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Creation and evaluation of multimedia materials to promote development of current and prospective international students’ pragmatic competence in academic settings

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Creation and evaluation of multimedia materials to promote development of current and prospective international students’ pragmatic competence in academic settings

by

Ananda Astrini Muhammad

A thesis submitted to the graduate faculty
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

Major: Teaching English as a Second Language/Applied Linguistics (Computer Assisted Language Learning and Literature in English as a Second Language)

Program of Study Committee:
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Iowa State University
Ames, Iowa

2017

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DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my family who has always placed a high value on education. Special dedication goes to my loving parents and sister.
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Last but not least, thank you to my family for their continuous support and encouragement to never stop improving myself. To my parents, M. Nathan Naing and Rosmiati Nyorong, thank you for believing in me. For my sister, Aulia Adelia, thank you for keeping me grounded.
Literature on communicative language ability has identified pragmatic competence as a crucial aspect of second language (L2) communicative language ability. However, current literature has employed varied definitions of pragmatic competence, and little effort has been made to synthesize pragmatics studies in order to come up with a comprehensive list of components that comprise pragmatic competence. This effort was recently undertaken by Laughlin, Wain, and Schmidgall (2015), who conducted a systematic literature review of many different models, principles, and theories of pragmatics. The result was a construct of pragmatic competence which included five components, namely sociocultural knowledge, pragmatic-functional knowledge, grammatical knowledge, discourse knowledge, and strategic knowledge. In addition to proposing a more comprehensive construct of pragmatic competence, Laughlin et al. (2015) also suggested an operationalization of the construct through the use of multimedia materials. The present study aims to operationalize this construct by designing, producing, and evaluating multimedia materials to teach pragmatics, particularly making requests in spoken and written communication within U.S. academic settings. More specifically, this research work investigates: (1) how participants perceive the effectiveness of the multimedia materials and accompanying tasks for developing their pragmatic competence; and (2) how participants’ performance differs between pre-instruction and post-instruction assessments. The creation of the multimedia materials was guided by multimedia design principles proposed by Mayer (2009) and Chapelle’s (2001) Computer Assisted Language Learning task appropriateness framework. Two groups of participants, namely current U.S. international students and prospective international
students, participated in the study. Both groups used and evaluated the multimedia materials hosted on an online learning platform. Data were collected from participants’ responses to feedback questionnaires, and their self-evaluation and self-reflection reports as well as their performance on pre-instruction and post-instruction assessments. Findings suggest that overall, participants’ learning experience was positive: they perceived gains specifically in their sociocultural, pragmatic-functional, and grammatical knowledge. However, certain limitations to the multimedia materials were also commented on by the participants, including the audio quality and length of the videos. Additionally, a comparison of participants’ performance in the pre-instruction and post-instruction assessments in Unit 1 seemed to suggest that most of the participants were able to successfully use the knowledge of request strategies and politeness features that they obtained from the instructional materials. This is indicated by their shift from using speaker-oriented strategies that are more direct in the pre-instruction assessment to using hearer-oriented strategies that are more indirect in the post-instruction assessments. Additionally, participants’ use of request strategies and politeness features were more varied after instruction. Results of this study provide insight on multimedia materials design that promotes an effective learning environment, especially for acquisition of pragmatic competence.
CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

In the past few decades, the development of the internet and multimedia technology has helped advance education, specifically the teaching of English as a second or foreign language. Multimedia materials have been incorporated into language teaching courses as well as made available in the form of self-access materials. As self-access materials, the multimedia materials are not necessarily attached to a language course. The advantage of self-access materials is that when made available on the internet, the materials can be accessed by anyone, anytime, and anywhere.

Self-access materials have been defined as “materials that are designed and organized in such a way that students can select and work on tasks on their own …. and obtain feedback on their performance, for example by comparing their answers to a key which accompanies the material” (Sheerin, 1991, p. 143). In the context of this study, self-access materials is operationalized as multimedia materials (mainly video materials) hosted on an online learning platform (i.e., Moodle) with tasks and assessments, as well as accompanying feedback for some of the assessments. The decision to use self-access multimedia materials to teach pragmatic competence, specifically making requests in spoken and written communication in academic settings, was based on the targeted users of the materials who are current and prospective international students interested in studying in the United States. Prospective international students are expected to want to develop their English language proficiency, especially in relation to the academic settings that they will most likely encounter in U.S. universities. Meanwhile, current international students, especially those
with a relatively short length of residence in the U.S., are expected to benefit from explicit instruction of pragmatic knowledge, particularly on topics that they might encounter in their daily academic lives. Furthermore, materials that are presented in self-access format will enable both prospective and current international students to use the materials whenever and wherever they decide to. Finally, students are free to look back on the materials that are provided whenever they feel the need to refresh their knowledge.

Pragmatic competence, specifically making requests, was chosen as the topic to teach for several reasons. Firstly, as an international student myself, the ability to communicate in a pragmatically appropriate way has often been a source of anxiety, especially when communicating with native speakers of English. This anxiety becomes more apparent when making requests in both spoken and written (i.e., email) communication as it is a potentially face-threatening act, even more so when the request is of a high degree of imposition and when the requestee is someone of a higher status (e.g., professors). Secondly, many of my colleagues have expressed their concern regarding their international students’ ability to make appropriate requests. Often, their requests are expressed as demands as they use fairly direct requests when more indirect requests would be appropriate. Finally, the literature on international students in U.S. higher education has reported that international students do face language-related problems which can affect their academic achievement (Gautam, Lowery, Mays, & Durant, 2016; Lee & Carrasquillo, 2006; Zimmermann, 1995). Although none of these studies explicitly point to international students’ lack of pragmatic competence, it is assumed that one of these language-related problems would pertain to pragmatic competence, as revealed by the experiences of my colleagues who are either native speakers of English or highly proficient non-native speakers of English who are graduate assistants.
Requests are one of the speech acts that have been extensively investigated in the area of intercultural pragmatics. In general, these studies can be categorized based on their research aims. The first category consists of studies that aim to investigate the requests produced by non-native speakers by asking them to respond to various scenarios and make judgments on the appropriateness or politeness of their requests (e.g., Fukushima, 1990; Syahri & Kadarisman, 2007; Taguchi, 2006; Trosborg, 1995; Yang, 2009). In making politeness judgments, the researchers would typically use the requests made by native speakers of the investigated language or use other request studies as a baseline to make politeness comparisons between requests produced by native speakers and those made by non-native speakers. The second category consists of studies that aims to analyze cross-cultural differences in making requests (e.g., Blum-Kulka & Olshtain, 1984; Fukushima, 1996; Kim & Wilson, 1994). Finally, the third category consists of pedagogically based studies aimed at teaching requests using certain methodologies (e.g., Cunningham, 2016; Glass, 2013; Li, 2012; Tan & Farashaiya, 2012). Of particular interest to this study is the third category. Despite the considerably large body of research on this particular speech act, there are few studies seeking to investigate the teaching of requests, and there are even fewer on the use of multimedia to teach making requests or other components of pragmatic competence, which is the main focus of this current study.

Learning through multimedia instruction has become increasingly attractive because of its ability to incorporate multiple formats of information to improve comprehension (Jones & Plass, 2002; Kim & Gilman, 2008; Whiting & Granoff, 2010). As discussed in Dillon and Jobst (2005), multimedia (which they termed ‘hypermedia’) can accommodate learners with different learning styles and needs through its application of multiple media formats. Indeed,
this can be a huge advantage for learners. However, Clark and Mayer (2011) point out that research carried out in the past sixty years has shown that learning occurs not because of the delivery medium, but because of the instructional methods. In other words, multimedia materials need to be designed using effective instructional methods for successful learning.

For the teaching of pragmatic competence, multimedia materials seem to be a natural choice. This is especially true when multimedia materials incorporate videos as a medium to communicate information. In a study conducted by Culbertson, Shen, Jung, and Andersen (2017), the development of pragmatic competence was facilitated using a voice-driven video learning interface. Participants indicated that the system promoted pronunciation learning, and most importantly raised their awareness on context-specific features that are crucial in improving their pragmatic competence. Furniss (2016) also used videos in the instructional website that she developed to teach the pragmatics of Russian conversations. Feedback given by participants in her study shows that the video materials facilitated in raising their awareness of the functions of several Russian formulaic sequences in the appropriate contexts. These studies highlight the affordances of multimedia materials in the teaching of pragmatic competence, especially as it supports raising awareness of the context-specific situations in the form of visualizations that appear to be crucial in the learning of pragmatics.

However, the concept of pragmatic competence in multimedia materials is more complex than the ideas put forth in these studies. In the present study, the operationalization of pragmatic competence in multimedia materials in Laughlin et al. (2015) was used. In their study, they synthesized definitions or conceptualizations of pragmatic competence found in the present literature to come up with a comprehensive construct definition of pragmatic competence. Using this construct, the authors made suggestions for its operationalization in
multimedia materials created to teach pragmatic competence in the workplace. In the current study, the target language use domain is the U.S. academic setting, which has been chosen due to reasons that have been stated in the beginning of this introduction. The construct of pragmatic competence proposed by Laughlin et al. (2015) will be further elaborated in Chapter 2.

The goal of this project is to design self-access multimedia materials to teach making requests in spoken and written communication in U.S. academic settings, to trial the materials with current and prospective international students as the intended users of the materials, and to evaluate the effectiveness of the materials. The evaluation is based on feedback obtained from the students, as well as data on their performance on several tasks (pre- and post-instruction). These tasks are embedded in the Moodle course to engage students with the materials as well as to allow for an analysis of their learning outcome as a measure of the usefulness of the materials.

Focusing on the instructional design of the materials and the process of learning pragmatic competence, the following research questions guide the research study:

1) How do participants perceive the effectiveness of the audiovisual materials and accompanying tasks for developing their pragmatic competence?

2) How do participants’ performance differ between pre-instruction assessments and post-instruction assessments completed after viewing the instructional content?

This thesis consists of five chapters. Following this introduction, Chapter 2 reviews literature related to problems faced by international students studying in U.S. universities to highlight the importance of connecting research on international students and second language acquisition (SLA) research to provide solutions. In addition, literature on designing
and evaluating multimedia technology for foreign language learning as well as the construct of pragmatic competence which guided this study will be reviewed. Chapter 3 explains the design choices made in the creation of the self-access materials and the procedures involved in collecting and analyzing the data. Results and analysis of the research data are presented in Chapter 4. These include results based on the use of both quantitative and qualitative research methods. Chapter 5 concludes the thesis by summarizing the study findings, indicating its limitations, and offering recommendations for future research on using multimedia materials to teach pragmatic competence.
CHAPTER 2
LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter reviews studies that help motivate and inform the current study. The first section provides a background on higher education research pertaining to international students in U.S. universities. This section ends by underlining the importance of addressing the language problems faced by the international students identified in these studies. The second section elaborates on the definitions of pragmatic competence that have been put forth in the literature focusing on the construct of pragmatic competence as defined by Laughlin et al. (2015), which is the foundation of the current study. The review will then shift to a review of studies on the explicit versus implicit instruction of pragmatics, emphasizing the outcomes observed in such instructional approaches. The fourth and final section of this chapter starts by covering research that has been conducted on the use of multimedia to teach a second language, followed by a review of the relatively small number of studies involving the creation and/or evaluation of multimedia materials to teach pragmatics specifically. The section concludes with an explanation of Mayer’s (2009) twelve principles of multimedia design which informed the design decisions for the multimedia materials used in this study.

Connecting Higher Education and Second Language Acquisition Research

Higher education presents many challenges for all students. However, for international students, additional problems most likely arise. Indeed, extensive research has been conducted to understand the kinds of challenges faced by international students
adapting to university life. For example, Lee and Carrasquillo (2006) examined responses of college professors and Korean students in colleges in the United States on cultural/learning and linguistic causes that affect international students’ academic achievement. Findings suggest that the cultural/learning characteristics that influence academic achievement include class participation, indirect thinking, ownership of knowledge, and eye contact. Meanwhile, the linguistic characteristics include difficulties with oral communication, difficulties with the structure of the English language, inability to answer questions in English, and language preferences.

A more recent study by Gautam et al. (2016) examined the concerns and difficulties of students from several different countries while studying in a small-town university in the United States. Two main themes emerged from the qualitative analysis of questionnaire responses and interviews, namely situational constraints and socio-economic/cultural challenges. The situational constraints were mainly issues with external factors, specifically the city, the people, and the opportunities provided for them as international students as well as their plans and successes for the future. Socio-economic/cultural challenges included language, jobs and finances, transportation, adjustment and cultural assimilation, cultural and religious encounters, and their double identities.

Zimmermann (1995) conducted a study that is considerably older than the ones previously mentioned, but is undoubtedly related to the current study. Results from interviews with 101 international undergraduate students in a Midwest university found that international students placed a high emphasis on their ability to talk with American students, and how it affects their adjustment to American life. One of the suggestions proposed by Zimmermann was for universities to design programs that can encourage international
students to interact more with members of the university community (e.g., faculty, staff, other students) as “developing intercultural communication competence in individuals is essential in the academic world and in the workplace” (p. 333).

The literature indicates that a recurring challenge faced by international students studying in the higher education level, specifically in the United States, is concerned with English proficiency. Moreover, it seems that it is not only a matter of lack of linguistic competence, but also the pragmatic competence of the international students. However, much of the current research is focused solely on identifying the challenges faced by international students. Thus, more effort is required to bridge the gap between research conducted within the general higher education area pertaining to international students, and the SLA area. One way is to provide language learning materials for international students that focus on pragmatic aspects of the English language. Ideally, these materials can be accessed by international students as separate from English language courses that they should take, but the materials could also be used as supplemental materials in the English language courses. Furthermore, the design and creation of these materials should be informed by current SLA research.

**Pragmatic Competence Defined**

Literature on communicative language ability has identified pragmatic competence as a crucial aspect of second language (L2) communicative language ability. However, pragmatic competence has been difficult to operationalize in language teaching and assessment due to two main problems. Firstly, although there has been a lot of work on pragmatics, the definition of pragmatic competence employed in the studies itself is varied,
prompting Eslami-Rasekh (2005) to state that there is no clear and generally accepted definition of the term itself. In relation to this, there has been little effort to synthesize pragmatics studies in order to come up with a comprehensive list of components that comprise pragmatic competence (Laughlin et al., 2015).

Pragmatic competence has been broadly defined by Taguchi (2009) as “the ability to use language appropriately in a social context” (p. 1). Meanwhile, Fraser (2010) described pragmatic competence as “the ability to communicate your intended message with all its nuances in any socio-cultural context and to interpret the message of your interlocutor as it was intended” (p. 15). Several other definitions have been put forward, but as Eslami-Rasekh (2005) pointed out, “Even though pragmatic competence has been recognized as one of the vital components of communicative competence ... there is a lack of a clear, widely accepted definition of the term” (p.199). If we were to operationalize the construct of pragmatic competence in learning materials, then we would certainly need to create a more comprehensive definition of it. Researchers from the Educational Testing Service have recently undertaken this endeavor. Laughlin et al. (2015) conducted a systematic literature review of many different models, principles, and theories of pragmatics. Their aim was to “propose a construct definition of pragmatic competence for the development of future assessment and learning tools” (p. 1).

Based on their synthesis of literature on pragmatic competence, they defined pragmatic competence as “mastery of strategically relating linguistic and nonlinguistic contextual information in order to generate meaning beyond the grammatical level in oral, written, or a hybrid mode of communication” (Laughlin et al., 2015, p. 19). This definition was further realized in the form of a framework that they call “a somewhat modified
construct of pragmatics, situating pragmatic principles and pragmatic-functional knowledge within a larger context of general language ability” (p. 3). Figure 1 roughly illustrates their proposed construct. In this figure, the gray base represents context which mediates the meaning, with the interlocutors encoding and decoding the input and output in reference to the contextual information. It also shows how each interlocutor’s pragmatic competence consists of five distinct but interrelated dimensions of knowledge, namely sociocultural knowledge, pragmatic-functional knowledge, grammatical knowledge, discourse knowledge, and strategic knowledge (illustrated in the figure as the spiral circling around all knowledge dimensions).

Sociocultural knowledge refers to the knowledge that language users require to “tailor their speech intentions and utterance(s) to the characteristics of the situational context” (Laughlin...
et al., 2015, p. 18). Sociocultural knowledge consists of knowledge of factors such as topic, role of participants, setting, norms of conventions and interaction, power relations, gender, and age. Meanwhile, pragmatic-functional knowledge pertains to knowledge required to make connections between form and meaning. It is conceptualized as consisting of two subcomponents: illocutionary knowledge and sociolinguistic knowledge. In this model, an emphasis is placed on “the sociocultural nature of elements such as register, dialect/varieties, or genre in contrast to the more linguistic orientation of speech acts and functions” (Laughlin et al., 2015, p. 18). Grammatical knowledge pertains to knowledge of lexis and rules of morphology, syntax, semantics, phonology, and graphology. Discourse knowledge is required for cohesion and coherence, and while it is considered as an individual knowledge component, its position above sociocultural, pragmatic-functional, and grammatical knowledge signifies that these three components come into play in “felicitous discourse in a target language” (Laughlin et al., 2015, p. 18). Finally, strategic knowledge is represented as knowledge that acts as a support system when there is insufficient knowledge and/or communicative breakdown. However, in the case of the current study, strategic knowledge is conceptualized as the knowledge acquired from learning about other people’s experiences and reflecting on the knowledge of their own culture, while simultaneously comparing it with the culture (in this case of making requests) of the target language.

**Explicit Versus Implicit Instruction of Pragmatics**

Studies examining the effects of explicit versus implicit pragmatic instruction have been conducted as early as the 1980s (Kasper, 1997) and have continued. Doughty (2003) characterizes explicit instruction as instruction that includes deductive or metalinguistic rule
instruction and explicit direction of learners’ attention to the target forms. In contrast, implicit instruction does not involve any rule instruction nor direction to attend to target forms. Table 1 provides a summary of recent studies that have investigated explicit versus implicit pragmatics instruction. These studies are motivated by the question of whether students benefit more from explicit or implicit pragmatics instruction.

Of the fifteen studies that were reviewed, nine studies (i.e., Bu, 2012; Eslami-Rasekh, Eslami-Rasekh, & Fatahi, 2004; Fordyce, 2014; Ghobadi & Fahim, 2009; Koike & Pearson, 2005; Nguyen, Pham, & Pham, 2012; Simin, Eslami, Eslami-Rasekh, & Ketabi, 2014; Takahashi, 2001; Takimoto, 2007) found that participants in the explicit instruction group performed significantly better than those in the implicit instruction group. Interestingly, some of the studies also indicated that participants who received implicit instruction also benefited from it (i.e., Bu, 2012; Fordyce, 2014; Koike & Pearson, 2005; Nguyen et al., 2012). Nguyen et. al. (2012) observed that “although both types of instruction proved effective in developing learners’ pragmatic performance, explicit instruction tended to produce a larger magnitude of effect” (p. 427). Moreover, learners’ accounts regarding implicit instruction seem to indicate that despite being aware of the target form for producing a particular meaning, they are uncertain regarding their applications in varying situations (Bu, 2012). This suggests that implicit instruction fails to provide saliency of sociopragmatic features of the target forms.

The remaining six studies (Liao, 2014; Martínez-Flor & Fukuya, 2005; Martínez-Flor & Soler, 2007; Rose & Ng, 2001; Soler, 2005; Tateyama, 2001), in contrast, found that there was no significant difference in learners’ pragmatic performance in both explicit and implicit
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Study</th>
<th>Teaching Goal</th>
<th>Proficiency Level</th>
<th>Languages</th>
<th>Design</th>
<th>Data Collection</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Takahashi (2001)</td>
<td>Requests</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>L1 Japanese L2 English</td>
<td>Pre- and Posttests</td>
<td>Discourse completion tests and written retrospection tasks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rose &amp; Ng (2001)</td>
<td>Compliments</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>L1 Cantonese L2 English</td>
<td>Pre- and Posttests</td>
<td>Self-assessment questionnaire, written discourse completion questionnaire, and metapragmatic assessment questionnaire</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Study</td>
<td>Teaching Goal</td>
<td>Proficiency Level</td>
<td>Languages</td>
<td>Design</td>
<td>Data Collection</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soler (2005)</td>
<td>Requests</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>L1 Spanish, L2 English</td>
<td>Pre- and Posttests</td>
<td>Elicited dialogues, awareness-raising tasks, and discourse completion tasks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ghobadi &amp; Fahim (2009)</td>
<td>Thanking</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>L1 Arabic, L2 English</td>
<td>Pre- and Posttests</td>
<td>Written discourse completion tasks and roleplays</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nguyen, Pham, &amp; Pham (2012)</td>
<td>Constructive criticism</td>
<td>High-Intermediate to Low-Intermediate</td>
<td>L1 Vietnamese, L2 English</td>
<td>Pre- and Posttests</td>
<td>Written discourse completion task, oral roleplay, and oral peer feedback</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liao (2014)</td>
<td>Apologies</td>
<td>Advanced</td>
<td>L1 English, L2 Chinese</td>
<td>Pre- and Posttests</td>
<td>Written discourse completion task</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
instruction groups. On the other hand, Soler (2005) found that students in the explicit instruction group produced more appropriate requests (the teaching goal) compared to those in the implicit instruction group. Similarly, analysis of students’ compliments and compliment responses in Rose and Ng’s (2001) study showed that although both deductive (explicit) and inductive (implicit) instruction had a positive effect on students’ pragmalinguistic performance, that is their ability to produce accurate forms of compliments and compliment responses, the deductive group had better sociopragmatic knowledge. In other words, both types of instruction helped develop students’ pragmalinguistic knowledge, but only deductive instruction led to gains in sociopragmatic knowledge. In Laughlin et al.’s (2015) construct of pragmatic competence, pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic knowledge seem to fall under the pragmatic-functional knowledge component.

In conclusion, the literature on the teaching of pragmatics through explicit and implicit instruction has shown that learners benefit more from explicit instruction, as it provides opportunities to develop both their pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic competence. Thus, this study aims to design multimedia materials that will enable learners to develop both their pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic competence, especially in the context of U.S. academic settings. Now we turn our focus to research conducted in using multimedia to teach a second language and look more closely at the studies in which researchers created multimedia materials specifically to teach pragmatics.

**Using Multimedia to Teach a Second Language**

In the past two decades, there has been an increase in interest to use multimedia to teach a second language. This is evident in the number of studies in academic journals that
aim to use multimedia approaches to promote second language acquisition. This increase in interest in the use of multimedia to teach a second language has been without doubt influenced by the development of the internet and various visualization technologies.

Mayer (2014), a cognitive psychologist who studies multimedia learning, defines multimedia learning as “the learner’s construction of knowledge from words and pictures” (p. 3). Here, words refer to both spoken and printed text, while pictures include illustrations, photos, animation, or video materials. According to Mayer (2014), the rationale for multimedia learning is that “students may learn more deeply from words and pictures than from words alone” (p. 7). However, he cautions the use of technology for technology’s sake. He further underlines the need for a “research-based understanding of how people learn from words and pictures and how to design multimedia instruction that promotes learning” (p. 7).

Studies and principles on designing multimedia instruction that promotes learning in general often become the basis for research on multimedia to teach a second language. For example, Plass, Chun, Mayer, and Leutner (1998) adapted Mayer’s generative theory of multimedia learning as a framework to develop their multimedia learning environment, which consisted of videos, static pictures, and text. The learning goals were geared towards vocabulary learning and text comprehension. Results of this study showed that the multimodality of the multimedia program helped students comprehend text more effectively.

As literature on the use of multimedia to teach a second language developed, more studies look towards SLA theory and research as guidance in the design process. Based on interactionist SLA theory and research, Chapelle (1998) outlined seven principles that are applicable for developing multimedia for language learning, and thus relevant to the current study:
1. The linguistic characteristics of target language input need to be made salient,
2. Learners should receive help in comprehending semantic and syntactic aspects of linguistic input,
3. Learners need to have opportunities to produce target language output,
4. Learners need to notice errors in their own output.
5. Learners need to correct their linguistic output,
6. Learners need to engage in target language interaction whose structure can be modified for negotiation of meaning, and
7. Learners should engage in L2 tasks designed to maximize opportunities for good interaction. (p. 23-25).

These principles will be elaborated throughout the study, particularly in connection to the design choices that were made for the multimedia materials created for this study.

Creation and Evaluation of Multimedia Materials to Teach Pragmatics

Despite the increasing number of studies investigating the use of multimedia to teach a second language, there is a surprisingly small number of studies on the use of multimedia materials to teach pragmatics. For this literature review, relevant studies were identified using a variety of search engines (i.e., Google Scholar, Linguistics and Language Behavior Abstracts, Education Resources Information Center), as well as manual searching in a number of Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL) journals (i.e., CALL, CALICO Journal, ReCALL, Language Learning and Technology). From this search, 14 relevant
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Study</th>
<th>Teaching Goal</th>
<th>Proficiency Level</th>
<th>Target Language</th>
<th>Multimedia</th>
<th>Data Collection</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Empirical Studies</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carel (1999)</td>
<td>Turn-taking, gesture, and lexical choice in speech</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>French</td>
<td>Virtual Ethnographer Multimedia Program (Video clips)</td>
<td>Student generated records, questionnaires, face-to-face interviews, computer records, and researcher’s observation notes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Levy (1999)</td>
<td>Various elements of cross-cultural pragmatics</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Australian English</td>
<td>Video clips</td>
<td>Listening comprehension questions, reflection questions, and recorded interviews</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sykes &amp; Cohen (2008)</td>
<td>Various speech acts (e.g., compliments, gratitude and leave taking, requests, apologies)</td>
<td>Upper-Intermediate</td>
<td>Spanish</td>
<td>Dancing with Words: Strategies for Learning Pragmatics in Spanish (Web-based)</td>
<td>Discourse completion tasks, online environment roleplay, recorded participant observation, and recorded one-on-one interviews</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hamilton &amp; Woodward-Kron (2010)</td>
<td>Intercultural communication in healthcare settings</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Australian English</td>
<td>Interactive DVD-ROM</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yang &amp; Zapata-Rivera (2010)</td>
<td>Requests</td>
<td>Low-Intermediate</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>Request game system</td>
<td>Background questionnaire, request game situations and usability survey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Study</td>
<td>Teaching Goal</td>
<td>Proficiency Level</td>
<td>Target Language</td>
<td>Multimedia</td>
<td>Data Collection</td>
</tr>
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<tr>
<td>Gilmore (2011)</td>
<td>Developing linguistic, pragmalinguistic, sociopragmatic, strategic, and discourse competencies Speech acts (e.g., interruptions, requests, apologies) and intercultural communication in workplace settings</td>
<td>Intermediate</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>Varied (e.g., video clips, web-based sources)</td>
<td>Pretest, posttest, and IELTS oral interview</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Waugh (2014)</td>
<td>Speech acts (e.g., interruptions, requests, apologies) and intercultural communication in workplace settings</td>
<td>Canadian Language Benchmark Level 7</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>Video clips</td>
<td>Oral and written discourse completion tasks, and intercultural development inventory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Furniss (2016)</td>
<td>Nine routine formulas</td>
<td>Intermediate and advanced oral proficiency</td>
<td>Russian</td>
<td>Corpus-referred website (Video clips)</td>
<td>Computer Assisted Screening Tool, background questionnaire, pre-, post-, delayed posttest, and feedback form</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Culbertson, Shen, Jung, &amp; Andersen (2017)</td>
<td>Pragmatic competence in general</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Spanish, French, Chinese</td>
<td>Voice-driven video learning interface</td>
<td>Background survey, usage data, and usability survey</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
studies were identified that fell under two categories. The first category included studies that created and/or evaluated multimedia with the goal of teaching pragmatics. Table 2 provides a summary of the 10 studies that fell under this category. The second category contains studies that only proposed some kind of multimedia materials—that have yet to be created—to teach pragmatics. Table 3 provides a summary of the four studies that fell under this category.

Table 3  
Studies on Multimedia Materials Development to Teach Pragmatics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Study</th>
<th>Teaching Goal</th>
<th>Target Language</th>
<th>Proposed Multimedia</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dufon (2004)</td>
<td>Pragmatics in general</td>
<td>Indonesian</td>
<td>Video clips</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pragmatic-semiotic features in spoken communication</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jaén &amp; Basanta (2009)</td>
<td>Requesting and complaining</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>Film clips (DVD format)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Russel &amp; Vásquez (2011)</td>
<td>Pragmatic competence in workplace settings (e.g., asking for permission in</td>
<td>Spanish</td>
<td>Web-based tutorial (Video clips)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>meetings)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laughlin et al. (2015)</td>
<td></td>
<td>English</td>
<td>Online-learning materials (e.g., video clips, email puzzles)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Not surprisingly, the majority of the studies that were identified utilized videos as the medium of instruction. Rose (1994) pointed out that “video provides ample opportunities to address virtually all aspects of language use because it provides language used in rich, recoverable contexts which can be exploited in consciousness-raising activities” (p. 58). A similar stance has been taken by researchers that have used videos in their studies on using multimedia to teach pragmatics. By using videos as a medium for explicit pragmatic instruction, learners’ pragmatic awareness increased (Carel, 1999; Culbertson et al., 2017; Furniss, 2016; Levy, 1999; Sykes & Cohen, 2008), which in turn improved students’
productive pragmatic competence (Gilmore, 2011; Utashiro & Kawai, 2009; Waugh, 2014; Yang & Zapata-Rivera, 2010).

Four of the fourteen studies that were identified described proposed designs for multimedia materials to teach pragmatics (Dufon, 2004; Jaén & Basanta, 2009; Laughlin et al., 2015; Russel & Vásquez, 2011) while one study (Hamilton & Woodward-Kron, 2010) did not go into detail on the outcome of the implementation of the multimedia materials, and instead focused on the rationale for the design choices. Overall, the designs that were proposed in these studies emphasized the importance of providing contextually rich video materials and explicit instruction of pragmatic strategies.

The designs proposed by Dufon (2004), Hamilton and Woodward-Kron (2010), and Laughlin et al. (2015) are of particular interest to this current study. Dufon (2004) described in detail the video design considerations that should take place prior to recording the videos, which included considerations of the events to be recorded, where to record, and the actors who will be performing the conversations. Dufon argued that the recorded events should reflect situations in which students are most likely to encounter. Similarly, the locations where the recording takes place should be as “authentic as possible” (p. 70). Additionally, the videos should consider “participant factors such as social identities, roles, and relationships in terms of power and social distance” (p. 71) as they are crucial factors “in determining which linguistic forms and politeness strategies are appropriate in a given interaction” (p. 71).

Meanwhile, Hamilton and Woodward-Kron (2010) proposed a reflective approach for their multimedia materials. The participants in their study were international students studying medical and health sciences education in Australia, who required language and
intercultural communication instruction to be able to succeed academically. In their proposed materials, one of the sections was dedicated to showing current international students share their experiences being an international student in Australia and studying clinical education, which includes topics like cultural differences and Australian English in clinical settings. The international students shown in the video also identified various “language-learning and communication strategies” (p. 565) in their particular setting which were valuable for the students viewing the videos. The goal of providing this section was “to develop reflectiveness of thought and in particular intercultural awareness rather than to teach accuracy in speech” (p. 565). This type of section was also adapted into the multimedia materials that were used in this study.

Similarly, Laughlin et al. (2015) also limited the target language use domain, choosing to propose example tasks and modules to promote development of pragmatic competence in a workplace environment. The tasks and modules were intended to be hosted on an online learning platform and consisted of five parts, namely Introduction and Outline, Diagnostic Assessment, Instruction, Practice and Instructional Content Review, and Application. This design allows for many awareness raising and practice opportunities, as well as enabling learners to use the materials according to their own learning pace. Of the fourteen studies, only Laughlin et al.’s study proposed a design for pragmatics instruction in written communication (i.e., email).

In summary, current research on the use of multimedia materials to teach pragmatics is still very limited. Approximately a third of the identified literature was still in the proposed design phase. Furthermore, nearly all of the studies focused on pragmatic competence in spoken communication, neglecting instruction for email communication. For the current
study, instruction for pragmatic competence in email communication is especially important due to the target language use domain, which is U.S. academic settings. Therefore, the current study addresses this gap in the literature by focusing on both the design and outcome of the use of multimedia materials to teach pragmatics for spoken and written communication.

**Mayer’s Twelve Principles of Multimedia Design**

Current literature on the use of multimedia materials to teach pragmatics has mainly focused on the content of the pragmatics instruction materials. Meanwhile, design decisions related to how the multimedia materials are presented or organized has seldom been discussed. The current study considered Mayer’s (2009) twelve principles of multimedia design to present and organize the content in the instructional videos.

Mayer’s twelve principles of multimedia design for learning were founded on the cognitive theory of multimedia learning and cognitive load theory. These theories argue that “learners can engage in three kinds of cognitive processing during learning, each of which draws on the learner’s available cognitive capacity” (p. 79). Table 4 describes the definition of the three kinds of cognitive load.
Table 4
Three Kinds of Cognitive Load

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Definition</th>
<th>Processes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Extraneous</td>
<td>Cognitive processing that does not serve the instructional goal; caused by confusing instructional design.</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Essential</td>
<td>Cognitive processing required to represent the essential material in working memory; caused by the complexity of the material.</td>
<td>Selecting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Generative</td>
<td>Cognitive processing required for deeper understanding; caused by the motivation of the learner.</td>
<td>Organizing and integrating</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


These types of cognitive load provide the basis for Mayer’s (2009) suggestions for multimedia design in the form of twelve principles. The first five principles—namely coherence, signaling, redundancy, spatial contiguity, and temporal contiguity—are intended to reduce extraneous processing during the learning process. Three principles, namely segmenting, pre-training, and modality, are aimed at managing essential processing. Finally, the remaining four principles of multimedia, personalization, voice, and image are intended to foster generative processing. Table 5 provides elaboration on how each of the twelve principles can be realized in the design of a multimedia project for learning.

Table 5
Twelve Principles of Multimedia Design

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Principle</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Coherence Principle</td>
<td>People learn better when extraneous words, pictures, and sounds are excluded rather than included.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Signaling Principle</td>
<td>People learn better when cues that highlight the organization of the essential material are added.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Redundancy Principle</td>
<td>People learn better from graphics and narration than from graphics, narration, and on-screen text.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Spatial Contiguity Principle</td>
<td>People learn better when corresponding words and pictures are presented near rather than far from each other on the page or screen.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Table 5 Continued

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Principle</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5. Temporal Contiguity Principle</td>
<td>People learn better when corresponding words and pictures are presented simultaneously rather than successively.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Segmenting Principle</td>
<td>People learn better when a multimedia lesson is presented in user-paced segments rather than as a continuous unit.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Pre-training Principle</td>
<td>People learn better from a multimedia lesson when they know the names and characteristics of the main concepts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Modality Principle</td>
<td>People learn better from graphics and narration than from animation and on-screen text.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Multimedia Principle</td>
<td>People learn better from words and pictures than from words alone.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Personalization Principle</td>
<td>People learn better from multimedia lessons when words are in conversational style rather than formal style.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Voice Principle</td>
<td>People learn better when the narration in multimedia lessons is spoken in a friendly human voice rather than a machine voice.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Image Principle</td>
<td>People do not necessarily learn better from a multimedia lesson when the speaker’s image is added to the screen.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


By taking into account the design decisions that were used and proposed in the literature on the use of multimedia materials to teach pragmatics as well as Mayer’s (2009) twelve principles for multimedia design during the process of designing the multimedia materials used in this study, it is expected that learners will be able to develop their pragmatic competence successfully.

This literature review argues that international students, especially those studying in the U.S., can benefit from pragmatics instruction using multimedia materials. Multimedia materials offer an instructional medium that can show rich contextual information that is important in pragmatics instruction. In the development of the multimedia materials, certain design principles were adopted based on the literature review. First, explicit instruction was
chosen as the instructional method to teach request-making in spoken and written communication as the current literature have demonstrated that explicit instruction led to development of both pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic knowledge. It was achieved through directing learners’ attention to the different contextual factors that they must consider when formulating requests as well as the request strategies that they can use. This is specifically related to the language learning potential quality in Chapelle’s (2001) CALL evaluation framework where CALL materials should provide sufficient opportunity for beneficial focus on form. Second, Mayer’s (2009) twelve principles of multimedia design helped guide the researcher decide how the instructional content were presented in the videos in order to promote effective learning. Third, Dufon’s (2004) study provided a guideline to select the events to be video-recorded, location of the recording, and the actors to participate in the recording. Fourth, Laughlin et al.’s (2015) study provided the basis for the layout of the online course, specifically what parts to include and what it should contain. Finally, based on the multimedia materials used in Hamilton and Woodward-Kron’s (2010) study, an additional section was added to the online course to show current international students sharing their experience making requests in the U.S. academic setting, which was not included by Laughlin et al. (2015). The following chapter will discuss the methodology as well as a description of the design decisions of the multimedia materials used in this study.
This chapter describes the participants and explains the instructional multimedia materials and tasks, data collection materials, and data analysis. A mixed-methods approach was used to answer the research questions. Mixed-methods studies “employ a research design that uses both quantitative and qualitative data to answer a particular question or set of questions” (Hesse-Biber, 2010, p. 3). This approach was chosen because quantitative data alone cannot sufficiently answer the research questions in this study, namely: 1) How do participants perceive the effectiveness of the audiovisual materials and accompanying tasks for developing their pragmatic competence; and 2) How do participants’ performance differ between pre-instruction assessments and post-instruction assessments completed after viewing the instructional content? In this study, qualitative data were required to understand participants’ experience with using the multimedia materials and to record their feedback on the materials.

Participants

The current study employed two different groups of participants, namely prospective and current international students. These two different groups reflect the population of users that are expected to use and benefit from the materials used in this study. A total of 30 participants, comprised of 26 prospective international students and four current international students, completed the demographic questionnaire and created an account on Moodle. However, only 15 participants were able to complete the whole course, while 19 participants
were able to complete half of the course. Of the 15 participants who were able to complete the whole course, four were current international students and 11 were prospective international students. Their completion of each unit is marked by their submission of the feedback questionnaire for each unit, not by completion of the tasks in each unit. This is because some participants chose not to do some tasks in each unit. Additionally, some participants chose not to complete the feedback questionnaire although they completed some tasks in the course. The following sections describe each group of participants.

**Prospective International Students**

Twenty-six prospective international students participated in this study (15 males and 11 females). Although the materials were not specifically created for Indonesians, all of the prospective international students who participated were Indonesians. They are individuals who are interested in studying in the U.S., with some of them actively seeking scholarships to pursue their graduate education in U.S. universities. The multimedia materials should therefore be of use to them in helping them prepare for their future academic life in the U.S. They were recruited with the help of the researcher’s acquaintances in her home country, Indonesia, as well as contacted directly by the researcher, who maintains a blog that caters to individuals who would like to continue their studies in the U.S.

They were 18 to 34 years old with a range of professional backgrounds, but were mainly people who work in education or were currently studying at a university. Most of the participants had never stayed in an English-speaking country. Those who had stayed in an English-speaking country (e.g., U.S., U.K., Singapore) did not stay for a substantial amount of time (i.e., less than two months). Regarding their English language learning experience,
most participants had learned English for more than seven years. Besides learning English in formal settings, most—if not all—participants had taken up learning English outside the formal setting, such as in English conversation clubs and supplementary language schools. Two participants have had some experience learning English through online courses. One participant commented that she enjoyed the experience of learning using an online course due to its “time flexibility.” Another participant stated that online language learning suited his learning style, which he believes could compliment his English language learning in supplementary language schools. In general, the prospective international students in this study were quite motivated to take the course which used multimedia materials.

**Current International students**

Four international students who were studying in the U.S. at the time of recruitment participated in this study (1 male and 3 females). Of the four participants, one was an undergraduate student and the other three were masters students. The undergraduate student was Namibian, while the masters students were Indonesian. As for their majors, two participants were in a TESOL program while the other two were in American studies and meat science programs. Their ages ranged from 18 to 34 years old. All four participants had stayed in the U.S. for less than 12 months under the Fulbright foreign student scholarship. None had ever stayed in another English-speaking country. Three participants were recruited directly by the researcher while one participant heard about the study from an acquaintance that the researcher had contacted.

Regarding their English language learning experience, all four participants reported that they had learned English for three to seven years. Unlike the prospective international
student participants, the current international students provided minimal information regarding their English language learning experience outside of their formal education. However, one participant commented that she had taken supplemental English language course in the past. Similar to the prospective international students, the current international students were highly motivated to take the course in this study, because the materials covered were relevant to their current setting and needs.

**Materials**

**Open-Source Learning Platform: Moodle**

The multimedia materials and tasks used in this study were hosted on Moodle (Version 3.1.3+; Moodle, 2017), an open-source learning platform. Moodle was chosen because the platform allows for the uploading of large data files, has a customizable layout, and includes task-builder applications that can be used to create tasks embedded in the webpage. In addition, participants’ data are secure and private. The course was set up so that no other people can see their personal information and responses except the researcher. Finally, Moodle is used at Iowa State University and thus the institution has their own Moodle team. Therefore, the researcher received technical support from the team, especially in setting up user accounts. In the future, it would be preferable for the materials to be hosted on a website that will allow current and prospective international students to access the files freely without the need to create an account.
The Use of Mayer’s Twelve Principles of Multimedia Design to Create the Videos

Mayer’s (2009) twelve principles of multimedia design were used to create the video materials used in this study. By considering Mayer’s twelve principles in the process of creating the videos, the designer felt that learners would be able to learn the contents of the videos effectively. Table 6 illustrates how the twelve principles of multimedia design was conceptualized in the videos used in the online course.

Table 6
Conceptualization of Mayer’s Twelve Principles of Multimedia Design in the Video Materials

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Principle</th>
<th>Conceptualization</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Coherence Principle</td>
<td>Videos do not include background music or sounds other than the audio narration. Words and pictures are only used to illustrate important concepts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Signaling Principle</td>
<td>The organization of the material in each unit is presented in Part 1 – Introduction and Outline. Cues in the form of text were also used in Part 6 – Strategies to highlight important information and request strategies that the speakers mentioned.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Redundancy Principle</td>
<td>On-screen text is only provided if the text is absolutely crucial for the explanation. The narration also tries to avoid re-reading what is already presented as on-screen text.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Spatial Contiguity Principle</td>
<td>Words and pictures corresponding to the material being narrated are presented near rather than far from each other on the page or screen with clear text.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Temporal Contiguity Principle</td>
<td>Words and pictures corresponding to the material being narrated are presented simultaneously rather than successively.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Segmenting Principle</td>
<td>Videos by nature can be user-paced by using the speed bar. Each instructional video is also laid out in several sections, not as a continuous unit. Additionally, the length of the videos is limited to less than 15 minutes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Pre-training Principle</td>
<td>Videos begin by showing learners a list of important terms and its definition. Learners are free to consult this section of the video anytime throughout their use of the course.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 6 Continued

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Principle</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Modality Principle</td>
<td>Animation is rarely used, and only used to introduce or emphasize important terms.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>Multimedia Principle</td>
<td>Videos in unit 1 include scenarios showing interaction between two interlocutors. Meanwhile, videos in unit 2 use pictures of emails to help illustrate the narration.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>Personalization Principle</td>
<td>The narrator used a relatively conversational tone in narrating the videos rather than a formal tone.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.</td>
<td>Voice Principle</td>
<td>The narration does not use machine voice.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.</td>
<td>Image Principle</td>
<td>The narrator does not appear in the video as ‘the narrator’, and only appears as one of the interlocutors in scenario videos in unit 1.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The researcher also made the decision to provide audio transcripts of the videos used in this study (see Appendix A for the audio transcripts of each video). This is because learners may face audio problems when playing the videos, or their ability to follow the narration and/or conversation in scenarios may be lacking. Inability to access the audio can result in the learners missing most of the instruction because following the redundancy principle, only on-screen text that was absolutely crucial for the instruction was shown on the video.

Making Requests in Academic Settings

The overall layout of this Moodle course is largely based upon the course design proposed by Laughlin et al. (2015). In their study, they suggested five parts for each learning module, namely Part 1 – Introduction and Outline, Part 2 – Diagnostic Assessment, Part 3 – Instruction, Part 4 – Practice and Instructional Content Review, and Part 5 – Application. In this study, an additional section—Part 6 - Strategies—was created. The Moodle course was divided into two units, one focused on making requests in spoken communication, and the other focused on written communication. The following sections describe the components of
the Moodle course, namely the introduction materials which participants should first view before using the multimedia materials and completing the tasks, followed by the first unit which focused on making requests in spoken communication (Unit 1: Making requests in spoken communication), and the second unit which focused on making requests in email communication (Unit 2: Making requests in written communication). The description of both units is divided into the six parts that composed the units, namely Part 1: Introduction and Outline, Part 2: Pre-Instruction Assessment, Part 3: Instruction, Part 4: Instructional Content Review, Part 5: Application, and Part 6: Strategies. The questionnaires used to collect participants’ demographic data and their feedback on the multimedia materials and tasks are also described.

**Introductory materials.** Due to the self-access nature of the materials, the researcher could not directly go through the sections of the course with each participant. Therefore, the first section of the online course was dedicated to providing video tutorials as well as the researchers’ contact information in case participants had problems that were not covered in the tutorials (see Figure 2).
The video tutorials were in the form of screencasts recorded using Camtasia (Version 9.0.3; TechSmith, 2017). Three tutorials were made, namely an introduction to the Moodle course, its different sections, and how to navigate it; how to record an audio file using an online software; and how to record answers on a quiz task. Each video tutorial has a PDF transcript of the audio. Figure 3 shows the layout of the Moodle tutorial as seen by a participant in the online course.

**Figure 3.** Video tutorial showing how to navigate the Moodle course.

**Unit 1: Making requests in spoken communication.** The first unit deals with making requests in spoken communication. Figure 4 illustrates the overall layout of Unit 1.
Part 1: Introduction and outline. The purpose of this section is to provide the learner with background information regarding the speech act of making requests. The instructional video started with a list of important terms that they will encounter in the video and throughout the unit, as well as their definitions. This feature was a conceptualization of the pre-training principle that states that learners will learn better when they know the terms of the main concept (Mayer, 2009). Following the important terms, the researcher as the
narrator in the instructional video highlighted the three important contextual factors that one must consider when making requests, namely power relationships, social distance, and degree of imposition. Each factor was explained in detail. The material for this section of the video was based on information on politeness theory from an online website, *Dancing with Words*, created by the Center for Advanced Research on Language Acquisition (CARLA) to teach the pragmatics of several speech acts, one of which is requests. This information is important to raise learners’ awareness on the contextual factors that come into play when formulating requests. It is also a crucial component of sociocultural knowledge as defined by Laughlin et al. (2015) in their construct of pragmatic competence.

After the explanation of the three contextual factors, the researcher described the four types of people that they will need to communicate with in a U.S. academic setting and who they will ‘see’ in the unit, namely professors, teaching assistants, classmates, and writing center consultants. An emphasis was made regarding the importance of making use of writing centers in their academic life. Finally, an outline of what they should expect to see and do in the first unit was provided. The provision of the outline of the first unit at the end of the video in this part was based on the signaling principle which states that learners will learn better when the organization of the materials is highlighted.

**Part 2: Pre-instruction assessment.** The purpose of this section is to give learners an opportunity to provide output prior to viewing the main instructional content. Similar to the video in Part 1, the learners first saw a list of important terms and their definitions at the beginning of the video. Then, learners were provided four request scenarios presented via video in the form of static images to highlight the context of the scenarios. Figure 5 shows an
example scenario in the video as seen by the participants. Their task was to formulate a request that best fits each scenario. After viewing the scenarios, learners were provided two choices to record their requests. The first option was to make an audio recording, and the second option was to save their requests in the form of text. The narrator emphasized the value of audio-recording requests by stating that they could monitor for intonation and pronunciation, and later compare them to the model requests that will be provided in Part 3 – Instruction. However, learners were free to use either option. The instructions to record their answers using these options were also presented in the video.

Figure 5. Example of request scenario.

Laughlin et al. (2015) named this section “Diagnostic Assessment” (p. 26). For this study, it is useful for the researcher to see whether their initial requests, that is requests made prior to seeing the main instructional video, are different with the requests that the learners made in subsequent practice tasks in terms of the strategies and politeness features that they chose.
**Part 3: Instruction.** This section provides explicit instruction on making requests. However, before the narrator explained the main instructional content, the narrator first reviewed the scenarios that were presented in Part 2. Each scenario was played, showing the interaction between an international student named ‘Ananda’ and a professor, teaching assistant, classmate, and writing center consultant who were played by different individuals. While they view the scenarios, the learners were instructed to compare the requests made by ‘Ananda’ and the requests that they produced. They were also directed to pay attention to her intonation, pronunciation, and body language during the interactions.

After viewing the scenarios, learners listened to the narrator who described the different request strategies and politeness features that they could use. The request strategies and politeness features presented in this instructional video were based on the research on the communicative act of requesting by Trosborg (1995). The explanation focused on helping learners make connections between the form of the requests and its meaning. In Laughlin et al.’s (2015) construct of pragmatic competence, this information is pragmatic-functional knowledge. Examples used to illustrate each request strategy and politeness features were adapted from Trosborg’s (1995) research to represent the requests that learners might make in an academic setting. During the instruction, the researcher’s image as the ‘instructor’ in this video did not appear. This was because the image principle states that seeing the instructor’s image does not necessarily help learners learn better. Therefore, the researcher’s image as the instructor was not included in the video assuming that it would only distract the participants from the instructional content.

Finally, learners’ attention was directed back to the scenarios that they had seen played in full in this video. The idea was that, using the information that they have learned in
Part 1 about contextual factors in an interaction and the request strategies in Part 3, learners could evaluate their performance and identify areas in which they could improve. In the final section of this video, the narrator described each scenario in terms of power relationship, social distance, and degree of imposition. The narrator also highlighted the request strategies and politeness features that ‘Ananda’ used in each scenario using the terms in Trosborg’s (1995) research.

In the development and production of the video in this part, the researcher used several other principles from Mayer’s (2009) 12 principles of multimedia design. The first one was the coherence principle, in which the researcher did not include any background music or sounds other than the audio narration. Additionally, the words and pictures that appeared in the video were only added if they were deemed helpful in illustrating important concepts. The second principle was the redundancy principle, in which on-screen text was only provided if the text was absolutely crucial for the explanation. The third and fourth principles, namely the spatial and temporal contiguity principles, were used to arrange the words and pictures that appear in the video in terms of their placement in space and time. That is, the words and pictures corresponding to the material being narrated were presented near to each other and that they appear simultaneously rather than successively.

**Part 4: Instructional content review.** This section is one of the two post-instruction assessments in Unit 1. The purpose of this section is to review learners’ understanding of the instructional video in Part 3. One type of assessment that Laughlin et al. (2015) suggested for this section was audiovisual situational judgment tasks (SJT). In audiovisual SJTs, learners are provided various detailed scenarios and their task is to choose the most appropriate
request. In this study, the researcher used Moodle’s ‘Quiz’ activity to create the assessment.

Figure 6 shows the instruction page of the assessment.

![Making Requests in Academic Settings](image)

**Figure 6. Instructions in Part 4: Instructional Content Review.**

Four scenarios were presented in the form of multiple choice questions. Each option was in the form of videos. The options showed differing levels of request forms. Figure 7 shows the layout of the first question in the SJT. Questions 2 to 4 were laid out in the same way. After learners submitted their answer, they were given feedback. Two types of feedback were provided. First, both correct and incorrect answers were identified, and a short rationale on why each was correct or incorrect was provided. The second type of feedback commented on the power relationship, social distance, and degree of imposition that was observed in each scenario.
Figure 7. Layout of question 1 in the audiovisual SJT.

Figure 8 below illustrates the two different types of feedback that learners saw after submitting their answers.

Figure 8. Feedback (i) is provided in learner’s chosen option, and feedback (ii) is provided after all answer options in each question.
**Part 5: Application.** This section is the second post-instruction assessment in Unit 1. In this section, learners were first instructed to self-evaluate their output from Part 2 by accessing the audio or written file that they had submitted for that section. Their self-evaluation was based on what they had learned from the instructional videos. A self-report section was provided so that students can type their self-evaluation. Their self-evaluation was guided by several questions, namely:

1) How did your requests in Part 2 differ from the requests that you chose in Part 4?

2) Do you think the requests that you chose in Part 4 reflected what you had learned from Part 3 (Instruction)?

3) After completing this self-evaluation, you will do some more practice. What do you think you will need to pay attention to more in order to improve your requests?

Through self-evaluation, learners “can reflect on and critically evaluate their own learning processes and performance” as well as promote learner “autonomy” (Kim, 2014, p. 21).

Besides the self-evaluation task, this section provided more opportunities for learners to practice making requests. Tasks in this section were in the form of recorded responses to video scenarios similar to those in Part 2, but with different situations. The instructions for recording their responses were no longer included in the video to avoid redundancy.

**Part 6: Strategies.** The purpose of this section is to provide strategies to make requests in academic settings given by current international students of high-level English language proficiency. In the video, two current international students gave some of the request strategies that they had used in the past, and they also described some of the
situations that they had been in, in which they had to make requests. Figure 9 shows one of the two international students explaining the request strategies that they used in the past.

Figure 9. An international student explaining a request strategy that she had used.

As can be seen in Figure 9, as the international students narrated their experience, the forms of the request and the types of request strategy used were highlighted on the video.

The decision to highlight some of the international students’ speech was based on the signaling principle. This explicitly directs learners’ attention to the important parts of the international students’ speech.

The idea to include a strategies section with current international students providing strategies and comments regarding making requests in U.S. academic settings came from a study conducted by Hamilton and Woodward-Kron (2010). In their study, they used videos showing current international students reflecting upon their experience studying in Australia as part of the instructional multimedia materials. Their videos highlight students’ “challenges in communicating and described strategies that they found helpful in facilitating the communication process” (Hamilton & Woodward-Kron, 2010, p. 564). The authors deemed this kind of video showing current international students sharing their experiences as
valuable, because learners would more likely engage with the materials if it mirrored “real
time experience” (p. 565). The difference is that, while students in Hamilton and Woodward-
Kron’s videos commented on their experience talking using Australian English in clinical
settings, the students in the videos used in this study talked about their experience making
requests in U.S. academic settings. Helpful information was provided by the international
students, not only about making requests, but also information related to the possible
situations that students might encounter in U.S. academic settings, and suggestions in facing
those situations.

After viewing the two international students sharing their experiences, learners were
tasked to self-reflect. In their reflection, they were asked to compare between the request
making strategies in U.S. academic settings and the academic settings in their country,
specifically in spoken communication. They were also specifically asked to identify any
similarities and differences in formulating appropriate requests. This self-reflection was
deemed important, because it can be considered a part of strategic knowledge. Laughlin et al.
(2015) defined strategic knowledge as knowledge that acts as a support system when there is
insufficient information and/or communicative breakdown. However, in the case of this
study, strategic knowledge was conceptualized as the knowledge acquired from learning
about other people’s experiences and reflecting on the knowledge of their own culture, while
simultaneously comparing it with the culture (in this case of making requests) of the target
language.
Unit 2: Making requests in written communication. Unit 2 specifically deals with making requests in email communication. This unit was added to the online course because email communication is regarded as an integral and inescapable part of academic life in the U.S. Biesenbach-Lucas (2007) remarked on the importance of explicit instruction of email communication, stating that “it might … be the case that students are simply uncertain about email etiquette due to lack of experience and because typically it is not explicitly taught” (p. 2). Figure 10 illustrates the overall layout of Unit 2.

Figure 10. Layout of unit 2.

Part 1: Introduction and outline. This section started by explaining the importance of email communication in academic life in the U.S., as well as mentioning that learners will
only ‘communicate’ with professors, teaching assistants, and classmates in the unit. This is because learners do not usually communicate through email with writing center consultants. Then, similar to Part 1 in Unit 1, this section provided an outline of what learners should expect to see and do in the second unit.

**Part 2: Pre-instruction assessment.** Unlike Part 2 in Unit 1 where learners were diagnosed on their performance in making requests in spoken communication, the purpose of this section was for the researcher to diagnose learners’ knowledge of making requests in email communication. The assessment was built using Moodle’s ‘Quiz’ activity. There were three scenarios in the task, and two types of task for each scenario. Figure 11 shows the two different tasks as seen by a participant.

![Making Requests in Academic Settings](image)

**Figure 11.** Two different tasks in Part 2 Unit 2.

The first task in this section required learners to identify the correct order of a scrambled email. This task was intended to measure learners’ knowledge regarding the structure of an email. Meanwhile, the second task required learners to identify the request in
the email, and to describe why they identified it as the request. Laughlin et al. (2015) stated that learner’s explanation “could provide teachers with insights into a learner’s pragmatic awareness” (p. 28). However, besides informing the teacher of the level of learner’s pragmatic awareness, learners also review their knowledge of request strategies.

After learners submitted their answers, short feedback was provided for both tasks. For the first task, no explicit feedback was provided. Learners were instead notified that they will learn the order of the email elements in Part 3. However, the correct order of the scrambled email was shown. For the second task, the type of request in each email was provided as feedback. Figure 12 below illustrates the feedback provided for each task.

![Figure 12](image-url) Feedback for the two tasks.

**Part 3: Instruction.** Because the instructional content of making requests had been covered in Unit 1, Part 3 Unit 2 specifically dealt with the structure of an email. The video started with a list of terms and its definition, followed by an explanation that email communication is not the same as text messaging. The narrator then went on to describe each element of an email (see Figure 13). The subject of email elements was deemed extremely
important to include in the instructional materials, because it can be argued that completeness of the email elements is a crucial aspect of e-politeness. The term e-politeness refers to the notion of politeness in computer mediated communication (CMC) such as email communication. An email that does not have complete email elements (e.g., a subject line) could potentially be understood by the addressee as the sender’s lack of interest or effort in writing the email.

Figure 13. Elements of an email covered in the video in Part 3 Unit 2.

Following the explanation of the different elements of an email, the narrator directed learners’ attention to the emails that they saw in Part 2. The narrator proceeded to explain the different situations in each email. The email elements were also highlighted as per the signaling principle that emphasizes the importance of providing cues that help learners see the organization of the material. Besides directing their attention to the request strategies and politeness features being used, the narrator also provided information regarding situations in U.S. academic life, for example the availability of information on academic policies in course
syllabi. The instructional video ended with a description of other factors that learners need to be aware of when writing emails.

Similar to the Part 3: Instruction section in Unit 1, the researcher’s image as the instructor in this video did not appear so as not to distract learners’ attention. In addition, unlike the videos in Unit 1 which was made to illustrate making requests in spoken communication and therefore required learners to see the interlocutors interacting, the videos in Unit 2 did not show the interlocutor’s image because it was made to illustrate making requests in written communication. However, instead of using only words throughout the video, the researcher decided to incorporate pictures of emails such as the one shown in Figure 13, rather than using the email text alone. This was suggested in the multimedia principle that states that learners learn better with words and pictures instead of just words. Additionally, the use of pictures of the emails can help learners visualize the organization of the email.

**Part 4: Instructional content review.** This section is one of the two post-instruction assessments in Unit 2. In this section, learners were tasked to correct three emails. The emails need to be corrected in terms of their email elements and the appropriateness of the request in each email. Figure 14 shows an example email in Part 4.
After submitting the corrections to all three email requests, the learners were provided feedback (see Figure 15). In the feedback, the researcher identified the missing elements in the email, and commented on the appropriateness of the elements and the request strategy used. Additionally, an example corrected email was also provided.

**Figure 14.** Example email that requires correction in Part 4 Unit 2.

**Figure 15.** Example feedback in Part 4 Unit 2.
Part 5: Application. This section is the second post-instruction assessment in Unit 2. In this section, learners were provided the chance to use their knowledge of the elements of an email and making requests in email communication. They were required to write an email based on several scenarios. Figure 16 shows an example email scenario in this section.

![Making Requests in Academic Settings](image)

Figure 16. Example email scenario in Part 5 Unit 2.

After learners submitted all their email responses, they received feedback for each email. The feedback was in the form of an example email response appropriate to the scenario (see Figure 17).

![Example email](image)

Figure 17. Example email response as feedback in Part 5 Unit 2.
**Part 6: Strategies.** Similar to the strategies section in Unit 1, in this unit, learners once again watched two current international students share their experience making requests, but this time in email communication. After watching the video, they also wrote a self-reflection with the aim to compare between the request making-strategies in U.S. academic settings and the academic settings in their country, specifically in written communication. Additionally, they were also asked to identify any similarities and differences in formulating appropriate requests.

**Questionnaires**

The questionnaires that the participants completed were for research purposes only, which was to collect participants’ demographic data and their feedback on the multimedia materials and tasks. Both types of questionnaires were created using Qualtrics. The following are the two types of questionnaires that participants completed.

**Demographic questionnaire.** The demographic questionnaire used in this study was adapted from a questionnaire used in a pragmatics study conducted by Tanck (2002). Besides asking the usual questions in a demographic questionnaire, such as age and gender, the questionnaire also asked questions related to participants’ English language learning experience in formal and informal settings (see Appendix B).

**Feedback questionnaires.** There were two feedback questionnaires for this study, one for each unit. The aim of the feedback questionnaires is to evaluate the quality of the multimedia materials for language learning, as well as understand learners’ experience in
using the multimedia materials. The questionnaires were adapted from a questionnaire used in a CALL evaluation study conducted by Jamieson, Chapelle, and Preiss (2005). This questionnaire was deemed appropriate to be used in the present study because the questionnaire in their study was created by operationalizing the six criteria for CALL evaluation proposed by Chapelle (2001). These six criteria are useful in evaluating the appropriateness of the multimedia materials used in the current study for the target learners, which were prospective and current international students in the U.S. In the current study, besides adapting the questions from Jamieson et al.’s (2005) questionnaire, the researcher also included questions that were formulated with Mayer’s (2009) twelve principles of multimedia design in mind. The feedback questionnaires that were used in this study consisted of multiple-choice questions with a textbox for each question so that participants could elaborate on their answers, as well as open-ended response questions. Appendix C shows the feedback questionnaires that were used in this study.

**Procedure**

The first stage of this study involved the designing and creation of the multimedia materials and tasks that were used in the online course. A part of this creation process was to recruit ‘actors’ to appear in the videos used in this study. Dufon (2004) provided some considerations that were taken into account, namely the selection of actors and scenarios. The researcher decided that besides native speakers, highly proficient non-native speakers should also be recruited as actors. This is because in real U.S. academic settings, the interlocutors are often from diverse backgrounds. Most importantly, some of the roles that were assigned to the actors are their ‘roles’ in their academic life, such as professor, teaching assistant, and
writing center consultant. This was an advantage for the researcher, because the actors provided corrections to the dialogue that the researcher created. These corrections were based on their own experience and therefore made the interaction in the video more authentic. As for the scenarios that were depicted in the videos and tasks, they were designed based on the researcher’s own experience as an international student as well as the actors’ experience in their respective roles. The events depicted in the videos and tasks were thus selected to reflect what the learners’ can expect to face in a U.S. academic setting. After the materials and tasks were completed, they were uploaded on to the Moodle course.

The next stage of the study was participant recruitment. Participants were recruited by the researcher in several waves shortly after the researcher received notification that the study received exempt status from the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at Iowa State University (Appendix D). The researcher used her connection with acquaintances in her home country, Indonesia, to find participants for the prospective international students group. Additionally, the researcher also contacted individuals who had expressed interest in studying in the U.S. through past communication with the researcher. For the current prospective international students group, the researcher recruited participants through the Intensive English Orientation Program (IEOP) at Iowa State University. The researcher also contacted acquaintances who were currently studying in several different U.S. universities. Individuals who expressed interest were sent a link to the demographic questionnaire. Only after they completed the demographic questionnaire were they given a Moodle account to access the multimedia materials and tasks.

Once they were able to successfully login to the online course, the participants were given approximately two weeks to complete it. Some participants requested for deadline
extensions which were granted by the researcher. Instructional materials and tasks in the self-access materials can be skipped if users wish to do so, however, for the purpose of this study, the participants were encouraged to complete all of the tasks prior to completing the feedback questionnaire. Participants started by accessing the introductory materials and then moved on to Unit 1: Making Requests in Spoken Communication. Most participants went through each part of the unit in successive order. Once they had watched and completed each task in Unit 1, they completed the unit by submitting the feedback questionnaire.

Participants who felt that they wanted to continue to Unit 2 went on to use the materials in Unit 2: Making Requests in Written Communication. Similar to Unit 1, they went through each part one after the other and completed Unit 2 by submitting its feedback questionnaire. The researcher ended the data collection process after one month from the time that the online course was made available to the participants.

**Data Analysis**

Although some of the participants did not complete all the tasks in the units and did not submit the feedback questionnaires, their answers were saved and used in the data analysis. Table 7 shows the number of participants who completed the tasks and feedback questionnaire in each unit. The data were analyzed both quantitatively and qualitatively.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tasks</th>
<th>Unit 1</th>
<th>Unit 2</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Part 2: Pre-Instruction Assessment</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Part 4: Instructional Content Review</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Part 5: Application</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Part 6: Strategies</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feedback Questionnaire</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
To answer the first research question (How do participants perceive the effectiveness of the audiovisual materials and accompanying tasks for developing their pragmatic competence?), the researcher used data collected from the feedback questionnaires, the self-evaluation reports in Part 5, and the self-reflection reports in Part 6. Since the feedback questionnaires were hosted on Qualtrics, the data that could be quantified were already available as figures showing frequency data. The qualitative data which were taken from the open-ended response questions were reviewed, and comments that were relevant to the research question were identified. The qualitative data were useful in providing additional information to the quantitative data. Some of the comments to a specific question in the feedback questionnaires (Did your knowledge of making requests improve from using this unit?) were coded to identify the knowledge gains (as defined by Laughlin et al., 2015) associated with development of pragmatic competence that participants perceived of gaining through using the multimedia materials. Table 8 shows example comments and the type of knowledge that it represents.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Knowledge</th>
<th>Definition</th>
<th>Example Comment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sociocultural</td>
<td>Knowledge of factors such as topic, role of participants, setting, norms of conventions and interaction, power relations, gender, and age</td>
<td>[I learned] how to choose the request in polite terms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pragmatic-functional</td>
<td>Knowledge required to make connections between form and meaning, including illocutionary and sociolinguistic knowledge</td>
<td>I can use more variety making requests strategies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grammatical</td>
<td>Knowledge of lexis and rules of morphology, syntax, semantics, phonology, and graphology</td>
<td>I did not know what words that needs to be used whenever we speak, even I did not care what words coming out of my mouth. so, I think I feel improved after taking this unit</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Learners’ reports from Part 5 and Part 6 in both units were also used because the reports provided insight on what learners found particularly helpful in their learning process, their self-evaluation of their learning process, and their awareness of cultural similarities and differences in making requests, which is regarded as an indicator of developed pragmatic competence. Data from Parts 5 and 6 were analyzed qualitatively.

To answer the second research question (How do participants’ performance differ between pre-instruction assessments and post-instruction assessments completed after viewing the instructional content?), the researcher used data collected from learners’ answers in Parts 2, 4, and 5 of both units. The discussion of participants’ performance were separated into their performance in Unit 1 and Unit 2. In Unit 1, participants’ audio recorded requests from Parts 2 and 5 were transcribed. These transcribed requests and the requests that were already in text format were coded by the researcher using the request strategies and politeness features framework by Trosborg (1995). Then, participants’ performance in Part 2 Unit 1 (pre-instruction assessment) were compared to their performance in Parts 4 and 5 of Unit 1 (post-instruction assessments). The results were analyzed both quantitatively and qualitatively.

For participants’ performance in Unit 2, the data were also analyzed both quantitatively and qualitatively. However, most of the data were analyzed qualitatively due to most of the tasks being open-ended responses, except for the multiple choice question in Part 2. Similar to the analysis for Unit 1, participants’ performance in Part 2 Unit 2 (pre-instruction assessment) were compared to their performance in Parts 4 and 5 of Unit 2 (post-instruction assessments).
This chapter has provided a description of the participants in this study, the materials used, how the data were gathered, and how the data were analyzed to answer the research questions. The following chapter will describe the results obtained from the study, which subsequently helped the researcher to answer the research questions.
CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

This chapter presents the results and discusses the findings from the feedback questionnaires and participants’ work on tasks used in the Moodle course. The first part shows results from the questionnaires, self-evaluation reports, and self-reflections reports indicating how participants perceived the effectiveness of the audiovisual materials and accompanying tasks for developing their pragmatic competence. Responses to the multiple choice questions in the feedback questionnaires allowed for a quantitative analysis of participants’ perception of the CALL qualities present in the online course based on Chapelle’s (2001) CALL evaluation framework, as well as their perception of the operationalization of Mayer’s (2009) multimedia design principles in the audiovisual materials. Participants’ additional comments provided the context needed to interpret their responses. Further insight into participants’ perception of their learning process is obtained through a qualitative analysis of their self-reflection and self-evaluation reports. The second part discusses differences in participants’ performance by comparing their performance in the pre- and post-instruction assessments in each unit. Participants’ performance in both units is discussed in terms of the request strategies and politeness features that they used. Specifically for the discussion in Unit 2, participants’ email organization is also evaluated. Finally, the third part is the conclusion section, in which the main highlights of the findings in this chapter are described.
Effectiveness of the Online Course for Development of Pragmatic Competence

The first research question of the study intended to explore participants’ perception on the effectiveness of using the multimedia materials and accompanying tasks to develop their pragmatic competence, specifically in making requests in U.S. academic settings. This section reports the results from feedback questionnaires and reports from the self-evaluation and self-reflection tasks in both units. Conclusions regarding participants’ perception of the effectiveness of the audiovisual materials and accompanying tasks for developing their pragmatic competence is made at the end of this section.

Participants’ Perception of the CALL Qualities

In this section, questions in the feedback questionnaires for unit 1 and 2 are grouped based on Chapelle’s (2001) criteria for CALL quality. Table 8 presents these questions, the desired responses to support claims for quality, and the extent to which evidence was found for each quality. The extent to which evidence was found was determined by looking at the number of participants who provided the desired response to support the claims for quality. Participants’ answers to these questions are described in the following sections. The comments that were used to describe participants’ answers came from the open-ended response part of the questions. Not all of the comments were presented. Instead, comments that expressed the same idea were grouped and paraphrased, with some quoted directly as they were considered representative of the ideas that were being expressed, as well as containing complex information that would be lost if they were paraphrased by the researcher. Comments that did not describe their answers, such as those that merely restated the question into a statement (e.g., Yes, it was clear) were not included.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>Operationalizations</th>
<th>Desired responses to support claims for quality</th>
<th>Extent of Evidence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Language learning potential | • What did you learn from Unit 1/2 besides making requests in English?  
• Did your knowledge of making requests improve from using this unit? Why or why not?  
• Did you understand the grammar explanations in this unit?  
• Did you get enough practice with the grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation in this unit?  
• Were there enough exercises in this unit? | • Other language related knowledge |
|                          |                                                                                    | • Yes                                           | Good              |
| Learner fit              | • How difficult was Unit 1/2 for you?                                               | • Good/Very difficult                           | Strong            |
| Meaning focus            | • Did you understand the scenarios presented in this unit?                           | • Yes                                           | Strong            |
| Authenticity             | • For current international students: Is what you learned in this unit needed for your current setting?  
• For prospective international students: Do you think what you learned in this unit will be needed for your future study in the U.S.? | • Yes                                           | Strong            |
### Table 9 Continued

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>Operationalizations</th>
<th>Desired responses to support claims for quality</th>
<th>Extent of Evidence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Positive impact</td>
<td>• Did you like the tasks in the Pre-Instruction Assessment section? &lt;br&gt; • Did you like the tasks in the Instructional Content Review section? &lt;br&gt; • Did you like the tasks in the Application section? &lt;br&gt; • Did you find it useful to see current international students share their experience in making requests in Part 6: Strategies? &lt;br&gt; • Did you find the self-reflection task in Part 6: Strategies useful? &lt;br&gt; • What did you learn from Unit 1/2 besides making requests in English? &lt;br&gt; • Overall, did you like using this unit? &lt;br&gt; • Would you like to use Unit 2: Making Requests in Written Communication (Email)?</td>
<td>• Yes &lt;br&gt; • Yes &lt;br&gt; • Yes &lt;br&gt; • Yes &lt;br&gt; • Yes &lt;br&gt; • Other non-language related knowledge &lt;br&gt; • Yes &lt;br&gt; • Yes</td>
<td>Good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Practicality</td>
<td>• Did you want to spend more or less time using this unit? &lt;br&gt; • How long did it take you to finish this unit? &lt;br&gt; • Were the computer and task directions easy to understand in this unit? &lt;br&gt; • Did you need help to use this unit?</td>
<td>• More time &lt;br&gt; • 3 hours &gt; &lt;br&gt; • Yes &lt;br&gt; • No</td>
<td>Good</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Language learning potential. Chapelle (2001) defined language learning potential as “the degree of opportunity present for beneficial focus on form” (p. 55). To find evidence of language learning potential, participants were asked questions related to their learning of making requests in both units. Figure 18 shows that most participants who completed unit 1 and 2 perceived that their knowledge of making requests improved from using the materials. However, there were four participants who answered ‘Some’ in the Unit 1 feedback questionnaire—indicating that they perceived their knowledge of making requests somewhat improved—and one participant who answered ‘No’ in the Unit 2 feedback questionnaire—meaning that the materials in Unit 2 did not help improve their knowledge of making requests at all.

In their open-ended response in the Unit 1 feedback questionnaire, the four participants who answered ‘Some’ stated that they already knew some of the materials, either because they had already learned it in the past or because the request-making practice in the U.S. academic setting is similar to that of their culture. Nevertheless, these participants still
found Unit 1 useful, because they “… found out how to make a request in U.S. academic settings,” “… can improve the way I said it to sound more natural,” and “… know how to avoid making complex request when it's actually not necessary.” One participant also commented that despite already being used to making requests when she did her undergraduate studies, completing the tasks in Unit 1 was “challenging enough. I was a bit nervous when I started them but as I did it, I became more confident.” This suggests that although learners had prior knowledge of making requests, the tasks in Unit 1 provided a degree of challenge for them, and although the participant did not specifically elaborate, it is assumed that the challenge resulted in them becoming more confident in their ability to make requests. Unfortunately, the one participant who indicated that Unit 2 did not help did not elaborate why.

Of the 15 participants who answered ‘Yes’ in the Unit 1 feedback questionnaire, 12 participants reported gains in sociocultural knowledge, pragmatic-functional knowledge, and grammatical knowledge. Comments regarding gains in sociocultural knowledge were the most frequent. These included comments that pertained to appropriateness/politeness ([I learned] how to choose the request in polite terms), the positioning of oneself in a conversation with different people in terms of power relationship and social distance (It makes me understand how to positioning myself appropriately when I make a request in a different situation), and the different request-making situations one can expect to face in a U.S academic setting (I have learned how to approach a professor, assistant and a strange students). Participants’ comments related to gains in pragmatic-functional knowledge mainly emphasized how they learned more strategies to make requests. As one participant said, prior to completing the unit “The way I asked for a request to everyone was just the same.”
Finally, the comment regarding gains in grammatical knowledge was specifically related to the “knowledge of lexis” (Laughlin et al., 2015, p. 18) component of grammatical knowledge. The participant stated that prior to completing the unit she “… did not know what words that needs to be used whenever we speak [in the context of making requests], even I did not care what words coming out of my mouth.”

Similarly, of the 13 participants who answered ‘Yes’ in the Unit 2 feedback questionnaire, four participants reported gains in sociocultural knowledge, pragmatic-functional knowledge, and grammatical knowledge. Two participants specifically stated that they became more aware of the importance of considering power relationships, social distance, and degree of imposition when making requests, which is a sign of sociocultural knowledge improvement ([I learned] how to use the proper words in email for every different person which correlated with power relationship, social distance, and degree of imposition). One participant commented on the improvement of pragmatic-functional knowledge, stating that “I got a lot of new styles and words in making request by email.” Regarding gains in grammatical knowledge, one participant noted that Unit 2 raised awareness on the distinction between formulating sentences in spoken and written communication: “I know the more acceptable way of stating my request and how to formulate sentences that sounds more formally than how I would state it orally.” Participants also made comments specifically regarding email communication. One participant stated that “I was always composing my request email directly. But after this lesson, I find out that I have to make a strong reason for my request in order my request accepted,” while another participant commented that they now know more about writing “a good and proper E-mail.”
Related to the question ‘Did your knowledge of making requests improve from using this unit?’ was the question ‘What did you learn from Unit 1/2 besides making requests in English?’ This question was considered a language learning potential question, but participants’ answer to this question also yielded non-language related answers which will be discussed in the positive impact section.

Participants who answered ‘What did you learn from Unit 1 besides making requests in English?’ in the Unit 1 feedback questionnaire made many comments regarding context, such as “I became to know how diverse the U.S. Academic Setting,” “I learned about several staffs that I would meet someday if I got the chance to study in U.S.,” and “I learned how to make a good communication with people especially for the older one or people who have the special status in social environment.” Several comments also noted that the videos in Unit 1 helped them learn how to make their speech more natural or conversational: “I learned how to use various kind of questions that can help me modifying conversation become more natural,” “I also learned about the way to express several which sounded more natural than the way I usually said it,” “conversation style in English, outside Indonesia, especially in America.” Four comments were related to gains in other English language skills, such as grammar, speaking and writing. Interestingly, one participant specifically commented that they felt it was the videos and the reading of instructions in the materials that helped improve their English. Meanwhile, of the 14 participants who answered the question ‘What did you learn from Unit 2 besides making requests in English?’, six commented on how Unit 2 showed them how to organize their email. The other eight comments concerned learning new vocabulary and expressions to convey appropriate requests.
Although the audiovisual materials that were used in this study did not specifically target the learning of grammar, it was hoped that what was brought up in the materials were understandable. The tasks were also not specifically designed for individual grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation practice. However, the tasks were designed so that learners can simultaneously practice grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation through communicative tasks. Figure 19 shows that 15 participants understood the grammar explanations in Unit 1, and 12 participants in Unit 2. However, there were four participants who chose ‘Some’ for Unit 1 and three participants for Unit 2. For Unit 1, three participants commented that they still needed to improve their grammar skills. However, it was not clear whether their comments meant that they would like more grammar explanations in the materials themselves. Similar comments were made by participants who answered this question for Unit 2. One participant also commented that a tutor may be needed to provide feedback to understand or notice new grammar in the unit.

Figure 19. Participants’ answers to the question ‘Did you understand the grammar explanations in this unit?’.
Figure 20 also shows that most participants felt that they had enough grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation practice, although four participants did choose ‘Some’ for Unit 1 and three participants for Unit 2, and even ‘No’ for Unit 1. Unfortunately, participants who chose ‘Some’ and ‘No’ for Unit 1 provided minimal feedback. Only two participants provided additional comments. The feedback that was provided stated that they felt there needs to be more practice, with one participant specifically stating that there needs to be more grammar practice. Similar comments were also made in the Unit 2 feedback questionnaire, where one participant stated that more grammar practice was needed, and another said that more practice “on the phrase we can use in the letter is probably better.”

**Figure 20.** Participants’ answers to the question ‘Did you get enough practice with the grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation in this unit?’.

The final question related to language learning potential is somewhat related to the question of whether learners were presented with enough grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation practice. Figure 21 shows participants’ view on whether there were enough exercises in Unit 1 and Unit 2. Although 15 participants for Unit 1 and 12 participants for Unit 2 felt that there were enough exercises, two participants for Unit 1 and three participants
for Unit 2 still felt that there needs to be more opportunities to practice making requests. For Unit 1, one participant commented that exercises were sometimes too short, while another participant specifically commented on the need for more multiple choice questions to review understanding of making requests. Participants who answered that they felt Unit 1 had enough exercises provided very minimal elaboration on why they felt so, opting to simply state that there were enough. But one particularly interesting comment was made not about the exercises but about the example situations shown in the videos, stating that the examples need to be longer particularly for spoken communication. This is true, since some of the examples are particularly short, because the focus is on the requestee making the request. This is something that needs to be considered for future improvements to be made to the materials. For the feedback for Unit 2, one participant commented that more email writing exercises were needed to practice using the phrases that can be used in the email. Another participant specifically stated that the online course should have “more challenging tasks with some different answer format like pairing/matching, multiple choice, etc.”

![Bar chart showing participants' answers to the question 'Were there enough exercises in this unit?']

*Figure 21. Participants’ answers to the question ‘Were there enough exercises in this unit?’*
**Learner fit.** Learner fit is defined as “the amount of opportunity for engagement with language under appropriate conditions given learner characteristics” (Chapelle, 2001, p. 55). Although the materials were not specifically created for a certain language level, the expectations were that learners who lacked pragmatic competence will find the materials and tasks in the course to be very difficult, and learners with some pragmatic competence will rate it as ‘Good’ which indicates a good level difficulty. However, learners were asked to give an estimate of their English language level. From the 19 participants who gave this estimate, four participants indicated that their English level was ‘Very good’, 12 participants chose ‘Good’, and three participants chose ‘Fair’. Figure 22 shows that most participants rated Unit 1 and Unit 2 as having a good level of difficulty. Only three people chose ‘Very easy’, one participant for Unit 1 and two participants for Unit 2.

![Figure 22. Participants’ answers to the question ‘How difficult was Unit 1/2 for you?”](image)

**Meaning focus.** Meaning focus is defined as “the extent to which learners’ attention is directed toward the meaning of the language” (Chapelle, 2001, p.55). This criterion was operationalized as participants’ understanding of the scenarios presented in each unit,
because understanding of the scenarios indicates the knowledge to connect context and the form of the request strategies to use. Having this knowledge should result in learners’ production of appropriate requests. Figure 23 shows that 18 participants for Unit 1 and 13 participants for Unit 2 stated that they understood the scenarios presented in the unit. Those who indicated ‘Some’ in their feedback provided different explanations. For Unit 1, the one participant stated that there was a need to replay the videos several times before he could get the “main point.” This participant also indicated ‘Some’ for his feedback on Unit 2 and further elaborated that the confusion with scenarios in the units is due to his English language ability. The other participant who chose ‘Some’ commented on a more technical aspect of the video, stating that confusion with the context was mainly because of the video and audio being out of sync. However, this problem was overcome with the help of the downloadable audio transcript.

Figure 23. Participants’ answers to the question ‘Did you understand the scenarios presented in this unit?’.
**Authenticity.** Chapelle (2001) defined authenticity as “the degree of correspondence between the CALL activity and target language activities of interest to learners out of the classroom” (p. 55). In the case of this online course, the CALL activity should align with the types of target language activities related to making requests that learners will encounter. Due to the two different types of participants in this study, the question for current and prospective international students were worded differently. Figure 24 shows the participants’ perception of the authenticity of what they had learned in Unit 1 and Unit 2. The results show that 16 participants for Unit 1 and 15 participants for Unit 2 felt that what they had learned was needed for their respective settings. However, two participants for Unit 1 chose ‘Some’, and they were both prospective international students. Only one provided additional comments to elaborate on her answer, in which she commented that she was still considering her option to study in the U.S., but she felt that the course “is not only for students who want to continue their study in everywhere.”

Those who did indicate that the course was needed for their current setting also provided some interesting comments regarding their learning experience. In the feedback questionnaires for Unit 1 and Unit 2, two participants commented that using the materials helped them to “imagine the situation at U.S study while learning this unit.” In the Unit 1 feedback questionnaire, one participant noted that the materials were helpful because “we can not avoid making some request later when we are in academic context.” Another participant also provided suggestions, stating that “it will better if there are more current international students shared their experience.” One feedback from a current international student for Unit 2 was particularly important, especially for future studies:
Sometimes I struggle writing emails to my professor. In reality, even my native English speaker friends do not use language as formal as the one used in this course. However, it is still good to know all of this information.

This participant’s comment illustrated her awareness of how her native speaker friends use less formal language. This would be interesting to investigate in future pragmatic studies, that is in which contexts do native speakers use formal versus less formal language.

![Bar chart showing participants' answers to the question 'Is what you learned in this unit needed for your current setting? Do you think what you learned in this unit will be needed for your future study in the U.S.?']

**Figure 24.** Participants’ answers to the question ‘Is what you learned in this unit needed for your current setting? Do you think what you learned in this unit will be needed for your future study in the U.S.?’.  

**Positive impact.** Chapelle (2001) defined positive impact as “the positive effects of the CALL activity on those who participate in it” (p. 55). To investigate the positive effects of the online course on the participants, several questions were asked about whether they liked certain sections of the units. These questions also helped identify feedback that could be used to improve the materials and tasks. Figure 25 shows that 15 participants liked the tasks in Part 2: Pre-Instruction Assessment in Unit 1 and 14 participants liked the tasks in Part 2 Unit 2. Participants who chose ‘Some’ and ‘No’ provided reasons and some useful
suggestions for future improvements. In the Unit 1 feedback questionnaire, only two participants provided extended feedback. One participant stated that the instructions needed to be more specific, while the other commented on the audio quality which hindered understanding. In the Unit 2 feedback questionnaire, the one participant who chose ‘No’ stated that she is not particularly “knowledgeable” on writing formal emails; neither is she fond of the activity, but she realizes that she still had to do it.

![Image]

**Figure 25.** Participants’ answers to the question ‘Did you like the tasks in the Pre-Instruction Assessment section?’.

Similarly, most participants also liked the tasks in Part 4: Instructional Content Review as illustrated in Figure 26. Sixteen participants liked the tasks in Part 4: Instructional Content Review for Unit 1 and 14 participants liked the tasks in Part 4 Unit 2. In the Unit 1 feedback questionnaire, only four participants provided additional comments which did not simply state that they liked the tasks. These participants commented that they felt the section was “quite challenging,” had “many authentic examples,” was one of their “favorites [because] I could see the actors demonstrated how they made the request and I had to choose
which one the appropriate one,” and that “the explanation is good.” In the Unit 2 feedback questionnaire, one participant noted that the review helped identify what was wrong, and another participant stated that the tasks were not boring. However, participants also provided some constructive criticism. For Unit 1, one participant stated that it was difficult to do the review alone. In Unit 2, two participants stated that they wanted more assessments, and that some of the options that were provided were “too obvious,” therefore the researcher was asked to “make them quite tricky.”

![Bar chart showing participants' answers to the question 'Did you like the tasks in the Instructional Content Review section?' for Units 1 and 2.](image)

**Figure 26.** Participants’ answers to the question ‘Did you like the tasks in the Instructional Content Review section?’.

Participants were also asked whether they liked the tasks in the application section. Figure 27 shows that while 15 participants for Unit 1 and 13 participants for Unit 2 indicated that they did like the tasks, some participants either somewhat liked them or not at all. Their comments show that participants who did like the application section—specifically the four participants who provided extended feedback in the Unit 1 questionnaire—did so because the additional practice was helpful, and challenging, and having learned the request strategies in the instructional videos helped them modify their requests. However, of the four participants
who indicated that they somewhat liked them, one participant stated that he did not really “understand.” No further elaboration was provided with regards to which part of the section he did not understand. For Unit 2, seven participants commented that they liked the application section mainly because it provided them with more practice opportunities. The only participant who chose ‘No’ stated that it was because she was not “fond” of writing formal emails.

![Bar chart showing participants' answers to the question 'Did you like the tasks in the Application section?'.](image)

*Figure 27. Participants’ answers to the question ‘Did you like the tasks in the Application section?’.*

Participants were also asked regarding their perception of the usefulness of viewing current international students sharing their experience in making requests in Part 6: Strategies. Figure 28 shows that all of the participants who answered this question in the Unit 1 feedback questionnaire agreed that the video showing current international students sharing their experiences in making requests in spoken communication was useful. On the other hand, 13 participants who answered this question in the Unit 2 feedback questionnaire found it useful. The one participant who answered ‘Some’ commented that watching the current international students was not particularly useful because the students only talked about “the
way their email their Professor for skipping their classes.” In other words, this person wanted the current students to talk about other situations that they were in. Meanwhile, the one participant who answered ‘No’ stated that the current international students were “basically [talking about] the same … information in the instruction. I was hoping for information from probably professor or teaching assistant about do or don't in writing request, especially based on their experience dealing with students.” This particular comment is valuable feedback which can be implemented in future improvement of the materials.

Figure 28. Participants’ answers to the question ‘Did you find it useful to see current international students share their experience in making requests in Part 6: Strategies?’.

Another question asked participants about the usefulness of the self-reflection part of Part 6: Strategies. Figure 29 shows that 16 participants for Unit 1 and 12 participants for Unit 2 agreed that the self-reflection was useful. Three participants who said so indicated that the self-reflection in Unit 1 gave them the opportunity to “reflect to your own work and see where you need improvement,” “see my weaknesses and revise those parts,” and “could compare with the way I request in my origin.” One participant even stated that she saw self-
reflection as “useful to be applied in my academic daily basic.” For the self-reflection in Unit 2, three participants stated that it reminded them to keep on learning, helped them review their own knowledge and compared it to what they had learned, and helped them reflect on the difference between making requests through emails in their country and in the U.S. Of the two participants who stated that they did not find the self-reflection in Unit 1 to be useful, one said that the task was “basically what I do everytime I learn something new. So, it is not entirely necessary to write it down.” For the self-reflection in Unit 2, one participant did not find any differences in making requests in his country compared to the U.S. Another participant questioned the value of “comparing the way we form a request in different countries academic settings.” Therefore, future improvements of the materials need to include an explanation on why self-reflection should be provided in the task directions.

Figure 29. Participants’ answers to the question ‘Did you find the self-reflection task in Part 6: Strategies useful?’.

Participants were also asked ‘What did you learn from Unit 1/2 besides making requests in English?’’, which was also considered a positive impact question. Participants
noted several comments that were non-language related. In the Unit 1 feedback questionnaire, one participant commented that online courses along with self-evaluation and reflection tasks were entirely new to him. In the Unit 2 feedback questionnaire, three participants provided comments that were positive impact but were non-language related. These participants commented that they were able to learn “situations students encounter when studying abroad, like we have to inform the teaching assistant about missing class and how to write a request for recommendation letter,” that the course improved their “knowledge about U.S academic setting, I can compare it with my country,” and that “because I am not good enough in reading, so I have to re-read the instruction to assure that I have addressed the task correctly.”

The last two questions related to positive impact asked participants whether they in general liked using Unit 1 and Unit 2, and when they had completed Unit 1 whether they wanted to use Unit 2. As shown in Figure 30, all of the participants who answered the first of these questions in the Unit 1 feedback questionnaire said that they liked using Unit 1, while 14 participants out of the 15 who answered this question in the Unit 2 feedback questionnaire stated that they liked Unit 2. Only one participant stated that they somewhat liked Unit 2, because they do not particularly like writing emails.
Figure 30. Participants’ answers to the question ‘Overall, did you like using this unit?’.

In the Unit 1 feedback questionnaire, participants were asked whether they would like to use Unit 2, and 17 participants said they would as shown in Figure 31. In their comments four participants provided the reasons, stating that they were “curious,” that they think the unit will be “good for the prospective student who want to contact professors and university,” because Unit 1 “has been very informative and easy to follow,” and because Unit 2 “must be more interesting than the unit one, as, in written communication, people should be more careful in making a request. Unlike spoken request, requester, upon written request, will not be there to clarified what he or she means on his or her request.” Unfortunately, the two participants who chose ‘Some’ did not elaborate on their response.
Figure 31. Participants’ answers to the question ‘Would you like to use Unit 2: Making Requests in Written Communication (Email)?’.

**Practicality.** Practicality is defined as “the adequacy of resources to support the use of the CALL activity” (Chapelle, 2001, p. 55). Several questions were asked in relation to this criterion, which specifically targeted the time required for participants to complete the task, whether participants understood the available computer and task instructions, and whether they needed help using each unit. Figure 32 shows that 14 participants felt that they had already spent a good amount of time using Unit 1, and nine participants felt similarly for Unit 2. It is also interesting to see that more participants wanted to have more time with Unit 2 compared to Unit 1.
Figure 3. Participants’ answers to the question ‘Did you want to spend more or less time using this unit?’.

Figure 33 shows that Unit 1 and Unit 2 had 10 and five participants respectively spending more than five hours. For learners to be able to watch all the videos and complete all tasks without rushing, it is estimated that learners should spend at least three hours on each unit. Unfortunately, participants did not provide any explanation on the time usage aspect of their learning.

Figure 33. Participants’ answers to the question ‘How long did it take you to finish this unit?’.
The remaining two questions related to practicality: ‘Were the computer and task directions easy to understand in this unit?’ and ‘Did you need help to use this unit?’ were somewhat related. Figure 34 shows that in Unit 1 and Unit 2 14 and 13 participants respectively were able to easily understand the computer and task directions. However, only one participant provided feedback that did not simply state that the directions were clear. This was for the instructions in Unit 2 in which they commented “I was often confused with the direction of the task of writing email, whether I was asked to fix it or did comment which part is wrong or missing, or both.” This comment seems to refer to Part 4: Instructional Content Review, and will be useful for future improvements of the tasks.

![Figure 34](image)

*Figure 34. Participants’ answers to the question ‘Were the computer and task directions easy to understand in this unit?’.*

Finally, Figure 35 shows that in general, most participants did not require help in using Unit 1 and Unit 2. A closer look shows that approximately eight participants stated that they did not need any help and eight participants stated that they needed some help for Unit 1. Meanwhile, nine participants stated that they did not need any help and only three participants stated that they needed some help for Unit 2. The same number of participants
indicated that they needed help in the Unit 1 and Unit 2 feedback questionnaire. The data show that participants required assistance particularly with Unit 1. The comments in the Unit 1 feedback questionnaire indicated that at least four participants had problems with the instruction provided in the materials. Participants also gave suggestions, the most extensive one coming from a participant who has had some experience with online courses:

Comparing to other online courses I have ever taken, this course needs some improvements to make users easier to navigate the command tools, for example, the check box does not need to be put in the sub or section if they are just optional.

Additionally, some of the video demonstrations are too long, moreover, it will be better if the end of the video has summary as short conclusion to remind the users with some important things that has been mentioned before.

Another participant suggested that there should be a question box on the course where learners can submit questions and have them answered. This could possibly be done by using the Forum section of Moodle, and can be implemented in future improvements of the materials. Meanwhile, the comments for this question in the feedback questionnaire in Unit 2 did not provide any additional information that could be used to improve upon the materials as they merely state that everything was clear. One participant, however, did provide a comment related to their learning experience, in which they googled the words that they did not understand.
In conclusion, based on participants’ answers to questions that were operationalizations of the six criteria for CALL evaluation (Chapelle, 2001), the multimedia materials used in this study seem to exhibit strong qualities of learner fit, meaning focus, and authenticity. The qualities of language learning potential, practicality, and positive impact was deemed good. Furthermore, participants seemed to have had a good learning experience using the multimedia materials, with development in their sociocultural knowledge, pragmatic-functional knowledge, and grammatical knowledge.

**Figure 35.** Participants’ answers to the question ‘Did you need help to use this unit?’

Participants’ Perception of the Operationalization of Mayer’s Multimedia Design Principles

Questions related to the technical aspects of the audiovisual materials’ presentation were also asked in the questionnaire. These questions were related to the operationalizations of some of the twelve principles of multimedia design. Figure 36 shows participants’ answer to the question ‘Were the videos of an appropriate length?’ which is an operationalization of
the segmenting principle. The data show that 13 and 14 participants believe that the videos in Unit 1 and Unit 2 were of an appropriate length respectively. For those who indicated ‘Some’ in the Unit 1 feedback questionnaire, there were two different comments. Three participants stated that the videos were in fact too short. One participant elaborated by saying that they really wanted to see a longer conversation so that they could learn more. On the other hand, one participant stated that some of the videos were too long and could be edited to cover only the important information. Unfortunately, the participant did not specifically indicate which videos were too long. Only one participant indicated ‘Some’ for Unit 2, and the comment was that the videos should be repeated. However, the researcher feels that this is not necessary, because videos can be played back fairly easily.

Figure 36. Participants’ answers to the question ‘Were the videos of an appropriate length?’.

Figure 37 shows participants’ answers to the question ‘Was the information presented in the videos understandable?’.

This question is an operationalization of several principles of multimedia design, namely the coherence, redundancy, spatial contiguity, temporal contiguity, modality, and multimedia principles. Nearly all of the participants indicated that
the information presented in the videos was understandable, with 18 participants choosing ‘Yes’ for Unit 1 and 14 participants for Unit 2. Fifteen participants commented on the “clear information” and good quality of the audio, which seems to contradict the comment made by a participant who stated that some of the audio was not clear. This may be because it is more of an issue for the technology that they were using, rather than the quality of the video provided in the course.

![Figure 37. Participants’ answers to the question ‘Was the information presented in the videos understandable?’.

Figure 38 shows participants’ answers to the question ‘Was it useful to be given an introduction to the topic of requests and the outline of the unit?’, which is an operationalization of the signaling principle. The data show that nearly all participants considered it to be useful, with 18 participants choosing ‘Yes’ for Unit 1 and 14 participants for Unit 2. Comments that were made in the feedback questionnaire for Unit 1 and Unit 2 were quite similar. However, only five relevant comments were provided for Unit 1 and six comments for Unit 2. Participants commented on how the introduction and outline aspect of
the videos helped them manage their time to finish the unit, informed them what they would need to do in each unit beforehand, and helped them review what they had learned.

Figure 38. Participants’ answers to the question ‘Was it useful to be given an introduction to the topic of requests and the outline of the unit?’.

Figure 39 shows participants’ answers to the question ‘Was it useful to be given in-video explanation of several key-terms?’, which is an operationalization of the pre-training principle. The data show that all of the participants who answered this question in the Unit 2 feedback questionnaire believed that it was useful. However, this was not the case in Unit 1, in which only 16 out of the 19 participants who answered this question chose ‘Yes’. The three participants who indicated that it was somewhat or even not useful commented that the introduction to key-terms were not necessary since they were clearly explained throughout the video.
Figure 39. Participants’ answers to the question ‘Was it useful to be given in-video explanation of several key-terms?’.

Figure 40 shows participants’ answers to the question ‘Was it useful to have the structure of the email highlighted?’, which is also an operationalization of the signaling principle. The data show that all of the 15 participants who answered this question felt that it was indeed useful. Two participants noted that highlighting the structure of the email helped them understand the instructional video.

In the final section of the feedback questionnaire, participants were provided a space to include any other feedback that they would like to give. In the Unit 1 feedback questionnaire, six relevant comments were made. Five of these comments were participants commenting on the need to improve the audio quality of specific videos, which will be very helpful for the researcher to review and improve in future versions of the materials. One comment was directed towards the loading time for the videos, in which the participant suggested that each webpage only include one video. Meanwhile, in the Unit 2 feedback questionnaire, four relevant comments were made. Of these four comments, three were again
directed towards the audio quality. The fourth comment remarked positively about the inclusion of a written explanation in addition to an audio explanation.

Figure 40. Participants’ answers to the question ‘Was it useful to have the structure of the email highlighted?’.

Overall, participants’ answers to the questions that were operationalizations of some of Mayer’s (2009) multimedia design principles (i.e., segmenting, coherence, redundancy, spatial contiguity, temporal contiguity, modality, multimedia, signaling, and pre-training principles) seemed to suggest that the application of these principles in the creation of the videos helped learners better understand the materials to some extent. However, some improvements remain to be made, especially regarding the audio quality of specific videos in the online course. Unfortunately, participants’ additional comments were less extensive for these questions compared to those that they provided for the questions that operationalized the six criteria of CALL qualities, and therefore there was not a lot of feedback regarding the more technical aspects of the videos.
Further Insight into Participants’ Perception of Their Learning Process

Besides using Chapelle’s CALL evaluation framework (2001) to investigate how participants perceive the effectiveness of the multimedia materials and accompanying tasks for developing their pragmatic competence, the researcher also analyzed participants’ self-evaluation reports in Part 5: Application, and their self-reflection reports in Part 6: Strategies to further understand what participants gained from using the multimedia materials, especially in relation to making requests in the U.S. academic setting.

A distinction between self-evaluation and self-reflection was made due to the difference in the nature of the tasks. In Part 5, the self-evaluation task required participants to answer questions that focus on their perceptions regarding the difference between the requests that they produced before and after instruction as well as what they thought they should pay attention to in order to improve their requests in the additional practice task which was also provided in Part 5. In other words, participants were asked to evaluate the outcome of their learning process as well as the areas that they could improve upon. The self-reflection task in Part 6 required participants to reflect on the similarities and differences in formulating appropriate requests in their own culture compared to the U.S. academic setting.

Participants’ self-evaluation in Part 5. The self-evaluation section was only present in Unit 1. In this section, before practicing making more requests in different situations, participants were asked to self-evaluate their performance before and after they saw the instructional videos. Their self-evaluation was guided by the following questions:

- How did your requests in Part 2 differ from the requests that you chose in Part 4?
• Do you think the requests that you chose in Part 4 reflected what you had learned from Part 3 (Instruction)?

• After completing this self-evaluation, you will do some more practice. What do you think you will need to pay attention to more in order to improve your requests?

Seventeen participants submitted a self-evaluation report. Their self-evaluation provided a more in-depth understanding of how participants perceived the effectiveness of the materials for developing their pragmatic competence.

For the first guiding question, twelve participants commented that they saw differences in the requests that they made in Part 2 and Part 4. The other three participants did not answer this question. The most noticeable difference came from their choice of words, in which they were more aware of the contextual factors when making the requests in Part 4. One participant noticed that in Part 4 she tended “to feel more comfortable using indirect requests than direct requests.” Another participant commented that requests made in Part 4 were more “complex.” For the second guiding question, all participants stated the requests that they chose in Part 4 reflected what they had learned in Part 3. Twelve participants specifically commented that they used the strategies that they learned in the instructional video. Finally, participants’ answers to the third guiding question seemed to suggest that their main concern was with understanding the power relationship, social distance, and degree of imposition; 10 participants stated that they had previously not considered them.
Participants’ self-reflection in Part 6. After watching the strategies video in Part 6 of Unit 1 and Unit 2, participants were asked to write a self-reflection report. Similar to the self-evaluation task, participants were provided with a guiding prompt:

After viewing all of the videos in this unit, compare between the request making strategies in U.S. academic settings and the academic settings in your country, specifically in written communication.

Are there similarities and differences in formulating appropriate requests?

Nineteen participants submitted a self-reflection report for Unit 1 and fifteen participants submitted the report for Unit 2. For the self-reflection report in Unit 1, all of the participants commented that formulating appropriate requests in an academic setting in their culture is not particularly different from that of the U.S. academic setting. Four comments that were made regarding the differences mainly touched on the idea of formality. One participant commented that when they talk to their friends in their country, they tend to avoid using formal language and instead use slang all the time, even when making requests. Another participant commented that people in their country tend to “ramble” when making an argument [to support a request] and they feel that Americans tend to be more concise. In relation to this comment, one participant stated that when making requests, people in that culture tend to say “Sorry” at the beginning, which could be considered awkward in a U.S. academic setting since apologizing indicates that the person has done something wrong instead of wanting to make a request. Another participant commented that respect is showed by students to teachers in his country by not being “too close” to their teachers, which is not the case in a U.S. academic setting.
Participants also commented on some eye-opening information that they learned from the unit. One participant stated that:

*I was always led to believe that U.S. people are very casual when communicating. We don't have to be so formal in talking. But after learning this unit, I know that is wrong. Formality is necessary especially in academic setting.*

Another stated that she learned that it was important to use polite request strategies even if it is “just for assistants” who holds the same power as a teacher.

As for the self-reflection report in Unit 2, participants provided minimal explanation, due to rareness of email communication between a student and a teacher or other people in an academic setting in their country. However, three participants specifically indicated that they prefer talking directly to the teacher or sending a text message rather than sending an email.

In general, the feedback questionnaire, self-evaluation, and self-reflection reports seemed to suggest that participants’ overall experience in using the materials and accompanying tasks were positive. In terms of the CALL evaluation framework, the evaluation that participants’ learning experience was largely positive was shown in their perception of the six criteria for CALL quality. Their answers to the feedback questionnaires showed that there was good evidence that the online course had language learning potential, positive impact, and practicality, and strong evidence that suggested that the online course was suitable for the learners, primarily focused on meaning, and authentic. Participants were also able to develop their pragmatic competence, with an emphasis on their awareness of the three contextual factors, namely power relationship, social distance, and degree of imposition. Interestingly, besides development of their pragmatic competence, participants also noted gains in other aspects of English language skills, such as grammar, reading, and
writing. Most importantly, participants provided helpful feedback for the improvement of the materials and tasks.

**Difference in Participants’ Performance in Pre-Instruction and Post-Instruction Assessments**

The second research question of the study investigated the difference in participants’ performance in the pre-instruction and post-instruction assessments. To do so, participants’ answers to tasks in Parts 2, 4, and 5 of each unit were analyzed. Their performance in Part 2: Pre-Instruction Assessment was analyzed as indicative of their pragmatic competence prior to viewing the instructional materials. Meanwhile, their performance in Part 4: Instructional Content Review and Part 5: Application was analyzed as indicative of their pragmatic competence after viewing the instructional materials. The difference or lack of a difference in performance shows the extent to which participants learned from the materials. Their answers for Unit 1 and Unit 2 were analyzed separately. Conclusion regarding participants’ overall performance before and after instruction is made at the end of this section.

**Unit 1: Making Requests in Spoken Communication**

**Pre-instruction assessment.** In the pre-instruction assessment participants were provided the chance to make requests prior to viewing the main instructional video, which shows the different types of request strategies. Participants were shown four different scenarios, each involving a different interlocutor. Participants were also given the option to audio record their requests or type and submit them. A total of 22 participants completed this task with most participants preferring to type and submit their answers rather than record their spoken requests.
The first scenario was a situation in which participants want to request information about elective courses from a professor, because they were unsure which courses are interesting. In general, participants favored the use of hearer-oriented strategies, which is an indirect request. However, participants tended to use could you or would you requests with minimal politeness features. The politeness features that were used were mainly please and some instances of I was wondering. Although participants tended to use indirect requests, there was some inappropriateness in its use. For example, one participant used Would you like to give me ...?. Additionally, there were also instances in which participants used speaker-oriented strategies, which are direct requests. These requests came off as very demanding:

I want to know your opinion and I wish you could give me some advice.

I need your advice to choose which course is suitable for me?

I need your suggestions, what subject I should take?

I would like to ask for your suggestion ....

Furthermore, some participants tended to speak in a roundabout way before making the request, potentially confusing the requestee.

The second scenario was a situation in which participants want to request explanation about feedback on an essay assignment from a teaching assistant. In their responses, participants also favored could you and would you requests, with please being the most used politeness feature. Some participants also used speaker-oriented strategies, such as:

I need advanced explanation ...

I need some help for revising my paper ...
The third scenario was a situation in which participants asked a classmate for help with a topic that was covered in class, but that they wanted to understand more. Participants’ responses show that they favor the use of *could you* and *can you* requests. Similar to other scenarios, participants also used speaker-oriented strategies that will sound especially demanding, since the request in this situation is particularly face-threatening due to the fact that the classmate is not someone that the requester has often talked to. One particularly demanding example was:

*Help me understand about the topic that was covered in class, because I wanna really understand.*

In addition, the request is of quite a high degree of imposition. Participants also used inappropriate request strategies. For example, one participant used *Would you like to give me...?* Interestingly, this was not the same participant who used the same request in the professor scenario. Another participant used *Could you like to tell me...?*

The fourth scenario that participants responded to was a situation in which they asked a writing center consultant to focus on the grammar of a paper that they brought to a consultation session. Similar to the third scenario, participants’ responses showed that they favored the use of *could you* and *can you* requests. There were also instances of other politeness features besides *please*, such as *Do you think ...?* Interestingly, once again the phrase *Would you like to ...?* was used by a participant, and was not one of the two people who had used it in previous scenarios. This seems to indicate that learners have a misunderstanding regarding this expression. Speaker-oriented strategies were also used by participants. For example:

*I want you to correct the grammar of my paper*
In the review section in Part 3, participants are informed that writing center consultants are not proofreaders. Instead, they provide writing and proofreading skills that learners could use.

**Post-instruction assessments.** The post-instruction assessment consisted of two tasks, one is in Part 4: Instructional Content Review, and the other is in Part 5: Application. The instructional content review consisted of four audiovisual SJTs in the form of multiple choice questions. Each correct answer is given one point; therefore the maximum ‘grade’ is four points. Four scenarios were provided, each one corresponding to the same four interlocutors: a professor, a teaching assistant, a classmate, and a writing center consultant. Twenty-two participants completed this task. Participants’ results show that they did relatively well for the first question, in which the requestee was a professor and the request was for additional study materials for a reading class. Only one participant chose a less appropriate request, because the request that they chose lack a reason. Participants also did relatively well in the second question. However, some participants also chose the option in which the requestee used a speaker-oriented strategy, which was ‘I would like additional time to work on this assignment’. In the third question, participants had to identify the most appropriate request, in which the requestee was a classmate who is the requester’s close friend, with the request being to borrow lecture notes. Only one participant chose an incorrect answer, which was an explicit demand: Give me your lecture notes please. It is possible that the *please* at the end of the request tricked the participant into believing it was more polite. In the final question, students had to identify the most appropriate request, in which the request was a writing center consultant and the request being help with the conclusion section of a
paper. Two participants chose the option in which the requester used an indirect request strategy to ask the consultant to ‘fix’ the conclusion section of their paper, which was ‘Could you correct the conclusion section of this paper, please?’. In this case, these participants’ mistake was not related to the request strategy, but the content of the request. In the feedback, they are once again reminded that a writing center consultant is not a proofreader.

The second task is in Part 5: Application which is similar to the task in Part 2: Pre-Instruction Assessment, the only difference being the scenarios that participants had to respond to. Seventeen participants completed this task. In the first scenario, participants were asked to make a request to a professor for an explanation on the difference between performatives and imperatives. Overall, the requests that participants made for this scenario were hearer-oriented strategies which are more indirect requests. None of the participants used direct request strategies. It is evident that participants used more varied strategies besides the usual *Could you please* request, which is an ability request strategy. In fact, in this scenario, it appears that participants shifted to using willingness request strategies:

- **Would you be willing** to explain for different between these two terms?
- **Would you mind** to explain to me, so i would understand clearly?
- **would you** explain me please?
- **Do you mind** explaining more so I can differentiate between the two?

Participants also used politeness features other than *please*, such as an expression of appreciation like: *I really appreciate your help.*

In the second scenario, participants were asked to make a request to a teaching assistant for a clarification of an assignment instruction. The assignment instruction was to write at least five examples of making requests, using direct or indirect requests. Participants’
requests did not show any direct request strategies. In fact, participants showed a tendency to use the hinting strategy, in which they did not directly request for the teaching assistants help to clarify. Instead, they commented that they were “a little confused”, “did not understand”, or formulated a question like:

*Does it mean to write 5 examples for each Direct or Indirect Requests, or 5 examples total?*

Furthermore, they also provided politeness features other than *please*, such as an expression of gratitude like: *I'd be really grateful if you could explain it to me again.*

In the third scenario, participants were asked to request to a classmate who they are friends with to work together for a group assignment. Participants used a variety of request strategies which were definitely more complex than what they had produced in the pre-instruction assessment task. Some participants used request strategies that focused on the ‘wants’ of the requestee, as opposed to the ‘wants’ of the requester:

*do you want to work together with me?*

*Would you like to become my partner?*

Others used hinting strategies such as *why don't we working together?* However, most participants favored the use of willingness request strategies like:

*I was wondering if you'd be willing to work together for a group assignment?*

*do you mind if we work together in a group assignment?*

In the final scenario, participants were asked to request to a writing center consultant for help with the overall structure of a research paper for a conference. In this scenario, participants did not use any direct request strategies, nor did they requested for the consultant
to fix or correct the paper. The requests that they use were also varied like in the previous three scenarios.

Overall, compared to their performance in the pre-instruction assessment, most of the participants’ performances in the post-instruction assessments seemed to suggest that they were able to successfully use the knowledge of request strategies and politeness features that they obtained from the instructional materials. This was indicated by the shift from using speaker-oriented strategies that were more direct in the pre-instruction assessment to using hearer-oriented strategies that were more indirect in the post-instruction assessments. Additionally, participants’ use of request strategies and politeness features were more varied in the request making part of the post-instruction assessment compared to the ones that they used in the pre-instruction assessment.

Unit 2: Making requests in written communication

Pre-instruction assessment. In the pre-instruction assessment section of Unit 2, participants were given three emails that were scrambled. Each email was addressed to different addressees, namely a professor, a teaching assistant, and a classmate. Participants were tasked to find the appropriate organization and identify the request in the email. Additionally, they needed to explain why they chose the particular option as the request of the email. A total of sixteen participants completed this task. For the identification of the appropriate organization part of this assessment, at a glance, it seems that participants did fairly well in identifying the correct email organization for emails one and two. The third email seemed to have the most wrong answers. When we look closer at the wrong option that
was chosen, all participants chose (B). Figure 41 shows the feedback for this incorrect answer.

Figure 41. Feedback for the third scrambled email. The correct answer is (A).

The researcher then understood that option (B) was an ambiguous distractor, since the organization could also be correct. Considering that participants had not viewed the instructional video that covered email organization, the identification of the appropriate organization part of the pre-instruction assessment may have been too easy.

For the identifying the request section of the assessment, nearly all of the participants were able to identify the request in each email, with some participants being able to identify the type of request strategy that was used and also making the effort to describe the contextual information in the email (see Figure 42).
Figure 42. A participants’ attempt at describing the contextual information of the email.

Only one participant seemed to have identified the wrong request in all three emails. However, a closer look at the participant’s explanation of the choice of option as indicating a request seemed to suggest that she had misunderstood the instructions. Instead of choosing the option indicating the request in the email, she chose the option that she thought could be improved. This may suggest that although she had misunderstood the instructions, she may already know which were the requests, and was in fact more proficient in email writing. Thus, she felt the need to make some improvements.
**Post-instruction assessments.** The post-instruction assessment in Unit 2 also consisted of two tasks, one in Part 4: Instructional Content Review, and the other in Part 5: Application. The instructional content review required participants to correct three emails addressed to three individuals, namely a professor, a teaching assistant, and a classmate. The instructions specified that the emails needed to be corrected in terms of their elements and the appropriateness of the request. Fourteen participants completed this task. Overall, participants’ corrections seemed to suggest that they had a good grasp of the different elements of an email. Nearly all of the participants were able to make the necessary ‘email elements’ corrections. However, some participants still had problems with correcting the appropriateness of the requests or providing a request when it is the missing element, especially in the emails to a teaching assistant and a classmate.

Figure 43 shows the ‘incorrect version’ of the email to the teaching assistant. In the email to the teaching assistant, some participants failed to provide a better explanation to support their request. Instead of incorporating the reason that was provided in the scenario (i.e., she is concerned that she will not be able to work in a group because of her class schedule and other assignments that are due at around the same time) or providing another more convincing reason, some participants still used the “because I don’t have the time to work in a group” reason which is inadequate for what is being requested in the scenario. Other participants provided speaker-oriented requests, such as:

*If you don’t mind, I want to complete the next assignment individually because my class schedule and other assignments are due at around the same time.*
I want to complete the next assignment individually because I don't have the time to work in a group. Would it possible for me to complete my other assignment individually?

Note that the participant in the first example tried to make the request more polite by using ‘If you don’t mind’. While the other example showed the participant following up the initial ‘want’ request with a more appropriate request.

Figure 43. Scenario and the incorrect email addressed to a teaching assistant.

One participant tried using a hinting strategy:

My class with the group assignment for the final project are due at the same time with the other classes. It's hard to me work that assignment on group. I think it better to complete the assignment individually.

However, the request came across as merely stating that they ‘better’ complete the assignment individually, without a follow up request asking for the teaching assistant’s permission to do so.
Meanwhile, for the incorrect email that was sent to a classmate (see Figure 44), some participants attempted to add politeness features to the ‘want’ request that was in the incorrect email as opposed to using a more indirect request strategy that is more hearer-oriented:

Would you mind if I **want** to change the time to later in the afternoon?

If you don’t mind, **I want** to change the time to later in the afternoon.

*Figure 44. Scenario and the incorrect email addressed to a classmate.*

The second post-instruction assessment that participants completed required them to write three emails with different scenarios. The first email was addressed to a professor, in which they would like to request for a recommendation letter (see Figure 45). In general, participants were able to write a complete email, one that has all the elements and an appropriate request for the scenario. One participant in particular, however, used the request “May I get the letter of recommendation as soon as possible please?” This was not preceded nor followed by a request that asks about the professor’s willingness to write a recommendation letter.
Scenario

You are an international graduate student at a U.S. university, and one day you find out that you are eligible for a scholarship for international students. One of the scholarship requirements is to have a faculty member write you a letter of recommendation. Therefore, you would like to email your professor, Dr. Anne Olson, who is also your academic adviser to request a letter of recommendation for the scholarship. The deadline for submitting letters of recommendation is December 15th, 2017. The scholarship committee has stated that recommenders should forward their letters directly to the following email: xyz@abc.org

Instructions

Write your email in the following textbox. There is no minimum/maximum for the number of words that you should write. Remember to write the subject line!

Figure 45. Scenario for an email addressed to a professor in Unit 2 Part 5.

The second email was addressed to a teaching assistant, in which participants need to request a way to possibly improve their current grade (see Figure 46). Based on the participants’ email submissions, it appears that most stopped at providing the request, in which they mainly used willingness request strategies, and did not go a step further to suggest some ways in which they could improve their current grade. Only two participants did so:

May I have some extra assignments to improve my current grade? I would be very grateful if you can help me with this.

I was wondering if I can do something to improve my score like doing an extra assignment or a paper for this course. I would appreciate if you provide me this opportunity.

Although most of the emails produced were adequate, one participant provided a request that was quite inappropriate for this scenario:

I really don’t want if my current grade just the same like the previous one. would you find a way to improve my grade please?
As we can see, in addition to using a ‘want’ request strategy, the participant also ‘pushed’ the responsibility of providing a way to improve their grade to the teaching assistant.

**Scenario**
You are taking an English class (Course code: ENGL 518) which is taught by a teaching assistant. You are currently at a B-, and you are quite concerned that your grade will further drop because of your current quiz scores. You feel like you have prepared for the quizzes, but your scores do not reflect that effort. Therefore, you would like to request to Jeff Williams, the teaching assistant, for a way to possibly improve your current grade.

**Instructions**
Write your email in the following textbox. There is no minimum/maximum for the number of words that you should write. Remember to write the subject line!

*Figure 46.* Scenario for an email addressed to a teaching assistant in Unit 2 Part 5.

In the third and final email, the participants wrote an email to a classmate, in which they request the classmate to submit a group assignment by the deadline (see Figure 47). Overall, participants used complex request strategies and added a variety of politeness features, including *please* and expressions of appreciation and gratitude. Some participants also used an interesting strategy in which they did not request the classmate to submit the assignment by the deadline, but instead hinted at whether the classmate ‘forgot’ to submit their part:

* I am wondering if you forget to submit your task material for our project.
* I was preparing to submit our group project for the reading class but I couldn't seem to locate the part that you worked on. Would it be okay if you send it again to me through e-mail?

This could be because participants were reluctant to directly point out that their classmate had not submitted their part of the assignment yet.
The analysis of learners’ performance in the pre-instruction and post-instruction assessments of both units seemed to suggest that there was some improvement in participants’ performance in making appropriate requests in spoken and written communication, specifically in terms of the variety and complexity of the request strategies being used. Table 9 shows a comparison of the request strategies and politeness features being used in the pre-instruction and post-instruction assessments of Unit 1 and the post-instruction assessment of Unit 2. The request strategies and politeness features in the pre-instruction assessment of Unit 2 was not included because the task did not have participants actually produce the requests; they only needed to identify the request statement in the email.

In the pre-instruction assessment of Unit 1, participants mainly utilized one or two different request strategies, with the politeness features limited to please and I was wondering. Additionally, participants often used ‘want’ request strategies which are very direct and speaker-oriented in scenarios where the request was of a high degree of imposition and the person that they were addressing had a higher power than them. After viewing the instructional video, participants used a variety of different request strategies and politeness features that were appropriate to the scenario presented. This suggests that some of the
participants were able to mostly implement what they had learned from the instructional video.

Table 10
Comparison of Request Strategies and Politeness Features Produced by Participants

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<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Unit 1 Pre-Instruction</th>
<th>Unit 1 Post-Instruction</th>
<th>Unit 2 Post-Instruction</th>
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<td><strong>Request Strategies</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Indirect (Hearer-based):</strong></td>
<td><strong>Can/Could you ...?</strong></td>
<td><strong>Could/May I ...?</strong></td>
<td><strong>Can/Could you ...?</strong></td>
<td><strong>Would it be possible/okay ...?</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Will/Would you (mind) ...?</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Do you mind ...?</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Do you think you could ...?</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Direct (Speaker-based):</strong></td>
<td><strong>Help me [do something] ...</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>I (really) want ...</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>I really need your ...</strong></td>
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<td><strong>I wish you could give me ...</strong></td>
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<td><strong>I need your ...</strong></td>
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<td><strong>I would like to ask for ...</strong></td>
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<td><strong>I (really) want ...</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Politeness Features</strong></td>
<td><strong>Please, It will be great if ..... If you don’t mind ..... I was wondering .....</strong></td>
<td><strong>Please, I’d be really grateful if ..... I really appreciate your help, I’m just wondering .....</strong></td>
<td><strong>I hope you would not mind ..... Please, I’m/was wondering if ..... I would be very grateful/(really) appreciate .....</strong></td>
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On the other hand, based on the results of the pre-instruction assessment in Unit 2, it appears that learners already had good knowledge regarding the structure of an email. In the feedback questionnaire, some participants indicated that the tasks were sometimes too easy. Therefore, the pre-instruction assessment in Unit 2 could be made more challenging.

Participants’ performance in the post-instruction assessment of Unit 2 also suggested that participants were able to use what they had learned from the instructional video. However, some inappropriate requests were still produced. More opportunities to write full emails with
different scenarios should be provided in future improvements of the materials, which was also suggested by some participants in the feedback questionnaire.

Conclusion

This chapter has presented the results and discussed the findings of the study, which suggested that participants generally had a positive experience using the materials and accompanying tasks. The results also suggested that participants were able to implement most of the knowledge regarding making requests that they had acquired from the materials. Additionally, participants’ open-ended responses in the feedback questionnaire provided valuable information regarding the limitations of the multimedia materials and accompanying tasks that were provided in the Moodle course. Participants’ comments were mainly related to the technical aspects of the videos, such as the audio quality and video length. They also commented on some of the instructions for the tasks which can be made more specific. Furthermore, participants suggested that more challenging practice tasks are provided in the course, especially ones where learners are required to produce their own requests.

The researcher also identified limitations in the content of the video scenarios and tasks in Unit 1. In general, the video scenarios presented in Unit 1 were relatively short and therefore could not really show learners the more interactional aspect of spoken communication, such as how interlocutors take turns in conveying their message while still producing coherent and cohesive speech. This is perhaps why participants did not make any comments regarding gains in discourse knowledge. In fact, one participant commented that they really wanted to see longer conversations in the videos so that they could learn more. Furthermore, the tasks were also limited in terms of their interactivity, where participants
were provided opportunities to produce their own requests but could not receive direct responses to their requests. This feedback is invaluable for the improvement of the materials and tasks in the future.
CHAPTER 5
CONCLUSION

This study sought to design and produce self-access multimedia materials to teach making requests in spoken and written communication in U.S. academic settings through explicit instruction of the contextual factors that one should consider when formulating their request (i.e., power relationship, social distance, and degree of imposition) and a variety of request-making strategies to use in different contexts. The multimedia materials were trialed by current and prospective international students as the target users. The researcher investigated how participants perceived the effectiveness of the multimedia materials and accompanying tasks for developing their pragmatic competence, and how their performance in making requests differed between pre-instruction and post-instruction assessments. Overall, the findings suggest that participants had a positive learning experience which contributed to the development of their pragmatic competence. After instruction, participants used more varied request strategies and politeness features, and experienced an increase in pragmatic awareness of the contextual factors that must be considered prior to making requests both in spoken and written communication. Interestingly, besides development of their pragmatic competence, participants also noted gains in other aspects of English language skills, such as grammar, reading, and writing.

The current study confirms findings from the literature on explicit instruction of pragmatics, in that learners were able to use more varied and appropriate request strategies as well as raise their awareness of contextual factors after explicit pragmatics instruction. It also contributes to the body of literature on the use of multimedia materials to teach pragmatics
by providing an example of how multimedia materials were designed and implemented using guiding principles from previous studies. For researchers in the field, the use of multimedia materials can be a starting point to open the possibility for investigation of variation in the approach to teach pragmatics in order to not only develop learners’ ability to produce requests (or other speech acts) in the appropriate context, but also to help learners create their individual pragmatics identity. This is an important step forward for researchers and materials developers, because ideally the instructional focus should not be prescriptive in nature and instead help learners realize or develop their own pragmatics identity. Additionally, the current study has attempted to push learners to become critical thinkers about their own interaction in pragmatic situations through self-reflection and self-evaluation tasks present in the online course. Teachers who are interested in teaching pragmatics, whether they would like to focus on requests or any other pragmatic routines, can adapt these kinds of tasks into their classroom teaching. The feedback that participants provided will be valuable for future researchers who would like to develop their own multimedia materials to teach pragmatics or expand upon the multimedia materials that were used in this study. In terms of aiding international students with their communication problems in U.S. academic settings, the Moodle course used in this study can potentially be built upon to suit the needs of international students in different U.S. universities.

The following sections describes the limitations of the current study, followed by some recommendations for future research.
Limitations

The researcher identified various limitations regarding the methodology of this study. First, the number of participants was relatively small, and having more participants could provide more insight into how the multimedia materials and accompanying tasks can promote the development of learners’ pragmatic competence. Having participants of different cultural backgrounds would also potentially provide the researcher with more information regarding the usefulness of the self-reflection task in Part 6, which was not included in Laughlin et al.’s (2015) suggestions for the operationalization of their construct of pragmatic competence in multimedia materials created to teach pragmatics. The participants in this study came from the same cultural background except for one participant, and the majority of the participants could not provide a richer self-reflection report because they found that the request making in the academic setting in their culture was not particularly different from that of the U.S. academic setting.

Second, the data collected from feedback questionnaires were limited in terms of the open-ended response provided. Due to the extensiveness of the questions asked, participants may have felt overwhelmed if they had to elaborate on every single one of their answers. Therefore, interviews with willing participants could provide more in-depth information to interpret the results of the feedback questionnaires.

Finally, gain scores for improvements within Unit 1 and Unit 2, respectively, could not be calculated because the pre- and post-instruction assessments in each unit were different. In Unit 1, the pre-instruction assessment was in the form of an elicited response task that required learners to audio-record or type their request. However, the post-instruction assessment consisted of a multiple choice quiz and another elicited response task similar to
that in the pre-instruction assessment but with different scenarios. In Unit 2, the pre-instruction assessment was a multiple choice quiz where participants had to identify the correct organization of several emails and the request statement in each of those emails. On the other hand, the post-instruction assessments consisted of two separate tasks, one requiring learners to correct the email elements and appropriateness of the requests in several emails, and another where learners wrote several emails based on different scenarios. Therefore, claims regarding the difference in participants’ gain scores in the pre- and post-instruction assessments within Unit 1 and Unit 2 cannot be made.

**Recommendations for Future Research**

Future research should expand the scope of the materials that are provided in the current study by adding more speech acts, such as apologizing, complaining, and suggesting in U.S. academic settings. Another idea would be to cover several different speech acts in a specific setting, such as an advising session with a professor. Most importantly, the videos should not only focus on the speech acts, but also point out the interactional features of the dialogue between the interlocutors.

The scenarios in this study were created based on the researcher’s own experience as an international student in a U.S. university. Future research should survey what faculty and staff members in U.S. universities find to be the most common scenarios when interacting with students, especially non-native speakers, to make the multimedia materials even more authentic. Future research should also consult the literature on this topic in the field of international students in higher education and SLA.
Specifically for Part 6: Strategies, the videos should not only depict international students sharing their experience performing certain speech acts. As has been suggested by the participants in the feedback questionnaires, the videos in Part 6 should also include what members of the U.S. academic setting (e.g., professors, teaching assistants, students, writing center consultants) identify as appropriate and polite.

**Conclusion**

Current literature on the use of multimedia materials to teach pragmatics is still limited, with some studies focusing on the design aspect of the multimedia materials. The present study adds to the body of literature on the use of multimedia materials to teach pragmatics, specifically making requests in U.S. academic settings, not only by elaborating on the development of the multimedia materials but also by investigating how participants perceived the effectiveness of the multimedia materials and accompanying tasks for developing their pragmatic competence, and how their performance in making requests differed between pre-instruction and post-instruction assessments. Overall, despite the limitations discussed earlier, this study can be improved upon and the multimedia materials to be expanded to include other speech acts, and then ideally used as instructional materials to aid prospective and current international students in the U.S.
REFERENCES


Hello! Welcome to Part 1 of Unit 1: Making Requests in Spoken Communication.

Before you continue, here are some important terms that you will encounter in this video.

- **Requester**: A person who makes the request.
- **Requestee**: A person from whom something is requested.
- **Face-threatening acts**: Actions that could cause a listener to feel discomfort, be burdened, embarrassed, or ashamed.
- **Degree of Imposition**: The extent to which the request will trouble or burden the requestee.
- **Context**: Aim of your request, who you are talking to, your relationship with the person you are talking to, and how ‘big’ is your request.

Are you ready to continue? If not, press the pause button to allow you some time to understand the terms. But if you are ready, then let’s begin!

You are probably wondering, “Why do I need to learn how to make requests? Is it such a difficult thing?”

Well, making requests is a potentially face-threatening act. This is because in the act of requesting, the speaker as the requester conveys to the hearer as the requestee that he or she wants the hearer to do something, which will benefit the speaker. In other words, the requester is imposing on the requestee. To have the hearer carry out the request, the speaker must consider several important factors, namely:

- **Power relationships**
- **Social distance**
- **Degree of imposition**

These three factors are essential to making a polite request so that the chances of the hearer to carry out the request will be much higher.

First, let’s consider power relationships. In the context of an interaction, you will usually find yourself in three types of power relationships. First, if the person you are talking to is a friend or a colleague, then it is considered that you would have equal power with them. Second, if the person you are talking to is a professor or a boss,
then you would have less power than them. Finally, if the person you are talking to is your student, then you would have more power than them. Typically, a more formal language is used when the person you are talking to has more power than you do.

Social distance also refers to the relationship between speakers, which concerns the relative closeness of the speakers. If the speakers are very close, they would have a low degree of social distance. If they have just met or are strangers to each other, they would most likely have a high degree of social distance. A more formal language should be used when there is a higher degree of social distance.

Degree of imposition concerns the degree of importance or difficulty of the request. For example, if you are requesting for a big favor, it means that it has a higher degree of imposition. When the request is a small favor, it has a smaller degree of imposition. More formal and complex language forms is necessary when the request is of a higher degree of imposition.

In an academic setting, specifically in a U.S. university, you will most likely encounter situations in which a combination of the factors come into play. For example, you might need to make a request of a high degree of imposition to your professor who you are close to, and other likely combinations. It is important that you consider the three factors to ensure that you make requests that are appropriate to the context.

In this unit, you will learn how to make appropriate requests in spoken communication within a U.S. university setting. There are four types of people that you will see and eventually ‘interact’ with in this course. They are people who you will most likely need to request something from. First is professors, who you will interact with because they might be your lecturer, academic advisor, major professor if you are a graduate student, or any other departmental roles. Second is teaching assistants, who are people that assist a professor with instructional responsibilities or is entirely responsible for one or several classes. Third is classmates, who you will interact with both inside and outside of your classes. Fourth is writing center consultants. The writing center is a resource for students that is typically provided by U.S. universities to help students develop and improve their writing skills and sometimes even presentation skills. This is a valuable resource that you should definitely make good use of.

Besides learning to identify contextual information, you will also learn to formulate appropriate requests in spoken communication using contextual information that you have identified. Then, you will have the chance to practice producing your own requests. One section will have you self-evaluate your answers based on the knowledge that you have gained on making appropriate requests. In the last section of this unit, you will view a video showing two international students sharing their request making strategies in spoken communication. Finally, after viewing this video, you will be asked to do a self-reflection by comparing request making in U.S. academic settings and academic settings in your country.
Welcome to Part 2 of Unit 1: Making Requests in Spoken Communication.

Before you continue, here are some important terms that you will encounter in this video.

- Advising session: A meeting session with a professor who is usually your academic adviser. In this meeting you can discuss about the progress in your studies, the problems that you are facing, ask questions, and other academic related issues.
- Elective courses: Optional classes that students can choose. The opposite of required courses that students must take.
- Student conference: A meeting session between you and your instructor (professor/teaching assistant). Usually the session is dedicated to talking about your progress in class, the problems that you are facing, your assignments, and other issues related to the class. It is scheduled once or more times during a whole semester.

Are you ready to continue? If not, press the pause button to allow you some time to understand the terms. But if you are ready, then let’s begin!

Before you start learning how to formulate the appropriate requests, let’s see how you would formulate your requests in the following video scenarios.

In the first scenario, you are in an advising session with your professor. Request information on some elective courses because you are unsure which courses are interesting.

In the second scenario, you are in a student conference with a teaching assistant. Request explanation for feedback on an essay assignment.

In the third scenario, your class has just ended. Request for help with a topic that was covered in class that you would really like to understand more to a classmate. Note that the classmate that you will address the request to is someone who you rarely talk to outside of class.

In the fourth and final scenario, you are in a consultation session with a writing center consultant. Request to focus on the grammar of a paper that you brought with you.
Now, you should make the requests. You have two options to save your answers.

**IF you would like to record your answer:**

1) Click on the URL link titled “Online Audio Recorder” under Part 2 of Unit 1. This link will take you to an online recording tool. You will not need to sign up to use this online recording tool.

2) If you have problems recording and saving your responses, find the “How to Record and Save Your Responses” video in the “Before You Start: Some Things You Need to Know” section of this course.

3) After recording and saving all **four** audio files, submit them to the submission page. Make sure to choose “Pre-Instruction Assessment Responses (Audio)”. Click on the link and click on the “Add submission button”.
Make sure to click on “Save Changes”, otherwise your submissions will not be uploaded.

**IF you would like to write your answers:**

1) Click on the link titled “Pre-Instruction Assessment Responses (Text)” under Part 2 of Unit 1.

   ![Part 2: Pre-Instruction Assessment](Part 2: Pre-Instruction Assessment)
   ![Online Audio Recorder](Online Audio Recorder)
   ![Pre-Instruction Assessment Responses (Audio)](Pre-Instruction Assessment Responses (Audio))
   ![Pre-Instruction Assessment Responses (Text)](Pre-Instruction Assessment Responses (Text))
   ![Part 2 [Transcript]](Part 2 [Transcript])

2) Read the answer formatting instruction on the page that shows up. Then click “Add submission” to start typing your responses.
3) Type your responses in the textbox provided. Make sure to click “Save changes” to successfully submit your answers.

You may choose to use either the audio recorder or the text submission option to save your answers. However, the advantage of recording your request is that you can check for intonation and pronunciation, and later compare them to the answers that will be provided in Part 3: Instruction.

Once again, here are the four scenarios and the requests that you need to make. You may pause the video here, while you record your answers.
This is the end of Part 2 of Unit 1: Making Requests in Spoken Communication. Please continue to Part 3. You may choose to view this video again at any time.

The following text is a transcript for the “Part 3: Instruction” video in Unit 1: Making Requests in Spoken Communication

Welcome to Part 3 of Unit 1: Making Requests in Spoken Communication.

In the previous section, you produced your own requests based on several scenarios. Before we go on to learn how to formulate appropriate requests, let us revisit the scenarios. This time you will see videos of the scenario, showing the scenarios played out in interactions between an International student, named “Ananda” and four requestees: a professor, a teaching assistant, a classmate, and a writing center consultant.

While you view these videos one after the other, compare the requests made by “Ananda” and the requests that you produced. Additionally, pay attention to her intonation, pronunciation, and body language during the interaction.

[Scenario 1]

Professor: Hi Ananda, what brings you in today?

Ananda: Well, I’m currently deciding which elective courses to take. But I’m unsure which courses are interesting. Could you give me some suggestions?

Professor: Okay. Well, I’m excited because I was looking into your degree planning sheet, and it looks to me like you have Spanish background. Right?

Ananda: Yeah.

Professor: And when you first entered the program, you took a Spanish placement exam. Now that’s been awhile, so I don’t know if you recall your score, but I have your score here. And it looks as though, based on your score, and your additional background in Spanish, you fall within the intermediate level.

Ananda: Okay.
Professor: Okay, so if you're interested, one direction that you could go with these additional elective credits that you have, is you could take a few courses in Spanish at the intermediate level. So you would fulfill your elective requirements and you would further your Spanish language skills.

Ananda: Awesome.

Professor: Okay? So what it would look like for registration, you would first want to enrol right here, Spanish 201, so that's like beginning-intermediate, that's four credit classes.

Ananda: Okay.

Professor: Okay, so four credits. Monday through Thursday typically, and then the following semester you would sign up for Spanish 202.

Ananda: Okay.

Professor: Okay, and that's an additional four credits. Now I know that only brings us to eight and you need nine I believe. And so, what I was thinking, you could potentially look into one credit elective within your declared major. Okay, there are courses that would be one credit. Now within Spanish there aren't any courses offered just for one credit. However, if you are really enjoying the experience of furthering your Spanish, if you wanted to that last semester then you could sign up for Spanish 301.

Ananda: Okay.

Professor: Okay, which by that time you will be considered at the beginning-advanced level.

Ananda: Okay.
Professor: So that would be your choice then at that point if you wanted to fill that one credit requirement with something else or if you wanted to keep going with your Spanish.

Ananda: Wow, I'm really excited. I didn't know about these electives. Thank you, this is really helpful for me.

Professor: No, it was my pleasure. Thanks for coming in.

[Scenario 2]
Teaching Assistant: Hi Ananda, did you get my feedback on your essay?

Ananda: Yes, I did, and I have some questions about the feedback.

Teaching Assistant: Sure.

Ananda: Well, you said that my essay doesn’t have a thesis statement. But I think I already stated it in my introduction.

Teaching Assistant: Then can you show me your thesis statement?

Ananda: (Points to a section on the essay) This is my thesis statement.

Teaching Assistant: Well, it's a pretty weak thesis statement. You're not making any specific claims. Remember when we talked about how to write a strong thesis statement?

Ananda: I think so. Can I revise this essay and submit it again?

Teaching Assistant: Sure. This is only your first draft anyway.

[Scenario 3]
Ananda: Hey Sal. Can I talk to you for a minute?

Classmate: Sure, what’s up?

Ananda: I don’t really understand some of the topics that we’ve covered so far in this class. Sometimes the professor just moves on too quickly for me. So, I was
wondering if you’d be willing to go over the topic that we covered this week with me? Because that’s the one I’d really like to understand more.

Classmate: Sure, no problem. As long as I’m not busy. Does Saturday work for you?

Ananda: Sure! Thank you so much, I really appreciate this!

[Scenario 4]

Consultant: Okay, what do you wanna work on today?

Ananda: I brought a paper that I wrote for one of my courses. Can we focus on the grammar of my paper, please?

Consultant: No problem.

After viewing the interactions, you must have realized that “Ananda” used a variety of expressions in making a request. Indeed, there are many different request strategies that one could use depending on who we are talking to and the degree of imposition of the request. However, before we analyze these scenarios more deeply, let us learn more about the various request strategies that you can use to formulate your requests.

Request strategies are typically divided into two main categories. Indirect and direct requests. In indirect requests, the request itself is not directly stated in the request statement. Instead, the request is formulated in a way that minimizes the face-threatening potential of the request. On the other hand, direct requests explicitly express what is wanted/needed by the speaker in the request statement. To better illustrate the difference between direct and indirect requests, let's look at the following requests.

Tell me the time.

I’m trying to find out what time it is.

Can you tell me the time?

The first sentence is a direct request, in which the speaker demands to the hearer to provide him/her with the current time. Meanwhile, the second and third sentence indirectly makes the request to know what time it is. We can see how example 1 is considered more face-threatening than examples 2 and 3 because it does not seek to minimize the degree of imposition of the request at all. Instead, it comes out as sounding like a command.

There are a number of ways that indirect and direct requests can be formulated. For indirect requests, there are at least 3 kinds of strategies that you can use. The first one is hinting. Consider the following examples:
It’s cold in here.

Has the assignment been submitted?

In the first sentence, the statement alone can literally mean that the temperature in the room is cold. However, if in said room there is a window open, the statement could instead act as a request for the hearer to close the window. In the second sentence, it seems like an ordinary Yes or No question. However, if the speaker and hearer are partners for a group assignment, and the hearer was tasked to submit the assignment but hasn’t done so, then the question becomes a request to submit the assignment as soon as possible. This strategy can be used when you do not want to state the imposition explicitly. It is then entirely up to the hearer to figure out the intended meaning behind your statement. Therefore, when resorting to using hinting strategies, it is best to use it only when you are fairly confident that the hearer is aware of the context. Here are other examples of requests using hinting strategies.

Is Miss Andrews in?

Are you ready?

Another strategy is called the hearer-oriented strategy. It is called hearer-oriented because the requests convey the message that the hearer has the option to decide whether or not to fulfill the request. Because of this, hearer-oriented requests are generally considered more polite than speaker-oriented requests which we will also discuss. Another reason why it is considered more polite is because it offers the hearer as the requestee a face-saving way out of the request, meaning that they can decline or are not pressured to fulfill the request. This particular strategy can be realized in a number of ways.

First, you can formulate the request as a question about the hearer’s ability to perform the request using expressions like Can you...? and Could you...? Consider the following examples:

**Can you meet me at the library tomorrow?**

**Could you show me how to use this program?**

Another way is to question the hearer’s willingness to fulfill the request, like in the following examples:

**Would you lend me a copy of your book?**

**Would you like to partner up with me for this assignment?**

Other common expressions to question the hearer’s willingness are:

**Would you mind...?**

**Would you be willing to...?**

**Would you be so kind as to...?**
These expressions are especially polite and formal, especially the second and third expressions.

Besides questioning the hearer’s ability or willingness, you can also request for the hearer’s permission. This strategy is also considered very polite and would work well if the request is of a high degree of imposition. Consider the following examples:

*Can I have a minute [of your time]?*

*May I meet with you during your office hours tomorrow?*

Compared to the word *Can*, the word *May* is considered even more polite.

Finally, you can formulate your requests by using a suggestion. The aim of this strategy is to know whether there are any conditions that might prevent the requestee from fulfilling the request. Consider the following examples:

*Why don’t you partner with me?*

*How about we work on the assignment tomorrow?*

Both questions would likely follow with either an affirmative answer or a reason why the requestee needs to decline.

After hinting and hearer-oriented strategies, there are the speaker-oriented strategies. When you use speaker-oriented strategies, your needs or desires become the focus of the request. Because this implies that you are putting your interests above the hearer’s, the request becomes more direct in its demand. Therefore, this strategy should be reserved for when you are requesting from a person with a low degree of social distance and who has less power or at least equal power with you. There are two ways in which you can formulate a speaker-oriented request.

First is by expressing your wish.

*I would like you to wait for me in my office.*

*I would prefer if you submit the assignment today.*

*I would rather wait for the additional information before starting our project.*

Second is by expressing your needs or wants.

*I need you to help me.*

*I need the room for a couple of hours.*

*I want the assignment submitted in an hour.*

*I want to speak to you now.*

These requests can possibly be softened by the use of the expression *if that’s okay/alright with you* at the end of the request.
There are also other ways to make even more direct requests. However, keep in mind that it is better to use more hearer-oriented strategies that are indirect requests than opting for more direct requests. Consider the following examples:

You should be in my group.

You must return the book by this afternoon.

I ask you to leave.

Give me the book.

Turn in the paper.

The more direct the requests, the more demanding it sounds to the hearer and the more face-threatening the request is.

Using the information that we have learned in Part 1 about contextual factors in an interaction and the request strategies in Part 3, let us revisit the previous video scenarios and analyze them one by one.

In the first scenario, Ananda wants to decide on which elective courses she should take. However, she is unsure which courses are interesting. So she sets up an appointment with a professor who is her academic adviser to request information on some elective courses. In this situation, Ananda has less power than her professor. The social distance should be somewhere in the middle, since the professor is her academic adviser. Meanwhile, the degree of imposition can be considered low because one of an academic adviser’s job is to provide students with information to academic related issues. Based on the context, one way to formulate the request is by questioning the hearer's ability to provide the information: Could you give me some suggestions?

In the second scenario, Ananda had some questions about the instructor's feedback and would like some explanation. In this situation, Ananda has less power than the teaching assistant. The social distance should be somewhere in the middle, since the teaching assistant is her instructor. Meanwhile, the degree of imposition can at the same time be considered low and also high. Why? It can be considered low because students are expected to ask their instructors questions about assignments and feedback on their assignment. On the other hand, requesting feedback can be considered as face-threatening for the instructor because it implies a questioning of the teaching assistant’s judgement on the essay. Therefore, it is best to resort to a hinting or hearer-oriented strategy. In this case, Ananda chose to hint by saying: Well, you said that my essay doesn’t have a thesis statement. But I think I already stated it in my introduction. This hint indirectly carries the meaning of a request for the teaching assistant to provide explanation on why she said that her essay doesn’t have a thesis statement. You might have also realized that Ananda made another request when she said: Can I revise this essay and submit it again? In this request, she used the permission strategy. Permission strategies give the power to the hearer and thus is considered a more face-saving strategy.
In the third scenario, Ananda needs some help from a classmate to understand the week’s topic that she doesn’t understand. In this situation, Ananda is not particularly close to the friend nor do they talk often outside of class. Therefore, it can be considered a somewhat high degree of social distance. Although they can be considered of equal power, Ananda is asking for a big favor. This is because the classmate would need to make some time to explain the topic for Ananda. Thus, it would be best to formulate a more complex request, such as *I was wondering if you’d be willing to teach me the topic that we covered this week?* The request is questioning the hearer’s willingness to help, and thus not putting any pressure to the hearer.

In the final scenario, Ananda needs some help with her paper. So, she makes an appointment with a writing center consultant. In the appointment, Ananda chose to request to focus on the grammar of her paper. In this situation, it is difficult to say who has more power than whom. The consultant is not giving the grade, so that they do not have any power over the student. However, they are there to help students much like professors/teaching assistants. Therefore, more polite requests should be used. Social distance should be of a somewhat high degree, unless they knew each other. However, the request should be of a low degree of imposition because it is the consultant’s job to help with a students’ paper. So, one way to formulate the request would be: *Can we focus on the grammar of my paper, please?* Notice the use of the word *we* rather than using *you*. This is because during a consultation session, both the student and the consultant work together to improve the paper. The writing center consultant is not an editor nor a proofreader. Also, Ananda chose to be more polite by using the word *please*, which is attached at the end of the request. The word please can also be attached after the word *we*, so it would be *Can we please focus on the grammar of my paper?*

Now that you’ve learned several different ways to formulate your requests, you can be more confident in making requests in different situations, specifically in U.S. academic settings. In the next sections, you will have the chance to use your knowledge of making requests.

This is the end of Part 3 of Unit 1: Making Requests in Spoken Communication. Please continue to Part 4. You may choose to view this video again at any time.

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*The following text is a transcript for the “Part 4: Instructional Content Review” video quiz in Unit 1: Making Requests in Spoken Communication*

**Question 1:**

Setting: Office, advising session

Requestee: Professor
Request: Requesting additional study materials

Dialog:

Professor : Hi Ananda, what can I help you with?

Ananda :

A. I need some additional study materials for the Reading class.
B. Can I have some additional study materials for the Reading class?
C. You should give me some additional study materials for the Reading class.
D. I’d really like to do more reading exercises outside of the Reading Class. Could you please suggest some additional study materials that I could use?

Question 2:

Setting: Office, student conferences

Requestee: Teaching assistant

Request: Requesting additional time to work on an assignment

Dialog:

Teaching Assistant : Hi Ananda, how are you doing with your assignment?

Ananda :

A. I was really sick a couple of days ago, so I wasn’t able to get much work done. I’d be really grateful if I could get an additional one or two days to finish it.
B. I would like additional time to work on this assignment.
C. Could I please have an additional one or two days to finish it?
D. I request additional time to work on this assignment.
**Question 3:**

Setting: Library, after group work

Requestee: Classmate, friends

Request: Requesting to borrow lecture notes

Dialog:

Ananda : 

A. Rebecca, do you mind if I borrow your lecture notes?

B. Rebecca, do you mind if I borrow your lecture notes? I’ll scan the pages so I shouldn’t need to borrow it for long.

C. Give me your lecture notes, please.

D. Rebecca, could you please lend me your lecture notes?

**Question 4:**

Setting: Writing center

Requestee: Writing center consultant

Request: Requesting help with the conclusion section of a paper.

Dialog:

Consultant : So, what would you like to work on today?

Ananda :

A. You need to give me feedback specifically on the conclusion section.

B. I brought a paper that I wrote for one of my courses. Can you give me feedback specifically on the conclusion section, please?

C. Would you mind helping me with the conclusion section of this paper?

D. Could you correct the conclusion section of this paper, please?
Welcome to Part 5 of Unit 1: Making Requests in Spoken Communication.

So far, you have learned how to evaluate situations that involves the need to make requests based on three important factors, namely power relationships, social distance, and degree of imposition. You have also learned how to formulate direct and indirect requests. With the knowledge of the three important factors in mind, now you can make informed decisions as to how to make appropriate requests, especially in U.S. academic settings.

In the previous videos, you have seen several situations that you may encounter yourself when studying in the U.S. In this unit, you will be given more opportunities to practice formulating requests in several different situations. However, before you start, let us go back to the requests that you formulated in Part 2: Pre-Instruction Assessment.

Self-evaluate your performance in Part 2 using the knowledge about making requests in academic settings that you have gained so far. Self-evaluation is an important part of language learning, especially in online learning environments such as the one that you are currently using, in which there are no teachers to give you feedback. By looking back at your pre-instruction answers, you can find out how much you have learned or improved and which aspects do you need to work on. The following are the steps to conduct your self-evaluation:

1) Access the requests that you submitted (audio or text) in Part 2: Pre-Instruction Assessment.
2) Make corrections to the original requests that you made. Use the knowledge that you have gained about making requests in academic settings to make these corrections.
3) After making the corrections, access the self-evaluation section to write about your self-evaluation. In addition to writing about the corrections that you have made, consider the following questions:
   - How did your requests in Part 2 differ from the requests that you chose in Part 4?
   - Do you think the requests that you chose in Part 4 reflected what you had learned from Part 3 (Instruction)?
   - After completing this self-evaluation, you will do some more practice. What do you think you will need to pay attention to more in order to improve your requests?
4) Click on “Start or edit my journal entry”.

Compare the responses that you made in Part 2 (Pre-Instruction Assessment!) and Part 4 (Instructional Content Review). Try to reflect on the following questions:
- How did your requests in Part 2 differ from those in Part 4?
- Do you think your requests in Part 4 reflected what you had learned from Part 3 (Instruction)?
- After completing this self-evaluation, you will do some more practice. What do you think you will need to pay attention to more in order to improve your requests?

You have not started this journal yet

5) Then, type your self-evaluation in the textbox provided.
6) Once you are ready to submit your answer, make sure to click on “Save changes”. Otherwise, your answer will not be submitted.

When you have submitted your self-evaluation, it is time to practice making more requests in different situations. Once again, you will encounter four scenarios.

In the first scenario, you visit your professor in his office. In the class that you are taking, he is currently teaching how to make requests and you don’t understand the difference between “performatives” and “imperatives”. Request an explanation for the difference between these two terms.
In the second scenario, you are in a student conference with a teaching assistant. Request clarification of an assignment instruction. The instruction was to “write at least five examples of making requests, using direct or indirect requests”.

In the third scenario, your class has just ended. Approach your classmate who is also your friend and request to work together for a group assignment.

In the fourth and final scenario, you are in a consultation session with a writing center consultant. Request help with the overall structure of a research paper for a conference.

Please submit your responses, either by recording or typing them, just like what you did in Part 2. Make sure to submit your responses under the appropriate submission link under Part 5 – Application. So, if you choose to record your requests, submit the four audio files in “Pre-Instruction Assessment Responses (Audio)”. If you choose to type your requests, type them in “Pre-Instruction Assessment Responses (Text)”. After submitting your responses, you can view some example requests that were made based on the four scenarios. You can find them in video format in the link titled “Example Requests for Part 5 Scenarios” under Part 5.

Once again, here are the four scenarios and the requests that you need to make. You may pause the video here, while you record your answers.

This is the end of Part 5 of Unit 1: Making Requests in Spoken Communication. Please continue to Part 6. You may choose to view this video again at any time.

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The following text is a transcript for the “Part 6: Strategies” video in Unit 1: Making Requests in Spoken Communication

Welcome to Part 6 of Unit 1: Making Requests in Spoken Communication.

Before you continue, here are some important terms that you will encounter in this video.
• Office hours: Time set aside by instructors (professors/teaching assistants) so that students can visit them to talk (usually about academic related issues). These office hours are often posted outside the instructor’s office door, on the department website, and/or course syllabus.

• Rapport: A good relationship with others.

Are you ready to continue? If not, press the pause button to allow you some time to understand the terms. But if you are ready, then let’s begin!

In the last part of this unit, you will see two current international students studying in the U.S. share their experience making requests in spoken communication. Pay attention to the request strategies that they use and the advice that they share.

[First international student]

So yeah, I have been in a situation before, where, um, you know, I need to make a request of a high degree of imposition with my professor ‘cause one day, I was asked to make an annotation and she asked me to read different books. But, it was overwhelming because it takes forever for me to read and understand the books. So, I need extension for that. So yeah, I came to her office and, um, met her and talked to her about my request of extension. So, but make sure if you need extension, you need to make this request, make sure that you make an appointment. I think you need to understand his or her office hours, as well as you need to know what your reason because you know, you need to say why do you need that extension, so it could be suitable. And the third, probably you know, using proper language when you make, you know, this request. So one of the example that I usually say to her whenever I need an extension is like, saying sorry at first, like um, you know, ask or apologize that I need that extension. And then the next thing, like saying, would you mind, if you know, I request for an extension for this, um, task, or would it be possible if I ask or request for an extension for this.

[Second international student]

Alright, so I requested for an office change a year ago from a professor because I was going to co-teach a class with another professor, and it would require me go all the time to his office a lot and it would be really tiring. Anyway, I had my reasons. So I went to this professor, who was assigning the offices, and I said, um, “Hi, um, I have a question to ask you, do you mind if I just go ahead and take your five minutes or so?” or something like that and he said, “Yeah, go ahead”. And then I said, “Here’s the situation, I need to co-teach this course with this professor, and as you know, my office is upstairs and I don’t really want to go um, climb upstairs and go downstairs all the time, so would you mind changing my office somewhere in the third floor if it’s possible, if not, it’s really not a big deal. But I just want to ask you because if you could then it would be really great for me. So that’s not a big deal, but I just wanted to take a chance and ask you. It would be really great for me if you could do that”. So I said something like this when I just asked for something from a professor or something like that. Then I try to be as polite as I can be, and I use some of those formulaic expressions, like “Do you mind..? Would you mind...?” or I don’t really say “Would you do this?” I say like, “Would you consider doing this?”
because I don’t want to make them feel like they have to consider doing that. I just want to make it sound like this is really not what I am forcing or this is just something I’m asking for, for you to do if that’s possible.

The most important thing is, for me, at least is just to, um, justify your reason for asking for something. Because if you do not give any background knowledge to someone about why you’re asking for something, it doesn’t really make any sense. Also, I really hate it when people come into my office where they say, “Hey could you do this?”. Well, give me some reason, just give me some background or say “Hi” or something like that. Sometimes it happens to me, that students email me asking about something, requesting something without even saying hi. So I think the first step is to build some kind of um, what do we call it, rapport. So talk to the person, make a connection, and then uh, explain your situation and ask them if you could take some of their time to request something. If they say yes, then explain that you have a situation and that person is the one who could help with this. So after explaining your situation, you could ask your um, whatever you were asking for by using a polite expression. But then the other important thing for me is not to put any pressure on the other person. So I want them to feel like, I’m just asking for this thing. But, I don’t want to force them to do it. If they can’t do it, that’s okay. Especially, sometimes it happens when I need people to participate in my research studies because I know everybody is busy and I don’t want to force my friends to do something for me because, just because they are my friends. So I want them, I want to make sure that they understand, I need their help but if they don’t, we’re still friends, it’s still okay.

After listening to their experience and viewing all the other videos in this unit, compare between the request making strategies in U.S. academic settings and the academic settings in your country, specifically in spoken communication.

Are there similarities and differences in formulating appropriate requests? Type your answer in the “Self-Reflection” section under Part 6: Strategies of Unit 1.

Click on the “Start or edit my journal entry” button.

You have not started this journal yet

After typing your reflection. Make sure to click on the “Save changes” button to submit your answer.
This is the end of Part 6 of Unit 1: Making Requests in Spoken Communication. Please continue to Part 1 of Unit 2: Making Requests in Written Communication. You may choose to view this video again at any time.

Unit 2: Making Requests in Written Communication

The following text is a transcript for the “Part 1: Introduction and Outline” video in Unit 2: Making Requests in Written Communication

Hello! Welcome to Part 1 of Unit 2: Making Requests in Written Communication.

In the previous unit, you learned how to make appropriate requests in spoken communication within a U.S. academic setting. Similarly, in this unit you will be learning how to make appropriate requests in the same setting, but in written communication, specifically in email communication.

Much of what you have learned in the previous unit is applicable to making requests in written communication, especially regarding the three contextual factors, namely power relationships, social distance, and degree of imposition. Therefore, the focus of this unit will be to introduce you to the different elements of an email, and how to compose an email with the intent of requesting something to people of different roles. Unlike the previous unit, in this unit you will only be faced with people of three different roles, namely professors, teaching assistants, and classmates. Communication with writing center consultants are usually only conducted face-to-face.

Email communication is an integral part of U.S. university experience. Besides being used to disseminate important information, you will also use it to send emails to many different people in a variety of different situations. In other words, you will have to use emails in your academic life. It is important to note that, when communicating with professors, teaching assistants, classmates, and other people in the university through emails, make sure that you use your university designated email. Don’t use personal emails in academic settings.

Now, before you move on to the next section, the following is the outline of what you should expect to do in this unit. First, you will be tasked to identify the correct order of email features through an email puzzle activity prior to learning about the different
features of an email. After you learn about the different features of an email, you will then take a quiz in which you will provide missing information in several incomplete emails. Next, you will be given the chance to practice making requests in email communication based on several scenarios. Similar to the previous unit, you will self-evaluate your answers to assessments based on the knowledge that you have gained on making appropriate requests, especially in email communication. In the last section of this unit, you will once again view a video showing two international students sharing their request making strategies specifically in written communication. Finally, after viewing this video, you will be asked to do a self-reflection by comparing request making in U.S. academic settings and academic settings in your country.

This is the end of Part 1 of Unit 2: Making Requests in Written Communication. Please continue to Part 2. You may choose to view this video again at any time.

The following text is a transcript for the “Part 3: Instruction” video in Unit 2: Making Requests in Written Communication

Welcome to Part 3 of Unit 2: Making Requests in Written Communication.

Before you continue, here are some important terms that you will encounter in this video.

- Subject line: A phrase/sentence that serves to provide an introduction on what the email is about.
- Greeting: The email opener. For example, “Dear Jim...”.
- Background/Purpose: The part of an email that explains the background or the purpose of the email.
- Main body: If the aim of the email is to request something from someone, then the body is the “request”.
- Closing: A message following your request, usually used to show your hopes for the request or your appreciation for the requestee’s help.
- Signing off: A phrase to end the email. For example, “Best, Ananda”.
- Interlibrary loan: Most U.S. Universities would have this service as part of the services provided by the library. With this service, you can borrow books/articles/media from other universities that are not available in yours.

Are you ready to continue? If not, press the pause button to allow you some time to understand the terms. But if you are ready, then let’s begin!

Let’s start this section by keeping in mind that sending an email is not the same as text messaging. An email has a certain structure that consists of several different elements. Let’s go through each element one by one.
The subject line is the first feature after your email address that someone will read. Therefore, it is a crucial element of the email. It will decide whether your email will be considered urgent or not. There are several do's and don’ts regarding the subject line. First, remember to be concise. Instead of writing in detail the contents of the email, use a short phrase that summarizes the intent of your email. Save the details for the body of your email. Second, be informative. Even though you need to be concise, you also need to provide adequate information in your subject line. Third, do not use capital letters. Using capital letters is very rude. Instead of using capital letters to catch someone’s attention, use well chosen words to describe the content of your email. Finally, do not forget to write a subject line. When you do not have one, your addressee might regard it as spam or will not consider it as urgent enough and will possibly ignore it.

One thing to note about sending emails to professors and teaching assistants is that it is important to include a course code in the subject line. This is important because professors and teaching assistants often teach more than a couple of classes. A course code is unique to a certain course and thus will help professors and teaching assistants identify which course you will be referring to in your email.

Next is the greeting. Avoid jumping directly into the body of your email. Some common greetings to start your email are:

- Dear [name],
- Hi [name], and
- Hey [name].

Starting your email with Dear [name] is appropriate when you are addressing your instructors (professors/teaching assistants). It also does not hurt to use it when addressing people of equal power to you. Meanwhile, Hi [name] can be used when emailing instructors, only if you feel like you have a closer relationship to them. For example, if they are also your academic adviser. On the other hand, Hey [name] should strictly be reserved for emails to classmates.

Regarding the use of first names when sending an email to people who have more power than you such as your professors, if you are not ‘close’ to them use their title (Professor/Dr.) or Mr./Mrs./Ms. followed by their last name. On the other hand, it is not uncommon for graduate students to address their instructors with their first name. However, make sure that they are okay with being referred to by their first name if they have not said so.

Now to the content of your email. Much like spoken communication, it is best to provide a background to your request. Explain why you are making the request. For example, if you are requesting for an assignment deadline extension, provide a good reason as to why you really need the extension. This will help the instructor understand your situation.

After you have given adequate information as to why you’re making the request, state your request. Remember to consider the three factors before formulating your request. Formulate a request that is appropriate to the context.
Then, before signing off, close your email by expressing your hopes or your appreciation to the requestee. Consider the following examples:

*I hope you wouldn’t mind changing the time of our meeting.*

*I’d appreciate it if you could let me know in advance whether you can make it to the weekly meeting or not.*

*I’d be grateful for your feedback on my study.*

In the first example, the requester is expressing his/her hope while in the second and third example, the requester is expressing his/her appreciation for if the requestee fulfills the request. Besides being used as a closing statement in an email, these expressions can also serve as minimizers to the face-threatening act of requesting.

Finally, there’s the signing off. Do not send the email without signing off. Some common ways to sign off are:

- Best, [your name]
- Best regards, [your name]
- Thanks/Thank you, [your name]

In your email, you may also choose to attach a file. There are two things to consider when attaching a file. First, make sure that it is absolutely necessary to include the file. Attaching unnecessary files may confuse the person who will receive your email. Second, notify your addressee if you choose to attach a file(s). Try to include a description of what the files are about. You can use the following expression to notify the receiver of your email:

*Please find attached the files that you may require to write the recommendation letter.*

In summary, there are at least six different elements in an email. With this knowledge, let us revisit the emails from Part 2.

In the first email, the requestee is a professor. The request itself is a request for an assignment deadline extension. First, let us identify the different elements of this email. The first element is the subject line. Because it is an email to a professor, “Ananda” included the course code, which is “ENGL 518”. Next, is the greeting. Now, for the background, since it is an assignment deadline extension, the reason must be a very good one. Usually, professors would already have policies regarding assignment deadline extension stated in the syllabus. However, if this issue is not addressed adequately, you should email the professor. In this email, “Ananda” described that despite trying very hard to work on the assignment while she was sick, she still was not able to progress much. Next comes the request. Based on what we have learned, we understand that this is a request of a high degree of
imposition. In this situation, the requester chose to formulate her request using the permission strategy, “Would it be possible for me to get a deadline extension for this assignment?”. This is an appropriate request to make, because it gives full authority to the requestee. Then, the requester closed by saying “Thank you for your consideration”. This is a good way to close an email that helps to minimize the face-threatening nature of the request. It also conveys the message that “Ananda” knows the professor would need to “consider” the situation at hand. Finally, the email is signed using “Best regards, Ananda”.

In the second email, the requestee is a teaching assistant. The request itself is a request to be absent in a class. First, let us identify the different elements of this email. The first element is the subject line. Because it is an email to a teaching assistant, “Ananda” included the course code, which is “ENGL 518”. Next, is the greeting. Now, for the background, similar to the first email, the reason must be a very good one. Instructors would also usually already have policies regarding absences in the syllabus. However, you should still request the instructors permission to miss a class. In this email, “Ananda” gave a background on why she would need to miss a class. Next comes the request. Based on what we have learned, we understand that this is a request of a high degree of imposition. In this situation, the requester chose to formulate her request using the permission strategy, “May I please be excused to miss the class on that day?”. It would also be more informative if the date that you will be missing the class is stated explicitly in the email. The request is followed by a notification of an attached file. The request is also made even more polite by the use of the words “may” and “please”. Then, the requester closed by saying “Thank you for your consideration” followed by the signing off.

In the third email, the requestee is a classmate, specifically a classmate that the requester does not know well. The request itself is a request to borrow a book. Once again, let us identify the different elements of this email. The first element is the subject line which clearly summarizes the content of the email. Next, is the greeting. Now for the background, there is a noticeable difference from the first and second email. In this email, “Ananda” chose to provide a short background followed by the request formulated using a willingness strategy. Then she follows up by adding more information on why she needs to borrow his book and not just borrow it through the library or use other library services. She closes by giving a sense of urgency and also assurance to the requestee that she would not need to borrow it for long. This is an attempt to reduce the degree of imposition. Finally, she signs off by saying “Thanks!” which is a friendly informal way to state her appreciation.

Now that you are aware of the different features that make up an email. You are ready to move on to the next section. However, before we do, the following are some additional things to have in mind regarding email communication. First is thinking about the purpose of your email before writing it. The advantage of organizing your thoughts before putting it into writing is that the message that you convey will be clearer. This is also a good time to consider the power relationships,
social distance, and degree of imposition so that you can formulate an appropriate request. Second, format your email so that it is easy to read. Not only does this mean that you need to have the complete email features, it also means that you need to have good spelling, capitalization, punctuation and layouting. Thirdly, before you send your email, proofread it. Make sure that your message is clear. If you are unsure about your email, you could request to your friend to have them look over the email.

This is the end of Part 3 of Unit 2: Making Requests in Written Communication. Please continue to Part 4. You may choose to view this video again at any time.

The following text is a transcript for the “Part 5: Application” video in Unit 2: Making Requests in Written Communication

Welcome to Part 5 of Unit 2: Making Requests in Written Communication.

In the previous sections of this unit, you learned about the different elements of an email, and completed several tasks related to making appropriate requests in written communication. In this section, you will be given the opportunity to write your own emails based on several different situations. However, before you start, let us look back to your answers for the tasks in Part 2: Pre-Instruction Assessment and Part 4: Instructional Content Review.

Self-evaluate your performance in Part 2 and Part 4 using the knowledge about making requests in academic settings, specifically in written communication, that you have gained so far. This self-evaluation is similar to what you have done in the previous unit. However, this time follow the following steps to conduct your self-evaluation:

7) Access the requests that you submitted (audio or text) in Part 2: Pre-Instruction Assessment.
8) Make corrections to the original requests that you made. Use the knowledge that you have gained about making requests in academic settings to make these corrections.
9) After making the corrections, access the self-evaluation section to write about your self-evaluation. In addition to writing about the corrections that you have made, consider the following questions:
   • How did your requests in Part 2 differ from the requests that you chose in Part 4?
   • Do you think the requests that you chose in Part 4 reflected what you had learned from Part 3 (Instruction)?
After completing this self-evaluation, you will do some more practice. What do you think you will need to pay attention to more in order to improve your requests?

10) Click on “Start or edit my journal entry”.

Compare the responses that you made in Part 2 (Pre-Instruction Assessment) and Part 4 (Instructional Content Review). Try to reflect on the following questions:

- How did your requests in Part 2 differ from those in Part 4?
- Do you think your requests in Part 4 reflected what you had learned from Part 3 (Instruction)?
- After completing this self-evaluation, you will do some more practice. What do you think you will need to pay attention to more in order to improve your requests?

11) Then, type your self-evaluation in the textbox provided.

12) Once you are ready to submit your answer, make sure to click on “Save changes”. Otherwise, your answer will not be submitted.

When you have submitted your self-evaluation, it is time to practice making more requests in different situations. Once again, you will encounter four scenarios.

In the first scenario, you visit your professor in his office. In the class that you are taking, he is currently teaching how to make requests and you don’t understand the
difference between “performatives” and “imperatives”. Request an explanation for the difference between these two terms.

In the second scenario, you are in a student conference with a teaching assistant. Request clarification of an assignment instruction. The instruction was to “write at least five examples of making requests, using direct or indirect requests”.

In the third scenario, your class has just ended. Approach your classmate who is also your friend and request to work together for a group assignment.

In the fourth and final scenario, you are in a consultation session with a writing center consultant. Request help with the overall structure of a research paper for a conference.

Please submit your responses, either by recording or typing them, just like what you did in Part 2. Make sure to submit your responses under the appropriate submission link under Part 5 – Application. So, if you choose to record your requests, submit the four audio files in “Pre-Instruction Assessment Responses (Audio)”. If you choose to type your requests, type them in “Pre-Instruction Assessment Responses (Text)”.

After submitting your responses, you can view some example requests that were made based on the four scenarios. You can find them in video format in the link titled “Example Requests for Part 5 Scenarios” under Part 5.

Once again, here are the four scenarios and the requests that you need to make. You may pause the video here, while you record your answers.

This is the end of Part 5 of Unit 2: Making Requests in Written Communication. Please continue to Part 6. You may choose to view this video again at any time.

The following text is a transcript for the “Part 6: Strategies” video in Unit 2: Making Requests in Written Communication

Welcome to Part 6 of Unit 2: Making Requests in Written Communication.
In the last part of this unit, you will see two current international students studying in the U.S. share their experience making requests in written communication. Pay attention to the request strategies that they use and the advice that they share.

[First international student]

Okay, of course I had, um.. This October, I had a Literary and Film Association Annual conference. So I had to attend the conference, so I could not make English Education course. So I had email to professor that I cannot make that class. In my case, I think, I thought that I should provide a really clear context to professor. Because professor does not know all the students situation. So I thought that I should provide a really understandable context, so in my case I explained the time that I attend the conference, where I attend the conference. And in the end, I attached the acceptance letter and the schedule of the conference, so that the professor could understand my situation totally.

Even though this is email, I try to keep the format, because anyway, it’s mail as the name signifies. So I start with ‘Dear Professor Donna’, and I also ask ‘Would you mind if I could not make the Thursday class because of the conference’.

[Second international student]

So today, I’d like to talk about how to make your requests adequate, concise, and polite when you ask something to your professors. One thing that you should keep in mind is that the professors are so busy and do not have enough time to look at your email. And then there are several things to point out. First, you have to include some information about by when you have to receive that reply. For instance, in the past I asked my professors to write a recommendation letter and then actually that recommendation letter was due some time. And then, you know, the professors have to know by when they have to make a reply to me. And secondly, you have to make the content that you want to obtain concise. Like, in the recommendation letter probably professors have to include my study status or something, and then I actually received some instructions from that institution about the recommendation letter. And then I attach that instruction to that email so professors could see that. Thirdly, you have to include a brief title in the email and makes it clear that whether it is urgent or not. If I ask my professors to write a recommendation letter, they might see my title like ‘Recommendation Letter’ so they can see how urgent it is. And next was the identification of yourself. So, you know this is pretty clear, but it might be forgotten. So probably you have to keep in mind that whether you provided your identification or not. And lastly, after you sending the email, when you meet the professors in person or face-to-face situation, probably you had better confirm whether the professor have received your email or not. And if they have received that email, probably you have to make a second request, like orally to show your politeness. And then regarding the politeness, I tend to use certain phrase like ‘I greatly appreciate it if you would bla bla bla bla’. So you might want to use this fixed expression, so you do not have to think about that much for that phrase. And other than these issues, I hope you get some positive reply from them.
After listening to their experience and viewing all the other videos in this unit, compare between the request making strategies in U.S. academic settings and the academic settings in your country, specifically in written communication.

Are there similarities and differences in formulating appropriate requests? Type your answer in the “Self-Reflection” section under Part 6: Strategies of Unit 2.

Click on the “Start or edit my journal entry” button.

You have not started this journal yet

After typing your reflection. Make sure to click on the “Save changes” button to submit your answer.

This is the end of Part 6 of Unit 2: Making Requests in Written Communication. You may choose to view this video again at any time.
APPENDIX B

DEMOGRAPHIC QUESTIONNAIRE

Demographic Questionnaire for Prospective International Students

Please fill in the following questionnaire only if you are a prospective international student. If you are already studying in the U.S. as an international student, request for the link to the demographic questionnaire for current international students to the researcher. If you have questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact the researcher at nanda@iastate.edu

Q1 Please select your age
- Less than 18
- 18 - 24
- 25 - 34
- 34 and over

Q2 Please select your gender
- Male
- Female

Q3 What is your nationality?

Q4 What is your native language?

Q5 What is your current profession?

Q6 Have you ever stayed in an English-speaking country(s)?
- Yes
- No

If Yes Is Selected, Then Skip To If Yes, please specify the country(s)...If Yes Is Not Selected, Then Skip To How many years have you studied Engli...

Q7 If Yes, please specify the country(s) and amount of time spent there in months.

Q8 How many years have you studied English in classes up until now?
- Less than 3 years
- 3 - 5 years
- 5 - 7 years
- More than 7 years
Q9 Have you studied English outside of school or university (e.g., private language courses, English conversation clubs)?
- Yes
- No

If Yes is selected, then skip to If Yes, please provide a short description of your experience learning English outside of formal education settings. If Yes is not selected, then skip to What has your English study focused on (e.g., grammar and grammar exercises, translation, conversation, reading skills, listening skills)?

Q10 If Yes, please provide a short description of your experience learning English outside of formal education settings.

Q11 What has your English study focused on (e.g., grammar and grammar exercises, translation, conversation, reading skills, listening skills)?

Demographic Questionnaire for Current International Students

Please fill in the following questionnaire only if you are a current international student in the U.S. If you are not a current international student, request for the link to the demographic questionnaire for prospective international students to the researcher. If you have questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact the researcher at nanda@iastate.edu

Q1 Please select your age
- Less than 18
- 18 - 24
- 25 - 34
- 34 and over

Q2 Please select your gender
- Male
- Female

Q3 What is your nationality?

Q4 What is your native language?

Q5 Please select your current program
- Undergraduate
- Masters
- PhD

Q6 What is your major?
Q7 How long have you stayed in the U.S.?
- Less than 6 months
- 6 - 12 months
- 12 - 24 months
- More than 24 months

Q8 Have you ever stayed in any other English-speaking countries?
- Yes
- No

If Yes is Selected, Then Skip To If Yes, please specify the count...If Yes Is Not Selected, Then Skip To How many years have you studied Engli...

Q9 If Yes, please specify the country(s) and amount of time spent there in months.

Q10 How many years have you studied English in classes before studying at your current U.S. university?
- Less than 3 years
- 3 - 5 years
- 5 - 7 years
- More than 7 years

Q11 Have you studied English outside of school or university (e.g., private language courses, English conversation clubs)?
- Yes
- No

If Yes Is Selected, Then Skip To If Yes, please provide a short d...If No Is Selected, Then Skip To What has your English study focused o...

Q12 If Yes, please provide a short description of your experience learning English outside of formal education settings.

Q13 What has your English study focused on (e.g., grammar and grammar exercises, translation, conversation, reading skills, listening skills)?
APPENDIX C

FEEDBACK QUESTIONNAIRES

Feedback Questionnaire for Unit 1

Q1.1 Name (First and Last)

Q1.2 Part One. Please read these questions about Unit 1: Making Requests in Spoken Communication. For questions that require you to explain, please provide as much detail as possible.

Q1.3 How long did it take you to finish this unit?
☑ Less than 1 hour
☑ 1 - 2 hours
☑ 2 - 3 hours
☑ 3 - 4 hours
☑ 4 - 5 hours
☑ More than 5 hours

Q1.4 What did you learn from Unit 1 besides making requests in English?

Q1.5 How difficult was Unit 1 for you?
☑ Very easy (you already knew it)
☑ Good
☑ Very difficult (you did not understand)

Q1.6 Did you want to spend more or less time using this unit?
☑ More time
☑ You spent a good amount of time
☑ Less time

Q1.7 What is your English level?
☑ Excellent
☑ Very good
☑ Good
☑ Fair
☑ Poor

Q2.1 Part Two. Choose the answer that is closest to your opinion. Please write any comments you have in the following comments box to explain your answer.
Q2.2 Did you need help to use this unit? What did you need help with?
- Yes
- Some
- No

Q2.3 Comments:

Q2.4 Did your knowledge of making requests improve from using this unit? Why or why not?
- Yes
- Some
- No

Q2.5 Comments:

Q2.6 Did you understand the scenarios presented in this unit?
- Yes
- Some
- No

Q2.7 Comments:

Q2.8 Did you understand the grammar explanations in this unit?
- Yes
- Some
- No

Q2.9 Comments:

Q2.10 Did you like the tasks in the Pre-Instruction Assessment section?
- Yes
- Some
- No

Q2.11 Comments:

Q2.12 Did you like the tasks in the Instructional Content Review section?
- Yes
- Some
- No

Q2.13 Comments:
Q2.14 Did you like the tasks in the Application section?
    ☐ Yes
    ☐ Some
    ☐ No

Q2.15 Comments:

Q2.16 Did you find it useful to see current international students share their experience in making requests in Part 6: Strategies?
    ☐ Yes
    ☐ Some
    ☐ No

Q2.17 Comments:

Q2.18 Did you find the self-reflection task in Part 6: Strategies useful?
    ☐ Yes
    ☐ Some
    ☐ No

Q2.18 Comments:

Q2.19 Were the computer and task directions easy to understand in this unit?
    ☐ Yes
    ☐ Some
    ☐ No

Q2.20 Comments:

Q2.21 Did you get enough practice with the grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation in this unit?
    ☐ Yes
    ☐ Some
    ☐ No

Q2.22 Comments:

Q2.23 Were there enough exercises in this unit?
    ☐ Yes
    ☐ Some
    ☐ No

Q2.24 Comments:
Q2.25 For current international students: Is what you learned in this unit needed for your current setting? For prospective international students: Do you think what you learned in this unit will be needed for your future study in the U.S.?

- Yes
- Some
- No

Q2.26 Comments:

Q2.27 Overall, did you like using this unit?

- Yes
- Some
- No

Q2.28 Comments:

Q2.29 Would you like to use Unit 2: Making Requests in Written Communication (E-mail)?

- Yes
- Some
- No

Q2.30 Comments:

Q3.1 Part Three. The following questions aim to obtain feedback for the use of video materials to teach making requests in academic settings. Choose the answer that is closest to your opinion. Please write any comments you have in the following comments box to explain your answer.

Q3.2 Were the videos of an appropriate length?

- Yes
- Some
- No

Q3.3 Comments:

Q3.4 Was the information presented in the videos understandable?

- Yes
- Some
- No

Q3.5 Comments:
Q3.6 Was it useful to be given an introduction to the topic of requests and the outline of the unit?
- Yes
- Some
- No

Q3.7 Comments:

Q3.8 Was it useful to be given in-video explanation of several key terms (e.g., Teaching Assistant, writing center, student conferences)?
- Yes
- Some
- No

Q3.9 Comments:

Q3.10 Please provide any other feedback, especially regarding the videos, that you may have:

Feedback Questionnaire for Unit 2

Q1.1 Name (First and Last)

Q1.2 Part One. Please read these questions about Unit 2: Making Requests in Written Communication. For questions that require you to explain, please provide as much detail as possible.

Q1.3 How long did it take you to finish this unit?
- Less than 1 hour
- 1 - 2 hours
- 2 - 3 hours
- 3 - 4 hours
- 4 - 5 hours
- More than 5 hours

Q1.4 What did you learn from Unit 2 besides making requests in English?

Q1.5 How difficult was Unit 2 for you?
- Very easy (you already knew it)
- Good
- Very difficult (you did not understand)
Q1.6 Did you want to spend more or less time using this unit?
   ☐ More time
   ☐ You spent a good amount of time
   ☐ Less time

Q2.1 Part Two. Choose the answer that is closest to your opinion. Please write any comments you have in the following comments box to explain your answer.

Q2.2 Did you need help to use this unit? What did you need help with?
   ☐ Yes
   ☐ Some
   ☐ No

Q2.3 Comments:

Q2.4 Did your knowledge of making requests improve from using this unit? Why or why not?
   ☐ Yes
   ☐ Some
   ☐ No

Q2.5 Comments:

Q2.6 Did you understand the situations/context presented in this unit?
   ☐ Yes
   ☐ Some
   ☐ No

Q2.7 Comments:

Q2.8 Did you understand the grammar explanations in this unit?
   ☐ Yes
   ☐ Some
   ☐ No

Q2.9 Comments:

Q2.10 Did you like the tasks in the Pre-Instruction Assessment section?
   ☐ Yes
   ☐ Some
   ☐ No

Q2.11 Comments:
Q2.12 Did you like the tasks in the Instructional Content Review section?
- Yes
- Some
- No

Q2.13 Comments:

Q2.14 Did you like the tasks in the Application section?
- Yes
- Some
- No

Q2.15 Comments:

Q2.16 Did you find it useful to see current international students share their experience in making requests in Part 6: Strategies?
- Yes
- Some
- No

Q47 Comments:

Q49 Did you find the self-reflection task in Part 6: Strategies useful?
- Yes
- Some
- No

Q51 Comments:

Q2.16 Were the computer and task directions easy to understand in this unit?
- Yes
- Some
- No

Q2.17 Comments:

Q2.18 Did you get enough practice with the grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation in this unit?
- Yes
- Some
- No

Q2.19 Comments:
Q2.20 Were there enough exercises in this unit?
- Yes
- Some
- No

Q2.21 Comments:

Q2.22 For current international students: Is what you learned in this unit needed for your current setting? For prospective international students: Do you think what you learned in this unit will be needed for your future study in the U.S.?
- Yes
- Some
- No

Q2.23 Comments:

Q2.24 Overall, did you like using this unit?
- Yes
- Some
- No

Q2.25 Comments:

Q3.1 Part Three. The following questions aim to obtain feedback for the use of video materials to teach making requests in academic settings. Choose the answer that is closest to your opinion. Please write any comments you have in the following comments box to explain your answer.

Q3.2 Were the videos of an appropriate length?
- Yes
- Some
- No

Q3.3 Comments:

Q3.4 Was the information presented in the videos understandable?
- Yes
- Some
- No

Q3.5 Comments:
Q3.6 Was it useful to be given an introduction to the topic of requests and the outline of the unit?
☑ Yes
☑ Some
☑ No

Q3.7 Comments:

Q3.8 Was it useful to have the structure of the email highlighted?
☑ Yes
☑ Some
☑ No

Q3.9 Comments:

Q3.10 Was it useful to be given in-video explanation of several key terms (e.g., E-mail subject, greeting, closing)?
☑ Yes
☑ Some
☑ No

Q3.11 Comments:

Q3.12 Please provide any other feedback, especially regarding the videos, that you may have:
APPENDIX D
IRB EXEMPT LETTER

Date: 12/5/2016
To: Ananda Astrini Muhammad
2517 Jensen Ave. #312

CC: Dr. Carol A Chapelle
339 Ross Hall
Dr. Tammy Slatter
335 Ross Hall

From: Office for Responsible Research

Title: Creation and Evaluation of Multimedia Materials to Promote Development of Current and Prospective International Students' Pragmatic Competence in Academic Settings

IRB ID: 16-540

Study Review Date: 12/5/2016

The project referenced above has been declared exempt from the requirements of the human subject protections regulations as described in 45 CFR 46.101(b) because it meets the following federal requirements for exemption:

- (1) Research conducted in established or commonly accepted education settings involving normal education practices, such as:
  - Research on regular and special education instructional strategies; or
  - Research on the effectiveness of, or the comparison among, instructional techniques, curricula, or classroom management methods.

- (2) Research involving the use of educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey or interview procedures with adults or observation of public behavior where
  - Information obtained is recorded in such a manner that human subjects cannot be identified directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects; or
  - Any disclosure of the human subjects' responses outside the research could not reasonably place the subject at risk of criminal or civil liability or be damaging to their financial standing, employability, or reputation.

The determination of exemption means that:

- You do not need to submit an application for annual continuing review.

- You must carry out the research as described in the IRB application. Review by IRB staff is required prior to implementing modifications that may change the exempt status of the research. In general, review is required for any modifications to the research procedures (e.g., method of data collection, nature or scope of information to be collected, changes in confidentiality measures, etc.), modifications that result in the inclusion of participants from vulnerable populations, and/or any change that may increase the risk or discomfort to participants. Changes to key personnel must also be approved. The purpose of review is to determine if the project still meets the federal criteria for exemption.

Non-exempt research is subject to many regulatory requirements that must be addressed prior to implementation of the study. Conducting non-exempt research without IRB review and approval may constitute non-compliance with federal regulations and/or academic misconduct according to ISU policy.

Detailed information about requirements for submission of modifications can be found on the Exempt Study Modification Form. A Personnel Change Form may be submitted when the only modification involves changes in study staff. If it is determined that exemption is no longer warranted, then an Application for Approval of Research Involving Humans Form will need to be submitted and approved before proceeding with data collection.

Please note that you must submit all research involving human participants for review. Only the IRB or designees may make
the determination of exemption, even if you conduct a study in the future that is exactly like this study.

Please be aware that approval from other entities may also be needed. For example, access to data from private records (e.g., student, medical, or employment records, etc.) that are protected by FERPA, HIPAA, or other confidentiality policies requires permission from the holders of those records. Similarly, for research conducted in institutions other than ISU (e.g., schools, other colleges or universities, medical facilities, companies, etc.), investigators must obtain permission from the institution(s) as required by their policies. An IRB determination of exemption in no way implies or guarantees that permission from these other entities will be granted.

Please don't hesitate to contact us if you have questions or concerns at 515-294-4566 or IRB@iastate.edu.