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**The effectiveness of Request Strategies in EFL  
Students' Requestive Emails: A Corpus-based  
Analysis**  
**The case of Master Two Students at M'sila University**

Dissertation Submitted to the Department of English in Partial fulfillment of the  
Requirements for the Master's Degree

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## **Dedication**

To my precious parents, whose unwavering support was instrumental  
in the completion of this work.

To my sisters, whose encouragement throughout this year proved  
invaluable.

Finally, to my esteemed classmates, who helped me and reached out  
my help as well.

**Ines Farah.**

## **Dedication**

This work is dedicated to my beloved parents, for their love,  
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May Allah bless them.

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inspiration and contributed to the accomplishment of this research.

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## **Abstract**

Email is one of the means of communication in EFL academic context, students tend to use it for different purposes, one of these purposes is requesting. Accordingly, the present dissertation is an attempt to investigate the effectiveness of request strategies in EFL students' requestive emails. To address the questions of this research and achieve its objectives, the researchers employed descriptive mixed method design, incorporating both quantitative and qualitative data analysis tools. These tools are; an unstructured interview directed to EFL Master II teachers at M'sila University and a text corpus analysis of students' requestive emails. These emails were analyzed by applying qualitative and quantitative content analysis. The results point out that those EFL students' requestive emails are mildly effective, which means that some students demonstrate high effectiveness in their emails. Whereas others show less proficiency, although their teachers offer comprehensive instructions on how to write requestive emails. Additionally, the most frequent request strategy among all strategies used in students' requestive emails was the query preparatory.

**Keywords:** Request strategies, Requestive emails, Pragmatic Competence, EFL.

## **List of Abbreviations**

**PC:** Pragmatic Competence

**CC:** Communicative Competence

**EFL/ESL:** English as Foreign Language/ English as Second Language

**CMC:** Computer Mediated Language

**FL:** Foreign Language

**TL:** Target Language

**CP:** the Cooperative Principle.

**PP:** the Politeness Principle.

**S:** speaker.

**H:** hearer.

**FTA:** face-threatening act.

**NNN:** Non Native Speaker

**D:** social distance.

**P:** power.

**R:** ranking of imposition

## List of Figures

Figure 1: Brown & Levinson's Politeness Strategies (1987, p. 60).....	18
Figure 2: Positive Politeness Strategies (Brown & Levinson, 1987, p. 102).....	20
Figure 3: Negative Politeness strategies (Brown & Levinson, 1987, p.131).....	20
Figure 4: Off Record strategies (Brown & Levinson, 1987, p.214) .....	21
Figure 5:Corpus of Feedback Requestive Email. ....	42
Figure 6:Corpus of Reference Requestive Email. ....	43
Figure 7:Corpus of Feedback / assistance Requestive Email. ....	43
Figure 8:Corpus of Feedback Requestive Email. ....	44
Figure 9: Corpus of Recommendation Requestive Email. ....	45
Figure 10: Corpus of Feedback Requestive Email .....	46
Figure 11: Corpus of Participation Requestive Email. ....	47
Figure 12: Corpus of Feedback/assistance Requestive Email. ....	48
Figure 13: Corpus of Action Requestive Email.....	48
Figure 14: Corpus of Information Requestive Email. ....	49
Figure 15: Corpus of information Requestive Email.....	49
Figure 16: Corpus of Participation Requestive Email. ....	50
Figure 17: Corpus of Feedback / Information Requestive Email. ....	51
Figure 18: Corpus of Information Requestive Email. ....	52
Figure 19: Corpus of Assistance Requestive Email. ....	52
Figure 20: Corpus of Assistance Requestive Email .....	53
Figure 21: Corpus of Participation / Assistance Requestive Email.....	54

## **List of Graphs**

Graph 1: Teachers' perceptions about the effectiveness of their students' requestive emails..	38
Graph 2: Frequency of receiving L1 words and structures in students' requestive emails.....	40
Graph 3: The frequency of request strategy per email.....	54
Graph 4: The frequency of different request types .....	55

## List of Tables

Table 1: The frequency of request strategy per email.....	54
Table 2: The frequency of different request types.....	55

# Table of Contents

<i>Dedication</i> .....	<i>I-II</i>
Acknowledgements.....	III
Abstract.....	IV
List of Abbreviations .....	V
List of Figures.....	VI
List of Graphs .....	VII
List of Tables .....	VIII
Table of Contents .....	IX

## General Introduction

1. Background of the Study .....	1
2. Statement of the problem: .....	1
3. Research questions .....	2
4. Objectives of the Study .....	2
5. Significance of the study .....	2
6. Research Method.....	3
6.1. Research population and sampling.....	3
6.2. Research Instruments .....	3
7. Structure of the Dissertation .....	4
8. Operational Definitions of Key Terms .....	4

## Chapter One: Requestive Emails in EFL Context

Introduction .....	6
1. Pragmatics .....	6
2. Pragmatic Competence .....	7
2.1. Speech Act: Theory and Realization .....	8
2.1.1. Locutionary Act.....	9

2.1.2. Illocutionary Act.....	9
2.1.3. Perlocutionary Act.....	9
2.2. Request Speech Acts.....	11
2.3. Request Strategies.....	12
3. Politeness Strategies in Speech Act Realization.....	15
3.1. The Politeness Theory of Brown and Levinson.....	17
3.1.1. Bald on record .....	19
3.1.2. Positive politeness .....	19
3.1.3. Negative politeness.....	20
3.1.4. Off-record.....	21
3.2. Face-Threatening Acts .....	22
4. The Impact of Socio-cultural Background on Written Communication.....	22
5. Emails .....	24
5.1. Definition of Email .....	24
5.2. Politeness in Emails.....	24
5.3. Effective Request Emails : Requestives .....	26
5.4 Emails' Use Inside and Outside EFL Classroom.....	27
5.5. Teacher-Students interaction via Email .....	28
5.6. Teaching Requestive Emails Writing in EFL Classroom.....	28
6. Requestive emails in EFL/ESL context.....	29
Conclusion .....	31

**Chapter Two: Methodology, Data analysis, Results and Discussion.**

Introduction: .....	34
1. Research Methodology and Design.....	34
1.1. Setting and Population: .....	35
1.2. Research Sampling.....	35
1.3. Research Instruments .....	35

1.3.1. Description of the teachers' interview .....	35
1.3.2. Description of Text Corpus Analysis.....	36
2. Procedures .....	37
3. Data analysis and interpretation of results.....	38
3.1. Data Analysis, Results, and discussion of the Teachers' Interview.....	38
3.2. Data Analysis, Results, and discussion of the Text corpus analysis of Students' requestive Emails.....	42
3.2.1. Text corpus analysis.....	42
3.2.1.1. The qualitative content analysis of the corpus of requestive emails .....	42
3.2.1.2. The Quantitative content Analysis of Corpus of emails.....	54
4. Discussion of the findings .....	56
5. Pedagogical Implications, Recommendations and Limitations .....	58
5.1. Pedagogical Implications .....	58
5.2. Recommendations for Future Research .....	59
5.3. Limitations of the Study .....	60
General Conclusion.....	62
References: .....	65
APPENDICES .....	74
الملخص .....	84

# **General Introduction**

## General Introduction

### 1. Background of the Study

The use of email has expanded as a result of ICT's (information and communication technology) advancements. Due to its quick transmission speed, email has become a common means of communication for both individuals and organizations (Crystal, 2001). Therefore, students may utilize emails as a main tool to communicate with their teachers for different purposes (apology, request, complaint), because it is free and they have access to it anytime and anywhere. Among all the types of emails, students use requestive emails to their teachers about different matters, such as; requests for information, requests for assistance, and requests for meeting (Balman et al., 2020).

Forming academic requestive emails is known to be challenging for learners, especially second language learners, because they are privet messages and the feedback is rarely given (Biesenbach-Lucas, 2007). Therefore, inappropriate requestive emails can affect the relationship between teachers and students. Especially that request as a directive speech act is defined as "attempts on the part of the speaker to get the hearer to perform or to stop performing some kind of action in the interests of the speaker" (Ellis, 2012, p. 172). Accordingly, by performing requests, students can cause a face-threatening act of their teachers' negative face (Brown and Levinson, 1987).

### 2. Statement of the problem:

In the past decades, the means of communication have shifted from using traditional communication like written letters to online communication like social media, due to developments in computer-mediated communication (CMC). Emails, as a form of online communication, can be considered as the most commonly used in academia to have things done. Among all the types of emails, students tend to use requestive emails with their teachers. And forming requestive emails may be challenging for foreign language learners

because of the diversity between their language and target language in terms of culture and rhetoric. Hence, they fall in the trap of forming ineffective, impolite or inappropriate requestive emails. Therefore, teachers have been complaining about how non native students of English write their requestive emails (**Biesenbach-Lucas, 2007**).In light of that, this study sets forward to unveil teachers' perceptions about the effectiveness of EFL Master II students' requestive emails as well as request strategies employed by them.

### **3. Research questions**

The current research attempts to answer the following research questions:

- 1/What perceptions do teachers hold about the effectiveness of their students' requestive emails in EFL context?
- 2/what are the request strategies most frequently used by EFL students in their requestive emails?
- 3/How effective are EFL students' requestive emails?

### **4. Objectives of the Study**

This study aims to achieve the following objectives:

- To explore EFL teachers' perceptions about the effectiveness of requestive emails of EFL Master II students.
- To uncover the request strategies employed by EFL advanced students at M'sila university.
- To investigate the effectiveness of the corpus of requestive emails.

### **5. Significance of the study:**

The current study would add significant contributions to emails writing at the University of M'sila. In other words, it may raise master 2 students' awareness of the importance of writing requestive emails in an appropriate manner that goes in harmony with the cultural norms of the target language, especially that they are advanced learners. Moreover, this study may throw the light on the need of integrating requestive emails teaching into university program. Consequently, improving the quality of interaction between students and teachers.

## **6. Research Method**

This research aims to investigate the effectiveness of request strategies in EFL requestive emails. Therefore, it adopts a descriptive method and employs a mixed-method approach. In which, it makes use of both quantitative and qualitative methods to build and generate findings. It also adopts an exploratory mixed method design. It aims to explore qualitatively, and based on its analysis, the quantitative results are raised.

The population taking part in this inquiry is Master II EFL students of linguistics and English literature at the department of English at M'sila University. This population is chosen for a variety of important reasons. First, they regularly communicate with their teachers via email. In addition to that, they are advanced learners and have been learning academic English for years, this indicates that they are able to speak and write in English with a wide range of grammatical structures and a sufficient vocabulary.

### **6.1. Research population and sampling**

The population taking part in this inquiry is Master II EFL students and teachers of linguistics and English literature from the department of English at M'sila University during the year (2023/2024). In order to select a representative sample of teachers from the population of 18 teachers, probability sampling is employed with a simple random sampling technique. Moreover, a corpus of 17 emails was also randomly collected from teachers of the same department.

### **6.2. Research Instruments:**

In order to collect data, this study utilizes two data collection tools. The first tool is an interview for teachers, which is designed and piloted under the consultation of the supervisor. This tool aims to investigate the effectiveness of request strategies from the perspective of teacher. In addition to that, a text corpus analysis of students' authentic requestive emails is

employed as a second data collection tool. A qualitative as well as quantitative content analysis is employed on the corpus of emails.

## **7. Structure of the Dissertation**

This study is divided into two main chapters; each one is further subdivided into sections. The first chapter is devoted to an extensive review of the relevant literature, encompassing a comprehensive synthesis of prior research. The second chapter concentrates on the field work of this study, including the approach, method, population, sample, procedures and the data collection tools. It also discusses the findings. In conclusion, it provides pedagogical implicate, limitations and proposes some recommendations for further research.

## **8. Operational Definitions of Key Terms**

### **8.1 Pragmatic competence:**

May take the definition as the capacity and the knowledge that speakers and listeners employ to engage in communication effectively, it includes the proper performance of a variety of speech actions.

### **8.2 Speech act of request:**

Can be defined as a communicative act, in which the speaker (S) asks the listener (H) to perform a specific action or provide certain information. This type of speech act involves the expression of the speaker's desire or need for the listener to do something.

### **8.3 Requestive E-mails:**

Are private messages, in which the sender requests the receiver to take a particular action.

# **Chapter One:**

## **Requestive Emails in EFL Context**

### Introduction

In order to initiate this research, this chapter rigorously examines and describes the theoretical framework concerning the variables under investigation. It commences with a broad overview of pragmatic, pragmatic competence, and politeness realization and strategies. It also aims to give an in-depth overview of speech act theory through a variety of definitions, and classifications. Lastly, it addresses the communication through requestive emails in EFL context. This chapter offers a comprehensive overview of the relevant literature.

### 1. Pragmatics

Pragmatics is a subfield of linguistics that studies how context influences the way language is understood and used in communication. It is one of the most active and quickly expanding areas of modern linguistics and philosophy of language. Its philosophical roots can be traced back to the work of the philosophers Charles Morris, Rudolf Carnap, and Charles Peirce in the 1930s.

The word pragmatics comes from the Greek word *pragma*, which means using the language, and it is described as the science that focuses on the examination of language use. However, this description may be too vague and general to be of much use. This is due to pragmatics being a complex topic with different disciplinary influences. Similarly, Crystal (1985) defined pragmatics as the study of language from the point of view of users, especially of the choices they make, the constraints they encounter in using language in social interaction, and the effect their use of language has on other participants in the act of communication. He added that, the effective communication between members of the speech community may result from observing social norms when speaking.

Rose (2001) claimed that, pragmatics concentrates on "the way speakers and writers accomplish goals as social actors who do not need to just get things done but must attend to their interpersonal relationships with other participants at the same time" (p. 2). It should be

mentioned that this definition clarifies the interpersonal elements that support the construction of pragmatic meaning. On the other hand, Levinson (1983) assumed that, pragmatics studies language from a functional perspective which attempts to employ non-linguistic factors to explain certain aspects of language structure.

Confirming the aforementioned claims, Spencer-Oatey and Zegarac (2020) presume that "pragmatics is concerned not with language as a system or product, but rather with the interrelationship between language form, (communicated) messages and language users" (p. 72). In fact, they (2020) presume that pragmatics attempts to find answers following questions:

-How do people communicate more than what the words or phrases of their utterances might mean by themselves, and how do people make these interpretations?

-Why do people choose to say and/or interpret something in one way rather than another?

-How do people's perceptions of contextual factors (for example, who the interlocutors are, what their relationship is, and what circumstances they are communicating in) influence the process of producing and interpreting language?

Actually, one of the most important topics of discussion in pragmatics is pragmatic competence (PC).

### **2 Pragmatic Competence**

The definition of pragmatic competence indicates the extent to which language users around the world possess it. This tends to support that PC is some vital construct speakers must develop and refer to in order to make appropriate use of their language in interactional exchanges (Taguchi, 2009).

In similar vein, Bachman (1990) defined pragmatic competence as the ability a speaker possesses to appropriately express a range of language functions. He claimed that it integrate

both illocutionary competence and sociolinguistic competence. Additionally, Thomson (1997) stated that, the significance of PC lies in the fact that it attributes in understanding the social variables and contexts to language use through the actual utterances of the interlocutors.

Pragmatic competence has a paramount significance in foreign language classes. Hence, EFL learners need to develop the socio-cultural knowledge of the language they are learning. In language classes, one can learn English or Japanese without understanding the context of language use. Leech and Thomas (1983) emphasized that, PC entails acquiring pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic skills, as well as effectively applying them in real-time communication.

### **2.1 Speech Act: Theory and Realization**

The primary concern of linguistic studies shifted from using language as methods of describing the world to studying how real common language is used in the second half of the 20th century. Speech act theory's origins are credited with the works of the philosophers J.L.Austin and Searle.

Austin mentioned the concept of speech acts in his famous book entitled "How to Do Things with Words"(1962).According to him, speech acts are any utterances that have a purpose in a communicative setting. In other words, making utterances is equivalent to making actions .Adhering to Austin's theory, Searle (1969) established the theory of speech acts and defined them as "the basic or minimal units of linguistic communication" (p. 16). It became one of the most important theories explaining how language is employed to communicate particular goals as well as to describe the real world. This theory also explained the interrelationships between language users and their intentions in addition to how these intentions get communicated (Lounis, 2018). Moreover, Yule (1996) asserted that, speech acts are defined as actions accomplished through utterances. People not only construct grammatical structures and words, but they also conduct actions through those utterances (utterances are more than just utterances; they are acts).

According to Austin (1962), speech acts are divided into three categorizations which are locutionary, illocutionary, perlocutionary acts.

### **2.1.1 Locutionary Act**

Austin (1962) asserted that a locutionary act is speaking a particular sentence with a specific meaning and reference. In addition to that, Yule (1996) has defined locutionary act as the creation of a meaningful linguistic expression or the basic act of speaking. Thus, this act has to do with the significant words, phrases, and sentences that a speaker uses.

### **2.1.2 Illocutionary Act**

Yule (1996) explained it as the creation of coherent speech with a specific function in mind. Utami (2022) added that, an illocutionary act is the employing speech to fulfill a function. When a speaker says something, he generates an utterance with a purpose in mind; he does not just make a meaningless statement. In other words, a speaker always has a purpose in mind when he or she delivers an utterance. This statement will accomplish something, such as requesting, accusing, apologizing, promising, blaming, and congratulating.

### **2.1.3 Perlocutionary Act**

Yule (1996) described perlocutionary act as the creation of an utterance with a function and the intent for it to have an effect. According to Utami (2022), a perlocution is the act by which locution and illocution have a particular or exert a certain influence on the hearer. Hence, the term "perlocutionary act" describes how the generated speech affects the listener.

Austin(1989) developed five fundamental types of speech acts which are:

1. Verdictives: acts that involve giving a finding (a verdictive). e.g., acquit, convict, read it as, grade.

2. Exercitives: acts that deals with a preference or opposition to a certain course of action, or advocacy of it. e.g., Appoint, order.
3. Commissives: acts that are intended to commit the speaker to a certain action. e.g., promising, accepting, and declaring an intention.
4. Behabitives: expressions that comprise reaction to person's behaviour and attitude of someone else. e.g., Apologize, Thank, congratulate, condole.
5. Expositives: are used in communicating views, conducting arguments, and providing clarification of usage and references. e.g., deny, affirm.

Austin (1989, p. 163) gave the following summary of his classifications: "To sum up, we may say that the verdictive is an exercise of judgment, the exercitive is an assertion of influence or exercising of power, the commissive is an assuming of an obligation or declaring of an intention, the behabitive is the adopting of an attitude, and the expositive is the clarifying of reasons, arguments, and communications."

Furthermore, Searle (1979) in response to Austin's classification of speech acts, suggested categorizing illocutionary acts into five categories (he did not follow Austin's classification but retained only commissives). This categorization is shown below:

1. Assertives: acts in which the speaker commits to the truth of what is expressed. They include Stating, explaining, Claiming, telling, describing. (e.g., bought new glasses)
2. Commissives: acts in which the speaker commits to some future action. They include promising, offering, contacts. ( e.g., I promise, I will succeed )
3. Directives: acts in which the speaker causes the hearer to do something. They include Ordering, Requesting, Warning, commanding. ( e.g., bring me some hot coffee)
4. Expressives: acts in which the speaker expresses a psychological state or feelings. They include Excusing, Thanking, Apologizing, congratulating. (e.g. I apologize for being rude)

5. Declarations: acts that change the reality according to the proposition of the declaration.

They include Baptizing, Appointing, Declaring war, Resigning. (e.g., I pronounce you husband and wife).

### 2.2 Request Speech Acts

In social interaction, persons act and speak in different ways, exchanging utterances through speech acts. These speech acts have a significant impact on our daily communication. Austin (1962) proposed three types of speech acts: locutionary, perlocutionary, and illocutionary. These categories of speech are characterized by their core structure (directive or indirect speech act). A request is one of the speech acts classified as illocutionary. Thus, a request is a polite way of asking for something. According to Brown and Levinson (1987), a request is an act that puts the speaker's and the listener's faces at risk.

Bach and Harnich (1984, p. 48) defined a request as "the speech act which is used to express the speaker's desire so that the hearer does what the speaker wants." In this instance, Bach and Harnich characterized the request as the speaker's want or intent, indicating that it is a relationship in which the speaker and the hearer agree on what they want to achieve. Requests occur on a daily basis in situations where the speaker and hearer develop interactions and actions.

Trosborg (1995) said that "a request is an impositive act performed by a speaker to impact the intentional behavior of the hearer for the benefit of the former only and the cost of the latter." This act entails the speaker conveying a statement while employing persuasive speech to get the listener to agree to the request. As noted by Achiba (2003), a request is a face-threatening act. Nonetheless, the requester must formulate the request according to techniques developed by researchers like Trosborg. Blum-Kulka and Olshtain (1984) described a request as speech that includes many parts when asking for something.

Forming such acts in a new language is difficult because of linguistic differences. The two main types of requests are direct and indirect. The direct strategy involves using suitable words and expressions to indicate that this act is a request: could, can, would, please. On the other hand, the indirect strategy differs in that the speaker may use utterances that do not literally express a request, but when taken as a whole, become a request statement. Blum-Kulka and Olshtain (1984) recognized three levels of directness that could be seen as universal (p. 201):

**-Explicit Level:** The most direct form of request, which includes imperatives.

**-Conventionally Indirect Level:** This includes contextualized predictions that include could and would in the request form.

**-Non-Conventional Indirect Level:** In this level, the request is made more as a hint.

These three levels of directness were classified into nine request strategies.

### 2.3 Request Strategies

There are many strategies that people could employ while performing a request speech act. They can make both direct and indirect requests. In other words, the direct strategy involves asking the hearer directly to do something or making an understandable demand, whereas the indirect one is easier to understand because it occurs depending on the utterances and is sometimes misunderstood by the hearer.

Additionally, they include also formal and informal hidden types. Formality is used when speaking with a requestee who is older or of a higher level, whereas informality is used with someone of the same age or level.

#### **Examples:**

- Good morning, Good evening (formal) / Hi (informal).
- Sir, Mm (formal) / Bro, guy (informal).
- Could we leave? (formal) / Let's go (informal).

In the Cross Cultural Speech Act Realization Project (CCSARP), Blum-Kulka and Olshtain divided the strategies into three levels of directness, classified in nine strategies types of request speech act. Those are direct strategies, conventionally indirect strategies and non-conventionally indirect strategies (Hardiyanti, 2015)

Blum-Kulka et al (1989, as cited in Jalilifar et al, 2011, p. 791) have proposed a list of nine possible requests strategies which can be seen below:

### **A. Direct Level**

#### **• Mood Derivable**

**Definition:** Utterances where the grammatical mood of the verb signals illocutionary force.

**Example:** "Leave me alone, " "Clean up that mess."(Hardiyanti, 2015, p. 12)

#### **• Performatives**

**Definition:** Utterances where the illocutionary force is explicitly named. The speaker expresses the illocutionary intent using an appropriate illocutionary verb, making the utterance an order.

**Example:** "I am asking you to clean up the mess." (Hardiyanti, 2015, p. 12)

#### **• Hedged Performatives**

**Definition:** Utterances where the naming of the illocutionary force is modified by hedging expressions.

**Example:** "I would like to ask you to lend me a pen." (Hardiyanti, 2015, p. 12)

#### **• Obligation Statements**

**Definition:** Utterances which state the obligation of the hearer to carry out the act. The speaker conveys the illocutionary intent by stating moral obligation directly.

**Example:** "You'll have to move that car." (Hardiyanti, 2015, p. 12)

- **Want Statements**

**Definition:** Utterances which state the speaker's desire that the hearer carries out the act.

The speaker conveys the illocutionary intent by expressing a particular want, desire, or wish.

**Example:** "I really wish you'd stop bothering me." (Hardiyanti, 2015, p. 12)

## **B. Conventionally Indirect Level**

- **Suggestory Formulae**

**Definition:** Utterances which contain a suggestion to do something. The speaker conveys the illocutionary intent expressed as a suggestion.

**Example:** "How about cleaning up?" (Hardiyanti, 2015, p. 12)

- **Query Preparatory**

**Definition:** Utterances containing reference to preparatory conditions. The utterance contains a preparatory question referring to the feasibility of the request.

**Example:** "Could you clean up the kitchen?" (Hardiyanti, 2015, p. 12)

## **C. Non-conventionally Indirect Level (Hints)**

- **Strong Hints**

**Definition:** Utterances containing partial reference to the object or element needed for the implementation of the act. While the illocutionary intent is not expressed overtly, the speaker provides strong clues for the hearer to construe the request.

**Example:** "You have left the kitchen in a right mess." (Hardiyanti, 2015, p. 13)

- **Mild Hints**

**Definition:** Utterances that make no reference to the request proper (or any of its elements) but are interpretable as requests by context. In other words, the speaker conveys the illocutionary intent by providing less strong clues, but it is still interpretable as a request with the help of the context.

**Example:** "It's really cold in here." (Hardiyanti, 2015, p. 13)

These strategies demonstrate the various ways speakers can formulate requests, ranging from direct commands to subtle hints, depending on the social context and the relationship between the speaker and the hearer.

### 3. Politeness Strategies in Speech Act Realization

Politeness, within the context of pragmatics, refers to the social conventions and linguistic strategies employed by individuals to maintain harmonious interactions and demonstrate respect toward others and avoid face-threatening (Norita, 2020). This concept has been extensively studied by scholars in the field of pragmatics (Jaafar & Ageli, 2022), including Goffman (1955), Grice (1975), Leech (1983) as well as Brown and Levinson (1987). And has been referred to in accordance with the notion of "face".

Starting with Goffman, the first one who established the notion of "face" in his article "On Face-work: An Analysis of Ritual Elements of Social Interaction (1955)" and eventually gave a further explanation to this concept in his book entitled "Interaction Ritual: Essays on Face-to-Face Behavior. (1967)". According to him (1955) face is defined as the positive public image that everyone creates depending on various social settings and wants to maintain it. He also mentioned that people have emotional attachment to their faces; therefore they feel pleasant when their faces are preserved, conversely, they feel unpleasant when their faces are spoiled.

In addition to that, Grice (1975) made significant contributions in politeness through his framework of cooperative principle (CP) and conversational maxims. For Leech (1983) politeness is to "minimize the expression of impolite beliefs, maximize the expression of polite beliefs" (p. 81) therefore, he suggested four maxims called the Gricean Maxims that interlocutors need to respect for the purpose of achieving effective communication.

**\*Quantity:** To provide as much information as required (no more, no less).

**\*Quality:** To say what you believe to be true (be truthful and sincere)

**\*Relation:** Be relevant.

**\*Manner:** Be clear and Avoid ambiguity.

Based on Grice's notion of cooperative principle and conversational maxims, Leech (1983) offered his concept of Politeness Principle (PP) which consists of six maxims. In fact, this idea of maxim-based view of politeness originally was introduced by Robin Lakoff (1973) however; Leech's work in 1983 provided an in-depth explanation to this approach (Culpeper, 2015). Kingwell (1993) asserted that "Leech's PP clarifies what is obscured in Grice"(p.395), therefore, Leech's Politeness Principle offers additional insights into communication that Grice's Cooperative Principle might not fully address. According to him (1983) the purpose of PP is to "to maintain the social equilibrium and the friendly relations which enable us to assume that our interlocutors are being cooperative in the first place" (p.82).

### **The PP contains six maxims:**

\*Tact maxim: minimize cost to other; maximize benefit to other.

\* Generosity maxim: minimize benefit to self; maximize cost to self.

\* Approbation maxim: minimize dispraise of other; maximize praise of other.

\* Modesty maxim: minimize praise of self; maximize dispraise of self.

\* Agreement maxim: minimize disagreement between self and other; maximize agreement between self and other.

\* Sympathy maxim: minimize antipathy between self and other; maximize sympathy between self and other.

Moreover, Brown & Levinson's (1987) model of politeness is considered as one of the most famous theories of politeness; consequently, this model has been extensively examined and put into practice in many different areas of research (Jaafar & Ageli, 2022). Their theory of politeness is built upon Grice's maxims (1975) and Goffman's notion of face (1955) .

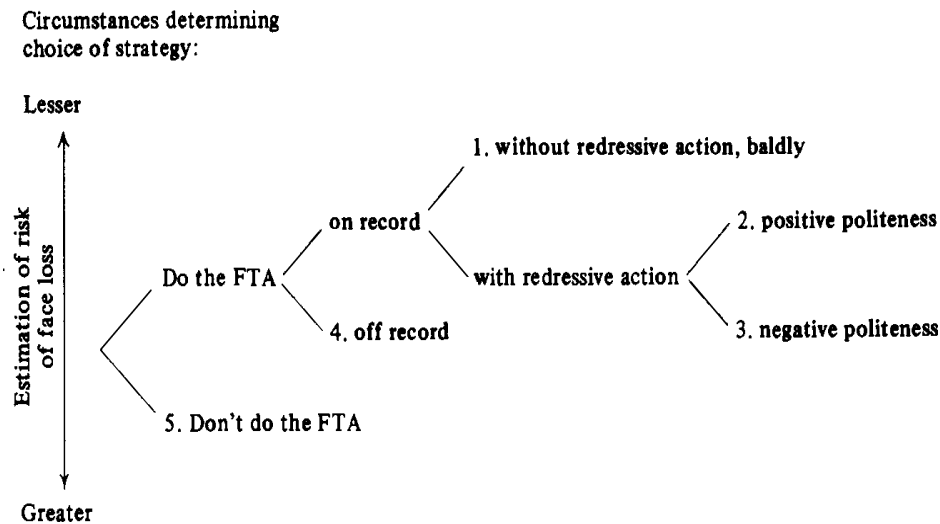
### **3.1. The Politeness Theory of Brown and Levinson:**

Penelope Brown and Stephen C. Levinson proposed the politeness theory in their (1978) study "Universals in Language Usage: Politeness Phenomena", which was later developed and republished under the title "Politeness: Some Universals in Language Usage" in 1987 (Abdul-Majeed, 2009). According to them (1987), politeness is defined as a strategy employed by participants to avoid face-threatening acts (FTA) and maintain interactants' face. In a similar manner, Yule (1996) offered a clear and concise definition to this strategy, stating that "Politeness, in an interaction, can then be defined as the means employed to show awareness of another person's face" (p.60). According to this description, politeness is employed to save someone's face in the process of communication. Brown & Levinson 's (1987) theory of politeness has three central notions: face, social variables that determine the choice of politeness strategies needed to deal with FTAs (P.D.R), and politeness strategies (Abbas & Suleiman, 2014).

In Brown and Levinson's theory (1987), the notion of face is viewed as a key concept (Abbas & Suleiman, 2014) which was adopted from Goffman (1967). According to them (1987), face is: "the public self-image that every member want to claim for himself" (p.61), they further noted that the participants in conversation have face and they cooperate in preserving their face this called 'face-work' (Brown and Levinson, 1987). Moreover, they claimed that face is divided into two categories; positive face is the want or the desire to be appreciated and loved by others, while negative face refers to one's

own want or desire to be addressed in a manner that she/he feels free and not being imposed on (B&L, 1987).

During conversations, interlocutors utilize certain speech acts which are by their nature in opposition to maintaining face wants like directives (requests). Accordingly; they might have the potential of threatening each other's faces. This gives the raise to the concept of "Face Threatening Acts" (FTAs) (B&L1987, p.65). To avoid this phenomenon and preserve speaker's face as well as listener's, Brown and Levinson (1987) proposed four politeness strategies which are shown in Figure 1.



**Figure 1. Brown & Levinson's Politeness Strategies (1987, p. 60)**

Besides politeness strategies, Brown and Levinson (1987) Suggested that there are three sociological variables (PDR) influence the choice of politeness strategies which a speaker (S) will use to an addressee (H). These variables are: the relative power of the person receiving the act over the person making the act, their social distance (D) which refers to the degree of closeness between H and S, and the ranking of imposition(R) involved in doing the face threatening act (FTA). Higher ranked politeness strategy is required when threatening the face of an individual of a higher power, with expanded social distance, or with acts with higher imposition.

### 3.1.1. Bald on record

Following the classification of the figure 1, “bald on record” is considered as the most straightforward politeness strategy .It denotes the speaker taking direct action without any effort to soften or redress the face-threatening act (FTA). This type of strategy bluntly utilizes imperatives or direct statements without any mitigation devices. Brown and Levinson (1987) stated that adopting this strategy can make the recipient feel uncomfortable, embarrassed. However, it is still commonly used among individuals with a close relationship like family members or friends. The selection of this strategy is dependent on certain circumstances: a) when the situation necessitates unambiguous and direct communication as the case of emergencies; b) when interlocutors are relatives or close friends; c) when the speaker (S) holds higher position in power or social than the hearer (H); or d) When the recipient deserved face threats.

### 3.1.2. Positive politeness

Brown and Levinson (1987) proposed the concepts of positive and negative politeness strategies that individuals employ in social interactions to mitigate face threat. Positive politeness strategies oriented towards the addressee's positive face, which refers to their desire to feel approved, appreciated, and included. That is to say, by employing this strategy, Speaker (S) aims to minimize the distance between him and the hearer (H) by adopting a familiar tone, maintaining the hearer's desires and wants, and promoting the feeling of unity.

Positive politeness comprises three umbrella strategies and each strategy has its respective sub-strategies shown in the figure below:

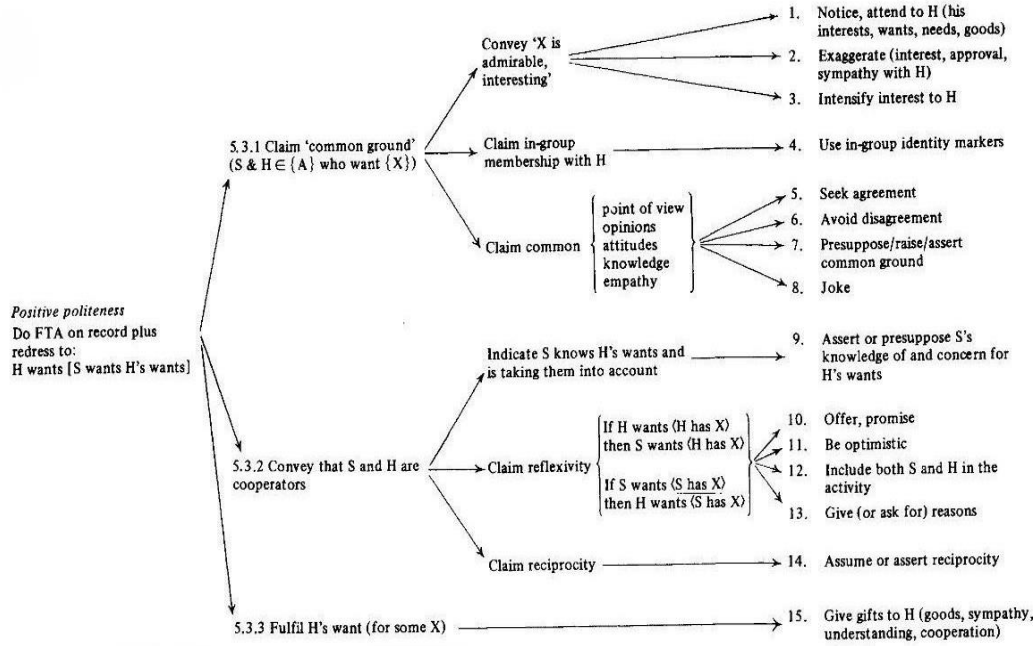


Figure 2. Positive Politeness Strategies (Brown & Levinson, 1987, p. 102)

### 3.1.3. Negative politeness

Unlike positive politeness that aims to satisfy H's positive face, negative politeness is oriented to satisfy H's negative face, which is the desire of having freedom of action, lack of imposition. The word "negative" in this strategy does not imply something negative or bad; it simply refers to the opposite pole from positive face Yule (1996). When speaker tries to save the hearer's negative face, he will opt for this strategy by respecting hearer's personal space.

Brown and Levinson (1987) categorize this strategy as follows:

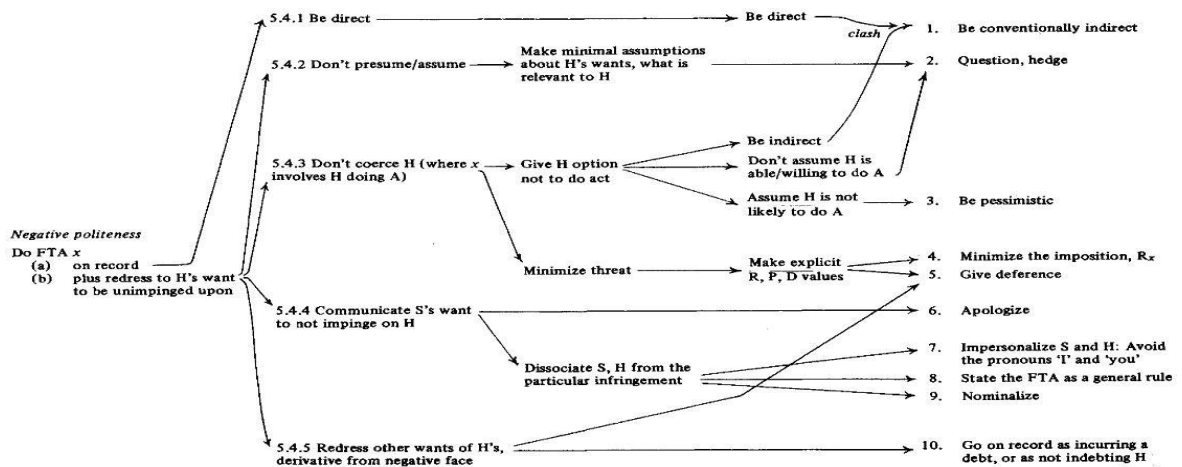


Figure 3. Negative Politeness strategies (Brown & Levinson, 1987, p.131)

3.1.4. Off-record

Off-record or also known as indirect strategy refers to performing an act indirectly or in an ambiguous manner. In other words, when the (S) wants to avoid direct FTA he/she opts for off record in which the message conveyed is either general or is not what it is truly meant (implicit) leaving the addressee decide how to interpret it. However, if the intended message was overly ambiguous, it will raise the risk of being misunderstood by the (H). Brown and Levinson viewed off-record as the most polite approach since it maintains S’s and H’s face. The classification of off record strategy is shown in figure (4).

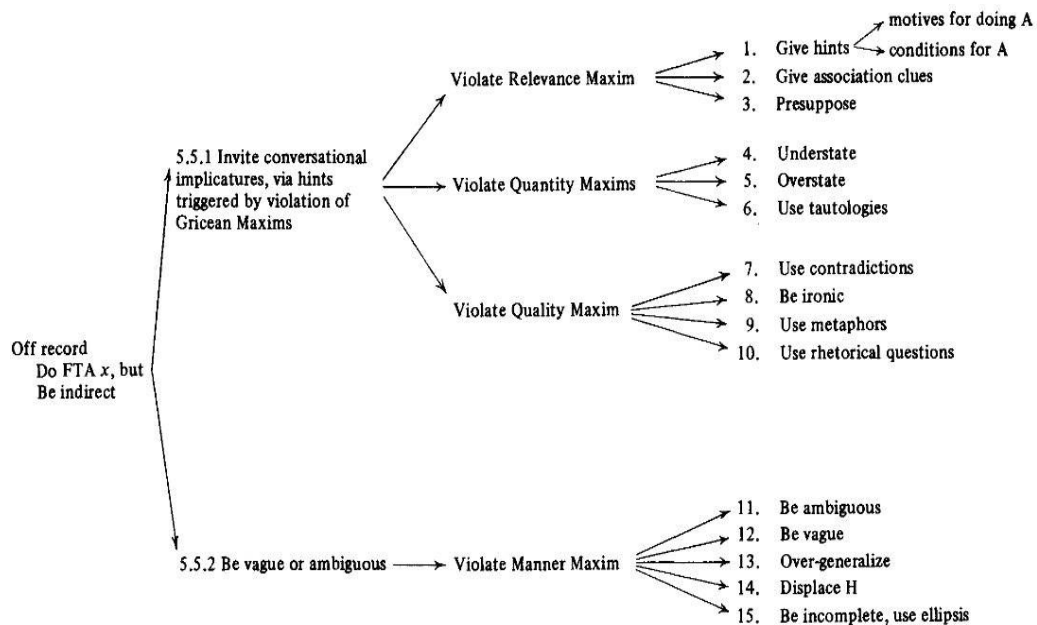


Figure 4. Off Record strategies (Brown & Levinson, 1987, p.214)

3.2. Face-Threatening Acts

The notion of face threatening acts (FTAs) is introduced by Brown and Levinson (1987) as one of the central concepts in their theory of politeness. Yule (1996) defined FTA as an act of communication that threatens the face of the addressee. According to them (1987), FTAs are ‘‘acts that by their very nature run contrary to the face wants of the addressee and/or the speaker’ (p.65). In addition to threatening the (H)'s face, these acts can also threaten the (S)'s (positive or negative face).

### 4. The Impact of Socio-cultural Background on Written Communication

The view of writing as a cognitive process has shifted to become a reflection of social cultural background. In this vein, Trimbur (1994) suggested the notion of writing as a “social turn”, in which he defined it as “a cultural activity by which writers position and reposition themselves in relation to their own and others' subjectivities, discourses, practices, and institutions” (Trimbur, 1994, p. 109). To put it another way, writing is not restricted on spelling, grammar and sentence structure, however individuals' socio-cultural background has a very significant influence on their written communication styles and patterns . Accordingly, socio-cultural background is defined as the combination of social and cultural factors present in particular population group. It includes elements such as: family dynamics, community influences, cultural traditions, socioeconomic status, language, religion, ethnicity, race, religion, socioeconomic status and geographic location (Lei, Butler, & Sabagh, 1972). Various researches were done on EFL/ESL context showed that some socio-cultural factors affect students' writing including: their rhetorical patterns, L1 transfer into L2, social values, and limited understanding of the socio-cultural aspects of the target language (Ahmed & Myhill, 2016; Al-Khatib, 2001; Anyanwu2016; Bhatt, 2019; Hinkel, 2009).

First Language Influence is one of the factors that have an impact on written communication. Anyanwu (2016) stated that, Nigerian students transfer (whether consciously or unconsciously)some knowledge from their mother tongue (indigenous language) into their target language(English), consequently this leads to Interference. As mentioned by Akindele & Adebite (1999), interference happens when two languages with different linguistic systems interfere in which the system of one language (first language) is transferred into the other one (second or target language). A study conducted by Ahmed (2011) on Egyptian students has indicated that, their English writing is characterized by; the misuse of articles, incorrect tenses, subject-verb disagreement, punctuation errors (especially the misuse of commas), and spelling mistakes, all these problems can be understood in relation to the

context within which they occur(Arabic country).

Moreover, Anyanwu (2016) in his research revealed another socio cultural factor that affects writing communication which is the nature of the target language (English). According to Chikao, (2016) language is an arbitrary system and a product of both society and culture, each language has its own structure, style...etc which make it unique and distinct from the other languages. Along with the same lines, Leki (1991) claimed that, EFL/ESL students view writing as a difficult process, especially when the rhetorical conventions (structure, style, and organization) of the target language is different from their mother tongue. Furthermore, Keumala et al. (2019) stated that, the lack of intercultural competence is a major problem encountered by learners of a foreign language, which is defined as limited understanding of the socio-cultural aspects of the target language resulted in the extreme differences exist between the learners' culture and the target language culture.

### **5. Emails**

Emails were invented in 1971, when the first email was sent in the United States of America; nevertheless, the emailing system was only available to the general public in the mid-1990s. It was mainly utilized in governmental, business, and computer science communities. Email interaction in academic contexts has grown in popularity over years due to its correctness, specifications, organization, and ability to deal with long expressions.

Wallace and Wingate (2001) stated that emails are great techniques for sending messages via computers. In this regard, the classroom is not the only context for the students to engage in a discussion with the teacher; therefore, email can be a helpful tool to communicate outside of the classroom. One of the primary advantages of email is its synchronization, which means that users are not need to be online simultaneously and can send and read the message at anytime (Frehner, 2008).Thus, itis not limited by time or location, and because it includes parts that are based on written messages, phone conversations, or face-to-face interactions (as cited in Hallajian, 2014).

Consequently, using email as an effective means of communication requires the EFL student know the crucial methods used to convey the message completely, such as the appropriate email structure, as well as beware of the use of appropriate politeness strategies.

### 5.1. Definition of Email

Since the term "email" first emerged, researchers and authors have spent a great deal of time trying to define it. The word "email" which combines the two words "electronic" and "mail" it was used in communications technology. It enables people to send and receive messages via computers in form of text, audio files, or even pictures (Celik & Ölçer2, 2018).

Bell (2000) defined email as "one dimensional transfer of information in form of a message, via an intermediate (tele-) communication system, from an identified sending party to one or more identified receiving parties" (p. 43). Additionally, he describes it as "Electronic mail is the generic name for non-interactive communication of text, data, image, or voice messages between a sender and designated recipients by systems utilizing telecommunications links" (Bell, 2000, p.43).

In other words, electronic mail is a telecommunication and Computer Mediated Language (CMC) application that operates via Internet. It is essentially a communication service in which the sender writes messages using a computer or a Smartphone. These messages come in form of words, images, or audio.

### 5.2. Politeness in Emails

Teachers-students communication has evolved over time. As technology advances, people use various methods to interact with one another, such as text messages, voicemail messages, and emails. When using these tools, English learners must communicate their ideas and wants in English appropriately, so the students should apply a number of politeness strategies that help them avoid disagreement with others (Rahmani, Rahmany, & Sadeghi 2014).

Politeness can be defined as "the actions taken by competent speakers in a community

in order to attend to possible social or interpersonal disturbance" (Meyerhoff, 2011, p. 85). Thus, the concept of politeness is typically rooted in one's culture, and it may differ between cultures depending on how a given society regards politeness.

The use of emails requires the application of certain conventions that are different from those of written and spoken language. In educational contexts, users need to be attentive in their conversational style and have appropriate expression choices in this sense; a bulk of literature tries to investigate the language used in emails with specific emphasis on linguistic politeness strategies. The following account presents the studies conducted to explore politeness strategies in emails communication.

Pariera (2006) investigated the usefulness of politeness strategies when discussing taboo topics. The study involved 29 university students who sent emails to both intimate friends and strangers. The study focused on comparing politeness strategies, and five major linguistic features were examined based on the seriousness of the taboos. The findings were compared with Brown and Levinson's (1987) model of politeness, and the results demonstrated that emails may develop a distinct set of politeness conventions. Similarly, Baugh (2011) studied the writing of students' request emails to their teachers. He investigated the writing of emails from students to educators. He highlighted the significance of teachers training of their native or non-native students to obtain clear guidelines for creating pragmatically appropriate emails.

Another study by Hallajian (2014) in which he investigated politeness and impoliteness in students' request emails to their supervisors. To accomplish this goal, 128 emails of 20 post-graduate Iranian students were analyzed. This study aimed to provide supervisors' perceptions of politeness and impoliteness in emails communication and to reveal how supervisors enact and interpret their students' emails. And he added, "It is important to consider the appropriate level of politeness needed in teacher-student interaction; therefore, communication skills should be represented in students' emails to their teachers" (Hallajian,

2014, pp.17-20). Economidou-Kogetsidis and Woodfield (2012) supported the former view claiming that writing a polite and appropriate email requires the integration of the two components: pragmatic knowledge and sociopragmatic knowledge.

### 5.3. Effective Request Emails : Requestives

Warschauer (1995) claimed that emails are a useful instrument that provides a realistic channel of communication in an entirely authentic context and an encouraging attitude for relationship. It provides opportunities to raise productivity and worker satisfaction.

Chen (2001) asserted that email is a form of interpersonal communication that is primarily used for requests in professional contexts. Therefore, a request may be defined as a directed speech act that achieves the speaker's goals by getting the addressee to do something. Chen's study (2001) compared how Taiwanese overseas students and American students made requests to teachers via email to determine the preferred request strategies by these two particular cultural groups. She noticed that both groups preferred to use 'query preparatory' (e.g., can you...) and 'want statements' (e.g., I want/ would like to...) to convey their requests, but they differed in the number of lexical or syntactic mitigating features (e.g., please, possibly, I was wondering if, etc.), making native speakers' requests more indirect and polite. She added that Taiwanese students tended to transfer Chinese rhetoric to their requests by making supportive moves before the requestive act (Chen, 2001). While this may make their requests less effective from the teachers' perspective.

According to Brown and Levinson's classification of speech acts (1987), requests are essentially face-threatening because they are meant to threaten the negative face of the receiver. The senders have the choice of using one of Brown and Levinson's strategies to reduce the threat or perform the requests in the simplest way. As a result, Hallijian (2014) defined request emails as a kind of speech act that requires students' a high level of pragmatic competence in interaction, which often causes in face-threatening acts, and certain politeness strategies to soften the request.

### 5.4. Emails' Use Inside and Outside EFL Classroom

Once emails became more frequently employed in high education, teachers tend to recognize the dominant role that emails serve in facilitating tasks in their field, and particularly FL professors who want to improve students' knowledge of the TL. Email-based activities are very useful for FL learners to expand potential for more exposure to language. In general, most educators viewed emails as a preferred form of interaction and viable alternative type of communication in their profession. Depending on this standpoint, email has been described as "the mother of all internet applications" (Warschauer, Shetzer,& Meloni, 2000, p.3).

Along the same line, Oxford (1990) stated that email is a tool of authentic interactions which involves writing and exchanging messages to communicate with students in the classroom or around the world. It helps EFL students to have deeper insights of their willingness to communicate in English. Furthermore, email is widely seen as an opportunity to do a variety of tasks such as request, clarification, receiving feedback, and permission. Hence, many researchers have become interested in integrating this medium inside or outside the classroom. Consequently, Yu and Yu (2002) investigated the impact of integrating emails into classroom setting on students' academic success and attitude within two groups of students: email diffusion group and non-email diffusion group. As a result, the two groups' academic performances were different significantly.

Actually, Shang (2007) stated that email can be used outside of the classroom to facilitate discussion in an EFL context, and that integrating electronic media in the EFL classrooms an innovation that opens up rather than narrows down. Typically, this kind of discussion provides more TL conversational opportunities and allowing students to communicate in English.

### 5.5. Teacher-Students interaction via Email

The emailing medium provides more opportunities to enhance interpersonal relationships between learners and educators. Although the classroom setting allows for teacher-student interaction, time is limited, and the debate is restricted to once a week. Iwasaki (2008) stated that teachers can use email to establish a personal communication with every student, with no time and place limitations. As well as, it enables students to interact with their teachers for a period of time that isn't always possible in the classroom.

According to prior research findings, using email interaction outside of the classrooms more likely to create a positive atmosphere, contribute to strengthening teachers' confidence and trust, and make students feel more comfortable. Students can create written activities outside of the classroom, as email exchange in TL provides more opportunities for practicing language in an authentic context with less tension and supports the teacher-student interaction. Furthermore, engaging in email interaction in an EFL course creates a positive cycle of enhanced teacher-student relationship (Iwasaki, 2008).

Additionally, this communication tool can be utilized for additional explanation and feedback. Huett (2004) stated that email helps teachers in developing an instructional focus to cope with students' needs when they face difficulties and provide more opportunities for learning.

### 5.6. Teaching Requestive Emails Writing in EFL Classroom

Many researchers have addressed the necessity of teaching email writing in EFL classroom. Likewise, Chen (2006) argued that appropriate email communication should be explicitly taught to FL students in FL classrooms. He claimed that those rules are generally implicit and difficult to acquire. Additionally, it's crucial to inform them about the appropriate application of email and direct their attention to how email impacts their educational success (Baugh, 2011).

The students do not consider writing academic emails in which they address their teachers in the same way that they do with their friends. Thereby, it becomes essential to stress the importance of structured email writing, presenting explicit courses that provide clear email guidelines, and highlight the manner of writing a formal email. In the same vein, Danielewicz-Betz (2013) maintained that email netiquette encompasses the correct and acceptable rules for communicating through electronic tools that facilitate interaction. It includes many guidelines for users, ranging from respecting others' privacy to avoid defeating people. Thus, it is vital to direct student's attention to netiquette in order to overcome impoliteness in emails.

In conclusion, students' writing of impolite emails is owing to their ignorance of email netiquette and email literacy.

### **6 Requestive emails in EFL/ESL context**

Requests as a directive speech acts Searle (1979) are considered as a face-threatening acts (FTAs) which threaten the hearer's negative face, as it can be interpreted by the (H) as an imposition or the (S) is trying to limit his / her freedom of action (Blum-Kulka and Olshtain, 1984; Brown and Levinson, 1987). Therefore, a person who is performing a request is required to perform some kind of action to minimize the imposition.

In terms of studying request in natural setting in which they occur, Biesenbach-Lucas (2007) indicated that, many studies collected their data through DCTs without any consideration to that factor. Accordingly, she (2007) used authentic email of requests as a main research data. And she applied Blum-Kulka et al.'s (1989) framework to analyzing levels of directness in requestive emails sent by native and non-native English-speaking graduate students to faculty in an American university. Her findings indicated that, in less imposition situation, non-native English speakers employed direct strategies and conventionally indirect strategies while in more imposition situation, they used conventionally indirect strategies.

Moreover, similar studies were conducted on native Arabic speakers. Umar's (2004) study found that, Arabic students of English from Egypt, Bahrain, Sudan and Saudi Arabia tend to use direct requests more than American native speakers of English. And they use more internal modifiers to reduce their directness and soften their request. Further in line with the findings of Umar's (2004), Scarcella and Brunak (1981) compared between Beginners and advanced Arabic learners of English and native speakers of English in performing requests. The results showed that, the advanced learners commonly use the imperative form with Familiar people, whereas beginning learners use imperatives with all addressees with no regard to the social variables (PDR).

Algerian students were also subjects of investigation. Atamna (2016) carried out his research on Master2 students from Constantine University 1. His sample was advanced learners of English and their mother tongue is mostly Arabic. This study aimed to reveal how EFL students' cultural background and linguistic proficiency level can impact the way they perform requests strategies in their emails of request. The findings have shown that, EFL students' cultural background and linguistic proficiency level significantly influence their realization of requests in English. And because they rely on their culture, Directness of their requests does not always denote impoliteness; in fact they indicate familiarity and bond.

The study of requestive emails in intercultural communication has been a topic of interest to many researchers in abroad. However, only a few studies were conducted in the Algerian context about requestive emails, and none of them tried to uncover the effectiveness of EFL students' request strategies in requestive emails in the target language.

### Conclusion

In summary, this chapter has discussed the theoretical framework of this study. It provides a comprehensive overview of the existing knowledge and incorporates the works of several scholars, including Austin, Blum-Kulka & Olshtain, Brown & Levinson, and Yule, etc., with a particular emphasis on the significant contributions made by Blum-Kulka et al. (1989) in their requests' coding scheme. This coding scheme will be used as a tool for checking the request strategies in students' requestive email discussions with their teachers, in addition to the level of directness, formality, and the presence of linguistic politeness following Brown and Liverson's model. Therefore, this chapter serves as a framework for the forthcoming inquiry, which will be detailed in the following chapter.

## **Chapter Two**

**Methodology, Data analysis, Results and Discussion.**

### **Introduction:**

After presenting the theoretical background and related research in the previous chapter, this chapter is devoted to the field work. It introduces the practical part of the research where both the methods and process used to conduct this research are explained.

The present chapter is divided into two sections. The first section provides a full explanation of the research methodology and design wherein the research methods, population, instruments and tools. The second section is concerned with data analysis, interpretations, and discussion of the results, limitations of the present study, pedagogical implications and recommendations for further research.

### **1. Research Methodology and Design**

This section explains the research methodology and the steps taken to collect, analyze, discuss, and interpret the data. It also describes the methods and approaches that were used to achieve the objectives and answer the research questions.

This research aims to investigate the effectiveness of request strategies in EFL students' requestive emails. In order to answer the research questions, the current study adopts a descriptive method that employs a mixed-method approach, which is defined by Creswell (2015) as the purposeful integration of qualitative and quantitative research method to achieve the study's results. It is characterized by the use of at least one quantitative and one qualitative data collection and analysis tools (Schoonenboom and Johnson, 2017). This mixed approach aims to gather reliable data, and elicit in-depth information that provides a detailed comprehension of the research problem. Accordingly, both quantitative and qualitative data are gathered through text corpus analysis and unstructured interview. It also adopts an exploratory method design its goal is for qualitative results to help in the development of the quantitative approach, data is divided into two phases. First, the study is explored qualitatively, and based on its analysis, the quantitative data are raised.

### **1.1 Setting and Population:**

The targeted population of the present study is Master II EFL students of the academic year 2023/2024 at the Department of English Language and Literature in University of M'sila. It includes both Linguistics and Civilization and Literature majors. Creswell defines a population as a group of people who share the same characteristics (2012). Accordingly, this population is chosen for a variety of important reasons. First, they frequently use emails as a main means of communication with their teachers. Second, they are advanced learners of English, this indicates that they are able to speak and write in English with a wide range of grammatical structures and a sufficient vocabulary. Besides students, Master II teachers (N=18) from the field of Linguistics and English Literature are also part of this population.

### **1.2. Research Sampling:**

According to Gay et al. (2012), a sample is a group of individuals, items, or events that represent the characteristics of the larger group from which the sample is drawn. In this study, probability sampling with a simple random sampling technique is employed, in which a sample of 17 emails were collected randomly from teachers. In addition to that, 12 master two teachers from the population of 18 teachers of English department at M'sila University have been randomly selected and voluntarily agreed to take part of this study.

### **1.3 Research Instruments**

In order to conduct this study, which aims to investigate the effectiveness of request strategies in EFL students' requestive emails, two data collection tools have been used: an interview for teachers and a text corpus analysis of students' requestive emails.

#### **1.3.1. Description of the teachers' interview**

Interviews are one of the instruments of data collection. According to Gay et al., (2012), interviewers can explore participants' responses to gather in-depth data about their

experiences and feelings. In the current research, an unstructured interview was designed and piloted under the consultation of the supervisor to investigate the effectiveness of request strategies from the perspective of teachers. It includes eight open-ended questions to gather qualitative data (see Appendix 1).

The first question concerns the effectiveness of EFL students' requestive emails. The second question seeks to know the factors that constitute the effectiveness of their EFL requestive emails. The third question is devoted to determining whether teachers receive polite and well-structured emails from their students. The fourth question is on the frequency of using words or structures driven by their mother tongue. The fifth question concerns the familiarity of students with request strategies in their email communication. The sixth question concerns the common request strategies in their students' emails. The seventh question is about the frequency of delivering instructions in request strategies of email communication in EFL classes. The final question involves teachers' views of whether teaching request strategies of email communication would improve the effectiveness of students' request emails or not.

### **1.3.2. Description of Text Corpus Analysis**

Text corpus analysis is widely used in linguistics to analyze language features. Sinclair (2005) defined corpus as "a collection of pieces of language text in electronic form, selected according to external criteria to represent, as far as possible, a language or language variety as a source of data for linguistic research" (p. 16). Text corpus can be described as a collection of linguistic data gathered in written texts or recorded speech in order to be analyzed and describe language features. This method is employed to analyze the variation in the use of specific words or sounds (Crystal, 1992). In other words, to construe the presence or the absence of particular language features in written recorded texts.

The corpus of this study consists of 17 requestive emails were gathered randomly from EFL Master 2 teachers in the Department of English Language and Literature at M'sila University. The corpus of emails are naturalistic and student-initiated, i.e., not a response to a prior messages from teachers. The rationale behind this is to avoid any potential consequences or bias (Sobhani et al., 2014). Those emails are delivered to teachers of Master 2 (Linguistics and Literature) during the academic year (2023-2024) and stored in their email inboxes, then collected for the sake of this study. To ensure more confidentiality, the personal information of the teachers and students, including their email addresses, has been removed.

### **2. Procedures**

The researchers started their fieldwork in April 2024 by conducting the interview on 18 teachers; however they received only 12 responses. Some of the teachers responded on a hard copies, while others preferred to answer on an online form (word or google forms).The responses of the interview were summarized into themes.

In addition to that, after collecting the corpus of requestive emails (19) and carefully reading them, the researchers excluded two emails from the sample, because they were not requestives. Another important note is that some emails messages include more than one request strategy, all of which are selected.

Researchers of this study started their with qualitative content analysis by identifying which sentence that contains request strategy, following the CCSARP framework designed by Blum-Kulka, House and Kasper (1989)(see Appendix two). The nine strategies used within this framework are adopted for the purpose of this study, however only seven of them were found in the corpus. And then they conducted quantitative content analysis using Excel 2007.

### **3. Data analysis and interpretation of results**

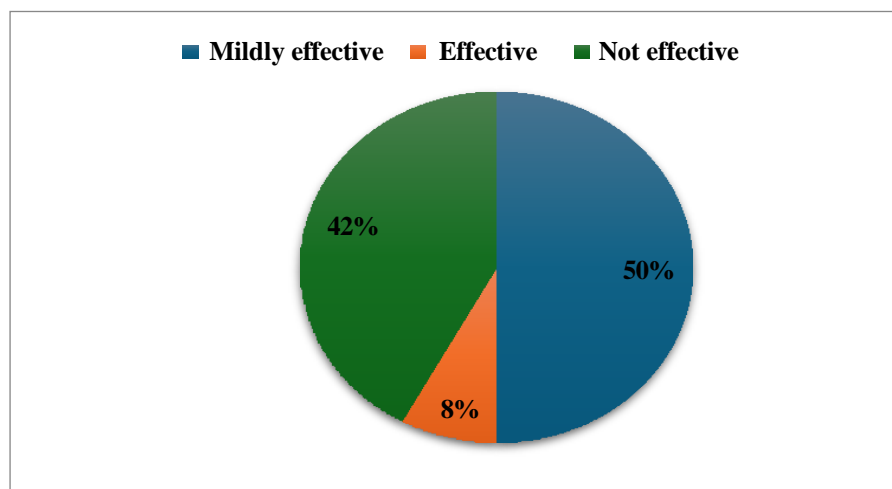
#### **3.1. Data Analysis, Results, and discussion of the Teachers' Interview**

The interview was designed in order to collect data about EFL teachers' perception

concerning the effectiveness of request strategies in their students' emails.

### 1. The Effectiveness of EFL Students' Requestive E-mails

The first question directed to teachers is "How effective do you believe are your EFL students' requestive emails?" .Teachers provided three main perspectives. Most of the responses (50%) indicated that the requestive emails they received are mildly effective while others are effective. As stated by one of the responses, "According to my experience, the effectiveness of my EFL student's requestive emails varies from time to time. Some students are good and display strong communication skills and effectively convey their requests, while others may struggle with clarity of expression, formality of style and the selection of register". Meanwhile (42%) of teachers demonstrated that they are not effective. Two teachers said that, "Not effective at all" whereas, another teacher declared the following "Most of my students, I would say, struggle with making an effective requestive email. They are either not very clear or most of the time not very appropriate in their communication", then he added "but I love them anyways" indicating that he is aware of his students' good intentions. The minority of the responses (8%) stated that the requestive emails they are receiving are effective. For instance one teacher mentioned that "Recently, I have remarked that EFL students' requestive emails are effective and they usually perform the desirable request or needs".



**Graph 1: Teachers' perceptions about the effectiveness of their students' requestive emails**

## **2 /The Factors that constitute in the effectiveness of EFL students' requestive emails**

The second question directed to teachers is “What factors constitute the (in) effectiveness of your EFL students' requestive emails?”, all of the responses are centered on four main elements; linguistic competence (language proficiency, clarity, appropriateness, grammar, and vocabulary), pragmatic competence ( the mastery of request strategies, politeness, and cultural sensitivity), practice ( frequency of writing emails), and email's structure (the awareness of email etiquette; form, subject, greetings). In this vein, one teacher summarized all these factors by saying “Many factors contribute to the effectiveness or ineffectiveness of my EFL students' requestive emails. These include their mastery of English language proficiency, their habits of how to write messages, their understanding of request strategies, and their cultural background influencing communication norms”.

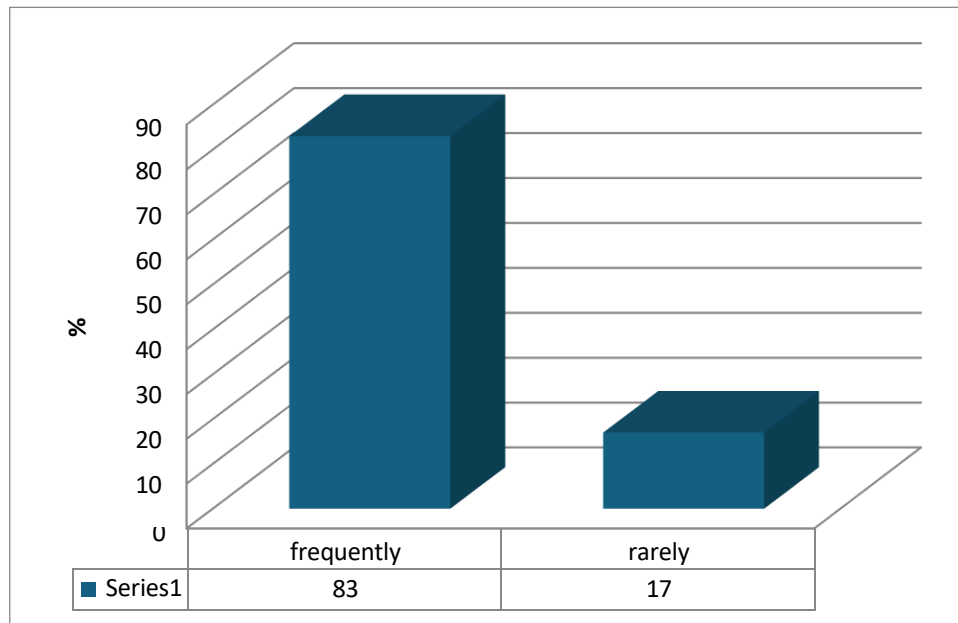
## **3/The Characteristics of Students' Requestive emails (Politeness and Structure)**

The third question of the interview is “How polite and well-structured are your EFL students' requestive emails?”. Most of teachers (75%) agreed on the fact that almost all the requestive emails they received are not structured and impolite, however, (17%) varied in their responses between; impolite/ structured and polite/ structured emails. And only one teacher (8%) said that “I would say that few of my students are able to make polite and well-structured emails”.

## **4/ Frequency of Receiving Requestive Emails that Contain Words/Structured Driven From Arabic**

The fourth question is “How often do your EFL students use words and/or structures driven by their L1 in their requestive emails? “. Approximately (83%) of the teachers frequently receive requestive emails driven by their students' L1, as mentioned by two of them “Most of the time they use their L1 words like ‘Sorry to bother you’, and ‘ Please tell me whether you have the news’ instead of let me up dated”, the other teacher said “ Using L1

either words or rules in L2 or foreign language is a remarkable phenomenon. For example, they may say “السلام عليكم” or just say it as “Salam 3alaikom”. In doing this, they use the so called language transfer to cover their weaknesses in using their equivalents in English. There have been other answer was not pivotal to the goals of the study, but deserve mentioning is “many of the requestive emails I have received are writing in L1 or ChatGPT”



**Graph 2: Frequency of receiving L1 words and structures in student's requestive emails**

### **5/ Familiarity of Students with Request Strategies in their Email Communication**

The fifth question is “How familiar, do you think, are your students with request strategies in EFL email communication?”. Teachers provided three main answers. Half of the responses (58%) indicated that EFL students are unfamiliar with request strategies. One teacher noted, “They are unfamiliar with these strategies”. On the contrary, (17%) of them mentioned that they are familiar with these strategies. One response stated that, “They display varying levels of familiarity with request strategies”. The rest of the responses (25%) stated that students are to some extent familiar with request strategies. As one teacher mentioned “Not all students are familiar with these strategies. Some may have prior experience or exposure to how to use them.

### **6/ Common Request Strategies in EFL Students' Emails**

The sixth question in the interview is “Which request strategy (ies) do you most commonly observe in your students' requestive emails?”. (25%) of teachers did not name any specific strategies, however, they said they are direct. One teacher said that “I am not familiar with request strategies official nomenclature, but they are usually either direct requests or expressions of gratitude”. However, the term of “politeness” was repeated in (41%) of the responses. One of them mentioned that “The most common request strategy which I observed in students' requestive emails is politeness strategy”. Whereas, the rest (34%) did not provide a relevant answers. For instance, “Grammar and vocabulary choice”.

### **7/ Frequency and the Impact of Delivering Instructions of Request Strategies in EFL Classes**

The two last questions deal with the frequency and the impact of delivering instructions of request strategies in EFL classes. According to the obtained results from the question about giving instructions, most of the interviewed teachers (58%) declared that they frequency give instructions about request strategies in their EFL classes. For instance, one teacher stated, “I frequently incorporate instructions on request strategies of emails communication in my classes. I insist that their messages should be clear namely those in relation to serious matters as lessons, assignments projects”. Meanwhile, (33%) highlighted some factors where they occasionally provide instruction including; the curriculum design, the specific objective of the course, and the nature of the module. For instance one teacher said, “Occasionally” And only one interviewee pointed out “I do not”.

Concerning the last question, the entire responses agreed on one opinion which is teaching request strategies of email communication would improve students' effectiveness of requestive emails, and they gave several ways on how to do it. One teacher noted, “Yes sure it is recommended. It can be through involving learners in activities about writing

requestive emails, providing them with the necessary communicative requirements to do so at first then expose them to authentic materials after which they can experience writing requestive emails. Is important to draw their attention to mistakes that they should avoid”.

### **3.2 Data Analysis, Results, and discussion of the Text corpus analysis of Students' requestive Emails**

#### **3.2.1 Text corpus analysis**

Two methods of analyzing were conducted on the corpus of emails the first is qualitative content analysis and the second is quantitative content analysis

##### **3.2.1.1 The qualitative content analysis of the corpus of requestive emails**

The qualitative content analysis is conducted on the corpus of email according to; the formality (formal/Semi-formal/informal), the presence of politeness strategies following Brown and Liversion(1987);off record, bald on record, positive politeness, negative politeness, the request strategies opted for following CCSARP framework designed by Blum-Kulka, House and Kasper (1989). As well as the level of directness (high/medium / low).

#### **Extract 1: Feedback Request**

Hello Sir,  
We would like you to have a glance at the questionnaire. Here is the link:

**Figure 5 .Corpus of Feedback Requestive Email**

As demonstrated, this is a semi-formal email. Although, it contains formal language with ' Sir' used to start the sentence, however, the statement "have a glance" is considered as colloquial and informal. The directness is at a medium level as the student requesting the recipient to review the questionnaire. The email utilizes one politeness strategy which is negative politeness “We would like you to have a glance at the questionnaire” and one request strategy which is want statement “We would like you to have a glance at the questionnaire”.

**Extract 2: Reference Request**

Dear Dr.  
Good evening sir, I hope this email finds you well. I am emailing you to seek your help concerning Critical Discourse Analysis. I have found some sources based on which I am conducting my research. However, I assume I am in need of more to construct a deep understanding. Would you please provide me with any documents that you believe may be useful? Sure, if you do have time, if not, that would be fine, you have already helped a lot.  
Thanks in advance,  
Have a great evening sir,

**Figure 6 .Corpus of Reference Requestive Email**

The email above displays a high level of formality through employing formal language and respecting the structure of email; greeting “Dear Dr”, “ Good morning sir”, closing salutation “Have a great evening sir, ” . The addressee opted for two politeness strategies; the first is positive politeness, such as expressing gratitude “Thanks in advance”, “you have already helped a lot”, the second is negative politeness "Would you please provide me with any documents that you believe may be useful?", and through reducing the imposition on the recipient “Sure, if you do have time, if not, that would be fine, you have already helped a lot.”. Moreover, request strategy of Explicit performative exists in this email “I am emailing you to seek your help...” in which the level of directness is medium.

**Extract 3: Feedback / Assistance Request**

Hello Dear Sir,  
I hope my e-mail finds you in a good health. Teacher, we have prepared our questionnaire draft and we haven't launched it on-line yet. We would be so grateful if you could have a look on it and give your feedback. Your help is highly appreciated as we trust you. What remarks you give, it will be taken into considération.  
I also wanna ask you whether you know some teachers who use EMI in other Algerian universities to send them our questionnaire.

**Figure 7. Corpus of Feedback / assistance Requestive Email**

This email is about requesting feedback and assistance from a teacher. It portrays a semi-formal email due to the use of constructions “wanna/haven’t” and no closing. It contains several politeness strategies, such as positive politeness as “Your help is highly appreciated as

we trust you” to show appreciation, negative politeness “We would be so grateful if you could have a look on it” and bald on record through utilizing direct statement “give your feedback”. Its level of directness is at a medium level, and three of request strategies are found here; query preparatory “if you could have a look on it”, mood derivable “give your feedback”, and mild hint “ I also wanna ask you whether you know some teachers”. Finally, the French language interference exists “considération”.

### Extract 4: Feedback Request

Good evening sir, we sent you our research proposal but we do not receive any answer from you, could you please send us your opinion and if we have to do some changes, we also prepared a questionnaire and we want to send it to you if it is possible, thank you sir  
Best regards

**Figure 8. Corpus of Feedback Requestive Email**

As demonstrates, this email is a semi formal, although it maintains a formal tone through the use of respectful greetings “Good evening sir” and closings “Best regards”, However, it contains some informal elements, such as the absence of a formal salutation like “Dear X”, and it lacks a clear, cohesive structure. Two politeness strategies are employed, such as thanks “thank you sir” to display positive politeness, and negative politeness “could you please send us your opinion”. The level of directness is at a medium level and two request strategies are used; query preparatory “could you please send us your opinion” and strong hint “we want to send it to you if it is possible”.

**Extract 5: Recommendation Request**

Good morning sir hope you are doing well, blessed djoumouaa(...)  
Concerning the research proposal I choose to write about our experience, (...)  
-Introduction  
-research Question  
What are the major challenges encountered by master student enrolled in on-line education program at the English language branch of MOMAMED BOUDIAF University in Msila  
-any other suggestion for the research question  
-literary review  
-Research methodology: using mixed methods  
Quantitative survey  
-semi-structured interviews  
-data analysis  
-expected outcomes  
-significance of the study  
-ethical consideration  
- case study and justification  
-references.  
Any suggestions, guiding ideas, changes you advise me to make I'm really sorry to interpret you in your weekend...have a nice day

**Figure 9. Corpus of Recommendation Requestive Email**

This email is formal and not structured through the use of formal greeting “Good morning sir” and closing “has a nice day”. Positive politeness strategies are employed through wishes “hope you are doing well”, “blessed djoumouaa” and the expression of apology “I'm really sorry to interpret you in your weekend”, in addition to request strategy mood derivable “you advise me to make” is found to indicate directness. Finally, the intercultural interference is preset in this extract by using religious expression “blessed djoumouaa.”

**Extract 6: Feedback Request**

Good morning Dr. X,  
Ramadan Mubarak. I hope this message finds you well.  
I've tried to reach out to you via Instagram, but unfortunately, I haven't received a response yet. I would greatly appreciate your feedback on the outline.  
Please respond as soon as possible.  
Regards,

**Figure 10. Corpus of Feedback Requestive Email**

As showcased, this is a formal email as the student addresses the teacher as “Dr. X”, opens it with “Good morning”, and ends it with “Regards”. Hence, level of formality is very high. The directness is at a medium level as the student has straight away mentioned that he/she is in need of outline feedback and requests the teacher to reply as soon as possible. The email deploys several politeness strategies, such as thanks “I would greatly appreciate your feedback on the outline” and wishes “Ramadan Mubarak” to display positive politeness, and some showing concern about the teacher's time “I've tried to reach out to you via Instagram, but unfortunately I haven't received a response yet” to display negative politeness. It also uses off-record politeness in the form of indirectly mentioning what would happen if the teacher did not provide feedback. Also, explicit request strategies are used, like stating directly the request through the use of two request strategies; mood derivable “Please respond as soon as possible” and hedged performative “I would greatly appreciate your feedback on the outline”. Finally, the intercultural interference is preset in this extract by using religious expression “Ramadan Mubarak”.

**Extract 7: Participation Request**

Dear teacher,

We hope this email finds you well. We are M k, and we are “X”, “Y”, and we are students currently undertaking our Master's degree in linguistics at Msila's University. We are reaching out to you regarding dissertation, titled (...)

As part of my research, we are conducting a written interview to gather insights from experts in the field, and we believe your expertise would greatly enrich our study. Enclosed with this email, you will find the interview questions. Your thoughtful responses would be invaluable in shaping the outcome of our dissertation.

Your time and consideration are greatly appreciated. We assure you that your responses will be handled with the utmost confidentiality and used solely for academic purposes.

If you could kindly take some time to complete the interview and return it at your earliest convenience, we would be sincerely grateful.

Thank you very much for considering my request. Please let me know if you require any further information or clarification.

Warm regards,

**Figure 11. Corpus of Participation Requestive Email**

As indicated, the email is formal in tone. This is evident from the formal words that students used to address their teacher, a clear and well-structured format; the opening sentence addresses the recipient as “Dear teacher”, body, and the closing sentence expresses gratitude to the recipient for their time and consideration and offers to provide further information if needed. And ends it with "Warm regards, ". The email utilizes both positive and negative politeness strategies to respectfully request participation. The senders used positive politeness strategies to value the recipient's expertise “We believe your expertise appreciated”, “we would be sincerely grateful”. They also used negative politeness strategies to minimize any imposition on the recipient's time. Examples of negative politeness include using hedges “if you could” and grateful expressions “We would be grateful if you could...”. The directness is at a medium level as the students clearly stated their request for the recipient to complete the

interview. However, they did so in an indirect manner by using softening phrases through the use of strong hint “Your time and consideration are greatly appreciated...”, query preparatory “If you could take some time to complete to complete the interview”, and mood derivable “return it at your earliest”.

### Extract 8: Feedback/Assistance Request

Good afternoon sir, hope you are well. We have sent our questionnaire seeking your feedback firstly. Secondly, would you mind sir sending your lessons of research methodology and Didactics I need them. I appreciate your time and help. Thanks in advance sir.

**Figure 12. Corpus of Feedback/assistance Requestive Email**

The email begins with a greeting “Good afternoon sir;” and finishes a closing statement “thanks in advance sir.” which are formal language, however, it lacks structure. Therefore, it is a semi-formal email. The directness is at a low level as the student did not explicitly ask for feedback. The email deploys several politeness strategies; positive politeness such as well-wishes “hope you are well”, and expressions of appreciation “I appreciate your time and help”, “Thanks in advance”. And negative politeness strategy “would you mind sir sending your lessons of research methodology and Didactics”. Additionally, it contains two request strategies; explicit performative “We have sent our questionnaire seeking feedback” and query preparatory “Would you mind sir sending your lessons of research...”.

### Extract 9: Action Request

I am a masters student and I want to inform you that my TD mark is not available on progress, can you check again please

**Figure 13. Corpus of Action Requestive Email**

As showcased, this email maintains a semi-formal tone, follows a simple structure that has no greeting. The text is concise and gets straight to the point. Hence, level of directness is very high. It has one request strategy which is query preparatory “can you check it please”.

**Extract 10: Information Request**

Good evening, sir. I hope this message finds you well. I would like to ask about model grid of other modules (like the one you provided about Language, Culture and Society, would you provide us with them on Moodle please. Thank you for your understanding. Waiting for a positive reply. Saha shourkoun.  
Regards

**Figure 14. Corpus of Information Requestive Email**

As demonstrated, this is a formal email given that the student refers the teacher as “Sir”, starts it with “Good evening”, and finishes it with “regards”. The language used is formal and respectful. The directness is at high level as the student mentions that he/she is in need of answer his/her question about model gride of other modules and requests the teacher to provide students with them on moodle. The email utilizes different politeness strategies, like thanks “Thank you for your understanding” and wishes “Saha Shourkoun” to show a positive politeness. In addition, request strategies are used, to state the request directly through the use of two request strategies which are hedged performative “I would like to ask...” and query preparatory “ Would you provide us with”. Lastly, in this email the intercultural interference is present by using religious expression “Saha shourkoun” .

**Extract 11: Information Request**

Hello  
I hope you are doing well, my classmates would ask you if there is an exam correction for tomorrow or not, for (...)  
Thank you.

**Figure 15. Corpus of information Requestive Email**

As illustrated, this email has a formal tone as the student uses proper salutation and expressions of gratitude, starts with a polite greeting “Hello” and ends with “Thank you”. The email is moderately direct as the student states the purpose of the inquiry directly with polite language and respect for the teacher’s time and authority “my classmates would ask you if there is an exam correction for tomorrow or not”. It employs several polite strategies such as

“I hope you are doing well” and thanks “Thank you” to maintain positive politeness. It states the request directly through using one request strategy which is hedged performative “my classmates would ask you if there is an exam..”.

**Extract 12: Participation Request**

Dear teacher,  
I am conducting a research study aimed at exploring the (...)  
Your participation in completing this questionnaire is crucial in providing me with a comprehensive understanding of the subject. I assure you that all responses will be kept confidential and used only for academic purposes.  
I greatly appreciate your time and valuable input.  
Best regards,

**Figure 16. Corpus of Participation Requestive Email**

The email is formal, this showed by the use of “Dear teacher” and the ending with “Best regards”. Hence the level of formality is high. The request for participation in completing the questionnaire is clear and direct without using indirect language, the directness level is medium. The student expresses gratitude and appreciation for the teacher's time and input using “I greatly appreciate your time and valuable input” to display positive politeness as well as to show respect and acknowledges the teachers' willingness to participate. There is no off-record implications or hints. He/She assures that all responses will be kept confidential and used only for academic purposes, which respects the teacher's privacy and autonomy. Also the request was stated directly by using one request strategy; strong hints" your participation in completing this questionnaire.. ”.

**Extract 13: Feedback/Information Request**

Good morning, I hope this email finds you well.  
I am currently working on Analysis of a dissertation done By “X” and “Y”  
Given your extensive experience and knowledge in this field, I would greatly value your opinion on the research.  
Could you provide feedback on the pedagogical implications suggested in the dissertation for integrating CQ into EFL learning?  
Are there any additional strategies you would recommend?

**Figure 17: Corpus of Feedback / Information Requestive Email**

The email maintains high level of formality; it opens with a polite greeting "Good morning". The directness is at medium level as the request is clear and direct. It employs several politeness strategies to display positive politeness, such expressing well wishes “I hope this email finds you well”, asking for feedback in respectful way “Could you provide feedback on the pedagogical implications...”, expressing appreciation for the teacher's potential input ("Given your extensive experience and knowledge in this field"), in addition to expressing value for the teacher's opinion “I would greatly value your opinion on the research”. The student avoids imposing on the recipient's time by making the request respectfully and attempts to mitigate any potential threat to the teacher's positive face. Lastly, the request has stated directly through the use of two request strategies; mood derivable “give your extensive experience” and query preparatory “could you provide feedback”, “you would recommend”.

**Extract 14: Information Request**

Hello sir, hope life is treating you well.  
I'm "X",(...) I was absent on  
your exam and I already submitted my justification  
Just wondering, when the date of the exam would be?  
Have a gorgeous day,

**Figure 18: Corpus of Information Requestive Email**

This email is moderately formal as the student starts it with "Hello sir" and ends with "Have a gorgeous day". Therefore, it is not overly formal, it maintains a respectful tone. The email is high direct; the student directly asks about the date of the exam. In this inquiry, several politeness strategies were employed to show positive politeness, like wishes "hope life is treating you well" and "have a gorgeous day", and somehow inconsideration for the teacher's time and situation by acknowledging the inconvenience caused by the absence on the exam through stating "and I already submitted my justification". The student's intentions and requests are explicitly mentioned, so there are no off-record politeness strategies. Finally, this email contains one request strategy; strong hint "Just wondering, when the date of the exam would be?".

**Extract 15: Assistance Request**

Our names are "X" and "Y".  
we are a master two students at  
University of M'sila. We are currently carrying out a study untitled (...) we  
would wholeheartedly appreciate your help in  
answering about the subject.

**Figure 19: Corpus of Assistance Requestive Email**

The email demonstrates a formal tone as the students introduce themselves; mention their academic status and their study. It contains formal language, which is appropriate for an academic context. The request is relatively direct, it uses one politeness strategy to show direct politeness; appreciation "we would whole appreciate your help in answering about the subject", though the students can soften the request by using more politeness strategies to show respect for teachers. The request for assistance is a potential FTA as it imposes on the teacher's effort time. Also, the request has stated by using one request strategy, which is strong hint "We would wholeheartedly appreciate you help".

**Extract 16: Assistance Request**

**Dear Dr. X,**  
**Good morning sir, I hope this email finds you well. I am texting you to seek your help concerning my research entitled (...)**  
**Would you provide me with articles that you believe may help me?**  
**Thanks in advance,**  
**Best regards**

**Figure 20: Corpus of Assistance Requestive Email**

As presented, this email demonstrates a formal tone as the student addresses the teacher as “Dr. X, “starts it with “Good morning” and finishes it with “Best regards”. It contains very formal language with “sir” employed to show respect for the teacher. The requests are clear and straight forward without ambiguity. In this email, several politeness strategies were used to demonstrate positive politeness, including thanks “Thanks in advance” and hoping for teacher’s well-being “I hope this email finds you well”. However, it employs other negative politeness strategies to mitigate the imposition of the request “would you provide me with articles..”, using a modal verb “would” to make the request less direct and more polite, in addition, the phrase “I am texting you to seek you help..” to show respect for the teacher's autonomy. Finally, in this email, two request strategies were employed to state the request directly; query preparatory “would you provide me with articles...” and explicit performative “I am texting you to seek your help concerning my research...”.

**Extract 17: Participation/Assistance Request**

**Dear teacher,**  
**My research study is aimed at (...), if you know some teachers.**  
**I would appreciate your help in answering me.**  
**Best regards**

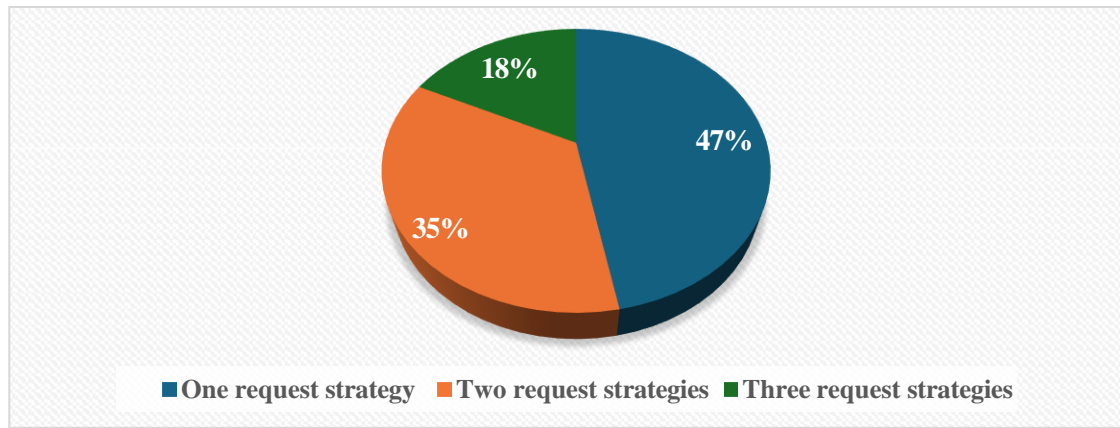
**Figure 21: Corpus of Participation / Assistance Requestive Email**

As showed, this email is formal, given that the student uses “Dear teacher”, and ends it with “Best regards” which are signs of formal and polite language. The directness is moderate, as the student has straightaway mentioned that he/she is in need of the teacher’s help in answering him/her. The email introduces multiple politeness strategies, for instance thanks “I would appreciate your help in answering me”, it mitigates potential imposition (FTA) by using polite language as well as, expresses appreciations in order to manage the teacher's negative face. It also uses off-record politeness “if you know some teachers”, as it state the requesting directly made by implying the desired information without explicitly asking for it. The sender of this email directly stated his request through using two request strategies; query preparatory “I would appreciate..” and strong hints “if you know some teachers..”.

**3.2.1.2 The Quantitative content Analysis of Corpus of emails**

**Table 1. The frequency of request strategy per email**

<i>Number of request strategy per email</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage (%)</i>
<i>One request strategy</i>	<b>8</b>	<b>47</b>
<i>Two request strategy</i>	<b>6</b>	<b>35</b>
<i>Three request strategy</i>	<b>3</b>	<b>18</b>
$\Sigma$	<b>17</b>	<b>100</b>



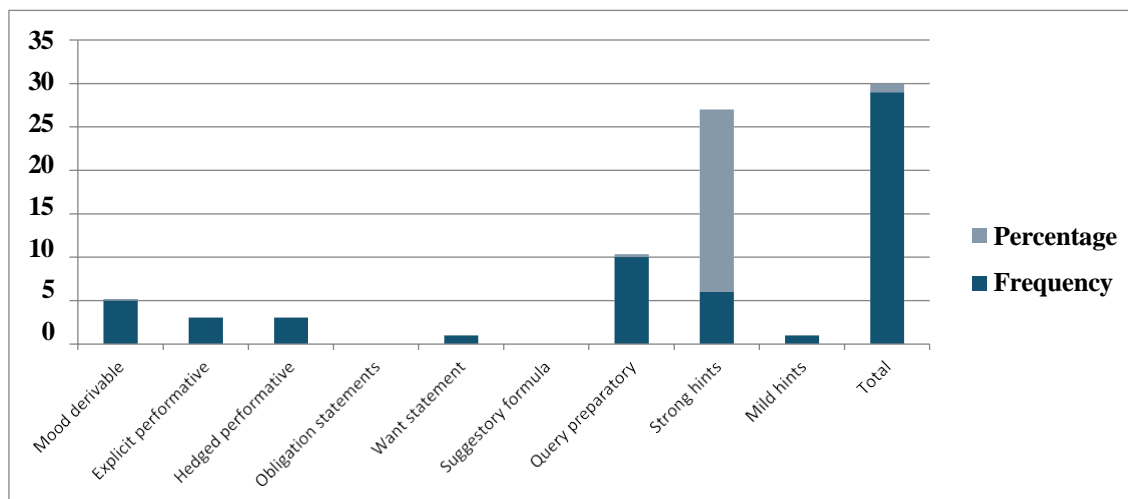
**Graph 3. The frequency of request strategy per email**

From Table (1) and Graph (3) show that approximately (47%) of emails contains one request strategy (see email one), whereas, (35%) of them have two requests strategies (see email 2). Additionally, (18%) of them include three request strategies (see email 3).

According to the results of the table (1), the first category (one request strategy per email) has the ( $\Sigma = 8$ ), the second category (two request strategies per email) contains 12 request strategies ( $\Sigma (2*6) = 12$ ), the third category (three request strategies per email) comprises of 9 request strategies ( $\Sigma(3*3) = 9$ ). Therefore, the sum of all request strategies within the corpus of 17 requestive emails is  $\Sigma=29$ . Further analysis of the corpus of emails, these 29 request strategies are divided into 9 types shown in the table below:

**Table 2. The frequency of different request types**

	Frequency	Percentage (%)
<b>Mood derivable</b>	5	17
<b>Explicit performative</b>	3	10
<b>Hedged performative</b>	3	10
<b>Obligation statement</b>	0	0
<b>Want statement</b>	1	3.5
<b>Suggestory formula</b>	0	0
<b>Query preparatory</b>	10	35
<b>Strong hints</b>	6	21
<b>Mild hints</b>	1	3.5



**Graph 4. The frequency of different request types**

The Table (2) and the Graph (4) present the frequency of different types of request strategies, with their corresponding percentages. The section below represents a deeper discussion of these values:

Among 29 strategies, mood derivable strategy is somewhat used, making up 17% of the total. It is employed moderately often, suggesting a preference for direct requests or commands expressed through grammatical mood. While, both explicit performatives and hedged performatives have the same percentage (10%). This indicates a balanced usage of these types, where speakers either directly perform the request they are referring to or do so with some level of reservation or politeness (hedged language). The absence of obligation statements (0%) and suggestory formula (0%) demonstrates that, EFL students at M'sila University do not prefer these two strategies, or they were not applicable in the context of their emails. In addition, want statement (3.5%) and mild hints (3.5%) are rarely employed by students in which, each appeared only once. This indicates that these two strategies are not commonly used. Query preparatory is the most frequent strategy, comprising (35%) of the total. This suggests a preference for making requests by inquiring about the listener's ability or willingness to comply, which is often considered a polite and indirect way of making requests. Strong hints are also fairly common, representing (21%) of the total. This shows a significant

use of indirect request strategies, where the intended request is stated implicitly rather than explicitly.

#### 4. Discussion of the findings

This section is devoted to answer research questions based on the results of the data analysis of the study tools, with integrating relevant studies in the literature.

The main purpose of this study was to explore EFL teachers' perceptions about the effectiveness of requestive emails of their master students. In addition to uncover the request strategies employed by EFL advanced learners in the Department of English Language and Literature. Consequently, the present study based on findings of the employed research instrument: teachers' interview and text corpus analysis of students' emails.

The findings from the data analysis of the teachers' interviews regarding their perceptions about the effectiveness of their students' emails (Q1) indicate that most teachers view these emails as "mildly effective." This term "mildly effective" implies that some students are very effective in their email communication, while others are less effective. This suggests that while students convey their main messages, they struggle with finer aspects (Q2) and (Q5) such; the familiarity with request strategies, the exposure to English native context, the level of linguistic competence, discourse competence (the failure in connecting meaning and realizing cohesion and coherence). In addition to the frequency of writing requestive emails and the mastery of email etiquette; proper formatting, clear subject lines.

Moreover, concerning the most frequent strategy used in students' emails, the results from the interview (Q6) is in contrast with text corpus analysis that revealed, the conventionally indirect request strategy; the query preparatory represented the most predominant among all the other used strategies. Because EFL students use these strategies while in more imposition situation (teacher-student). This goes in harmony with the findings of Biesenbach-Lucas (2007). On the other hand, the majority of teachers perceived their students' emails as impolite (Q3). This goes in line with the results of text corpus

analysis. Which proved that EFL advanced students of M'sila University use direct request strategies frequently; mood derivable, performatives, hedged performatives, want statement. Another point to mention is students did not opt for suggestory formula and obligation statement, because they are either not preferred or not applicable of the context of their requestive emails.

Furthermore, another results of teachers' interview (Q4) show that EFL students at M'sila University tend to use words and structures driven by their mother tongue, as if they are thinking in L1 using L2 words. This results in redundant language, the miss use of punctuation marks (L1 interference). Especially that Arabic and English differs in rhetorical conventions. Additionally, socio-cultural background impact was present in students' emails specially the use of religious expressions such as; (السلام عليكم /Asalam 3alailoum). This finding were also found in text corpus analysis "blessed djoumouaa" in email (5), "Ramadan Mubaraka" as in email(6) and "Saha shourkoum" in email (10).

Lastly, results from (Q7) and (Q8) demonstrated that most of teachers give instructions to their EFL students about the request strategies in their classes; however, most of their students' requestive emails are still ineffective. Therefore, it is better to integrate lessons about how to write effective emails in general and requestives in particular.

This study aimed to address three research questions as outlined in the general introduction, and in accordance with the findings of the analysis, the study has succeeded in answering each of those research questions and in achieving the research objectives. In addition, the results of this study were relevant in the literature of previously conducted in the speech act of request, as detailed in the results section. Some of those similarities include the students' choice of specific request strategies over the others.

### **5. Pedagogical Implications, Recommendations and Limitations**

#### **5.1. Pedagogical Implications**

The analysis of this study indicates that students tend to use direct request strategies in

their emails of requests, which are often perceived as blunt or impolite by teachers. Additionally, the lack of structure in their emails suggests a gap in their understanding of proper email etiquette. Addressing these issues in an educational setting can help students develop more effective communication skills, which are crucial for their academic and professional success. Therefore, this research recommends the following practical applications for educators:

- Raising EFL students' awareness about the importance of writing effective requestive emails with appropriate use of; request strategies, politeness, and emails netiquette. In order to achieve the intended purpose of the request.
- Raising EFL teachers' awareness towards integrating requestive emails writing in EFL classes through giving instructions, developing a series of workshops, providing examples of both effective and ineffective emails to illustrate key points.
- Since emails are privet exchanges, offering frequent feedback from teachers on requestive emails writing would be an area improvement.
- Using authentic materials and highlighting the significant differences between the L1 and target language in the rhetorical conventions.
- Incorporating requestive emails teaching in English language education can improve the relationship between students and their teachers.
- The pedagogical implications mentioned above can be unrealistic and cause certain challenges due to curriculum design, the additional time required to teach and assess requestive emails writing..Etc. Accordingly, EFL educators may give strict instructions and point out fundamental elements on how to write these emails effectively in regular sessions.

### 5.2. Recommendations for Future Research

After tackling this study, researchers offered recommendations for future studies as:

-Using discourse completion task (DCT) instead of text corpus analysis of emails. Because it

offers a more structured, controlled, and targeted approach to assessing language and communication skills compared to text corpus analysis of emails, which can be more variable and context-dependent. Also it allows to collect data from large sample in shorten time.

- Future research can also focus on how EFL learners perform other speech acts for instance: apologies, promises, threats, and refusals.

-Highlighting the need for future studies to include a larger and more diverse email corpus to enhance the findings.

-Alternatively, future studies could consider changing the research method from a descriptive method to an experimental method. For instance, test the effectiveness of EFL students' requestive email before providing them with instructions and training on how to write effective request emails and then retest them to determine whether these instructions and training are successful or not.

### 5.3. Limitations of the Study

As with conducting any type of study, encountering barriers and facing limitations during various stages of the research process is unavoidable.

- In this study one of the primary challenges encountered was the shortage of time.

- The limited data set of requestive emails may also have impacted the diversity of request strategies.

-The small sample size of teachers who responded on the interview process. Although researchers initially interviewed 18 teachers, they received only 12 responses.

-The pilot study of the interview was conducted only with the supervisor of this research, due to busy schedule of teachers.

-Due to the limited knowledge about different Linguistic structures of request strategies, the researchers constrained understanding of their various semantic forms from multiple studies.

# **General Conclusion**

### General Conclusion

In this study, researchers undertake an investigation of the effectiveness of master 2 request strategies in their requestive emails in M'sila University. The request strategies in email communication have been a significant area of interest in the EFL context abroad; however few studies addressed it in Algerian setting. As such, this research aims to fill that gap in the context of M'sila University.

Two research questions are in line with aims of collecting complimentary results. The first and the main research question concerns teachers' perceptions about the effectiveness of their students' requestive emails in EFL context. The second research question aims to uncover the most repeated request strategy in the corpus of EFL requestive emails. This dissertation is structured into two main chapters. The initial chapter is devoted to an extensive review of the relevant literature, encompassing a comprehensive synthesis of prior research studies. Whereas the second chapter is dedicated to the fieldwork of the study.

In order to achieve the objectives of this dissertation, two instruments were employed to collect quantitative and qualitative data; first, an unstructured interview for EFL teachers of M'sila University, to investigate their perceptions. Second, text corpus analysis of students' requestive emails to uncover the most repeated requestive strategy. Based on the findings of the current study, students' requestive emails are perceived by teachers as mildly effective. This term suggests that some students demonstrate high effectiveness in their email communication, others show less proficiency. Concerning the most frequent strategy used in students' emails, the text corpus analysis identified that conventionally indirect request strategy; the query preparatory, as the most prevalent among all strategies used.

In conclusion, the findings of the research indicate that EFL learners and teachers can benefit from enhancing requestive email communication practices. Improving these skills will

## **General Conclusion**

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enable students to be more effective, resulting in enhanced communication in academic contexts. The outcomes of the investigation provide suggestions for further study in the EFL context studies.

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# **APPENDICES**

## APPENDICES

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### Appendix 1

#### Teachers' interview

1/How effective do you believe are your EFL students' requestive emails?

2/What factors constitute the (in) effectiveness of your EFL students' requestive emails?

3/How polite and well-structured are your EFL students' requestive emails?

4/How often do your EFL students use words and/or structures driven by their L1 in their requestive emails?

5/How familiar, do you think, are your students with request strategies in EFL email communication?

6/Which request strategy (ies) do you most commonly observe in your students' requestive emails?

7/How often do you deliver instruction in request strategies of email communication in you classes?

8/Do you think that teaching request strategies of email communication would improve students' effectiveness of their requestive emails? How?

## APPENDICES

### Appendix 2

The requests coding scheme, designed by Blum-Kulka et al. (1989) in their Cross Cultural Speech Act Realization Project (CCSARP).

<b>The level of directness</b>	<b>Strategy</b>	<b>Definition</b>
<b>Direct</b>	<b>Mood derivable</b>	The grammatical mood of the verb indicates the illocutionary act
	<b>Explicit performatives</b>	The illocutionary act is explicitly named.
	<b>Hedged performative</b>	The naming of the illocutionary act is modified by hedges
	<b>Obligation statement</b>	The obligation of the hearer to carry out the act is stated.
	<b>Want statement</b>	We would like you to have a glance
<b>Conventionally indirect</b>	<b>Suggestory formula</b>	A suggestion is made to carry out the act.
	<b>Query preparatory</b>	A reference to ability or willingness is made using a modal verb.
<b>Non-conventionally indirect</b>	<b>Strong hints</b>	Partial reference to object needed for completing the act
	<b>Mild hints</b>	No reference to the object of the act is made. But it is interpreted as a request by context.

Appendix 3

Hello Sir,  
We would like you to have a glance at the questionnaire.  
Here is the link:

Dear Dr.  
Good evening sir, I hope this email finds you well. I am emailing you to seek your help concerning Critical Discourse Analysis. I have found some sources based on which I am conducting my research. However, I assume I am in need of more to construct a deep understanding. Would you please provide me with any documents that you believe may be useful? Sure, if you do have time, if not, that would be fine, you have already helped a lot.  
Thanks in advance,

Have a great evening sir,

Hello Dear Sir,  
I hope my e-mail finds you in a good health. Teacher, we have prepared our questionnaire draft and we haven't launched it on-line yet. We would be so grateful if you could have a look on it and give your feedback. Your help is highly appreciated as we trust you. What remarks you give, it will be taken into consideration.  
I also wanna ask you whether you know some teachers who use EMI in other Algerian universities to send them our questionnaire.

Good evening sir, we sent you our research proposal but we do not receive any answer from you, could you please send us your opinion and if we have to do some changes, we also prepared a questionnaire and we want to send it to you if it is possible, thank you sir  
Best regards

## APPENDICES

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Good morning sir hope you are doing well,blessed  
djoumouaa

Concerning the research proposal I choose to write about  
our experience,c

e Branch At

Mohamed Boudiat University Of Msila

-Introduction

-research Question

What are the major challenges encountered by master  
student enrolled in on-line education program at the English  
language branch of mohamed boudiaf University in Msila?

-any other suggestion for the research question.....

-literary review

-Research methodology:using mixed methods

Quantitative survey ....

-semi -structured interviews:

-data analysis

-expected outcomes ...

-significance of the study

--ethical consideration

- case study and justification

-references.

Any suggestions,guiding ideas ,changes you advise me to  
make ....

I'm really sorry to interpret you in your weekend ...have a

Good morning

Ramadan Mubarak. I hope this message finds you well.

I've tried to reach out to you via Instagram, but  
unfortunately, I haven't received a response yet.  
I would greatly appreciate your feedback on the outline.

Please respond as soon as possible.

Regards,

## APPENDICES

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Dear teacher,

We hope this email finds you well. We are N. and K., and we are a students currently undertaking our Master's degree in linguistics at Msila's University. We are reaching out to you regarding our dissertation, titled "

As part of my research, we are conducting a written interview to gather insights from experts in the field, and we believe your expertise would greatly enrich our study. Enclosed with this email, you will find the interview questions. Your thoughtful responses would be invaluable in shaping the outcome of our dissertation.

Your time and consideration are greatly appreciated. We assure you that your responses will be handled with the utmost confidentiality and used solely for academic purposes.

If you could kindly take some time to complete the interview and return it at your earliest convenience, we would be sincerely grateful.

Thank you very much for considering my request. Please let me know if you require any further information or clarification.

Warm regards,

Good afternoon sir ,hope you are well. We have sent our questionnaire seeking your feedback firstly. Secondly, would you mind sir sending your lessons of research methodology and Didactics I need them. I appreciate your time and help. Thanks in advance sir.



I am a masters student and I want to inform you that my TD mark is not available on progress , can you check again please .

Good evening, sir. I hope this message finds you well. I would like to ask about model grid of other modules (like the one you provided about Language, Culture and Society), would you provide us with them on Moodle please. Thank you for your understanding. Waiting for a positive reply.  
Saha shourkoun.  
Regards

Hello  
I hope you are doing well,my classmates would ask you if there is an exam correction for tomorrow or not,  
Thank you .

## APPENDICES

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Dear teacher,

I am conducting a research study aimed at exploring the . Your participation in completing this questionnaire is crucial in providing me with a comprehensive understanding of the subject. I assure you that all responses will be kept confidential and used only for academic purposes.

I greatly appreciate your time and valuable input.

Best regards,

Good morning, I hope this email finds you well. I am currently working on Analysis of a dissertation done By -

Given your extensive experience and knowledge in this field, I would greatly value your opinion on the research.

Could you provide feedback on the pedagogical implications suggested in the dissertation for integrating CQ into EFL learning?  
Are there any additional strategies you would recommend?

Hello sir , hope life is treating you well .  
I'm \_\_\_\_\_ , I was absent on  
your exam and I already submitted my  
justification  
Just wondering , when the date of the exam  
would be ?  
  
Have a gorgeous day ,

Our name are \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_, we are a master two students at  
university of Msila. We are currently  
carrying out a study untitled \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_, we would  
wholeheartedly appreciate your help in  
answering about the subject.

Dear D.  
Good morning sir, I hope this email finds you well. I am texting  
you to seek your help concerning my research entitled

\_\_\_\_\_  
Would you provide me with articles that you believe may help  
me.  
Thanks in advance,  
Best reagrds

## APPENDICES

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Our name are

,we are a master two students at university of Msila. We are currently carrying out a study untitled

,we would wholeheartedly appreciate your help in answering about the subject.

Dear teacher,

My research study is aimed at

if you know some teachers.

I would appreciate your help in answering me.

Best reagrds

## المخلص:

يعد البريد الإلكتروني إحدى وسائل التواصل في المجال الأكاديمي لطلبة اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية، حيث يميل الطلاب إلى استخدامه لأغراض مختلفة، أحدها هو تقديم الطلبات. وعليه، تسعى هذه الدراسة إلى البحث في فعالية استراتيجيات الطلب التي يوظفها طلاب اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية في رسائل البريد الإلكتروني الطلبة وذلك للإجابة على أسئلة البحث وتحقيق أهدافه، حيث استخدم الباحثون منهجاً استكشافياً وصفيًا، يتضمن أدوات تحليل البيانات الكمية والنوعية. تشمل هذه الأدوات مقابلة غير منظمة موجهة إلى أساتذة اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية في جامعة المسيلة وتحليل نصوص لرسائل البريد الإلكتروني الطلبة للطلاب. تم تحليل هذه الرسائل الإلكترونية باستخدام تحليل المحتوى النوعي والكمي. حيث أظهرت نتائج أن استراتيجيات الطلبة رسائل البريد الإلكتروني لهؤلاء الطلاب فعالة بشكل معتدل، مما يعني أن بعض الطلاب يظهرون فعالية عالية في رسائلهم الإلكترونية. بينما يظهر آخرون كفاءة أقل على الرغم من تلقيهم تعليمات شاملة حول كيفية كتابة رسائل البريد الإلكتروني الطلبة من طرف أساتذتهم. بالإضافة إلى ذلك كانت أكثر استراتيجيات الطلب تكررًا بين جميع الاستراتيجيات المستخدمة في رسائل الطلب هي استراتيجية "الاستفسار التمهيدي "

**الكلمات المفتاحية:** استراتيجيات الطلب، رسائل البريد الإلكتروني الطلبة، الكفاءة البراغماتية، اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية