

Developing a task-based assessment of EAP pragmatics

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Interlanguage pragmatics (ILP) research investigates how second language (L2) learners acquire L2 pragmatic competence and how it develops (Kasper & Blum-Kulka, 1993). L2 pragmatic development has been conceptualized both from a second language acquisition (SLA) individual-cognitive and a sociocultural perspective which inherently share quite different ILP research issues (Kasper, in press). Deriving strongly from cognitivist perspectives, there have been particular interests among ILP researchers on comparisons of first language (L1) and L2 pragmatic knowledge and use, effects of L2 pragmatic instruction, and pragmatic transfer from existing pragmatic knowledge to ILP (Kasper, 1992; Takahashi, 1996). On the other hand, along with a growing number of critiques of SLA research that are heavily influenced by cognitive and psycholinguistic traditions (Firth & Wagner, 1997), L2 pragmatics has been conceptualized as a socially constituted learning within various sociocultural approaches, such as socio-cultural theory, language socialization, and conversation analysis.

Within a view of pragmatic learning as individual cognition, one of the central issues in ILP research is a relationship between L2 pragmatic development and pedagogical intervention (Kasper & Rose, 2001), and previous researches repeatedly showed that L2 grammatical knowledge and exposure to L2 pragmatics in the L2 target environment don't naturally entail L2 pragmatic development (Bardovi-Harlig, 1999, 2001; Kasper & Rose, 2002). According to a comprehensive review (Kasper, 2001) and a meta-analysis (Jeon & Kaya, 2006) of effects of instruction on ILP development, it is generally known that explicit instruction is better than implicit instruction, which is consistent with what Norris and Ortega (2002) reported on the overall superiority of explicit over implicit instruction. However, although explicit instructions of L2 pragmatics have positively influenced ILP

development, there is an issue that remains to be unsolved on explicit instruction as the way that “explicit instruction” is conceptualized and operationalized varies depending on studies, such as whether explicit instruction indicates specific rule explanation and inclusion of multiple-component treatments in explicit instruction. Regarding limitations of previous ILP research, Jeon and Kaya (2006) reported in their comprehensive meta-analysis of ILP research that instruction of speech act in isolation or in combination with related L2 forms was the most popular, and the most popular measurement of L2 pragmatic learning effect was discourse completion task type among others.

Aside from interests in contexts of L2 and foreign language teaching and learning at large, L2 learners’ pragmatic demands in institutional settings and more specifically an English for academic purpose (EAP) setting, such as advising sessions, emails to professors, or writing tutorials, have also long been recognized (Bardovi-Harlig & Hartford, 1990, 1996, 2005; Kasper & Rose, 2002). Studies on ILP in institutional settings (Biesenbach-Lucas, 2006; Chen, 2006; Davies & Tyler, 2005; González-Bueno, 1998) with various focuses have reported that L2 learners struggle with L2 pragmatic uses in institutional settings mainly due to insufficient L2 pragmatic knowledge, and a lack of knowledge in institutional settings and target language culture. Despite a productive line of ILP studies in institutional settings, comparatively little attention has been paid to the systematic investigation of pragmatic needs of diverse L2 learners, nor to the development of pragmatic assessment tasks based on such needs in university-level EAP settings. In this project, following task-based language teaching (TBLT) framework (Long & Norris, 2002), pragmatic assessment tasks are developed for the assessment of L2 pragmatic competence based on needs of students and their academic interlocutors in a U.S. university EAP program.

Previous research on EAP pragmatics

There has been a growing body of research on L2 learners' EAP pragmatic uses and development. The earliest studies were done by Bardovi-Harlig and Hartford (1990, 1993, 1996a, 1996b) with focuses of international students' language uses in academic advising sessions, and request e-mails. They have shown that in academic advising sessions international students use less effective speech event, that are more vague, indecisive, and inflexible, than American students (Bardovi-Harlig & Hartford, 1996a). Also, based on comparisons between negative and positive feedback on e-mails received from the faculty members, Bardovi-Harlig and Hartford (1996b) reported that L2 speakers showed the following patterns in their request emails compared to native speakers: (a) fewer mitigating forms which caused negative effect, (b) less frequent institutional explanations, (c) frequent explanations of personal needs and time frames, and (d) few acknowledgement of request imposition.

Since the studies done by Bardovi-Harlig and Hartford have appeared, especially greater attentions have been made into L2 learners' e-mail communications in an EAP setting focusing on analyses of L2 learners' e-mail practices and development from an emic and critical perspective (Chen, 2006), and a conversation analytic approach (Iimuro, 2006) among others. Chen (2006) conducted a longitudinal case study of e-mail literacy development of a Taiwanese graduate student who has an advanced linguistic level. Findings from Chen's study show the participants' numerous pragmatic problems which are congruent with what previous literature found, such as unclear and delayed purpose statements with irrelevant details, requests with a strong help-needed tone, inappropriate politeness, and ineffective use of explanations (Chen, 2006, p. 50). In addition, she calls for explicit instruction of appropriate e-mail communications in L2 classroom. As Chen (2006) exactly points out the importance of explicit instruction of appropriate language uses in e-

mails and previous ILP researches have shown, either explicit or implicit instruction of L2 pragmatics is one of the central issues in L2 pragmatic development. However, comparatively little attention has been paid to on systematic pedagogical instructions and assessment of L2 learners' pragmatic competence specifically in EAP settings. As such, this study attempts to fill the gap by making a pedagogical intervention of L2 pragmatics in an EAP setting with a focus of developing valid L2 pragmatic assessment tasks, following task-based language teaching framework.

Task-based language teaching and assessment

Norris (forthcoming) defines “task-based language teaching (TBLT) is an approach to second or foreign language education that integrates theoretical and empirical foundations for good pedagogy with a focus on tangible learning outcomes in the form of ‘tasks’ – that is, what learners are able to do with the language”. Strongly influenced by philosophy of education and second language acquisition theories, TBLT has been developed since the early 1980s (Long & Crookes, 1992; Skehan, 1998) out of critiques of traditional syllabi, including structural and functional approach to language teaching, limitations of focus on forms, and communicative language teaching (CLT). Emphasizing the importance of using task as the unit of analysis in curriculum design, central to TBLT is the notion of linking task to curriculum, instruction, and learning (Long & Norris, 2000) which entails six main elements in a TBLT program: a needs analysis, identification of target task-types, developing, sequencing and implementing pedagogic tasks, and assessment. Along with the inclusive notion of TBLT, Norris (forthcoming) extends the TBLT framework by emphasizing roles of detailed TBLT instructional phases and intended uses of assessment in TBLT.

Among the elements in the TBLT framework, task-based needs analysis plays a

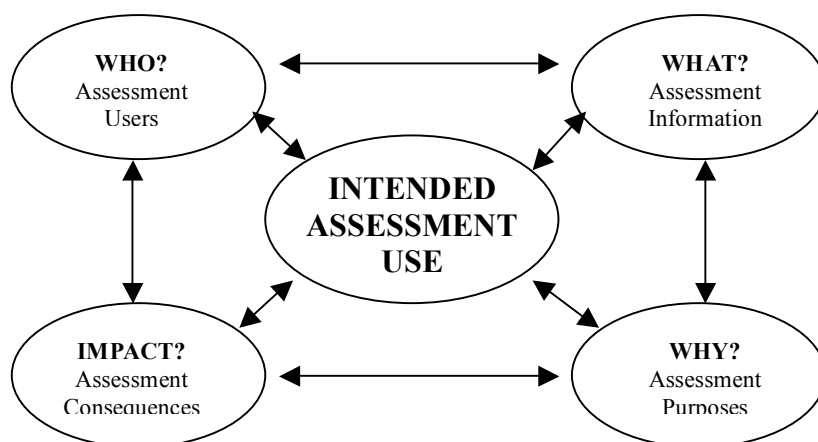
central role in TBLT in terms of determining coherent syllabus design and kinds of learning outcomes that learners should be able to accomplish upon completion of the program (Long, 2005). However, there have been mis-understanding and mis-interpretation of task-based needs analysis including claims such as learners cannot expect and know their language learning needs and uses. Regarding this challenge, Norris (forthcoming) calls for a comprehensive and critical understanding of task-based needs analysis among language teaching community. He emphasizes that needs analysis does not solely target language learners' needs, but equally importantly include values that language educators, language programs, and societal demands hold. Also, he further points out an inseparable relationship between task-based needs analysis, and justifiable and defensible goals for language education, which implicates a fundamental and vital function of needs analysis not only in TBLT but also in language programs at large.

Following critical values and functions of needs analysis in TBLT, there have been varying scopes of needs analysis conducted depending on needs of contexts. A needs analysis study done by Chaudron, Doughty, Kim, Kong, Lee, Lee, Long, Rivers, and Urano (2005) focused on a relatively small scale of needs analysis to identify a small number of tasks and to develop prototype task-based instruction for a tertiary Korean as a foreign language program rather than to reform an entire curriculum. Using semi-structured interviews and task-based L2 use questionnaire, they identified a target task "following street directions", and detailed elements of target tasks were further developed through analysis of authentic target discourse samples. On the other hand, Van Avermaet and Gysen (2006) conducted a national-level needs analysis to transform an entire curriculum of Dutch as a second language (DSL) program in Belgium. In their study, based on results of the needs analysis, they provided detailed procedures starting from determining particular domains and situations of language use, and then deriving tasks from identified situations

using various methods as a basic unit for curriculum design. Van Avermaet and Gysen's needs analysis in the TBLT project in DSL context in Belgium has played a central role to following steps. The results of needs analysis have influenced to develop target and pedagogical tasks (Van Gorp & Bogaert, 2006), and task-based language assessment (Gysen & Van Avermaet, 2005). Although the impacts of the needs analysis to a curriculum level were different in these two studies, regardless of the scope of needs analysis both studies presented empirical findings of needs analysis in relation to other elements in TBLT, and implicated influential functions and importance of needs analysis in TBLT.

In TBLT framework, task-based language assessment (TBLA) shares quite different issues from the traditional approach in language assessment mainly in terms of its starting concern, primary focus to be assessed, and involved processes among others (Norris, 2002, 2008). While traditional language assessment is concerned with the construct to be measured first, TBLA addresses a more fundamental question of "why and how task-based assessment are being used in contexts?" first (Norris, 2002), and thus the focus of assessment is performance itself rather than measurement of construct (Norris, Brown, Hudson, & Yoshioka, 1998; Brown, Hudson, Norris, & Bonk, 2002; Norris, 2002). A fundamental question of why and how task-based assessments are being used has been conceptualized and operationalized through a specification of "intended uses of assessment" as seen in Figure 1 (Norris, 2000, 2008). Norris emphasizes purposeful natures of language assessment, and discusses that the intended test use is defined as the interrelationship between four components of the language assessment process: (a) who uses the test; (b) what information the test should provide; (c) why, or for what purpose, the test is being used; and (d) what consequences the test should have (2000).

Figure 1. Specification of intended assessment use (Norris, 2000)



There has been a debate among language testers (e.g., Shohamy, 1995; McNamara, 1996; Bachman, 2002) over whether TBLA can make warranted inferences on actual language competence beyond particular tasks or test contexts. While these concerns cannot be avoidable and can be shortcomings of TBLA, there are more tangible, inferential and equally important needs among language educators and in language programs, that are needs of complex, integrative, and task-specific tests, that TBLA can suitably offer (Norris, Brown, Hudson, & Bonk, 2002). Despite a tension between TBLA and traditional language assessment approach, there has been a growing body of TBLA studies in response to various needs of learner, local institutions, and society (Robinson & Ross, 1996; Norris, Brown, Hudson, & Yoshioka, 1998; Brown, Hudson, Norris, & Bonk, 2002; Byrnes, 2002; Norris, 2002; Gysen & Van Avermaet, 2005). Robinson and Ross's (1995) study was one of the early TBLA studies that addressed evaluation of the effect of task-based instruction in an EAP setting. Norris et al. (1998) and Brown et al. (2002) embarked a pioneer university-level second and foreign language TBLA study by developing carefully-designed prototype task-based performance tests along with task-specific, and holistic rating scales and criteria. Since then, depending on intended uses of TBLA, some studies

(e.g., Gysen & Van Avermaet, 2005) developed specific target tasks and task types that can extrapolate task performance to often make high-stakes decisions with summative uses for assessment, based on a national-scale needs analysis in a DSL setting in Belgium. Other studies (e.g., Byrens, 2002) reformed an entire collegiate foreign language curriculum by implementing tasks into the entire curriculum and each lesson as well with both pedagogical and assessment purposes. By doing so, the study implicates how TBLA with formative uses is beneficial and facilitative in providing opportunities not only for learners to acquire and use language and contents, but also for teachers and curriculum developers to observe, reflect, and evaluate the effectiveness of implemented tasks and instructed language learning. Specifically with formative uses of assessment, Norris (forthcoming) calls for further research on classroom diagnostic and feedback framework in TBLA that can be used by teachers to evaluate effectiveness of implemented tasks and learner development.

As discussed above, when it comes to EAP pragmatics, relatively little attention has been made to a systematic investigation of task-based EAP pragmatic instruction and assessment, including needs analysis, development task-based pedagogical activities, and evaluation of effectiveness such assessment tasks. The current study attempts to fill such gap, and thus the purpose of the present study is to identify L2 speakers' pragmatic needs in a university EAP program. Based on the needs analysis, target tasks and pragmatic assessment tasks are identified with a specification of intended use of assessment tasks. The following research questions will be discussed in this paper:

- (a) What are EAP pragmatic needs of students, instructors, and the program?
- (b) What are target EAP pragmatic tasks that can be incorporated in the existing curriculum?
- (c) What are intended uses of EAP pragmatic assessment tasks?

(d) What are EAP pragmatic assessment tasks?

METHODS

Assessment context

The English Language Institute (ELI) at the University of Hawai‘i at Manoa (UHM) was selected to pursue the goals of the study. The ELI provides English instruction for non-native speakers of English who have been admitted to the university to help them succeed in their academic pursuits. The curriculum of the ELI is academic skill-based, and it consists of listening & speaking, reading, and writing courses with two levels of courses. Regarding assessment practices in the ELI, all students are required to take the ELI Placement Test (ELIPT) before the start of the semester of their enrollment into the university. Depending on their ELIPT results, the students are placed into intermediate or advanced levels of each ELI curriculum area, or exempted. Also, there has been a prolific and diverse line of research within the program including language policy, needs analysis of each curriculum content, development of teaching materials, and development of valid placement test items among others. However, comparatively little research has been done on analyses of EAP pragmatic needs, development of such materials, and assessment tasks with valid rating criteria.

Participants

Various groups of stakeholders at the ELI participated in different stages of data collection. The needs analysis involved two stages: semi-structured interviews and a survey questionnaire. There were the following two main reasons of conducting a semi-structured interview before the survey questionnaire: (a) the needs analysis of the current study is not only designed for students but also to include programs' needs at large. So, before conducting a survey questionnaire, input from program administrators and instructors were

important to consider; (b) it is crucially necessary to solicit valid and broad perspectives from various sources through qualitative interviews to develop valid items to be included in the survey questionnaire. As such, for semi-structured interviews, 3 ELI administrators, 7 ELI instructors, and 12 ELI students participated. The 3 ELI administrators include the ELI director, executive director, and program curriculum coordinator. ELI teachers from each curriculum, listening & speaking, reading, and writing participated. The 12 ELI students were recruited from two intermediate ELI reading classes. Based on input from semi-structured interviews, 102 students enrolled in the ELI at the time of data collection participated in a survey questionnaire. The ELI students who completed the questionnaire are composed of graduate ($n = 45$, 44.1%) and undergraduate ($n = 57$, 55.9%) students with diverse majors and L1s. Also, for development of pragmatic assessment tasks and rating criteria, ELI teachers and ELI administrators participated to give feedback and suggestions.

Materials

Materials for two main stages of the project were developed. First of all, for the stage of needs analysis, semi-structured interview questions were developed (see Appendix A) by the researcher to gather valid information from different sources based on existing literature on L2 pragmatics and EAP. Different types of questions were designed depending on for ELI faculty members or ELI students. Questions for the ELI faculty members focus on EAP pragmatic needs that are closely related with current curriculum's objectives and syllabi. On the other hand, questions for the ELI students were designed to help informants to think about their experiences with failure of appropriate language use. Based on input from the semi-structured interviews, a survey questionnaire that lists 20 specific EAP situations that involve L2 pragmatic competence was developed for ELI students to answer (see Appendix B). The questionnaire is composed of four sub sections: (a) communications between peers in class, (b) communication with professors, (c) communication in general

on campus, and (e) cross-cultural communication knowledge. Each item in the survey questionnaire represents a real life EAP situation, and ELI students were asked to express the extents of their needs for each task with a four-point scale from 1 (not at all necessary) to 4 (very necessary). Second of all, for the stage of developing assessment tasks, an intended use of EAP pragmatic assessment tasks and prototype pragmatic tasks were developed. Details of developing the assessment tasks will be further discussed in a result section.

Procedure

For the semi-structured interviews, an individual face-to-face interview with each ELI administrator and teacher was conducted while focus groups of three or four ELI students were set up for the interviews with the students. Each interview took about 40 minutes on average. Based on the interview results, 20 EAP pragmatics-related situations were selected that repeatedly appeared in the interviews, and closely related with program objectives of the ELI as well. To administer the questionnaire, the researcher individually visited each ELI class, distributed, and collected the questionnaires upon agreements with the ELI instructors and students.

Based on the needs analysis results, target tasks were identified. The identified target tasks served as important baseline information for development of assessment tasks. Before developing prototype assessment tasks, a description of intended use of assessment tasks was developed and was distributed to the ELI administrators and instructors for further feedback. To develop prototype EAP pragmatic assessment tasks, the identified target tasks were fleshed out with task prompts and explanations of task parameters. Further details of procedures of developing assessment tasks will be discussed in a result section.

RESULTS

In this section, first of all, results from the needs analysis in relation to identification of target tasks will be reported. Second of all, a detailed procedure of developing assessment tasks will be provided.

Needs analysis

Descriptive statistics, an internal-consistency reliability measure (Cronbach alpha), and factor analysis were employed for analysis of a survey questionnaire items. Table 1 shows descriptive statistics for each task item of the questionnaire. The means for the all items range from a low of 2.92 for C.14 *Refuse to peers' request* to a high of 3.48 for B.6 *Refuse politely to professors' request* with a very slight difference with other items with high means (B.8 *Recommendation letter request* and C.17 *Write a cover letter*). Looking closely at the descriptive statistics, the standard deviations (SD), as well as the minimum and maximum scores, indicate that the dispersion of scores around the mean is relatively reasonable. When it comes to the distributions of the score, the skewness statistics for all items are negative ranging from -1.25 (C.17 *Write a cover letter*) to -0.24 (C.16 *Know apologize appropriately in general*), and the kurtosis statistics vary more or less away from 0.00. Among the items, especially items B.8 *Recommendation letter request*, B.13 *Ask clarification questions to professors* and C.17 *Write a cover letter* show quite negatively skewed distribution with relatively high mean scores.

To examine the consistency of the answers to the questions, an internal-consistency reliability measure (Cronbach alpha) was used. Cronbach alpha (α) for the all items in a survey questionnaire is .901, and the reliability measures for sections A, B, C, and D is 0.84, 0.8, 0.67, and 0.26 consecutively as shown in Table 1. While the reliability estimates of sections A, and B are reasonably high, sections C and D show low reliability measures. Such low reliability measures might be due to somewhat incoherent features of items in Section C as the items in section C list pragmatic needs in general on campus, which is not

coherent as much as in other sections A and B, and small number of items ($k = 2$) in section D.

Table 1

Descriptive Statistics

| | <i>N</i> | Mean | SD | Min | Max | Skewness | Kurtosis |
|---|----------|------|------|-----|-----|----------|----------|
| A. Communication with peers in class ($k = 5$) | | | | | | | |
| 1. Disagreement | 102 | 3.02 | 0.84 | 1 | 4 | -0.74 | 0.21 |
| 2. Manage conversation | 102 | 3.14 | 0.81 | 1 | 4 | -0.60 | -0.30 |
| 3. Comment or compliment | 102 | 2.93 | 0.84 | 1 | 4 | -0.39 | -0.44 |
| 4. Ask relevant questions | 102 | 3.01 | 0.75 | 1 | 4 | -0.44 | 0.00 |
| 5. Give feedback on peers' work | 102 | 3.11 | 0.72 | 1 | 4 | -0.33 | -0.44 |
| Cronbach alpha (α) = 0.84 | | | | | | | |
| B. Communication with professors ($k = 8$) | | | | | | | |
| 6. Refuse politely to request | 102 | 3.48 | 0.70 | 2 | 4 | -0.99 | -0.30 |
| 7. Make an appointment by email | 102 | 3.18 | 0.84 | 1 | 4 | -0.86 | 0.24 |
| 8. Recommendation letter request | 102 | 3.47 | 0.70 | 1 | 4 | -1.13 | 0.67 |
| 9. Write a thank you note | 102 | 3.01 | 0.97 | 1 | 4 | -0.62 | -0.65 |
| 10. Write an email | 102 | 3.31 | 0.76 | 1 | 4 | -0.88 | 0.23 |
| 11. Suggest new ideas on class | 102 | 3.18 | 0.71 | 1 | 4 | -0.61 | 0.38 |
| 12. Understand cultural jokes | 102 | 2.93 | 0.95 | 1 | 4 | -0.58 | -0.54 |
| 13. Ask clarifying questions | 102 | 3.29 | 0.86 | 1 | 4 | -1.18 | 0.78 |
| Cronbach alpha (α) = 0.8 | | | | | | | |
| C. Communication in general ($k = 5$) | | | | | | | |
| 14. Refuse to peers' request | 102 | 2.92 | 0.93 | 1 | 4 | -0.37 | -0.85 |
| 15. Explain situations effectively | 102 | 2.99 | 0.92 | 1 | 4 | -0.55 | -0.58 |
| 16. Know apologize appropriately | 102 | 2.90 | 0.83 | 1 | 4 | -0.24 | -0.65 |
| 17. Write a cover letter | 102 | 3.45 | 0.78 | 1 | 4 | -1.25 | 0.68 |
| 18. Understand implied meaning | 102 | 2.97 | 0.83 | 1 | 4 | -0.48 | -0.26 |
| Cronbach alpha (α) = 0.67 | | | | | | | |
| D. Cultural knowledge in academic situation ($k = 2$) | | | | | | | |
| 19. Cross-cultural communication | 102 | 2.93 | 0.97 | 1 | 4 | -0.46 | -0.85 |
| 20. Discuss speaking and writing rules | 102 | 3.14 | 0.78 | 1 | 4 | -0.63 | -0.05 |
| Cronbach alpha (α) = 0.26 | | | | | | | |

Note. Cronbach alpha of all items = .901

In addition to descriptive statistics and reliability measures, factor analysis was conducted to explore how the items in the questionnaire can be explained by a certain number of factors, which will give a baseline information to identify target tasks. The Eigen value was set at 1.00, and a rotated component matrix was examined. The results indicated

that a five factor solution fit the data. Table 2 presents the results of five factor solution after a VARIMAX rotation. The five factors accounted for 65% of the variance in this study.

The section A *communication with peers in class* shows the clearest pattern in Table 2 as all five sub-items load well above .30 on factor 2 without any additional loadings in other factors, which indicates that factor 2 is measuring pragmatic needs to communicate with peers. The section B *communication with professors* shows an almost clear pattern where six sub-items out of eight items load well above .30 on factor 1. The two sub-items 6. *Refuse politely to request* and 13. *Ask clarifying questions* load not only on factor 1 but also on factor 2 which indicates these two items are both closely related needs of communications with peers and professors as well. Also, items 8. *Recommendation letter request* and 12. *Understand cultural jokes* heavily in section B load on factor 4 and factor 3 separately which indicates these two items measure quite different needs. The section C *communication in general in campus* and section D *cross-cultural communication knowledge in academic situations*, don't show a clear pattern, although three sub-items of section C reasonably load on factor 5. Interestingly, loadings of some items in sections C and D are congruent with loadings of the other items in sections A and B. For example, item 12 in section B, item 18 in section C, and item 19 in section D heavily load on factor 3. These items represent understanding implied meaning in general and cultural jokes in communicating with professors, which indicates a need of understanding implied meaning regardless of situations. Also, item 8 in section B, item 17 in section C, and item 20 in section D load on factor 4, and these items represent needs to request for a recommendation letter and to write a job application cover letter. As these items load on the same factor, factor 4 indicates a need of pragmatic knowledge in a professional setting. In sum, the following summary is made for each of the five factors regarding specific needs in

EAP pragmatics:

- (a) Factor 1 indicates a need of communicating with peers in class appropriately
- (b) Factor 2 indicates a need of communicating with professors
- (c) Factor 3 indicates a need of understanding implied meaning in general
- (d) Factor 4 indicates a need of using English in a professional setting
- (e) Factor 5 indicates a need of performing various speech acts in general in campus.

Table 2

Factor Analysis Results

| EAP pragmatic situations | Factor | | | | | <i>h</i> ² |
|--|--------|------|------|------|-------|-----------------------|
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | |
| A. Communication with peers in class | | | | | | |
| 1. Disagreement | .27 | .66* | .11 | -.08 | .09 | .54 |
| 2. Manage the conversation | .15 | .72* | .10 | .22 | -.07 | .60 |
| 3. Comment or compliment | .17 | .79* | .13 | .12 | .18 | .72 |
| 4. Ask relevant questions | .27 | .77* | .19 | -.09 | .11 | .72 |
| 5. Give feedback on peers' work | .21 | .68* | .16 | .25 | .10 | .61 |
| B. Communication with professors | | | | | | |
| 6. Refuse politely to request | .62* | .47* | -.13 | .13 | .07 | .64 |
| 7. Make an appointment by email | .77* | .19 | -.14 | .02 | .08 | .65 |
| 8. Recommendation letter request | .15 | .10 | -.07 | .83* | .18 | .76 |
| 9. Write a thank you note | .79* | .25 | .09 | .28 | .01 | .78 |
| 10. Write an email | .72* | .15 | .24 | .02 | .07 | .60 |
| 11. Suggest new ideas on class | .52* | .24 | .26 | .19 | .19 | .46 |
| 12. Understand cultural jokes | .01 | .21 | .79* | -.13 | .25 | .75 |
| 13. Ask clarifying questions | .76* | .40* | .07 | .07 | -.01 | .74 |
| C. Communication in general in campus | | | | | | |
| 14. Refuse to peers' request | .28 | .26 | .19 | .21 | .73* | .77 |
| 15. Explain situations effectively | .63* | .04 | .24 | .18 | .21 | .54 |
| 16. Know apologize appropriately | .28 | .40* | .29 | .16 | .53* | .63 |
| 17. Write a cover letter | .14 | .09 | -.03 | .79* | -.01 | .65 |
| 18. Understand implied meaning | .29 | .09 | .66* | -.06 | .32* | .63 |
| D. Cultural knowledge in academic situation | | | | | | |
| 19. Cross-cultural communication styles | .04 | .17 | .75* | .08 | -.17 | .63 |
| 20. Discuss speaking and writing rules | .37* | .32* | .20 | .39* | -.47* | .65 |
| Proportion of Variance | .20 | .18 | .11 | .09 | .07 | .65 |

Note. * loadings above .30

Development of assessment tasks

In the stage of developing assessment tasks, first of all, target tasks were identified based on the results of factor analysis. Second of all, a specification of intended uses of tests was developed. Lastly, prototype assessment tasks were developed based on Norris et al.'s (1998) carefully designed task difficulty matrix.

Identification of target tasks According to the result of factor analysis, the identified five factors which served as a baseline of target tasks. Along with the identified factors, the current ELI curriculum was importantly considered to develop target EAP pragmatic tasks that can be practically implemented. Table 3 presents the identified target tasks. First of all, factor 1 is about pragmatic needs while communicating with peers, and in the current ELI curriculum discussion among classmates and peer feedback, such as suggestions, agreement, disagreement, and criticism, on peer's class work, are main components that involve the communication needs with peers. As such, the first target task is *to give constructive comments on peers' work*. Secondly, regarding factor 2, communication with professors, this need includes both face-to-face advising session and e-mail correspondences with professors which involve various speech acts. According to the interviews with ELI instructors and administrators, it was found that ELI students' e-mail literacy, regardless of whether the recipient of e-mails are classmates, instructors, or professors, needs to be explicitly instructed. With such common ground needs of ELI students, instructors, and administrators, the second target task is decided as *to write various academically-appropriate e-mails to various audiences*. Thirdly, factor 3 is identified as a need to understand implied meaning in academic discourse, such as to understand cultural jokes or indirect utterances, so the third target task is *to understand implied meaning or indirect utterances in academic discourse*. Lastly, factor 4 and 5 are

incorporated into the last target task, *to use pragmatic knowledge with various academic purposes*. Actually, factor 4 and factor 5 are representing different needs, and especially factor 4, a need of using English in a professional setting (e.g., request for recommendation letter and write a cover letter) is identified as an independent factor with high mean scores. However, it was felt that combining factor 4 and 5 would be better to be congruent with the existing ELI curriculum so that the instructor can flexibly adapt the target tasks according to the needs of the given student population.

Table 3

The Four Target EAP Pragmatic Assessment Tasks

A. To give constructive comments on peers' work

This target task covers how to appropriately give constructive comments on peers' work at an academic level. The constructive comments include appropriately agreeing, disagreeing, suggesting, complimenting, and criticizing peers' class work.

B. To write various academically-appropriate e-mails to various audiences

This target task covers how to write academically-appropriate e-mails to professors or classmates. Possible situations include e-mails that involve various speech acts, such as request, refusal, and apology, and addresses to various audiences including professors, classmates, or someone who you haven't met.

C. To understand implied meaning or indirect utterances in academic discourse

This target task covers how to understand implied meaning or indirect utterances during communications with various interlocutors in an EAP setting. Possible situations include understanding cultural jokes that professors make during the lecture, or understanding and asking clarification questions regarding an indirect request or implied meaning that interlocutors make.

D. To use pragmatic knowledge with various academic purposes

This target task covers how to use pragmatic language knowledge with academic purposes in general terms, such as to write a cover letter to apply for a job, request a recommendation letter from your professor, and refuse your classmates' request.

Intended uses of assessment tasks Following Norris' (2000) specification of intended assessment uses, descriptions for the four questions in general terms are developed (see detailed description for each of the target tasks in Appendix C)

(a) Who are the assessment users? Main users of the assessment tasks are stakeholders in the program including ELI students, instructors, language testing graduate assistants, and administrators. Additional users would be prospective instructors and students, other EAP institutions that want to employ EAP pragmatic components in their existing curriculum.

(b) What is being assessed? Prototype EAP pragmatic assessment tasks represent real-world tasks that non-native English students in a U.S. university would likely face in an EAP setting, and tasks specifically involves L2 pragmatic use. L2 pragmatic competence in an EAP setting involve integrated language skills and institutional knowledge as well.

(c) Who/what is being impacted? A variety of possible consequences of implementing EAP pragmatic assessment tasks into the current curriculum can be identified. The development of EAP pragmatic assessment tasks are not intended to reform an entire ELI curriculum, but are intended to strengthen the current ELI curriculum by adding a crucial but neglected component that students want and need to learn to succeed in their academic pursuits. Also, the assessment tasks will not only be used solely for assessment purposes, but also for instructional purposes in classes with room for being further adapted and developed by instructors. Thus, for students, intended positive consequences include satisfaction of their needs, raising awareness, lessening pressure of appropriate interactions with peers and professors, and accomplishment of becoming a proficient and appropriate interlocutor. Also for instructors and administrators, positive consequences include strengthen current ELI curriculum, satisfy students' pragmatic needs, evaluate effectiveness of classroom activities and assessment tasks, and professional development.

(d) Why? The ELI program provides English instruction for non-native speakers of English who have been admitted to the university to help them succeed in their academic

pursuits. Despite a prolific and productive line of research conducted within the EPI program, relatively less attention has been made to instruction and assessment of EAP pragmatic competence in its own rights within the ELI curriculum. Importantly, as shown in the results of needs analysis in this study, the ELI students expressed their relatively high needs on various academic situations which involve EAP pragmatic competence.

Furthermore, the ELI instructors and administrators also expressed their needs that the students need to have in terms of pragmatic competence. These needs are congruent with empirically and theoretically supported previous L2 pragmatics research findings including a superiority on explicit instructions on L2 pragmatics over implicit instructions, and struggles of non-native English speakers who are even in high level of academic English in terms of limited EAP pragmatic knowledge. As such, implementation of EAP pragmatic assessment tasks into the current ELI curriculum would be significantly beneficial both for the ELI students and the ELI program.

The intended uses of assessment provided the general and rather abstract information that would have to be met by the ELI instructors and the ELI program to accomplish what it was intended to accomplish. As a next step, test and item specifications are developed.

Test and item specifications The purpose of test and item specifications is to minimize ambiguity in assessment procedures. To determine task difficulty, the current project adopted the task difficulty model that Norris et al. (1998) developed which is primarily based on Skehan (1996) as shown in Table 4. There are three variables involved to determine task difficulty: code complexity (complexity of the language code to be processed), cognitive complexity (complexity of the cognitive operations involved), and communicative demand (processing demands associated with the required communication activities). For each variable, there are also two subcategories that define each variable's

characteristics (more detailed discussion in Norris et al., 1998). Also, plus (+) and minus (-) signs represent varying degrees of task difficulty.

Table 4

Task Difficulty Matrix (modified from Norris et al., 1998)

| Variable | easy → difficult | easy → difficult |
|-----------------------------|---------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| code complexity | range - + | number of input sources - + |
| cognitive complexity | organization of input - + | availability of input - + |
| communicative demand | mode - + | response level - + |

Based on the specification of intended uses of assessment, and the task difficulty descriptions, a next step was a practical application for actual test item specification and for the prototype EAP pragmatic assessment. Table 5 lists all items and shows where the items fall in terms of task difficulty components.

Table 5

Task Difficulty of Items

| Target Task | Task | difficulty index | code Cognitive communicative demand | | | | | |
|-------------|------|------------------|--|-----------------|---------------|-----------------|------|----------------|
| | | | characteristics | | | | | |
| | | | range | # input sources | input /output | input available | mode | response level |
| A | A1 | 3 | + | + | - | - | + | - |
| | A2 | 4 | + | + | - | + | + | - |
| | A3 | 6 | + | + | + | + | + | + |
| B | B1 | 3 | + | - | - | + | + | - |
| | B2 | 3 | + | - | - | + | + | - |
| | B3 | 5 | + | + | + | + | + | - |
| | B4 | 3 | + | - | - | + | + | - |
| | B5 | 4 | - | + | + | + | + | - |
| | B6 | 2 | + | - | - | - | + | - |
| | B7 | 5 | + | + | + | + | + | - |
| C | C1 | 2 | + | - | - | + | - | - |

| | | | | | | | | |
|---|----|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | C2 | 3 | + | + | - | + | - | - |
| D | D1 | 4 | + | + | + | - | + | - |
| | D2 | 6 | + | + | + | + | + | + |

Followings are task prompts for each of the four target tasks listed in Table 3. Each item is presented with a general prompt and necessary material with task difficulty.

Target task A. To give constructive comments on peers' work

Task A1: Give feedback to a summary that your classmate wrote

Difficulty index: 3

Prompt: Here's your classmate's summary of the article that you read in class. You will give comments on this summary. As you read the short summary, you find out that the writing has numerous grammar mistakes and the summary didn't include main ideas of the article although the summary provides a very good and succinct conclusion of the article. Read the summary, and write an academically-appropriate short feedback with suggestions on your classmate's summary in terms of its grammar, coherence, organization of the summary.

Material: A summary written by a student which has some flaws

Task A2: Give feedback on request e-mail that your classmate wrote

Difficulty index: 4

Prompt: In class, you wrote an e-mail that requests a meeting with an academic advisor to discuss next semester's schedule. And then, your will write your classmate's e-mail to give feedback. Here's your classmate's e-mail. Read this e-mail and give feedback including suggestions and compliments based on the e-mail criteria that you learned during the class.

Material: An e-mail that a student wrote to request a meeting with an academic advisor.

Task A3: Write a short feedback on presentation that your classmate gave.

Difficulty index: 6

Prompt: In class, you listen to classmate's oral presentation. While you're listening to the presentation, your task is to write a brief feedback on your classmate's performance. Based on your notes, you will give a face-to-face verbal feedback including suggestions, disagreed opinions and compliments once your classmate finishes his/her presentation.

Target task B. To write various academically-appropriate e-mails to various audiences

Task B1: Write an introduction e-mail to instructor

Difficulty index: 3

Prompt: It's the beginning of your new semester. Your instructor and classmates hardly know about you, so you will briefly introduce yourself to your instructor and your

classmates via e-mail. So, send a brief e-mail to introduce yourself to your instructor and your classmates.

Task B2: Write an e-mail about class in general to your instructor

Difficulty index: 3

Prompt: It's the beginning of your new semester. You might have some requests, questions, or concerns in general about the class that you want your instructor to know. Please think about those, and write an e-mail to your instructor.

Task B3: Write a recommendation letter request e-mail to professor

Difficulty index: 5

Prompt: Recently, you're informed of a scholarship opportunity. Among application criteria, you need a recommendation letter from a professor. Read the description of the application in detail. Write an e-mail to professor to request a recommendation letter.

Materials: An introduction of a scholarship application which includes information on the scholarship and detailed information of criteria.

Task B4: Write an e-mail to make an appointment with your academic advisor

Difficulty index: 3

Prompt: You have some questions on classes that you're going to take next semester. So, you need to meet with your academic advisor to discuss courses that you can take next semester. To make an appointment, write an e-mail to your academic advisor.

Task B5: Write an e-mail to your classmates to introduce your course projects

Difficulty index: 4

Prompt: You're working on a course project in ELI classes, which is to find an interesting article and develop comprehension and discussion questions for your group members. The instructor told you to e-mail to your group members to introduce your article. Write an e-mail to your group members to introduce the article that you find. You have to summarize the article briefly.

Materials: A short news article (1 page) with a title.

Task B6: Write an e-mail to admission office to check your graduation status.

Difficulty index: 2

Prompt: You're about to graduate the program. Usually, you need to file a graduation to graduate, and you want to check your graduation status with the admission office. Write an e-mail to an office staff working at the admission office.

Task B7: Write a refuse e-mail to professor's request

Difficulty index: 5

Prompt: You received an e-mail from your professor about a presentation schedule. Your

professor asks whether you can make a presentation a week earlier than it is originally scheduled. But, you cannot do it because of your final exams schedule. So, you need to reply to your professor to refuse the request. Please read professor's e-mail shown here, and write a replay e-mail.

Material: A request e-mail from a professor to you.

Target task C. To understand implied meaning or indirect utterances in academic discourse

Task C1: Understand implied meaning

Difficulty index: 2

Prompt: Read the following conversation between two classmates, and then explain what Tom probably means in this conversation.

Jane and Tom are classmates. Jane was reading Tom's paper to give him feedback. Then, professor came and asked Tom as follow:

Professor: "How did you like Jane's paper?"

Tom: "I thought it was well-typed."

Task C2: Understand implied meaning

Difficulty index: 3

Prompt: Read the following conversation between two classmates, and then explain what Sarah probably means in this conversation.

Tim and Sarah are classmates. Although they're not very close, they were in the same groups for a couple of times. Sarah thinks she is very diligent student and takes class notes very well. One day, Tim approaches to Sarah, and ask whether if he can borrow Sarah's class notes.

Tim: "Sarah, I couldn't make it to classes last week. Is it possible to borrow your class notes? I really appreciate it."

Sarah: "Oh, you know.. I don't have good handwriting"

Target task D. To use pragmatic knowledge with various academic purposes

Task D1: Write a cover letter to apply for a research assistant in your department

Difficulty index: 4

Prompt: You will apply for a research assistant opening in your department. To do that, you need to write a cover letter. Please read an email that announces the research assistant job opening, and write a cover letter.

Material: A copy of e-mail that announces the research assistant opening with detailed job description, qualifications, and required materials.

Task D2: To request for help at the International Student Service center

Difficulty index: 6

Prompt: You received an e-mail from the International Students Service (ISS) on campus regarding your student visa with work permit. The e-mail says that you didn't submit required materials that you actually submitted through a face-to-face meeting with the ISS director. You need to explain your situation in detail at the ISS so that you can get proper help. Look at the e-mail that you received from the ISS. Clarify your visa situation and ask for proper help.

Material: A copy of an e-mail from the ISS regarding your visa with work permit.

Future plans for research

In this project, I outlined the steps of developing EAP pragmatics assessment tasks. By employing needs analysis of various stakeholders including ELI students, instructors, and administrators, the results of needs analysis were fully implemented to identify target tasks. Based on task difficulty matrix, prototype EAP pragmatic assessment tasks are developed with varying task difficulties.

To implement developed prototype assessment tasks, development of rating scale and criteria is one of the important remaining steps to complete in the near future along with an investigation of validity of assessment tasks. Following steps will be pursued in developing task-specific real life rating criteria:

- (a) Collect authentic data of each target task that will give baseline information.
- (b) Conduct interviews with domain experts and instructors to identify important rating criteria that students have to be aware of.
- (c) Receive feedback from ELI instructors who will use the assessment tasks on preliminary rating criteria
- (d) The assessment tasks will be used in selected ELI classes.
- (e) The preliminary rating criteria will be piloted by raters

Based on results from the rating procedures, data will be further analyzed in terms of its

practical implementation into the ELI curriculum, and reliability and validity of the assessment tasks.

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Appendix A: Semi-structured questions

ELI faculty members:

1. In relation with the objectives and values of the ELI, what would be pragmatics-related tasks that ELI students are supposed or ideally to accomplish upon completion of the ELI courses?
2. In addition to the current objectives in each curriculum, do you think it is necessary to add more pragmatics-related tasks (or objectives) in each curriculum? If so, what are they? Why or why not?
3. When you're interacting with your students, have you experienced any situations in which your students were inappropriate especially when they make a request, apology, or refusal?
4. After completing the ELI courses, can you think of pragmatics-related tasks that students have to keep working on for their successes in academic pursuits?

Interview questions for students

Request

1. Have you made a request in English to your classmates during class or out of class? If so, what were the situations? Please describe the situations. Were they easy or difficult to do? Why?
2. Have you made a request in English to your professors or instructors during class or out of class? If so, what were the situations? Please describe the situations. Were they easy or difficult to do? Why?
3. Have you made a request in English to administrators in your department office or any other office or program on campus? If so, what were the situations? Please describe the situations. Were they easy or difficult to do? Why?

Apology

4. Have you made an apology in English to your classmates during class or out of class? If so, what were the situations? Please describe the situations. Were they easy or difficult to do? Why?
5. Have you made an apology in English to your professors or instructors during class or out of class? If so, what were the situations? Please describe the situations. Were they easy or difficult to do? Why?
6. Have you made an apology in English to administrators in your department office or any other office or program on campus? If so, what were the situations? Please describe the situations. Were they easy or difficult to do? Why?

Refusal

7. Have you made a refusal in English to your classmates during class or out of class?

If so, what were the situations? Please describe the situations. Were they easy or difficult to do? Why?

8. Have you made a refusal in English to your professors or instructors during class or out of class? If so, what were the situations? Please describe the situations. Were they easy or difficult to do? Why?
9. Have you made a refusal in English to administrators in your department office or any other office or program on campus? If so, what were the situations? Please describe the situations. Were they easy or difficult to do? Why?

Implied Meaning

10. Have you ever experienced that you couldn't understand what your classmates implied when they say something to you? If so, what were the situations? Please describe the situations.
11. Have you ever experienced that you couldn't understand what your professors implied when they say something to you? If so, what were the situations? Please describe the situations.
12. Have you ever experienced that you couldn't understand what administrators in your department office or any other office or program on campus implied when they say something to you? If so, what were the situations? Please describe the situations.

Questions for a focus group

1. Are you aware of differences between English and your native language in terms of ways of request, refusal, or apology? If so, what are they? Can you share your thoughts with group members?
2. Have you experienced any communication breakdowns because of any differences mentioned above? If so, what were they?
3. What were your strategies for dealing with the communication breakdown?
4. Have you experienced any difficulties to understand implied meanings conveyed in conversations between you and your classmate, professors, or administrators at campus? If so, what were they?
5. Besides the learning objectives covered in your ELI classes, have you felt you need extra tasks that will help you use English appropriately to succeed your academic pursuit in the ELI classes? If so, what are they?

Appendix B: A survey questionnaire for EAP pragmatic needs**Pragmatic Language Use in English as Academic Purpose Setting**

Currently taking ELI courses: _____ **Years of studying in USA:** _____

Academic status (circle):

Undergraduate MA PhD Other: _____ **Major:**

_____ **First Language:** _____

Please indicate extent of learning needs of following situations.

| | | | |
|-------------------------|------------------|--------------|-------------------|
| 1= Not at all necessary | 2= Not necessary | 3= Necessary | 4= Very necessary |
|-------------------------|------------------|--------------|-------------------|

A. Communication with peers in class

1. During discussion, you want to know how to appropriately disagree with what classmates are saying.

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
|---|---|---|---|
2. During discussion, sometimes you don't know how to initiate, clarify, or close the conversation. You want to know how to do these during the conversation.

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
|---|---|---|---|
3. During discussion, you want to know how to comment on or compliment classmates' opinions.

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
|---|---|---|---|
4. During discussion, you want to know how to properly ask a clarification question or a relevant question to classmates' opinions.

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
|---|---|---|---|
5. When you give peer-feedback to your classmates' writing or speaking, you want to know how to give comments or suggestions nicely and appropriately.

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
|---|---|---|---|

B. Communication with professors

6. Imagine that you're working with a professor, you need to refuse some requests that you received from a professor. You want to know how to politely refuse.

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
|---|---|---|---|

7. You want to know how to appropriately make a meeting appointment with a professor either by email or in person.
8. You need a recommendation letter to apply for a scholarship. You want to know how to politely write an email to professor to request a recommendation letter.
9. When you want to thank someone such as professors or classmates, you want to know how to write a thank you email or card appropriately.
10. About writing an email to your professor or someone who you haven't met, you want to know how to appropriately write an email and reply in general.
11. Possibly you might want to suggest something new to your professor about class. So, you want to know how to politely express your opinion and suggest new ideas.
12. Sometimes professors make cultural jokes that are related with your class contents during the class. You want to know how to understand cultural jokes.
13. When you talk to your professor, you couldn't understand the implied meaning. You want to know how to politely ask your professor what exactly he/she meant.

C. Communication in general on campus

14. Sometimes you need to nicely refuse your friend's requests such as to borrow class note or your laptop. You want to know how to nicely refuse.
15. As an international student, sometimes you might have visa problems that school should help you with. You want to learn how to nicely and effectively explain your situation to receive help.
N/A
16. Sometimes, you feel that you're overly apologizing to someone. So, you want to know how to appropriately apologize.
17. You want to learn how to appropriately write a cover letter or resume that you might need in future to apply for a job.
18. Sometimes, you don't understand when people say something indirectly. You want to know how to

understand indirect meaning. For example, people indirectly say “I feel so cold in the classroom” to ask you to turn off an air conditioner.

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
|---|---|---|---|

D. Cross-cultural communication knowledge

19. In the ELI reading class, you want to read articles about different cross-cultural communication styles to raise your awareness.

20. You think you don't know much about culturally or academically appropriate English speaking and writing rules. So, you want to discuss this matter in classes.

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
|---|---|---|---|

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
|---|---|---|---|

Appendix C: Intended uses of EAP pragmatic assessment tasks in the ELI

▪ **Give a constructive and appropriate comments including compliments, disagreement and suggestions on students' various work** (e.g., paper, discussion leader, presentation)

Who uses?

Instructors:

- Use this task both as a small class activity and achievement assessment tasks.
- Mention differences among overly-direct expressions and mitigated expressions, along with possible grammatical and lexical resources.

Students:

- Using this task, students can diagnose their ways of giving comments on peer's work.
- Learn appropriate language uses in giving comments

What is being assessed?

Knowledge in writing academically-appropriate comments including compliments, suggestions, displaying agreement and disagreement, in terms of appropriate content organization, grammatical and lexical resources will be assessed.

Who/What is being impacted?

Students:

Students will be able to learn various resources that can be used in expressing their opinions, such as suggestions, compliments, and disagreements. Besides the resources that they can use, they will learn appropriate content organization in comments. So, ultimately, students can employ this knowledge both in writing and speaking to successfully engage in academic discourses.

Why?

In the ELI, peer-feedback and peer-evaluation are often used in all curricula. In the needs analysis conducted for this project, some students specifically mentioned personal episodes relating peers' overly-criticized and inappropriate comments on her/his work. Often, even if students know what to comment on peers' work, they are not necessarily aware of what constructive comments would mean and how to do it,

mainly due to a lack of grammatical and lexical resources to express their opinion appropriately. So, it is very important to give feedback, provide various resources, and assess students' knowledge on appropriate and effective language uses in giving comments.

▪ **Writing an introduction or request e-mail to instructors**

Who uses?

Instructors:

- a. Diagnose students' initial knowledge of writing an academically-appropriate e-mail at the beginning of the semester
- b. Know more about students' general needs and any request for classes in general via e-mail communication

Students:

- a. Raise awareness of using an e-mail to communicate with instructors, which is one of the important and frequently-used academic communication mediums.
- b. Based on instructor's feedbacks, be aware of basic elements and etiquettes in e-mail communication
- c. Express their needs and expectations in general via e-mail

What is being assessed?

Students' knowledge in basic elements of writing email, such as subject, appropriate addressing terms, opening remarks in the e-mail, and appropriate contents, will be assessed.

Who/What is being impacted?

Students:

Students will raise their awareness of using an e-mail in an EAP setting. As the semester goes by, students will need to interact with people more and more. So, discussing basic elements of writing an e-mail at the beginning of a semester will benefit ELI students.

Why?

This task can be used as a diagnostic assessment to gauge students' initial knowledge of writing academically-appropriate e-mails. Students who just enter academic institutions might not necessarily be aware of writing an e-mail as an academic discourse that is distinguished from mundane interaction. Also, according to interviews with ELI students done for this project, e-mail is not used at all even in university settings in some cultures. As such, for these students, it is important to give them appropriate feedback and instruction of writing an e-mail in an academically-appropriate fashion.

▪ **Writing emails according to various scenarios**

Possible situations:

- a. Write an e-mail to professor to request for a meeting
- b. Write an e-mail to professor to explain reasons of class absence
- c. Write an e-mail to professor to request for a recommendation letter
- d. Write an e-mail to professor to refuse the request that you received from a professor (e.g., Professor requests you to present a week earlier, professor request you to do certain tasks which might not be related with your job responsibilities)
- e. Write an e-mail to someone who you haven't met in the campus to request for some information (e.g., admission office, department secretary)
- f. Write an e-mail to your classmates regarding class assignments

Who uses?

Instructors:

- a. Adopt various scenarios of e-mail correspondence depending on students' needs to teach and assess students' knowledge of writing various email interactions
- b. Use this type of task to give specific instruction on subtle differences of using various modal expressions depending on situations.
- c. Emphasize different ways of explaining accounts depending on audience and situations.

Students:

- a. Use the information from this task to gauge their problem areas with writing academically-appropriate e-mails
- b. Use this task to learn both academically-appropriate linguistic and lexical resources to deliver their messages in the e-mails

Curriculum developer & ELI testing GA:

- a. In the ELI placement test, writing an e-mail can be included in the writing test section

What is being assessed?

Ability to employ important features of writing an e-mail as an academic discourse, and appropriate and effective language uses in relation to purposes of writing e-mails will be assessed.

Who/What is being impacted?

Students:

Through the feedback they receive either from their peers or teachers on their performances of writing e-mails, they will be able to identify subtle differences in language uses depending on contexts of e-mail communication. More importantly, students can minimize any miscommunications with professors, ELI instructors, and classmates.

Why?

An email is one of the frequently used mediums of communication in an EAP setting. Previous studies on e-mail communication indicate that even highly-proficient L2 speakers have difficulties communicating via e-mail. Often, their e-mails are considered to be too direct or rude mainly due to inappropriate language uses in e-mails. So, it is crucial to develop pedagogical tasks that teach and assess appropriate e-mail communications to benefit ELI students.

▪ Understand implied and indirect meanings in an EAP setting

Who uses?

Instructors:

- a. Possibly use this task in class to discuss implied and indirect meaning in details

Curriculum developer and ELI testing GA:

- a. Include this type of task in the placement test possibly in a multiple choice format or short written response format. Although the results will not be mainly used for making a decision of placement, it will be a good opportunity for students to be aware of the situation and to think about it while taking a placement test.
- b. Bring positive washback effects to ELI curriculum by using this type of task in a placement test.

Students:

- a. Use this assessment task to know more about various academic situations which involve understanding implied and indirect meaning.
- b. Follow up on understanding implied or indirect meaning by asking relevant questions to ELI instructors

What is being assessed?

Ability of understanding implied or indirect meaning during interactions in an EAP setting will be assessed.

Who/What is being impacted?

Students:

By engaging in assessment tasks which involve indirect or implied meaning in academic settings, students can ultimately understand them, and actually will be able to use indirect or implied meaning as conversational resources.

Why?

According to the needs analysis, “learn to understand implied or indirect meaning” was identified as one of students’ high learning needs in an EAP setting. Understanding implied or indirect meaning during academic discussion or advising session can be challenging for ELI students. Depending on the curriculum, this assessment task can be employed as small class activities or as a discussion topic.