# The Interlanguage Pragmatics of Greetings

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## Abstract

The present study centers on interlanguage and cross-cultural pragmatics. It investigates semantic formulas (SF) in the speech act of greeting as performed by Russian EFL learners. In particular, it compares the non-native speakers' (NNS) and native speakers' (NS) production of SF in terms of number, frequency, and content. A Free Discourse Completion Test (FDCT) containing 16 situational prompts elicited greetings by the English NNSs and NSs. The results demonstrate significant differences in NS and NNS production in terms of number, frequency, and content of greetings strategies, namely, greetings proper, phatic questions and phrases, address terms, and situational greetings. The differences result from negative pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic transfer, lack of appropriate linguistic means, attitude towards the FDCT, and induced instruction. Important pedagogical implications for pragmatic instruction are discussed. The results contribute to a better understanding of how EFL learners greet and respond to greetings. They also shed light on the discussion of L2 learners' pragmatic competence and appropriateness.

*Keywords*: interlanguage, cross-cultural pragmatics, speech acts, greetings.

## Introduction

In the recent years, in the fields of applied linguistics and Teaching English as a Second/ Foreign Language, interlanguage pragmatics (ILP) – acquisition and use of second language (SL) or foreign language (FL) pragmatics – has drawn extensive research interest (AlcónSoler &Martínez-Flor, 2008; Culpeper, Mackey, & Taguchi, 2018; Martínez-Flor &Usó-Juan, 2010a; Taguchi, 2019; Trosborg, 2010). Among many directions in ILP research, such as politeness strategies, conversational implicatures, turn-taking, discourse markers, and others, the central attention of the researchers in cross-linguistic ILPhas was devoted to the production of speech acts by non-native speakers (NNSs) of different languages. Among a variety of speech acts, requests and apologies are the most well-studied (Blum-Kulka, House, & Kasper, 1989; Trosborg, 1995).Research has demonstrated that performing speech acts is a complex task which requires linguistic as well and communicative and pragmatic competence. In the process of speech acts production, a target language(L2)learner relies not only on the linguistic rules – phonetics, phonology, morphology, semantics, and syntax, but also on the appropriate use of these rules and interactional norms according to a specific context. In other words, in order to interact successfully in the immediate as well as broad

socio-cultural context, a learner should develop communicative, pragmatic, and interactional competences. Such communication includes performing appropriate utterances and communicative tasks and also joint construction and negotiation of meaning in a dynamic discourse (Taguchi, 2017). This becomes vital under today's conditions of globalization and multiculturalism with the goal of current English as a Second language (ESL) pedagogy to create conditions for effective cross-cultural interaction between speakers of different languages and representatives of different cultures (Savignon, 2018).

Previous literature has documented and described difficulties that SL and FL learners of all proficiency levels encounter in acquisition ofL2 communicative rules and pragmatic norms (Bardovi-Harlig, 2001). It has been shown that the learners often inappropriately transfer pragmalinguistic (linguistic forms) and sociopragmatic (sociocultural and contextual conventions) rules of their native language (L1) into the L2 production (Thomas, 1983). Such pragmatic transfer often leads to communicative breakdowns, misunderstandings, and pragmatic failure. Pragmatic errors or "errors of appropriacy" (Crandall &Basturkmen, 2004, p. 38) are perceived as serious by native speakers (NSs) and compared to grammatical or vocabulary errors are "less easily forgiven" (Yates, 2010, p. 288) and might beseen asoffensive, disrespectful, and rude.

Developing competence in performing speech acts is therefore of paramount importance in relation to successful communication. It becomes especially important in the case of performing the speech act of greeting considering its significant social function in speech communities. Greetings are keys for establishing and maintaining contacts and for language learners serve "as a door to the target culture" (Kakiuchi, 2005, p. 63). Knowledge and appropriate use of greetings is an important component of L2 communicative and pragmatic competences: "the more speakers understand the cultural context of greetings, the better the society appreciates them, and the more they are regarded as well behaved" (Schleicher, 1997, p. 334).

## Literature Review

The speech act theory views greetings as ritualized speech utterances which lack propositional content and denotational meaning (Austin, 1962; Searle, 1969). Their main function is social: to establish and reestablish relations and to acknowledge differences in social status (Goffman, 1971). Moreover, greetings represent politeness, distinguish and recognize hearer (H), express attitudes of speaker (S) towards H, attract attention, and are expected in a certain social situation. The choice of greetings in a particular culture depends on different factors such as social status, age, gender, degree of familiarity, and degree of intimacy or distance (Ferguson, 1981; Laver, 1981). In the Politeness Theory, Brown and Levinson (1987) characterize greetings as face-saving acts (FSA)since they demonstrate positive politeness, phatic communication, and establish relationships in a non-threatening atmosphere. However, if greetings violate a variable of power (P) or social distance (D), they may turn into a face-threatening act

(FTA). In regards to greetings, Brown and Levinson's formula for determination the weight of an FTA

$$W_x = D\ (S,H) + P\ (H,S) + R_x$$

might be revised as $X = D\ (S,H) + P\ (H,S) + \ldots$ (Qian, 1996), where X is the degree of greeting politeness. It varies if variables of D or P change. For example, in the dialogues "Hey buddy! – Hey! Glad to see you here!" and "How do you do, Mr. Smith? – How do you do, Mr. Jones? I am pleased to meet you" the variables of P and D are contextually different. Consequently, X–the greeting politeness–is changed (Qian, p. 36). The suggested formula is open-ended as other factors, for example, time of day, communicative intention, number of interlocutors and so on, may interfere (Felecan, 2015; Qian, 1996).

Traditionally, verbal greetings in English are classified according to time indication, contextual factors (P, D, age (A), etc.), and lexico-semantic content. First, English greetings are divided into time-free (such as "Hello," "How are you?") and time-bound (such as "Good morning," "Good afternoon") (Halliday, 1975). Another classification distinguishes formal and informal greetings (Greere, 2005; Leech &Svartvik, 2002). Formal greetings denote formality of context and are used in business situations, with interlocutors of higher P and A, and unfamiliar or not so well familiar interlocutors. Informal greetings have more variability and flexibility and are used between family members, friends, P and A peers, and in informal situations in general. Finally, greetings are distinguished by the social context: different kinds of service encounters, telephone calls, media broadcasts,

personalized greetings, and other (Qian, 1996). Specific opening phrases functioning as a greeting or preceding it are expected in these contexts, e. g. the phrase "Can I help you?" in service encounters; summons in telephone calls (Schegloff, 1986); summons in academic office hours (Limberg, 2010); "Nice to meet you," "How do you do," "My name is …" in introductory greetings (Greere, 2005; Masi, 2008); and inquiries about interlocutor's health, feelings, family, compliments or remarks appropriate to the situation in personalized greetings.

In cross-linguistic descriptive studies, greetings from a number of languages Chinese (Li, 2009; Ma, 2000; Qian, 1996), Vietnamese (Suu, 1990), Polish (Jakubowska, 1998), Spanish (Pinto, 2008), Thai (Bornmann, 2001), Persian (Negargar, 2015; Salmani-Nodoushan, 2007), German and Spanish (Feller, 2007), Italian (Bonsignori, Bruti, &Masi, 2011)– have been compared to English. These studies demonstrate the diversity of greetings and their contextual, social, and linguistic variability. The determining factors can be D, P,A, gender, or socio-religious norms of a community. Such variability presents a challenge for L2 learners in terms of linguo-cultural comprehension and linguistic production. For instance, Chinese and Thai greetings "Have you eaten?" or "Where are you going?" might become FTAs for English speakers (Li, 2009; Sukwiwat & Fieg, 1987). In contrast, for Chinese speakers such greetings "show concern for others' welfare and at the same time maintain the hearer's positive face" (Li, p. 74). Another example of a challenge for L2 learners is the English greeting phatic questions such as "How are you?" Because of

the "mismatch between the literal meaning, or locutionary force, of the utterance and its intended meaning, or illocutionary force" (Sykes, 2018, p. 121),this phrase might be perceived as a genuine question about well-being, leading to misunderstandings, cultural profiling (Kartalova, 1996), and pragmatic failure (Jaworski, 1994).

In ILP research, the speech act of greeting has been under studied. Although many greetings are relatively straightforward and formulaic (Baratta, 2009),they can involve extensive forms and additional contextual features emerging in context and during interaction (Baratta, 2009; Duranti, 1997). In this regard, the speech act of greeting mightpresent difficulties for L2 learners (Waring, 2012) and consequently is of interest for ILP scholarship. Nonetheless, the studies exploring the ILP aspect of greetingsare scarce up to date. Few studies analyze the NNSs' production of English greetings. The first one done by Ebsworth, Bodman, and Carpenter (1995) looked at the types of English greetings performed by English NNSs with various L1s. The analysisof Discourse Completion Tests (DCT) and role-plays demonstratedsignificant difficulties that English learners at the advanced level of proficiency have with producing and responding to English greetings. Pragmatic transfer, sociopragmatic and pragmalinguistic deficiencies, and a limited variety of greeting phrases were noted. The second study – byKakiuchi (2005) –analyzed greetings in conversations by NSs

of American English and Japanese NNSs of English and found NNSs to be less target-like and showing low variability in greetings. Gharaghani, Eslami-Rasekh, Dabaghi, and Tohidian (2011) further confirmed and exemplified challenges for English learners in the production of greetings. In their research, Persian EFL learners inappropriately transferred L1 greeting strategies into the English production, which led to pragmatic failure. In addition to these three studies, several others direct attention to the L2 production of greetings in languages other than English. Omar (1991) explored greeting performance by learners of Kiswahili. Du Fon (1999) focused on the process of acquisition of Indonesian greetings. Lastly, Sithebe (2011) analyzed greetings produced by American learners of Swazi. These studies provide additional evidence on the complexities of greetings and challenges for L2 learners.

The current article aims to address the research gaps outlined above. Adopting cross-linguistic comparative perspective, it analyzes the production of the speech act of greeting from the ILP view and identifies and explains differences between NS and NNS production of this particular speech act. The following research questions are addressed in this article: Are semantic formulas (SF) in greetings produced by Russian EFL learners different or similar to those produced by English NSs in terms of their number, frequency, and content? What types of greetings exhibit differences/ similarities?

## Methods

The data for the present research wa scollected through a Free Discourse Completion Test(FDCT). It has undergone

two rounds of piloting for prompts revising and rewording, ensuring comprehensibility for the NNS respondents, feasibility to

answer, and practicality to administer. The final version included 16 situational prompts with the contextual variables of P, D, A, and Formality (F) which, as discussed above, influence greetings production significantly.

The prompts in the FDCT represent all possible configurations of P, D, A, and F variables for the participants. The distribution of variables is represented in Table 1. All variables are binary and are presented as follows: +A (H is older than S) and =A (equal age of S and H); +F (formal situation), -F (informal situation); +D (S and H do not know each other), -D (S and H know each other); +P(H has more power than S) and =P (power status of S and H is equal). In the P variable, the possible scenario of -P (S has more P than H) was not included in the FDCT, as the participants were undergraduate students and it might have been unfeasible for them to envision contexts of greeting someone of less P. The complete FDCT is presented in Appendix 1.

Table 1.
Variables distribution between items of the FDCT

| FDCT dialogue | Variables | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | P | A | F | D |
| #1. Friend informal | = | = | - | - |
| #2. Friend formal | = | = | + | - |
| #3. Friend older informal | = | + | - | - |
| #4. Friend older formal | = | + | + | - |
| #5. Professor informal | + | + | - | - |
| #6. Professor formal | + | + | + | - |
| #7. Instructor young informal | + | = | - | - |
| #8. Instructor young formal | + | = | + | - |
| #9. New friend informal | = | = | - | + |
| #10. New classmate formal | = | = | + | + |
| #11. New friend older informal | = | + | - | + |
| #12. New classmate older formal | = | + | + | + |
| #13. New professor informal | + | + | - | + |
| #14. New professor formal | + | + | + | + |
| #15. New instructor informal | + | = | - | + |
| #16. New instructor formal | + | = | + | + |

Two groups of participants were employed: NNSs of English – EFL students in a Russian university (N=50), and NSs of American English – undergraduate students in an American university (N=40). Both groups answered demographic questions on their age, gender, and university major. The NNSs group was additionally asked about the

number of years of English learning and opportunities to use English outside the classroom.

The majors of the NNS participants were English language and literature (52%), Finnish and English languages (36%), andjournalism (12%). NS participants had a variety of majors – English, German, arts, music, history, geography, psychology, sociology, business and finance, botany, strategic communication, engineering, and political science. NNS participants were 10% male and 90% female; NS – 30% male and 70 % female. Age of both groups was between 18 and 24 years (the mean – 19.5 years). For the NNSs, the number of years of English learning varied from five to 16 years (the mean – 9.8 years). Regarding using English outside the classroom, 38% of the NNSs never communicate in English, 28% – rarely, 26% – sometimes, and 8% – often;14% have travelled to countries where English is used for communication.

For the NNS group, the prompts of the FDCT were written both in L1 and L2 in order to ascertain their full understanding. The test was run during class time or immediately after it by the researcher or cooperating university instructors. The NS participants completed the FDCT at their convenience.

In the current study, following the method of data analysis used in cross-linguistic ILP research (Bardovi-Harlig, 2009;Bardovi-Harlig, Bastos, Burghardt, Chappetto, Nickels, & Rose, 2010; Bardovi-Harlig & Hartford, 1990; Beebe, Takahashi, Uliss-Weltz, 1990; Keshavarz, Eslami-Rasekh, &Ghahraman, 2006), semantic formulas (SF) – components of a speech act

(Cohen, 1996) – were used as major units of analysis.

SF of greetings produced in the FDCTs were identified and coded. The SF in the present data include the constituents of ,English greetings: greetings proper, address terms, and elements of phatic communication (Bonsignori et al., 2011; Greere, 2005; Sacks, 1975) and were coded as follows:

1. Greetings proper. This category was further divided into time-free/ time-bound and formal/ informal variants. For example, "Hello" is time-free, neutral greeting proper; "Hey" is time-free, informal greeting proper; "Good afternoon" is time-bound, formal greeting proper.

2. Address terms. This category was further divided into personal names, university titles (Doctor, Professor), honorifics (Mr./ Mrs., Sir/ Madam), and colloquial addresses (man, dude);

3. Phatic questions. This category was further divided into neutral (How are you?), formal (How do you do?), and informal (What's up?) questions;

4. Phatic phrases (Nice to see you/ Nice to meet you);

5. Situational greetings. This category includes contextualized or individualized phrases or questions which serve as a greeting in specific circumstances of the constructed dialogue.

For example, the greeting "Hi, John! What's up?" includes the following components – SF: time-free informal greeting proper 'Hi', a personal name, and the informalphatic question.

In order to ensure the reliability of coding and further analysis, a second coder coded 10% of the data, a sufficient amount for

establishing raters' reliability (Mackey &Gass, 2005, p. 243). The results were highly reliable (97%), with disagreements being resolved through discussion.

The number of SF was calculated and compared between the two participant groups. The mean number of all SF was calculated by dividing the total SF number by the number of responses (total # of SF / N). The mean number of particular SF was calculated by dividing the total number of particular SP by the number of responses (total # of particular SF / N). In order to determine whether there is a difference in the number of produced SF between the two groups and whether the difference is significant, the chi-square test was conducted, and the p-value was calculated. The frequency of SF was calculated as the percentage of the total number of SF produced by the respondents ([total # of particular SF / total # ofSF] x 100) (Bardovi-Harlig & Hartford, 1993, p. 147). For qualitative analysis, the NNSs' responses were examined from the SF perspective in relation to NSs' responses; attention was paid to the features and content of obtained discourse data.

## Results and Discussion

Table 2 presents the numbers of SF produced in the entire FDCT and the mean in the two participant groups.

Table 2

Numbers and Mean of SF in NS and NNS Data

| FDCT dialogue | Number | | Mean | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | NS | NNS | NS | NNS |
| #1. =P,=A,-F,-D | 90 | 137 | 2.25 | 2.74 |
| #2. =P,=A,+F,-D | 77 | 113 | 1.925 | 2.26 |
| #3. =P,+A,-F,-D | 83 | 126 | 2.025 | 2.52 |
| #4. =P,+A,+F,-D | 88 | 110 | 2.2 | 2.2 |
| #5. +P,+A,-F,-D | 95 | 94 | 2.375 | 1.88 |
| #6. +P,+A,+F,-D | 95 | 82 | 2.375 | 1.64 |
| #7. +P,=A,-F,-D | 91 | 99 | 2.275 | 1.98 |
| #8. +P,=A,+F,-D | 80 | 86 | 2 | 1.72 |
| #9. =P,=A,-F,+D | 82 | 106 | 2.25 | 2.3 |
| #10. =P,=A,+F,+D | 76 | 119 | 1.9 | 2.38 |
| #11. =P,+A,-F,+D | 83 | 102 | 2.075 | 2.4 |
| #12. =P,+A,+F,+D | 79 | 106 | 1.975 | 2.12 |
| #13. +P,+A,-F,+D | 73 | 106 | 1.875 | 2.12 |
| #14. +P,+A,+F,+D | 77 | 116 | 1.925 | 2.32 |
| #15. +P,=A,-F,+D | 72 | 102 | 1.8 | 2.04 |
| #16. +P,=A,+F,+D | 72 | 108 | 1.8 | 2.16 |
| Total | 1313 | 1712 | 33.025 | 34.24 |

As shown in Table 2, the total mean of SF produced by the NS and NNS groups is similar. In other words, in average, the NSs and NNSs produced similar number of SF in

the entire FDCT. For the total number of SF, $X^2= 0.0384$, $p=.844567$ which is not significant at p < .05. However, the results of the mean of SF per each FDCT item(#1-16) are different: they demonstrate discrepancies between the NSs and NNSs. Mainly, the number of SF varied depending on P and D. The NNSs produced a higher number of SF when greeting status peers (=P) in items# 1-3. More SF were also produced in introductory greetings (+D) in items # 9-16. A lower number of SF was produced in greeting status superiors – university professors and instructors (+P) in items # 5-8.

The higher number of SF in the NNSs' production can be accounted for by an interlanguage characteristic known as "waffle phenomenon" (Edmonson & House, 1991). It refers to "excessive use of linguistic forms to fill a specific discourse 'slot' or 'move, i.e. achieve a specific pragmatic goal" (pp. 273-274). According to Blum-Kulka and Olshtain (1986), such verbosity and overuse of SF is evident in more proficient learners. In producing a high number of words and excessive elaboration, they demonstrate "a desire to 'play it safe' by making propositional and pragmatic meanings as transparent as possible" (Ellis, 2003, p. 172). Additionally, the L2 learners may not be entirely competent in the usage range and appropriateness of a particular SF (Edmondson & House, 1991). As Blum-Kulka and Olshtain (1986) and Edmondson and House (1991) showed, NNSs produced longer DCT responses for the speech acts of requests and apologies. In these studies, the NNSs used fewer formulas and a higher number of words compared to the NSs. Such verbosity was intended to communicate

information and express themselves more clearly. The current research partially supports these results. In the present study, the NNSs similarly exhibited "waffling;" however, it is found not in the number of discrete words but in the number of SF. The NNSs used strings of formulas in order to highlight the illocutionary meaning, to ensure its complete understanding, and to achieve the overall communicative goal. For example, a typical NNS greeting of a peer(=P, =A, -F, -D) includes three SF contrasting with the single-formula NS greeting, as shown in (1) and (2):

(1)   Oh, hi! It's so good to meet you. How are you? (NNS 4, dialogue 1);

(2)   Hey (NS 1, dialogue 1).

Additionally, the high numbers of formulas in FDCT items # 1-3 and # 9-16 can be explained by the NNSs' attitude towards the FDCT. They treated it as a serious task and intended to demonstrate their competence and ability to produce long and extended utterances in L2 (Ellis, 2003; Faerch & Kasper, 1989). The NSs, on the other hand, did not have to prove their proficiency and responded to the FDCT dialogues in the most natural manner approaching and resembling natural conversations. As one of the NS respondents commented, "This is how I really talk most the time" (NS 12).

The second interesting finding regarding the number of SF in the NNS production is the low numbers of formulas in the FDCT items# 5-8. Such production was influenced by and transferred from politeness rules and communication style of L1. As shown in the literature (Bergelson, 2012; Larina, 2009; Wierzbicka, 2002), Russians are more verbose with close friends and peers than with

superiors and typically find it inappropriate to converse and to engage in small talk with status superiors. In this study this observation is supported by the use of the phatic question "How are you?" which was produced less frequently by the NNSs in greeting status superiors as will be discussed further.

To summarize, in the entire FDCT, the NNSs did not produce significantly higher number of SF as compared to the NSs. Table 3.

However, the numbers of SF vary in each FDCT item depending on the factors of P, A, and D. The NNSs were more verbose with P and A equals and in introductory greetings of all types, and less verbose – with P superiors.

The next part presents and discusses the results of particular SF production of the two groups. The distribution of particular SF in their number, mean and frequency in the NS and NNSs data is presented in Table 3.

Number, mean, and frequency of particular SF in the NS and NNS data

| SF | Greeting | NS | | | NNS | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | number | mean | frequency | number | mean | frequency | $X^2$ | p-value |
| Greetings proper | Hello | 196 | 4.9 | 14.92 | 310 | 6.2 | 18.1 | 3.8627 | .049369 |
| | Hi | 141 | 3.525 | 10.67 | 157 | 3.14 | 9.17 | 1.6856 | .19418 |
| | Hey | 167 | 4.175 | 12.64 | 40 | 0.8 | 2.33 | 108.4231 | <.0001 |
| | Time-bound | 43 | 1.075 | 3.25 | 233 | 4.66 | 13.5 | 80.9056 | <.0001 |
| Terms of address | Names | 48 | 1.2 | 3.63 | 50 | 1 | 2.92 | 1.1998 | .273371 |
| | Titles | 80 | 2 | 6.05 | 26 | 0.52 | 1.51 | 42.6406 | <.0001 |
| | Honorifics | 22 | 0.55 | 1.66 | 75 | 1.5 | 4.38 | 16.4928 | .000049 |
| | Colloquial addresses | 15 | 0.375 | 1.13 | 20 | 0.4 | 1.16 | 0.0042 | .948161 |
| Phatic questions | How are you? | 166 | 4.15 | 12.56 | 98 | 1.96 | 5.72 | 37.2091 | <.0001 |
| | How do you do? | 0 | - | - | 16 | 0.32 | 0.93 | - | - |
| | Informal | 98 | 2.45 | 7.41 | 30 | 0.6 | 1.75 | 54.6071 | <.0001 |
| Phatic phrases | Phrases | 14 | 0.35 | 1.06 | 62 | 1.24 | 3.62 | 18.9033 | .000014 |
| Situational greetings | FDCT #1-8 | 40 | 1 | 5.7 | 157 | 3.14 | 18.53 | 44.3919 | <.0001 |
| | FDCT#9-16 | 278 | 6.95 | 45.27 | 432 | 8.64 | 49.94 | 1.1062 | .292902 |

As shown in Table 3, the statistically significant differences (p < .05) are found in the production of the following SF: greetings proper "Hello," "Hey," and time-bound greetings; terms of address – titles and honorifics; phatic questions; phatic phrases; and situational greetings (FDCT items# 1-8).

The first significant difference is found in the greetings "Hello," "Hey," and time-bound phrases: the NNSs employed "Hello" and

time-bound greeting frequently and the NSs – the greeting "Hey" frequently. This result can be explained by the induced instruction as well as sociopragmatic transfer of the L1 norms. Traditionally, EFL classes present and use "Hello," "Hi," and time-bound greetings as typical and standard. Besides, these phrases correspond to Russian greetings: a more formal – здравствуй/ здравствуйте (zdrastvuy/ zdrastvuyte) corresponding to "Hello", and a more informal – привет (privet), corresponding to "Hi", making the use of these English greetings easier for the learners. In contrast, the greeting "Hey" does not have a single translational equivalent. Thus, as the data showed, the NNS production of "Hey" was very limited. The NNSs were not completely competent and confident in its usage and "played safe" (Ellis, 2003, p. 172) preferring the neutral "Hello". In addition, they used time-bound greetings frequently which can be explained by the high level of politeness of their equivalents in L1. The NNSs used such greetings in order not to insult the interlocutor and not to sound inappropriate.

The second significant difference was observed in the production of address terms, namely in the use of titles and honorifics to address professors and personal names to address instructors. The NSs employed titles (such as Doctor and Professor) to address their professors, the NNSs – honorifics (such as Mr., Mrs.). Such production stems from the differences in academic culture in L1 and L2 environment. Besides, it is indicative of insufficient information on the academic address termspresented during EFL instruction.Another difference in address terms is observed in the use of personal names. The NSs used them frequently to address instructors. For the NNSs, however, such use was unacceptable. The NNSs based their addresses on the politeness norms of L1 being that students must address interlocutors of the higher status – here, teachers – respectfully. Consider the following FDCT dialogue in Example (3):

(3) -   Hello, Nick.
-   Shhh. We are in the university. I'm your instructor.
-   Excuse me. I didn't want to say it.
-   It's okay. Later you'll accustom. (NNS 42, dialogue 8).

In Example (3), a student used the first name to address an instructor. The use of a personal name was perceived as inappropriate in the given context and consequently, the student had to apologize. In Russian, students should address all instructors – irrespective of their age – by their first full name and patronymic. Using the first name only or its diminutive is considered unacceptable at the university setting. In Example (3), the lack of the corresponding linguistic form in L2 caused difficulties in the NNSs' address production.

Next, the participants demonstrated significant discrepancies in the phatic greeting questions. The NNSs employed questions "How are you?" and the like less frequently than the NSs. Such tendency reveals transfer of L1 politeness rules and a difference in the "How are you?" meaning and use between English and Russian. In English, it is a phatic and ritualized phrase the response to which does not imply an elaborate and honest answer. The "How are you?" sequence might open a conversation; however, the phrase primarily serves a social purpose – recognize

the presence of an interlocutor, create a conversational routine, and maintain politeness rules of interaction. In Russian, the corresponding phrases such as "Какдела?" ("Kakdela?" – "How are things?") are ritualized to a lesser extent. Such questionsare commonly used among friends, family members, or in-group participants; rarely – among interlocutors who do not know each other well and interlocutors of a higher social status; and never – between strangers. It is regarded more as a genuine question and a conversation opener rather than a routinized greeting. Such lingua-cultural differences have led to the lesser use of "How are you?" and similar phrases by the NNSs. Interestingly, a formal phatic question "How do you do?" – brought up through instruction – occurred in the NNS data. While "How do you do?" for the NNSs participants was a polite and appropriate way to greet superiors, i.e. professors, "How are you?" seemed an inappropriate question to ask of professors and instructors. A revealing dialogue is given in Example (4):

    (4)  - Hey! How are you?

        - I don't think it's appropriate to talk to your university instructor in that way… (NNS 1,    dialogue 8).

In Example (4), a student greeted auniversity instructor with an informal greeting "Hey" and a neutral phatic question "How are you?" The response to such a greeting showed that the instructor perceived it aa inappropriate attempt to chat, to initiate an informal conversation, breaking the hierarchy subordination of P status between the student and the instructor.

Lastly, the participant groups showed significant differences in the situational greetings – context-specific phrases and questions. The NNSs employed a wide variety of those in FDCT dialogues # 1-8: questions "Where are you going?" and "What are you doing (here)?"Expressions of surprise, personal comments, speech acts of requests, suggestions, offers, compliments, and complaints. Such production again refers to the "waffle phenomenon" (Edmonson & House, 1991, p. 273)and willingness to demonstrate L2 proficiency(Ellis, 2003).In addition, the use of direct questions such as "Where are you going?" and direct comments or personal remarks in items# 1-4– greeting friends – might be explained by transfer of L1 socio-pragmatic rules. The Russian speakers tend towards straightforwardness and openness in the conversations with friends and close people, thus demonstrating directness, honesty, and content orientation typical for Russian communicative style (Larina, 2009; Wierzbicka, 2002).

As we see, the major factors that influenced the NNS production of greetings are induced instruction, L1 transfer, low competence in a particular greeting phrase or strategy, desire to sound polite, and attitude towards the FDCT as a means to prove L2 proficiency. Besides, the NSs and NNSs applied dissimilar rules of greetings as components of politeness systems in their L1s. For the NSs, greetings are mostly casual and informal, even in the academic setting in greetings of status superiors – professors and instructors. For the NNSs, such informality is unacceptable. The evidence for such a view is, first, in the high numbers of the informal greeting "Hey" in the NS data; second, in the high numbers of time-bound greetings in the NNS data, and third, in the low numbers of

the "How are you?" question and its informal variants and high numbers of direct questions

to status peers in the NNS data.

## Conclusion

To contribute to the ILP scholarship, the article has established and systematically analyzed a research gap in the area of the speech act of greeting produced by English NNSs. The focus of the investigation was the SF in greetings and comparison of NNSs and NSs production. The study found that the NNSs' production differs from the NSs in regards to the number, frequency, and content of SF. The differences were discovered in all components of the speech act – greetings proper, phatic questions and phrases, and address terms. Several factors explain the divergences: "waffle phenomenon" (Edmonson & House, 1991), explicit demonstration of English competence, insufficient confidence in the use of particular formulas, efforts to use politeness strategies, induced instruction, attitude towards the research instrument – FDCT, and pragmatic transfer from L1.

The current study has important implications for learners and instructors of ESL/ EFL. Research has demonstrated the benefits and need for explicit instruction of speech acts, cross-linguistic comparisons, cross-cultural awareness (Bardovi-Harlig, 2001; Martínez-Flor &Usó-Juan, 2006; Martínez-Flor &Usó-Juan, 2010b; Takimoto, 2008), and in general, the explicit strategic approach to development of ILP (Cohen, 2018; Sykes & Cohen, 2018). A variety of materials for pragmatic instruction in general (Sykes, 2018; Taguchi & Sykes, 2012) and teaching greetings and conversation openings in particular have been developed (Wong & Waring, 2010). An important issue here is the

representation of speech acts in EFL textbooks which might provide deficient illustrations of speech acts including greetings (Kakiuchi, 2005; Usó-Juan, 2007; Williams, 2001). Lack of authentic materials and instruction might avert development of pragmatic competence. As the results of the current study demonstrate, some of the learners' pragmatic choices are directly instruction-related and are influenced by textbooks and classroom discourse. To reduce such limitations of EFL pragmatic instruction, teaching materials should include corpus-based data and teachers could become more aware of variability of speech acts uses in the target-language.

However, in teaching pragmatics, it is essential to address the needs of the learners and the current conditions of English teaching in a globalizing world. First, the learners may not necessarily aim at achieving native-like pragmatic competence (Ishihara &Tarone, 2009; Kasper, 1998). In contrast, they may deliberately choose to distance themselves from L2 pragmatic behaviors and sustain their NNSs' or multicultural identities through language use (Ishihara, 2010). Second, and even more importantly, today, most of communication in English is between NNSs of English (Crystal, 2012).Thus, achieving and demonstrating native-like proficiency in language skills, including pragmatic skills, is not the goal of instruction; rather the instruction is oriented on successful interaction when interlocutors constantly negotiate and adjust their language resources to reach a desired communicative goal(House,

2010; Taguchi & Ishihara, 2018). Consequently, in teaching pragmatics, we need to consider this dynamics of pragmatic conventions and their instant negotiation (Kasper, 2006), and the modern reality of English as a lingua franca (ELF) with its "diversity, fluidity, and variability" (Jenkins, 2015, p. 50).Pragmatic instruction should consider "the users' cultural content and their sense of appropriate use of English" (McKey, 2003, p. 13) and aim at developing an "in-between style of interaction" (House, 2003, p. 150) or "hybrid pragmatics" (Murray, 2012, p. 4).

The results of the present study point out the importance of further research in several directions. First, variables of NNSs such as age, gender, university major, L2 proficiency level, and contacts with L2 speakers, and the influence of these variables on the choice of greeting strategies should be studied more in depth. The secondquestion – a more general one – concerns theNNSs' attitudes towards NS pragmatic conventions and politeness rules and maintaining multicultural and multicultural identity in L2. Anotherinterestingdirection of research is the use of conversational analysis and emic approach in ILP in order tobetter understand talk-in-interaction and the construction of meaning by the participants in the immediate context. Additionally,approaches to pragmatic instruction should be investigated further todevelop pragmatic and interactional competence of EFL/ ESL/ ELF learners and users. Lastly, the application of the theoretical constructs of communicative, pragmatic, and interactional competences and their significance in ELF should be addressed in future research.

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## Appendix

### Free Discourse Completion Test (FDCT)

You need to write a short dialogue for each situation in English that represents typical language that you would use if you were in these situations.

1. You run into a good friend (of the same age with you) in one of the streets in the city.
2. You run into a good friend (of the same age with you) when you come for an internship to a business company/ government agency, etc.
3. You run into a good friend (older than you) at a restaurant/ café.
4. You run into a friend/ a colleague (older than you) when you come to studies/ work on Monday morning.
5. You run into your professor on one of the streets in the city.
6. You meet your professor in the university hallway.
7. You run into your university instructor (of the same age with you) in a café in the city.
8. You meet your university instructor (of the same age with you) in the university hallway.
9. At a friend's party you see someone whom you don't know (of the same age) who smiles in a friendly manner and seems willing to chat.

10. On the first day of classes at the university you see a new student (of the same age) and decide to talk to him/her.
11. At a friend's party you see someone whom you don't know (older than you) who smiles in a friendly manner and seems willing to chat.
12. On the first day of classes at the university you see a new student who looks older than you and decide to talk to him/her.
13. At a university party you see a new professor whom you don't know yet and decide to talk to him/ her.
14. You come for a consultation to a new university professor whom you haven't met before.
15. At a university party you see a new instructor who is of your age and decide to talk to him/ her. You haven't met the instructor before.
16. You come for a consultation to a new university instructor (of the same age with you) whom you haven't met before.