

A Longitudinal Study of English-Major Turkish Students' Pragmatic Awareness in an EFL Context

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ABSTRACT

This paper presents the results of a longitudinal study which examined the development of the Turkish EFL learners' pragmatic awareness in an EFL context in a four-year period. The data which were originally collected from American native speakers and used by Bulut and Özkan (2005) were also used in this study as the baseline to compare Turkish EFL learners' pragmatic awareness longitudinally. A ten-item pragmatic judgment test, which was originally developed and used by Bulut and Özkan (2005), was also used for this study. Students who participated in this study were asked to rank the five complimenting expressions listed under each of the ten complimenting situations from the most to the least appropriate during their first year and fourth year at university. Each situation included a native speaker complimenting expression and four complimenting expressions from non-native speakers of English. The results showed that students' perceptions of native speaker complimenting expressions did not significantly change in four years' time. The results also showed that while there were no significant correlations between native speaker rankings and students' rankings during their first year at university, the students' rankings were significantly correlated with native speaker rankings only in two of the ten situations when they were in their fourth year, which means that length of study did not contribute significantly to the development of English-major Turkish EFL learners' pragmatic awareness.

INTRODUCTION

Pragmatic awareness and production have been investigated in different language learning contexts and the studies conducted for the last 20 years have shown that native speakers and learners of a language do not always match in their perception and production (Schauer 2006). Pragmatic awareness seems to be treated as the initial step into