

Maria Economidou-Kogetsidis, Milica Savic, and Nicola Halenko (eds.),
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Email Pragmatics and Second Language Learners, edited by Maria Economidou-Kogetsidis, Milica Savic, and Nicola Halenko, consists of nine chapters authored by well-known scholars in the field of second language (L2) pragmatics and Computer Mediated Communication (CMC). After two decades with numerous studies focusing on email communication, this volume provides very insightful studies and thoughts for both future teaching and research practices in the field. Nowadays, writing emails to people from different social and cultural backgrounds has become a common activity among people around the world. However, as the editors claim in the introductory chapter, knowing how to write pragmatically appropriate emails is not an easy task for L2 learners, especially if textbooks or course curricula do not devote enough time to teaching how to carry out such a daily activity in the current societies. In addition to this difficulty, many factors may also interfere in the process of choosing what is most appropriate when emailing others, such as first language (L1) transfer or age generation gaps, among others. Altogether, emailing might become a challenging task not only when interacting with native speakers (Nss), but also with multilingual speakers (as in the case of English as a Lingua Franca or as an International Language). The chapters of the volume are organized into two main sections. Part I, *Email literacy and pragmatic development*, consists of four chapters which aim to understand the difficulties that learners may encounter in staff-students interactions through emails. Part II (with five chapters), *Relational practices in email communication*, examines the importance of how contextual, social and cultural variables affect the pragmatic appropriateness in email performance.

Chapter 1, *Reformulation on Chinese EFL learners' email literacy*, authored by Yuan-shan Chen and Chin-Ting Liu, aims to investigate the effects of reformulation on L2 email literacy development by means of a multistage task. The study is carried out through a case study with two L1 Mandarin high-intermediate learners of English, who were asked to collaboratively write an email to express their interest in applying for a job position. Then, their email was sent to a NS for reformulation, and another NS was asked to write a model email with the same topic. In the following phase, the learners were asked to analyze examples of emails with guidance written by learners together with reformulation made by Nss (taken from Cohen 1989). Then, the learners were given their original emails and were asked to compare them to the reformulated one as well as to the NS model and identify differences between them. Finally, they had to

revise on their own and individually their first email. Findings indicate that learners mainly focus on pragmalinguistic aspects, as well as use a wider variety of pragmalinguistic forms in the posttest. This suggests that both the reformulations and the NS model are beneficial for learners' L2 pragmatic learning. The study provides teachers with ideas for developing similar didactic units with other pragmatic moves, as it also opens doors to further investigate the effects of reformulation in L2 pragmatic learning.

In a study on emails of complaints, Thi Thuy Minh Nguyen and Thi Than Thuy Pham, Chapter 2, *Strategy use by low and high proficiency learners of English as a foreign language*, explore through a computerized discourse completion test (DCT), the effects of proficiency on the pragmatic strategies used in such type of emails by Vietnamese English as a foreign language (EFL) learners. Furthermore, the authors also examine the cognitive processes students go through while performing the speech act of complaint in emails. Regarding proficiency, findings report no statistically significant differences in the strategies used; however, it is noted that higher proficiency learners seem to use a wider repertoire than lower proficiency learners. Think-aloud protocols demonstrate that high proficiency learners seem to focus more on pragmatic aspects than lower proficiency students. This chapter certainly contributes not only to the research of email interaction, but also to the study of the effects of proficiency on pragmatic learning, which still requires further investigation.

Chapter 3 supports the benefits of pragmatic instruction in the long run. Esther Usó-Juan, in *Long-term instructional effects on learners' use of email request modifiers*, examines the development of request modification in Spanish EFL learners by following the 6Rs approach: Researching, Reflecting, Receiving, Reasoning, Rehearsing and Revising. In line with previous studies, this chapter shows the positive effects of instruction as seen in the posttest and delayed posttest (i.e. higher amount of modifiers, wider variety of both internal and external modifiers), but that some seem to be easier than others to learn. In addition to these results, it should be highlighted the detailed description the author provides per each session, which will undoubtedly help teachers in applying the 6Rs approach in their lessons and other researchers to replicate or to carry out similar studies following this approach.

Chapter 4 (*Experts and novices: Examining academic email requests to faculty and the developmental change during stay abroad*) closes Part I of the book. Nicola Halenko and Lisa Winder explore email requests to faculty by comparing L1 (English) expert writers and Chinese L2 English learners' emails, as well as the development of the learners' email after a stay abroad (SA) experience. The results go in line with previous literature, showing that expert writers opt for indirectness, as opposed to novice learners, who prefer the use of more

direct strategies. Regarding modification, L2 learners did not seem to benefit from the experience, since they mainly overused the mitigator *please*, which at the end of the stay its use was more similar to an aggravator than to a softener. As opposed to previous studies on the effects of SA on pragmatic learning, the current study reports no effects of such experience on the development of requests.

Part 2 of the volume begins with Wei Ren and Wenjie Liu's study entitled *Phatic communion in Chinese students' gratitude emails in English: Production and perception* (Chapter 5). On the one hand, the authors explore the strategies used in gratitude emails by Chinese L2 learners of English at different proficiency levels. Findings reveal that learners use very similar strategies, leading to the conclusion that proficiency had no effect in their data. On the other hand, regarding perception, differences were identified between lower and higher proficiency groups, which showed that advanced learners were more aware that transferring from the L1 can lead to pragmatic problems in email communication between native and non-native speakers. It is highlighted in the chapter that in order to overcome such difficulties, instruction or SA experiences that provide students with opportunities of real-life intercultural exchanges may be beneficial for developing pragmatic competence in this type of emails.

Maria Economidou-Kogetsidis, in Chapter 6 (*The effect of first language pragmatics and second language email performance: The case of Greek students' email requests*), aims to investigate the effects of L1 (Greek) on L2 (English) email requests. Although the author points out that the data sample is small, the study presents quite solid results from 200 hundred emails (100 Greek L1 emails, and 100 English L2 emails). Similar pragmatolinguistic strategies are found in the two languages, which may mean that many of the strategies used in the L2 were transferred from the L1. However, L2 advanced learners seem to show a tendency towards moving away from the L1 pragmatic norms. Thus, as Economidou-Kogetsidis concludes, more research is needed to understand the pragmatic choices learners make when writing emails in the L2.

In Chapter 7, *Email communication in English and in German: A contrastive pragmatic investigation of German university students' emails sent to university staff in their native and foreign language*, Gila Schauer investigates openings and closings in 17 German undergraduate EFL learners' emails. Regarding greetings, all participants seem to prefer formal style, but fail in terms of address form choice, which resembles German forms. As for closings, very similar results are found in the two languages; however, German pre-closing sequences seem to resemble English pragmatic norms.

Chapter 8, *In search of the missing grade: Egalitarianism and deference in L1 and L2 students' emails to faculty members*, Sypridoula Bella examines

authentic email data in Greek L2 learners' requests for a 'missing grade' and compares them to L1 data. As opposed to studies of this type, the results show that L2 requests are not that inappropriate as compared to L1 speakers' emails, even if some differences emerge in the two data samples. These results point to the need for exploring whether L1 users know how to appropriately communicate in such type of interactions. As Bella claims, future studies on lecturers' perceptions can contribute to exploring what they consider pragmatically correct in such exchanges.

Finally, Chapter 9, *"You are the best!": Relational practices in emails in English at a Norwegian university*, examines how email conversations develop with exchanges with different institutional roles. The authors, Milica Savic and Miodrag Dordevic, examined conversational progression, institutional roles and social distance in learners of Norwegian with a variety of L1 backgrounds but similar proficiency levels. As for the progression of conversation, it did not seem to have an effect on opening sequences. In contrast, institutional roles seemed to have an effect to a certain extent. Similar findings were reported for social distance, which had significant effect on both openings and closings. It should be worth highlighting that further studies of this type are also needed involving other languages, since it might help understand further what learners actually do (and why) with a variety of institutional roles involved, since it is a reality that students face when they communicate via email mode at university.

All in all, this volume makes an outstanding contribution to the field of email pragmatics. The book provides studies which include a wide variety of languages (both L1s and L2s), learning contexts (FL and SA), email topics, speech acts (with a special focus on requests in many of the chapters), data collection procedures and analyses, and teaching approaches in university settings. In addition, the volume will definitely encourage further research in the field, since although we have been using emails to communicate for many years now, it still seems to be a challenging task for L2 learners and even for native speakers. For all these reasons, this volume will be extremely useful for both researchers and teachers.

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