The influence of social distance and power in email politeness in an academic context[*]

La influencia de la distancia social y el poder en la cortesía del correo electrónico en un contexto académico

Victòria Codina-Espurz

Universitat Jaume I

codina@uji.es

Abstract: *This study examined the influence of social and power distance on students' preferences of openings and closings and requestive strategies used when sending an email in an academic context. Students were more conventionally indirect with a person of higher power and greater social distance as well as when writing to their peers. However, email directness increased in emails to a faculty member with whom they maintain a closer social distance despite their status-unequal relationship. Familiarity with a higher-up may give students the authority to relinquish the sociopragmatic norms they, otherwise, would use in social-distant and power-unequal communication.*

Keywords*:* email, requests, openings, closings, (im)politeness, (in)appropriateness

Resumen: *Este estudio examina la influencia de la distancia social y de poder en la elección de las aperturas y cierres, así como las estrategias de petición de los estudiantes universitarios al enviar un correo electrónico en un contexto académico. Los estudiantes resultaron ser más convencionalmente indirectos con una persona de mayor poder y mayor distancia social así como en los mensajes a sus compañeros. Sin embargo, la cortesía disminuyó en los correos electrónicos al profesor. La familiaridad con un superior puede dar a los estudiantes la autoridad para renunciar a las normas sociopragmáticas que, de otro modo, usarían en una comunicación social distante y desigual poder.*

Palabras clave: correo electrónico, peticiones, aperturas, cierres (des)cortesía, (in)adecuación

1. Introduction

Nowadays, most of the communication that takes place worldwide is computer-mediated, especially in academic contexts. Over time, email writing has replaced face-to-face interaction in this type of settings. Engaging in email communication with a faculty member tends to be less threatening because it initially reduces the burden of having to communicate face-to-face to an interlocutor of a perceived higher status. However, this may lead students to use fewer politeness strategies (Deveci and Hmida, 2017) as the social

---

perceptions we observe in face-to-face communication seem to vanish when we communicate electronically. Therefore, how an email message is encoded and organized becomes essential, mainly in status-unequal communication, as paralinguistic cues, which are present in face-to-face communication, are not available in email writing (Chen, 2006). Despite having more time to organize their writing, students do not seem to take advantage of the asynchronous nature of email communication (Codina-Espurz and Salazar-Campillo, 2019a). In a globalized world where much of the communication relies on instant messaging, email writing has adopted the same spontaneous, immediate, and unplanned characteristics. As a result, faculty members may express concerns about the directness of the messages they receive or the inappropriateness of such messages given the nature of the academic context and the social distance between students and professors. As Briz (2014, p. 77) states, email communication, mainly among young adults, reflects "hybridization phenomena". This explains why many emails, although they are written, may display features of informal speech. Given this hybrid nature, online communication should be conceived within the discourse continuum defined by the poles of communicative *proximity* and communicative *distance* (Kotzur, 2015), which have been related to a more colloquial vs. formal use of language (Briz, 2014; Mancera Rueda and Pano Alamán, 2014; Pano Alamán and Mancera Rueda, 2020). The reality, however, is that email writing turns into an even more challenging task, for non-native speakers (NNSs), whose linguistic and pragmalinguistic competence in the L2 may be limited.

In the last few years, we have witnessed a proliferation of studies on request emails in academic settings. Most studies have focused on student-professor communication, but few on student-student interaction in an academic context. Thus, the present study attempts to address this gap by exploring students' email requests to peers and interlocutors with a greater social and power distance in a university context.

2. Background to the study
2.1. Research on email requests

A great number of studies have focused on how requests are performed in emails in academic contexts. Some of these studies have explored the pragmalinguistic realizations of requestive emails among NNSs of English (Zarei and Mohammadi, 2012; Alcón-Soler, 2015; Tseng, 2015; Burgucu-Tazegül *et al*., 2016), while others have compared how native speakers (NSs) and NNSs differ in request performance (Bloch, 2002; Chen, 2006; Biesenbach-Lucas, 2007; Economidou-Kogetsidis, 2011; Alcón-Soler, 2013; Deveci and Hmida, 2017).

Biesenbach-Lucas (2007) examined NS and NNS students' e-politeness of high- and low-imposition requests to faculty and found a tendency for directness mainly in low-imposition requests, which indicated that students were aware of situational factors and tackled emails to faculty differently

according to different request goals. Likewise, Félix-Brasdefer (2012a) reported that students resorted to direct strategies with lower impositive requests (e.g., for information or verification) while conventionally indirect strategies in the form of query preparatory were preferred in highly imposition email requests, which also involved a higher degree of internal modifications to account for politeness. In a study on the pragmatic competence of two different proficiency groups of Taiwanese English-as-a-foreign-language (EFL) students, Tseng (2015) claimed that both groups tended to produce more direct strategies although the higher-proficiency group displayed a wider range of internal and external modifiers.

On the contrary, other studies have reported a preference for conventionally indirect request strategies in emails. Pan (2012) analyzed email request production and perception by NSs and NNSs of English in a Chinese university by means of Discourse Completion Tasks (DCTs). Regardless of cultural background, this author reported a greater preference for query preparatory in power-unequal requests, although NSs were more skillful in using a variety of hints and direct strategies. In a data-elicited study in an Iranian university context, Zarei and Mohammadi (2012) stated that EFL students displayed a greater number of conventionally-indirect strategies in requests for action, but resorted to more direct strategies in requests for information to faculty. Professors' perceptions of the email requests were also assessed, which indicated that such directness, the omission of openings and closings, or inappropriate forms of address contributed to potential pragmatic failure.

Overall, comparative studies have revealed that NNSs' email politeness tended to differ from that of NSs. Moreover, many of these studies concluded that emails addressed to faculty members are pragmatically inappropriate in face of the norms that NSs would apply. In many instances, these differences can be attributed to different learners' L1 sociocultural norms, which results in inappropriate and impolite email writing.

2.2. Opening and closing in emails

In an academic setting, formality should be the norm when writing an email to a faculty member (Sifianou, 2013). Despite globalization, what seems to hold true is that this expected and/or desirable degree of formality is by no means universal, as it may vary across different cultures. Eslami (2013) pointed out that when dealing with students from different cultural backgrounds, one should take into consideration that politeness norms might vary, and, therefore, the student-professor power distance may differ from culture to culture, especially among cultural groups with different politeness systems like Western and Eastern societies (Chen, 2006; Chen *et al.*, 2013). In a study on politeness, Eslami (2013) analyzed the pragmatic choices Iranian and American university students made in opening and closing emails. Her findings revealed that NNSs

opted for greater deference and variety of moves as well as longer sequences when opening and closing an email. The author claimed that these differences signaled a different communication style attributed to the students' cultural background. This finding suggests that NNSs may not necessarily modify their writing style when sending emails in English, and that they may opt for choices that reflect their own cultural norms. In a study on openings and closings in emails written by Spanish university students in Spanish and English, Salazar-Campillo (2018) claimed that students tended to phrase openings with a greeting and the professor's first name in both languages, which corroborated the L1 influence when writing in the L2. However, this lack of formality was not present in closings as students opted for more appropriate deference to the professor. Similarly, Félix-Brasdefer (2012b) examined openings and closings in emails produced by American university students in both English and Spanish and observed a large degree of pragmalinguistic variation. For example, students produced more formal openings in the L2, but used informal greetings in the L1, whereas closings tended to be more formal.

Cross-cultural differences may account for the variability in formality and directness. Cultural preference for informality, mainly in opening sequences was observed by Salazar-Campillo and Codina-Espurz (2018) in a study of politeness in first-occurrence and follow-up emails to faculty. As these authors claimed, the familiarity in the use of salutations was attributed to a transfer of the L1 Spanish norms on how to address a professor. Moreover, the relaxed attitude towards politeness observed in follow-ups portrayed a dialogic and conversational format rather than the epistolary style that could be expected in written communication.

Since contextual variables such as social distance (close vs. distant) and power distance (equal vs. unequal status) may affect the degree of politeness the sender has to exhibit to save face with the addressee, the present study intends to determine to what extent these two contextual variables influence the pragmalinguistic choices students make when writing an email. In order to do so, request preferences in emails sent by students of English to several addressees (i.e., a professor, a classmate and the director of a school) will be analyzed in this paper.

3. The study
3.1. Data and participants

Data consisted of 60 emails collected from 20 female Spanish students enrolled at a Spanish university. To control for a possible gender effect, male students were not included in the present study. Half of the students were in their last year of the English Studies degree and the other half in their first year of their master's program. They all had at least an upper intermediate level of English (B2) according to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR).

3.2. Data collection

The participants were asked to write an email in English to three different recipients (i.e., a professor, a classmate and the director of a school) asking each addressee to do something for them in an academic context (i.e., *requests for action*).

In order to control for the contextual variables of social and power distance between the interlocutors, three different scenarios were devised (see *Fig. 1*). Although the emails were elicited, the requests students posed in their emails dealt with real academic matters (i.e., revise a paper, sign a learning agreement, grant permission to observe a class) and mirrored tasks students could perform in a real academic context at any time. Actually, in scenario 1, students had to ask their professor to digitally sign their learning agreement, a prerequisite for starting a placement at a school. In scenario 2, learners were prompted to ask a classmate, who was a NS of English, to revise a course paper for linguistic inaccuracies. Finally, in scenario 3, learners had to ask the director of an international school about the possibility of conducting a class observation task at her school. The tasks were controlled for time to comply with the request and gender (i.e., a female recipient as well).

Scenario	Addresser	Social distance	Social power
1	Professor	close	unequal
2	Classmate	close	equal
3	Director of a school	distant	unequal

Fig. 1: Features of the three email scenarios

3.3. Data analysis

In order to assess request politeness, (in)directness of the request realizations as well as email openings and closings were examined.

Following previous models of analysis (e.g., Blum-Kulka and Olshtain 1984; Trosborg, 1995), request head acts were classified as *Direct*, *Conventionally Indirect* and *Non-conventionally Indirect* or hints. Yet, as in most studies on emails requests (Lin, 2009; Economidou-Kogetsidis, 2011; Lundell and Erman, 2012; Shim, 2013; Tseng, 2015, to name a few), coding schemes may vary as they are adapted to fit the data.

Our data revealed five types of Direct request strategies: *Imperatives* (the illocutionary force is signaled by the mood of the verb), *obligation* (the sender explicitly states the obligation to carry out the act), *performative hedged* (the illocutionary force is explicitly named and the performative verb is in the past or conditional to mitigate the request), *want/need statements* (the sender expresses her demand or need for the recipient to carry out the action requested), *like/appreciation statements* (the sender expresses her desire or gratitude for the recipient to carry out the act).

Conventionally indirect strategies were realized by *query preparatory*, which express the preparatory condition (i.e., ability, possibility, willingness or permission) of the act to be performed.

As for non-conventionally indirect strategies, Blum-Kulka and Olshtain (1984) distinguished between *strong* and *mild hints*; however, this distinction is not made in the present study, and only the category *hint*, was included.

The level of directness in which the request is encoded is related to the degree of pragmatic clarity. The use of direct strategies, although unambiguous, has usually been related to a lack of politeness. Likewise, the use of a hint, which is the most indirect strategy, is also associated to lack of politeness in request production due to its ambiguity or deficient pragmatic clarity.

Examples of the different request strategies found in the present study are provided in *Fig. 2* below.

DIRECT	
Imperative (mood derivable)	*Please, **send me** the learning agreement signed.*
Obligation	***You need to sign** the learning agreement as soon as possible.*
Performative hedged	***I wanted to ask** you if you could revise my paper.*
Want /Need statements	***I need to observe** some lessons in your school.*
Like/Appreciation statements	***I would like to observe** a classroom in your school for a week.*
CONVENTIONALLY-INDIRECT	
Query preparatory	
Ability	***Could you have a look** at my paper?*
Possibility	***Could it be possible** to attend some lessons in your school?*
Permission	***Could you let me visit** your classes?*
Willingness	***Would you read** my paper?*
NON-CONVENTIONALLY INDIRECT	
Hint	*I was wondering whether I should start the practicum.*

Fig. 1: Request realizations in the present study

In order to analyze the level of formality of openings and closings, Salazar-Campillo and Codina-Espurz's (2018) typology for the analysis of openings and closings was used (see Appendix A). Within openings, the authors distinguish three moves: *Salutation*, which may include a greeting expression/term of deference (GE) and an address term (title/first name/last name), *Pleasantry* (i.e., a polite social comment to establish communication with the recipient), and the *Identification of self*.

Three moves are also distinguished within closings: *Pre-closing statement, Complimentary close, and Signature.* Pre-closings signal the readiness to start signing off, and make reference to the email request by expressing, for example, gratitude (i.e., *Thanks in advance.*), or appeal (i.e., *Looking forward to hearing from you.*). Expressions such as *Thanks* or *Regards*, defined as "seemingly innocuous

polite words" (Scheyder 2003, p. 28), which appear to be even more routinized were analyzed as complimentary closes. The last move, *Signature,* was analyzed in terms of whether the sender signs the email by using her first, last name, or omits the signature altogether.

4. Results and discussion
4.1. (In)directness of students' email request strategies

Overall, learners seemed to opt for indirectness when asking someone to do something for them, as *Fig. 3* illustrates.
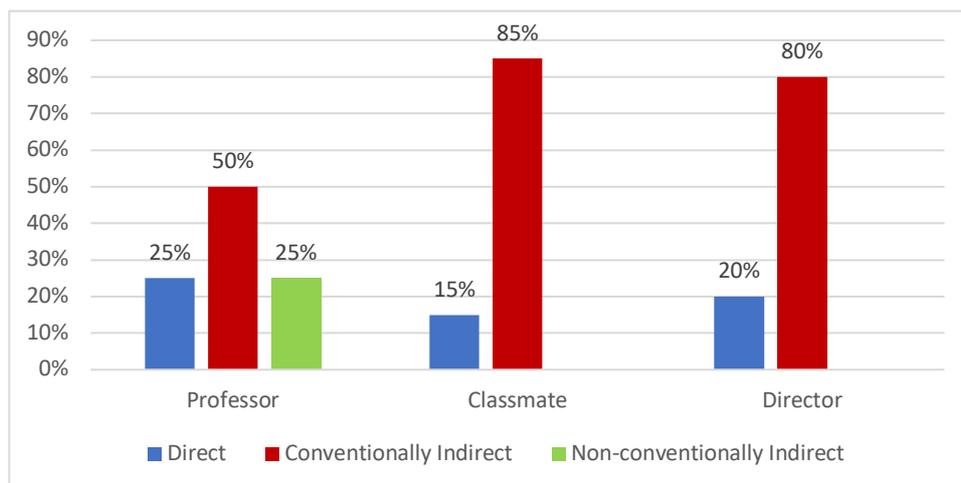

Fig. 3: Distribution of request strategies in the three situations

Although many studies on email requests have claimed a tendency for directness, in line with other studies (e.g., Pan, 2012; Zarei and Mohammadi, 2012), our results revealed a preference for conventionally indirect strategies realized by query preparatory. Actually, query preparatory strategies were highly produced in power-equal requests to a classmate (85%) as well as in power-unequal student-school director emails (80%), but much less frequent in student-professor (50%) requests for action.

As *Fig. 4* shows, the direct strategies of imperative and obligation only occurred in emails addressed to the professor, which seems quite inappropriate considering the social power asymmetry between students and faculty. However, in this particular situation, to have the learning agreement signed by the professor was a prerequisite for the student's placement. Given the professor's obligation to sign the document could may have signaled an authority by students to be bold about asking a faculty member to fulfill her obligation.

	Professor	Classmate	Director
DIRECT	25%	15%	20%
Imperative (mood derivable)	5%		
Obligation	15%		
Performative hedged		5%	
Want /Need statements	5%	5%	10%
Like/Appreciation statements		5%	10%
CONVENTIONALLY-INDIRECT			
Query preparatory	50%	85%	80%
Ability	35%	65%	10%
Possibility	5%	5%	30%
Permission			20%
Willingness	10%	15%	20%
NON-CONVENTIONALLY INDIRECT			
Hint	25%		

Fig. 4: Distribution of sub-strategies

In contrast, non-conventionally indirect strategies in the form of mild hints (25%) were only produced in email requests addressed to the professor as well. The argument here could be the opposite. Students may feel uncomfortable when having to ask a faculty member to fulfill one of her duties and opt for evasiveness to save face.

In emails to the professor, due to the nature of the request, half of the students opted for being either very direct (25%) or evasive (25%) while the other half displayed more appropriate and polite conventionally indirect strategies (50%) to fulfill their requestive goal.

The high frequency of conventionally indirect strategies in email requests sent to the director of school was expected and denotes a preference for politeness in a situation characterized by a higher social and power distance between the interlocutors. However, it is interesting to note that students resorted to a higher degree of politeness with their peers. This may indicate that they are aware of their high imposing request and try to compensate their imposition by being as polite as possible.

4.2. Openings and closings

Politeness is also conveyed by the choices the sender makes regarding how to open and sign off an email. Results indicated that all students used an opening formula in their emails in the three situations (see *Fig. 5*). These were in the form of a GE + FN in all emails to classmate and two thirds of the emails to faculty, whereas 75% of students used the more appropriate formula of GE + T + LN when writing to the director of the school.

Salutation: Greeting expression/deference term + Address term (title/first name/last name)	Professor	Classmate	Director
GE + T + FN + LN			5%
GE + T + LN	5%		75%
GE + T	15%		
GE + FN	65%	100%	5%
GE	15%		15%
Pleasantry	5%	45%	
Identification of self	10%	5%	95%

Fig. 5: Distribution of opening moves

Contrary to other studies (Economidou-Kogetsidis, 2016), the use of the informal opening formula GE + FN in emails to the professor should be interpreted in the context of a Spanish university where the professor-student relationship, although of unequal status, is not perceived as distant. The omission of a title may be regarded as totally inappropriate in student email communication to faculty in many countries (Economidou-Kogetsidis, 2011), but students may be simply transferring the L1 Spanish pragmatic norms and adopt a more familiar style in English. When writing to the school director, the higher frequency of openings phrased as Salutation + T + LN (75%) could indicate that students know the socio-cultural norms of how to address a person with higher social distance and tended to be more formal. However, the same deference is usually not maintained with a faculty member in accordance to the academic norms of the Spanish university context.

Forty-five percent of the emails to classmate included a pleasantry. It is interesting to note that this polite social remark intended to establish social contact was almost exclusively used in emails to peers. On the other hand, as expected, 95% of students resorted to the identification-of-self move in emails to the director given the high social distance with the email addressee.

With regard to closings (see *Fig. 6*), a higher number of students included pre-closing statements in emails sent to the director (85%) followed by the professor (70%), which contrasts with the smaller number of students (35%) who used a pre-closing statement in emails addressed to a peer. The greater frequent use of this closing move with a person of higher status and social distance could be interpreted as a sign of a higher degree of formality. In some cases, mostly in emails sent to the director, students opted for two pre-closing statements, usually, gratitude and appeal (e.g., *Thank you for your time. I look forward to hearing from you soon*.). Pre-closings expressing gratitude were used in all three scenarios whereas apology only in emails to the professor. Students may feel awkward to have to pose a legitimate request, hence the need to apologize to save face.

CLOSINGS			
	Professor	Classmate	Director
Pre-closing statement	70%	35%	85%
Apology	10.5% (2/19)		
Gratitude	63.2% (12/19)	100% (7/7)	48% (12/25)
Appeal	26.3% (5/19)		52% (13/25)
Complimentary close	75%	80%	70%
(Best, Kind)Regards	45% (9/20)		70% (14/20)
Thank you/Thanks	30% (6/20)	80% (16/20)	
Ø	25% (5/20)	20% (4/20)	30% (6/20)
Signature			
FN	55% (11/20)	45% (9/20)	60% (12/20)
FN + LN	15% (3/20)	15% (3/20)	20% (4/20)
Ø	30% (6/20)	40% (8/20)	20% (4/20)

Fig. 6: Distribution of closing moves

In line with other studies (Hallajian and David, 2014; Salazar-Campillo and Codina-Espurz, 2018), different forms of *Regards* and *Thanks* were the preferred complimentary closing moves in this study. *Regards* was the only form used in mails to the director (70%) and slightly less used in emails to the professor (45%), which could be interpreted as a sign of formality towards a stranger and/or a superior. In scenario 2, a different pattern emerged as students opted for a more casual *Thanks* (80%) or no closing (20%) at all. As Scheyder (2003) claims, social distance between the sender and the receiver may affect the choice of the complimentary closing move, thus the preference for *Regards* with the director or *Thanks* with peers. Yet a considerable number of students omitted a complimentary formula in emails to the professor (25%) and to the director (30%), which denotes lack of politeness, mainly when writing to a person of higher status and/or greater social distance.

As for signing emails, students favored the FN formula or adopted a very "relaxed" attitude and omitted the signature altogether. Especially in email requests to the director, this way of signing the email does not seem appropriate considering the social distance between the student and the email recipient, which again denotes lack of politeness especially in status-unequal email requests. The omission of any closing move is interpreted as a lack of e-politeness, mainly in emails to a stranger and /or a person of higher status.

Due to their lower power status, students would be expected to use more mitigating devices in their requests and higher level of deference when sending an email to their professor or the director of the school. In these situations, formality and politeness should be enhanced given the power and/or social distance with the interlocutors.

5. Conclusion

Students in the present study used more indirect strategies in status-equal than in asymmetrical communication with their professor. Although the level of directness was higher in mails to faculty, the more appropriate use of indirectness in emails to the director of the school may indicate that students are aware, to a certain extent, of how they should communicate in a status-unequal situation even though they do not maintain the same standard with the professor as a result of the type of request (the professor's obligation) and social distance (close relationship). Thus, familiarity with a higher-up may give students the authority to relinquish the sociopragmatic norms they, otherwise, would use in social-distant and power-unequal communication. Moreover, the greater use of direct request strategies to a faculty member may be explained by the nature of the request goal and the contextual situation where the participants' roles and obligations are clearly defined (Biesenbach-Lucas, 2007). Thus, the professor's obligation to sign a learning agreement gives students more power to exhort their academic demands.

The findings in this study also suggest that students may be transferring their L1 sociocultural norms when writing in the L2, which may lead to pragmatic failure (Tseng, 2016). However, in the Spanish context, the student-faculty relationships are not as distant, therefore, the use of more formal forms of address (i.e., title + professor's last name) may sound unnatural.

In the present study, contrary to what was expected, the higher number of politeness devices used in emails addressed to the classmate seemed to indicate that students were more concerned with minimizing the classmate's negative face than that of their professor's or the unknown school-director's. Although the three scenarios were devised considering a request for action, in view of the results, students probably did not see the three requests as having the same degree of imposition. The higher production of direct request strategies in emails addressed to the professor may indicate that the request was perceived as low- rather than high-impositive. Students could have perceived the request as a simple academic transaction between them and the faculty member, which could explain the low concern for indirectness in this situation and in enhancing politeness. Therefore, besides considering the nature of the task, our findings suggest that imposition should be assessed by taking into account how a request is perceived by both the sender and the receiver of the email request. Moreover, the lower concern for mitigation in emails to a higher-up may reveal that students could have perceived their requests as a mere transaction, whereas when writing to a peer, they may be interested in maintaining their social relationship as much as obtaining their goal.

The fact that the most direct forms of requests have been found in the present study could be attributed to the use of data collection elicitation techniques. Some of the instances present in elicited data do not frequently occur in real student-faculty interaction, as they may sound too harsh and

inappropriate in a real academic context. However, as pointed out earlier, the requestive goal in scenario 1, could justify the use of such direct forms. One of the limitations of the present study is that data were elicited; therefore, results could vary when spontaneous emails are analyzed. Actually, some of the more direct strategies did not appear in a study by Codina-Espurz and Salazar-Campillo (2019a) with natural data. The more genuine and personal interest students have in spontaneous emails sent to faculty may yield different results from elicited emails (Chen *et al.*, 2015).

Many researchers (Tseng, 2015; Burgucu-Tazegül *et al.*, 2016; Deveci and Hmid, 2017) have highlighted the need for instruction in e-politeness, especially when mere exposure to the L2 may not be enough for the learner's interlanguage pragmatic development as certain politeness devices may not be present in the learner's L1 (Tseng, 2015; 2016). The lack of formality evident in the omission of closing moves, for example, calls for the role of instruction in e-politeness, as many of these issues may not be adequately addressed in many L2 textbooks (Scheyder, 2013). As Scheyder (2003, p. 27) claims, it is not easy, even for the advanced learner, to find the balance between "appropriate tone and style" in email writing. Thus, some pedagogical proposals have been advanced to tackle the development of pragmatic competence (Krulatz, 2014; Codina-Espurz and Salazar-Campillo, 2019b), especially in email requests, as inappropriate email writing may negatively contribute to pragmatic failure, affect the receiver's perception of the sender and jeopardize her relationship with the email recipient.

Bibliography

Alcón-Soler, E. (2013). Mitigating email requests in teenagers' first and second language academic cyber-consultation. *Multilingua*, *32*, 779-799.

Alcón-Soler, E. (2015). Instruction and pragmatic change during study abroad in email communication. *Innovation in Language Learning and Teaching*, *9*(1), 34-45. https://doi.org/10.1080/17501229.2014.995763

Biesenbach-Lucas, S. (2007). Students writing emails to faculty: An examination of e-politeness among native and non-native speakers of English. *Language Learning and Technology*, *11*(2), 59-81. http://llt.msu.edu/vol11num2/biesenbachlucas/

Bloch, J. (2002). Student/teacher interaction via email: the social context of Internet discourse. *Journal of Second Language Writing*, *11*, 117-134. https://doi.org/10.1016/S1060-3743(02)00064-4

Blum-Kulka, S. and Olshtain, E. (1984). Requests and apologies: A cross-cultural study of speech act realization patterns (CCSARP). *Applied Linguistics*, *5*(3), 196-213. https://doi.org/10.1093/applin/5.3.196

Briz, A. (2014). Hablar electrónicamente por escrito. *CHIMERA. Romance Corpora and Linguistics Studies*, *1*, 77-89.

Burgucu-Tazegül, A., Han, T., and Engin, A.O. (2016). Pragmatic failure of Turkish EFL learners in request emails to their professors. *International Education Studies, 9*(10), 105-115.

Chen, C-F. E. (2006). The development of email literacy: From writing to peers to writing to authority figures. *Language Learning & Technology*, *10*(2), 35-55. http://llt.msu.edu/vol10num2/chen/

Chen, R., He, L., and Hu, C. (2013). Chinese requests: In comparison to American and Japanese requests and with reference to the "East-West divide". *Journal of Pragmatics*, 55, 140-161. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pragma.2013.05.012

Codina-Espurz, V. and Salazar-Campillo, P. (2019a) Student-to-faculty Consultation in English, Spanish and Catalan in an Academic Context. In P. Salazar-Campillo and V. Codina-Espurz (Eds.), *Investigating the Learning of Pragmatics across Ages and Contexts* (pp. 196-217). Brill.

Codina-Espurz, V. and Salazar-Campillo, P. (2019b). Openings and closings in emails by CLIL students: A pedagogical proposal. *English Language Teaching*, *12*(2), 57- 67. https://doi.org/10.5539/elt.v12n2p57

Deveci, T. and Hmida, I.B. (2017). The request speech act in emails by Arab university students in the UAE. *Journal of Language and Linguistic Studies*, 13 (1), 194-214.

Economidou-Kogetsidis, M. (2011). "Please answer me as soon as possible": Pragmatic failure in non-native speakers' email request to faculty. *Journal of Pragmatics*, *43*, 3193-3215. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pragma.2011.06.006

Economidou-Kogetsidis, M. (2016). Variation in evaluations of the (im)politeness of emails from L2 learners and perceptions of the

personality of their senders. *Journal of Pragmatics*, *106*, 1-19. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pragma.2016.10.001

Eslami, Z. R. (2013). Online communication and students' pragmatic choices in English. *Lodz Papers in Pragmatics*, *9*(1), 71-92.

Félix-Brasdefer, C. (2012a). Email Requests to Faculty. In M. Economidou-Kogetsidis and H. Woodfield (Eds.), *Interlanguage Request Modifications* (pp. 87-118). John Benjamins.

Félix-Brasdefer, C. (2012b). Email Openings and Closings: Pragmalinguistic and Gender Variation in Learner-Instruction Cyber Consultation. In E. Alcón-Soler and P. Safont-Jordà (Eds.), *Discourse and Language Learning across L2 Instructional Settings* (pp. 223-248.). Rodopi.

Hallajian, A. and David, M. K. (2014). "Hello and good day to you dear Dr…." Greetings and closings in supervisors-supervisees email exchanges. *Procedia. Social and Behavioral Sciences*, *118*, 85-93. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2014.02.012

Kotzur, G. (2015). Nothing but "typed talk"? Analysing discourse in computer-mediated communication by employing Koch and Oesterreicher's framework model. *Münchener Beiträge zur Allgemeinen und Historischen Sprachwissenschaft*, *4*, 46-56.

Krulatz, A. (2014). Integrating pragmatics instruction in a content-based classroom. ORTESOL Journal, 31, 19-25.

Lin, H-Y. (2009). Query preparatory modals: Cross-linguistic and cross-situational variations in request modification. *Journal of Pragmatics, 41*, 1636-1656. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pragma.2008.12.007

Lundell, F. F. and Erm, B. (2012). High-level requests: A study of long residency L2 users of English and French and native speakers. *Journal of Pragmatics*, *44*, 756-775. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pragma.2012.02.010

Mancera Rueda, A. and Pano Alamán, A. (2014). Las redes sociales como corpus de estudios para el análisis del discurso mediado por ordenador. In S. López Poza and N. Pena Sueiro (Eds.), Humanidades Digitales: desafíos, logros y perspectivas de futuro. *Janus: Estudios sobre el Siglo de Oro*, Anexo 1, 305-315.

Pan, P.C. (2012). Interlanguage Requests in Institutional E-mail Discourse. In M. Economidou-Kogetsidis and H. Woodfield (Eds.), *Interlanguage Request Modification* (pp.119-162). John Benjamins.

Pano Alamán, A. and Mancera Rueda, A. (2020). Introdución..*Cuadernos AISPI. Estudios de Lenguas y Literaturas Hipánicas*, *16*(2), 9-23. http://dx.doi.org/10.14672/2.2020.1707

Salazar-Campillo, P. (2018). Student-initiated email communication: An analysis of openings and closings by Spanish EFL learners. *Sintagma*: *revista de lingüística*, *30*, 81-93. https://doi.org/10.21001/sintagma.2018.30.05

Salazar-Campillo, P. and Codina-Espurz, V. (2018). Politeness in First and Follow-up Emails to Faculty: Openings and Closings. In A. Sánchez-Hernández and A. Herráiz-Martínez (Eds.), *Learning Second Language Pragmatics beyond Traditional Contexts*. Peter Lang.

Scheyder, E. C. (2003). The use of complimentary closing in e-mail: American English examples. *Working Papers in Educational Linguistics*, *19*(1), 27-42. https://works.bepress.com/elizabeth_scheyder/1/

Shim, Y-S. (2013). Requests in student-to-professor emails of Korean EFL students. *English Language and Linguistics, 19*(3), 171-194. https://doi.org/10.17960/ell.2013.19.3.008

Sifianou, M. (2013). The impact of globalisation on politeness and impoliteness. *Journal of Pragmatics*. 55, 86-102. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pragma.2013.05.016

Trosborg, A. (1995). *Interlanguage pragmatics: Requests, complaints and apologies*. Mouton de Gruyter.

Tseng, C-T. H. (2015). "You must let me pass, please!": An investigation of email request strategies by Taiwanese EFL learners. *Journal of ELT and Applied linguistics* (JETAL), *3*(1), 11-28.

Tseng, C-T. H. (2016). E-politeness: An analysis of Taiwanese EFL learners' email discourse on request strategies. *International Journal for 21st Century Education*, 3 (Special Issue 'Language Learning and Teaching'), 35-62. http://hdl.handle.net/10396/17513

Zarei, G.R. and Mohammadi, M. (2012). E-politeness in Iranian English electronic requests to the faculty. *Research in Applied Linguistics* (RALS), *3*(1), 3-24.

Appendix A: Typology for the analysis of opening and closing moves (Salazar-Campillo and Codina-Espurz, 2018)

OPENINGS						
	A	Salutation: Greeting expression + Address term				Example
		Code	Greeting/ term of deference	Title	First name	Last name	
1.	GE+T+FN+LN	X	X	X	X	*Dear Dr.* (professor's first name and last name)
2.	GE+T+LN	X	X		X	*Dear Dr.* (professor's last name)
3.	GE+T+FN	X	X	X		*Dear Dr.* (professor's first name)
4.	T+FN+LN		X	X	X	*Dr.* (professor's first name and last name)
5.	T+LN		X		X	*Dr.* (professor's last name)
6.	T+FN		X	X		*Dr.* (professor's first name)
7.	GE+T	X	X			*Dear Professor*
8.	T		X			*Professor*
9.	GE+FN+LN	X		X	X	*Dear* (professor's first name and last name)
10.	GE+LN	X			X	*Dear* (professor's last name)
11.	GE+FN	X		X		*Dear/Hello* (professor's first name)
12.	GE	X				*Hello, Good afternoon,*
13.	FN+LN			X	X	(professor's first name and last name)
14.	LN				X	(professor's last name)
15.	FN			X		(professor's first name)
16.	Ø	-	-	-	-	(no Salutation)
	B.	Pleasantry					*I hope this email finds you well.*
	C.	Identification of self					sender's identification

Note: the first four unlabelled columns in the data rows above correspond to "Degree of formality" (+ / -) running vertically for section A, with row numbers in column A.

CLOSINGS		
A.	Pre-closing statement	Examples
	Gratitude	*Thank you for your help/your answer*
	Appeal	*Looking forward to hearing from you*
	Hope/wish	*I hope I can register in your class.*
	Apology	*Sorry for the inconvenience*
B	Complimentary close	*Regards/Thanks/Have a nice day*
C.	Signature	Student's first name and/or last name(s)