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## NATIVE AND NON-NATIVE ENGLISH INSTRUCTORS' PRODUCTION OF REFUSALS AND COMPLAINTS: A PRELIMINARY CASE STUDY IN A STATE UNIVERSITY IN TURKEY

Emrah EKMEKÇİ\*

### Abstarct

In order to achieve their communicative goals, speakers use a variety of speech acts; specifically apologies, requests, complaints, and refusals. A lot of research has been carried out on apologies and requests, but limited number of studies focused on complaints and refusals in the literature. The present study is a preliminary study which explores the differences between native and non-native instructors' production of refusals and complaints. Six native and fifteen non-native instructors working at a state university in Turkey participated in the study. Data were collected through a Discourse Completion Test (DCT) previously employed in the study of complaints by Olshtain and Weinbach (1987), of refusals by Beebe, Takahashi and Uliss-Weltz (1990) and in the study by Tanck (2002). The results of the study indicated that non-native instructors' utterances were vague and inappropriate in terms of the quality compared with native instructors. Their responses also revealed that they were more verbose than native instructors. They added an emotional plea to their complaints. Both native and non-native instructors used almost the same speech act components; namely direct complaint, request, explanation of purpose, and justification as components of complaint. As for the components of refusal, they employed statement of regret, excuse, statement of positive opinion, statement of alternative, and appreciation. Non-native instructors also used offensive language as a component of complaint, which indicated difference from native instructors' utterances.

**Keywords:** Speech acts, complaints, refusals, components of speech acts.

### 1. Introduction

Pragmatics which is defined by Fasold (1990:119) as 'the study of the use of context to make inferences about meaning' takes on a new significance when it is considered in foreign language learning context in particular. Accordingly, academic studies regarding teaching Pragmatics in foreign language education have been increasing in number with each passing day due to awareness raising attempts of many scholars specialized in language learning and teaching field. According to Bardovi-Harlig and Taylor (2003), pragmatics helps language users explore their ability to match utterances with contexts they are appropriate most. They state that teaching of pragmatics facilitates language learners' preference of appropriate language when they face various social situations. They maintain that pragmatics does not receive attention in language teacher education programs either. Teaching of pragmatics can be accepted as a neglected component of language education since it is not included adequately in language teaching curricula. Instead, language learners can be presented lots of activities in which they can use the appropriate language when they encounter definite situations. They can be educated so as to be pragmatically competent language users or teachers. Bardovi-Harlig and Taylor (2003) point out that there appears a clear need for teaching pragmatics when language users are observed closely. No matter how grammatically and linguistically competent they are learners have difficulty to use the appropriate piece of language for some situations in which native-speakers know what to say subconsciously. As highlighted by Bardovi-Harlig and Taylor (2003), a learner with a high grammatical proficiency may not be pragmatically competent enough. That constitutes the main problem in language learning process particularly in countries where English is taught as a foreign language (EFL). In this sense, language teacher education is extremely important since teachers are the initial ring of the chain considering students who are educated by them.

Within the context of pragmatic competence which needs to be included in language teacher education curricula, speech acts play a key role. O'Keeffe, Clancy and Adolphs (2011:84) state that 'Speech Act Theory provides a taxonomy of the different functions that utterances might perform, and it also offers an approach to understanding the apparent discrepancy between what we say and what we mean.' That is to say, what we say is not always identical with what we mean. For this reason, language learners, including language teacher trainees in particular, should be pragmatically competent enough. This preliminary case study, therefore, investigates into how competent non-native instructors are in pragmatics when compared to native ones. For this reason, native and non-native instructors' productions of refusals and complaints have been compared with the help of a Discourse Completion Test (DCT). We believe that the findings of the

\* Asst. Prof. Dr., Ondokuz Mayıs University, Department of English Language Teaching.

study will shed a light for re-evaluation and reconstruction of the language teacher education curricula, and integration of classroom activities enhancing pragmatic competence of the language learners into general language teaching curricula as well especially in EFL context. Our aim in this research is to find out answers to the following research questions:

- 1- Do native and non-native English Instructors' production differ in realization of the speech act set of refusals and complaints?
- 2- Which speech act sets do they employ in production of refusals and complaints?

## 2. Review of Literature

### 2.1 Background

Various questions have appeared regarding the relationship between language teaching and pragmatics such as *Do we really need to teach pragmatics in foreign language education? How can we integrate it into language education curricula? How can pragmatics be taught? Why teach pragmatics in language classes?, and so on.* A number of research has been conducted to answer the above-mentioned questions in the literature. Before dwelling on the issues, it is better to define what *pragmatic competence* means.

Pragmatic competence which consists of illocutionary competence, knowledge of speech acts, functions and sociolinguistic competence can be considered as one of the components of communicative competence (Bachman 1990). It is simply the ability of using language appropriately according to context. The most important issue concerning pragmatic competence is whether learners really need to be taught them or not. Research indicates that foreign or second language learners and native speakers differ in using pragmatically appropriate language in certain contexts. In addition, it has been reported that grammatically competent and advanced foreign language learners' utterances have a great deal of pragmatic errors (Kasper, 1997; Blum-Kalka, House, and Kasper, 1989). Kasper (1997) also states that there is a need for teaching pragmatics considering language learners' incompetency in using appropriate language. In order to raise pragmatic awareness of language learners, two major techniques have been recommended for teachers; teacher presentation and discussion and student discovery. Teacher presentation and discussion is directly related to explicit pragmatic instruction in classes. The aim is to make students be equipped with the necessary knowledge and help them make their own decisions about how to use the target language (Thomas, 1983). Bardovi-Harlig (1996) suggests a variety of ways to raise pragmatic awareness in classrooms. For example, teachers can make students think about how certain speech acts are different in their mother tongue, which leads to classroom-led discussions.

As for the goals for teaching pragmatics, Bardovi-Harlig and Taylor (2003:5) explain this as; "The chief goal of instruction in pragmatics is to raise learners' pragmatic awareness and to give them choices about their interactions in the target language. The goal of instruction in pragmatics is not to insist on conformity to a particular target-language norm, but rather to help learners become familiar with the range of pragmatic devices and practices in the target language."

They maintain that with the help of pragmatic instruction, students can fully participate in target language communication. Thus, they can practice the pragmatically appropriate language they need for certain context in classroom environment.

Another issue which is considered to be one of the components of pragmatics is the appropriate use of *speech acts*. Speech Act Theory emerged in the 1960s and its main focus is on literal and intended meaning and directness and indirectness (O'Keeffe, Clancy and Adolphs, 2011). Austin (1962) made a classification between 'constatives' and 'performatives'. *Constatives* can be analysed as 'true' or 'false', whereas *performatives* can be described in terms of the act which they perform when uttered in a specific context (O'Keeffe et al, 2011). Austin revised this classification later by describing three kinds of action within each utterance. O'Keeffe et al (2011:85) report Austin's classification as:

- (1) Locutionary Act: this is the actual utterance itself, i.e. the physical act of producing an utterance and its apparent meaning;
- (2) Illocutionary Act: this is the intended meaning of the utterance. The illocutionary act tends to be the focus of analysis in Speech Act Theory and is often referred to as the 'illocutionary force' of an utterance;
- (3) Perlocutionary Act: the effect that is achieved through the locution and illocution. Examples include *persuading, inspiring, convincing* and so forth.

To put it simply, locutionary act can be explained as what is said, illocutionary act as what is meant, and perlocutionary act as what the hearer does in relation with the utterance. Following Austin's classification, another scholar Searle divided speech acts into five categories assigning functions to them. These categories are outlined by Levinson (1983:240) as follows:

- (1) Representatives, which commit the speaker to the truth of the expressed proposition (paradigm cases: asserting, concluding, etc.);
- (2) Directives, which are attempts by the speaker to get the addressee to do something (requesting, questioning);
- (3) Commissives, which commit the speaker to some future course of action (paradigm cases: promising, threatening, offering);

- (4) Expressives , which express a psychological state (paradigm cases).

Apart from the above-mentioned categories, more specific speech acts exist such as requests, complaints, apologies, and refusals (Kasper and Rose, 2001). It is reported by many scholars that strategies of using these specific speech acts differ to a great extent due to some cultural variations between native and non-native speakers of English. (Beebe, Takahashi and Uliss-Weltz, 1990; Blum-Kulka, House, and Kasper, 1989; Gass and Houck, 1999; Kasper, 1997; Song Mei Lee-Wong, 2000). For this reason, the accurate and appropriate use of specific speech acts is extremely important for ensuring effective communication. Considering the EFL context in Turkey, the issue comes into prominence a bit more. Prospective English Language Teachers and in-service teachers are particularly in need of receiving pragmatic instruction during their training since they are almost the only ones who will teach future generations how to use language appropriately in a given context. Therefore, this preliminary study presents a close up photograph of the current situation of a sample at a tertiary level.

## 2.2 Relevant Studies

Studies on refusals and complaints are relatively limited compared with the ones on apologies and requests. Some studies focus on all refusal types such as refusal to suggestion, request, invitation and offer (Beebe, Takahashi and Uliss-Weltz, 1990; Chen, Ye and Zhang, 1995). Beebe et al. stated the evidence of pragmatic transfer in the order, type, and frequency of semantic formulae used by Japanese speakers in the USA. Chen et al. searched for the refusal behaviour of native speakers of Mandarin Chinese in the USA. It was found that lower status refusers frequently used excuses, but higher status refusers made less use of excuses. Dwelling on refusal to request, Gass and Houck (1999) used discourse completion tests (DCT) or role plays (RP) and they instructed their refusers with or without a prepared excuse for refusal. The excuses provided were all external factors, and refusers were allowed to write down or say anything they liked. Semantic formulas were compared in relation with three power relationships; family, company, and campus. Bardovi-Harlig and Hartford (1993, 1996) concentrated on academic setting in which a foreign student refused an American supervisor's suggestion regarding class selection.

Tanck (2002) investigated the differences between native and non-native English speakers' production of complaints and refusals. 25 graduate students at an American University participated in the study. 12 students were native speakers of English. The rest of the students were non-native whose languages were Russian, Serbian, Thai, Polish, Spanish, Korean, Chinese, and Haitian Creole. The researcher used a DCT to collect data on refusals and complaints strategies of the participants. The results of the study revealed that non-native speakers sometimes produced fewer components of speech act sets of refusal and complaint. In addition, the quality of the speech acts was less appropriate compared to native ones. That non-native speakers tended to produce refusals with a more specific excuse, and their addition an emotional plea to their complaints can represent some of the remarkable findings of the study. Apart from Tanck's, one of the rare studies on complaints was carried out by Devenci (2010) who investigated the complaint speech by Turkish EFL learners in two situations; speaking to a contradicting teacher and speaking to a commiserating teacher. The results of the study revealed that students made both positive and negative transfer in using demand while speaking to the commiserating teacher. The students speaking to the contradicting teacher made positive transfer in the components of *justification*, *complaint*, and *explanation of purpose*.

Jalilifar (2009) compared Iranian and Australian speakers in terms of refusal strategies through DCT. The results indicated that Iranian EFL learners did not acquire adequate sociopragmatic knowledge considering social distance. Likewise, Ghazanfari, Bonyadi, and Malekzadeh (2013) investigated the speech act of refusal by native Persian and English speakers in relation with linguistic devices. The results revealed that there were some differences between the two languages with regard to refusal utterances and gender. Persian students used excuse more than English speakers by applying strategies such as regret, non-performative statements, and lack of enthusiasm. Another comparative study was conducted by Geyang (2007). The study compared Japanese and Chinese EFL learners and native speakers' preferred semantic formulas and their sequences in refusal to suggestions. Employing a DCT for data collection like many other researchers, Geyang found that Japanese EFL learners preferred indirect way of refusal by using semantic formulas that conveyed positive reactions for the coming refusal. In addition, Japanese and Chinese EFL learners preferred that way as 4a refusal strategy followed a statement of justification. Similar to above-mentioned studies, Sadler and Eröz (2002) examined English refusals produced by native speakers of English, Turkish, and Lao. The aim of the study was to determine whether the non-native speakers' first language played a role in the production of L2 refusals. The results indicated that the two groups of L2 English speakers followed the same pattern as the native English speakers. However, males and females employed different patterns of refusals.

### 3. Method

#### 3.1 Participants

The study involves 21 participants, 6 of whom are native-speakers of English and 15 are non-native speakers. As it is indicated in Table 1, the age of the native-speakers ranges from 22 to 45. Four of the native-speakers are female and there are two male participants. They major in various subjects at university.

Table 1: Biographical Data about Native-Speakers

<i>NATIVE SPEAKER</i>	<i>Age</i>	<i>Gender</i>	<i>Course of study at university</i>	<i>First Language</i>
1. NS	29	female	Arts	English
2. NS	35	female	Secondary Teaching/ Arts	English
3. NS	26	male	Mathematics / Photography	English
4. NS	45	male	Biology	English
5. NS	22	female	Political Science	English
6. NS	22	female	English Literature/Theatre	English

Fifteen non-native speakers participated in the study. Three of them were male, and twelve were female. The age range of the non-native speakers was from 25 to 45. Most of the non-native participants majored in English Language Teaching (ELT) or English Language and Literature (ELL) departments. Two of them studied Chinese and only one majored in French language at university. The biographical data of non-native speakers are presented in Table 2:

Table 2: Biographical Data about Non-native-Speakers

<i>NON-NATIVE SPEAKER</i>	<i>Age/Gender</i>	<i>Course of study at university</i>	<i>Total time spent in English Speaking Countries</i>	<i>First Language</i>	<i>Duration of Studying English (years)</i>
1. NNS	33/female	Chinese	None	Chinese	10 +
2. NNS	29 / female	Chinese	None	Chinese	10
3. NNS	29 / male	English Lang. And Lit.	None	Turkish	14
4. NNS	25 / female	French	18 (years)	Turkish	18
5. NNS	36 / female	English Lang. And Lit.	None	Turkish	11
6. NNS	37 / female	English Lang. And Lit.	None	Turkish	11
7. NNS	42 / female	ELT	None	Turkish	7
8. NNS	45 / female	ELT	None	Turkish	11
9. NNS	31 / female	ELT	None	Turkish	8
10. NNS	28 / female	ELT	1,5 (month)	Turkish	14
11. NNS	35/ female	ELT	None	Turkish	11
12. NNS	27/ male	English Lang. And Lit.	None	Turkish	12
13. NNS	39/ female	English Lang. And Lit.	3 (months)	Turkish	11
14. NNS	40/ female	English Lang. And Lit.	None	Turkish	10
15. NNS	31/ male	ELT	None	Turkish	10

#### 3.2 Instrument

DCT is one of the means of collecting data regarding pragmatic competence of participants if it is applied appropriately (Cohen, 1996). The DCT used in this study had been previously employed in the study of complaints by Olshtain and Weinbach (1987), of refusals by Beebe, Takahashi and Uliss-Weltz (1990) and in the study by Tanck (2002). The DCT consisted of six prompts. In order to elicit specific speech acts; refusals and complaints, four prompts and two distracters were used. The distracters were about an apology and a request, which were disregarded in the analysis of the data. The prompts provided participants with equal or unequal relationships, and in each scenario the subject was familiar with the interlocutor. The first prompt was a refusal of invitation given by a professor; the second one was a distractor (request); the third one was a refusal of invitation given by a classmate; the fourth one was again a distractor (apology); the fifth one was a complaint made to professor and the last prompt was another complaint made to classmate.

#### 3.3 Data Collection Procedure

Participants were first given a written demographic survey asking basic information such as age, gender, course of the study at university, total time spent in English-speaking countries, first language, and duration of studying English. Next, they were given a DCT in order to compare their pragmatic competence while performing the speech acts of refusals and complaints. Participants were encouraged to write their responses as what they would exactly say in daily conversations. The DCT was conducted in the presence of the researcher and it took about 15-25 minutes including the demographic survey. As all of the participants were instructors teaching English at a prep school in a State University in Turkey, the researcher did not have any difficulty in administering the DCT.

#### 3.4. Data Analysis

The collected data based on four prompts; two refusals and two complaints were analysed in accordance with the semantic formula provided by Beebe et al. (1990) for refusals and Murphy and Neu

(1996) for complaints. Beebe et al. (1990) state that refusal is a complex speech act requiring high level of pragmatic competence. They classify refusals into two main groups; direct refusals and indirect refusals. In addition, they add another dimension as *adjuncts*, which are expressions accompanying a refusal but which cannot be used as refusal by themselves. The semantic formula and adjuncts offered by Beebe et al. (1990) are as follows:

**Semantic formulas**

**Direct**

1. Performative
2. Nonperformative statement

**Indirect**

3. Statement of regret
4. Wish
5. Excuse, reason, explanation
6. Statement of alternative
7. Set condition for future or past acceptance
8. Promise of future acceptance
9. Statement of principle
10. Statement of philosophy
11. Attempt to dissuade interlocutor
12. Acceptance that functions as a refusal
13. Avoidance

**Adjuncts**

1. Statement of positive opinion/feeling of agreement
2. Statement of empathy
3. Pause fillers
4. Gratitude/appreciation

As for the speech act of complaints, Murphy and Neu's (1996:199-203) classification was employed.

They identified the strategies as follows:

1. Explanation of Purpose / Warning for the Forthcoming Complaint

*I just came by to see if I could talk about my paper.*

2. Complaint

*I think maybe the grade was a little too low.*

3. Justification

*I put a lot of time and effort in this...*

4. Candidate solution: request

*I would appreciate it if you would reconsider my grade.*

Upon collecting the data, the researcher and an experienced instructor of English coded the responses on the basis of the above-mentioned semantic formula of refusals and classifications of complaints. After the coding process, another experienced instructor was asked to recode the data to ensure the reliability of the coding. Subsequent to the final coding, three instructors including the researcher came together and agreed on the final categorization of the participants' responses.

**4. Findings**

The aim of the present research is to identify whether native and non-native English instructors' production of the speech act set of refusals and complaints differ (Research Question 1) and which speech act sets they employ in production of refusals and complaints (Research Question 2). In the DCT, the first scenario is related to refusal made to professor's invitation. The percentage of participants' preferences of related semantic formulas is presented in Table 3 and 4:

Table 3: Percentage of semantic formulas for the refusal *made to professor's invitation* by native and non-native English Instructors

<i>Preferred Semantic Formulas</i>	<i>NI/NNI*</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Statement of regret	NI NNI	0% 33%
Excuse, reason, explanation	NI NNI	46% 48%
Adjuncts: Statement of positive opinion/feeling of agreement	NI NNI	8% 5%
Nonperformative statement	NI	8%

	NNI	0%
Statement of alternative	NI	38%
	NNI	14%

\*NI: Native Instructors, NNI: Non-native Instructors

As it is clear in Table 3, the most remarkable difference between native and non-native instructors' production of refusal exists in non-native instructors' preference of statement of regret as a refusal formula. On the other hand, none of the native instructors preferred statement of regret. 33% of the refusals by non-native instructors made to professor's invitation to go to cafeteria in the scenario contained statement of regret; "I'm sorry. I can't join you. I have to pick up a friend from the airport." "I am sorry I cannot join you. I promised to pick up a friend from the airport." The percentage of using excuse, reason and explanation by NI and NNI while refusing was almost the same (46% and 48% respectively). Another noteworthy difference occurred in producing nonperformative statement. None of the NNIs produced nonperformative statement, while 8% of NI's productions contained nonperformative statement such as "I can't. I'm meeting a friend." In addition, NNIs produced fewer statements of alternatives while refusing.

The second refusal prompt in the scenario was to refuse a classmate's invitation. As it is indicated in the following table, neither NIs nor NNIs preferred statement of regret for the second refusal prompt. NIs used more excuses than NNIs while refusing. However, NNIs preferred adjuncts; statement of positive opinion such as "You know I'd love to but I need to finish a project for Wednesday.", "I would like to, but I have to do some paperwork at lunchtime. Next time " NIs used more statements of alternative (20%) compared to NNIs (8%) e.g. "Thanks, but I need to work on my project right now. Can we go another time?", "Oh I'd love to but I'm trying to get ahead on my project. Maybe we could do lunch tomorrow?" In addition, NNIs produced more adjuncts; gratitude/appreciation than NIs did. The percentage of semantic formulas employed for the second refusal is presented below:

Table 4: Percentage of semantic formulas for refusal *made to classmate's invitation* by native and non-native English Instructors

<i>Preferred Semantic Formulas</i>	<i>NI/NNI*</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Statement of regret	NI	0%
	NNI	0%
Excuse, reason, explanation	NI	33%
	NNI	23%
Adjuncts: Statement of positive opinion/feeling of agreement	NI	20%
	NNI	34%
Statement of alternative	NI	20%
	NNI	8%
Adjuncts: Gratitude/appreciation	NI	27%
	NNI	35%

\*NI: Native Instructors, NNI: Non-native Instructors

The third prompt was a complaint made to professor about a missing letter of recommendation. The percentage of semantic formulas produced by native and non-native instructors is presented in Table 5:

**Table 5:** Percentage of semantic formulas for complaint *made to professor* by native and non-native English Instructors

<i>Preferred Semantic Formulas</i>	<i>NI/NNI*</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Explanation of Purpose / Warning for the Forthcoming Complaint	NI	60%
	NNI	47%
Complaint	NI	20%
	NNI	23%
Justification	NI	0%
	NNI	6%
Candidate solution: request	NI	20%
	NNI	24%

\*NI: Native Instructors, NNI: Non-native Instructors

As it is indicated in the table, NIs tended to produce complaint speech act with more explanation of purpose and warning for the forthcoming complaint (60%) compared to non-native counterparts (47%). For example, the uttered sentences such as “Hi Professor, sorry to bother you but I just wanted to check-in with you about my letter of recommendation. The company I’m applying for told me yesterday that they had not received your letter”, “Hey Professor, I was just wondering if you had a chance to send that recommendation letter we talked about. I can give you some more info if you’d like.” For *complaint* and *Candidate solution: request* semantic formulas, NIs and NNIs produced sentences with roughly the same percentage. However, NNIs produced semantic formula of justification with 6% of ratio, while NIs uttered none.

Table 6: Percentage of semantic formulas for complaint *made to classmate* by native and non-native English Instructors

<i>Preferred Semantic Formulas</i>	<i>NI/NNI*</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Explanation of Purpose / Warning for the Forthcoming Complaint	NI	43%
	NNI	0%
Complaint	NI	0%
	NNI	25%
Justification	NI	0%
	NNI	31%
Candidate solution: request	NI	57%
	NNI	44%

\*NI: Native Instructors, NNI: Non-native Instructors

Table 6 shows the percentage of semantic formulas for a complaint made to clerk about missing photocopies. The preferences of NIs and NNIs yielded interesting results since NIs produced utterances including explanation of purpose and warning for the forthcoming complaint with 43%, however; NNIs did not prefer any of that semantic formula. Likewise, for the semantic formula of *Complaint* NNIs produced utterances including complaint with 25% while NIS preferred none. Similarly, NNIs used justification with their complaints with the percentage of 31 whereas NIs did not prefer any justification sentence for semantic formula. Examples for explanation of purpose were as “I placed my order yesterday, could you check again? I need to drop the copies at noon and if you can’t help I don’t know what I’ll do.”, “I need to have my thesis handed in by 12. What’s going to happen now? You can’t possibly have it finished by 12! This is very irresponsible of you!” For the semantic formula *Candidate solution: request*, NIs produced more utterances including request compared to NNIs (57% and 44% respectively) such as “Could you please check it with the manager. I placed the order yesterday. It is very important.”, “Could you check it again, please?”

## 5. Discussion and Conclusion

When non-native instructors’ utterances are evaluated on the basis of native ones, it can be inferred that their utterances seem to be inappropriate or inadequate especially for the components of refusal such as statement of regret and statement of alternative. Native instructors tend to use more statements of regret and offer alternatives while refusing. As for the components of complaint, non-native instructors’ utterances were found to be verbose compared with natives’. For example, one native and one non-native instructor’s responses on complaint about a missing letter of recommendation were as follows:

Native Instructor: “Hi Professor! I’m just checking in with you about that letter of recommendation you were writing for me.”

Non-native Instructor: “Good morning sir! Can I ask a question, if you have time? I asked you for a letter of recommendation sometime, if I’m not mistaken about a month ago, and you said you’d write it. I’m sorry but I need it as soon as possible, Sir. Would you please do something about it?”

When the number of words each instructor uses, it is clear that the non native instructor produces longer utterances, which verifies verbosity in utterances. In addition, they add emotional plea to their utterances while complaining about missing thesis booklet scenario, e.g. “Oh, please, Can you check it again? They are very important to me. I have to deliver the copies to the committee by 12.00. I’m really sorry.” Some non-native instructors also use offensive language while complaining such as “...This is very irresponsible of you.”, “...Oh my God! It is absolutely your fault and you are going to pay for it.”

It is obvious from the analysis of utterances by both native and non-native instructors that non-native instructors employed more semantic formulas than native ones. The whole semantic formulas for refusals created by Beebe et al. (1990) were not preferred by the participants. They preferred only six formulas and did not employ the rest for their refusals. As for the speech act of complaints, all of the formulas of Murphy and Neu (1996) were preferred while complaining. The only component which was not

employed by native instructors was *justification*. Considering the research questions stated at the beginning of the current paper, it can be concluded that native and non-native English instructors' production differ in preferring particular semantic formulas for each speech acts; refusals and complaints. However, it is interesting that native-instructors preferred only specific ones among seventeen formulas for refusals. The most remarkable refusal differences which arose upon analysing the utterances were in the semantic formulas of statement regret, nonperformative statement and statement of alternative. As for the complaining differences, justification, explanation of purpose and complaint were the main formulas preferred by the participants. The current study also yielded similar results with the studies of Jalilifar, 2009; Ghazanfari, Bonyadi, and Malekzadeh, 2013; Geyang, 2007 and Tanck, 2002.

The results of the study indicate that even grammatically and linguistically competent English as foreign language users, most of whom had studied in foreign language departments at various universities at least for four years and have been teaching English for about ten years, have not been pragmatically successful enough while making refusals and complaints compared to non-native English instructors. In order to cope with pragmatic difficulties foreign language users may face while communicating, departments training foreign language teachers, as being the first ring of the chain, in universities need to reconstruct their curricula allowing explicit teaching of pragmatics. In this way, teachers who are trained with pragmatic awareness will probably understand the significance of pragmatic competence better, and try to train their own students with this perspective in mind.

All in all, the present preliminary case study attempts to shed some light on the current level of pragmatic competence of non-native instructors in particular at a state university. It is quite natural that the findings of the study cannot represent the whole but just give a hint of the present situation. The study has naturally some limitations. For example, in DCT, there are only two prompts for each speech act. A similar study can be conducted with more prompts and participants to get more reliable results. In addition, even though the participants were encouraged to write what they would actually say in the course of spoken interaction, they had time to think about the scenarios and this may not reflect their real intentions about what and how to say in real communication. Another study may be carried out by observing the participants in a natural setting producing refusal and complaint speech act in daily their daily lives.

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