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Computer Mediated Language and Culture: Salutations and Closings in British and Turkish ‘Call for Papers’ Written in English

Çiler Hatipoğlu

Abstract. Easy access, speed and efficiency have placed e-mailing firmly among the main mediums of communication in the last few decades. Therefore, in the recent years there has been a growing interest in the so called e-mail language (Baron 1998a, b; Hatipoğlu 2004) and some researchers have claimed that a distinct medium of interaction with universally valid features (e.g., style and register) is emerging (Gimenez 2000).

The present research examines data coming from a collectivist, high uncertainty, high power distance, feminine culture (i.e., Turkish) and an individualistic, low uncertainty, low power distance, masculine culture (i.e., British) and studies the effects of two variables – medium of communication (i.e., electronic messaging) and cultural background – on the format and style of the salutation and closing parts of the e-mailed ‘Call for Papers for international conferences’ (CFPIC) written in English. The specific questions addressed in the study are: (1) Is there a new mode of interaction with mutually agreed upon rules and norms by its users in the cultures scrutinised?, (2) Can the cultural identity of the correspondent override the effects of the medium of interaction on the message, as Hofstede (1991, 2001) claims, and play a primary role in shaping electronic messages?

The two sets of e-mail data examined in this research were collected between January 2002 and February 2006 in Britain and Turkey, and the analysis, on which discussions are based, includes comparison and contrast of the organisational and semantic features of the salutations and closing parts of the collected electronic messages.

The findings of the study reveal that the relationship between the medium of interaction, the cultural background of interlocutors and the quality of the electronic messages is complex and dynamic. The results also show that there are not still firmly agreed conventions governing electronic messages in neither of the examined cultures and that subjects in both groups utilise the trial and error process in an attempt to discover protocols that will work best in the new communicative modality.

Key words: *language, culture, technology, Turkish, British, English.*

Introduction

Rapid technological developments and worldwide accessibility to the Internet have made Computer Mediated Communication (CMC) between people with different cultural backgrounds an everyday occurrence. These developments have brought big challenges and responsibilities for communication experts, however, as it is not clear how the new medium of interaction and the cultural background of ‘cross-cultural interlocutors’ affect each other. What is more, it is not clear yet whether or not, and if ‘yes’ how those two factors (i.e., the medium of interaction and the cultural background of the interlocutors) affect the way communicators choose to use language during CMC and to interpret the electronic messages they read. Therefore, more research examining the effect of these two variables on online ‘cross-cultural’ exchanges is needed as this may facilitate the identification of potential areas of conflict in international cyberspace and may be helpful in resolving and even preventing some misunderstandings.

The current paper aims to contribute to this particular area of research. It explores the format and semantic features of the salutation and closing parts employed in e-mailed ‘Call

for Papers for international conferences’ (CFPIC) written by members of two distinct cultures – Turkish and British – and aims to uncover (1) Is there a new mode of interaction with mutually agreed upon rules and norms by its users in the cultures scrutinised?, (2) Can the cultural identity of the correspondents override the effects of the medium of interaction on the message, as Hofstede (1991, 2001) claims, and play a primary role in shaping electronic messages?

CFPIC were chosen as a unit of analysis in this paper mainly due to three reasons:

- (i) Medium used for dissemination: As a results of the fast developments in technology and due to its easy access and efficiency, almost all of the academic institutes around the world use e-mails to disseminate information related to organisations such as conferences, symposiums, workshops and other professional meetings. The new medium is faster, chipper and more reliable. Such advances remover, however, traditional obstacles such as distance and time, and may amplify cultural differences (St. Amat 2002); and this in turn may cause

some unexpected misunderstandings. Therefore, it is believed that research into the organisation and content of texts such as CFPIC is needed and the results of such studies will provide linguists (and all conference organisers) with valuable information about the rules dictated by the medium of interaction (if there are any).

- (ii) Frequency of occurrence: A huge number of international conferences are organised every year in different countries and the 'call for papers' for those events reach academicians daily. There are days in which they receive and read more than a dozen CFPIC. Knowing the rules governing the format and the content selection of such texts will help potential writers to present the information related to their conferences in a more effective way. After all, whether or not academicians decide to attend a particular conference might partly depend on the proficiency with which CFPIC are prepared; and whether or not academicians from different countries decide to attend a conference might be decisive in the success of the planned event. Potential readers of CFPIC can benefit from the results of studies such as this one as well, as they may help them process CFPIC in a more efficient way.
- (iii) Expected uniformity of format and content of messages: When a particular university / institution decides / takes the responsibility to organise an international conference and sends its 'call for papers' one of the main objectives is that scholars with any cultural background read and understand and decide to participate in the event organised by them. Therefore, these academic texts are expected to have a uniform format and content which are 'shared knowledge' among all conference organisers. Due to these expectations, any differences in the information structure of written texts produced by the members of the examined two cultures (i.e., Turkish and British) can be interpreted as an indication of the effect of the cultural background and / or the medium of interaction (i.e., electronic messages). That is, disparities in the format and in the quality of the content will be considered as an indication of an interpretive link between the type of material collected and its cultural context.

Theoretical Framework

In this study we adopt the best known and the most widely used framework for comparing cultures – Hofstede's National Cultures Model (1991) and examine whether or not the dimensions proposed in this work will be able to explain the observed similarities and differences between the texts in the two corpora.

In his study Hofstede's (1991, p. 5) defines culture as 'the collective programming of the mind which distinguishes the members of one group or category of people from another'. He argues that cultural differences manifest themselves in several ways and at different layers of depth (Hofstede 1991, pp. 7-9). At the deepest end we have core values, rituals and heroes are at layers two and three, and symbols are at the surface layer. There are also five upper level dimensions that determine how various societies employ the different layers of culture. These five cultural dimensions are referred to as:

Collectivism vs. Individualism (C / I): The relationship between the individual and the group

Uncertainty Avoidance (UA): Ways of dealing with uncertainty, relating to the control of aggression and the expression of emotions

Power Distance (PD): Social inequality, including the relationship with authority

Femininity vs. Masculinity (FEM / MAS): The social implications of having been born as a boy or a girl

Long-term Orientation (LTO): The degree to which the society embraces, or does not embrace, long-term devotion to traditional, forward thinking values

In this study we will examine whether or not the first four dimensions of culture (as there is not information about the position of Turkish culture in relation to the fifth dimension) identified by Hofstede (2001) will help us explain the observed similarities and differences in texts written by members of Turkish and British cultures.

When describing the effect of the first dimension on individual's behaviour, Hofstede (2001) states that in collectivist cultures a man is not an end to himself. Here, the goals of the group are central and individuals define their identities in term of group attributes. Individualist cultures, on the other hand, believe that each and every person may live his / her own life for his own happiness. The personal attributes are vital and the goals of the individual are of primary importance.

In relation to the uncertainty avoidance dimension, Hofstede (1991) divides cultures into high uncertainty avoidance and low uncertainty avoidance cultures. He argues that members of high uncertainty avoidance cultures have a low tolerance for uncertainty and ambiguity. This feature, in turn, creates rule-oriented societies which introduce laws and regulations whose primary goal is to reduce the amount of uncertainty. Low uncertainty avoidance countries, in contrast, have more tolerance for a variety of opinions. They accept change more readily, take greater risks and are less rule-oriented.

The third variable power distance is described as 'the extent to which the less powerful persons in a society accept inequality in power and consider it as normal' (Hofstede 1980, p. 307). Hofstede argues that inequality exists within any culture, but the degree to which it is tolerated varies from culture to culture. Depending on this degree of tolerance, he divides cultures into high power distance cultures and low power distance cultures. He states that the way individuals view power affects their relationships at work, at home and at educational institutions. Hofstede (1991) and other researchers (Gudykunst & Ting-Toomey 1988; Triandis 1972) have found that in low power distance cultures people believe that power should be used only when it is legitimate. In these cultures respect for the individual and equality are seen as antecedents to "freedom".

The last dimension femininity / masculinity (FEM / MAS) predicts cultural differences in relationships between genders as well as on the emphasis placed on various values (Gudykunst & Matsumoto 1996, p. 48). Valuing every individual for who they are and harmony and nurturance in relationships are features

associated with FEM cultures. In MAS cultures, on the other hand, assertiveness, material success and possessions are the features that are valued and emphasised.

When compared along the dimensions proposed by Hofstede (1991, 2001) (see Table 1) Turkish and British cultures seem to differ clearly from each other, therefore it is hoped that if culture has any effect on the use of language in electronic interaction the chosen framework will be able to explain them.

Table 1. Hofstede's dimension and Turkish and British cultures

| | C / I | UA | PD | F / M | LTO |
|--------|-------|----|----|-------|-----|
| Turkey | 89 | 85 | 66 | 66 | - |
| UK | 37 | 35 | 35 | 45 | 25 |

Methodology

The corpus used in this research consisted of 142 e-mailed 'Calls for papers for international conferences' (CFPIC) collected between January 2002 and February 2006. All of CFPIC were related only to conferences on linguistics, English literature and foreign / second language teaching / education. Among those 55 were written by Turkish and 87 by British conference organisers and three sources were used to gather the data: the LINGUIST LIST, the Conference Alerts website and the 'call for papers' e-mailed by the institutions organising the conference to staff members of other universities. The CFPIC were gathered from those three sources only in order to increase maximally the comparability of the texts coming from TUR and BRI cultures.

The LINGUIST LIST (LL), our first source of data, is a prestigious free web-site primarily for academic linguists. It maintains over 2000 pages and has more than 22,000 members all over the world. People responsible for running the LL are linguistics professors and graduate students and the messages posted here are 'with substantial linguistic content or with content which will be of wide interest within the discipline' (<http://www.linguistlist.org>). The LL also hosts searchable archives of over 100 other linguistic mailing lists and runs various research projects whose aim is to develop tools for the field of linguistics. One of the most important services provided by the LL is that conference organisers can submit CFPIC by web form to this site. All messages sent to LL, however, are subject to moderation. Those who plan to submit CFPIC to LL are informed that 'any information you enter is subject to editor approval and will not be listed on our pages until approved (usually within 48 hours)'.

Conference Alerts (CA), the second web-site which was used for data collection in this study, is affiliated with RegSoft.com, one of the largest online transaction companies on the web. Similarly to LL, CA is a free web-site and it also has thousands of subscribers worldwide. Differently from LL, however, CA posts conference announcements related to all (science) areas. Under the 'About us' heading CA states that 'both individual academics and a wide range of 'knowledge brokers' – such as journal editors, web site administrators and discussion list moderators – rely on our searchable

online database and on Conference Alerts Monthly to remain informed about upcoming academic and professional (<http://www.conferencealerts.com>).

Another difference between LL and CA is that the messages that can be reached through CA's web-site are less moderated than the ones on LL. The usual procedure followed by CA is to connect the web-site visitors directly to the conference website instead of posting the messages in a special format on CA's web-page.

The last group of CFPIC were sent by conference organisers to potential attendees' e-mail addresses. These CFPIC were sent either in the body of the e-mail message or as attachments (i.e., separate texts, usually well edited and well formatted). Among the three groups these were the least moderated texts by third parties. That is, the messages sent by conference organisers reach potential attendees' e-mails directly without being read and edited by other people.

Scrutiny of the messages available from those three sources showed that announcements related to conferences were usually sent under four headings: first call for papers, second call for papers, conference announcements and workshops. Following the definition of call for papers adopted from Wikipedia, and given below, we decided to focus only on first call for papers.

'Call for papers (CFP) is a method used in academics and other contexts for collecting conference speeches. It is an invitation sent to interested parties, describing the broad theme, the occasion for the CFP, formalities (what kind of abstract has to be submitted to whom?) and a deadline. A CFP is usually distributed using a mailing list (e.g., DBWorld in Computer Science), or on specialized services such as [PapersInvited](#) or [EventSeer.org](#).' (Wikipedia: The Free Encyclopaedia)

After these selection processes the distribution of the collected CFPIC was as shown in Table 2.

Table 2. TUR and BRI 'Call For Papers' distribution

| | TURKISH | | BRITISH | |
|---------------|---------|------|---------|-----|
| | No | % | No | % |
| Linguist List | 14 | 25,5 | 40 | 46 |
| Webpage | 10 | 18,2 | 10 | 12 |
| Sent | 31 | 56,3 | 37 | 42 |
| Total | 55 | 100 | 87 | 100 |

Collot and Belmore (1966, p. 21) compared the features of various written, spoken and electronic texts, and concluded that 'the genres which [electronic language] most closely resembles are public interviews and letters, personal as well as professional.' Therefore, the analyses in this study concentrated on uncovering the similarities and differences between letters and CFPIC. The aim of the first part of the analysis was to identify and delineate differences in the organisation of the CFPIC and business letters. Since the CFPIC were written in English, it was examined whether or not the collected CFPIC followed / deviated from the structure usually associated with planned written text in this language (i.e., begin with a salutation / address line finish the letter with a complimentary closing) (Bouton 1995; Jenkins & Hinds 1987). It is believed that concentrating

on these two parts of CFPIC provided us with a useful frame within which we were able to compare texts coming from two different cultures systematically and objectively. To provide a clear understanding of the basis on which the analyses were built those two components were operationally defined in the following way: (1) The Salutation is a word or phrase used to address the person you are writing to (e.g., Dear Colleague); (2) The Closing is the last part of the CFP which begins with the complimentary closing (i.e., the part of the letter which says 'good bye' to the reader, e.g., Yours truly), includes the signature (i.e., the name of the writer) and the information given after it (e.g., the contact address and the affiliation of the writer).

The second stage of the analysis included the examination of the structural and content characteristics of each of these two parts of the CFPIC (i.e., the syntactic and semantic features of the expressions used in the salutation and closing parts of the collected texts were scrutinised). This method of analysis was adopted following recent literature on cross-cultural studies where it is argued that a thorough analysis is crucial in order to 'grasp important differences in cultural communicative styles and will be ultimately helpful in understanding different cultural values and assumptions concerning interpersonal conduct' in different societies (Al-Khatib 2001; Bouton 1995; Liaw & Johnson 2001; Suszczyniska 1999, p. 1053).

The statistical analysis, on the other hand, included frequency count of the various strategies used in the texts (e.g., use of in-group identity markers such as dear colleagues, dear) and t-tests in order to determine whether or not some of the observed differences between the two cultures were significant.

Results

The initial analysis of the collected material concentrated on one of the basic features of written letters, namely format / organisation. The aim of this scrutiny was twofold: (1) to uncover whether or not TUR and BRI conference organisers view written and computer-mediated interaction differently; (2) to scrutinize whether or not TUR and BRI CFPIC writers follow same 'internet culture' rules (i.e., follow the same rules but those rules are different from the ones valid in written discourse). This procedure was adopted because as early as 1966, Kaplan has alerted linguists and communication experts to the fact that there might be profound cultural differences in the organisation of compositions / letters. That is, members of different cultures may choose different ways for creating and expressing the same meaning. Since the CFPIC were written in English, it was examined whether or not the two parts usually associated with planned written text in this language (i.e., salutation / address line and closing) (Bouton 1995; Jenkins & Hinds 1987) was present or absent in the TUR and BRI CFPIC.

1. Salutations

In written interaction, salutations are described as the units in which writers establish their relationships with the audience, and as the parts that provide important interpretative clues for a proper comprehension of the body of the letter. Perusal of sources such as The Complete Letter Writer published by

Foulsham (1998) and Collins Complete Guide Letter Writing (2004) reveals the importance of the word Dear in letter salutations written in English. Potential writers are strongly advised to begin their letters with 'Dear + X'; they are even warned that

'Launching into a letter without using the word 'dear' at all – 'lily, how are you?', for example – could be taken as implying that Lily is not dear, and in fact, that you probably do not like her. It might be staid and conventional, but to avoid the potential negativity of this impression it's best to stick to the safety of 'Dear' (Collins 2004, p. 35).

Moreover, according to the guides for letter writing, it is essential to vary salutations according to the level of formality of the letter. In a chapter entitled 'How to write a letter' authors of The Complete Letter Writer (1998, p. 9) recommend the use of expressions such as Dear Sir, Dear Madam, Sir, Madam in business letters while Dear John, Dear Miss Smith, Dear Fred are reserved for friendly letters.

Table 3 (Appendix 1) presents data related to the SALUTATIONS used in CFPIC written by TUR and BRI conference organisers and shows that there are significant differences between the two sets of data. The differences between the two corpora are both quantitative and qualitative. First of all, BRI writers chose not to use any salutations in 95,4% (i.e., 83 out of 87) of their CFPIC while TUR conference organisers have used salutations in 43,6% (i.e., 24 out of 55) of their CFPIC. What is more, BRI and TUR authors prefer different salutations when they decide to include them in their CFPIC. While the majority of the TUR salutations are 'other oriented' and begin with the word 'dear' (e.g., Dear colleague, Dear Friends), three of the four salutations employed by BRI writers are more 'I' centred (e.g., The Linguistic Politeness Research Centre is pleased to invite you to a SYMPOSIUM on THE PRAGMATICS OF APOLOGY to be held at Sheffield Hallam University Collegiate Crescent Campus on Friday June 6th 11.00-4.00).

When we examine the level of formality / the quality of the salutations used in the CFPIC written by TUR conference organisers, we see that they vary from very formal to very informal / casual ones. There are some examples that begin with Dear Sir / Madam which, according to the letter writing guides, are very formal salutations which should really be used for impersonal, official correspondence such as business letters to public organisations or law firms. Then, there are a few casual expressions such as Dear friends, which are salutations reserved for letters written to close friends. The bulk of the salutations, however, are more 'neutral' / 'semi-formal' (e.g., Dear colleague, Dear Linguists, Dear participants), as if aiming both to identify the inner group to which the writers and the potential readers belonged but at the same time trying to keep the writer and the potential reader at appropriate distance from each other and avoiding being patronising. None of the BRI salutations were geared towards the formal side of the scale.

There are two possible explanations for the results presented in Table 3. (Appendix 1) The first one is purely cultural. As mentioned in the Theoretical Framework section of this paper, Hofstede (1991) classifies TUR culture as a moderately feminine (FEM) culture while BRI culture is defined as a masculine (MAS) culture (see Table 1 above). The expected

effect of this classification on communication patterns is that members of MAS cultures will tend to view language / interaction as a tool / way for exchanging information while for FEM cultures, language is a vehicle for establishing various social relationships (i.e., 'report' vs. 'rapport' view of language). If salutations are units that help writers to establish relationships with their readers it is not surprising then that TUR CFPIC (i.e., texts written by members of FEM culture) included more salutations than BRI ones. What is more, expressions such as dear, friends, colleague are described as indicators of in-group membership by Brown and Levinson (1987). That is, TUR writers that belong to a collectivist culture, where group membership is important, felt the need to show to their interlocutors that writers and readers belong to the same group.

The main function of language for the members of MAS cultures is to report facts and to transfer knowledge while establishing social relationship is of secondary importance. What is more BRI culture is a strong individualistic culture in which it is believed that the options should be presented to persons and they should decide for themselves whether or not they would like to be a part of a particular group or not. Thus, it could be argued that the potential audience was not addressed in 95.4% of the BRI CFPIC simply because for BRI writers this information was redundant as the potential recipient of their e-mail was already identified in the 'TO' line at the top of the e-mail form. What is more, when they used salutations BRI writers did not try to 'force' their readers to join into pre-defined / pre-identified groups (e.g., Dear linguists) as in individualistic cultures respect for the individual is seen as an antecedent to "freedom".

The second plausible explanation is related to the medium of interaction (i.e., electronic messaging). Researchers who have examined electronic data frequently comment on its informality (Feenberg 1989; Spears and Lea 1992; Turner 1988). That is, when compared with texts composed with pen and paper, e-mails are less carefully edited and formatted and their organisation carries features from both writing and speech (Baron 1998b). The findings of these previous studies may explain why the majority of the BRI and TUR CFPIC did not include salutations. It may be argued that almost all of the BRI CFPIC did not have a salutation part because BRI writers view electronic message as informal texts whose main function is to inform interested parties about a professional gathering, what is more, the culture to which they belong (i.e., low uncertainty cultures) values tolerance and variety. That is, they are encouraged to take risks and to rearrange the written work they create more freely, depending on the size, history, scope and objectives of the conference.

It looks as if the medium of interaction has overridden the influence of the cultural background of TUR writers. The TUR culture is a high uncertainty avoidance culture and Hofstede (1991) argues that cultures high in uncertainty avoidance prefer clear instructions and have a greater need for formal rules and lower tolerance for ambiguity. The expected behaviour in those circumstances then is for TUR CFPIC writers not to deviate much from the prescribed rules for writing letters and to include salutations as prescribed by letter writing guides. What is observed in our data, however, is that in more than half of the CFPIC written by TUR conference

organisers this rule is ignored and they began their call for papers without salutations.

2. Closings

If the salutations are the parts in which writers establish their relationships with the audience, CLOSINGS are the sections in which the bond between the two parties is re-established and the author says 'good-bye' in appropriate manner to the reader. That is, closings are supposed to enhance the 'keeping-in touch' function of the texts. Their level of formality has to be in keeping both with the salutations and with the general tone of the letter. Collins Complete Guide Letter Writing (2004, p. 35) presents a number of choices of parallel salutation-closing sections:

Start with 'Dear Tom', end with 'Yours sincerely'

Start with 'Dear Sir' (or Madam), end with 'Yours faithfully'

When we compare the importance given to the closing parts in business letters in TUR and BRI cultures we see that the closings used in Turkish business letters have been strongly influenced by the official / bureaucratic letters which usually end with predetermined formulaic expressions (Akar 2002). In letters written in Turkish, closings are viewed as expressions summarising the basic rhetorical purpose of the text in one sentence and therefore, there are different formulae even for letters that only inform the receiver and for those that request something from the receiver. When discussing English letters Jenkins and Hinds (1987) argue that since la fond (i.e., the content) is more important than la forme (i.e., the layout of the letter) in those texts the one of the more important issues related to complimentary closings that should be kept in mind is that they should be in keeping with the salutations.

The results presented in Table 4 (Appendix 2) show that there are some similarities and differences between the closings parts employed by TUR and BRI conference organisers. The closings of TUR CFPIC consisted of five main parts: (A) Complimentary closings, (B) Group identifications, (C) Signature, (D) Contact details, (E) Extra information while the closings of BRI CFPIC had an extra component which was not found in any of the TUR CFPIC. That is, at the end of some of the BRI CFPIC writers apologised for cross-posting the messages (i.e., for sending the same e-mail more than once via different mediums) and requested readers to forwards the messages to their colleagues. None of the TUR writers included apologies or requests for further postings in their CFPIC.

Even though the other five units were found both in TUR and BRI CFPIC the regularity with which they were used by writers in both cultures was different. Perusal of the results presented in Table 4 shows that the report function takes precedence over the rapport function of the language with BRI writers. If we follow the definition of CFPIC adopted in this study we see that the main job of these messages is to collect conference speeches. To succeed in that CFPIC first have to inform interested parties how to contact the organisers and then, they have to offer potential participants information such as a deadline for abstract submission, acceptable length of the abstract, conference fee, accommodation and transport arrangements. As can be

seen from Table 4, the Contact Details and Extra Information categories (i.e., categories that present report information) are the most crowded groups in the BRI corpus. While similarly to the BRI writers, TUR writers included contact details in almost all of their CFPIC only 34,5% of them included extra practical information. The category which they viewed as of primary importance was the signature (i.e., the title and the name of the person who sent the e-mail). In addition, more than one-third of TUR CFP had the expected complimentary closing part at the end while only 4,4% of BRI CFPIC included complimentary closings. If we follow the rule that salutations and closings should be parallel to each other then the behaviour of BRI writers should not be surprising. Only four of the 87 CFPIC sent by BRI conference organisers had a salutation at the beginning and only four ended with a complimentary close.

Conclusions

The aim of this study was to compare the form and content of the salutations and closings used in e-mailed CFPIC written in English by BRI and TUR conference organisers and to uncover which variable – the cultural background or the medium of interaction – has a better explanatory value.

The findings of the study reveal that the relationship between the medium of interaction, the cultural background of interlocutors and the quality of the electronic messages is multifaceted and dynamic. All of the variables are intertwined and none of them can be isolated from the others. Maybe, due to this neither Hofstede's National Culture's Model nor the medium of interaction alone were able to explain all of the observed features of the examined CFPIC.

The finding also support Reder and Schwab (1989) claim that CMC does not yet have a uniform set of interactive or functional characteristics. That is, there are not still firmly agreed conventions governing electronic messages in neither of the examined cultures. The salutations and closing in TUR and BRI electronic call for papers were distinctively different from each other and among themselves which can be seen as an indication of the fact that the writers in both cultures utilise the trial and error process in an attempt to discover protocols that will work best in the new communicative modality.

The current study (as far as the author is aware) is the first attempt to compare and contrast the features of language in electronic messages written by TUR and BRI conference organisers in English, and therefore, there are some limitations that call for further research. The first point that should be considered is that the results of this study are based on the analysis of a limited number of CFPIC and we cannot not claim that the outcomes can be generalised to all e-mailed messages written by the members of TUR and BRI cultures. In order to ascertain a more general validity of the findings, similar research needs to be carried out with bigger corpora.

Moreover, it should be borne in mind that in this study we concentrated only on two variables and tried to determine their effect on the language used in the e-mailed CFPIC. However, research on cross-cultural communication and

CMC shows that other variables (e.g., level of familiarity between interlocutors, gender of the author, sites where the messages are posted) may influence the style of writing and the type of information included in the texts. Hence, a parallel research with similar subject groups investigating to what extent other variables affect the form and the content of salutations and closings of electronic messages written by TUR and BRI organizers of conferences are also needed to set the 'scene' (Hymes 1972) showing the values which permeate much of interpersonal communication in each of the cultures better.

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Çiler Hatipoğlu

Interneto kalba ir kultūra: įžanginės ir pabaigos frazės britų ir turkų „Prašymuose atsiųsti straipsnius“, parašytuose anglų kalba

Santrauka

Lengvas priėjimas, greitis ir efektyvumas per pastaruosius du dešimtmečius elektroninių laiškų rašymą pavertė pagrindine ryšių priemone. Todėl labai padidėjo susidomėjimas taip vadinama e-susirašinėjimo kalba (Baron, 1998a, b; Hatipoğlu, 2004). Tyrinėtojai tvirtina, kad atsirado tam tikra bendravimo terpė su universaliai galiojančiais bruožais (pvz., stiliumi ir funkcinio stiliumi) (Gimenez, 2000).

Šiame straipsnyje yra nagrinėjami duomenys iš kolektyvinės, pilnos abejonių, išlaikančios atstumą moteriškosios kultūros (t.y., turkų) ir individualistinės, savimi pasitikinčios, neturinčios abejonių vyriškosios kultūros (t.y., britų), ir taip pat tyrinėjamos dviejų kintamųjų bendravimo priemonės (t.y., elektroninio susirašinėjimo) ir kultūrinės terpės – įžanginių ir pabaigos frazių „Prašymuose atsiųsti straipsnius tarptautinėms konferencijoms“, parašytų anglų kalba, siunčiamų elektroniniu paštu forma ir stilius. Specifiniai tyrime nagrinėti klausimai yra: (1) ar yra koks nors naujas bendravimo būdas su abipusiai priimtinais taisyklėmis ir normomis, kurios tiktų aptariamų kultūrų vartotojams?, (2) ar gali rašančiojo asmens kultūrinis identitetas nepaisyti bendravimo etiketo žinutėje, kaip tvirtina Hofstede (1991, 2001), ir vaidinti pagrindinį vaidmenį, rašant elektronines žinutes?

Du elektroninių laiškų duomenų rinkiniai šiame tyrime buvo sukaupiti tarp 2002 metų sausio mėnesio ir 2006 metų vasario mėnesio Britanijoje ir Turkijoje, o tyrimas, kuriuo remiasi aptarimas, lygina ir priešpastato organizacinius ir semantinius bruožus įžanginių ir pabaigos frazių, paimtų iš elektroninių žinučių tekstų

Tyrimas atskleidė, kad ryšys tarp bendravimo stiliaus ir kultūrinės pašnekovo aplinkos, elektroninių žinučių kokybės yra sudėtingas ir dinamiškas. Rezultatai taip pat rodo, kad nei vienoje iš nagrinėtų kultūrų vis dar nėra griežtų susitarimų, reguliuojančių elektronines žinutes, tačiau abiejų analizuotų grupių atstovai, naudodami bandymų ir klaidų metodą, stengiasi surasti etiketo taisykles, kurias būtų galima geriausiai pritaikyti naujam bendravimui.

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The Author

Çiler Hatipoğlu, Dr, a lecturer at Middle East Technical University (METU), Turkey.

Areas of research interest: Cross-cultural communication, language and technology, language and gender, politeness, interlanguage pragmatics.

Address: Middle East Technical University (METU), Faculty of Education, Department of Foreign Language Education, 06531 Ankara, Turkey.

E-mails: ciler2@yahoo.com, ciler@metu.edu.tr

APPENDIXES

APPENDIX 1

Table 4.1. SALUTATIONS in CFPIC written by TUR and BRI organisers of conferences

| CATEGORIES | TUR | | BRI | |
|--|-----------|-------------|-----------|-------------|
| | N | % | N | % |
| Without salutation | 31 | 56,4 | 83 | 95,4 |
| With salutation | 24 | 43,6 | 4 | 4,6 |
| <i>Dear Sir / Madam</i> | 2 | 3,6 | | |
| <i>Dear colleague(s)</i> | 11 | 20,1 | | |
| <i>Dear participants</i> | 1 | 1,8 | | |
| <i>Dear Linguists</i> | 1 | 1,8 | | |
| <i>Dear Friends (and members of X)</i> | 2 | 3,6 | | |
| <i>Dear Mrs Name + Surname</i> | | | 1 | 1,1 |
| <i>As X, I welcome you to Y</i> | 2 | 3,6 | | |
| <i>X is pleased to invite / invites you to Y</i> | 5 | 9,1 | 3 | 3,5 |
| Total | 55 | 100 | 87 | 100 |

APPENDIX 2

Table 4.2. CLOSINGS in CFPIC written by TUR and BRI organisers of conferences

| CATEGORIES | EXAMPLES | TUR | | BRI | |
|---------------------------------|---|-----------|-------------|------------|--------------|
| | | N | % | N | % |
| A: Complimentary Closing | <i>Best / Kind Regards</i> | 7 | 12,7 | | |
| | <i>Yours truly</i> | 1 | 1,8 | | |
| | <i>We look forward to welcoming you in / to X</i> | 4 | 7,3 | 1 | 1,1 |
| | <i>We look forward to hearing from you</i> | | | 1 | 1,1 |
| | <i>We look forward to seeing you</i> | | | 1 | 1,1 |
| | <i>The X looks forward to hearing from you and to welcoming you to the conference next summer</i> | | | 1 | 1,1 |
| | <i>Enjoy the conference</i> | 1 | 1,8 | | |
| | <i>With friendly regards and best wishes</i> | 1 | 1,8 | | |
| | <i>Your Sincerely</i> | 4 | 7,3 | | |
| | <i>I look forward to your participation</i> | 1 | 1,8 | | |
| Subtotal | | 19 | 34,5 | 4 | 4,4 |
| B: Group identification | On behalf of the organising committee | 3 | 5,5 | | |
| | Organising committee | 7 | 12,7 | 12 | 13,8 |
| Subtotal | | 10 | 18,2 | 12 | 13,8 |
| C: Signature | Title (academic, related to the conference) | 25 | 45,5 | 17 | 19,6 |
| | Name and Surname | 27 | 49,1 | 33 | 35,9 |
| Subtotal | | 52 | 94,6 | 50 | 57,5 |
| D: Contact Details | E-mail | 16 | 29,1 | 38 | 43,7 |
| | Mail address | 10 | 18,2 | 22 | 25,3 |
| | Website | 10 | 18,2 | 27 | 31 |
| | Phone | 9 | 16,4 | 17 | 19,5 |
| | Fax | 8 | 14,5 | 11 | 12,6 |
| Subtotal | | 53 | 96,4 | 115 | 132,1 |
| E: Extra Information | Practical information | 6 | 10,9 | 58 | 66,6 |
| | For further information contact | 13 | 23,6 | 32 | 36,8 |
| Subtotal | | 19 | 34,5 | 90 | 103,4 |
| F: Other | Apologies | | | 3 | 3,3 |
| | Requests | | | 1 | 1,1 |
| Subtotal | | | | 4 | 4,4 |

