

Politeness in Requests: A Cross-cultural Study of Turkish and British Natives

Ebru Melek Koç*

Suggested Citation:

Koç, E. M. (2011). Politeness in requests: A Cross-cultural study of Turkish and British natives. *Egitim Arastirmalari-Eurasian Journal of Educational Research*, 42, 153-166

Abstract

Problem Statement: There are few researches investigating pragmatic awareness of Turkish adult EFL learners, and none of them have investigated factors such as social distance, power and degree of imposition that are important in affecting the learners' preference of request strategies. Therefore, a study focusing on the request strategies of Turkish adult learners of English will fill this gap.

Purpose of Study: This study is a cross-sectional investigation of the request strategies used by Turkish learners of English as a Foreign Language and British native speakers of English. Therefore, the present study aims to shed light on Turkish EFL learners' request strategies in socially and psychologically distance situations. It also attempts to systemize the various strategies used by Turkish learners for the purpose of analysing the learning requests from a pragmatic point of view.

Methods: Participants of the study are 35 Turkish language learners of English and 21 British natives. A multiple-choice task questionnaire is used to collect data related to the request strategies used by both Turkish learners of English and the British natives. In order to identify the type and frequency of the request strategies made by learners, the data were analyzed and the frequency of occurrence and percentage of each category of strategies were calculated for each group and each situation.

Findings and Results: The prime finding of the study reveals that Turkish learners do not differ from British natives in terms of their strategy preference of requests. Both groups seem to have a tendency toward conventional,

* Ph.D, Uludag University, Faculty of Education, Bursa-Turkey emdaloglu@uludag.edu.tr

direct-request strategies. The results also reveal that Turkish learners are more direct than the English natives.

Conclusions and Recommendations: Suggestions for further research and some recommendations concerning how to develop language learners' pragmatic awareness are provided.

Keywords: Politeness, requests, social distance, EFL learners

Proficiency in a language means not only knowing its syntax, phonology, vocabulary and semantics but also being able to use this linguistic knowledge appropriately in communication. In other words, learning a language requires both linguistic and communicative competence. Communicative competence consists of four major areas of knowledge and skills: 1) grammatical competence 2) strategic competence 3) discourse competence and 4) sociolinguistic competence (Canale & Swain, 1980). Grammatical competence, which refers to Chomsky's linguistic competence, includes knowledge of the syntactic, lexical, morphological and phonological features of a language (Canale & Swain, 1980). Discourse competence is the ability to deal with the use of language in context. Strategic competence refers to the mastery of communication strategies that enhances the effectiveness of communication. Lastly, sociolinguistic competence is associated with knowing the knowledge of the sociocultural rules of language and discourse and having the ability to use that language with the appropriate social meaning for the communication situation. Learners also need to acquire the relationship among these four areas in order to establish successful communicative competence. Though some authorities use "pragmatic competence" as a synonym for "communicative competence," Thomas (1983) relates the concept of "pragmatic competence" to "social competence" and defines pragmatic competence as the ability to use language effectively in order to achieve an effective communication in a social context. Pragmatic competence, which is one of the vital components of the construct of communicative competence, should be achieved in order to establish and maintain successful communication (Bachman, 1990). Pragmatic competence, from a more specific view, involves speakers' ability to employ different linguistic formulae in an appropriate way when interacting in a particular social and cultural context. This includes the knowledge of speech acts such as giving and responding to compliments, requesting, apologising and giving refusals. Ellis (1994, p. 167) defines requests as "attempts on the part of a speaker to get the hearer to perform or to stop performing some kind of action." Blum-Kulka, House, and Kasper (1989) group nine sub-categories of request strategies under three main categories: direct strategies (for example, "Open the door"/ "I tell you to open the door"), conventionally indirect strategies (for example, "Can you/would you open the door") and non-conventionally indirect strategies (for example, "It is hot in here"). There is a direct relationship between indirectness and politeness: the more indirect the speakers, the more polite they are (Ellis, 1994).

Brown and Levinson (1987) in their "politeness theory" define the abstract notion of "face" with two specific aspects: a negative face and a positive face. Negative face is related with one's desire to be unimpeded by the other members of the society,

whereas positive face is related with one's desire to be appreciated and approved of by others. Speakers need to be indirect while performing speech acts like requesting, apologising, refusing, etc., since these speech acts are "face-threatening." There are three main factors affecting the preference of a request strategy: social distance, power, and degree of imposition. Power refers to the relationship between the speaker and the hearer. If two people are very close (for example, friends), they would have a low degree of social distance. Degree of imposition is concerned with the degree of difficulty in the situation. For example, when the request is big, to avoid losing face, the requester will prefer to use an indirect politeness strategy to minimize the threat and redress of loss of face.

Leech (1983) presents a set of multiple psychological factors such as age, status, and sex, which together affect the harmony of the social relations and decide the degree of "respectfulness" in a speech situation. Similarly, Tanaka and Kawade (1982) consider social and psychological differences to affect the selection of request strategies. According to the distance-politeness hypothesis, if the requester-requestee relationship is both socially and psychologically close, the requester will use a less polite strategy (vice versa). Psychological variables play a more important role in the use of the politeness strategy than social variables.

Requests are regarded as important speech acts in that most of the interaction between people is based on requests. Since requests are face threatening, they call for considerable linguistic expertise, and therefore, have received considerable attention in second language acquisition (SLA) literature. Very few studies have focused on pragmatic awareness of Turkish adult EFL learners (Karatepe, 2001; Otçu & Zeyrek, 2008). However, none of them investigated factors such as social distance, power and degree of imposition, which are likely to affect the learners' preference of request strategies. Therefore, the present study aims to shed light on Turkish EFL learners' request strategies in socially and psychologically distance situations. The research question of the present study is: What are the Turkish EFL learners' politeness strategies in requests in social contexts where social and psychological factors are variable?

Method

Participants

There are two groups of participants. The first group is composed of the Turkish non-native speakers (NNS) of English. They are 35 learners of English enrolled in a private English language teaching institute to learn English. Before the beginning of the course, the learners undertook a test of proficiency, according to which their proficiency of English was characterized "intermediate." Of 35 EFL learners, 15 of them are female and 20 of them are male. The age of the Turkish EFL learners ranges from 17 to 28. The second participant group involves eleven native speakers of British English who constitute the control group. There are 21 British natives, six of whom are male. The age of native speakers (NSs) varies from 21 to 26.

Data Collection Instrument

The data collection instrument used to elicit data is a multiple-choice task (MCT) questionnaire (Tanake & Kawade, 1982; Suh, 1999). The MCT is advantageous in that it can elicit contextual variation better (Rose, 1994; Rose & Ono, 1995). The MCT used by Tanake and Kawade was “unique and worked well for their own research purposes, which was to study politeness levels of requests” (Yamashita, 1996, p. 15). Therefore, for the purpose of the study, Tanake and Kawade’s MCT was chosen. The questionnaire presents a set of situations that simulated natural contexts with different requesting strategies. These situations contain three basic themes: “borrowing an umbrella,” “borrowing a pen” and “turning down the music.” These three basic themes are complicated by two factors: social status and the psychological (like/dislike) factor. There are a total of four requestees (speakers) in twelve situations: a distinguished professor who is both socially and psychologically distant from the requestee; a young and sociable professor who is socially distant, but psychologically close; an older neighbour who is psychologically distant from the requestee; and a close friend who is both socially and psychologically close to the requestee. SD refers to “social distance,” and PD refers to “psychological distance.” The social variable is treated as a binary value, that is, interlocutors either know each other (- social distance) or they do not know each other (+ social distance). In other words, + SD means that the speaker (S) and the hearer (H) are socially distant, whereas - SD means that the S and H are intimate. Similarly, + PD means that the S does not like the hearer, and - PD means that the S likes the H.

Table 1
Situations According to “Social Status” and “Psychological (like/dislike)”

Situations		Social Status	Psychological (like/ dislike)
Borrowing an umbrella	1	+ SD	+PD
	2	- SD	+PD
	3	+ SD	- PD
	4	- SD	- PD
Turning down the music	5	+ SD	+PD
	6	- SD	+PD
	7	+ SD	- PD
	8	- SD	- PD
Borrowing a pen	9	+ SD	+PD
	10	- SD	+ PD
	11	+ SD	- PD
	12	- SD	- PD

Table 1 demonstrates the four variable combinations and how the twelve situations are composed in terms of these two variables. Blum-Kulka, et al. (1989) categorise request types into three: direct strategies (DI), Conventionally Indirect strategies (CI) and non-conventionally indirect strategies (NCI). Similarly, in the present study of the six request strategies mentioned in “a, b, c, d, e and f,” the request strategies mentioned in a, c, f are regarded as DI, whereas b, d and e are CI strategies.

The 6 requesting strategies are as follows:

- a) I want you to.....
- b) Would you?
- c) Lend me.....
- d) I would appreciate it if you could.....?
- e) Can you.....?
- f) Root of the verb, will you?

Data Collection Procedures

The multiple-choice questionnaire was administered to the Turkish non-natives during their course sessions. Though no time limitation was presented to the participants, it only took about 15 minutes for the learners to complete the questionnaire. Data from the native speakers of English were also gathered via e-mail.

Data Analysis Procedures

When analyzing the data, the 12 situations in the questionnaire were categorized into four. The first category of situations (+ SD/+PD) consists of situations 1, 5, and 9. In the second category (- SD/+ PD), situations 3, 7 and 11 are included. The third category (+ SD/- PD) contains situations 2, 6, and 10. The last category of situations (- SD/- PD), where the speaker and hearer relationship is psychologically and socially close, contains situations 4, 8, and 12. In order to identify the type and frequency of request strategies made by learners, the data were analyzed, and the frequency of occurrence and percentage of each category of strategies were calculated for each group of participants and each situation (Table 2).

Table 2
Percentages of NNSs' and NNSs' Request Strategies for the 12 Situations

	Groups	A	B	C	D	E	F
Situations 1,5,9	NNS	0.95	41.90	0.0	28.57	24.76	3.80
+ SD/+ PD	NS	0.0	15.15	0.0	54.54	30.30	0.0
Situations 3,7,11	NNS	6.66	23.80	7.61	10.47	40.0	11.42
- SD/+ PD	NS	0.0	15.50	0.0	30.30	54.54	0.0
Situations 2,6,10	NNS	4.76	18.09	13.33	13.25	39.04	9.52
+ SD/- PD	NS	0.0	1.15	3.03	45.45	33.33	3.03
Situations 4,8,12	NNS	18.09	6.66	35.23	1.90	10.47	27.61
- SD/- PD	NS	0.0	9.09	0.0	21.21	42.42	27.27
Average	NNS	7.61	22.61	14.04	13.54	28.61	13.08
	NS	0.0	10.22	0.75	37.87	40.14	7.57

Then the data were classified into two main categories of direct and conventionally indirect requests. Again, the frequency of use of these two main categories of request strategies was recalculated (Table 3).

Table 3
Percentages of NSs' and NNSs' Use of DI and CI Request Strategies

	Groups	DI (a, c, f)	CI (b, d, e)
Situations 1, 5, 9	NNS	4.75	95.25
+ SD/+ PD	NS	0.0	100
Situations 3, 7, 11	NNS	25.69	74.31
- SD/+ PD	NS	0.0	100
Situations 2, 6, 10	NNS	27.61	72.79
+ SD/- PD	NS	6.06	93.94
Situations 4, 8, 12	NNS	80.9	19.1
- SD/- PD	NS	27.7	72.3
	NNS	35.5	64.5
Avarege	NS	8.44	91.5

Results and Discussion

A general finding of the study was that Turkish learners did not differ from native speakers of English in terms of their strategy preference of requests. The results also revealed that Turkish EFL learners were more direct than the English natives, which showed consistency with the related literature (Eslamirasekh, 1993; Fukushima, 1996; Julilifar, 2009). According to the results, both the NNSs (64%) and the NSs (91%) seemed to prefer CI request strategies (Table 3). However, Turkish learners of English seemed to have a tendency to use CI request strategies in +SD/+PD situation, where there is both a social and psychological distance between the interlocutors. On the other hand, they preferred DI request strategies in which the requestee was both socially and psychologically close to them (80.9%) (Table 3). In -SD/+ PD and + SD/- PD situations where either a social or psychological distance does not exist, the Turkish learners also preferred DI request strategies. These findings are consistent with Tanaka & Kawade's distance-politeness hypothesis, which posits that if there is not a social and psychological distance between the interlocutors, the requester will use a less polite (direct) strategy and vice versa. This finding could be explained in relation to the Turkish EFL (English as a Foreign Language) learners' "proficiency level of English." As mentioned before, the Turkish EFL learners' proficiency was "intermediate," which means that besides their being proficient in the syntax, vocabulary, and phonology of the foreign language, the Turkish learners seemed to also be competent in applying appropriate request strategies.

It was a very striking finding that the NSs, in all situations, preferred to use CI request strategies even in the -SD/-PD situation where there is neither a social nor

psychological distance between the interlocutors. This contradicts Tanaka and Kawade's distance-politeness hypothesis. This could be due to cultural factors. Previous studies (Leech, 1983; Searle, 1969) have mentioned that indirect speech acts correlate with politeness in Western cultures, because Western language usage is fundamentally associated with negative politeness (Brown & Levinson, 1987). Hall (1976) and Holtgraves (1997) also mention the notions of "high/low context" and "collectivist/individualist society" in relation to cultural factors in the selection of request strategies. According to Hall (1976), people in a collectivist and high-context culture use more indirect expressions than do people in individualist and low-context cultures. According to Hall's (1976) categorization of levels of contexts (high/low), Britain is placed in an intermediate position. Turkish people were used to having more collectivist characteristics in the past, but recently, Turkish people seem to have experienced a change towards individualism in recent years (Aydin & McIsaac, 2004; Hofstede, 2001). Such cultural considerations are then likely to be the reason why British natives showed a steady preference for CI request strategies in all situations.

The findings also revealed that the most preferred CI request sub-strategy was query preparatory ("Can you...?"). It was found to be the most preferred request strategy by both groups, which means that the Turkish EFL learners in the present study seemed to have a tendency to overuse the use of the query-preparatory request strategy "Can\Would you....?". This is likely to be due to the negative transfer from L1, Turkish, in which "Can..." strategies are commonly used when making a request. The result is in line with literature. Jalilifar (2009) found that the high- and mid-Iranian EFL learners overused conventional indirectness. Karatepe (2001) investigated to what extent the Turkish teacher trainees recognised and produced indirect requests in English, and the results indicated that Turkish learners focused on three forms when requesting: can, could, and would. Similarly, Dikilitaş (2004) found that the Turkish English-language learners preferred to use CI request strategies. Rose (2000) constructed an exploratory cross-sectional study of pragmatic development among three groups of primary school students and investigated their requests, apologies and compliments. The findings revealed that conventional indirectness was the most frequent strategy overall, and almost exclusively, "query preparation" with either "can" or "may" was the most preferred strategy with a percentage of 70%. Likewise, Sasaki, Rintell and Mitchell (1989) found that the greatest frequency of strategy choice for both the native and non-native groups was "query preparatory," which includes request strategies "would you...?" and "could you...?". Similarly, Otçu and Zeyrek (2008) found that the CI query preparatory subcategory was the most frequent strategy used by both NNSs and NSs.

In relation to the most preferred request strategy types, another significant finding of the present study was that while the phrase, "I would appreciate it if you could.....?" was the least frequently used by NNSs (13%), it was found out to be used the most commonly by NSs (37.8%). The results are in line with some studies that revealed that British English native speakers commonly use lexical/phrasal downgrades such as "please," "I was wondering," and "do you think;" and the

syntactic downgrades “can/could” with common combinations as follows: “Could I...please?,” “Could you possibly..?”, and “I was wondering if I could...?” (Aijmer, 1996; House & Kasper, 1987; Otçu & Zeyrek, 2008). This finding reveals that the British natives seem to have a tendency for using the most polite request strategies.

Concerning DI request strategies, the results indicated that the forms of “lend me...” and “root of the verb, will you?” were found to be the most commonly used DI strategies by NNSs (14.04%, 13.08%) (Table 2). This contradicts the findings of Otçu and Zeyrek (2008), who discovered that Turkish learners mostly employ DI strategies in the form of locution derivables and want statements (p. 282). On the other hand, the results are in line with Huls’s study (1989), which investigated the speech acts of Turkish migrants in the Netherlands and found that Turks frequently used imperative forms. A possible explanation may be due to the Turkish learners’ poor pragmalinguistic choices because of gaps in their proficiency in English. Regarding DI request strategies, another finding was that the NNs (7.52%) seemed to prefer to use the “root of the verb, will you” form of DI strategies more frequently. Of the three forms of DI strategies, the “root of the verb, will you?” form was the most polite one. When compared with people speaking Mediterranean languages, English-speaking people are regarded as being more negative-politeness oriented (Sifianou, 1992), which could be an explanation for NSs’ preference for the DI strategy.

Conclusions

The present study aimed to investigate the Turkish EFL learners’ request strategies in different social contexts and compare their request strategies with British natives. The high range of selection for the CI strategy by both groups was the main result of the present study. The study also showed the effect of cultural issues in the selection of request strategies. The results confirmed that British natives were more indirect than Turkish EFL learners. It seems that although the Turkish learners used the appropriate request strategies for different situations, they seemed to overuse these strategies. This is likely to be associated with insufficient exposure of the EFL learners to pragmatically appropriate input. Concerning this issue, Ellis (1992) points out that the language classrooms do not provide sufficient significant input for the development of pragmatic competence. Bialystok (1993) highlights the importance of input and claims that pragmatic competence develops only if there is sufficient input containing enough examples of a target feature, and if this input is noticed and analysed by the learner. The language teacher has to provide explicit instruction on pragmatics so that the learners have the opportunity to “notice” certain features, and instruction on pragmatics improves language learners’ pragmatic competence (Liu, 2007).

“Input” constitutes the textbooks and the instruction of the teacher. Therefore, textbooks and EFL teachers need to change their approaches in L2 teaching and provide the learners with pragmatically appropriate input to help them gain proficiency in communicating in the target language (Koike, 1989). Harlow (1990)

suggests that input allied with social variables that affect the preference of speech act strategies should be presented in the textbooks and classroom activities. Providing authentic input is vital in an EFL classroom, since the language learners have very limited opportunities for authentic language exposure. English teachers should, therefore, provide their learners with more authentic teaching materials such as movies or videos in order to arouse their students' pragmatic awareness. Related with the issue of helping learners develop pragmatic awareness, the findings of Rose's study (2000) posit that film language represents a valuable resource for teaching pragmatics. In addition, Bou, Franch and Garces (2003) suggest a methodological proposal in order to develop pragmatic awareness (to raise learners' awareness of the different uses of linguistic devices) in EFL classrooms. According to this model, first-step politeness and politeness theories should be defined to the learners, since most of them are unaware of what linguistic politeness means.

Although the study serves as a good source for Turkish learners' request strategy perceptions, it has some limitations. One of the limitations of the study is in relation to the generalizability of the findings. Participants of this study consist of only a small number of Turkish learners, who do not represent the whole population of each culture. Therefore, the findings cannot be generalised for all the Turkish EFL students in Turkey. Despite this limitation, the present study sheds light on the Turkish EFL learners' pragmatic competence and their perceptions of using request strategies. The study also gathered valuable information about how cultural differences are likely to affect the preference of request strategies.

The provision of information by the present study about the use of request strategies of Turkish learners, however, does not indicate any information about learners' pragmatic development. Therefore, a suggestion for further research is to focus on the development of request strategies by Turkish EFL learners with different proficiency levels. The present study used multiple-choice tasks (MCT) to elicit data. Another suggestion for further research is to use different data collection tools such as the Discourse Completion Test (DCT) and oral and written self-reports to generate data. Data gathered by such measures could provide valuable information in how Turkish EFL learners judge each situation, plan and implement request strategies.

References

- Aijmer, K. (1996). *Conversational routines in English: Convention and creativity*. London and New York: Longman.
- Aydın, C. H. & McIsaac, M. S. (2004). Impact of instructional technology in Turkey. *Educational Technology Research and Development*, 52(1), 105-112.
- Bachman, L. F. (1990). *Fundamental considerations in language testing*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Bialystok, E. (1993). Symbolic representation and attentional control in pragmatic competence. In G. Kasper & S. Blum-Kulka (Eds.), *Interlanguage pragmatics* (pp. 43-59). New York: Oxford University Press.
- Blum-Kulka, House, J. & Kasper, G. (1989). *Cross-cultural pragmatics: Requests and apologies*. Norwood, N.J: Ablex Publishing.
- Bou-Franch, P. & Garces- Conejos, P. (2003). Teaching linguistic politeness: A methodological proposal. *IRAL*, 42, 1-22.
- Brown, P. & Levinson, B. (1987). *Politeness: Some universals in language usage*. London Cambridge University Press.
- Canale, M., & Swain, M. (1980). Theoretical bases of communicative approaches to second language teaching and testing. *Applied Linguistics*, 1(1), 1-47.
- Dikilitas, K. (2004). *A Comparative study into acquisition of politeness in English as a foreign language*. Unpublished MA thesis, Çanakkale Onsekiz Mart University, Çanakkale.
- Ellis, R. (1992). Learning to communicate: A study of two language learners' requests. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition*, 14, 1-23.
- Ellis, R. (1994). *The study of second language acquisition*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Eslamirasekh, Z. (1993). A cross-cultural comparison of requestive speech act realization patterns in Persian and American English. *Pragmatic and Language Learning*, 4, 85-103.
- Fukushima, S. (1996). Request strategies in British and Japanese. *Language Science*, 18(34), 671-688.
- Hall, E.T. (1976). *Beyond culture*. New York: Doubleday.
- Harlow, L. L. (1990). Do they mean what they say? Sociopragmatic competence and second language learners. *The Modern Language Journal*, 74(3), 328-349.
- Hofstede, G. (2001). *Cultural consequences: comparing values, behaviours, institutions, and organizations across nations*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Holtgraves, T. (1997). Styles of language use: Individual and cultural variability in conversational indirectiveness. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 73(3), 624-637.
- House, J., & Kasper, G. (1987). Interlanguage pragmatics: Requesting in foreign language. In W. Loersch & Schulze (Eds.), *Perspective on language in performance* (pp. 1250-1288). Tuebingen: Narr.
- Huls, E. (1989). Directness, explicitness and orientation in Turkish family interaction. In Deprez, K. (Eds.), *Language and intergroup relations in Flanders and in the Netherlands* (pp.145-164). Foris: Dordrecht.
- Jalilifar, A. (2009). Request strategies: Cross-sectional study of Iranian EFL learners and Australian native speakers. *English Language Teaching*, 22(2), 46-61.
- Karatepe, Ç. (2001). Pragmatic awareness in EFL teaching training. *Language Awareness*, 10(2), 178-188.

- Kasper, G. (1989). Variation in Interlanguage: Speech Act Realization. In Susan Gass, Carolyn Madden Dennis Preston and Larry Selinker (Eds.), *Variation in second language acquisition: Discourse and pragmatics* (pp.37-58). Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.
- Kasper, G. & Schimitt, R. (1996). Developmental issues in interlanguage pragmatics. *Studies in Language Acquisition*, 18 (2), 149-165.
- Koike, D.A. (1989). Pragmatic competence and adult L2 acquisition: Speech acts in interlanguage. *The Modern Language Journal*, 73 (3), 279-286.
- Leech, G. (1983). *The principle of pragmatics*. New York: Longman.
- Liu, C. (2007). *Pragmatics in foreign language instruction: the effects of pedagogical intervention and technology on the development of EFL learners' realization of request*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Texas & ALM University, Texas.
- Otçu, B. & Zeyrek, D. (2008). Development of requests: A study on Turkish learners of English. In Martin Pütz and JoAnne Neff-van Aertselaer (Eds), *Interlanguage and Cross-Cultural Perspectives* (pp.265-298). Berlin/New York: Mouton de Gruyter.
- Rose, K. R. (1994). On the validity of DCTs in non -Western contexts. *Applied Linguistics*, 15, 1-14.
- Rose, K. R. (2000). An exploratory cross-sectional study of interlanguage pragmatic development. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition*, 22, 27-67.
- Rose, K. R & Ono, R. (1995). Eliciting speech act data in Japanese: The effect of questionnaire type. *Language Learning*, 54(2), 191-223.
- Sasaki, M Rintell, E., & Mitchell, C. J. (1989). Studying requests and apologies: An inquiry into method. In S. Blum-Kulka, J. House, & G. Kasper (Eds.), *Cross-cultural pragmatics* (pp.248-272). Norwood, NJ: Ablex.
- Searle, J. (1969). *Speech acts: An essay in the philosophy of language*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Sifianou, M. (1992). *Politeness phenomena in England and Greece: A cross-cultural perspective*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Suh, J. (1999). Pragmatic perception of politeness in requests by Korean learners of English as a second language. *IRAL*, 37(3), 195-213.
- Tanaka, S., & Kawade, S. (1982). Politeness strategies and second language acquisition. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition*, 5, 18-33.
- Thomas, J. (1983). Cross-cultural pragmatic failure. *Applied Linguistics*, 4(2), 91-112.
- Yamashita, S. O. (1996). *Six measures of JSL pragmatics*. Second Language Teaching & Curriculum Center. University of Hawaii at Manoa: USA

Ricada Kibarlık Stratejilerinin Kullanımı: Türk Yetişkinlerin ve İngiliz Yetişkinlerin Karşılaştırılması

(Özet)

Problem Durumu: Edimsel yeti etkili iletişimin önemli gereksinimlerinden biri olarak kabul edilir. 'Rica' insan ilişkilerinde önemli bir yere sahip olduğundan söz ediminde rağbet edilen araştırma konularının arasında yer alır. İnsanların birbirleriyle olan sosyal eşitlik düzeyi, birbirleriyle olan psikolojik yakınlığı veya uzaklığı ve rica edilen kişiye vereceği zahmetin derecesi kullanılacak rica stratejilerini belirlemede önemli rol oynar. Literatürde İngilizceyi yabancı dil olarak öğrenenlerin hangi rica stratejilerini kullandığı ve öğrencilerin edimsel gelişimlerini konu alan çalışmalar bulunmaktadır. Fakat etkili iletişimi etkileyen sosyal ve psikolojik uzaklık veya yakınlığın rica etme stratejilerinin kullanımı nasıl etkilediğine yönelik bir çalışma bulunmamaktadır. Bu nedenle, anadili Türkçe olan ve İngilizceyi yabancı dil olarak öğrenen Türk yetişkinlerin rica etme stratejilerini sosyal ve psikolojik yakınlık/uzaklık değişkenleri açısından inceleyen bir çalışmanın gerekli olduğu düşünülmüştür.

Araştırmanın Amacı: Bu çalışmanın amacı İngilizceyi yabancı dil olarak öğrenen yetişkinlerin sosyal ve psikolojik yakınlık durumlarında hangi rica stratejilerini kullandığını ortaya çıkarmaktır. Türk yetişkinlerin kullanmayı tercih ettikleri rica stratejileri İngiliz yetişkinlerinkiyile karşılaştırılması da çalışmaya kültürel bir boyut katacaktır.

Araştırmanın Yöntemi: Araştırmanın katılımcıları iki gruptan oluşmaktadır. Birinci grup, özel bir İngilizce Yabancı dil dershanesine kayıtlı ve İngilizce bilgi seviyeleri 'orta düzey' olarak belirlenen ve anadili Türkçe olan yetişkinlerdir. Yaşları 17-31 arasında değişen otuzbeş Türk yetişkinin onbeşi kadın yirmisi erkektir. İkinci katılımcı grubunu anadili İngilizce olan ve yaşları 21 ile 26 arasında değişen İngiliz yetişkinlerden oluşmaktadır. Veri toplamak için sosyal ve psikolojik yakınlık içeren ve oniki durumdan oluşan bir 'seçenekli durum anketi' kullanılmıştır. Ankette katılımcıların rica stratejilerini kullanacakları oniki farklı durum vardır. Ankette 3 ana durum bulunmaktadır, bunlar; şemsiye ödünç alma durumu, müzik sesinin kısılması durmu ve dolmakalem ödünç alma durumu'dur. 'Sosyal uzaklıklık/yakınlık' ve 'psikolojik uzaklık/yakınlık' sosyal değişkenler olarak kullanılmış ve ankette toplam 12 durum oluşturulmuştur. Her 12 durumda, rica eden kişi ve rica edilen kişi arasında sosyal ve psikolojik yakınlık veya uzaklık bulunur. Her bir durum için altı rica stratejisi seçenek olarak verilmiştir. Katılımcılardan her durum için kendilerine uygun düşen altı rica stratejilerinden birini seçmeleri istenmiştir. Veri analizinde, altı rica stratejisinin her iki katılımcı grubu tarafından ne sıklıkla kullanıldığı hesaplanmıştır. İkinci

basamak veri analizinde ise altı rica stratejisi 'dolaylı' ve 'dolaysız' olarak ikiye ayrılarak her iki rica stratejisi için kullanma sıklığı tekrar hesaplanmıştır.

Araştırmanın Bulguları: Araştırmada Türk yetişkinlerinin %64'ünün ve İngiliz yetişkinlerinin %91'inin 'dolaylı rica stratejileri' ni kullandığı bulunmuştur. Bir diğer deyişle araştırma sonuçları Türk ve İngiliz yetişkinlerin 'dolaylı rica' stratejilerini kullanma eğiliminde olduklarını göstermektedir. Bulgular ayrıca Türk yetişkinlerin İngiliz yetişkinlere kıyasla daha fazla 'dolaysız rica stratejileri' ni kullanma eğiliminde olduğunu göstermiştir. Araştırmada, Türk yetişkinlerin ricada buldukları kişiyle aralarında sosyal ve psikolojik yakınlık bulunmuyorsa 'dolaylı rica stratejileri', sosyal ya da psikolojik yakınlıktan herhangi biri mevcut olduğunda ise 'dolaysız rica stratejileri' kullanma eğiliminde oldukları sonucu ortaya çıkmıştır ki bu da 'nezaket teorisine' uymaktadır. Çalışmanın ilginç sonuçlarından biri İngiliz yetişkinlerin ricada bulunacakları kişiyle aralarında sosyal ve psikolojik yakınlık olmasına rağmen 'dolaysız rica stratejileri' yerine 'dolaylı rica stratejilerini' kullanma eğilimi göstermiş olmasıdır. Bu sonuç, İngiliz ve Türkler arasındaki kültür farklılığından kaynaklanmaktadır.

Araştırmanın Sonuçları ve Önerileri: Sosyal ve psikolojik yakınlıklarla ilgili değişik durumlarda Türk yetişkinleri 'nezaket teorisine göre uygun rica stratejilerini kullanmalarına rağmen 'dolaylı nezaket stratejilerini' aşırı kulanma eğilimi göstermektedirler. Sınıfta yabancı dil öğretmenleri tarafından uygun ve yeterli edimbilim bilgisi verilmediğinden dolayı öğrencilerin yetersiz seviyede edimbilim bilgisine sahip olması bunun nedenlerinden biri olabilir. Bir yabancı dil sınıfında bulunan öğrenciler için edimbilimle ilgili tek kaynak ders kitabı ve öğretmendir. Bu yüzden, İngilizce yabancı dil öğretmenlerinin, öğrencilerin edimbilim bilgilerini geliştirmesi sürecinde ne kadar önemli bir rol oynadıklarının bilincinde olması gerekmektedir. Yabancı dil ders kitaplarının ve İngilizce öğretmenlerinin öğrencilerin etkili iletişim yetilerini geliştirmek adına dil öğretim yaklaşımlarını değiştirmeleri gerekmektedir. Yabancı dil öğretmenlerinin sınıfta öğrencilere söz edimi ile bağlantılı teorik bilgiyi (örnek, nezaket teorisini) aktararak onların 'farkındalık' düzeylerini artırması yabancı dil öğrencilerinin edimsel yetilerinin gelişmesine yardımcı olacaktır. Ayrıca söz edinimiyle ilgili, farklı sosyal durumlar içeren aktiviteleri içeren ders kitaplarının ve gerçeğe yakın öğretme materyallerinin dil öğretmenleri tarafından kullanımı, sınıfta sosyal değişkenli aktiviteler uygulanması da öğrencilerin edimbilim ve dolayısıyla etkili iletişim yetilerinin gelişmesinde önemli katkılar sağlayacaktır. Bu çalışma İngilizce dilbilgi düzeyi 'orta' olan Türk yetişkinlerin rica stratejilerini incelemiştir. İngilizce dil bilgisi farklı

düzeyde olan öğrencilerin rica stratejilerini inceleyen ve karşılaştıran bir çalışma Türk yetişkinlerinin edimsel gelişimi konusunda yararlı bilgiler sunma adına gelecekte yapılması için önerilen bir çalışmadır. Bu çalışmada veri 'seçenekli durum anketi' vasıtasıyla toplanmıştır. 'Konuşma Tamamlayıcı Test', 'yazılı/sözlü anlatım' gibi farklı veri toplama araçlarının kullanıldığı bir çalışma da ikinci bir araştırma önerisi olarak sunulabilir.

Anahtar Sözcükler: Nezaket, rica, sosyal uzaklık, yabancı dil öğrencileri