

COMPUTER-MEDIATED COMMUNICATION ACTS IN  
NON-NATIVE ENGLISH SPEAKERS' ELECTRONIC MAIL EXCHANGES

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## Thesis Abstract

Eray Sevingil, “Computer-Mediated Communication Acts in Non-Native English Speakers' Electronic Mail Exchanges”

The basic aim of this study is to examine the Computer-Mediated Communication (CMC) acts of Turkish non-native speakers of English (NNS<sub>S<sub>T</sub></sub>), native speakers of English (NSs) and non-native speakers of English in different countries (NNS<sub>S<sub>O</sub></sub>) within online e-mail exchanges in English on preset topics between February 2008 and May 2008.

This study explores whether NNS<sub>S<sub>T</sub></sub>' CMC acts resemble or differ from NSs' and NNS<sub>S<sub>O</sub></sub>' CMC acts. The study examines what types of CMC acts NNS<sub>S<sub>T</sub></sub> use in their e-mail exchanges when they address NNS<sub>S<sub>O</sub></sub> or NSs in the study. Besides, the perceptions of NNS<sub>S<sub>T</sub></sub> about the contribution of CMC to their cross-cultural communication, understanding and their foreign language learning are discussed.

Computer-Mediated-Discourse Analysis (CMDA) was conducted with respect to qualitative e-mail exchanges in the e-mail group. Descriptive statistics were used to analyze quantitative data generated by the CMC acts of all groups. The analyses reveal that the difference between the frequencies of NNS<sub>T</sub> and NNS<sub>O</sub> CMC acts is not statistically significant. However, there is a statistically significant difference between the frequencies NNS<sub>T</sub> and NS CMC acts. In addition, NNS<sub>S<sub>T</sub></sub>' CMC acts addressed to NNS<sub>S<sub>O</sub></sub> or NSs are not statistically significant. NNS<sub>T</sub> regard the use of e-mails as a beneficial tool for Foreign Language Education and intercultural understanding. The findings of this study offer a pragmatic view of foreign language education to develop linguistic, social and cultural competencies in the target language and show how to combine CMC tools and foreign language learning.

## Tez Özeti

Eray Sevingil, “Bilgisayar destekli iletişimde ana dili İngilizce olmayanların elektronik postalarında ortaya çıkan söz edimleri”

Bu çalışmanın amacı ana dili İngilizce olan ve olmayan farklı ülkelerdeki üniversite öğrencisi katılımcıların, bilgisayar destekli iletişimde elektronik posta yoluyla önceden belirlenen konular üzerinde Şubat 2008 ve Mayıs 2008 arasında İngilizce olarak gerçekleştirdikleri söz edimlerini araştırmaktır.

Bu çalışma ayrıca ana dili İngilizce olmayan Türk üniversite öğrencilerinin ana dili İngilizce olan ve olmayan diğer gruplarla bilgisayar destekli iletişimde gerçekleşen söz edimlerinin o gruplarla ne denli benzerlik veya farklılık gösterdiğini inceler. Ayrıca Türk üniversite öğrencilerinin ana dili İngilizce olan ve olmayan her iki grupta birebir gerçekleştirdiği yazışmalarında hangi söz edimlerini kullandıklarını araştırır. Son olarak, çalışma içinde kullanılan bilgisayar destekli iletişimin Türk üniversite öğrencilerinin kültürlerarası iletişim, anlayış ve yabancı dil öğrenimi açısından algılarına yarar sağlayıp sağlamadığı tartışılır.

Çalışmada nitel e-mail yazışmalarına bilgisayar odaklı söylem çözümlemesi uygulanır ve betimleyici değerler tüm gruplar arasında gerçekleşen bilgisayar odaklı iletişim edimlerini nicel olarak analiz etmek için kullanılır. Çalışmanın sonucunda ana dili İngilizce olmayan Türk öğrenciler ve diğer katılımcılar arasında bilgisayar odaklı iletişim edimleri kullanımı açısından istatistiksel fark görülmemiştir fakat Türk üniversite öğrencileri ve ana dili İngilizce olan katılımcılar arasında bilgisayar odaklı iletişim edimleri kullanımı bakımından istatistiksel fark görülmüştür. Türk öğrencilerin bireysel olarak diğer gruplar için kullandıkları söz edimleri her iki grup için farklılık göstermemiştir.

Türk üniversite öğrencileri, elektronik posta kullanımını yabancı dil öğrenimi ve kültürlerarası iletişim açısından yararlı bulmuşlardır. Bu çalışmanın bulguları yabancı dilde dilsel, sosyal ve kültürel yetilerin gelişimini sağlayan edim odaklı yabancı dil eğitimi görüşünü önerir. Bilgisayar odaklı iletişim araçlarının ve yabancı dil öğretiminin nasıl birleştirilmesi gerektiğini gösterir.

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## ABBREVIATIONS

BBs	Bulletin Boards
CBT	Computer-Based TOEFL
CEF	Common European Framework
CMC	Computer-Mediated-Communication
CMD	Computer-Mediated Discourse
CMDA	Computer-Mediated Discourse Analysis
CSCL	Computer-Supported Collaborative Learning
E-mail	Electronic mail
ESL	English as a Second Language
ETS	Educational Testing Service
EFL	English as a Foreign Language
FtF	Face-to-Face
ICT	Information and Communications Technology
IM	Instant Messaging
KCC	Kendall's Coefficient of Concordance
L1	First Language
L2	Second Language
MUDs & MOOS	Multi-User interactions
NNSs	Non-Native Speakers
NNS <sub>SA</sub>	NNS <sub>ST</sub> and NNS <sub>SO</sub>
NNS <sub>SO</sub>	Non-Native Speakers of English in Different Countries
NNS <sub>ST</sub>	L1 Turkish Non-Native Speakers of English
NSs	Native Speakers of English
PBT	Paper-Based TOEFL
TOEFL	The Test of English as a Foreign Language
WWW	World Wide Web

## CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Information and communication technology (ICT) has improved and challenged the traditional way of communication. Individuals use language in different ways and integrate some elements of speaking into their online writing by making use of visual and aural cues online as well as creating new forms of electronic texts that look like written conversations (Barnes, 2003). Computer-Mediated Communication (CMC) tools, which offer multimedia technologies that combine text, image, sounds, and video have been a major topic of recent research (Wang, 2006).

Computer-Mediated Communication (CMC), which consists of interpersonal communication systems used for conveying written texts, takes place through computer networks between individuals that are far away (Herring, 1996). CMC is achieved via CMC tools. Earlier modes of CMC tools are newsgroups, electronic bulletin boards, or listserv/ mailing lists, which are text-based, and they consist of anonymous interactions (Herring, 2002). Newer modes of CMC include instant messaging (IM), voice chat, 3D online games, social networking sites, such as Facebook and YouTube, weblogs, web discussion boards/forums, wikis, content syndication, podcasting and content tagging services that make use of textual, audio, visual and graphical information (Xie, 2008; Anderson, 2007).

Individuals develop new discourses with CMC tools that are rich in terms of communication. Researchers compare CMC discourses, face-to-face (FtF) communication and general written discourse to understand how individuals modify and reconstruct new discourses (Magnan, 2008). Many fields, such as communication research, organizational psychological research and social

psychology have shown interest in CMC and CMC tools (Christopherson, 2007). Teachers and learners have also used CMC for language teaching and learning to understand how learners communicate and to make use of technology-based discourses to support L2 education. The number and range of applications of CMC to teaching and learning at all levels has continued to grow, and educational research on the use of CMC has developed more (Yates, 2001).

### Rationale for the Study

Electronic mail (e-mail) is one of the most convenient CMC tools to use in classrooms (Yu & Yu, 2001). Teachers and students have shown interest in the use of e-mail to foster interaction, to find partners from different cultures and to help learning (Keranen & Bayyurt, 2006).

CMC allows discourse analysis and pragmatics (Bublitz, Eisenlauer & Hoffman, 2007). In the current study, the focus is on an asynchronous CMC tool (e.g., e-mail) as e-mails allow for discourse analysis.

Language learners make use of old and new modes of CMC. They create new discourses by interacting with people all over the world. These mediating discourses of learners from different countries suggest new ways to develop L2 proficiency, L2 teaching and learning, and intercultural communication and understanding. In light of this, it will be possible to learn, understand and distinguish between different types of CMC acts in English in CMC by studying CMC acts of participants within e-mail exchanges. This may in turn provide insight on helping learners make appropriate pragmatic choices in CMC, utilize e-mails for instructional and communication purposes, and gain intercultural experience while practising L2 at the same time.

This study examines “speech acts” in CMC discourse within e-mail exchanges in English across several participants from different countries. A Computer-Mediated speech acts analysis may reveal the nature of CMC acts used by participants from different countries and help to conclude whether CMC acts used by the participants vary under different conditions, that is, when they exchange e-mails in English with different participants whose L1s are different. Moreover, intercultural Computer-Mediated exchanges may help participants to understand their partners, develop their L2 proficiency, contribute to their cross-cultural understanding, and change their ideas and attitudes about the target culture.

The wide use of technology, especially the use of e-mails in educational settings in most parts of the world is becoming widespread. Turkish educational contexts also utilize e-mails for educational purposes and L2 teaching and learning. This will be the first study of CMC acts conducted in Turkish setting with Turkish learners and other participants coming from different countries. The e-mail messages of Turkish learners and other participants in different countries may reveal the nature of CMC discourses in learners’ e-mail exchanges and support the learners in terms of helping them become aware of cross-cultural understanding.

In other words, this study aims to determine and analyze “speech acts” in the CMC discourse of non-native speakers of English who are Turkish first language speakers (NNS<sub>T</sub>), native speakers of English (NSs) and other NNSs of English in different countries (NNS<sub>O</sub>) within online e-mail exchanges in English on preset topics between February-May, 2008. CMC acts of Turkish NNSs of English are analyzed to reveal whether they use different types of CMC acts than NNS<sub>O</sub> and NS university students. The participants consist of three groups of university students

who are L1 Turkish NNSs of English, L1 Greek and Spanish learners of English and L1 English participants, respectively.

The second aim is to find out whether CMC acts of NNS<sub>T</sub> resemble or differ when they address NNS<sub>O</sub> of English in different countries (Greek and Spanish participants) or NSs of English (American participants) in the study.

The third aim is to investigate the attitudes of Turkish NNS university students towards the contribution of CMC to their cross-cultural communication and understanding as well as their foreign language learning.

### Research Questions

This study is guided by the following research questions:

1. What types of CMC acts can be observed in the online e-mail exchanges of non-native speakers of English who are Turkish first language speakers, non-native English speakers (NNS<sub>O</sub>) in different countries and native speakers of English (NS) when they communicate in English?
2. To what extent do Turkish university students use different types of CMC acts than non-native speaker (NNS<sub>O</sub>) university students in different countries and native speaker (NS) university students?

3. What types of CMC acts do Turkish university students use when they communicate with each of the following groups?
  - a) Non-native speaker (NNS<sub>0</sub>) university students in different countries
  - b) Native speaker (NS) university students
  
4. What are the perceptions of Turkish university students about the contribution of CMC to their foreign language learning and cross-cultural communication?

In the following sections, various aspects of CMC are explored, including features of CMC and e-mails. Current literature regarding pragmatics, speech acts, speech act theory, discourse and discourse analysis, pragmatic competence and related studies about pragmatics and CMC for learning and teaching L2 within several CMC contexts are reviewed.

## CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

### Features of CMC

In traditional oral culture, communication is immediate as individuals see each other in a context. Individuals make use of contextual clues and involve some elements of informality in their speech based on the situation they are in. As for general writing, people do not consider it an immediate and informal activity as the previous one. They try to create the context themselves and integrate elements of formality into their writing (Barnes, 2003). In line with that Crystal (2001) states:

Writing requires understanding and time on the part of the reader but speech is time-bound spontaneous, face-to-face, socially interactive, loosely structured, immediately revisable and prosodically rich. However, writing is space-bound, contrived, visually decontextualized, factually communicative, elaborately structured, repeatedly revisable, graphically rich. (p. 28)

Oral communication and general writing do not share the same characteristics. The expectations of each medium are different from each other. The media of CMC has also some features of its own, combining the elements of both orality and writing in general where individuals are not time and space bound. In the first place, online messages in the CMC take place in the form of writing although the long-lasting nature of writing does not usually exist in these messages. These online messages disappear when the computer is off, and they have slight chances of recovery in the future as long as they are not stored (Herring, 1996).

CMC register has its own ways as individuals make use of various graphics, figures, acronyms, abbreviations and special lexis for that context. CMC technology and new genres of CMC lead to new styles of communication (Herring, 1996)

together with sharing of information, fostering interaction and personal relationships through different genres of CMC, such as e-mails and chat (Barnes, 2003). In the CMC environment, it is hard to come across facial expressions, gestures, the ways of body posture and distance. Individuals witness the new uses of written language in the CMC environment (Crystal, 2001).

Face-to-face communication (FtF) and the media of CMC have different characteristics (Parks & Floyd, 1996). In comparison with FtF interaction, CMC is very different, since non-verbal communication cues such as body, age, gender, ethnicity and status are removed on CMC. This accounts for the fact that cross-cultural differences occurring on FtF environment are hard to notice on CMC (Cinnirella & Green, 2007). Individuals do not need physical attendance or physical presence in CMC environment. A primarily text-based presentation of the self occurs in this medium. Individuals may interact without knowing the gender, identity, characteristics and mood of their interlocutor. They rather present themselves through a text on CMC environment (Herring, 1996). Their interlocutors use their intuition to compensate for the missing visual and oral clues to find out what the other party mentions (Barnes, 2003).

The issue of feedback in CMC is also different from normal speech. Feedback is not immediate as in a normal conversation since speed of typing is more of an issue than the Internet connection especially for text-based asynchronous CMC tools. Besides, CMC depends on reading and writing unlike normal speech, which means communication goes on without pronunciation errors, and individuals have the chance to process input and extend their talk time. In addition, there is much time-delay for turn-taking in a CMC environment compared to normal speech. The

amount of time required for turn-taking may vary according to different types of CMC genres (Crystal, 2001).

In brief, the CMC environment has become a relatively new social medium in which it is possible to witness different styles of communication including gendered styles and communicative strategies. Interactors from various settings may be engaged in using several conversational patterns in CMC environment as the CMC language is not the same as either written or spoken language, and it has unique features of its own (Al-Sa'di & Hamdan, 2005; Guiller & Durndell, 2007; Negretti, 1999; Newlands, Anderson, & Mullin, 2003).

## CMC MODES

Several types of CMC mostly differ across whether they are *synchronous* or *asynchronous* and whether communication takes place on a one-to-one basis or one-to-many basis (Baron, 2004).

### Synchronous CMC

In synchronous environments, such as chat rooms and online instant messaging systems (e.g., MSN and ICQ) all parties exist in real time (Lotherington & Xu, 2004). Interlocutors are present to read messages and answer them immediately. They are online simultaneously. Interactive writing occurs in synchronous communication. Synchronous communication is not the focus of this current study. Instead, e-mail messages, which are one of the tools of asynchronous communication, will be specifically dealt with in the study.

## Asynchronous CMC

In the asynchronous mode, communicators are not online and available at the same time or place. There is no need to coordinate communication in terms of time. The sender may plan and edit his/her message as in traditional writing. Participants have the opportunity to compose, send messages and contribute to ongoing messages. These contributions facilitate the exchange of information because message writers have time to go over the messages (Montero, Watts & García-Carbonell, 2007). Asynchronous environments include e-mail, bulletin boards, group conference folders and listservs in which participants are not present and discourse is limited due to time-delay (Lotherington & Xu, 2004).

As a component of CMC, the asynchronous mode of communication has strengths and weaknesses when compared to FtF settings and synchronous communication. As for weaknesses of asynchronous communication, Abrams (2003) states that the lexical and syntactical quality of language do not change among a synchronous group, an asynchronous group, and a control group. An and Frick (2006) reveal that most learners think FtF communication is faster, easier and more convenient, while others report that CMC saves time, and it is more convenient. In addition, Arnold (2007) claims that asynchronous CMC does not have strong effect on learners' confidence levels as synchronous CMC and FtF exchanges. Also, in Guan, Tsai and Hwang's (2006) study, learners prefer FtF communication because they think that the interaction between the participants is more intensive during a discussion and a question can receive answers immediately. Besides, the participants can hardly stray away from the topic in an FtF communication.

On the other hand, there are also some studies concerning the effectiveness of asynchronous communication and CMC environment over FtF communication. For instance, Fitze (2006) suggests that during written electronic conferences, learners are able to use and practice a wider range patterns and discourse that may be beneficial for L2 learning. Warschauer (1996) indicates that learners use lexically and syntactically more formal and complex language in electronic discussion than they do in FtF discussion, which may help them in acquiring communicative skills.

Ocker and Yaverbaum (1999) put forward that asynchronous collaboration is as effective as FtF communication in terms of learning, quality of solution, solution content and satisfaction with the solution quality. Luppicini (2007) states that CMC learner characteristics are associated with greater convenience, easier interaction with instructors and peers, positive learning experience and performance advantages.

The asynchronous mode is also likely to be advantageous to many people in administrative and academic situations in terms of personal development. Most of the Internet users prefer asynchronous mode “e-mails” since they may serve as a useful medium for teaching and learning purposes. In parallel to that, this thesis will focus on asynchronous communication, e-mails, to find and analyze CMC acts in e-mail exchanges across three groups of participants from different countries with different L1s.

## Electronic Mail

### The Language of Electronic Mails

There are some elements that belong to e-mails, which are the heading, the body or message (the obligatory item), maybe attachments as well as greeting and a farewell. E-mail messages vary in length and style, and they are usually linked to previous messages. These features of e-mails render e-mail exchanges a different way of communication, which is unlike normal speech or writing (Crystal, 2001).

Traditional writing also consists of different genres, which present various stylistic options for writers (Biber, 1988; Chafe, 1985; Tannen, 1982). E-mail has altered the conventional way of language by improving stylistic range of language as other forms of writing (Collot & Belmore, 1996), so it is hard to make a strong connection between e-mail writing and traditional writing although e-mails are permanent in nature, and they look like traditional writing (Crystal, 2001).

An e-mail displays various features of normal speech together with a stylistic variety that is required for writing in general. Although e-mail is a written form, it is similar to speech in some respects. First, an e-mail message can be deleted or altered as in speech. An e-mail may require an urgent response from the interlocutors, which proves the ongoing nature of normal conversation in e-mail messages (Barnes, 2003). Furthermore, e-mail messages are not private, and they can be transferred easily.

## CMC and Pragmatics

CMC gives an idea on what individuals intend to do and convey in CMC context. Individuals combine meanings of messages into meaningful discourses in

CMC. These discourses are gathered and analyzed to understand the ways of CMC (Das, 2009). However, CMC in the context of L2 pragmatic competence is an underexplored area of research (Blattner & Fiori, 2009). This study addresses CMC from pragmatic perspectives and links CMC and pragmatics after discussing some issues on pragmatics.

### Pragmatics

Pragmatics is a branch of linguistics that covers the theory of communication (speaker meaning) and speech acts (Bach, 1994). It is the study of language with respect to the view of learners, takes into consideration the choices that individuals make, the problems they come across when using language in a context and the results of individuals' language use on the other participants during communication. Individuals can understand how language is used and interpreted in context. Pragmatics involves cognitive, social and cultural aspects of communication and hardly ever takes linguistic structure into account (Levinson, 1983).

### Pragmatic Competence

Chomsky (1965) put forward the ideas of competence and performance. While the former refers to the innate knowledge of rules of grammar and syntax, the latter refers to the individual's ability to produce language. On the other hand, Hymes (1972) coined the concept of communicative competence to compensate for the limited description of the Chomskian definition of competence and asserted that communicative competence does not solely mean having grammatical knowledge. It

entails the knowledge of linguistic forms and the ability to use them in an appropriate context in the referred speech community. Gumperz (1982) also highlighted that communicative competence consisting of linguistic and grammatical knowledge serves as a source to perform communicative functions in an appropriate context. Canale (1983) described communicative competence as consisting of four types of competencies, which are grammatical competence, sociolinguistic competence, discourse competence and strategic competence. The first one is the knowledge of the forms and rules as Chomsky asserted. Sociolinguistic competence includes the knowledge of context and social rules of language. Discourse competence is the ability to combine the extended use of language in a context. Finally, strategic competence is the ability to survive in an authentic communication context. For the purpose of this study, I will focus on sociolinguistic competence, in other words, pragmatic competence.

Pragmatic competence deals with the language use in a social context and requires understanding of the role of participants, their social status, what information they state and what they want to achieve during communication (Alptekin, 2002). One main aspect of pragmatic competence is the production and understanding of speech acts and their appropriateness in a given situation as pragmatics involves speech acts. Therefore, speech acts and the speech act theory will be covered in the following pages.

## Speech Acts

### Austin

Philosophers asserted that a statement can only “describe” or state “some facts”. However, Austin (1962), (1976) contended that individuals use language to accomplish actions, not just to make true or false statements. The need to clarify what a “statement” is led to new ideas and theories starting with the work of Austin.

According to Austin (1962), communication consists of a series of communicative acts or namely, speech acts. These speech acts accomplish particular communicative purposes. He drew attention to the distinction between *constatives* and *performatives*. The first one gives information about the facts as opposed to performatives (pseudo-statements), which do not describe, report anything or state facts (Grundy, 1995). Performatives are neither true nor false, which are the characteristics of a statement. The sentences provided below are performative sentences (Austin, 1976, pp. 4-5).

For instance

A) I do take this woman to be my lawful wedded wife

B) I name this ship Queen Elizabeth

In the first sentence, the aim is marrying rather than reporting that these people are marrying. That is, these sentences not only say things or describe, instead, they rather do things (Levinson, 1983).

In the following years, Austin distinguished between explicit performatives and implicit performatives (Levinson, 1983). However, as a result of the difficulty in

the identification of explicit and implicit performatives, Austin stated that the number of explicit performatives was rare, and there was not much well-known procedure for many assertions (Wardhaugh, 1986).

Finally, Austin (1962) stated that the same utterance could at the same time constitute three kinds of acts. He asserted his general theory of *illocutionary acts* in which some performatives and constatives are included. The constative-performative distinction founded by Austin later left its place to his distinction of the acts, namely “*locutionary*”, “*illocutionary*” and “*perlocutionary*” acts, which are simultaneously performed during speaking (Cummins, 2005). As for the sentence “It is hot in here”, the locutionary act is the act of uttering this sentence in this way. In terms of the illocutionary act, the intention or the force behind this utterance may be that the utterer wants some fresh air. Finally, the hearer gets the message and opens the door as a perlocutionary act (Thomas, 1995).

The locution belongs to the traditional territory of truth-based semantics. The perlocution belongs strictly beyond the investigation of language and meaning since it deals with the results or effects of an utterance. The illocutionary act is now in the territory of pragmatics (Levinson, 1983).

Austin (1962) also introduced a new term, “*force*”, to refer to the speaker’s communicative intention, which is the same as an illocutionary act (Thomas, 1995). For example, the sentences “get out” and “I order you to get out” are different illocutionary acts but they might represent the same illocutionary force.

Austin (1976) proposed the following classes of utterances according to their illocutionary force. Here are the five illocutionary points (acts) of language use: Austin comes up with (1) verdictives, e.g., convicting and estimating. They give something a fact or value as in “I grade” and “I value”. (2) Exercitives, e.g., ordering

and warning. Exercitives makes individuals exercise powers such as appointing, voting, ordering, urging, advising and warning. (3) Commissives, e.g., promising and intending. They commit individuals to do something as in the case of “I promise” and “I bet”. (4) Behabitives, e.g., apologizing and congratulating. They involve social behaviour such as apologizing, congratulating, cursing, challenging. (5) Expositives, e.g., stating and illustrating. They may include “I argue” and “I state”. Speakers rarely produce isolated individual sentences but they perform these individual illocutionary acts (Vanderveken & Kubo, 2002).

### Searle and Speech Act Theory

Speech act theory originates with the work of Austin (1962). Building on Austin, Searle (1969) further developed the theory of “speech acts”. Speech acts are the production of symbols, words or sentences under certain conditions. Searle (1969) proposed that speech acts are the basic or minimal units of linguistic communication as opposed to the idea that the unit of linguistic communication is a symbol, word or sentence. Searle, Kiefer and Bierwisch (1980) asserted that the performance of certain acts such as asking questions, giving orders are important for successful communication instead of symbols, words or sentences etc. A speaker performs one or more of these acts by uttering a sentence or sentences.

Searle placed the speech act at the center of the study of language, meaning and communication. A study of the meaning of sentences is not distinct from a study of speech acts. Searle pointed out the necessity of taking into account in the analysis of a speech act the social institution within which it was produced (Thomas, 1995).

Searle segmented utterances into speech acts very similar to those proposed by Austin. Searle (1969), (1985) suggested that Austin's illocutionary acts may be further divided into *illocutionary context*, *propositional content* and *illocutionary force* (Austin's *locution* and *illocution*). *Illocutionary context* is the factual knowledge about the participants and the context. *Propositional content* expresses what the speech act is about. It gives an idea on what the utterance is about. *Illocutionary force*, mentioned by Austin first, indicates the goals and the intentions of the speaker. It is the communicative intention of the utterance (Thomas, 1995). For instance, the sentences "Please help me" and "You will help me" have the same propositional content but they have different forces. In contrast, "Is it snowing?" and "Are you coming?" have the same force but different propositional contents (Vanderveken & Kubo, 2002).

Searle improved Austin's classification of performative verbs and proceeded to a classification of illocutionary forces of utterances because Searle found Austin's list of illocutionary acts limited. Searle (1985) proposed that some verbs that are under a specific category may not be suitable for that category. There is also a problem with the classification of illocutionary acts and illocutionary verbs. Speech act functions may overlap or speakers may have several intentions in mind. A single utterance may have more than one function. Instead, Searle (1969) proposed a detailed classification of the major categories of speech acts based on speaker intentions (illocutionary force). Searle's taxonomy of five illocutionary forces includes assertives, commissives, directives, declaratives and expressives. Each category is followed by a definition and a sample explicit speech act. Assertives (representatives) are the statements of facts, such as claims and reports as in the sentence "I think he is the murderer". Directives get the hearers to do something,

e.g., commands and requests. For example, “Let’s go shopping this afternoon”. Commissive are related to future actions, for example, promising and threats, such as “I’ll be there”. Declaratives change the present state of things, such as “I pronounce you husband and wife”. Finally, expressives are the expressions of feelings, such as apologies and complaints as in “Your hair looks nice” (Searle, 1969).

Most taxonomies of speech acts are based on Searle’s classification. Speech acts have been classified into different taxonomies since then.<sup>1</sup> Several philosophers and linguists have attempted to offer new classifications because of the difficulty of classification of speech acts as Searle asserted. They argued that it would be demanding to classify every utterance by using the five classifications discussed by Searle (Hatch, 1992). Next, Bach and Harnish (1979) proposed a classification of speech acts for formal deliberative discourse based on different sets of illocutionary forces. The first four of Searle's forces are more or less equivalent to Bach and Harnish's forces. The last group, declaratives, is not represented as a separate force in Bach and Harnish's framework.

Table 1. Comparison of Two Speech Act Taxonomies

Searle (1969)	Bach & Harnish (1979)
Assertives	Constatives
Directives	Directives
Commissives	Commissives
Expressives	Acknowledgements
Declaratives	

There has been much debate so far about the classification of speech acts. Speech acts are hard to uncover with the sentences or any descriptive approach as speech act theory deals with the functions and uses of a language (Schmidt & Richards, 1980).

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<sup>1</sup> There are also other taxonomies that deal with speech acts. For further reading please see the following references: Hancher (1979), Lyons (1977), and Francis and Hunston (1992).

The taxonomic approach to speech acts may be insufficient. Rather, studying discourse may provide effective results for understanding speech acts.

Successful communication does not only consist of combining sentences in the correct way. There is a system that leads communication to go beyond forms of language. This system, that is, discourse, keeps away from the structural base of language to pay attention to the way certain patterns are used to realize a function in specific contexts or how they result from the application of strategies (Schiffrin, 1994). The linguistic analysis at the utterance level is not enough to understand all of the discourse.

To understand discourse, discourse analysis is applied to indicate how discourse consists of social, cognitive and linguistic factors, and it studies the language of spoken or written communication. The description of these factors, and how they vary across mode, channel and setting are part of the analysis of discourse (Hatch, 1992). Discourse analysis is the study of the relationship between language and the context where language is used. Various discourse analyses tools are used to gain awareness of discourse and the nature of successful and unsuccessful communications patterns (McCarthy, 1991).

If speech act theory is based on speech, and speech act analysis is a grounded way of analyzing meaning-in-context at the level of the utterance (Austin, 1962; Bach & Harnish, 1979), CMC is based on CMC context as online interaction on CMC environment also takes place by means of discourse. CMC environment can be the subject of discourse analysis as textual communication on CMC environment leaves a trace. Logs of verbal interaction (characters, words, utterances, messages, exchanges, threads, archives) and any analysis of online behavior that is grounded in

empirical, textual observations are the subject of Computer-Mediated Discourse Analysis (CMDA) (Herring, 2004).

CMC discourse has emerged as a result of the rapid development of the Web and the use of computers for interaction and interpersonal communication (Christopherson, 2007; Sassenberg, Boos & Rabung, 2005). The use of CMC tools for L2 learning and cross-cultural interaction lead researchers to combine speech acts and CMC to deal with the speech acts involved in CMC discourse.

In profiling “speech acts” in CMC discourse, I adopt CMDA suggested by Herring (2004) and show a set of CMC acts that are used to analyze messages in e-mail exchanges on preset topics in English. To analyze CMC discourse, CMC Act Taxonomy developed by Herring, Das and Penumarthy (2005) will be used for coding “speech acts” in Computer-Mediated discourse.<sup>2</sup> This taxonomy is a simplified and modified synthesis of the act categories elaborated for spoken conversation by Francis and Hunston (1993) and for formal and deliberative discourse by Bach and Harnish (1979) for analyzing ‘speech’ acts in CMC (Herring, 2004).

Table 2. CMC Act Taxonomy (Herring, Das & Penumarthy, 2005)

Accept	Apologize	Claim	Desire	Direct	Elaborate	Greet	Inform
Inquire	Invite	Manage	React	Reject	Repair	Request	Thank

### Pragmatics for L2 Learning and Teaching

The communicative approach renders communicative competence crucial for foreign language learning and knowing the target culture in depth. Language learners are not only expected to acquire forms but also learn how to use them in the target

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<sup>2</sup> Please see the methodology chapter of the thesis to see all the act labels and proposed examples in CMC Act Taxonomy (Herring, Das & Penumarthy, 2005).

language (Alptekin, 2002). The communicative approach does not consider language as removed from its cultural setting and norms (Keesing, 1979). Instead, the communicative approach to second-language learning challenges the form-focused classes and fosters the use of pragmatics.

As an aspect of pragmatics, pragmatic competence deals with the social use of language and understanding the social context where language is used. There have been some studies regarding pragmatic competence for L2 learners. Hoffman-Hicks (1992), Jorda (2004) and Saito and Beecken (1997) focus on the relationship between linguistic (grammatical competence) and pragmatic competence. Their findings demonstrate that a certain level of linguistic competence is necessary for L2 learners, whereas the level of linguistic competence is not solely enough for learners to attain socio-cultural appropriateness. Pragmatic competence does not only develop with linguistic competence. Language should be viewed as a whole.

Pragmatic instruction has to take part in foreign language learning environments or classes for students to comprehend and acquire L2 pragmatic forms (Blum-Kulka, 1982). Teaching speech acts and explicit instruction of pragmatic competence in the form of introducing typical use and teaching a variety of appropriate uses encourage learners to make their own choices regarding their appropriate use. The amount of time spent in the target speech community remains learners' main opportunity to acquire pragmatic knowledge, so learners have to be exposed to some situational, social and linguistic knowledge for successful communication and better L2 learning. In this way, learners witness a variety of appropriate uses due to awareness-raising. The responsibility for teaching the pragmatic aspects of language use falls on teachers although there is a lack of emphasis on pragmatic issues (Kondo, 2004; Schauer, 2006; Eslami-Rasekh, 2005).

An awareness-raising approach is necessary in the second and foreign language classrooms for teaching culture as it is an important part of teaching appropriate speech act behaviour (Meier, 1997). In line with this, Clennell (1999) allows NNSs to experience authentic oral interaction with NSs, and they reflect on the linguistic and socio-pragmatic features of spoken discourse as they arise. This heightened awareness of language in context improves learners' oral skills and enhances academic performance. Pearson (2006) states that pragmatic competence should not be viewed as something that is activated automatically as linguistic competence expands. By beginning pragmatic instruction at the earliest levels of study, as is done with grammar and vocabulary, additional opportunities can be provided for learners to comprehend and acquire L2 pragmatic forms.

Different cultures have different means and expressions for interaction, and language learners need to understand the principles of language use. Atawneh (2003) and Barron (2000) assert that pragmatic issues are neglected in foreign language classes. Learners end up with pragmatic failure and cross-cultural misunderstanding due to the lack of training and cultural differences in pragmatics in L2 among NSs and NNSs of English.

When learners perceive social or cultural distance between themselves and the target culture, they have difficulty in achieving pragmatic competence and developing cultural and pragmatic awareness. Therefore, learners should be provided with a range of opportunities to experience the use of language in different socio-cultural contexts, need to know the use of native-like routines and have the knowledge of the target social structure and values. It is necessary to expose learners to various language uses and contexts. In this way, they can become competent speakers of L2 (Erton, 2007; Lorenzo-Dus, 2001).

## CMC for L2 Learning and Teaching

CMC has become a popular technology offering online learning environments and programmes (Vrasidas, 2003). Individuals make use of CMC tools for several purposes. One of these purposes is foreign language learning and teaching. In this section, I will focus on skills teaching and CMC, collaborative learning and CMC as well as CMC and intercultural communication.

### Skills Teaching and CMC

Different kinds of CMC modes have been used to supplement foreign language teaching and learning contexts. They offer new possibilities for new learning opportunities. For instance, Felix (2001) and Stapleton (2005) explore learners' ideas on working with Web-based materials in terms of writing, and they conclude that Web-based materials help language learning. Learners develop positive attitudes towards using computers for communication and writing after online discussions (Clawson, Deen & Oxley, 2002).

As another CMC tool, Coniam and Wong (2004), and Jarrell and Freiermuth (2005) emphasize the use of Internet Relay Chat facilities, such as ICQ for foreign language learning to help learners write complex sentences and communicate in English. Next, Lee (1998) concludes that the use of online newspapers and chat rooms enhance the learning of advanced L2 learners. As for other CMC modes, Chen and Chiu, (2008), and Zhu (2006) suggest that teachers use online discussions to foster critical thinking and encourage the discussion of controversial topics in foreign language classrooms. Besides, Yang, Newby and Bill (2008) assert that bulletin

boards (BBs) significantly improve learners' critical thinking skills and attitudes towards learning foreign language via BBs. In addition, Pinkman (2005) shows that blogs foster interaction, learner interest and motivation to use L2. Finegold and Cooke (2006) examine the learner attitudes, experiences and dynamics of interaction using the WebCT discussion boards. WebCT discussion boards contribute to familiarity among group members although learners sometimes resort to other methods or tools of communication, such as discussion boards, e-mails and FtF communication.

In addition, a CMC environment leads to the increased interaction and negotiation of meaning (Buzzard, MacLeod & DeWitt, 1997; Leahy, 2004; Schellens & Valcke, 2006). Online exchanges that take place in foreign language classes foster meaningful and lasting interactions. Learners negotiate meaning in a CMC environment and form interpersonal relationships that lead to the further exchanges of new ideas and topics useful for foreign language learning. Learners share personal opinions or experiences and regard CMC as a medium for socializing and information exchange (Liaw, 2003; Kung, 2002; O'Dowd, 2007; Romanoff, 2003; Vogt, 2006).

CMC tools lead to meaningful conversations as long as learners use each mode, and teachers design tasks that include both modes of CMC (Coffin, North & Martin, 2008; Hew & Cheung, 2008; Lai, 2007; Simpson, 2002; Pérez, 2003; Paulus & Phipps, 2008). CMC modes can be used in combination to provide valuable alternative spaces for collaboration, learner autonomy and several learning opportunities. Asynchronous and synchronous CMC can be used together with the possibilities of interactive media on the Web (Simpson, 1997).

In CMC, learners make use of different CMC tools. For instance, they are involved in discussion tasks and chat room interactions online. Instructors combine some elements of FtF talk and find new ways of interactive writing of CMC modes (Ellis, Goodyear, Prosser & O'Hara, 2006; Merchant, 2001). Instructors need to design tasks that combine several modes of CMC and FtF communication to benefit from both modes and develop the L2 proficiency of their students.

New CMC technologies and activities may alter a traditional classroom and enrich language learning, so instructors need to try to find new methods and collaborators for interaction (Curran, 2002). These CMC tools are advantageous for L2 learning and teaching. They also develop L2 proficiency, foster experiential learning, reflection and collaboration unlike traditional classrooms (Eastmond, 1998).

It is useful to make use of CMC and make it an integral part of foreign language classes (Vandergriff, 2006). Familiarity with CMC technologies is crucial for foreign language teachers to integrate technology with other activities in classroom instruction. Teachers' level of education and teaching experience determines the use of technology in classes and explains why some teachers use technology more (Moore, Morales & Carel, 1998). Learners also need to be familiar with the CMC technologies and apply them in classrooms. Foreign language teachers need to explore and experiment with CMC tools and integrate online activities into foreign language classes (Matsumura, 2004).

## Collaborative Learning and CMC

The social use of CMC has attained importance as a research topic (Tosun, 2002). Educational researchers have combined information and communication technologies applications (ICT) and collaborative learning, which is a mode of learning where learners work in pairs or small groups to achieve a common goal. As for L2, learners work together to improve communicative competence in the target language and help their partners (Vinagre, 2008). When learners collaborate in a computer-supported collaborative learning (CSCL) environment, they use CMC tools to communicate with group members (Janssen, Erkens, Kanselaar & Jaspers, 2007). For instance, Osman and Herring (2007) highlight that synchronous chat between two different cultural contexts facilitate deep learning and lead to increase in collaborative learning activity. In brief, CMC provides options for collaboration and learner autonomy.

## CMC and Intercultural Communication

Communicating with culturally diverse students online enhances successful learning and helps learners to identify different cultural issues and gain new insights from ongoing interactions (Hewling, 2006). Online communication provides valuable learning opportunities for students and teachers.

Intercultural communication contributes to language learning as language learning also implies knowing about cultures. This kind of technology-based distance learning can improve the quality of teaching and learning (Möllering, 2000; Ware & Kramsch, 2005).

Siebenhaar (2006) indicates that the Internet links different communities globally with English as it is the dominant language of communication. Tudini (2003), and Jarrell and Freiermuth (2005) investigate whether live chat with native speakers creates some opportunities for negotiation of meaning without teacher supervision in L2. The results indicate that this kind of negotiation helps learners to become competent speakers of L2 provides an authentic cross-cultural experience and motivates learners to communicate. Learners of English communicate with native speakers of English or culturally diverse learners from different parts of the world to develop academic performance and intercultural understanding.

CMC involves cultural interaction related to the communicative approaches to foreign language learning and teaching (Warner, 2004). Learners' level of English improves when they are involved in communication with culturally diverse learners. As a result, learners perceive themselves as members of an international and global community (Bee-Lay & Yee-Ping, 1991). Moreover, Keranen and Bayyurt (2006), O'Dowd (2005), and O'Dowd and Eberbach (2004) also suggest a telecollaborative intercultural project in English to develop intercultural competence. They contend that participants communicate their cultures, gain cultural understanding from their exchanges and build intercultural awareness. These findings illustrate that learners find the opportunity to know their partners in-depth and challenge the stereotypes and prejudices about the target culture. Instructor support and training are necessary to help learners participate and become involved in online intercultural exchanges as learners move from national and regional boundaries to the global world (Dewey, 2007). Teachers may get learners to have different experiences if they allow them to get in contact with culturally diverse learners (Kramsch, 2006).

## CMC and Pragmatic Competence

Computer-based language learning environments supplement conventional ways of learning and teaching. They offer a wide range of functions and resources that may help L2 teaching and learning (Barr & Gillespie, 2003). CMC technologies help learners interact with native speakers that are far away, provide opportunities to learn more about the target language and develop pragmatic competence (Chapelle, 2005). Chapelle (2004) points out:

Learners can gain some L2 practice in online communication that may be valuable for performance in other contexts. Negotiation of meaning, and negotiation of form, have been observed in online communication, but may not compare favorably to face-to-face conversation, quantitatively. Learners have been observed developing syntactic, pragmatic, and intercultural competence through online communication. The function of online communication is not limited to a tool that teachers can use to construct collaborative tasks for learners; it is potentially a transformative tool that each learner, depending on his or her own knowledge and agency, can use to construct an identity as a user of the L2 beyond the classroom (p. 12-13).

CMC discourse is hard to uncover because it involves both spoken and written discourse. It has its own shared norms and interpretations across several languages, cultures and social communities (Gaeorgakopoulou, 1997). These kind of shared norms and interpretations help L2 learners foster L2 competence with the support of technology. Due to the flexibility of technology, learners practise the target language using L2 speech acts.

Waldvogel (2007) analyzes the use and form of greetings and closings in the e-mails of two workplaces and demonstrates that there is a need to consider cultural factors in addition to sociolinguistic variables when accounting for the linguistic choices people make. Bjørge (2007) investigates level of formality in international

students' e-mails sent to academic staff and suggests that cultural factors and sociolinguistic variables affect the way individuals make linguistic choices and finds some variation in the choice of greetings and complimentary ends in students' e-mails.

Skulstad (2005) states that learners use various genres, discourse types, discourse structure and discourse strategies during the constant negotiation of the writer's roles in the forum groups in asynchronous communication. In addition, Sykes (2005) states that asynchronous CMC environments should be utilized as a tool in the foreign language curriculum because learners practice individually and process the pragmatic issues as well as the other L2 forms in written chat. Instructors have to be aware of the pragmatic competence that is required for participation in CMC environment and develop instructional tasks accordingly to help learners make appropriate socio-pragmatic choices as Gutiérrez and Plana (2004) suggest, pragmatic competence can be taught and learnt in the same way as grammatical competence. There are also studies regarding how to foster communicative repertoires through personal messages and interaction to develop L2 pragmatic competence (Belz & Kinginger, 2005; Nasti, Peña & Hancock, 2006).

Online communication is useful for learners in terms of negotiating meaning and forming a new L2 learner identity, with which they construct their knowledge and improve themselves linguistically and cross-culturally. Teachers help learners have different experiences if they let them get in contact with NSs (Kramsch, 2006). The integration of CMC into foreign language classes fosters linguistic and pragmatic competence. CMC as an alternative to the FtF mode may present opportunities for learners to be better communicators in L2.

## Electronic Mails and Foreign Language Education

In this study, I focus on electronic mails for educational and cultural purposes because as Xiao and Ru-ha (2006) put forward, CMC tools contribute to foreign language teaching and learning contexts.

The use of e-mails supplements teaching and creates a new medium for communication. Learners develop positive attitudes towards writing although their online writing does not resemble conventional writing (Hawisher & Moran, 1997).

Teachers use e-mails in their classes as they think e-mail exchanges foster reflection and learning awareness. Learners have a chance to go over their messages and put all of their efforts into writing a message (Hassini, 2006; Vinagre, 2008). Learners put significantly more thought into e-mail communication with the instructor and groups of peers than they do for FtF communication also they put about the same amount of thought into e-mail compared to FtF communication (Lightfoot, 2006). E-mail writers spend effort in the correct wording of their messages to compensate for aural, visual and sometimes tactile cues that are lacking in CMC environment (Kötter, 2003).

The e-mail communication provides opportunities for a new form of communication, which is communicative, creative, corrective and social (Bretag, 2006; Hawisher & Moran, 1993). E-mail is used more for social moves together with other CMC modes to complete tasks, form interpersonal relationships and provide support from family and friends who live far away (Haigh, Becker, Craig & Wigley, 2008; Paulus, 2007).

E-mail is an effective way of exchanging and discussing simple information rather than more complex information that requires clarification on the part of

interlocutors. Learners have positive attitudes toward using e-mails, and they feel relaxed if their partner is a social counterpart (Waldeck, Kearney & Plax, 2001).

E-mails allow exchanging of wide-range of ideas and become a valuable learning experience for learners when they reflect on their own learning processes (Hoshi, 2003). After cross-cultural e-mail exchanges on second/foreign language learning, foreign language learners' self efficacy in writing increase, so language learners, researchers and instructors design and implement new pedagogical activities to help learners (Erkan, 2004).

## CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

### Introduction

This study examines “speech acts” in Computer-Mediated Communication Discourse (CMCD) within e-mail exchanges in English on preset topics between February 2008 and May 2008 to learn what types of CMC acts Turkish NNSs of English (NNSs<sub>T</sub>), NSs of English (NSs) and NNSs of English (NNSs<sub>O</sub>) use. This chapter will provide information about the research questions, participants, instruments, data collection procedures, analyses of the data, and inter-rater reliability analyses.

### Research Questions

This study investigates “speech acts” in CMC in the form of e-mail exchanges taking place between NNSs<sub>T</sub>, NNSs<sub>O</sub> and NSs of English. The study aims to present the types of CMC acts used across three groups of participants when they are involved in e-mail exchanges in English. The study addresses four research questions:

1. What types of CMC acts can be observed in the online e-mail exchanges of non-native English speaker Turkish university students (NNSs<sub>T</sub>), non-native English speakers in different countries (NNSs<sub>O</sub>) and native speakers of English (NSs) when they communicate in English?
2. To what extent non-native English speaker Turkish university students (NNSs<sub>T</sub>) use different types of CMC acts than non-native speaker university students in different countries (NNSs<sub>O</sub>) and native speaker university students (NSs)?

3. What types of CMC acts do Turkish university students use when they communicate with each of the following groups?
  - a) Non-Native speaker university students in different countries (NNS<sub>SO</sub>)
  - b) Native speaker university students (NS<sub>S</sub>)
4. What are the perceptions of non-native English speaker Turkish university students (NNS<sub>ST</sub>) about the contribution of CMC to their foreign language learning and cross-cultural communication?

## Participants

### L1 Turkish Non-Native Speakers of English

The participants of this study were 19 English prep school students aged 18-22 studying at Istanbul Commerce University in Turkey. There were 8 male and 11 female students, who have varying majors. They volunteered to be participants for the study.

A 3-point Likert scale type background questionnaire in English developed by Shin (2006), Warshauer, (1996b) and Lee (2004) was administered to NNS<sub>ST</sub> prior to the study. This background questionnaire provided information on basic demographic information, NNS<sub>ST</sub>' use of computers in general and their expertise in using various aspects of computers, such as e-mails as the current study requires an optimal amount of computer literacy to use computers and address e-mail messages (See Appendix A).

Table 3. Turkish Participant Demographic Information (N = 19)

Gender	Avarage Age	Internet Access	Knowledge of Computers
Female (52.6%)	18.9	100%	58% (Good)
Male (47.3%)			

All Turkish participants had computers and the Internet access. NNS<sub>S<sub>T</sub></sub> were familiar with the Web (79%), e-mail (68%), chat programs (68%) and Word processing programs (63%). As for their expertise in using these tools, NNS<sub>S<sub>T</sub></sub> were advanced in using chat programs (79%), e-mails (78%), and they were intermediate in using Word processing programs (68%) and the Web (58%).

NNS<sub>S<sub>T</sub></sub> were all students of the institution that I worked for. They did not know me and each other prior to the study. NNS<sub>S<sub>T</sub></sub> were called the “Gold group” at the university based on the results of the “Proficiency and Placement Exam” held by Istanbul Ticaret University at the beginning of the fall term, 2007. Their scores varied between 47 and 60 (out of 100), which were the highest scores among all other levels, namely silver and bronze levels. Silver and bronze level students are excluded from the current study since there was a need for more English proficient participants to exchange e-mails with NSs of English (NSs) and other NNSs of English (NNS<sub>S<sub>O</sub></sub>) in different countries. The “Proficiency and Placement Exam” helped me to find NNS<sub>T</sub> participants who had almost the same English level proficiency.

Since the beginning of the term, NNS<sub>S<sub>T</sub></sub> were exposed to English materials starting from A1 level (the lowest English proficiency level according to Common European Framework, CEF). They covered main courses, skills and reading courses over a year beginning in October 2007 (the beginning of the term). By the end of spring term in May 2008, the official final exam was prepared and administered according to the objectives of materials that learners had gone over for a year. The

aim of the institution was to make all prep school students from each level (Gold, Silver and Bronze) reach B2 level at the end of spring term, 2008, according to the CEF.

To clarify all levels in CEF, the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) scores have been mapped by the Council of Europe's Common Framework of Reference for Languages. Educational testing service (ETS) recommended scores from the TOEFL paper-based test (PBT) corresponding to only B1 and C1 levels on the CEF instead of recommending a separate score for B2 level, which falls between B1 and C1 scores (For further information see [www.ets.org/toefl50.html](http://www.ets.org/toefl50.html)). B1 and C1 minimum scores that correspond to 457 and 560 respectively, out of 677 are given. Suggested minimum scores for B1 and C1 also correspond to 4.5 and 5.5 out of 6 for writing. In addition, the total minimum score of computer-based TOEFL (CBT) corresponds to 137 and 220 for B1 and C1 out of 300. The scores suggested for writing for CBT are also 4.5 and 5.5 out of 6 as PBT.

### L1 Spanish and Greek Non-Native Speakers of English

There were other non-native speakers of English who participated in the study. Their ages were 18 and 20. One of them was a male Spanish freshman university student who was between B1 and B2 levels according to the test result at his university based on CEF. His major was education and psychology. Moreover, a female freshman year EFL student at a university in Greece also participated in the study. Her level was between B1 and B2 according to CEF. They exchanged e-mails in English with their NNS<sub>T</sub> and NS partners.

## L1 English Native Speakers

The native speaker group was from the United States. They were three freshman year Foreign Language Education students at Georgia State University in Atlanta. Two of them were 20 and 22 years old and the other one was 40. There were two males and a female participant in the group. They similarly exchanged e-mails with NNS<sub>ST</sub>, NNS<sub>SO</sub> and other NSs.

### Data Collection Procedures

To start with, I sent NNS<sub>ST</sub> an introductory e-mail message in Turkish explaining how to join the Yahoo group that I formed for e-mail exchanges. This message contained some information about me, the advantages of getting in contact with people from all over the world in English and some details on how to be a member of the Yahoo group (Appendix B).

Nineteen students agreed to be members of the iticugold1 Yahoo group, and they were able to succeed in exchanging messages throughout the semester. Later on, I sent them a second e-mail and asked them to write e-mails about five basic questions that I sent them in Turkish during the first week before other NSs and NNS<sub>SO</sub> were involved in the study. These questions are given in Table 4 both in English and Turkish:

Table 4. Initial Questions for Turkish Participants

1. What do you think about the contribution of online e-mail exchanges in English when you communicate with native speakers and non-native speaker university students from different countries? 1. Dünyanın farklı yerlerinde yaşayan ana dili İngilizce olan ve olmayan üniversite öğrencileriyle gerçekleştireceğiniz İngilizce e-mail yazışmalarının size ne gibi katkılarının olacağını düşünüyorsunuz?
2. What do you feel about communicating with university students from different parts of the world in English? 2. Dünyanın farklı yerlerinde yaşayan üniversite öğrencileriyle İngilizce iletişim kurmak size ne hissettiriyor?
3. What do you think about Computer-Mediated-Communication and e-mail exchanges in English with these groups? 3. Bu gruplarla e-mail yoluyla bilgisayar destekli iletişim kurmak konusundaki düşünceleriniz nelerdir? İngilizce gerçekleşecek karşılıklı e-mailler hakkında ne düşünüyorsunuz?
4. Do you think these online exchanges will contribute to cross-cultural understanding and knowing other cultures in-depth? 4. Sizce bu gruplar arasında gerçekleştireceğimiz e-mail yazışmaları farklı kültürler arasında tanışma ve kaynaşma ortamı sağlayacak mı?
5. How do these online e-mail exchanges contribute to cross-cultural communication and understanding? 5. Bu gruplarla gerçekleşen e-mail yazışmalarının kültürlerarası iletişim ve diyaloga ne gibi yararları olabilir?

In addition, although NNS<sub>S<sub>T</sub></sub> started writing e-mails to each other in Turkish at first, most participants resorted to English gradually as they stated that this was a project based on English. These participants went on exchanging e-mails in English. Moreover, all NNS<sub>S<sub>T</sub></sub> introduced themselves to each other before contacting other NSs and NNS<sub>S<sub>O</sub></sub>.

As for NSs and NNS<sub>S<sub>O</sub></sub>, I made the necessary connections to find partners from different parts of the world by sending e-mails to the professors of the participants and asked them to help me with finding participants for the study and send their e-mail addresses to me. Next, NSs and NNS<sub>S<sub>O</sub></sub> sent their e-mail addresses to me, and I

also sent them an introductory message in English and asked them to join iticugold1 Yahoo group (See Appendix C).

Later on, I provided all participants with a discussion topic each week. Topics were compiled from the studies of Keranen and Bayyurt (2006), Pinkman (2005), and Thompson, et al. (2000). Each discussion topic was accompanied by three or four discussion prompts taken from Web sites and young adult blogs, such as teenmag.com, cosmogirl.com, seventeen.com and fashion-mag.com. The discussion topics were all identified according to the Topic Survey that I had sent participants prior to the study. All participants were asked to discuss about these issues each week between February 2008 and May 2008 without any instructor intervention during e-mail exchanges.

## Instruments

### Topic Survey

To decide on which topics the participants would like to write about during their e-mail exchanges in English, a Topic Survey including seventeen topics was sent to NNSs<sub>T</sub>, NSs and NNSs<sub>O</sub> by e-mails. All participants were asked to rank nine topics in order of importance starting by giving one (1) point for the most popular one and ten (10) for the least popular one. Nine favourite discussion topics were chosen out of seventeen topics (Appendix D).

After identifying nine popular topics, I sent NNSs<sub>T</sub> another message explaining that NSs and NNSs<sub>O</sub> were to join them soon, and they were to exchange messages about a topic that had three or sometimes four related discussion prompts each week.

seventeen topics in the Topic Survey rated in the order participants chose are listed as follows in Table 5:

Table 5. Topic Survey

1. Friendship / friends
2. Education
3. Sports
4. Leisure and work
5. Nature
6. Eating and food customs
7. Music
8. Movies
9. Holidays
10. Beauty
11. TV and entertainment
12. Celebrities
13. Fashion
14. Greetings/gifts
15. Taking photos
16. National heroes
17. Performing arts

The most popular topics of discussion were friendship/friends, education, sports, leisure and work, nature, eating and food customs, music, movies and holidays. Apart from an introduction session lasting for a week among NNSs<sub>T</sub> both in English and Turkish, these topics were presented to the participants with discussion prompts to foster interaction each week. Discussion topics and related prompts for the study are listed in Table 6:

Table 6. Discussion Topics and Related Prompts for Each Week

<p><u>Friendship/Friends</u></p> <p>What qualities do you think are important in a friend?</p> <p>How do you maintain a good friendship?</p> <p>What makes friends different from family?</p> <p>There is a saying "To have a good friend, you need to be a good friend." Do you agree with the saying?</p> <p><u>Education</u></p> <p>Do you think higher education is worth the time, money and effort? If so, what are the benefits of higher education?</p> <p>Do you think education should be free? Please explain your reasons.</p> <p>What is the role of education in the progress of an individual's mind and country?</p> <p><u>Sports</u></p> <p>How much sport do you do in your life? Do you think it is too much or not enough?</p> <p>What do you think is the best and the most interesting sport?</p> <p>What do you think is the best and the most boring sport?</p> <p>Do you agree with the statement "Champions aren't made in the gyms? Champions are made from something they have deep inside them, a desire, a dream, a vision.</p> <p><u>Leisure-Work</u></p> <p>Do you want more leisure in your life? Please explain your reasons.</p> <p>How do you balance work and leisure in your life?</p> <p>Which activity that you haven't done so far would you like to do most? Please give your reasons.</p> <p>Why do you think leisure activities are important for individuals?</p> <p><u>Nature</u></p> <p>Do you think that people ruin the environment? Please explain your reason(s).</p> <p>What do you do to help the environment?</p> <p>Which environmental problem do you think is the most urgent?</p> <p>What do you think about global climate change?</p> <p><u>Eating and Food Customs</u></p> <p>Do you think culture affects our eating habits? Please give your reasons.</p> <p>What is the most favorite dish in your country? Could you tell us how to make it?</p> <p>Do you know of any superstitions related to food or eating in your country?</p> <p>Would you enjoy eating different kind of food in another country? Please explain your reasons.</p> <p><u>Music</u></p> <p>Have you ever learned to play an instrument?</p> <p>What is(are) your favorite instrument(s) and why do you like it(them)?</p> <p>What kind of music do you listen to? How long have you enjoyed listening to it and why?</p> <p>What kind of music is popular in your country and why do you think it is popular?</p> <p><u>Movies</u></p> <p>What movie do you think everyone should see at least once during their lives? Please explain your reasons.</p> <p>What do you think of the "novels into movies"?</p> <p>What kind(s) of movies are popular in your country? Please give your reasons.</p> <p>What do you think of the "movie ratings" in the newspapers or magazines?</p> <p><u>Holiday(s)</u></p> <p>What are your most popular holiday sites in your country? Why do you like this/these holiday site(s)?</p> <p>Where would you spend your next holiday if you had the chance to travel around the world and why?</p> <p>What do you think life would be like if no one ever had to work?</p> <p>What do you think are the effects of holidays on people?</p>
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### Background and Pre-Study Questionnaires

I administered a background questionnaire for the demographic information of the participants, such as gender and age. This background questionnaire was based on the studies of Shin (2006), Warshauer, (1996b) and Lee (2004) (See Table 3).

Additionally, a “Pre-Study” questionnaire was sent to NNSs<sub>T</sub> to assess how participants rate themselves in terms of reading, writing and speaking in English and their English performance in classrooms. This tool was originally used in Beauvois and Eledge’s (1996) study. The first part of the questionnaire is a 5-point Likert scale starting from “strongly agree”, rated “1” point to “strongly disagree”, rated “5” points. The second part of the questionnaire requires completion on the part of participants (See Appendix E).

Next, an attitude questionnaire developed by Warshauer (1996b) was used to assess NNSs<sub>T</sub>’ attitudes towards the use of computers for writing and communication to understand whether they regard using computers useful in terms of communication, cross-cultural understanding and English. There were thirty questions in the original questionnaire; however, I skipped seven questions as they were out of the scope of the current study. Participants rated their reactions starting from “1”, “strongly disagree” to 5, “strongly agree” in the questionnaire (See Appendix F).

### Post-Study Questionnaire

Finally, a post-study questionnaire was used to assess NNSs<sub>T</sub>’ English language proficiency in general and their experience resulting from online e-mail

exchanges with other NNSs<sub>O</sub> and NSs in the current study. This questionnaire was adapted from Beauvois and Eledge (1996), and Lee (2004).

Generally, in the first part of the questionnaire, participants were expected to write their opinions and comments or ideas for developing the current project about online e-mail exchanges. In the following parts, participants were supposed to rate their reflections on English level with all aspects in classroom and out of classroom as well as the use of e-mails for the current study by giving “1” point for “strongly agree” and “5” points for “strongly disagree”. As for the third part, namely, “possible linguistic benefits”, four questions from the original study tool were skipped as they had nothing to do with the aims of the current study. Participants also rated the possible benefits of writing e-mails by giving “1” point for “strongly agree” and “5” points for “strongly disagree” (See Appendix G).

### Interviews

NNSs<sub>T</sub> were interviewed to reflect on their experiences about online e-mail exchanges and whether this experience contributed to them in terms of their English language proficiency, cross-cultural communication and understanding. Interview questions were adapted from Lee (2004). I also prepared the Turkish version of the interview questions in case NNSs<sub>T</sub> had difficulty in understanding some of the questions and the terminology (See Appendix H).

### Examples of Electronic Mail Exchanges

I asked all participants to exchange e-mails about the topic of the week. They mostly preferred to answer the prompts that I had sent them rather than exchanging

messages with other participants. While some participants showed interest in a limited number of topics and preferred to answer my discussion prompts one by one, some participants still maintained correspondence with NNS<sub>SO</sub>, NSs and NNS<sub>ST</sub>. The length of e-mails varied a great deal. Here are the excerpts of e-mail exchanges:

Excerpt 1:

Hi! I'm \_\_\_\_\_. I'm eighteen and interested in different languages, films and music. I'm in prep class now and my department is law. What's more, i like to travel and see interesting cultures. If i have a lot of money one day, i'll travel the world. :) I think we should develop this work. Because it will be more practicable. If this is not inconvenient to you, we may write twice a week. This is useful and we may know new cultures intimately. Well, i'll be pleased, if you introduce yourselves. See you.

In Excerpt 1, the participant introduced herself and expressed her ideas on the current study. She asserted the importance of knowing more about other cultures and asked the other participants to set a specific time on when to write e-mail messages.

Furthermore, the discussion topics helped the participants and guided them while writing their e-mail messages. They could arrange what they wanted to write. Excerpt 2 shows how a participant reacted to one of the discussion topics and related prompts and planned herself to write an e-mail message according to the related topic.

Excerpt 2:

I think a good friend must have some qualities. First of all, a good friend is a good listener. You can share all about you with her or him. You can trust him or her totally. If I can't trust that person, why am I going to wander around with him or her, or why am I going to talk anything with that person? A good friend always be there for you. Not only good times. He or she will stand by your side and when you feel depressed, that person will try to change your mood positively. Friends must respect each other. If anyone who doesn't respect her or his friend, that person haven't got a respect to himself or herself. Finding a good friend is a difficult job; but when you succeed it, all your problems will go away. Everybody can find a friend. However, some people find a best friend.

Similarly, the next participant in Excerpt 3 also used the discussion topic and prompts to guide him while exchanging e-mail messages; that is, he built on the discussion topics and prompts to write what he meant. He used them as a base for developing his ideas.

Excerpt 3:

I'm really sorry I'm late I want to introduce myself a bit then I'm going to explain my feelings about friendships. I'm in 18-B and my major is industrial engineering I love my major and I really want to improve my english, too. our friends are really important people in our life because we share all our secrets with our friends so we can relax or we can solve our problems with them. The other item is this maybe we may not tell our secrets or problems to our mother or father then we share them with our friends so this makes friends different from family. I think the most important thing is this friends must be faithful each other about their friendships it's really important

Moreover, some discussion topics and related prompts fostered interaction among participants, and they created curiosity among members of the group. Participants reacted to each other, which in turn led to learning more about other cultures and cultural understanding as in Excerpts 4 and 5.

Excerpt 4:

Hi \_\_\_\_\_! Welcome to this forum. I am really impressed with everyone's English. Is it a language that is compulsory in school or do you have the choice of other languages? Also, I'm curious about the school system in Turkey. Is prep the equivalent of high school (grades 9-12) in the U.S. or is it like a school that you attend after high school and before university? You already have a major so I assume that is what you'll study at university. Good luck with your studies, music, and, of course, basketball!

Excerpt 5:

Our country we have two kind of preparatory school. One of them is before the high school and the other is before the university. But unfortunately, this year the prep school that's before the high school is canceled.. That was so useful I think. However there is still a prep school before the university we all in this school now. There is something else about this. We took an exam when we came to the university and if we could pass this exam we wouldn't have to go to prep school. So the prep school that's before the university isn't compulsory.

These two exchanges indicate that participants tried to learn about their education system in detail. These exchanges led to in-depth discussions based on discussion prompts, and participants created constant negotiation among themselves.

Last but not least, four participants used this medium for their school work that was about cross-cultural communication and understanding, which was also one of the aims of the current study. When they found an opportunity to meet people from different parts of the world, they did not hesitate to learn more about them. In the Excerpts 6 and 7, a NS participant asked the other participants to answer the questions assigned by his lecturer. As a response to that, the participants helped him and answered his questions.

Excerpt 6:

Could you all help me to answer these questions? I would like to use your responses for my course on "Culture & Language Learning". I would really appreciate it if you chose to help me. Thank you.

Why have you chosen to learn English?

What are the difficulties that you go through in order to learn English?

What do you think of the different accents of English?

Which sounds of English do you find difficult to pronounce?

Did you find it easy to accept English-speaking cultures?

Excerpt 7:

because nowadays english is really important and necessary language in the world. if we want to have good job we'll speak english clearly so we must learn. I can understand when a person speaks english easily or I know grammer or vocabulary but I can't find any place to speak english all the time. I can only speak at school or like that but I want to learn. i know if i speak two or three times to a tourist i'll speak easily. I don't feel nervous:( at first it can be difficult but now it is easy to speak for me...of course we can't speak like an English we can improve ourselves if we want.

A new opportunity for interaction apart from their usual task of discussing the topic of the week came to the foreground. Moreover, all participants had the chance to face various questions and suggestions, which may have helped them to think globally about cross-cultural communication and improve their English.

## Data Analyses

The raw data for this study consists of seventy-six asynchronous electronic e-mail messages that were sent between the dates of February 2008 and May 2008. The body of the data consists of seventy-six e-mail messages with forty-six messages from NNS<sub>sT</sub>, eight messages from NNS<sub>sO</sub> and twenty-two messages from NSs.

The contents as well as the intentions of the messages are analyzed in this study. The main focus of analysis is qualitative in the sense that the messages were coded in a number of act labels to investigate the main content or purpose of the message, for example inquire, claim and elaborate.

### Coding Procedure

This study is concerned with the meaning of words, symbols and utterances (speech acts) to identify the speech acts, that is, what the participants intended and conveyed through language in their Computer-Mediated Discourse (CMD).

Computer-Mediated Discourse Analysis (CMDA) developed by Herring (2004) is applied in the current study as it is a study of Computer-Mediated texts. It differs from other discourse analyses because of its focus on language and language use in CMC environments and by its use of methods of discourse analysis as the analysis is carried out at the meaning level (Herring, 2006).

Herring, Das and Penumarthy's (2005) taxonomy of CMC acts is used as an analysis framework to code "speech" acts in CMD. There are sixteen categories in their taxonomy. All the act labels and their examples are given in Table 7.

**Table 7. CMC Act Taxonomy (Herring, Das & Penumarthy, 2005)**

1. REQUEST (Seek action politely) Direct or Indirect Request * Can you help me find it?
2. INVITE (Seek participation/acceptance by A) Solicit input, Include, Suggest, Offer (Provide goods or opportunity) * Lets go outside
3. INQUIRE (Seek information) Inquiry, Neutral/Marked Proposal * How long does it take?
4. DIRECT (Attempt to cause action) Require, Prohibit, Permit, Strongly advise * Cool down.
5. INFORM (Provide "factual" information; verifiable in principle, even if untrue) Inform, State * The capital of India is New Delhi.
6. CLAIM (Make a subjective assertion; unverifiable in principle) Assert, Guess, Speculate * I love pizza!
7. DESIRE (A cover term including three categories of irrealis situation) Desire, need (desiderative), hope, wish, dream, speculate (hypothetical, counterfactual), promise (future action) * I wish I could go with you.
8. ELABORATE Comment on, Explain, Paraphrase a previous utterance (usually one's own) * (I can't fake ill...) mum's a teacher
9. ACCEPT Concur, Agree, Acquiesce * Yes, I agree.
10. REJECT Disagree, Dispute, and Challenge * No you can't!
11. REACT (Show listenership, engagement – positive, negative, or neutral), Approve * Cool!! * Eww, ick!
12. REPAIR Return, Clarify and Correct Misunderstanding * Did you mean "school holiday"?
13. APOLOGIZE Humble oneself, Self-deprecate * Oops my fault :(
14. THANK Appreciate, Express Gratitude * thxs for showing me / you're welcome
15. GREET Greeting, Leave Taking, Inquiries about/wishes for well-being * Hi roley!! / How r u?
16. MANAGE (Manage discourse) Organize, prompt, focus, open or close discussion, preamble, etc. * OK let's get started.

I coded the participants with numbers, such as 1 and 2. All the e-mail messages were carefully compiled and coded first with reference to their contents and intents. Initially, the unit of communication was identified by the researcher. Each single sentence in each e-mail message was considered a unit. Of the seventy-six messages, 542 communication units were identified. The content of each unit was then coded according to the categories in the CMC Act Taxonomy of Herring, Das, and Penumarthy (2005).

When analysing at the meaning level, the message is broken into propositions in the left column, and they are assigned speech act labels in the middle column. The speech acts column reveals the meaning of each utterance in context (Herring, 2004). In the current study, each e-mail message was broken into sentences in the left column as each sentence stands for a communication unit. They were also assigned speech act labels in the middle column. The speech acts column revealed the meaning of each utterance in context. For instance, 2A functions as “inform” in Excerpt 8 below, which shows how an e-mail message was analyzed in the study.

Excerpt 8:

- 2A [INFORM] my name is \_\_\_\_\_.
- 2B [INFORM] I was born in 1989.
- 2C [INFORM] I am learning English in prep school.
- 2D [CLAIM/ELABORATE] I dont want to finish this course because we have already improved our English when the course finishes, many student will forget english or learned english words.
- 2E [CLAIM] I like traveling.
- 2F [DESIRE] If I will have oppportunity I want to go every country on the earth :D
- 2G [GREET] takecare:)

After coding all messages, the raw data was sent to other two coders for inter-rater reliability. As a last step, I collected all of the codings and displayed them together for each message in the data. In Excerpt 9 as shown below, the first act label in capital letters belongs to the researcher, the second one belongs to the second coder, and the third one belongs to the third coder.

Excerpt 9:

- 11A [INFORM inform inform] my name is \_\_\_\_\_.
- 11B [INFORM inform inform] I am studying in prep school and i will study statistics.
- 11C [CLAIM claim claim] I am interested in internet too much.
- 11D [CLAIM claim claim] I like listening to music and attending what I want.
- 11E [ACCEPT/CLAIM accept accept/claim] I agree whit others friend if we don't use words we wil forget their.
- 11F [CLAIM claim claim] we can improve our english with using words and reading english newspaper or website.

Next, I counted all the CMC acts used by NNS<sub>ST</sub>, NNS<sub>S</sub> and NS<sub>SO</sub> in my coding separately to get a total number of CMC acts that NNS<sub>ST</sub>, NNS<sub>S</sub> and NS<sub>SO</sub> used. I also calculated the percentages of each act label among all CMC acts for each of the groups separately. Then, I selected the e-mail exchanges of NNS<sub>ST</sub> that were addressed to NNS<sub>O</sub> or NS group as opposed to the Iticugold1 Yahoo group as a whole. There were 11 NNS<sub>T</sub> e-mail messages addressed to NNS<sub>SO</sub> or NS<sub>S</sub> by NNS<sub>ST</sub>. I also calculated their percentages separately, to find out which CMC acts NNS<sub>ST</sub> used when they addressed NNS<sub>SO</sub> or NS<sub>S</sub>. I did the same calculations for other coders based on their codings to measure the inter-rater reliability in the study.

#### Inter-rater Agreement Analyses

Coding of the raw data was carried out using the CMC Act Taxonomy (Herring, Das & Penumarthy, 2005). Before coding, I trained other two coders to help them become familiar with CMC act labels and analyze the data. The coders coded all (100%) of the raw data and sent their codings back to me. All the messages were initially coded by me to check inter-rater reliability. One of the coders is a graduate student of Foreign Language Education at Boğaziçi University. The other graduated from the Translation and Interpreting Studies Department at Boğaziçi University.

In this study, Kendall's coefficient of concordance (KCC) was used to assess the level of agreement of ordinal assessments made by multiple coders. Kendall's coefficient accounts for the magnitude of the difference among scores (Sheskin, 2003). The high value of Kendall's coefficient, which is 0.9 or above indicates

stronger agreement. A high or significant Kendall's coefficient means that the coders are applying essentially the same standard when evaluating the samples.

In inter-rater agreement analyses, the frequencies of all the CMC acts (including NNS<sub>ST</sub>, NNS<sub>SO</sub> and NSs) observed by three different raters are given in Table 8 and Figure 1 below.

Table 8. Overall Frequencies and Percentages of CMC Acts observed by Three Different Raters

	Researcher	Researcher (%)	Rater1	Rater1 (%)	Rater2	Rater2 (%)
Accept	15	2.00%	18	2.50%	16	2.40%
Apologize	10	1.40%	11	1.50%	9	1.30%
Claim	238	32.30%	242	34.00%	244	35.90%
Desire	56	7.60%	51	7.20%	52	7.60%
Direct	0	0.00%	1	0.10%	2	0.30%
Elaborate	118	16.00%	106	14.90%	88	12.90%
Greet	40	5.40%	41	5.80%	37	5.40%
Inform	163	22.10%	166	23.30%	158	23.20%
Inquire	20	2.70%	20	2.80%	17	2.50%
Invite	10	1.40%	6	0.80%	9	1.30%
Manage	33	4.50%	24	3.40%	22	3.20%
React	10	1.40%	7	1.00%	5	0.70%
Reject	1	0.10%	1	0.10%	1	0.10%
Repair	3	0.40%	2	0.30%	2	0.30%
Request	6	0.80%	6	0.80%	6	0.90%
Thank	13	1.80%	10	1.40%	12	1.80%
Total	736	100%	712	100%	680	100%

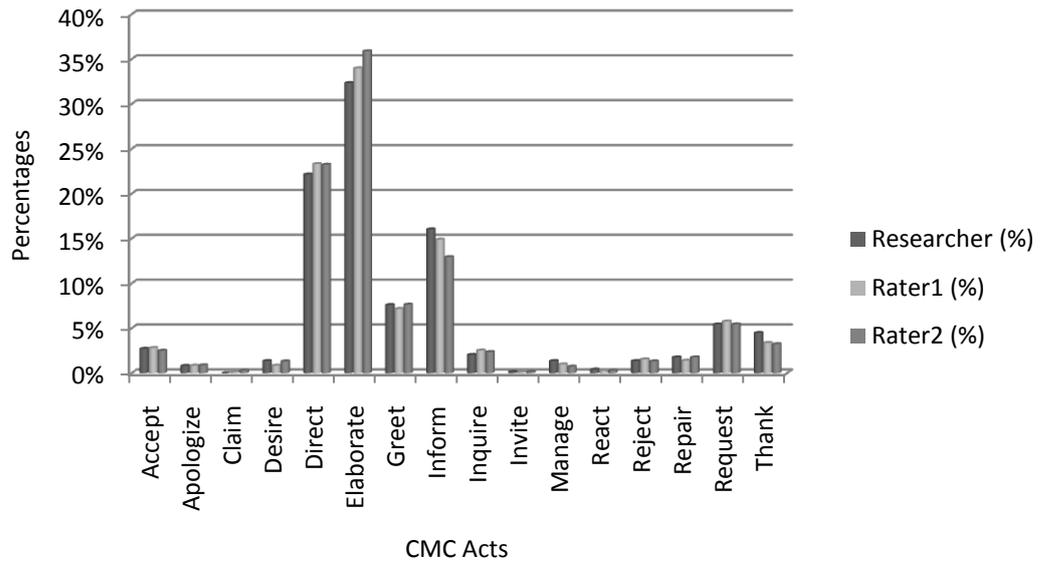


Fig. 1 Overall frequencies and percentages of CMC acts observed by three different raters

Inter-rater agreement of the CMC acts analyses (Researcher vs Rater1) and Researcher vs Rater2) were performed by Minitab data analysis and statistical analysis software. Table 9 shows Inter-rater agreement analysis results.

Table 9. Inter-rater Agreement Analyses Results

	Kendall's Coefficient	Chi - Square	DF	P
Researcher vs Rater 1	0.994092	29.8227	15	0.0126
Researcher vs Rater 2	0.993353	29.8006	15	0.0127

The results suggest that the agreement between the raters of researcher and Rater 1 is very strong (Kendall's Coefficient=0.994>0.90). The same strong agreement is also observed between the raters of researcher and Rater 2 (Kendall's Coefficient=0.993>0.90). These high and significant Kendall's coefficient values mean that all raters are applying essentially the same standard when evaluating the samples.

## Statistical Analyses

In this study, chi-square method was used to test differences between two actual samples. With chi-square, a value is calculated from the data using chi-square procedures and then compared to a critical value from a chi-square table with degrees of freedom corresponding to that of the data (Hinkel, 1997).

Chi-square method was used to determine the significance of the difference between the frequencies of occurrence in two or more categories with two or more groups. It was performed to establish whether the frequencies of CMC acts used either in NNS<sub>T</sub> and NS e-mail exchanges or NNS<sub>T</sub> and NNS<sub>O</sub> e-mail exchanges were significant (Kalaycı, 2006; Sheskin, 2003).

Chi-square test was performed with the help of Analyse-it software, which shows the number of observations analysed, and how many missing values were excluded. The suggested results were confirmed with Minitab software. A significant p-value ( $p < 0.05$ ) was automatically taken as the level of significance in chi-square test.

## CHAPTER 4: RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section provides the findings of the study. In the first part of this section, the research questions are addressed. Next, the results of the questionnaires are presented.

### Frequency of CMC Acts across NNS<sub>sT</sub>, NSs and NNS<sub>sO</sub>

The current study aimed to find out what types of CMC acts Turkish NNSs of English (NNS<sub>sT</sub>), NSs of English (NSs) and NNSs of English in different countries (NNS<sub>sO</sub>) used when they exchanged e-mails in English. First, qualitative analyses of e-mail exchanges were carried out by examining messages in terms of contents and intention using CMDA. Moreover, quantitative analyses were performed to find out how many CMC acts all participants used during their e-mail exchanges. All CMC acts that belong to NNS<sub>sT</sub>, NSs and NNS<sub>sO</sub> were calculated along with their percentages. The sum and the percentages of all CMC acts for each group are presented in Table 10 and Figure 2 below. They indicate the frequency and percentages of CMC acts across all groups in the study.

Table 10. Frequency and Percentages of CMC Acts used by NNSs<sub>T</sub>, NNSs<sub>O</sub> and NSs

CMC acts	NNSs <sub>T</sub>	NNSs <sub>T</sub> (%)	NNSs <sub>O</sub>	NNSs <sub>O</sub> (%)	NSs	NSs (%)	Sum	Sum (%)
Accept	11	2,3%	1	1,3%	3	1,6%	15	2,0%
Apologize	8	1,7%	2	2,6%	0	0,0%	10	1,4%
Claim	155	32,9%	22	28,6%	61	32,4%	238	32,3%
Desire	36	7,6%	6	7,8%	14	7,4%	56	7,6%
Direct	0	0,0%	0	0,0%	0	0,0%	0	0,0%
Elaborate	78	16,6%	12	15,6%	28	14,9%	118	16,0%
Greet	20	4,2%	6	7,8%	14	7,4%	40	5,4%
Inform	108	22,9%	19	24,7%	36	19,1%	163	22,1%
Inquire	9	1,9%	0	0,0%	11	5,9%	20	2,7%
Invite	5	1,1%	1	1,3%	4	2,1%	10	1,4%
Manage	23	4,9%	7	9,1%	3	1,6%	33	4,5%
React	4	0,8%	1	1,3%	5	2,7%	10	1,4%
Reject	0	0,0%	0	0,0%	1	0,5%	1	0,1%
Repair	3	0,6%	0	0,0%	0	0,0%	3	0,4%
Request	4	0,8%	0	0,0%	2	1,1%	6	0,8%
Thank	7	1,5%	0	0,0%	6	3,2%	13	1,8%
Total	471	100%	77	100%	188	100%	736	100%

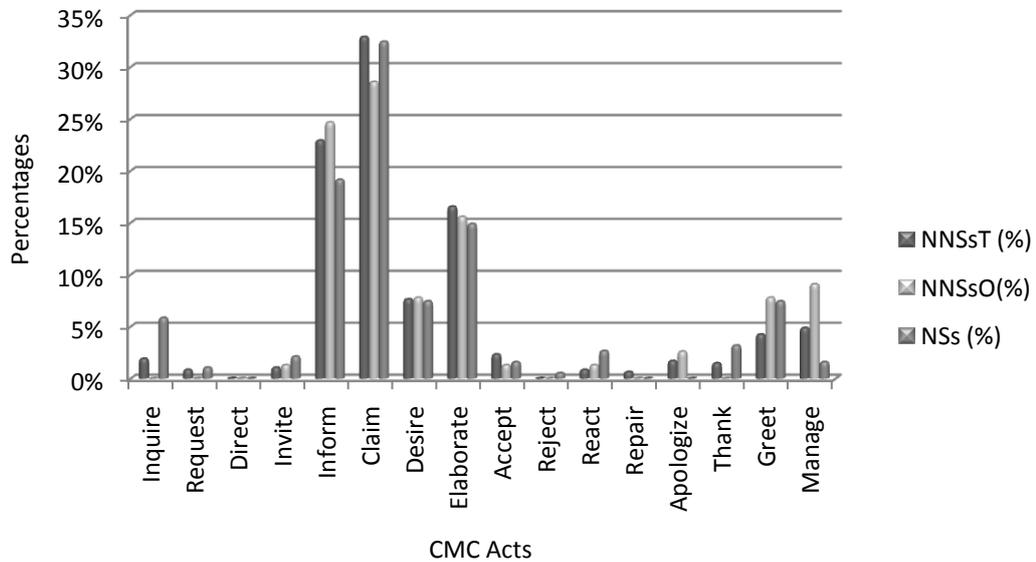


Fig. 2 Frequency and percentages of CMC acts used by NNSs<sub>T</sub>, NNSs<sub>O</sub> and NSs

All participants were responding to the same stimulus; that is, the same discussion topics and related prompts. Therefore, CMC acts of *claim*, *inform* and *elaborate* in the data were used in higher amount than other CMC acts as the discussion prompts

in the form of questions encouraged the use of these three acts. The data also illustrated variation of CMC acts across all the groups and showed how participants were involved in producing e-mail exchanges that entailed a variety of discourses as Fitze (2006) and Warschauer (1996) suggested.

After counting frequency and showing percentage of all CMC acts, the most frequently used CMC acts of NNS<sub>S<sub>T</sub></sub> were *claim*, 155 times (32.9%), *inform*, 108 times (22.9%) and *elaborate*, 78 times (16.6%), out of a total of 471 total NNS<sub>T</sub> CMC acts. Other frequently used CMC acts were *desire*, 36 times (7.9%), *manage*, 23 times (4.9%) and *greet*, 20 times (4.2%). The least used CMC acts of NNS<sub>S<sub>T</sub></sub> were *accept*, 11 times (2.3%), *inquire*, 9 times (1.9%), *apologize*, 8 times (1.7%), *thank*, 7 times (1.5%), *invite*, 5 times (1.1%), *request*, 4 times (0.8%), *react*, 4 times (0.8%) and *repair*, 3 times (0.6%). NNS<sub>T</sub> did not make use of the CMC act labels of *direct* and *reject* in their exchanges.

As for NNS<sub>S<sub>O</sub></sub>, the most frequently used CMC acts were *claim*, 22 times (28.6%), *inform*, 19 times (24.7%), *elaborate*, 12 times (15.6%) and *manage*, 7 times (9.1%), out of a total of 77 total NNS<sub>O</sub> messages in the data. *Desire*, 6 times (7.8%), *greet*, 6 times (7.8%), *apologize*, 2 times (2.6%) were mostly opted CMC acts of NNS<sub>S<sub>O</sub></sub>. The four lowest percentages occur in *invite*, *accept* and *react* with 1.3% of each CMC act. The CMC acts of *inquire*, *request*, *direct*, *reject*, *repair* and *thank* did not take place in NNS<sub>O</sub> data.

The most frequently used CMC acts of NSs were *claim*, 61 times (32.4%), *inform*, 36 times (19.1%) and *elaborate*, 28 times (14.9%), out of a total of 188 NS e-mail exchanges. *Greet* and *desire*, each used 14 times, were identical in the distribution with 7.4%. Other most used CMC acts were *inquire*, 11 times (5.9%), *invite*, 4 times (2.1%). The lowest percentages occur in *manage* (1.6%), *accept*,

(1.6%), *request* (1.1%) and *reject* (0.5%). NSs did not use *repair*, *apologize* and *direct* in their online exchanges.

NNS<sub>ST</sub> (32.9%), NSs (32.4%) and NNS<sub>SO</sub> (28.6 %) opted for *claim* the most. The reasons why *claim* is the most used act across all the groups, especially in NNS<sub>T</sub> and NNS<sub>O</sub> data, may be their need to express their opinions in detail when interacting with other interlocutors coming from different cultural and linguistic backgrounds by using subjective statements (*claims*) the most (See Excerpt 1).

Next, NNS<sub>ST</sub>, NNS<sub>SO</sub>, NSs chose *inform* (22.9% for NNS<sub>ST</sub>, 24.7% for NNS<sub>SO</sub> and 19.1% for NSs). The use of *inform* may be due to participants' need to state factual information about themselves, their countries, since this study is also an intercultural project realized by participants from different countries. As interlocutors were not familiar with each other, they replied some questions addressed to them by using *inform* and *claim* as shown in Excerpts 10 and 11 taking place between a NNS<sub>T</sub> and a NNS<sub>O</sub>.

Excerpt 10:

Hi, I'm Spanish. I come from a beautiful village called Sésamo. Actually i'm studying in León University. My major is Education and Psychology. I also love football (one of you said that was a fan of Fenerbache), probably you know Barça. Well first I'm sorry, i'm writting so late but i can't do it before. I think friends are very important and here at university, the first weeks, i would have wanted to have some of my friends with me. I want to know all of you better and talk more with you. A thing that has surprised me is that two of you are doing Industrial Engineering. It must be very beautiful so on talk to me about it. If you have questions about Spain or spanish things answer me i will be happy if i can help you, i also want to know things about your countries I'm interesting in films history, teaching, animals.....

Excerpt 11:

Hi \_\_\_\_, My name is \_\_\_\_ and my major is computer engineering. I'm Turkish and I'm in prep class now. I would like to ask you about your country. We all see your country on TV. I think Spain is very interesting and amazing :). Spain is a part of Mediterian like Turkey; so we have something in common I guess about our culture. Can you tell me about your life style in Spain, your daily duration? How is your city and your university? Also can you tell me about your unviersity friends? Do you wonder about my country :)? If you wonder you can ask whatever you want and I can send you some photos. I live in Istanbul and Istanbul is one of the most beatiful city int the world.

In addition, *elaborate* was the third option for NNS<sub>ST</sub> (16.6%), NNS<sub>SO</sub> (15.6%) and NSs (14.9%). This may be due to their efforts to make themselves understood by all participants because their linguistic and cultural backgrounds were different. NNS<sub>ST</sub> and NNS<sub>SO</sub> (NNS<sub>SA</sub>) used *elaborate* to go on with the e-mail exchanges and sustain interaction. Their e-mail messages reveal that participants tried to carry on their e-mail exchanges and did not limit their interaction to some formulaic expressions they had learned beforehand. Rather, NNS<sub>SA</sub> elaborated on them whenever they did not feel English proficient and asked for help. This finding is consistent with Stone and Posey (2007), who stated that the information and communication context is limited, thus individuals ask for more explicit statements in a CMC environment. Excerpts 12 and 13 that belong to the same NNS<sub>T</sub> are shown below to indicate the use of *elaborate*.

Excerpt 12:

Hi everyone, my name is \_\_\_\_ and I'm a prep student just like the others. I was born on 1989 and my major is computer engineering. I join this group today; because of some mail adress problem. I hope we will learn a lotf of things from us. I want to recognize people who come from different cultures :). If I make some grammar mistake, please for give me:)

Excerpt 13:

I forgot to tell about myself. I like reading books a lot. Especially, science and fantastic books. I like running and eating sweet things :). I like learning English and I want to improve my; English because, at this time, this language is very common and I think, we can say, world's collective language is English. Of course it is important for job and career; but also telling your ideas to everybody around the world.

Other most used CMC acts were *desire* (7.6% for NNSs<sub>T</sub>, 7.8% for NNSs<sub>O</sub> and 7.4% for NSs), *greet* (4.2% for NNSs<sub>T</sub>, 7.8% for NNSs<sub>O</sub> and 7.4% for NSs). The least used CMC acts were *invite* (1.1% for NNSs<sub>T</sub>, 1.3% for NNSs<sub>O</sub> and 2.1% for NSs), *accept* (2.3% for NNSs<sub>T</sub>, 1.3% for NNSs<sub>O</sub> and 1.6% for NSs) and *react* (0.8% for NNSs<sub>T</sub>, 1.3% for NNSs<sub>O</sub> and 2.7% for NSs).

CMC helps to analyze communicators' linguistic communication patterns, their way of using their language, and how they derive meaning and understanding from these contexts (Naidu & Järvelä, 2006). Therefore, I focused on the use of CMC acts by three groups of participants and compared their use of CMC acts.

As a medium of CMC, e-mail is a way that may makes learners practice L2, negotiate meaning and contact people who come from different parts of the world (Xiao & Ru-hua, 2006). Participants in the current study used English as a common way of interaction to foster learning and information exchange as depicted in earlier studies (Möllering, 2000; Siebenhaar, 2006; Ware & Kramersch, 2005).

The interaction taking place between NSs and NNSs is advantageous in many respects. For instance, Fung and Carter (2007) stated that learner pragmatic competence can be fostered through interaction between NNSs and NSs. This kind of interaction, as Bell (2005) and Park (2007) indicated, between NSs and NNSs keeps the interaction moving ahead and leads to negotiation of meaning. Advanced L2 participants' interaction with NSs may result in deeper processing of lexical items

and semantic fields. Their findings coincide with the current study (See Excerpts 4 and 5).

Previous studies indicated that NSs provide scaffolding for NNSs in terms of meaning and form (Akayoğlu & Altun, 2008; Fernández-García & Arbeláiz, 2003; Lee, 2004). As Fedderholt (2001) pointed out, NNSs write for genuine reasons in English, and they pay attention to their mistakes in English during e-mail exchanges as in Excerpts 14 and 15:

Except 14:

I want to say, we will learn a lot of things from each other; but I wrote we will learn a lot of things from us. Sorry for that mistake :).

Except 15:

That's fine. It's good that you noticed your mistake and that you corrected yourself.

### CMC Acts of NNS<sub>sT</sub> compared to NNS<sub>sO</sub> and NSs

This section of the current study discusses what types of CMC acts NNS<sub>sT</sub> used when they sent e-mail messages to NNS<sub>sO</sub> and NSs, and whether their use of CMC acts resemble or differ from other NNS<sub>sO</sub> and NS groups in the study.

#### NNS<sub>sT</sub> and NNS<sub>sO</sub>

I analyzed the CMC acts of NNS<sub>sT</sub> and NNS<sub>sO</sub>. The results suggest that the most frequently used CMC acts of NNS<sub>sT</sub> and NNS<sub>sO</sub> were *claim* (32.9% for NNS<sub>sT</sub> and 28.6% for NNS<sub>sO</sub>), *inform* (22.9% for NNS<sub>sT</sub> and 24.7% for NNSs), *elaborate* (16.6% for NNS<sub>sT</sub> and 15.6% for NNS<sub>sO</sub>) and *desire* (7.6% for NNS<sub>sT</sub> and 7.8% for NNS<sub>sO</sub>) (See Table 10 and Figure 2 for the frequency of CMC acts used by NNS<sub>sT</sub> and NNS<sub>sO</sub>).

Other frequently used CMC acts by NNSs<sub>T</sub> and NNSs<sub>O</sub> were *manage* (4.9% for NNSs<sub>T</sub> and 9.1% for NNSs<sub>O</sub>), *greet* (4.2% for NNSs<sub>T</sub> and 7.9% for NNSs<sub>O</sub>), *apologize* (1.7% for NNSs<sub>T</sub> and 2.6% for NNSs<sub>O</sub>), *react* (0.8% for NNSs<sub>T</sub> and 1.3% for NNSs<sub>O</sub>), *invite* (1.1% for NNSs<sub>T</sub> and 1.3% for NNSs<sub>O</sub>) and *accept* (2.3% for NNSs<sub>T</sub> and 1.3% for NNSs<sub>O</sub>). While NNSs<sub>T</sub> used *inquire* (1.9%), *thank* (1.5%), *request* (0.8%) and *repair* (0.6%), NNSs<sub>O</sub> did not make use of these acts. Finally, none of the groups used *direct* and *reject*.

A Chi-square test was performed to establish whether the frequencies of NNSs<sub>T</sub> and NNSs<sub>O</sub> CMC acts were significantly different. Table 11 indicates the frequencies of NNSs<sub>T</sub> and NNSs<sub>O</sub>.

Table 11. Chi-Square Analysis of NNS<sub>T</sub> and NNS<sub>O</sub> CMC Acts

Chi-square CMC acts	Groups		Total
	NNSs <sub>T</sub>	NNSs <sub>O</sub>	
Accept	11 (10.3)	1 (1.7)	12
Apologize	8 (8.6)	2 (1.4)	10
Claim	155 (152.1)	22 (24.9)	177
Desire	36 (36.1)	6 (5.9)	42
Elaborate	78 (77.4)	12 (12.6)	90
Greet	20 (22.3)	6 (3.7)	26
Inform	108 (109.2)	19 (17.8)	127
Inquire	9 (7.7)	0 (1.3)	9
Invite	5 (5.2)	1 (0.8)	6
Manage	23 (25.8)	7 (4.2)	30
React	4 (4.3)	1 (0.7)	5
Repair	3 (2.6)	0 (0.4)	3
Request	4 (3.4)	0 (0.6)	4
Thank	7 (6.0)	0 (1.0)	7
Total	471	77	548
Pearson's $X^2$ statistic	8.97		
DF	13		
p	0.7756		

The CMC act labels of *direct* and *reject* are discarded in the analysis because they are zero for both NNSs<sub>T</sub> and NNSs<sub>O</sub>. Beneath each count, in brackets, is the expected count. Chi-square statistics showed no statistical significance with a value of  $X^2=8.97$  and  $DF=13$ , which corresponds to the p value of 0.7756. The difference between the frequencies of NNSs<sub>T</sub> and NNSs<sub>O</sub> CMC acts is not statistically significant.

The CMC environment lacks aural, tactile and visual cues. Therefore, language learners have to spend effort to understand, interpret the messages and make use of pragmatics since communicative intentions and norms of interpretation are not clear in the CMC environment. It is of great importance for NNSs to possess the knowledge of communicative intentions, interlocutors and context in which communication takes place as in Ware and Kramsch (2005). Since language in CMC is English as Seidlhoffer (2001) pointed out, NNSs<sub>A</sub> tried to understand the context and compensated for their limited pragmatic knowledge in the study as shown in Excerpts 16 and 17 taking place between two NNSs.

Excerpt 16:

I tried to write an answer to \_\_\_\_; but I think I couldn't do that. Can you help?

Excerpt 17:

I don't understand you, what did you say to me? I'm really sorry I couldn't understand you :(

In the current study, NNSs<sub>T</sub> and NNSs<sub>O</sub> used a variety of communication strategies, discovered different cultural settings in a natural way, learned about different cultures and reflected on their own and other cultures as stated in earlier studies (Keränen & Bayyurt, 2006; O'Dowd, 2005; O'Dowd & Eberbach, 2004).

Excerpt 18:

Dear \_\_\_\_\_, Although I've never learnt to play a musical instrument, music has always been part of my life as I listen to many songs every day. A traditional Greek instrument is the Klarino which is mostly used to play traditional Greek songs. My favourite musical instrument is the guitar and most of the songs I listen have their introduction played with that instrument. Traditional Greek music is often heard at wedding receptions or to honour a Saint on His name-day. The music I prefer is rock music, specially that of the past decades which carried important political messages and criticised social reality in general.

Excerpt 19:

Dear \_\_\_\_, I can't play instrument but I want to play ud, which is arabic music instrument. Ud' s voice is very relaxing people use that instrument for cure the batty. I like classic music especially turkish classic music and also I like pop, metal, hard music. I know that is so odd but I'm so odd people too :D

When NNS<sub>S<sub>T</sub></sub> and NNS<sub>S<sub>O</sub></sub> were exposed to the L2 medium, and they found the opportunity to experience real language as Hewling (2006) indicated. In light of this, participants in the study gained the opportunity to use the target language outside the classroom context by means of the medium of CMC as Chapelle (2005) suggested.

NNS<sub>S<sub>T</sub></sub> and NSs

This study also explored the use of CMC acts by NNS<sub>S<sub>T</sub></sub> and NSs along with NNS<sub>S<sub>T</sub></sub> and NNS<sub>S<sub>O</sub></sub> mentioned above. The most frequently used CMC acts of NNS<sub>S<sub>T</sub></sub> and NSs were *claim* (32.9% for NNS<sub>S<sub>T</sub></sub> and 32.4% for NSs), *inform* (22.9% for NNS<sub>S<sub>T</sub></sub> and 19.1% NSs), *elaborate* (16.9% for NNS<sub>S<sub>T</sub></sub> and 14.9% for NSs) and *desire* (7.6% for NNS<sub>S<sub>T</sub></sub> and 7.4% for NSs).

Other frequently used CMC acts were *greet* (4.2% for NNS<sub>S<sub>T</sub></sub> and 7.4% for NSs), *manage* (4.9% for NSs<sub>T</sub> and 1.6% for NSs) and *inquire* (1.9% for NNS<sub>S<sub>T</sub></sub> and 5.9% for NSs). The least used CMC acts were *accept* (2.3% for NNS<sub>S<sub>T</sub></sub> and 1.6% NSs), *thank* (1.2% for NNS<sub>S<sub>T</sub></sub> and 3.2% for NSs), *invite* (1.1% for NNS<sub>S<sub>T</sub></sub> and 2.1%

for NSs), *request* (0.8% for NNS<sub>T</sub> and 1.1% for NSs) and *react* (0.8% for NNS<sub>T</sub> and 2.7% for NSs). *Direct* was not used by any of the groups.

A Chi-square test was also performed to establish whether the frequencies of NNS<sub>T</sub> and NS CMC acts were significantly different. Table 12 shows the frequencies of NNS<sub>T</sub> and NS CMC acts.

Table 12. Chi-Square Analysis of NNS<sub>T</sub> and NS CMC Acts

Chi-square CMC acts	Groups		Total
	NNS <sub>T</sub>	NSs	
Accept	11 (10.0)	3 (4.0)	14
Apologize	8 (5.7)	0 (2.3)	8
Claim	155 (154.4)	61 (61.6)	216
Desire	36 (35.7)	14 (14.3)	50
Elaborate	78 (75.8)	28 (30.2)	106
Greet	20 (24.3)	14 (9.7)	34
Inform	108 (102.9)	36 (41.1)	144
Inquire	9 (14.3)	11 (5.7)	20
Invite	5 (6.4)	4 (2.6)	9
Manage	23 (18.6)	3 (7.4)	26
React	4 (6.4)	5 (2.6)	9
Reject	0 (0.7)	1 (0.3)	1
Repair	3 (2.1)	0 (0.9)	3
Request	4 (4.3)	2 (1.7)	6
Thank	7 (9.3)	6 (3.7)	13
Total	471	188	659
Pearson's $X^2$ statistic	27.98		
DF	14		
p	0.0143		

In the analysis, the CMC act label of *direct* was discarded because it was zero for both NNS<sub>T</sub> and NS groups. Beneath each count, in brackets, is the expected count. Chi-square statistics proved statistically significant with a value of  $X^2=27.98$  and DF=14, which corresponds to the p value of 0.0143 ( $p<0.05$ ). This value shows that there is a statistical significance between the frequencies of NNS<sub>T</sub> and NS CMC

acts. Table 13 also summarizes the statistical analyses of both NNS<sub>T</sub> versus NNS<sub>O</sub> and NNS<sub>T</sub> versus NS groups.

Table 13. Statistical Analyses of NNS<sub>T</sub> vs NNS<sub>O</sub> and NNS<sub>T</sub> vs NS Groups

	Chi-square X <sup>2</sup>	p value	Statistically significant
NNS <sub>S<sub>T</sub></sub> vs NNS <sub>O</sub>	8.97 (DF=13)	0.7756	NO
NNS <sub>T</sub> vs NS	27.98 (DF=14)	0.0143	YES

Table 13 indicates that the frequencies of NNS<sub>T</sub> and NNS<sub>O</sub> CMC acts are not statistically significant. On the other hand, the frequencies of NNS<sub>T</sub> and NS CMC acts are statistically significant. This may stem from the fact that NNSs may fall short of using English to communicate as they may not have the necessary knowledge of the linguistic and pragmatic conventions of NSs, and they have rarely been exposed to the target culture as in Kramsch (2006). In the current study, NNS<sub>S<sub>T</sub></sub> made use of a lesser number of CMC acts than NSs although their use of CMC acts, such as *inform* and *elaborate* were more frequent than NSs. This may result from cultural differences, which may foster or hinder communicating in English as in earlier studies (Atawneh, 2003; Barron, 2000; Waldvogel, 2007; Bjørge, 2007).

NSs and NNSs of English sustained interaction and negotiated meaning by making use of several CMC acts in CMC discourse, which has its own norms and interpretations across several languages and cultures (Gaeorgakopoulou, 1997).

Below are Excerpts 20 and 21 taking place between a NS and a NNS<sub>T</sub>.

Excerpt: 20

Hi \_\_\_\_! Welcome to the this forum. I am really impressed with everyone's English. Is it a language that is compulsory in school or do you have the choice of other languages? Also, I'm curious about the school system in Turkey. Is prep the equivalent of high school (grades 9-12) in the U.S. or is it like like a school that you attend after high school and before university? You already have a major so I assume that is what you'll study at university. Good luck with your studies, music, and, of course, basketball!

Excerpt: 21

Our country we have two kind of preparatory school. One of them is before the high school and the other is before the university.. But unfortunately this year the prep school that's before the high school is canceled.. That was so useful I think.. However there is still a prep school before the university we all in this school now.. There is something else about this. We took an exam when we came to the university and if we could pass this exam we wouldn't have to go to prep school. So the prep school that's before the university isn't compulsory..

In addition, NNSs<sub>T</sub> needed to respond to questions addressed to them by the NSs. NSs urged NNSs<sub>T</sub> to produce language by exposing learners to various language uses and contexts. NSs provided help to improve NNSs<sub>T</sub>' English as in Excerpts 22 and 23. This finding is consistent with the previous studies (Erton, 2007; Lorenzo-Dus, 2001).

Excerpt 22:

we may forget English words because there isn't an opportunity to speak English in Turkey, but we can use the internet to do it. it'll be beneficial. ...but internet has a limited opportunity to improve our English that's why I think we must do different activities for example; reading a book, watching a film etc. What do we need to do?

Excerpt 23:

maybe you could write a journal in English and read English newspapers online. The New York Times is good: [www.nytimes.com](http://www.nytimes.com). I have a headset, so if you wanted, we could talk through the Internet and I can provide help with English.

CMC Acts of NNSs<sub>T</sub> addressed to NNSs<sub>O</sub> or NSs

In this study, all participants were involved in exchanging e-mails and answered the prompts each week. The nature of interaction was mostly one-to-many as the mail group that I formed was distinct from usual e-mail exchange, which occurred mostly in one-to-one direction. In this part of the study, I compiled the eleven e-mail messages of NNSs<sub>T</sub> which were addressed to NSs or

NNSs<sub>O</sub>. Table 14 and Figure 3 show NNSs<sub>T</sub>' CMC act preferences when interacting with NNSs<sub>O</sub> in different countries and NSs.

Table 14. CMC Acts of NNSs<sub>T</sub> addressed to NNSs<sub>O</sub> or NSs

CMC acts	NNSs <sub>T</sub> to NNSo	NNSs <sub>T</sub> to NNSo (%)	NNSs <sub>T</sub> to NSs	NNSs <sub>T</sub> to NSs (%)
Accept	0	0.0%	2	2.8%
Apologize	0	0.0%	2	2.8%
Claim	20	33.9%	23	32.4%
Desire	4	6.8%	3	4.2%
Direct	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Elaborate	4	6.8%	12	16.9%
Greet	3	5.1%	3	4.2%
Inform	16	27.1%	11	15.5%
Inquire	5	8.5%	2	2.8%
Invite	3	5.1%	3	4.2%
Manage	2	3.4%	4	5.6%
React	2	3.4%	3	4.2%
Reject	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Repair	0	0.0%	1	1.4%
Request	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Thank	0	0.0%	2	2.8%
Sum	59	100%	71	100%

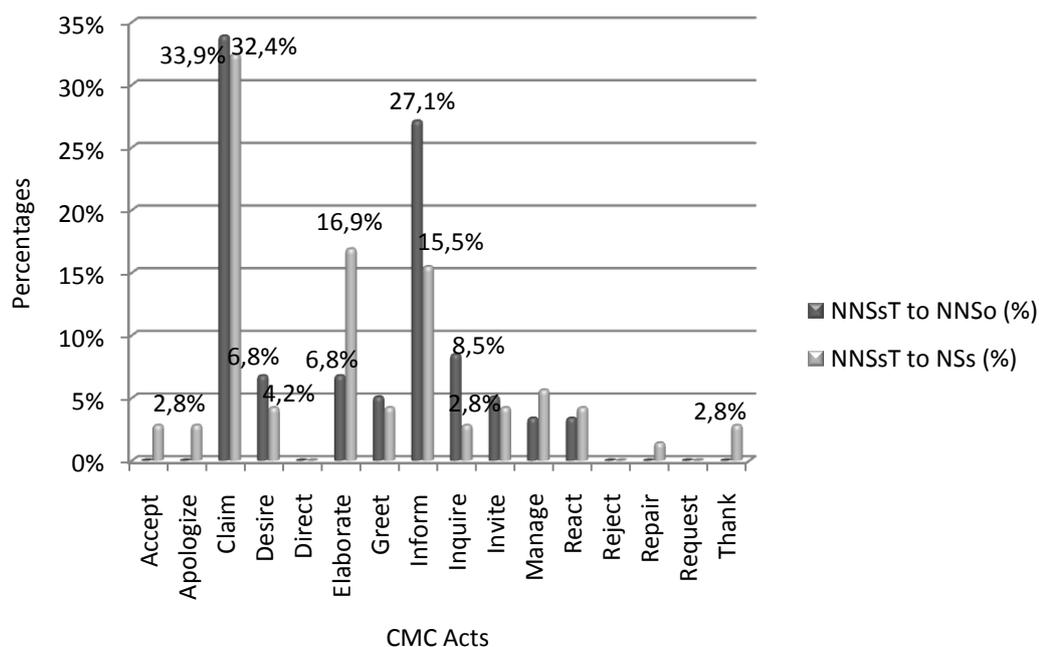


Fig. 3 CMC Acts of NNSs<sub>T</sub> addressed to NNSs<sub>O</sub> or NSs

The most frequently used NNS<sub>T</sub> CMC acts when they addressed NNS<sub>S<sub>O</sub></sub> were *claim*, 20 times (33.9%), *inform*, 16 times (27.1%), and *inquire*, 5 times (8.5%). Other most used CMC acts were *elaborate* (6.8%), *desire* (6.8%), *invite* (5.1%), *manage* (3.4%) and *react* (3.4%). NNS<sub>T</sub> did not make use of CMC acts, such as *accept*, *apologize*, *direct*, *repair*, *request* and *thank*.

When they sent e-mails to NSs, NNS<sub>T</sub> made use of *claim*, 23 times (32.4%), *elaborate*, 12 times (16.9%) and *inform*, 11 times (15.5%). Other most used CMC acts were *manage* (5.6%), *invite* (4.2%) *greet* (4.2%), *react* (4.2%) and *desire* (4.2%). The least used CMC acts were *inquire* (2.8%), *thank* (2.8%), *accept* (2.8%), *apologize* (2.8%) and *repair* (1.4%). The CMC acts of *reject*, *direct* and *request* were not in the data.

According to the overall findings, *claim* was slightly used more when addressing NNS<sub>S<sub>O</sub></sub> (33.9% for NNS<sub>S<sub>O</sub></sub> and 32.4% for NSs). *Elaborate* was mostly opted for NSs (16.9%) as opposed to NNS<sub>S<sub>O</sub></sub> (6.8%). The frequent use of these acts may stem from the need to respond to NS questions in the data. NNS<sub>T</sub> tended to use *inform* with NNS<sub>S<sub>O</sub></sub> (27.1%) rather than NSs (15.5%). Moreover, they made use of *inquire* when interacting with NNS<sub>S<sub>O</sub></sub> (8.5% for NNS<sub>S<sub>O</sub></sub> and 2.8% for NSs). NNS<sub>S<sub>O</sub></sub> tended to stay away from exchanging messages at times; however, NNS<sub>T</sub> tried to compensate for this by addressing questions to them.

As for *desire*, NNS<sub>T</sub> asserted their hopes and dreams more to NNS<sub>S<sub>O</sub></sub> (6.8%) compared to NSs (4.2%). *Invite* was also another option that NNS<sub>T</sub> mostly used for NNS<sub>S<sub>O</sub></sub> (5.1%) and NSs (4.2%) due to the infrequent participation of NNS<sub>S<sub>O</sub></sub>. NNS<sub>T</sub> used *react* more for NSs (3.4% for NNS<sub>S<sub>O</sub></sub> and 4.2% for NSs). NNS<sub>T</sub> used *accept* (2.8%) and *apologize* (2.8%) for NSs unlike NNS<sub>S<sub>O</sub></sub>. *Repair* was also another option that NNS<sub>T</sub> used for NSs (1.4%).

A Chi-square test was also used to establish whether the frequencies of CMC acts in the e-mail exchanges of NNSs<sub>T</sub> when addressing NSs or NNSs<sub>T</sub> were significantly different or not as shown in Table 15.

Table 15. Chi-Square Analysis of NNS<sub>T</sub> CMC Acts addressed to NNSs<sub>O</sub> or NSs

Chi-square CMC acts	Groups		Total
	NNSs <sub>T</sub> to NNSs <sub>O</sub>	NNSs <sub>T</sub> to NSs	
Accept	0 (0.9)	2 (1.1)	2
Apologize	0 (0.9)	2 (1.1)	2
Claim	20 (19.5)	23 (23.5)	43
Desire	4 (3.2)	3 (3.8)	7
Elaborate	4 (7.3)	12 (8.7)	16
Greet	3 (2.7)	3 (3.3)	6
Inform	16 (12.3)	11 (14.7)	27
Inquire	5 (3.2)	2 (3.8)	7
Invite	3 (2.7)	3 (3.3)	6
Manage	2 (2.7)	4 (3.3)	6
React	2 (2.3)	3 (2.7)	5
Repair	0 (0.5)	1 (0.5)	1
Thank	0 (0.9)	2 (1.1)	2
Total	59	71	130
Pearson's $X^2$ statistic	13.44		
DF	12		
p	0.3381		

In the analysis, the CMC acts of *reject*, *direct* and *request* are discarded because they are zero for each group. Beneath each count, in brackets, is the expected count. Chi-square statistics showed no statistical significance with a value of  $X^2=13.44$ ,  $p=0.3381$ . The difference between the CMC acts of NNSs<sub>T</sub> addressed to NNSs<sub>O</sub> and the CMC acts of NNSs<sub>T</sub> addressed to NSs is not statistically significant.

The findings suggest that NNSs<sub>T</sub> made use of a variety of CMC acts when sending messages to NSs. Their use of several CMC acts for NNSs<sub>O</sub> is rather limited compared to NSs. This may be due to the infrequent interaction of NNSs<sub>O</sub> with

NNS<sub>ST</sub> as opposed to more frequent e-mail exchanges taking place between NNS<sub>ST</sub> and NSs who fostered NNS<sub>ST</sub> to write more by asking questions as shown in Excerpts 24 and 25.

Excerpt 24:

Hi, \_\_\_\_\_, I'm American, I would also like to go to all the countries in the world. In which city do you live? Are you 17 or 18? Which types of music do you like?

Excerpt 25:

Really? Aren't elementary school and secondary school free for the students in Turkey?

Founding interpersonal relationships leads to exchanging ideas and topics, which in turn may contribute to professional development and individuals' reflection on their social and cultural differences. When a NS and a NNS negotiate meaning in L2, they share information and try to learn more about each other's cultures (Liaw, 2003; Darhower, 2007). These findings are in line with the current study (See Excerpts 20 and 21).

### NNS<sub>ST</sub>' Perceptions on CMC, Foreign Language Learning and Intercultural Understanding

The perceptions of NNS<sub>ST</sub> about the contribution of CMC to their foreign language learning and cross-cultural communication were explored with the help of pre-study, post-study questionnaires and an interview.

## Pre-Study Questionnaire

I administered a pre-study questionnaire for NNSs<sub>T</sub> to assess how they rated themselves in terms of reading, writing and speaking in English and their English performance in classrooms prior to the study. The participants rated their interaction in English on a 5-point Likert type scale. They gave “1” point for strongly agree and “5” points for strongly disagree. Table 16 shows the results.

Table 16. Results of Pre-Study Questionnaire

Rate your reactions ( 1: Strongly agree – 5: Strongly disagree)	Average
1. I feel confident in my written English	2,2
2. I am comfortable speaking English in class	2,3
3. I am comfortable reading English	1,8
4. I can express my thoughts reasonably well in conversational English	2,4
5. I can express my thoughts satisfactorily in written English	2,2
6. I understand spoken English reasonably well	2,1
7. I understand written English reasonably well	1,8
8. I enjoy discussing ideas with my classmates in English in class	2,5
9. I feel I have ample time to express my thoughts when I am questioned in English in class	2,4
10. I speak only English in class and don't find it necessary to use Turkish to express my ideas	3,1

The participants asserted that they did not always speak English in class, and they sometimes found it necessary to use Turkish. Moreover, the participants were neutral about whether they enjoyed discussing ideas in English with their classmates. They did not think they could express their ideas in conversational English. The participants felt comfortable speaking English in class.

As for writing, they felt confident in their English, and they could express their ideas in a better way in written English. They understood written English. Finally, they did not consider reading as a difficult aspect of English according to their ratings.

As for the second part of the questionnaire, participants felt less confident in their English class in terms of speaking, writing, listening, vocabulary and grammar,

respectively. Only one of them reported feeling confident with vocabulary. Furthermore, they also felt confident when they knew the answers to the questions, and expressed what they meant in English. Three of the participants reported to feel less confident when they made simple mistakes, and they did not know the answer to the question.

NNS<sub>ST</sub> asserted that they were more comfortable with writing and reading than other skills. This means that when exchanging e-mail messages, they may have felt confident in terms of reading other participants' messages and responding to them. Their self-reflections about their perceptions of English in general encouraged me to go on with e-mail messages rather than other modes of CMC as participants would have more time to prepare messages, read and reflect on these messages without being in a hurry. Last but not least, their attitudes towards English indicated they were self-confident with several aspects of English, which in turn encouraged me to think they would be successful communicating in English with individuals from different countries.

#### Attitude Questionnaire for CMC

An attitude questionnaire regarding the use of CMC, benefits of CMC and e-mails for English was sent to NNS<sub>ST</sub>. They asserted their ideas on the use of CMC and whether e-mail helped them to bridge the gap between their current proficiency or not. Participants rated their reactions by giving "1" point for "strongly disagree" and "5" for strongly agree.

Table 17. Results of CMC Attitude Questionnaire

Rate reactions ( 1: Strongly disagree – 5: Strongly agree)	Average
1. I enjoy using computer to communicate with people around the world	4,1
2. I enjoy using computer to communicate with my classmates	4,0
3. I am more afraid to contact people by e-mail than in person	2,5
4. E-mail helps people to learn from each other	3,7
5. An advantage of e-mail is you can contact people anytime you want	3,7
6. Writing to others by e-mail helps me to develop my thoughts and ideas	3,5
7. Using e-mail and the internet makes me feel a part of community	3,5
8. Using e-mail and the internet is a good way to learn more about people and cultures	4,0
9. Communicating by e-mail is a good way to improve my English	3,5
10. Writing e-mail messages makes me more creative	3,6
11. Using computers to communicate with other people gives me more chance to read and use authentic English	3,9
12. Writing e-mail messages gives me more control over my learning	3,7
13. I can improve my English independently when I write e-mail messages	3,5
14. Writing e-mail messages keep people isolated from each other	3,3
15. I can improve my English faster when I send e-mail messages	3,0
16. Writing e-mail messages in English gives me more chance to practise English	3,5
17. Writing e-mail messages are usually very frustrating to work with	2,8

With regard to the questions of 1 and 2, the majority of the participants agreed that they can communicate with people around the world and their classmates with the help of computers. They favored the use of computers. As for question 11, communicating with other people via computers gave learners a chance to practice English and face authentic language. All of these answers indicate that participants found working with computers useful in terms of communication and English. The participants' answers support the findings of the previous studies (Liaw, 2003; Kung, 2002; O'Dowd, 2007; Romanoff, 2003; Vogt, 2006).

Participants regarded the use of e-mail and the Internet as a good way to learn about people and other cultures as stated in Hawisher and Moran (1997). As for the other advantages of e-mails, they asserted that e-mail develop thoughts and ideas. E-mail was also regarded as a tool for learning, and they contended that writing e-mails encourages creativity in line with Erkan (2004). Most participants maintained positive attitudes toward the e-mail application as Luppicini (2007) put forward, CMC experience is associated with positive learning experience and easier interaction with peers and instructors.

NNS<sub>ST</sub> stated that writing e-mails may give them more of a chance to practice and improve English. Such finding is consistent with Hassini (2006) and Vinagre (2008). Moreover, they did not consider working with e-mails frustrating. These answers indicate that participants are eager to be involved in working with computers, meet new people and practice English as pointed out in the previous studies (Bretag, 2006; Hawisher & Moran, 1993).

#### Post-Study Questionnaire on E-mail Exchanges

NNS<sub>ST</sub> reported what they liked the most about online e-mail exchanges. They focused on how these exchanges improved their English and language skills. The majority of the participants reported that these exchanges improved their speaking skills and claimed to have learned new words that are useful for daily life. They considered the medium of CMC as a new opportunity to practice English (See Excerpts 14-15, 16-17, and 22-23). Moreover, three participants mentioned that these exchanges resulted in meeting new people and learning about other cultures (See Excerpts 4 and 5). This was also an opportunity for them to examine their culture from a different point of view as indicated in Haigh, Becker, Craig and Wigley, (2008) and Paulus (2007). These e-mail exchanges contributed to their existing knowledge as there were participants with distinct L1 societal and cultural backgrounds.

Apart from that, participants gave suggestions for further research on the study and offered to make use of different topics next time. In the second and third part of the questionnaire, participants ranked their reactions to the following items in Table 18 below.

Table 18. Learner Perceptions on CMC for Language Learning and Cross-Cultural Understanding

Part 2: Rate reactions (1: Strongly agree – 5: Strongly disagree)	Average
1. I enjoy studying in the English language	2,2
2. I am comfortable speaking English in class	2,3
3. I enjoy writing in English	2,2
4. I like listening to English and trying to understand it	1,7
5. I am comfortable reading English	2,1
6. I feel my pronunciation is good	1,9
7. I can express myself reasonably well in conversational English	2,2
8. I can express my thoughts satisfactorily in written compositions in English	2,1
9. I understand spoken English reasonably well	2,3
10. I usually get anxious when I have to respond to a question during online exchanges with my Turkish friends	3,1
11. I usually get anxious when I have to respond to a question during online exchanges with a native speaker of English	2,9
12. I usually get anxious when I have to respond to a question during online exchanges with non-native speakers of English	2,9
13. I am embarrassed to volunteer answers during online exchanges	2,6
14. I am generally tense when participating in English online exchanges	2,6
15. Whenever I have to answer a question in an online exchange, I get nervous, confused	3,1
16. Online e-mail exchanges were useful for me	2,3
17. Online e-mail exchanges were useful for my partner/s	2,3
18. I believed my partner/s enjoyed online e-mail exchanges	2,5
19. I had the feeling I was leading the discussion most of the time	3,3
20. We focused on the topic	2,6
21. Topics were interesting to me	3,2
22. It was difficult to find time for online e-mail exchanges	2,8
23. Online e-mail exchanges were intimidating for me	3,1
24. Online e-mails enhanced my writing skills.	2,6
25. It was a positive experience for me	2,1
Part 3: Possible Linguistic benefits when writing e-mails:	
1. I monitor my use of grammar and vocabulary	2,1
2. I understand the texts better	2,1

Participants assessed themselves in terms of a variety of skills in English in the first part of the questionnaire. Based on questions of 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, and 8, they stated that their levels of listening and writing along with pronunciation were proficient enough to understand English. They agreed that they enjoyed studying the English language, speaking English in class. They understood spoken English well.

Furthermore, they were asked to reflect on their CMC experience, they claimed that they felt confident when interacting with other NNSs<sub>T</sub> in the study. On the other hand, they agreed that they experienced some anxiety when interacting with NSs and NNSs<sub>O</sub>. NNSs<sub>T</sub> did not find writing to other NNSs difficult because they assumed that their partners did not possess adequate linguistic and cultural norms of the target

culture as Darhower (2007), Fedderholt (2001) and Lee (2001) indicated. Next, perceptions about NSs may be another reason for limited output of CMC acts. In the post-study questionnaire, NNSs<sub>T</sub> claimed they felt some kind of anxiety when interacting with NSs and even with NNSs<sub>O</sub> due to the difficulty in using native-like routines and having the target social structure and values as Erton (2007) and Lorenzo-Dus (2001) pointed out. Although NNSs<sub>T</sub> stated that they were not comfortable with NSs, the number of messages showed that they had more conversation with NSs than NNSs<sub>O</sub> (See Excerpts 20 and 21). They believed that these exchanges were useful for them and their partner; however, they were not sure whether NSs and NNSs<sub>O</sub> liked this experience or not.

In addition, they did not utterly believe that they were leading the discussions most of the time. In terms of topics, they did not appreciate the topics much although they had chosen them. Still, they agreed to focus on the topics while exchanging e-mails as they stated that discussion topics were also an important factor for urging the participants to communicate (See Excerpt 2). Next, they strongly agreed that this was a positive experience for them, and these exchanges contributed to their writing skill as in earlier studies (Hawisher & Moran, 1997; Lightfoot, 2006; Kötter, 2003). While writing e-mails, they agreed to monitor their use of grammar and vocabulary, and e-mails helped them to understand texts better as in Hoshi (2003). However, they had difficulty in finding time for these exchanges.

E-mail exchanges led the participants to write longer messages at a time and to long-distance interaction. Asynchronous correspondence helped to provide an environment where autonomous learning was fostered and supported as Kramsch (2006) put forward. Participants were motivated through questions and answers that were addressed to them by NSs and NNS<sub>T</sub> (See Excerpts 24 and 25).

## Interview Results

NNS<sub>sT</sub> were asked eleven questions during the interview session. The questions were prepared in Turkish and then translated into English.

Table 19. Interview Questions

1. Could you briefly describe your experience during online e-mail exchanges?
2. What was the most valuable and interesting part of online exchanges and why?
3. Could you describe the most difficult part of online exchanges and explain why it was the most difficult one?
4. Could you describe the least difficult part of online exchanges and explain why it was the least difficult one?
5. Could you tell me about your experience with native speakers during online e-mail exchanges in English? Did you enjoy it and why?
6. Could you tell me about your experience with non-native speakers from different parts of the world during online e-mail exchanges in English? Did you enjoy it and why?
7. Could you tell me about your experience with other non-native speakers of English in Turkey during online e-mail exchanges in English? Did you enjoy it and why?
8. Do you think these exchanges improved your English? What do you think about this?
9. What do you think about the topics for online e-mail exchanges?
10. How did the experience of online e-mail exchanges change your perspective on online collaboration? Do you have any concerns about networked collaboration?
11. Do you think you learned anything specifically from participating in these online e-mail exchanges in terms of reading, writing, oral expressions, and/or comprehension?

NNS<sub>sT</sub> reported enjoying these e-mail exchanges as they led to information exchange about different cultures (See Excerpts 4-5 and 10-11). They considered them useful in terms of English, self-expression, and reading and writing as stated in Hoshi (2003) and Waldeck, Kearney and Plax (2001). However, three participants asserted that they did not experience anything at all or spend enough time for these exchanges. They claimed that it was a burden for them, and they thought that they were not English proficient enough to exchange messages with these people.

The majority of the participants asserted that the most valuable part of these exchanges was to learn about other cultures, discuss different topics, correct their mistakes and learn from each other (See Excerpts 16-17). These exchanges invoked some curiosity among learners in terms of English, choice of vocabulary and learning e-mail conventions. NNS<sub>sT</sub> felt that they gained a good deal of cultural information.

They compared their way of life and realized how fundamentally similar or different NSs and NNSs<sub>O</sub> were (See Excerpts 10-11 and 20-21).

Six NNSs<sub>T</sub> reported that the hardest part of online exchanges was to write about the topics of the week. The least difficult part of online exchanges was reading the messages and the first introduction part in the beginning of the study. In addition, ten NNSs<sub>T</sub> stated that providing discussion topics with prompts made it easier to write about a discussion topic in detail as they provided guidance (See Excerpts 2 and 3).

Regarding their experience with NSs during online e-mail exchanges in English, most NNSs<sub>T</sub> said that they learned some conventions of colloquial English and new words. NSs helped them with their English (See Excerpts 20 and 21). On the other hand, most NNSs<sub>T</sub> realized they were not proficient enough when interacting with NSs while exchanging messages on complex issues. On the contrary to that, when NNSs<sub>T</sub> exchanged e-mails with NNSs<sub>O</sub>, they said they felt secure since English was not their mother tongue. Therefore, they were able to correct each other's mistakes and engaged in peer tutoring as stated in previous studies (Akayoğlu & Altun, 2008; Fernández-García & Arbelaiz, 2003; Lee, 2004).

When NNSs<sub>T</sub> participants exchanged messages with their NNS<sub>T</sub> peers in the group, they felt they were more comfortable in expressing themselves as they had a common background, and they provided help when necessary as Vinagre (2008) stated that L2 learners work together to help their partners. However, two NNSs<sub>T</sub> asserted that they preferred to address NSs and NNSs<sub>O</sub> rather than their NNS<sub>T</sub> peers.

Nine participants stated that they learned lots of things from NSs and NNSs<sub>O</sub>. The only problem was the rare number of response they got from NNSs<sub>O</sub> as they did

not participate actively in the conversation although a general topic was chosen for e-mail exchanges every week, and they were informed about this beforehand.

NNS<sub>S<sub>T</sub></sub> expressed their ideas on the discussion topics. Four of the participants did not find the topics interesting or motivating and offered to change topics. These participants did not contribute much to these e-mail exchanges. On the other hand, most participants approved of these topics as they led to information-exchange, and they were popular topics among the youth.

The use of technology for online collaboration was useful according to the participants because they were able to reflect on their own and others' ideas, cultures and practice English. The finding is consistent with the earlier studies (Möllering, 2000; Ware & Kramsch, 2005). Most NNS<sub>S<sub>T</sub></sub> felt that these exchanges helped them in terms of reading, writing, oral expressions, and/or comprehension. They added that their level of English was not the only reason to go on with the exchanges. Interest and motivation were the most crucial thing to learn from these exchanges.

## CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION

The purpose of this thesis was to find out and analyze “speech acts” in the CMC discourse of Turkish NNSs of English (NNS<sub>S<sub>T</sub></sub>), NSs of English (NSs) and NNSs of English (NNS<sub>S<sub>O</sub></sub>) within online e-mail exchanges in English on preset topics between February 2008 and May 2008. Furthermore, NNS<sub>S<sub>T</sub></sub>’ e-mail exchanges were analyzed to determine if their choice of CMC acts resembled or differed from other NSs’ and NNS<sub>S<sub>O</sub></sub>’ CMC acts. Next, the CMC acts of NNS<sub>S<sub>T</sub></sub> were analyzed to find out what types of CMC acts NNS<sub>S<sub>T</sub></sub> used when they addressed NNS<sub>S<sub>O</sub></sub> or NSs. Lastly, the attitudes of NNS<sub>S<sub>T</sub></sub> on the contribution of CMC to their cross-cultural communication, understanding and their foreign language learning were discussed.

76 asynchronous e-mail messages (46 messages from NNS<sub>S<sub>T</sub></sub>, 8 messages from NNS<sub>S<sub>O</sub></sub> and 22 messages from NSs) were analyzed in terms of the contents as well as intentions by using CMDA and CMC Act Taxonomy. Quantitative analyses were performed to find out what CMC acts each group of participants used during their e-mail exchanges. The findings suggested that there was a variety of CMC acts used across the groups. Three groups made use of *claim*, *inform* and *elaborate* as their common CMC acts. Other most used CMC acts were *desire*, *greet*, *invite*, *accept* and *react* across the groups.

Chi-square method was performed to indicate that there is a statistical significance between the frequencies of NNS<sub>S<sub>T</sub></sub> and NS CMC acts. On the other hand, the frequencies of NNS<sub>S<sub>T</sub></sub> and NS CMC acts are statistically significant.

Moreover, eleven NNS<sub>S<sub>T</sub></sub> e-mail messages that were addressed to NNS<sub>S<sub>O</sub></sub> or NSs were analyzed. The most frequently used NNS<sub>S<sub>T</sub></sub> CMC acts when they addressed NNS<sub>S<sub>O</sub></sub> were *claim*, *inform*, *inquire*, *elaborate* and *desire*. When they sent e-mails to

NSs, NNS<sub>S<sub>T</sub></sub> made use of *claim, elaborate, inform, manage* and *invite*. The results suggested that NNS<sub>S<sub>T</sub></sub> resorted to *claim, elaborate, inform, inquire, desire, invite* and *react*. The differences between the CMC acts of NNS<sub>S<sub>T</sub></sub> addressed to NNS<sub>S<sub>O</sub></sub> and the CMC acts of NNS<sub>S<sub>T</sub></sub> addressed to NSs are not statistically significant.

NNS<sub>S<sub>T</sub></sub> regarded the use of e-mail as a beneficial learning tool to know more about people and other cultures, gain cultural information and compare their way of life with other participants from different countries. The participants practiced L2 and negotiated meaning through discussing topics that created a common medium for interaction. They asserted that these exchanges improved their English in terms of choice of vocabulary, learning e-mail conventions and grammar. They had the chance to practice several patterns and discourses. Also, they were able to correct each other's mistakes and be engaged in peer tutoring with NSs and NNS<sub>S<sub>O</sub></sub>. Finally, they agreed that this experience helped them understand the conventions of the target culture and language. NNS<sub>S<sub>T</sub></sub> stated that CMC tools should be used in foreign language classrooms in the future.

#### The Limitations of the Study

The present study has certain limitations. The main limitation is the sample size because with a larger number of participants, normalization of the data would be possible. These results should be treated with caution as these findings may be challenged with a more representative sample or studies conducted at other institutions with different levels of participants. The discussion prompts presented in the study encouraged using the CMC acts of *claim, inform* and *elaborate* more than other CMC acts although other CMC acts emerged in the data.

In addition, two participants in the study asserted that they were not comfortable with e-mails, so they avoided exchanging e-mails and produced limited output. The majority of the participants stated that they spent much time for typing to convey their thoughts in e-mail exchanges.

The participants produced limited number of e-mail exchanges. Most participants sent many e-mails in a week while others sent none. Their interest in a specific topic may have affected how they reacted to it, and what they wrote about it. They simply chose not to respond to questions they felt uncomfortable about addressing, which in turn resulted in a limited number of messages.

They also asserted that the time allowed for exchanging messages on a discussion topic was rather short. Another limitation is the loss of interest in e-mail exchanges. The participants' enthusiasm for writing messages was high in the beginning but the number and the length of e-mail exchanges between the learners decreased as in Stockwell (2003). When their messages were left unanswered, they lost interest in the study and stopped sending e-mail messages to the e-mail group. Others mentioned that CMC often became extra work when there was a lack of participation on the part of other participants.

Most participants of the study did not put enough effort into writing messages. There were some hindrances explained by them in e-mail exchanges, such as school work, exams and the lack of a deeper understanding of each other's background. Participants may have suffered from the lack of social, linguistic clues and explicitness of the messages as they were from different backgrounds, their L1s were different, and their language proficiency in L2 was limited compared to NSs. Therefore, they generally asked for clarification and sought explanations from the other participants owing to limited language proficiency.

In spite of these limitations, the current study brings insights to Foreign Language Education, CMC and pragmatic instruction. The use of e-mail exchanges to teach pragmatics may be a valuable tool to supplement traditional classroom teaching.

### Implications for Further Research

This study also brings to the fore some significant implications for the effectiveness of online learning environments and opens a new road for foreign language learning that adopts a pragmatic point of view. It supports the integration of CMC into foreign language classrooms for the richer input and output that is necessary for L2.

It is necessary to pay attention to low levels of participation among the participants and their indifference to the project in using asynchronous e-mail exchanges. Moreover, it is important that learners receive timely responses to their e-mail messages. As Hair, Ranaud and Ramsay (2007) contended, e-mail creates some kind of pressure on users as it is very fast and arrives as soon as it is sent. There should be a limited time-lag between e-mail exchanges. Learners need to take on enough responsibility and feel pressure to answer e-mails.

I suggest that researchers make use of a smaller number of discussion topics over a longer period of time during the study. Participants should know beforehand what they are going to exchange e-mails about and internalize the discussion topics gradually to answer other interlocutors. Instructors should not interrupt the ongoing interaction by providing lots of topics at a time. They should allow for all

participants to clarify what they write and foster request for clarification whenever needed.

Furthermore, learners need to avoid ambiguity and refrain from unwanted consequences on CMC environment. Learners have to interpret non-verbal and social context clues on CMC environment and compensate for their lack of knowledge about the CMC context. It might be useful in future research to explore the CMC acts used by participants from various levels of language proficiency.

NSs should not be a matter of focus all the time. There should be more NNS-NNS exchanges because of the scarcity of research comparing these kinds of exchanges. Stereotypes about other cultures and participants' conceptions on intercultural understanding may affect the way participants write e-mails. Therefore, it would be better if instructors encourage NNSs to ask for clarification and get rid of prejudices they may have about NSs of the target language.

The integration of e-mail into the traditional classroom may also be possible and frequent in the future. Online e-mail exchanges as in the current study may be beneficial with respect to their use in foreign language education settings in the future with different groups of participants from different countries with different linguistic and socio cultural backgrounds. It would be beneficial to open up a new array of research for the following studies concerning CMC discourse that has specific features of its own.

E-mail is becoming obsolete among learners in the current study. Learners prefer new modes of CMC that include textual, audio, visual and graphical information. They want to use multiple modes of CMC and switch from one to another. Synchronous and asynchronous forms of communication may be used and compared for future research. Further studies might consider the investigation of the

use of synchronous media as they appear to be increasing outside formal learning settings (An & Frick, 2006). Instructors can make use of various tasks, topics and collaborative projects to foster communication with several types of CMC tools. The integration of brand new technologies to classes and language learning may challenge the traditional teaching and learning methods. These innovative methods may contribute to foreign language teaching and learning.

The obvious suggestion is to better educate students for the advantages of CMC tools and collaboration on CMC. CMC tasks should not be seen as a burden when learning a foreign language. It is necessary to increase learner participation in asynchronous and synchronous technologies as these technologies create opportunities for foreign language learners.

It is important for teachers and learners to be familiar with computer technology. CMC still seems to be a useful way of teaching and learning language. It may help learners to become L2 competent language learners and make them familiar with the target language in context.

## APPENDICES

### Background Questionnaire

- 1) First Name:..... 2) Last Name:..... 3) Native Language(s):.....
- 4) Sex:..... 5) Age:..... 6) E-mail address:.....
- 7) Nationality:..... 8) Education:.....
- 9) Language Proficiency in English: A1 A2 B1 B2 C1 C2
- 10) Do you have a computer at home/dormitory? Yes..... No..... for how long? ...
- 11) Please rate your knowledge of computers
- Excellent Very good Good Fair Poor
- 12) How often do you use computers to do the following things?
- Word processing a lot..... a little..... never.....
- E-Mail a lot..... a little..... never....
- Chat (ICQ, Messenger, etc.) a lot..... a little..... never....
- World Wide Web (WWW) a lot..... a little..... never....
- 13) What is your expertise in using word processing programs?
- Low Intermediate Advanced
14. What is your expertise in using email(s)?
- Low Intermediate Advanced
15. What is your expertise in using web browsers?
- Low Intermediate Advanced
16. What is our expertise in using chat programs such as Messenger, ICQ?
- Low Intermediate Advanced

## A. Introductory Message in Turkish

Ben İstanbul Ticaret Üniversitesi İngilizce okutmanlarından Eray Sevingil. Daha önce e-mail adreslerinizi çalışmamız için almıştık. Bu çalışmada ana dili İngilizce olan ve İngilizceyi yabancı dil olarak öğrenenen üniversite öğrencileri arasındaki karşılıklı e-mail yazışmaları ve bu yazışmaların kültürlerarası iletişime katkısı incelenecektir.

Bu çalışma için üniversitemizden Gold grup olarak sizler seçildiniz. Sizlerin arasında yakın bir zamanda sizlerle İngilizce seviyeleri aynı olan üniversite öğrencisi İspanyol akranlarınız ve ana dili İngilizce olan Amerikalı üniversite öğrencileri katılacaktır.

Bu çalışma boyunca her hafta verilen çeşitli konular üzerinde farklı kültürlerden farklı arkadaş grupları ile İngilizce olarak yazışma ve tartışma olanağı bulacaksınız. Bu grup içerisindeki yazışmaların amacı farklı kültürlerin İngilizce olarak paylaşımına olanak sağlamaktır ve çalışmamız hiçbir şekilde sizi test etmeyi, yazışmalarınızdaki değerlendirmelerinizi dilsel ve düşünsel olarak değerlendirmeyi amaçlamaz. Bizim açımızdan sadece farklı kültürlerin dil kullanım özelliklerini incelemek önemlidir.

Bu çalışma içerisinde sizden beklenen mümkün olduğunca boş zamanlarınızda e-mail adreslerinize [iticugold1@yahogroups.com](mailto:iticugold1@yahogroups.com) adresinden gelen yazışmaları takip edip, bu e-mail adresi aracılığıyla diğer grup üyelerine cevap vererek karşılıklı tartışma ve paylaşma ortamı oluşturmaktır.

Çalışma hakkında aklınıza gelen her türlü soruyu bana [eraysevingil@yahoo.com](mailto:eraysevingil@yahoo.com) adresinden veya okulda hazırlık bölümünde okutmanlar odası 2 de beni bularak sorabilirsiniz.

Bu çalışma grubunda yer almak için lütfen

[iticugold1-subscribe@yahogroups.com](mailto:iticugold1-subscribe@yahogroups.com)

adresine boş bir e-mail atınız. Sonra size bir e-mail gelecektir, gelen e-mail de tekrar “reply” a basıp “send” e tıklayarak boş bir cevap atınız. E-mail gelmedi ise mesaj kutunuzun “junk” bölümünü de kontrol ediniz.

Eray Sevingil

İngilizce Dil Programları

## B. Introductory Message in English

Dear Students,

I would like to thank you for your interest and collaboration in this study. The project is about the online exchanges between native speakers of English and non-native speakers of English in different countries.

Turkish and Spanish freshmen year university students and Native speakers of English have already started exchanging e-mails on some preset topics. I hope you will also join the group sooner. I am going to send you a topic with three questions each week and that will be the content of the exchanges. Thanks to the online exchanges, you will have the chance to exchange e-mails with many students from different countries also find the opportunity to get to know them more through sharing and discussing ideas about different topics per week. This study aims to open up a new form of interaction between students across different cultures in English. This study does not aim to assess your ideas on a specific topic(s) and does not aim to test your English proficiency.

All you are supposed to do is to write e-mails about the topics. Please follow the e-mails from [iticugold1@yahoogleroups.com](mailto:iticugold1@yahoogleroups.com) and join exchanging messages with people so that you will find the opportunity to share and know more about each other.

If you are able to join us, please send a blank e-mail to

[iticugold1-subscribe@yahoogleroups.com](mailto:iticugold1-subscribe@yahoogleroups.com)

After this step, you will get an e-mail. Click reply on this e-mail and then send it back. In case of not getting the first e-mail, please check your “junk” mailbox.

For any further questions, please contact [eray.sevingil@boun.edu.tr](mailto:eray.sevingil@boun.edu.tr)

Thank you

Eray Sevingil  
English Language Programs

### C. Topic Survey

Name/Last name:

E-mail:

#### A Questionnaire

Imagine you are going to e-mail some international students abroad. What kind of topics would you like to discuss with them in your e-mails? Please send the results to [eray.sevingil@boun.edu.tr](mailto:eray.sevingil@boun.edu.tr)

Please rate them in order of importance for you, for example; if fashion is the most important item for you, please put 1 next to it.

Fashion \_\_\_1\_\_\_, beauty \_\_\_2\_\_\_ and so on.

1. Beauty \_\_\_\_\_
2. Friendship / Friends \_\_\_\_\_
3. Fashion \_\_\_\_\_
4. Celebrities \_\_\_\_\_
5. Greetings/Gifts \_\_\_\_\_
6. Leisure and work \_\_\_\_\_
7. Education \_\_\_\_\_
8. Holiday(s) \_\_\_\_\_
9. Sports \_\_\_\_\_
10. National heroes \_\_\_\_\_
11. TV and entertainment \_\_\_\_\_
12. Performing arts (plays, opera etc.) \_\_\_\_\_
13. Movies \_\_\_\_\_
14. Music \_\_\_\_\_
15. Eating and food customs \_\_\_\_\_
16. Taking photos \_\_\_\_\_
17. Nature \_\_\_\_\_

Thank You

## D. Pre-study Questionnaire

Name :

Last Name :

English Courses taken at any institution:

I. Please rate your reactions to the following statements:

1. Strongly Agree   2. Agree   3. Neutral   4. Disagree   5. Strongly Disagree

1. \_\_\_\_\_ I feel confident in my written English.
2. \_\_\_\_\_ I am comfortable speaking English in class.
3. \_\_\_\_\_ I am comfortable reading English.
4. \_\_\_\_\_ I can express my thoughts reasonably well in conversational English.
5. \_\_\_\_\_ I can express my thoughts satisfactorily in written English.
6. \_\_\_\_\_ I understand spoken English reasonably well.
7. \_\_\_\_\_ I understand written English reasonably well.
8. \_\_\_\_\_ I enjoy discussing ideas with my classmates in English in class.
9. \_\_\_\_\_ I feel I have ample time to express my thoughts when I am questioned in English in class.
10. \_\_\_\_\_ I speak only English in class and don't find it necessary to use Turkish to express my ideas.

II. Complete these statements:

1. In my English class, I am most confident when \_\_\_\_\_
2. In my English class, I am least confident when \_\_\_\_\_

## E. Attitude Questionnaire

The purpose of this questionnaire is to assess your attitude towards the use of computers for writing and communication. If you please answer the following questionnaire as honestly and carefully as possible, you will have contributed a lot to the study. Thank you.

Please rate your reactions and write a number (1-5):

1. Strongly Disagree   2. Disagree   3. Neutral   4. Agree   5. Strongly agree

1. I enjoy using the computer to communicate with people around the world.

1   2   3   4   5

2. I enjoy using the computer to communicate with my classmates.

1   2   3   4   5

3. I am more afraid to contact people by e-mail than in person.

1   2   3   4   5

4. E-mail helps people to learn from each other.

1   2   3   4   5

5. An advantage of e-mail is you can contact people any time you want.

1   2   3   4   5

6. Writing to others by e-mail helps me develop my thoughts and ideas.

1   2   3   4   5

7. Using e-mail and the Internet makes me feel a part of a community.

1   2   3   4   5

8. Using e-mail and the Internet is a good way to learn more about people and cultures.

1   2   3   4   5

9. Communicating by e-mail is a good way to improve my English.

1   2   3   4   5

10. Learning to use a computer gives me a feeling of accomplishment.

1   2   3   4   5

11. Writing by computer makes me more creative.

1   2   3   4   5

12. Using a computer gives me more chance(s) to read and use authentic English.

1   2   3   4   5

13. I want to continue using a computer in my classes.  
1 2 3 4 5
14. Using a computer is not worth time and effort.  
1 2 3 4 5
15. Using a computer gives me more control over my learning.  
1 2 3 4 5
16. I enjoy the challenge of using computers.  
1 2 3 4 5
17. Learning how to use computers is important for my career.  
1 2 3 4 5
18. I can improve my English independently when I use a computer.  
1 2 3 4 5
19. Computers keep people isolated from each other.  
1 2 3 4 5
20. I can improve my English faster when I use a computer.  
1 2 3 4 5
21. Using a computer gives me more chance to practise English.  
1 2 3 4 5
22. Computers are usually very frustrating to work with.  
1 2 3 4 5
23. Computers make people weak and powerless.  
1 2 3 4 5

## F. Post-study Questionnaire

Name:

Last Name:

Complete the sentences:

I. The best thing about these online exchanges is:

\_\_\_\_\_

I would suggest the following way/s to improve these online exchanges:

\_\_\_\_\_

II. Please rate your reactions to the following statements by putting the number of your choice in the blank by the statement below:

1. Strongly agree   2. Agree   3. Neutral   4. Disagree   5. Strongly Disagree

After completing the online exchanges, I can say that

1. \_\_\_\_ I enjoy studying the English language.
2. \_\_\_\_ I am comfortable speaking English in class.
3. \_\_\_\_ I enjoy writing in English.
4. \_\_\_\_ I like listening to English and trying to understand it.
5. \_\_\_\_ I am comfortable reading English.
6. \_\_\_\_ I feel that my pronunciation is good.
7. \_\_\_\_ I like writing on a computer.
8. \_\_\_\_ I can express myself reasonably well in conversational English.
9. \_\_\_\_ I can express my thoughts satisfactorily in written compositions in English.
10. \_\_\_\_ I understand spoken English reasonably well.
11. \_\_\_\_ I usually get anxious when I have to respond to a question during online exchanges in English with my Turkish friends.
12. \_\_\_\_ I usually get anxious when I have to respond to a question during online exchanges with a native speaker of English.
13. \_\_\_\_ I usually get anxious when I have to respond to a question during online exchanges with non-native speakers of English from countries

14. \_\_\_\_\_ I am embarrassed to volunteer answers during online exchanges.
15. \_\_\_\_\_ I am generally tense when participating in English online exchanges.
16. \_\_\_\_\_ Whenever I have to answer a question in an online exchange, I get nervous and confused.
17. \_\_\_\_\_ Online e-mail exchanges were useful for me.
18. \_\_\_\_\_ Online e-mail exchanges were useful for my partner/partners.
19. \_\_\_\_\_ I believed my partner/s enjoyed online e-mail exchanges.
20. \_\_\_\_\_ I had the feeling that I was leading the discussion most of the time.
21. \_\_\_\_\_ We focused on the topic.
22. \_\_\_\_\_ Topics were interesting to me.
23. \_\_\_\_\_ It was difficult to find time for online e-mail exchanges
24. \_\_\_\_\_ Online e-mail exchanges were intimidating for me.
25. \_\_\_\_\_ Online e-mail exchanges enhanced my writing skills.
26. \_\_\_\_\_ It was a positive experience for me.

Thinking back on your experience during online e-mail exchanges with other non-native and native speakers in different countries and Turkey, please answer these questions regarding your online e-mail exchanges. Use the same 5 point values:

1. Strongly agree    2. Agree    3. Neutral    4. Disagree    5. Strongly Disagree

**I. Possible Linguistic Benefits: When writing e-mails**

1. \_\_\_\_\_ I monitor my use of grammar and vocabulary.
2. \_\_\_\_\_ I understand the texts better.
3. \_\_\_\_\_ I like the increased reading practice.
4. \_\_\_\_\_ I like the increased writing practice.
5. \_\_\_\_\_ I can express my thoughts better orally after using this conversational writing practice.
6. \_\_\_\_\_ I find that I participate more during online e-mail exchanges than in oral discussion in the regular class.
7. \_\_\_\_\_ I like the conversational aspect of the online e-mail exchanges.
8. \_\_\_\_\_ I think I have improved my automaticity, i.e., ability to express myself easily using common phrases and expressions during online e-mail exchanges.

## G. Interview Questions

1. Could you briefly describe your experience during online e-mail exchanges?
2. What was the most valuable and interesting part of online exchanges and why?
3. Could you describe the most difficult part of online exchanges and explain why it was the most difficult one?
4. Could you describe the least difficult part of online exchanges and explain why it was the least difficult one?
5. Could you tell me about your experience with native speakers during online e-mail exchanges in English? Did you enjoy it and why?
6. Could you tell me about your experience with non-native speakers from different parts of the world during online e-mail exchanges? Did you enjoy it and why?
7. Could you tell me about your experience with other non-native speakers of English in Turkey during online e-mail exchanges? Did you enjoy it and why?
8. Do you think online e-mail exchanges helped you improve your English and how?
9. What do you think about the topics for online e-mail exchanges?
10. How did the experience of online e-mail exchanges change your perspective on the online collaboration? Do you have any concerns about networked collaboration?
11. Do you think you learned anything specifically from participating in these online e-mail exchanges in terms of reading, writing, oral expressions and/or comprehension?

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