Macrothink Institute™

International Journal of Linguistics
ISSN 1948-5425
2023, Vol. 15, No. 4

Developing Pedagogical Applications for Teaching Politeness Strategies in Advanced English as a Foreign Language Classrooms

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Received: June 27, 2023 Accepted: July 20, 2023 Published: August 18, 2023
doi:10.5296/ijl.v15i4.21118 URL: https://doi.org/10.5296/ijl.v15i4.21118

Abstract

The field of English as a foreign language (EFL) strives to promote students' proficiency by equipping them with proper grammatical and lexical skills. However, EFL textbooks often neglect the teaching of pragmatics which can lead to cross-cultural communication failures for EFL learners. EFL learners often struggle with traditional language teaching approaches that prioritize grammatical development over pragmatic skills. This paper aims to address this gap by focusing on promoting the use of politeness strategies among EFL learners in cross-cultural communication, particularly in email correspondences with college professors. The proposed teaching activities are based on the Linguistic Theory of Politeness and the 3Ds framework within the context of the Communicative Repertoire Approach. This paper aims to assist advanced EFL learners in effectively employing politeness strategies when writing email requests to college professors, by offering practical pedagogical applications that enhance EFL learners' ability to express their communicative intentions clearly and avoid any potential misunderstanding or misinterpretation by their college professors.

Keywords: EFL learners, Teaching pragmatic, Politeness strategies, Translanguaging

1. Introduction

Recognizing the importance of pragmatic awareness in making requests during cross-cultural communication is crucial in language learning and teaching. When making a request through email, it is essential to possess not only language competence (e.g., knowledge of spelling, word formation, sentence formation, pronunciation, etc.) but also pragmatic competence and knowledge of the power dynamics within the target language (e.g., the ability to use language

effectively in social contexts to achieve communicative goals). Failure to understand and adhere to these power relations, as well as lacking pragmatic competence, can put students at risk, especially if they unintentionally infringe upon the authority of faculty members who hold greater institutional power (Hartford & Bardovi-Harlig, 1996). In such cases, it becomes imperative to incorporate pragmatic communication instruction into language teaching to facilitate effective communication between native and non-native speakers of the target language. This instruction not only aids students in developing a comprehensive understanding of the pragmatic rules and conventions of the target language (Economidou-Kogetsidis, 2015) but also helps them navigate potential pitfalls and achieve successful communication outcomes.

EFL learners may possess the necessary linguistic competence to communicate, but they often struggle to convey their intended meanings accurately, leading to potential misunderstandings. Native speakers of English may interpret learners' pragmatic failures as rudeness or unfriendliness, rather than simply linguistic shortcomings (Economidou-Kogetsidis, 2015). For example, an Arab EFL learner, due to their cultural background, may unintentionally come across as impolite when requesting an office hour meeting or a letter of recommendation from their American professor by simply using phrases such as "*I want you to send me a signed letter*." Conversely, certain phrases may be perceived as unnatural or overly polite. Najeeb, Maros, and Nor (2012) provided an example of an Egyptian graduate student enrolled in a Malaysian university who wrote to his professor, saying, "w*hen you called me, that made me relieved. Upon your request*." While the Egyptian student wanted to come as polite as possible, his professor considered this phrasing unconventional and atypical. These instances of communication breakdown arise from direct transfers from the Arab context and can be perceived as impolite or misunderstood in EFL communication (Takahashi, 1996).

Language teachers face challenges in developing learners' pragmatic awareness due to a lack of appropriate authentic materials and training (Eslami-Rasekh, 2005). Therefore, the inclusion of explicit politeness instruction in EFL textbooks will contribute to language proficiency and enable EFL learners to effectively convey their intended meanings in a manner that is appropriate and well-received by their interlocutors. Bardovi-Harlig and Hartford (1991) suggested the use of mitigators as an example of politeness that can be employed in language learning. By incorporating mitigators to soften requests, learners can gain a deeper understanding of the cultural norms and values associated with the target language. Hence, this paper underscores the importance of providing explicit instruction and allocating more attention to teaching pragmatics, specifically politeness, to advanced EFL learners to enhance their pragmatic competence and prevent future miscommunication arising from cross-cultural differences.

2. Literature Review

Politeness, as defined by Fraser (1975, p. 13), is “a property associated with an utterance in which, according to the hearer, the speaker has neither exceeded any rights nor failed to fulfil any obligations”. In light of this, incorporating pragmatic knowledge, which is “the ability to communicate your intended message with all its nuances in any socio-cultural context and to interpret the message of your interlocutor as it was intended” (Fraser, 2010, p. 15), will significantly enhance effective communication in the target language. Including pragmatic instruction into EFL teaching materials will gear up EFL learners with the necessary skills to

navigate diverse cultural contexts and engage in successful communication exchanges. In order to further explore the complexities of politeness in language, it is crucial to delve into the realm of the Linguistics Theory of Politeness. This theory offers valuable perspectives and analytical framework for understanding how politeness is conceptualized and studied within the field of pragmatics.

2.1 Linguistics Theory of Politeness

The pioneering work of Brown and Levinson on the theory of politeness was taken as a theoretical framework for designing the pedagogical application of this paper. The early work of Fraser (1975) on politeness as well as the work of Goffman (1963) set the ground for the linguistic theory of politeness in the sense that face needs to be saved and maintained throughout the communication process. Based on the work of Goffman (1963) and Fraser (1975), Brown & Levinson (1987) introduced the notion that speakers and hearers are subject to make what is called face threatening acts (FTAs). In other words, face has to be maintained and attended to throughout a conversation to avoid being socially damaged by putting the face at risk when making requests, refusals, or any other face threatening acts. Building on this foundation, the Linguistics Theory of Politeness serves as a fundamental framework for comprehending the intricate concepts of politeness and face-threatening acts. By establishing this foundation, it lays the groundwork for the subsequent sections of this paper, which delve deeper into the significance of politeness in fostering effective communication with college professors. Brown & Levinson's pivotal contribution involves the dual facets of the face: the positive and negative dimensions.

Generally, the positive face is not threatened when the interlocutors have the tendency to be respected, esteemed, and admired. The positive face is threatened when the speaker or hearer cares less about the other person's feelings and disregards their emotions. The speaker himself can be affected by the FTAs when he cannot control himself which could lead to the need of an apology. On the other hand, the negative face is when the speaker interferes with the other person's freedom of actions and abilities to make choices. The negative face is threatened when the speaker has the power and control to impose his needs on the other person and takes his choices away by, for example, giving direct orders which could lead to a pragmatic failure (Brown & Levinson, 1987, pp. 313-314). The division of face into positive and negative aspects provides a nuanced understanding of politeness strategies and serves as the basis for the subsequent teaching methodology and activities proposed in this paper.

Brown and Levinson (1987) proposed strategies to avoid FTAs that protect the hearer's face from any potential damage. These strategies are bald on-record without redress, on-record with redress which includes positive and negative politeness, and off-record (pp. 316-317). First, the 'off-record' is the use of indirect and ambiguous actions which is the least threatening politeness strategy. The speaker avoids the use of direct requests by using hints or using tautologies (e.g., it's very hot and humid outside instead of saying it directly let's get inside). Second, Bald on-record without redressive actions are those actions that can be done in the most unambiguous and direct way, which might embarrass the addressee. Speakers using the bald on-record with no redressive actions do not pay attention to the addressee's face at all. For example, speakers use imperative verb forms (e.g., do this or go there) to make requests. Third, bald on-record with redress are those strategies that give face to the hearer and aim to avoid threatening or causing potential damage to the addressee. The categorization of politeness strategies in this paper provides a comprehensive framework to

understand the diverse approaches that speakers can utilize in face-threatening situations. These strategies serve as the foundational basis for the pedagogical applications proposed in this paper, promoting their integration into the instructional activities.

Continuing the discussion on bald on-record with redress, which gives face to the hearer, speakers have no intention to threaten the addressee's face, nor do they want to cause any potential damage to it. This leads to the two main strategies that speakers can employ: they could either do positive politeness or negative politeness. On the one hand, the positive politeness strategy avoids causing damage to the hearers' face by highlighting friendliness or by maintaining a good relationship and minimizing the potential damage to the hearer's face. This can be done by seeking agreement and avoiding disagreement, intensifying interest in the hearer, being optimistic, presupposing common ground, jokes, giving or asking for reasons, etc. On the other hand, negative politeness seeks not to impose an action on the addressee, so it gives the addressee "a face-saving escape line" or an "out". When speakers use the negative politeness strategy, they do not want to interfere with the addressee's freedom of actions. This can be done using questions, hedges, apologies, being conventionally indirect, and giving deference (Brown & Levinson, 1987, p. 317). A sentence such as (I know the deadline might not work for you, so feel free to say no.) can be used to mitigate and soften the request by avoiding imposing on the addressee's freedom. The explanation of bald on-record with redress strategies and the differentiation between positive and negative politeness strategies provides a crucial theoretical foundation for this paper. It clarifies how these strategies maintain the hearer's face and avoid imposition, forming the basis for incorporating politeness instruction in EFL teaching materials. This understanding is essential for guiding EFL learners in diverse cultural contexts and enabling successful communication exchanges, preventing unintentional offense or misunderstanding. Based on this, this paper offers concrete examples of how politeness strategies can be applied in EFL education, bridging the gap between theory and practice in enhancing pragmatic competence. The following section introduces the Communicative Repertoire Approach, which operates in tandem with the politeness theory to advance the pedagogical applications of this paper.

2.2 Communicative Repertoire Approach

Introducing learners to their entire linguistic repertoire is of great importance in language learning, as it emphasizes the significance of developing a wide range of communication skills and strategies to improve their proficiency in various contexts (Galante et al., 2020). By allowing learners to utilize diverse linguistic forms, the Communicative Repertoire Approach (CRA) empowers them to meaningfully interact with others during conversations. This approach becomes particularly relevant in fostering successful and considerate interactions between EFL learners and their college professors, as it recognizes the importance of accommodating various language forms, ensuring that students avoid imposing their requests on their professors while expressing their needs appropriately. The CRA emphasizes the importance of teaching individuals a broad range of communication skills and strategies to allow them to communicate effectively in various settings and situations. It is a form of translanguaging that refers to the various communication modes, systems, and strategies learners can use to express themselves and interact with others (Rymes, 2012). In other words, it allows learners to use whatever linguistics forms at their disposal to make meaning during a conversation. A person's repertoire is the sum of all the things they know how to do and say, as well as the way they present themselves to the world. It encompasses various elements,

such as different languages, dialects, gestures, clothing, posture, knowledge of communicative routines, familiarity with types of food or drink, and references to mass media (Rymes, 2014). Given this, Leveraging the CRA can contribute to fostering successful and considerate interactions between EFL learners and their professors to avoid imposing their requests on their professors. The CRA also emphasizes the importance of developing a wide range of communication skills and strategies, including those related to politeness and respect, to effectively communicate in different settings and situations.

Both EFL teachers and learners in the classroom can derive benefits from the CRA when combined with the concept of 3Ds (Rymes et al., 2016, p. 265). According to Rymes et al., the 3Ds do not represent a new teaching method; rather, they embody "a new way of thinking about one's teaching, a new stance that involves recursive discovery of new repertoires in one's classroom as a springboard to designing and doing lessons." (p. 265). The 3Ds can be summarized as Discovering, Designing, and Doing (pp. 265-269). First, the discovering phase develops awareness and identifies students' and teachers' current communication abilities, including their languages spoken at home, with friends, and during out-of-school time. In addition, it identifies patterns of interaction, such as greetings, goodbyes, storytelling, and questioning and answering. It also discovers digital tools and other ways of communicating without language. Second, the designing phase entails creating learning objectives and activities for the classroom based on the discovered communication abilities and repertoires. This step entails developing a learning environment that promotes the application of existing languages, patterns of interaction, digital resources, and additional forms of expression. Third, the doing phase entails the execution of the planned classroom activities and tactics that would eventually enable learners to engage in genuine and authentic communication practices to enhance their proficiency. The implementation of the 3Ds approach, along with the CRA, offers practical and effective methods for developing pragmatic competence, particularly in teaching politeness, to EFL learners. Teachers can use these innovative approaches to help students understand the significance of politeness in communication and navigate cross-cultural interactions confidently. Additionally, the flexibility of the CRA enables teachers to adapt instruction to the diverse needs and proficiency levels of learners, ensuring an inclusive and effective learning experience.

2.3 Previous Research on Teaching Politeness

Teaching politeness strategies in EFL context has descended from three key approaches: conformity, discursive, and face management (Fédix-Brasdefer & Mugford, 2017, p. 492). First, the conformity approach adheres to the target language's social and cultural polite norms. It simply teaches learners to imitate the social interactions between native speakers of the target language (Ahmadi & Heydari, 2011; Fédix-Brasdefer & Hasler-Barker, 2012; Ficzere, 2014). Second, the discursive approach of interactional achievement recognizes the complexity of social interactions and emphasizes the importance of power dynamics and social hierarchy in the target language context. It also considers other pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatics factors, the importance of context-based teaching, and the knowledge of the participant's age and background (Haugh, 2006; Haugh, 2007; Fédix-Brasdefer & Cohen, 2012). Finally, research on teaching politeness falls into the face management approach which views language learners as independent individuals who can make their own linguistic choices in terms of politeness to express themselves (Iwasaki, 2011, p. 96). An essential issue that teachers need to take into account is the learners' beliefs and values to express

themselves without imposing the target language norms, as they have their ways of reflecting their view of the world (Economidou-Kogetsidis, 2015).

In a study that investigated the usefulness of teaching politeness strategies in an EIL context, Ficzere (2014) conducted a three-phase study in the UK to collect data from four participants whose L1s were Korean, Italian, Arabic, and French and then suggested teaching exercises. Those three phases were personal interviews, classroom teaching, and a perception questionnaire. The author interviewed the participants first to measure their politeness awareness manifested in their attitudes, behavior, and language, which showed their willingness to be polite when using English. Second, Ficzere designed a lesson to provide a cultural context and examine whether politeness can be taught, so Ficzere gave exercises in the form of discussions, role-play, multiple-choice, and ordering exercises for comparison in L1 and L2 cultures. The findings of the lesson came in three stages that started with the importance of pragmatic competence. The participants in the first stage ranked the sentences in terms of politeness similarly to what they would do in their L1s, which indicates the importance of considering context when teaching politeness. The lesson's second stage focused on cross-cultural issues. The participants showed differences in ranking people (e.g., police officer, writer, grandparent, etc.) based on age and distance, indicating slightly different power dynamics between the participants' cultures and the English culture. The third stage indicated that they found it convenient to apply language and politeness strategies taught as linguistic tools; however, they struggled to produce politeness strategies in situations with high imposition, such as criticism and complaints. Overall, the findings reveal that instructing politeness strategies is attainable, given the learners' indication of the usefulness of such knowledge in their everyday routines.

Similarly, Kurdghelashvili (2015) investigated Georgian teachers' and students' use of speech acts and politeness strategies in the EFL classroom context. Through a survey distributed to 108 students and class observation with two local English teachers, the author concluded that although the students possessed some pragmatic knowledge of politeness, as indicated by the survey, they demonstrated no politeness strategies when communicating in the classroom. As for teachers, they were able to use politeness strategies in the classroom by using indirect ways of making requests. For example, one of the teachers said, "Tsira, can you add any other information?" The teachers also used indirect ways to correct errors without threatening the students' social faces. The author finally stated that teachers are responsible for promoting their students' pragmatic knowledge. Also, to engage learners in the target language, teachers should provide their students with authentic materials, such as TV shows and news broadcasts, to improve their passive knowledge to gain cultural awareness of the target language. Furthermore, by engaging in role-playing dialogues or utilizing speech components, individuals can implement their passive knowledge and stimulate their linguistic abilities.

Writing an email requires not only grammatical competence but also pragmatic competence. Economidou-Kogetsidis (2015) examined the use of pragmatic skills of politeness in six emails written by Greek-Cypriot undergraduates with advanced English language proficiency. The author chose those emails based on the degree of directness and lack of mitigators. Twenty-four Greek-Cypriot, Greek, and British lecturers from twelve universities in the UK were then given those six emails along with a survey to measure their perceptions of the given emails as if they were sent to them by their students in the UK universities. There was statistical significance in the use of politeness strategies in the six emails. The mean scores

ranged from 1.38 (0.576), the least polite email, to 3.78 (0.736), the most polite email. The lecturers viewed the use of “please” + an imperative as impolite because it 'sounds like a demand', and the use of an imperative can be expected from a manager, not a student. This indicates that students should keep in mind the social power relations during communication in the target language. In addition, the use of “thank you in advance” was perceived negatively by the lecturers as students may presuppose the request is guaranteed. Missing out on “dear” and a salutation form was also perceived by instructors as impolite and disrespectful. Finally, the author suggested some pedagogical implications to promote students' pragmatic awareness through explicit email instruction in the EFL/ESL classroom.

In a similar vein, Alsout and Khedri (2019) did a study that examined how politeness is deployed in 109 email requests written by 20 Libyan postgraduate students to their lecturers. The participants were students at four top-ranked Malaysian universities. Using the Brown and Levinson's (1987) framework to identify the types of strategies, the results revealed that there was an excessive use of negative politeness strategies compared to other types, leading to high levels of directness. The list prioritized negative politeness strategies, which were identified 70 times, followed by positive politeness strategies, then off-record, and finally, the on-record politeness strategies. This extensive reliance on negative politeness may have come as a result of insufficient pragmatic awareness.

The aforementioned studies have made valuable contributions by exploring learners' pragmatic knowledge of politeness in EFL contexts and the possibility of improving it. However, a notable limitation in these studies is the lack of specific pedagogical applications for language educators. While they have shed light on learners' abilities and awareness, the absence of actionable teaching strategies restricts the practical implications of their findings for EFL classrooms. To address this gap, the current study seeks to build upon the existing research by proposing concrete pedagogical applications that EFL teachers can implement in their classrooms. By doing so, the study seeks to empower educators to effectively foster the development of politeness strategies among their EFL students. This emphasis on actionable pedagogy will enhance the practical utility of the applications designed in this paper and contribute to the advancement of teaching politeness in EFL contexts.

3. Teaching Methodology

The study adopts an eclectic approach to teaching politeness strategies, which involves incorporating principles and procedures from various techniques and language teaching methods (Nunan, 2015). This paper teaches the politeness strategies proposed by Brown & Levinson through the utilization of the 3Ds framework (Rymes et al., 2016) and explicit instruction to familiarize EFL learners with different forms of politeness in cross-cultural communication. The 3Ds framework helps learners to engage in translanguaging practices, which discover and use their full linguistic repertoire, such as all languages, varieties of languages, interaction styles, and non-verbal communication techniques they use for communication (García, 2014). Following the discovery phase, instructors enhance awareness of and facilitate practice of using politeness strategies using learners’ full linguistic repertoire (e.g., using politeness strategies in L1 and L2) by using authentic communication practices to enhance their abilities in promoting politeness strategies for successful communication with college professors. The following list presents a set of specific and measurable student learning outcomes. By the end of the course, learners will be able to:

- Identify and evaluate different politeness strategies in email requests in college communication.
- Edit and incorporate politeness strategies when writing email requests to college professors.
- List examples of the dynamic power relations and social distance between students and college professors.
- Describe the social and cultural norms of politeness that prevail in the language when making requests.

In addition, the teaching template developed by Schaefer and Warhol (2019) can be used in conjunction with the 3Ds to help EFL learners apply politeness strategies in their email exchanges with college professors. The template consists of the following sequential steps:

- **Explain:** Instructors explain politeness strategies, features, forms, and meanings to boost learners' understanding and awareness of politeness types and FTAs.
- **Examine:** Learners examine and analyze samples of politeness strategies from authentic emails previously sent to college professors. Half of the emails include emails with politeness strategies, and the other half includes emails that lack politeness strategies for comparison.
- **Experience:** Learners experience politeness strategies by reading authentic samples extensively.
- **Experiment:** Learners practice writing emails that include politeness strategies.
- **Explore:** Learners explore issues, such as lack of linguistic devices, syntactic mitigators, and lack of implementation of politeness strategies through readings, writings, discussion, and research.

4. Activities

4.1 Activity

4.1.1 Pre-class

Video samples: Students watch a YouTube video showcasing a cultural misunderstanding and the consequences of being unaware of power dynamics, leading to a pragmatic failure (e.g., https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kt2M9FAJlLQ). The instructor verifies that the video has closed captioning or a transcript that is easily accessible. Subsequently, students are given a set of questions to answer regarding the video's content (e.g., *Why did the pragmatic failure happen in the video clip from the movie United States of Al? What could the driver in the movie United States of Al have done to avoid the pragmatic failure? How would you deal with this situation in your L1 or any language variety you know?*)

4.1.2 During Class

Lecturing: Instructor gives a lecture explaining politeness strategies and how they can be integrated into emails (e.g., *What are politeness strategies? What are the most direct and least direct strategies? What politeness strategies would you include in your email to a professor?*).

Softening devices: Instructor emphasizes the importance of using syntactic mitigators, such as 'please' or the use of conditionals (e.g., *if*), to soften requests and encourages comparing their usage in both L1 and L2.

Handouts: Instructor incorporates authentic materials, such as handouts and email samples, that highlight politeness norms and practices in different languages, cultures, registers, or dialects allowing students to analyze and identify politeness strategies. In groups, students work on the emails, adding elements like hedges, expressing interest in the professor, and minimizing imposition, to enhance their politeness. For instance, Arabic language includes the phrase *peace be upon you* السلام عليكم formally in each email as an opening. Whereas English has no such phrase. Also, "Offering a prayer" or "appealing to God" is used by Arabs extensively as a form of politeness while English simply shows politeness through thanking others (Bataineh, 2013).

Movie scene: Students watch a movie scene that contains requests and then determine what politeness strategy is employed in each request. They could also try to reformulate those requests in the movie scene in different language varieties.

Multiple choice: Instructor asks students to choose the appropriate politeness strategy for a number of requests (e.g., *Would it be possible to meet with you whenever it suits your schedule*: positive - negative - bald on record without redress.)

Discussion: Class comes together to discuss the use of politeness in the provided emails and how politeness is shown using all forms of communication (e.g., L1, L2, dialects, etc.).

4.1.3 Post-class

Composing an Email: Students compose an email request to a professor (e.g., *write an email to your instructor asking for a two-day extension for turning in your homework. You should write the letter twice, one in your L1 and the other in English*). Students maintain a face by using politeness strategies as explained in Brown and Levinson's framework. Instructor needs to give feedback to students in a timely manner and discuss the challenges that students might encounter in the next class.

4.2 Activity

4.2.1 Pre-class

Video sample: Students watch a short video on politeness and interaction (e.g., https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=T4UlxuNhNcQ)

4.2.2 During Class

Explaining: Instructor explains politeness strategies and how to use them in email correspondences. The instructor discusses topics including the definition of politeness, politeness strategies and how they could be used in an email.

Discussion: Students discuss politeness strategies across their L1, L2, and other language varieties with which they are familiar. That is, they can compare these different language forms to understand how politeness is expressed differently in various languages and cultures.

Role-play activity: Students divide themselves into pairs; one student pretends to be a college student, and the other pretends to be a college professor. The students spend 15 minutes where each student writes an email request in the L1, L2, or a dialect they know to

the other one asking for a letter of recommendation. They should try to be less direct by using a negative politeness strategy and avoid FTAs. That is, they need to maintain a positive and negative face and avoid potential imposition. They should include information, such as a subject line, an opening and a closing salutation (e.g., *Request for a Letter of Recommendation, Dear Dr…, Best, etc*.), off-record politeness strategy (e.g., *The letter is important for my application …*), and negative politeness strategy (e.g., *I was thinking if you could write a letter for me …)*.

Discussion: Following the role-play activity, the instructor brings the class back together to discuss any challenges or successes they experienced during the activity. This discussion can help reinforce the key concepts covered in the activity and allow students to reflect on their own learning.

4.2.3 Post-class

Online discussion board: Each student reflects on what they learned in class and what challenges they encountered when applying politeness strategies (e.g., challenges regarding being less direct and/or avoiding interference with a professor's freedom of actions).

4.3 Activity

4.3.1 Pre-class

Video samples: Instructor assigns a pre-class assignment where students watch a video (e.g., https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2_nNS8_DlOQ) to familiarize themselves with politeness strategies.

4.3.2 During Class

Raising awareness: Instructor introduces the framework of Brown and Levinson and elucidates its potential in aiding learners to comprehend the varying degrees of politeness present within the communication. Tangible instances are used to exemplify politeness strategies in students' L1 or L2. For instance, a student hypothetically makes a request by asking a professor to go over a point that seemed vague at first. This phrase may help soften the request: (e.g., Excuse me, professor. I'm not sure I understood this point correctly. Could you please explain it a bit more?).

Comparisons: Students compare politeness strategies provided by the instructor (e.g., bald on-record without redress vs bald on-record with redress). They can also compare how each strategy is employed in multiple language varieties.

Noticing: Instructor provides students with sample email correspondences, and the students should label the politeness strategies in each email. The students need to label off-record, negative, positive, and on-record baldly without redress in the given emails (e.g., *What politeness strategies are used in these requests? 1) Explain this exercise for me, I am wondering if you could help me on this matter, 2) I can't really get my head around the second point, etc*.) These requests need to be in various dialects to activate students' linguistic repertoire.

Writing: Instructor asks students to write requests in their L1 and L2 using politeness strategies (e.g., Using negative politeness, write one request in two different languages, language varieties, or registers you know; for example, Arabic (MSA or regional) and English (American English: southern American dialect, midland, AAVE, etc.).

4.3.3 Post-class

An Acceptability Judgment Test: Instructor creates about ten sentences that may or may not lack politeness in student-professor communication, and students decide which sentences are acceptable and which are not. In the next class, the class reviews the sentences and engages in a discussion about these sample sentences. The purpose is to establish a shared knowledge and enhance communication skills to better communicate messages with professors (e.g., *hey! I need to meet with you on Zoom next week. I would like to discuss the possibility of having a two-day extension on my assignment? etc.)*

5. Conclusion

Although EFL students may possess an appropriate linguistic competence to communicate, they may not have sufficient pragmatic knowledge to express their ideas in a courteous manner. As a result, they may unintentionally impose on their professors, leading to the risk of coming across as either excessively polite or disrespectful. In light of this, the current paper offers an integrated approach by combining the Linguistics Theory of Politeness, the Communicative Repertoire Approach, and the 3Ds to design a number of activities that could promote the pragmatic awareness of politeness among EFL students. This integrated framework is specifically tailored to college communication and advanced EFL learners, aiming to enhance their pragmatic competence in written communication with professors. However, in light of this integrated approach, it is necessary to recognize and address some inherent limitations. One of the main limitations of this paper is that it primarily addresses the teaching of politeness strategies in written communication, specifically email correspondences. Further research can explore the application of these strategies in other forms of communication, such as face-to-face interactions or online discussions. In this sense, investigating the effectiveness of incorporating politeness strategies in spoken English contexts would provide valuable insights into enhancing EFL learners' pragmatic competence. Another limitation is that the proposed teaching activities mainly target advanced EFL learners. Future studies can extend the scope of this research to include learners at different proficiency levels and explore how the teaching of politeness strategies can be adapted to meet the needs of diverse learner populations. Overall, it is highly recommended that practitioners, linguists, and second language acquisition researchers provide more thorough and specific description of politeness strategies in college communication. Such descriptions could support the creation of more efficient teaching strategies and instructional resources to raise the pragmatic competence of EFL students in academic settings.

Acknowledgments

I would like to acknowledge the University of Bisha, Saudi Arabia, for their generous sponsorship, and the University of Mississippi, USA, for its unwavering support during this research project. The resources and academic opportunities provided by both institutions have been instrumental in the successful completion of this study.

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