmatic competence level.

In the Palestinian context, results showed that no significant differences were identified among freshmen and senior ELT students in their pragmatic competence in terms of pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic competence when producing English requests. However, there were limited differences between both groups in producing apologies in favor of senior students whose scores in pragmalinguistic competence and sociopragmatic competence are a bit higher than those of the freshmen.

This result indicates that despite the differences between freshmen and senior students in terms of the university level and the number of university courses they were exposed to, freshmen students had a similar level of pragmatic competence compared to senior students who had been introduced to many language courses. This result can be attributed to the fact that the academic plan of the ELT program at Alaqsa University does not include courses that help students acquire the necessary skills that can contribute to building students' pragmatic competence. Additionally, pragmatic competence was not targeted as an objective to be achieved in related courses such as listening and speaking, and linguistics.

According to the raters' evaluations of the Turkish students' responses to request and apology expressions, the results showed that there were significant differences between freshmen and senior students' scores in pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic competence in favor of senior students in producing request and apology speech acts, indicating that senior students exposed a bit more awareness of socio-cultural context when producing speech acts.

5.1.1. Pragmatic Competence and Gender

The current study also aimed at investigating whether students' pragmatic competence in expressing request and apology speech acts is influenced by their gender. Therefore, the researcher compared male and female students' pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic competence as evaluated by the raters. Results indicated that there were no statistically significant differences between male and female students in producing requests in the two contexts.

However, in producing apologies, there were differences in favor of male students in the Palestinian context in terms of pragmalinguistic competence, whereas the difference was in favor of female students in sociopragmatic competence. This result reflects the females' strong tendency towards adopting more indirect strategies when producing apologies. The results of the present study were similar to other studies in terms of finding differences (Al-Zumor, 2009; 2012; Alzeebaree and Yavuz, 2017; Elham, 2017; Keshani and Heidari-Shahreza, 2017; Uгла and Abidin, 2016; Salehi, 2014; Abu Humeid, 2013).

5.2. Interrelation between Pragmalinguistic and Sociopragmatic Competence

The second major issue that the present study seeks to address is the potential interrelation between pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic competence. Even though they represent integral components of pragmatic competence, the researcher was interested in identifying whether there is a positive correlation between them or not. In other words, is the increase in the students' pragmalinguistic competence followed by an increase in the sociopragmatic competence?

The researcher examined the correlation between the two components of pragmatic competence and found that there was a medium positive correlation between pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic competence among ELT students at Alaqsa University when producing requests and a strong positive correlation between pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic competence in apology. Similarly, in the Turkish context, results indicated a strong correlation between the two components in the request and apology speech acts.

5.3. Similarities and Differences in the Two Contexts

Providing comprehensive answers for the third major question necessitated delving into discussing four aspects: 1. Comparing freshmen and senior students' selection of request strategies in the Palestinian context in terms of (in)directness and linking it with the comparison in the Turkish context, 2. comparing apology strategies utilized by the participants in the two contexts, 3. examining how students' selection of request and apology strategies was influenced by social power, social distance, and imposition, and 4. comparing whether gender affected students' selection of request and apology strategies in the two contexts.

5.3.1. Request Strategies in the Two Contexts

According to the results of MDCTs and WDCTs, no substantial differences were identified between freshmen and senior ELT students in their selection of request strategies in the Turkish and Palestinian contexts. Results indicated that *conventionally indirect (hearer-based)* strategy was the most recurrently utilized strategy among the participants. However, freshmen and senior students in the Turkish context utilized diverse indirect request strategies, e.g., *conventionally indirect (hearer-based)*, *conventionally indirect (speaker-based)*, and *indirect*. Results also indicated that *ability*, *permission*, and *willingness*, which all belong to *conventionally indirect hearer-based* strategy, were the most utilized sub-strategies among the study participants in the two contexts.

Although Olshtain (1989) emphasized that the strategy selection varies according to the context and the unique cultural background of speakers, favoring similar request strategies in the two contexts of the present study can be explained in light of the fact that both contexts (despite the cultural differences) share some commonalities, and the tendency towards employing indirect request strategies is believed to form a guarantee for English language users in the two contexts, as indirect request strategies can lessen the threats of the request act on the speaker's face.

The results of the present study support the findings revealed from a number of studies conducted in Türkiye (Hammadi, 2019; Karatepe, 2016; Karagöz and İşisağ, 2019; Öztürk, 2017; Alzeebaree and Yazuv, 2017; Jalilifar, 2009), and also they go in line with the studies conducted in many Arab countries, including Palestine (Umar, 2004; Al-Marrani, 2010; Abuarrah et al., 2013; Shafran, 2019; Aribi, 2012).

Some other studies were conducted in the Arab world (e.g., Saudi Arabia, Yemen, Tunisia, Libya, Jordan, and Iraq) to investigate the production of request speech acts by Arab learners of EFL (Alfattah and Ravindranath, 2009; Alaouni, 2011; Roever and Al-Gahtani, 2015). Even though all the participants share the same L1 (Arabic language), the production of speech acts differs in the level of (in)directness, which reflects the effect of the cultural values and norms of EFL learners. Similarities and differences cannot be attributed to one single reason, as the issue of favoring one strategy over another is a personal preference and a context-bound issue. The strategy selection cannot be only governed by culturally established rules due to the fact that there is not any agreed-upon schema among the speakers who share the same L1 and cultural background and because language is considered an interactive process that is difficult to take one shape.

5.3.2. Apology Strategies in the Two Contexts

The results indicated that there were limited differences between freshmen and senior students' selection of apology strategies in the Palestinian context, whereas there was no difference between the two groups in the Turkish context, and that Turkish EFL freshmen and senior students utilized varied apology strategies across the six scenarios, whereas the most frequently utilized strategy was *IFID* in the Palestinian context.

The results indicate that both groups in the two contexts utilized indirect apology strategies, as both cultures view apology as a very sensitive speech act that requires careful consideration by the apologizer. Thus, despite the limited differences in the type of apology strategies utilized, Turkish students show recommended combinations of apology strategies that can have effective remedial impact on the hearer. Blum-Kulka and Olshtain (1980) postulated that non-native speakers of English have an inclination towards using more words in order to express similar pragmatic acts compared to native speakers.

The results of the current study agree with what Olshtain and Cohen claimed (1983) about the most utilized apology strategy: both researchers found that the most frequently utilized strategy among different languages is *IFID*. Similarly, Al-Zumor (2011) concluded that the most preferred formula for apology is "I am sorry", which is a representation of expression of regret strategy. Al-Zumor stated that other formulas of apology (e.g., forgive me, please, and accept my apology, please) are used to intensify the force of apologetic expressions when the offence is marked as a high degree of severity.

The results proved to be similar to those revealed in the study of Çetin et al. (2021), which was conducted between Arab and Turkish learners. Similarly, the results were in line with other studies conducted in the Arab countries (Al-Zumor, 2011; Jassim and Nimehchisalem, 2016; Ezzaoua, 2020; Soliman, 2003; Batainah and Batainah, 2008; Abu Humeid, 2013; Ja'afreh, 2023).

Results also indicated that both freshmen and senior students in the two contexts utilized very similar combinations of apology strategies across the six scenarios, including (*IFID+RESP*), (*IFID+EXPL*), (*IFID+REPR*) according to the results of the WDCTs. However, the least utilized combination of strategies was (*IFID+FORB*). However, the results in the Turkish context were not similar to other studies conducted in the Turkish context which indicated that *IFID* was the most frequently utilized apology strategy (CEBİ and BABAYİĞİT, 2021; Aydin, 2013; Tabatabaei et al., 2018; Canli and Canli, 2013; Asmali and Yavuz, 2014; Alzeebaree and Yavuz, 2017).

The existences of some differences in the EFL students' selection of some apology strategies in the two contexts can be attributed to students' cultural backgrounds and personal preferences. The results concluded from the WDCTs are similar to those of other studies which concluded that EFL learners in different contexts utilize multiple apology strategies in the same situation (Jassim and Nimehchisalem, 2016; Batainah and Batainah, 2008; Hussein and Hammouri, 1998; Ja'afreh, 2023; Tabatabaei et al., 2018; Istifçi, 2009).

5.3.3. Influence of Socio-cultural Variables on Producing Requests and Apologies

In recent years, scrutinizing request and apology speech acts has received considerable attention by researchers in the field of pragmatics and also in English language teaching, yet investigating the socio-cultural variables that are expected to influence the production of request and apology speech acts is limited, specifically in the field of EFL (Kulsawang and Ambele, 2024; Boonsuk and Ambele, 2019). Thus, the current study seeks to investigate the potential influence of the sociocultural variables on ELT students' ways of expressing request and apology speech acts.

Influence of Socio-cultural Variables on Producing Requests

In order to investigate the potential influence of the socio-cultural variables on ELT students' ways of expressing requests, the researcher identified four sets of comparisons that represent different levels of social power, distance, and imposition. Deciding whether there is a potential influence of the socio-cultural variables on students' selection of the strategies was judged by identifying whether or not the participants adopted the same strategy in the two scenarios of the same set of comparisons.

The results of the current study revealed that P, D, and R had an effect on freshmen and senior students' ways of expressing requests in the Palestinian context. Both groups utilized different strategies for expressing requests according to the sociocultural variations across the six scenarios. For example, the results of the first set of comparisons (scenario 1 and 3) indicated that there was potential influence of these three variables on senior students' selection of request strategies signifying that senior students change their way of requesting according to the changing variables represented in the two scenarios. On the contrary, these variables did not influence the Turkish EFL students' selection of request strategies. Both freshmen and senior ELT students in the Turkish context utilized similar strategies (*indirect request strategy*) for expressing request despite the variation involved in different sets of comparisons.

This result reflects cultural differences among the two contexts, indicating that EFL students in Palestine use indirect request strategies depending heavily on the context variations. Thus, they pay less attention to indirect request strategies when they produce requests if there is a low level of social power or a low rank of imposition. Unlike the Palestinian EFL students, the Turkish EFL students tend to utilize indirect request strategies more frequently in almost all the request scenarios (disregarding the cross-cultural variations), which reflects paying more attention to the social context and prefer to choose indirect request strategies to avoid any potential threats imposed on them even if the request scenarios represent low levels of social power or low rank of imposition.

Another example indicated that there was potential influence of the rank of imposition on senior students' selection of request strategies at Alaqsa University: they utilized *indirect* strategy in the fourth scenario because the rank of imposition is high, disregarding that they have higher social power over the requestee. However, in the Turkish context, freshmen students' selection of request strategies was not influenced by the socio-cultural variables (they utilized the same strategy pattern in the two scenarios).

The results of the present study agree with the results of a number of studies that emphasize the role of social power, social distance, and imposition in influencing EFL students' selection of request strategies in terms of (in)directness, leading them to change the way they request (directly or indirectly) according to the variations included in the context (Sinan, 2004; Ja'afreh, 2023; Ezzaoua, 2020; Jalilifar, 2009; Al-Marrani, 2010; Abuarrah et al., 2013; Aribi, 2012; Shafran, 2019).

On the other hand, the results of the WDCTs show that there was no influence of these variables on ELT students' selection of the request strategies in all sets of comparisons in the Turkish and Palestinian contexts. Both groups selected the same strategy, namely *conventionally indirect (hearer-based)*. The results of the WDCTs were similar to those of Muthusamy and Farashaiyan (2016), whose findings revealed that social power, distance, and imposition had no influence on the participants' selection of the apology and request strategies; however, these situational factors influence the use of the mitigating strategies.

The contrast between the results in the MDCTs and WDCTs can be attributed to the fact that MDCTs provided the respondents with varied options for making requests; however, when students were asked to depend on their linguistic repertoire and express how to request, they opted to adopt what they believed was leading them to avoid making mistakes, namely they chose to stick to the commonly learned formulaic expressions (e.g., could you, would you, may I).

Influence of Socio-cultural Variables on Producing Apologies

Similar to the four proposed sets of comparisons investigating the impact of socio-cultural variables on students' selection of request strategies, the researcher identified the same four sets of comparisons for investigating apology as these four sets share the different levels of social power, distance, and severity of offence. Similarly, deciding whether there is potential influence of the socio-cultural variables on students' selection of the apology strategies was judged through identifying whether or not the participants adopt the same strategy in the two scenarios of the same set of comparison.

Findings indicated that freshmen students' way of expressing apology was influenced by the socio-cultural variables at Alaqsa University; however, these variables had no influence on senior students' way of expressing apology. The differences between the two groups in the Palestinian context can be attributed to the fact that freshmen students showed more care for adopting socially appropriate ways of expressing apology, whilst senior students utilized direct apology strategies, and they (in most of the scenarios) adopted the same formula (*i.e.*, *I am sorry*) despite the great variations involved in the sets of comparisons. This result also reflects senior students' tendency towards expressing apology in a very direct way, which is a reflection of their Arab culture through which apology is recommended to be very direct. However, freshmen students were very meticulous to use the English language in as much of a native-like style as they can.

In the Turkish context (on the contrary), both freshmen and senior students' way of expressing apology was influenced by the socio-cultural variables in most of the scenarios. Both groups expressed apology in a careful way that considered the variations involved in each scenario. In other words, both groups utilized different strategies according to the

variations involved in each scenario. This result reflects Turkish students' awareness of the social context and the tendency to employ indirect apology strategies to lessen the impact of the consequences of the undesired situation.

The results of the present study were similar to other studies that emphasized the significant role of social power, distance, and imposition in influencing the strategies employed by EFL students in English apologies (Rustandi, 2018; Nugroho and Rekha, 2020; Berowa, 2022; Huwari, 2018; Darong et al., 2020; Mahmud et al., 2019; Chiravate, 2019; Khanapornvorakarn and Gadavani, 2022; Kanchina and Deepadung, 2019; Pan, 2022)

The results of the WDCTs revealed that students' way of expressing apology is influenced by social power, distance, and severity of offence in the two contexts, which support the results of the MDCTs. However, there are some differences between the results obtained from the MDCTs and those of the WDCTs, which can be attributed to the fact that WDCTs provided the respondents with free space to express apology without being limited to any already-determined formula. For example, most of the students' responses in the WDCTs were combinations of apology strategies, which was not possible in the MDCTs.

5.3.4. Gender Variations in Producing Requests and Apologies

One of the study objectives was to examine whether there are differences between male and female students in their selection of request and apology strategies in terms of (in)directness. According to the results of the current study, there were a number of differences between male and female students at Al-Qadisiyah University in their selection of request strategies in all the request scenarios in terms of (in)directness. In the Palestinian context, female students employed implicit strategies more frequently than male students, which indicated females' strong tendency towards adopting indirect strategies in requests as face-threatening acts. However, in the Turkish context, there were no differences between male and female students at ÇOMÜ who utilized *indirect* request strategies most frequently.

Regarding the apology strategies utilized by male and female students, results in the Palestinian context indicated that there were differences between male and female students in their selection of the apology strategies according to the results of the MDCTs and the

WDCTs. For example, female students employed diverse patterns of apology strategies, while male students utilized direct apology strategies in most of the scenarios. However, in the Turkish context, there were no differences between male and female students in terms of indirectness. Both groups utilized the same apology strategies in all six scenarios and balanced using indirect apology strategies.

It is worth noting that both students' responses in the WDCTs differ from those in the MDCTs because in the WDCTs students had much space to express apology as close to what they actually do in real-life practices. Thus, they exposed their way of expressing apology, which seems to be a reflection of their Arab culture in which they apologize by utilizing a combination of two or more strategies; accordingly, this is a clear indication that pragmatic transfer is involved among ELT students at Alaqsa University.

In fact, gender is a very exclusive variable, and the decision of whether it affects the language users' way of apology is still debatable, even in contexts that share high levels of similarity as this issue is more pertinent to the idiosyncratic cultural norms rather than the linguistic levels of proficiency. The influence of gender on language users' way of expressing speech acts and indicating politeness is among the crucial variables that vary across languages, thus there is no clear-cut supposition that gender's role is significant in the production of speech acts.

Generally speaking, some studies argued that female speech is more polite (Holmes, 1995; Macaulay, 2001; Coates, 2013; Ja'afreh, 2023; Alzeebaree and Yazuv, 2017; Karagöz and İşısağ, 2019; Abu Humeid, 2013; Batainah and Batainah, 2008) which is consistent to the results of the current study.

5.4. Implications and Suggestions for Further Research

The current research findings are neither limited to covering one single topic nor meant only to provide flat answers for a number of questions, and also, the findings of the present research are not limited to proving or refuting claims; rather, they are awareness-raising findings. For example, the findings related to EFL students' level of pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic competence, including the comparisons held between the two contexts

in Palestine and Türkiye, are not meant to judge EFL students' level or indicate the superiority of one context/program over the other but rather to raise the awareness of EFL teachers and program designers to the significant role of pragmatics teaching in EFL classes, no matter how explicit or implicit it will be. Furthermore, the results show a pressing need for revisiting the ELT programs and evaluating the English language courses based on the gaps that should be bridged.

Similarly, investigating request and apology strategies that EFL students utilize is not expected to list a list of strategies that students prefer but to draw the readers' attention towards the reflection of the students' native culture on their way of using English as a foreign language; consequently, it helps to raise EFL teachers' and students' awareness of the importance of enhancing students' pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic competence, which are the components of pragmatic competence. Additionally, the results related to the influence of sociocultural variables raise EFL teachers' attention towards the importance of enhancing the students' ability to thoroughly observe the social context in which the discourses take place and be alerted to the influence that L1 culture has in the process of communication, especially if the ELT students belong to different cultural backgrounds.

It is worth mentioning that pragmatic awareness is the stepping stone to building pragmatic knowledge (Bardovi-Harlig, 2001; Kasper, 1996). According to Schmidt (1995), it is necessary to increase L2 learners' awareness because it contributes to L2 pragmatics learning. Current studies emphasize that exposing learners to pragmatic rules through explicit instruction of pragmatics has positive effects on learners' achievement compared to those who receive linguistic input only (Bardovi-Harlig, 2001; Olshtain and Cohen, 1990). Pragmatic competence does not develop simultaneously with the language acquisition unless learners pay attention to the pragmatic features underlying the language they use. Thus, learners should be aware of the linguistic input they are exposed to, and they should first build what is known as pragmatic awareness for the acquisition of pragmatic knowledge (Bardovi-Harlig, 2001).

In light of the present study discussions, the researcher holds a number of remarkable implications covering important sectors, including researchers, language policy decision-makers, professional development programs, curriculum designers, and ELT departments.

Firstly, it is apparent that there is a scarcity of references and studies related to the investigation of EFL students' pragmatic competence in the Palestinian context more than in the Turkish context; therefore, there is a gap of knowledge that should be bridged. It is recommended that other researchers conduct further research works related to the current research topic(s), which can contribute to expanding knowledge on this topic.

Secondly, EFL teachers need to exert efforts to ensure raising students' awareness of improving their pragmatic competence through teaching pragmatics because EFL learners in the ELT departments are prospective teachers; thus, they need to be well-equipped with a convincing level of pragmatic competence, which will help them to introduce appropriate language models for their students in the future. The results of the current research invite EFL lecturers and teachers to place more focus on pragmatics instruction in language classes (implicitly or explicitly); consequently, EFL lecturers can break the traditional routine that favors grammar and linguistic knowledge over other skills.

Thirdly, it is of paramount importance for ELT programs to conduct needs analysis through which ELT university courses are supposed to be framed. Additionally, Teacher Education Programs, which aim at providing teachers with the necessary knowledge, skills, and attitudes for performing their tasks effectively and enhancing their professional development, can benefit from the discussions of the present study in offering training programs that provide opportunities for EFL teachers to exchange knowledge and experience related to pragmatics instruction in EFL contexts.

Fourthly, the current research findings indicate that language production is an interactive process and cannot be taught according to already-formed patterns, and also language is never taught or understood without a context, which is influenced by a number of variables; consequently, it is suggested that a revision for foreign language teaching policy is necessary in terms of the foreign language evaluation process that must not be centered around linguistic competence at the expense of communicative and pragmatic competence.

In light of the current research findings and discussion, the researcher presents several suggestions as follows:

1. The researcher suggests utilizing a diversity of data collection tools, basically face-to-face data collection tools, when eliciting authentic data.
2. The researcher suggests exploring speech acts realization and production through linking the linguistic context with the social context, which can provide a multi-dimensional view.
3. It is of paramount importance to consider the cross-cultural related issues in EFL contexts through introducing several elective and obligatory courses of pragmatics in the academic plan of the ELT departments that focus on intercultural communication, especially in Türkiye where there is a multicultural context.
4. The researcher suggests conducting further extensive studies of speech acts in the Palestinian culture as there is a scarcity of knowledge in this regard.
5. The researcher suggests conducting further research on gender differences in relation to the production of speech acts.
6. The researcher suggests conducting studies addressing the role of artificial intelligence on EFL learners' perception of speech acts and communication.

In conclusion, the current study is an attempt to shed light on a research topic that is ignored in the Palestinian context and that receives little attention in the Turkish context, as well. Despite the huge body of knowledge that we have in EFL, ESL, and ELT, it is apparent that we need to establish more meaningful links between the linguistic-based contexts and the pragmatics-based ones.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1



T.C.
ÇANAKKALE ONSEKİZ MART ÜNİVERSİTESİ REKTÖRLÜĞÜ
Lisansüstü Eğitim Enstitüsü Etik Kurulu
Bilimsel Araştırma Etik Kurulu



Sayı : E-84026528-050.01.04-2200302305
Konu : Başvuru İncelenmesi

19.12.2022

Sayın Adham M.m ABUHHATTAB

Yürüttüclüğünüzü yapmış olduğunuz 2022-YÖNP-0968 nolu projeniz ile ilgili Bilimsel Araştırmalar Etik Kurulu'nun almış olduğu 15.12.2022 tarih ve 22/40 sayılı kararı aşağıdadır.

Bilgilerinize rica ederim.

KARAR 40- Sorumlu yürüttüclüğünü **Doç. Dr. Sevim İNAL**'ın yaptığı ve proje araştırmacısı **Adham M.m ABUHHATTAB** tarafından gerçekleştirilen "İngilizceyi Yabancı Dil Olarak Öğrenen Türk ve Filistinli Öğrencilerin Edimibilim Yetilerinin İstek ve Özür Dileme Sözeylemleri Açısından İncelenmesi" başlıklı araştırmanın, Bilimsel Araştırmalar Etik Kurul ilkelerine **uygun** olduğuna oy birliği ile karar verilmiştir.

APPENDIX 2

Multiple-choice Discourse Completion Test (MDCT)

The current research is an investigation into the realization of English request and apology speech acts by freshmen and senior ELT learners in Palestine and Türkiye. It aims at comparing the strategy patterns that EFL learners employ in the production of English request and apology speech acts in terms of (in)directness, besides identifying the potential influence of socio-cultural variable (i.e., social power, distance, and imposition/severity of offence) on learners' selection of request and apology strategy. The present multiple-choice discourse completion test consists of three parts as follows:

1. Demographic information
2. Six request situations
3. Six apology situations

Please read each situation carefully and pay special attention to the underlined part/s, then choose what you believe is the closest response to your natural spoken language. Please note that you have to choose only one response for each situation.

Your participation is voluntary and is not a part of any evaluation. If you are willing to take part in the present study, please indicate your consent (permission) by writing “yes” in the following space:

Thank you in advance for your cooperation!

The researcher
Adham M. ABUHHATTAB

Part One: Demographic Information

Code: (provided by the researcher)

1. **Age:**
2. **Gender:** Male Female
3. **Native language:** Arabic Turkish Other (Specify)
4. **University:** ÇOMÜ Alaşsa University
5. **Department:**

English Language Teaching (ELT) English Language Literature (ELL)
6. **University Graduate Level:** 1st year 4th year

Part Two: Request Situations

Situation one: Imagine that you are having lunch at a restaurant, and you want the waiter/waitress to bring you another bottle of water. What would you say to her or him?

1. I would like to ask you to bring me another bottle of water, please.
2. Would you bring me another bottle of water, please?
3. I need you to bring me another bottle of water, please.
4. Excuse me. It seems that I am very thirsty and one bottle of water is not enough.

Situation two: Imagine that you are a participant in an online workshop and you want the trainer, who is a close friend of yours, to explain what he or she has said about earning money online. What would you say?

1. Please repeat what you have said about earning money online.
2. May I ask you to repeat what you have said about earning money online, please?
3. I would like to know again how to earn money online, please.
4. It will be great if you repeat what you have said about earning money online.

Situation three: Imagine that you and your elder brother share a rented flat, and you want him to pay the rent for the next two months so you can save money for your new project. What would you say?

1. I would like to ask you to pay the rent for the next two months.
2. How about paying the rent for the next two months?

3. I need you to pay the rent for the next two months.
4. I will be able to start the new project if I have the chance of not paying the rent for the next two months.

Situation four: Imagine that you are the head of English language department and you are having a meeting with the top three students whom you know very well. What would you say if you wanted them to participate in a two-month voluntary teaching project for young learners?

1. As top students, you have to participate in that voluntary teaching project.
2. Could you participate in that voluntary teaching project for young learners?
3. I want you to participate in that voluntary teaching project for young learners.
4. Participating in the teaching projects for young learners is a great experience for excellent students.

Situation five: Imagine that you work as a language trainer in a private center, and you want to ask one of the IT technicians who seems to be very busy to help the trainees download some applications. What would you say to the technician?

1. I would like to ask you to help some trainees download the applications, please.
2. May I ask you to help some trainees download the applications, please?
3. I need you to help some trainees in downloading the applications, please.
4. Our trainees need help, and I know that great people like you do not hesitate to help whoever needs help.

Situation six: Imagine that you are a freshman student, and you give an oral presentation in front of a group of senior students whom you meet for the first time. You want one of them to turn on the air conditioner. What would you say?

1. Turn on the air conditioner, please.
2. Could you turn on the air conditioner, please?
3. I need you to turn on the air conditioner, please.
4. I think nobody can bear this hot weather; I am surprised to see the air conditioner has not been turned on yet!

Part Three: Apology Situations

Situation one: Imagine that you were a new school headmaster, and you asked the school staff to gather for the first meeting, but you were half an hour late. When you arrived, you decided to apologize for being late. What would you say to the staff?

1. I am sorry for being late.
2. I am late because I had an urgent situation with some students.
3. I did not intend to be late to our first meeting.
4. I will not take much of your time in the meeting and let you leave early.
5. I promise not to be late again.

Situation two: Imagine that you borrowed your close friend's notes, but you forgot to bring them back on time because you were busy. A few days later, you met your friend and decided to apologize for what you did. What would you say?

1. May I ask you to forgive me for not bringing your notes back?
2. I forgot to bring your notes back because I was working all week.
3. I should not have forgotten to bring the notes back to you. It is my fault.
4. I can bring the notes back to you whenever and wherever you like.
5. This will not happen again.

Situation three: Imagine that your elder sister asked you to check (scan) her laptop. Unfortunately, you were not aware of the threatening messages that appeared on the screen. Eventually, your sister's laptop stopped working because of what you did. What would you say to her?

1. May I ask you to forgive me for the problem that I caused to your laptop?
2. Your laptop has broken down because I unintentionally ignored the threatening messages.
3. I did not realize that the threatening messages were serious. It is my fault.
4. I will pay whatever it costs for repairing your laptop.
5. I promise not to try any risky procedures that may damage your laptop.

Situation four: Imagine that you went to a gift store which is owned by your nephew. You wanted to buy an expensive gift for your friend. When you were holding the gift in the store, it fell down and was broken. What would you say to your nephew?

1. I apologize for breaking that gift.
2. I was not holding the gift tightly because I was carrying two gifts in one hand.
3. It is my fault. I should not have carried so many items in one hand.
4. I am going to pay whatever it costs.
5. I promise to be more attentive.

Situation five: Imagine that you were a student giving a presentation to other students from a different class. You were angry with them for not being active during the presentation, so you started shouting at them and left the class. A few seconds later, you realized that what you did was a mistake, and you decided to apologize. What would you say?

1. I am sorry. I apologize for misbehaving with you.
2. I could not control myself because I was under stress, sorry!
3. It is my fault. I should not have shouted at anyone for any reason.
4. I will do whatever it takes to make you feel satisfied.
5. I promise not to misbehave again, sorry.

Situation six: Imagine that you were a university student who had just enrolled on a speaking course. During the lecture, you were invited to speak about yourself. When you got to the teacher's desk, you accidentally dropped the teacher's bag. What would you say to the lecturer?

1. Excuse me, I am sorry for dropping your bag.
2. I was moving a bit fast. That's why I did not see your bag.
3. I did not mean to cause any annoyance.
4. I will handle the fallen bag.
5. I promise to be more watchful.

Thank you for your valuable participation!

APPENDIX 3

Written Discourse Completion Test (WDCT)

The current research is an investigation into the production of English request and apology speech acts by ELT students in Palestine and Türkiye. It aims at identifying freshmen and senior EFL learners' levels of pragmatic competence in the production of request and apology speech acts in terms of pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic competence, as well as comparing and contrasting the two contexts under scrutiny with reference to a number of socio-cultural variables. To this end, the researcher designs a written discourse completion test consisting of three parts as follows:

1. Demographic information
2. Six request situations
3. Six apology situations

Please read each situation carefully and pay special attention to the underlined part/s, then write what you believe is the closest response to your natural spoken language. Note that each situation differs in terms of the following non-linguistic variables: 1. the power relationship between the speakers (social power), 2. the degree of familiarity between the speakers (social distance), and 3. the degree of obligation (imposition).

Your participation is voluntary and is not a part of any evaluation. If you are willing to take part in the present study, please indicate your consent (permission) by writing "yes" in the following space:

Thank you in advance for your cooperation!

The researcher:

Adham M. ABUHHATTAB

Part One: Demographic Information

Code: (provided by the researcher)

1. **Age:**
2. **Gender:** Male Female
3. **Native language:** Arabic Turkish Other (Specify)
4. **University:** ÇOMÜ Alaşsa University
5. **Department:**

English Language Teaching (ELT) English Language Literature (ELL)
6. **University Graduate Level:** 1st year 4th year

Part Two: Request Situations

Situation one: Imagine that you have moved to a new flat, and you want to know where to find the closest bookshop. You have met your neighbor, a young teenager whom you met for the first time, and you want to ask her or him where the closest bookshop is. What would you say?

.....
.....

Situation two: Imagine that you are having lunch with one of your closest friends. You want to use your friend’s phone to make a call because your phone is out of charge (runs out of battery). What would you say to her or him?

.....
.....

Situation three: Imagine that you have online exams but your laptop has broken down. Your elder brother has a new laptop, which he uses daily. You need to use his laptop for a few days to be able to finish your exams. What would you say to him?

.....
.....

Situation four: Imagine that you are a university lecturer who is about to travel for a month, and you want to ask one of your students, whom you have known well for a long time, to receive other students’ assignments till you come back. What would you say to her or him?

.....
.....

Situation five: Imagine that you are an English language trainer, and you want to ask another trainer, who has newly started working at the same center, to give your students a two-hour training session instead of you because you have an urgent meeting. What would you say to him or her?

.....
.....

Situation six: Imagine that you are a freshman student, and you want to know how to use the university application for registering your courses. You go to the IT center to ask for help. What would you say to the employee?

.....
.....

Part Three: Apology Situations

Situation one: Imagine that you were a language trainer who started a new speaking course. When the trainees were introducing themselves, you unintentionally ignored one of them, and then you realized that. What would say to her or him?

.....
.....

Situation two: Imagine that you had a meeting with one of your best friends. On the way to see her or him, you remembered that you had another meeting with your doctor. So, you called your friend to apologize for not being able to see her or him. What would you say?

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.....

Situation three: Imagine that your father asked you to bring some important documents from the company where he worked for. Because you were busy, you forgot to bring them. Your father felt anger with you. What would you say to him?

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.....

Situation four: Imagine that you and your younger brother were participating in the graduation ceremony at your university. During the event, you accidentally dropped the juice on your brother's shirt. What would you say to him?

.....
.....

Situation five: Imagine that you were a university student giving a presentation in front of your classmates. During the discussion, you laughed at a question asked by a new student. You realized that you embarrassed your classmate and decided to apologize for him or her. What would you say?

.....
.....

Situation Six: Imagine that you were a freshman student. During the lecture, you kept chatting with your classmates. The lecturer asked you to keep quiet or leave the class. At the end of the class, you went to the lecturer to apologize. What would you say?

.....
.....

Thank you for your valuable participation!

APPENDIX 4

Rating Scale

The current research is an investigation into the production of English request and apology speech acts by EFL learners in Palestine and Türkiye. It aims at identifying freshmen and senior ELT students' levels of pragmatic competence in terms of pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic competence, as well as comparing and contrasting the two contexts under scrutiny. To this end, the researcher designs a rating scale consisting of two sub-scales as follows:

1. The first sub-scale focuses on the participants' pragmalinguistic competence, which refers to the language user's ability to produce appropriate linguistic elements (including lexical resources and grammatical accuracy). The guiding rubrics for evaluating pragmalinguistic competence are adapted from those of the IELTS writing rubrics (*How IELTS Is Assessed | Take IELTS, n.d.*).
2. The second sub-scale focuses on the participants' sociopragmatic competence, which is concerned with using socially appropriate language in different contexts that vary in social power, social distance, and imposition. The guiding rubrics for evaluating sociopragmatic competence are based on the assessment rubrics introduced by Ishihara and Cohen (2010).

The raters are kindly asked to thoroughly read the participants' responses to twelve situations, which were elicited from written discourse completion tasks (WDCTs), then tick the number that represents their evaluation of the participants' responses in each situation according to the scale below. The below numbers represent the identifiers of the scale as it follows:

*1 = Entirely inappropriate, 2 = Inappropriate, 3 = Somewhat appropriate, 4 = Appropriate
5 = Entirely appropriate*

Please note that each rater will be given a code number by the researcher, and each copy of the participants' WDCTs is given a special code number. The rater is kindly asked to provide the two codes in the required space given in the scale.

This introductory page is only used once, so please provide the required information below and make sure you receive your special code number.

Rater's Personal Information

1. **Gender:** Male Female
2. **Native language:**
3. **Degree:** BA MA PhD

Rater's code number: (Please contact the researcher)



Thank you in advance for your cooperation!

The researcher:
Adham M. ABUHHATTAB

Rating Scale

Rater's code:

Participant's code:

Situation	Pragmalinguistic Competence Rating Scale (PCRS)					Sociopragmatic Competence Rating Scale (SCRS)				
	Is the participant's response appropriate in terms of lexical resources and grammatical accuracy?					Is the participant's response appropriate in terms of sociopragmatic competence?				
	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
#	Request					Request				
S1										
S2										
S3										
S4										
S5										
S6										
#	Apology					Apology				
S1										
S2										
S3										
S4										
S5										
S6										

Thank you for your valuable cooperation

Assessment Rubrics

Pragmalinguistic Competence Rating Scale (PCRS)

The Pragmalinguistic competence rating scale is concerned with the participant's ability to use appropriate linguistic elements (e.g., lexical resources and grammatical accuracy) in the production of request and apology speech acts. The guiding rubrics for evaluating pragmalinguistic competence are adapted from those of the IELTS writing rubrics.

Descriptors of Pragmalinguistic Competence Rating Scale

Identifier	Lexical Resources	Grammatical Range and Accuracy
Entirely appropriate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Uses vocabulary fluently, adequately, and naturally. * Errors occur rarely as 'slips'. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Produces fully accurate and extensive structures. * Errors occur rarely as slips.
Appropriate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Uses vocabulary extensively. * May produce infrequent errors in spelling or word formation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Produces various structures adequately. * May produce infrequent grammar and punctuation errors.
Somewhat appropriate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Uses limited vocabulary for the task. * May produce frequent errors in spelling and/or word formation, but still maintain a sound level of understanding. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Produce simple and complex sentences with repetitive errors in grammar and punctuation but still maintain a sound level of language use.
Inappropriate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Uses repetitive and/or inaccurate vocabulary. * Frequent occurrence of spelling and word formation errors * Communication is very likely to be distorted. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Produce limited forms of structures which are mostly grammatically inaccurate. * Communication can be distorted. * Has very limited control of grammar and punctuation.

Entirely Inappropriate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Uses inaccurate vocabulary. * Spelling and word formation errors occur very frequently. Communication is distorted. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Uses only memorized forms of sentences * Produces inaccurate structures. * No control of punctuation at all.
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Sociopragmatic Competence Rating Scale (SCRS)

This scale is concerned with the participant’s ability to use socially appropriate language in different contexts that vary in social power, social distance, and imposition. The guiding rubrics for evaluating sociopragmatic competence are based on the assessment rubrics introduced by Ishihara and Cohen (2010), who developed a number of assessment rubrics including -but not limited to- politeness, directness, formality, and appropriateness of choosing and using speech act.

1. Politeness	<p>Interlocutors are expected to show care of the addressee’s self-image either through using polite and face-saving language (positive politeness) or respecting the listener’s autonomy (negative politeness).</p> <p>According to Leech’s model of politeness principles, politeness in directive and expressive speech acts is decided through the interlocutors’ adherence to two maxims, namely tact maxim (for request as directive speech act) and modesty maxim (for apology as expressive speech act). According to the tact maxim, the interlocutor is expected to minimize cost to other and maximizes benefit to other. In modesty maxim, the interlocutor is expected to minimize praise of self and maximize dispraise of self in apology speech acts.</p>
2. Directness	<p>The interlocutor is expected to use the language directly or indirectly according to the context where the face-threatening acts appear. Using direct language can be threatening and has impact of the addressee’s self-public image. According to leech, the more indirect an utterance is, the more polite it is.</p>

<p>3. Formality</p>	<p>The interlocutor is supposed to fine-tune the language he/she uses according to specific variables including the formality of the context (register), the style, the interlocutors' social distance, social status, age, gender, etc.</p>
<p>4. Appropriateness</p>	<p>Appropriateness covers a wide range of terms including intelligibility, relevance, length of production, avoidance of L1 negative interference, maintaining the cultural norms of the target language.</p> <p>The interlocutor is expected to maintain sound levels of appropriate production of language taking in account the non-linguistic elements related to the context of communication.</p>