



Politeness perception of university students and lecturers in email requests: A comparison study

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ABSTRACT

Improving the quality of digital communication is a need in today's world as digital communication lacks key aspects of face-to-face communication. In educational settings, digital communication often takes place through emails, learning management systems, discussion forums and videoconferencing. Emails are one of the most common ways of digital communication, particularly those between students and lecturers. The interaction between two must be investigated to contribute to communication quality because emails might lead to misunderstandings between students and teachers. In Turkish culture, politeness is expected to be expressed during interaction while communicating with a person with a higher rank, and the same is also expected while communicating online. For this reason, this present study aims to investigate students' and lecturers' perceptions of politeness in email requests. Five sample emails, each adopting different politeness strategies: bald on record, negative politeness, positive politeness, positive and negative politeness, and off record, have been sent to lecturers and students studying at different universities. While lecturers were asked to rate the politeness of email requests, students were asked to rate the likelihood of sending the sample emails to their lecturers. The results have suggested an overall match between students' and lecturers' perceptions of politeness with both groups rating the negative politeness strategy as the most appropriate way in email requests.

Keywords

pragmatics,
politeness,
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Introduction

With the fast development of technology, communication has started to take place in online environments. However, digital communication does not involve the exact characteristics of face-to-face communication. King and Xia (1997) state that digital communication lacks nonverbal clues, such as body language, facial expressions, eye contact, and hand gestures. The lack of these aspects might hinder effective communication in digital environments. Therefore, a misunderstanding is likely to occur. From a linguistic point of view, pragmatic failure may occur. Blum-Kulka and Olshtain (1986) define pragmatic failure as an incident that occurs "whenever two speakers fail to understand each other's intention." (p. 166). Pragmatic failure in digital communication can influence lecturers' perceptions towards students. Certain types of misunderstandings are evaluated within the scope of pragmatic failure. For example, different cultural and linguistic backgrounds seem to be the main reason (Blum-Kulka &

Olshtain, 1986). Yet still, the lack of pragmatic awareness underlines all the reasons behind linguistic misunderstandings (Thomas, 1983).

Previous studies have highlighted the significance of digital politeness in educational settings and have offered pedagogical implications. Bolkan and Holmgren (2012) claim that lecturers had a higher level of perceptions regarding students' competence and success after students' use of specific politeness strategies. Similarly, Stephens et al. (2009) concluded that informal emails of students influenced lecturers' willingness to respond to their requests. Digital communication between lecturers and students has been addressed many times in the relevant literature, and most of these studies have focused on the use of pragmatic aspects in students' emails (see Biesenbach-Lucas, 2007; Bjørge, 2007; Chejnova, 2014; Economidou-Kogetsidis, 2011; Merrison et al., 2012). However, there is a shortage of research investigating lecturers' perceptions of politeness in students' emails, and very little research has compared lecturers' and students' perceptions of politeness in emails. Therefore, the purpose of this present study is to compare lecturer and student perceptions of politeness in students' email requests and to shed light on the differences and similarities between the two groups of participants. Finally, this study contributes to the growing body of research on cross-cultural communication since politeness is culture-bounded in its interpretation (Redmond, 2015). Five emails adopting different politeness strategies were sent to lecturer and student participants via an online survey to meet the aim. Whereas teacher participants were asked to rank students' politeness in the emails, student participants were asked to rank their likelihood of sending the emails to their lecturers. Using the same emails in data collection from two groups enabled the researcher to understand politeness in the Turkish context and compare the perceptions of the two groups.

Literature Review

Since the term was coined by Dell Hymes (see Hymes, 1967; Hymes, 1972), communicative competence has received scholarly interest in language teaching. Chomsky (1957) claimed that linguistic competence did not include social factors. As a response to his argument, Hymes argued that appropriate language use in context was needed, as well as linguistic competence, which refers to the formal system of languages. Therefore, communicative competence was defined by two types of competences: linguistic and sociolinguistic competence in the early 1970s. Indeed, the model of communicative competence evolved in time with the contributions of Canale and Swain (1980) and Canale (1983). The model included strategic competence and discourse competence. The paradigm shift has brought out the necessity to define the aspects of communicative competence, and one of the competence types categorized under it is pragmatic competence. Pragmatic competence refers to the ability to convey an intended message appropriately in a social context and understand the interlocutor's intended message properly. According to Ishihara and Cohen (2010), pragmatic competence is a challenging sub-dimension of communicative competence. Still, adequate importance and attention are not given in teaching contexts. Therefore, learners tend to experience pragmatic failures despite making grammatically perfect sentences. As language is ultimately a means of communication, learners must eventually meet the communicative aims of language learning. Such a situation makes the role of teaching pragmatics in EFL contexts critical. For this reason, research aiming

to understand learners' pragmatic competence in instructed contexts deserves extra attention from various perspectives, and the concept of politeness is one of the topics that can often vary depending on the speaker and the context. To the researcher's best understanding, understanding the concept of politeness in a specific context is necessary.

Politeness theory proposed by Brown and Levinson in 1987 is underpinned by Goffman's face theory in the 1950s. Face can be defined as a public self-image, and according to Yule (2020), "This is the emotional and social sense of self that everyone has and expects everyone else to recognize. Politeness can be defined as showing awareness and consideration of another person's face" (p. 135). Face theory claims that two universal faces are true for all cultures: positive face and negative face. Negative face is threatened when the speaker interferes with the addressee's autonomy, and positive face is attained when the speaker's wants are desirable. Therefore, face theory claims that individuals are motivated by two needs in communication: a sense of autonomy and a sense of belonging. In interaction, some conversational acts put the needs of individuals in danger, and these acts are called Face-Threatening Acts. According to Brown and Levinson (1987), face-threatening acts are likely to occur in every communication, and politeness strategies are used to mitigate the threats to the face. There are four main types of strategies: bald on record, negative politeness, positive politeness, and off record (Brown & Levinson, 1987). Politeness theory claims that individuals adopt a strategy based on the severity of face-threatening acts by adding the effects of factors such as rank, distance, and power between speakers. For instance, bald on record strategies can be adopted in a conversation between two close friends as this strategy does not aim to alleviate the threat to the addressee's face. On the other hand, strangers tend to use off record strategies as this strategy uses indirect and vague utterances to minimize the threat. Positive politeness and negative politeness derive from the threats to the universal faces. Positive politeness strategies make the addressee feel comfortable in the interaction process, such as joking, showing approvals, and being optimistic. Negative politeness strategies are used when the speaker includes a right to be free from imposition on the addressee by using questions, hedges, and apologies.

As a well-researched theory, politeness theory has so far received much criticism from scholars. Most of the claims have been made about the universality of the theory, and researchers have long stated that the face is not threatened by the same acts to the same extent in every culture. Despite criticism, politeness theory is still one of the most researched theories in pragmatics today. Therefore, many studies have adopted Brown and Levinson's theoretical framework (1987). Digital politeness is one of the research areas that uses politeness theory. Various genres have been examined for business purposes and educational purposes until recently.

Email as a digital communication tool is often used between students and lecturers. Therefore, investigating students' emails within the theory of politeness is an inquiry of pragmatics. Biesenbach-Lucas (2007) conducted a study on native and non-native students' email requests by applying Blum-Kulka et al.'s (1989) CCSARP framework, and the results showed that most of the requests adopted direct strategies, and native speakers were more successful in e-politeness. Another comparative study that investigates the politeness strategies used by British, Irish, German, and French students suggested that the native language has an

impact on selecting politeness strategies. Additionally, gender influences the directness of the requests (Hermanová, 2018). Similar studies conducted in different contexts yielded mixed results regarding politeness theory. Elmianvari and Kheirabadi (2013) examined Iranian students' email requests and found that students tended to express their politeness formally and indirectly to save the negative face. On the other hand, Najeeb et al. (2012) argue that Arab students prefer more direct strategies in email requests to avoid misunderstanding. Alsout and Khedri (2019) investigated email requests of Libyan students and proposed that negative politeness strategies are used more than others when they communicate with the lecturers. Chejnová (2014) studied email requests of Czech students and found out that students employ both positive and negative strategies. Therefore, previous research suggests that even though the concept of face is universal, politeness strategies are likely to change according to the context. The use of politeness strategies bears pedagogical implications in educational settings since the research has so far proposed that the content of email requests can influence teachers' perceptions towards students. A mismatch between teachers and learners regarding strategy use can cause pragmatic failure and negatively affect teachers' perceptions of students' characteristics (Economidou-Kogetsidis, 2016). Furthermore, some studies have proposed that politeness strategies can affect teachers' perceptions of students' academic competence (Bolkan & Holmgren, 2012) by leading teachers to be more motivated and willing to respond to the students' requests (Stephens et al., 2009). Therefore, investigating perceptions of politeness in students' email requests in different contexts can yield fruitful results for educational purposes. Considering the relevant literature and the purpose of the study, this study aims to answer the following research questions:

- 1) What are Turkish lecturers' perceptions of politeness strategies in email requests?
- 2) What are Turkish students' perceptions of politeness strategies in email requests?

Methodology

Participants

University lecturers and university students took part in this study. The convenience sampling technique was used. The number of student participants is 109 (female $n = 66$, male $n = 43$). The student participants are from five different universities in Turkey, and their departments vary. Twenty participants currently study at the English preparatory school of the universities, and the others pursue their studies at departments. All student participants are assumed to have at least an intermediate level of English proficiency. Regarding lecturer participants, 43 lecturers completed the survey (female $n = 30$, male $n = 13$), and they teach at different universities in Turkey. Lecturers teach at the School of Foreign Languages ($n = 34$) and the English Language Teaching departments ($n = 9$).

Procedure and Data Analysis

Five sample emails created by Bolkan and Holmgren (2012) were used in this study, and this study used the same emails for data collection from participants. All emails included the same

request: in each scenario, a student asks to meet with the lecturer to discuss his exam score outside of office hours. Based on Brown and Levinson's (1987) study, politeness strategies differ in each scenario. The sample emails and adopted politeness strategies are as follows:

Scenario 1 (Bald on Record)

Good morning. This is Ali Yılmaz from your 12:00 p.m. class. I just received my score on your exam and I did not do as well as I thought I did. I would like some help understanding what I did wrong but I have class during your office hours and can't make it. I need to schedule an appointment with you outside of office hours to have this conversation.

Regards,

Ali

Scenario 2 (Positive Politeness)

Good morning. This is Ali Yılmaz from your 12:00 p.m. class. I just received my score on your exam and I did not do as well as I thought I did. I would like some help understanding what I did wrong but I have class during your office hours and I need to schedule an appointment with you outside of office hours to have this conversation. I realize this time of year is busy for all of us but you do such a good job explaining the material in class that I am sure if we meet up you will be able to help me answer my questions. I hope we can make something work, your help would be extremely appreciated!

Regards,

Ali

Scenario 3 (Negative Politeness)

Good morning. This is Ali Yılmaz from your 12:00 p.m. class. I just received my score on your exam and I did not do as well as I thought I did. I would like some help understanding what I did wrong but I have class during your office hours and I need to schedule an appointment with you outside of office hours to have this conversation. Normally, I would not ask you to make a special appointment so I want to apologize in advance for the inconvenience. I'm sure the questions I have can be answered within a few minutes and I won't take up much of your time. I hope this doesn't bother you too much, I would be very grateful if we can make something work!

Regards,

Ali

Scenario 4 (Positive and Negative Politeness)

Good morning. This is Ali Yılmaz from your 12:00 p.m. class. I just received my score on your exam and I did not do as well as I thought I did. I would like some help understanding what I did wrong but I have class during your office hours and I need to schedule an appointment with you outside of office hours to have this conversation. You do such a good job explaining the material in class that I am sure if we meet up you will be able to help me answer my questions. I'm sure the questions I have can be answered within a few minutes and I won't take up much of your time. I hope this doesn't bother you too much, your help would be extremely appreciated!

Regards,

Ali

Scenario 5 (Off Record)

Good morning. This is Ali Yılmaz from your 12:00 p.m. class. I just received my score on your exam and I did not do as well as I thought I did. I would like some help understanding what I did wrong but I have class during your office hours and can't make it.

Regards,

Ali

The student participants and lecturer participants were given numeric ranking scales. Whereas student participants were asked to rate the likelihood of sending the emails to the lecturers on a scale of 1 to 7, lecturer participants rated the politeness of emails on a scale of 1 to 9. The reason behind using different rating scales is to be able to better capture minor variations in lecturers' data representing the politeness of students' emails, which might help more sensitive comparisons in this current study and future comparison studies.

The data was available through descriptive statistics in SPSS and the analysis was conducted through interpretation of the percentages, means and modes. While percentages were used to compare the perceptions of the two groups, means and modes were analyzed to describe central tendencies unique to each group. Means enabled the researcher to find the average value and modes provided the most frequently occurring value in within-group responses.

Results and Discussions

When each group was evaluated within the group, there was a match between the perceptions of lecturers and students in email requests. As seen in Figure 1 below, lecturers and students rated politeness strategies in the same order. Even though the means and percentages differed across the groups, the same order indicates a match in perception of politeness strategies between lecturers and students in the Turkish context.

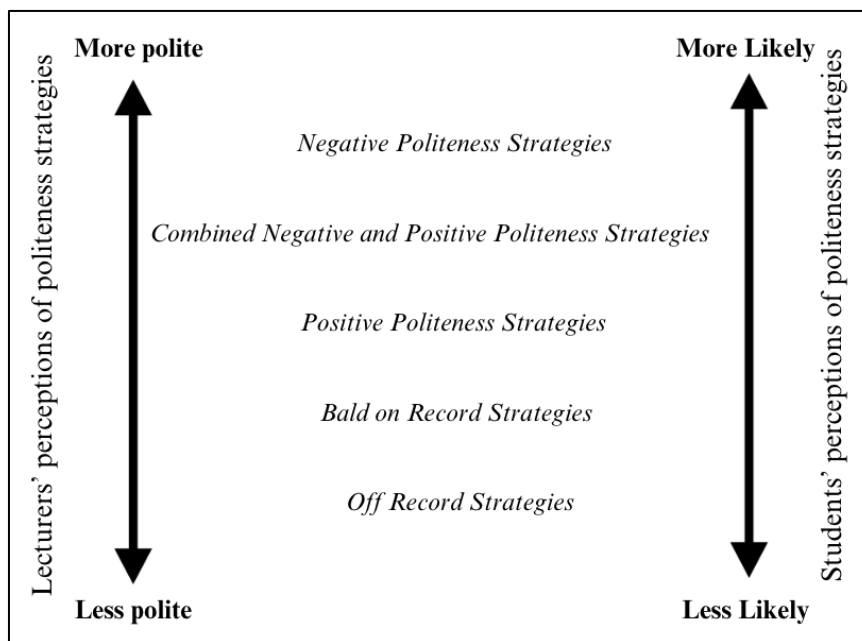


Figure 1. Turkish lecturers and students' perceptions of politeness strategies in email requests

Bald on Record

When people are involved in face-threatening acts, according to Brown and Levinson (1987), four strategies can help people save their face and others' face. Bald on record strategies are one of these four strategies. Using this strategy, the speakers can express what they want precisely without ambiguity. Our results have shown that students are divided into two groups in terms of sending emails with bald on record strategies. While 43.1% of students stated that they would send the email, 37.5% indicated that it is unlikely for them to send such an email. On the other hand, most lecturers find bald on record strategies in emails polite. Therefore, bald on record strategies in emails seem more appropriate for lecturer participants when the means in Table 1 below are considered. Brown and Levinson (1987) claim that bald on record strategies are often used when speakers have close relationships, as they don't generally aim at minimizing the effect of face-threatening acts. Yet still, Brown and Levinson's politeness theory and Goffman's face theory have been criticized. Redmond (2015) claims that politeness strategies may differ for each culture. Instead, they tend to vary, so the differences across cultures threaten the universality of the theory. Therefore, the discussions regarding the findings should also consider the criticism.

Table 1. Students' and lecturers' perception of bald on record strategies in emails

	Completely Unlikely & Mostly Unlikely & Somewhat Unlikely (%)	Neither Likely nor Unlikely (%)	Somewhat Likely & Mostly Likely & Completely Likely (%)	Mean	Mode
Students	37.5	19.3	43.1	4.00	4
	Extremely Impolite & Very Impolite & Impolite & Maybe Impolite (%)	Unsure Impolite or Polite (%)	Maybe Polite & Polite & Very Polite & Extremely Polite (%)	Mean	Mode
Lecturers	25.5	14.0	60.5	5.72	6

Taking the cultural differences that can shape politeness strategies into account, the relevant literature claims that students prefer bald on record strategies relatively less than other politeness strategies in email requests (see Alsout & Khedri, 2019; Karimkhanlooei & Vaezi, 2017; Najeeb et al., 2012), which means bald on record strategies are perceived to be polite for some individuals whereas others do not prefer it. Therefore, the close percentage numbers of students' likelihood and the unlikelihood of sending the sample email can call for future research to investigate the issue in depth. Previous experiences of students in online communication might affect students' preferences concerning bald on record strategies. Additionally, requests as a speech act can be classified as direct and indirect. Burgucu-Tazegül et al. (2016) have concluded that Turkish students prefer direct request strategies in email communication with faculty members.

Similarly, Karatepe (2016) has stated that Turkish university students mainly prefer explicit performatives and want statements for requests in complaint letters. These findings can propose a culture-specific politeness strategy since the results of the present study are in line, yet further research is still needed in Turkish context. As for lecturers, the findings show

similarities with Bolkan and Holmgren's (2012) study in that lecturers find bald on record strategies more polite than off record strategies and less polite than three other politeness strategies. However, the findings differ in terms of means. While Bolkan and Holmgren (2012) obtained a higher mean ($m = 7.36$) for bald on record samples, the mean in this study was calculated to be 5.72, which can imply a cross-cultural difference between two different contexts.

Positive Politeness

Brown and Levinson (1987) define positive strategies as a strategy in which the speaker intends to alleviate the threat to the addressee's positive face. This strategy can be achieved by making suggestions, and compliments, avoiding disagreements, and creating a sense of equality between speakers. Table 2 below displays the percentages regarding lecturers' and students' perceptions. More than a half of the lecturers rated the sample email as polite enough, whereas almost a half of the students rated it similarly. Yet still, the percentages also show that the other half of the students seem uncertain about sending an email involving politeness strategies. The uncertainty might result from the sample email's directness, as a similar division between the students occurred in the bald on record strategy. The results also suggest that most of the lecturers favor positive politeness strategies more than students. Indeed, some of the lecturers ranked the positive politeness strategy as impolite or marked it as neutral. This might have resulted from the directness of the sample emails. Burgucu-Tazegül et al.'s (2016) study suggested that Turkish students often ignored greetings and closing in email requests, which have a softening effect on requests.

Table 2. Students' and lecturers' perception of positive politeness strategies in emails

	Completely Unlikely & Mostly Unlikely & Somewhat Unlikely (%)	Neither Likely nor Unlikely (%)	Somewhat Likely & Mostly Likely & Completely Likely (%)	Mean	Mode
Students	27.5	25.7	46.8	4.25	4
	Extremely Impolite & Very Impolite & Impolite & Maybe Impolite (%)	Unsure Impolite or Polite (%)	Maybe Polite & Polite & Very Polite & Extremely Polite (%)	Mean	Mode
Lecturers	16.3	16.3	67.4	6.53	8

The findings are in parallel with similar studies in the relevant literature. In Alsout and Khedri's (2019) study with Libyan students, positive politeness strategies were found to be the second most used strategy following negative politeness strategies. This present study yields the same findings. However, in some other contexts, as in Najeeb et al.'s (2012) research, positive politeness seems to be favored more than negative politeness strategies, which indicates a different pattern than this study. Karimkhanlooie and Vaezi (2017) state that students' preferences for negative and positive politeness strategies might be affected by their proficiency level since they concluded that intermediate learners prefer using positive politeness strategies more while upper-intermediate learners use more negative politeness strategies in written communication. The present study does not involve a collected data regarding participants'

current proficiency levels; however, it is presupposed that learners' proficiency levels fall within intermediate to advanced level because these levels align with departmental requirements of universities. Regarding lecturer participants, positive politeness strategies in emails have not been rated as polite as emails containing negative strategies, which slightly differs from Bolkan and Holmgren's (2012) study. The lecturers in their study seem to perceive positive strategies relatively more polite than negative strategies, and the means differ when the participants' responses in their study ($m = 8.35$) are compared with Turkish lecturers ($m = 6.53$). Considering the findings and the existing literature, positive politeness strategies are often perceived to be more polite than others, excluding negative politeness strategies. For this reason, preferences for negative and positive strategies seems to be context-bound and culture-specific.

Negative Politeness

The speaker uses negative politeness strategies to alleviate the threat to the addressee's negative face, and the speaker intends to mitigate the imposition by addressing indirect questions, apologizing, and pluralizing the pronouns (Levinson & Brown, 1987). This strategy is often used when the speaker requests something and still wants to give the addressee the right to refuse. Table 3 below displays the percentages of lecturer and student participants regarding the sample email using negative politeness strategies.

Table 3. Students' and lecturers' perception of negative politeness strategies in emails

	Completely Unlikely & Mostly Unlikely & Somewhat Unlikely (%)	Neither Likely nor Unlikely (%)	Somewhat Likely & Mostly Likely & Completely Likely (%)	Mean	Mode
Students	16.5	12.8	70.6	5.15	6
	Extremely Impolite & Very Impolite & Impolite & Maybe Impolite (%)	Unsure Impolite or Polite (%)	Maybe Polite & Polite & Very Polite & Extremely Polite (%)	Mean	Mode
Lecturers	4.3	4.3	91.4	7.53	9

Compared to the other strategies, the students prefer negative politeness strategies, while lecturers rate it highly polite ($m = 7.53$). The findings are in line with Khedri and Alsout's (2019) study, in which negative politeness strategies were used by Libyan students more often than other politeness strategies. Similar findings were also reported in the Iranian context (see Karimkhanlooei & Vaezi, 2017). However, Najeeb et al.'s (2012) study concluded that Arab students tend to use positive politeness strategies more than negative strategies, which might be an indicator of a culture-specific finding or might have resulted from the small sampling size of their study. From the lecturers' perspective, Bolkan and Holmgren (2012) concluded that negative politeness strategies are less polite than positive strategies, which again shows a different pattern than this study.

Positive and Negative Politeness

People often combine positive and negative politeness strategies in a conversation (Brown & Levinson, 1987). Therefore, Bolkan and Holmgren (2012) combined negative and positive strategies in one of their sample emails. Even though four main politeness strategies (bald on record, negative politeness, positive politeness, off record) are proposed, since the present study used the sample emails suggested by the relevant literature, the combined sample email was shown to participants to determine their perception. Both lecturer and student participants were found to rate combined positive and negative politeness strategies almost as polite as using positive strategy only.

Table 4. Students' and lecturers' perception of combined negative and positive politeness strategies in emails

	Completely Unlikely & Mostly Unlikely & Somewhat Unlikely (%)	Neither Likely nor Unlikely (%)	Somewhat Likely & Mostly Likely & Completely Likely (%)	Mean	Mode
Students	24.8	28.4	46.7	4.40	4
	Extremely Impolite & Very Impolite & Impolite & Maybe Impolite (%)	Unsure Impolite or Polite (%)	Maybe Polite & Polite & Very Polite & Extremely Polite (%)	Mean	Mode
Lecturers	11.6	20.9	67.5	6.69	9

Even though the participants of this study preferred negative politeness strategies over the combined politeness positive and negative politeness strategies, the participants of Bolkan and Holmgren's (2012) study remarkably ranked the combined strategies ($m = 8.46$) as the politest strategies in email requests. Their findings can also be supported by only positive strategy use ($m = 8.35$). Both results propose that participants favor positive politeness more than negative politeness. In contrast, the participants of this study perceived the combined strategy as polite as only positive strategy use and preferred negative politeness strategies over positive politeness strategies, which may indicate another cross-cultural difference.

Off Record

Off record strategies are indirect politeness strategies in which the face is not overtly threatened. Instead, the speaker aims at implying the requests by giving hints, using ironic expressions and jokes, and being sarcastic. It should be noted that off record strategies lead the addressee to interpret the utterance. Therefore, interpretations can be vast and dubious. Table 5 below displays the findings obtained from students and lecturers. Compared to the percentages of other strategies in sample emails, off record strategies have been ranked by students and lecturers as the least polite strategies. Most students stated that they are unlikely to send the sample email involving off record strategy. In contrast, almost half of the lecturers did not perceive the strategy as a way of politeness. Still, thirty percent of lecturers stated that off record strategies can be used in academic emails. Therefore, this finding calls for a further qualitative study to get an in-depth understanding to identify the perceptual differences between lecturers.

Table 5. Students' and lecturers' perception of off record strategies in emails

	Completely Unlikely & Mostly Unlikely & Somewhat Unlikely (%)	Neither Likely nor Unlikely (%)	Somewhat Likely & Mostly Likely & Completely Likely (%)	Mean	Mode
Students	74.3	11.9	13.8	2.44	1
	Extremely Impolite & Very Impolite & Impolite & Maybe Impolite (%)	Unsure Impolite or Polite (%)	Maybe Polite & Polite & Very Polite & Extremely Polite (%)	Mean	Mode
Lecturers	51.2	18.6	30.2	4.46	4

Brown and Levinson (1987) claim that off record strategies are often used when there is a social distance between speakers, which might explain the reason why some students prefer sending the sample email. However, the indirect nature of off record strategies leads the addressee to interpret the utterance's meaning, so students and lecturers in some cultures may tend to be direct in their conversations. For example, Khalib and Tayeh (2014) have reported that students in Malaysia do not prefer using hints while communicating with their classmates and teachers. Similarly, off record strategies are the least frequent in different contexts in students' request emails (Alsout & Khedri, 2019; Fukushima, 2012; Karimkhanlooei & Vaezi, 2017; Najeeb et al., 2012). Regarding lecturers, a significant difference seems to occur between the participants of the present study and Bolkan and Holmgren's (2012) study. Though the lecturers in their research found off record strategies less polite than other strategies, they still obtain a high mean ($m = 7.36$). On the other hand, a relatively lower mean ($m = 4.46$) was obtained from Turkish lecturers, which shows that most lecturers disapprove of off record strategies in students' emails.

Conclusion

The results have suggested an overall match regarding the perceptions of politeness strategies in email requests between Turkish students and lecturers. Despite slight changes in percentages, the participants ranked the politeness strategies in the same order. Overall, Turkish participants seem to perceive negative politeness strategies as the politest in email requests. This finding has been supported by the fact that they ranked the combined strategy as the second most polite strategy. On the other hand, off record strategies have been perceived to be the least polite by both groups, which means that participants prefer direct utterances while communicating in educational settings. Bald on record strategy seems to create almost equal division between students. While some students state that they are likely to send email requests involving bald on record strategies, while others find them inappropriate while communicating with their lecturers. To elaborate on the differences that have been found, a qualitative study is needed in the email requests of Turkish students. Indeed, this present study is not without limitations. Since the sample emails proposed by the relevant literature were used while collecting the data, emails might not reflect exact culture-specific aspects of students' email requests. Therefore, further research should investigate authentic emails that students send to their lecturers.

Understanding the perceptions of Turkish students and lecturers offers pedagogical implications for higher education settings. Since previous research has suggested that students' politeness has an impact on lecturers' perceptions of students' abilities. Therefore, the courses aiming at teaching digital communication can pay regard to the present study's findings and students' email requests can be revisited considering the results.

Disclosure Statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the authors.

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