



INTERJECTIONS IN ENGLISH: NEGLECTED BUT IMPORTANT ASPECT OF FOREIGN LANGUAGE LEARNING AND TEACHING

(İNGİLİZCE’DE ÜNLEMLER: YABANCI DİL ÖĞRENİMİ VE ÖĞRETİMİNİN GÖZ ARDI EDİLEN AMA ÖNEMLİ BİR KISMI)

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ABSTRACT

This paper aims at stressing the importance of interjections in foreign language learning and teaching. It defines the concept of interjection, assesses the strengths and weaknesses of two contemporary approaches to interjections, and expounds the concept of pragmatic competence with reference to interjections. It tries to find out whether non-native students of ELT department in the European University of Lefke (EUL) context can use the right interjection in the related context successfully or not. Further, it investigates three most frequently used interjections and three least frequently used interjections by these students and the underlying reason(s) for this pragmatic phenomenon. The results of the study reveal that *wow*, *ow* and *hey* are three most frequently used interjections, whereas *dear*, *eh*, and *uh* are three least frequently used interjections by non-native students of ELT department in the EUL context.

Keywords: interjections, pragmatics, pragmatic competence, linguistics, foreign language teaching

ÖZ

Bu çalışma yabancı dil öğrenimi ve öğretiminde ünlemlerin önemini vurgulamayı amaçlamaktadır. Çalışma ünlem kavramını tanımlamakta, ünlemlerle ilgili iki modern yaklaşımın olumlu ve olumsuz yönlerini değerlendirmekte, ve ünlemlerle bağıntılı olarak edimbilimsel yeti kavramını açıklamaktadır. Lefke Avrupa Üniversitesi (LAÜ) bağlamında ana dili İngilizce olmayan İngilizce Öğretmenliği bölümü öğrencilerinin bağlam içerisinde doğru ünlemi başarılı olarak kullanıp kullanamadıklarını bulmaya çalışmaktadır. Üstelik, öğrenciler tarafından en çok sık ve en az sık kullanılan üç ünlem ve bu edimbilimsel olayın temelini oluşturan sebep(ler)i araştırmaktadır. Çalışma sonuçları LAÜ bağlamında ana dili İngilizce olmayan İngilizce Öğretmenliği bölümü öğrencilerinin en çok sık kullandıkları ünlemlerin *wow*, *ow*, ve *hey*, en az sık kullandıkları ünlemlerin ise *dear*, *eh*, ve *uh* olduğunu ortaya çıkarmıştır.

Anahtar sözcükler: ünlemler, edimbilim, edimbilimsel yeti, dilbilim, yabancı dil öğretimi

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INTRODUCTION

The term “*interjection*” arises from the Latin *inter* meaning “between” and *jacer* meaning “throw”. They are words or constructions with no real linguistic value but we generally employ them to express feelings or states of mind in daily life situations. We use interjections more in speaking than in writing. Examples in English include *wow, ouch, oops, er, huh, gee, ooh, uh, aha, brrr, shh, ahem, psst* (Li, 2005:65).

The reason why we have focused on interjections in this paper is that the teaching of interjections has long been ignored by language teachers working at ELT departments in our country. Especially, in speaking lessons, language teachers do not provide their students with semantic and pragmatic knowledge regarding English interjections, which, unfortunately, gives rise to students’ not being able to establish a successful oral communication when interacting with (non)native speakers of English beyond the classroom context. It defines the concept of interjection, assesses the strengths and weaknesses of two contemporary approaches to interjections, and expounds the concept of pragmatic competence with reference to interjections. It tries to find out whether non-native students of ELT department in the European University of Lefke (EUL) context can use the right interjection in the related context successfully or not. Further, it investigates three most frequently used interjections and three least frequently used interjections by these students and the underlying reason(s) for this pragmatic phenomenon.

INTERJECTIONS

Traditionally, interjections have often been regarded as peripheral to language. Latin grammarians characterized them as non-words, unrelated to syntax, expressing only feelings or states of mind. The linguists in the 19th century viewed them as para-linguistic, even non-linguistic occurrences (Benfey 1869:295). Sapir (1970:7) categorized interjections as “never more, at best, than a decorative edging to the ample, complex fabric of language”.

Such views can still be encountered in contemporary literature: Quirk *et al.* (1985:853) describe interjections as “purely emotive words which do not enter into syntactic relations”; Trask (1993:144) describes an interjection as “a lexical item or phrase which serves to express emotion and which typically fails to enter into any syntactic structures at all”; Crystal (1995:207) defines an interjection as “a word or sound thrown into a sentence to express some feeling of the mind”.

In what follows, the relative strengths and weaknesses of two contrasting approaches to interjections, the sociolinguistic approach and the semantic approach, will be assessed.

APPROACHES TO INTERJECTIONS

The sociolinguistic approach

Those who support the sociolinguistic approach contend that an interjection “doesn’t seem to be a statement in the linguistic sense”. Rather, it is a “ritualized act, in something like the ethological sense of that term” (Goffman, 1981:100). In sociolinguistic viewpoint, interjections are not part of language, and are analyzed in relation to the socio-communicative roles they play, rather than any linguistic content they are likely to have.

Goffman views interjections as "response cries": "We see such 'expressions' as a natural overflowing, a flooding up of previously contained feeling, a bursting of normal restraints" (1981:99). By "response cries", Goffman indicates expressions such as *ouch*, *oops*, *yuk*, *wow*, *eh*, *ah*, *oh*, etc. He categories response cries in terms of what function they serve. Some are indeed more or less instinctive, normal reactions: the *transition display*, where a person articulating *brrr* when leaving a warm atmosphere for a cold one might not only do so to restore some sort of physical equilibrium but also to "fall into cadence with the others in the room" (1981:101); the *spill cry*, where a person saying *oops* on dropping something might do so in that it has the impact of "downplaying import and hence implication as evidence of our incompetence" (1981:102).

In Goffman’s viewpoint, the basic function of *ouch* (the *pain cry*) is to warn others that a threshold for pain is being reached, or about to be breached. Because such response cries (i.e. *ouch*, *oops*, *ah*) are not productive linguistically, they cannot be regarded as part of language. In spite of regarding response cries as peripheral to language proper, Goffman does not disregard their communicative adaptability. He stresses that if being told by a friend about a specifically gruesome moment from their previous trip to the dentist’s, you might say *ouch* sympathetically on their behalf. Or it might be used as in the following sentence:

(1) *Dentist*: That’ll be £75 for the consultation and £30 for the cavity.

Patient: *Ouch!*

It is, after all, obvious that *ouch* and most primary interjections, while being instinctive in some respects, are under our conscious control. If a person brings a hammer down forcefully on his thumb, the four-letter word he says is unlikely to commence with 'o'. A person screaming in agony is not screaming *ouch*. Thus, it can be stated that interjections do have some kind of meaning in spite of their

expressive and instinctive nature. In the following section, we will look at what interjections communicate besides the instinctive overflowing.

The semantic approach

The linguists who support the semantic approach argue that interjections are “semantically rich and have a definite conceptual structure which can be explicated” (Wilkins 1992:120). They stress that interjections communicate complex conceptual structures, have real semantic content and communication is achieved mainly via *encoding* conceptual structures. The following example shows the kind of analysis proposed by the semanticists, Wierzbicka’s conceptual structure for *wow* (1992:163):

(2) *wow!*

I now know something
I wouldn’t have thought I would know it
I think: it is very good
(I wouldn’t have thought it could be like that)
I feel something because of that

As can be seen from this analysis, semantic analyses of interjections are massively decompositional. Just as Wierzbicka states, “we can capture the subtlest shades of meaning encoded in interjections relying exclusively on universal or near-universal concepts, such as ‘good’ and ‘bad’, ‘do’ and ‘happen’, ‘want’, ‘know’, ‘say’, or ‘think’ (Wierzbicka 1992:163).

There are certain problems with this approach despite the emergence of a number of analyses within this framework. Firstly, its experimental psycholinguistic evidence exhibits that decompositional aspects of meaning are devoid of psychological reality (Fodor, Fodor and Garrett, 1975).

The second problem with the semantic approach is that an utterance of *wow* seems to communicate something altogether more obscure than the kind of structures they propose would predict: as shown above, the meaning of *wow* cannot be ‘rigorously defined’. This is not to deny that interjections can communicate a great deal. However, the range of communicative effects an utterance of *wow* might lead to, when integrated with different intonations and facial expressions, seems to go well beyond anything capturable in semantic structures such as those proposed above.

The third problem for the semantic approach is the context-dependence of interjections. Of course, (2) is not a fully propositional structure because of including uninterpreted indexicals (I, it, now), assigned reference by means other

than linguistic decoding. To put it differently, the communicative content of interjections is more obscure than the proposed conceptual structures would predict. It is the highly context-dependent nature of interjections that suggests a substantial pragmatic contribution to their comprehension.

The fourth problem with the approach is overlooking partly linguistic and partly natural composition of interjections. As is known, interjections fall somewhere between the natural and the linguistic. They share the feature of being partly coded and partly natural with tone of voice, facial expressions and even gestures. The fifth problem is related with the fact that interjections do not contribute to the truth conditions of the utterances containing them. That is, interjections are, in reality, non-truth-conditional. The non-truth-conditional nature of interjections suggests that a conceptual account is inappropriate, and that alternative semantic treatments should be explored.

PRAGMATIC COMPETENCE

Language learners often have difficulty in communicating with other people in the target language because of being communicatively incompetent. For this reason, they need to have not only knowledge of vocabulary, morphology, syntax, phonology, and the graphemic elements but also of the social and contextual factors underlying the target language. These factors indicate the norms of interaction shared by members of a given speech community to establish and maintain successful communication. They are related to one of the basic ingredients of the construct of communicative competence, that is, pragmatic competence (Bachman, 1990:87).

Pragmatic competence includes both 'illocutionary competence' and 'sociolinguistic competence'. While illocutionary competence refers to the functional use of language, sociolinguistic competence refers to the appropriateness of an utterance to context. Illocutionary competence involves the ability to (a) express ideas and emotions (ideational function), (b) get things done (manipulative function), (c) use language to teach, learn, and solve problems (heuristic function), and (d) be creative (imaginative function). Sociolinguistic competence comprises a sensitivity to (a) dialect or variety, (b) register, (c) naturalness (native-like use of language), and (d) cultural references and figures of speech (Bachman, 1990:87-98). A lack of pragmatic competence on the part of language learners may result in undesirable misunderstandings which can give rise to a breakdown of communication. Hence, language learners should be made familiar with how to behave appropriately when employing a variety of pragmatic features if their goal is to communicate successfully in the target language and culture.

When teaching commonly used English interjections to non-native students, the language teacher should try to make students aware of a wide variety of functions expressed by interjections in the English language and emphasize the importance of using interjections in the most appropriate context. S/he should stress that the functions expressed by interjections are typically emotional, such as pleasure, surprise, pity, hesitation, greeting, pain, pleading, etc. The following table exhibits some of the common interjections and their communicative functions (Essberger, 2009).

Table 1. Common Interjections in English and their Communicative Functions

Interjection	Communicative Function	Example
Ah	expressing pleasure	"Ah, that feels good."
	expressing realization	"Ah, now I understand."
	expressing resignation	"Ah well, it can't be hoped."
	expressing surprise	"Ah! I've won!"
Dear	expressing pity	"Oh dear! Does it hurt?"
Eh	expressing surprise	"Dear me! That's a surprise!"
	asking for repetition	"It's hot today." "Eh?" "I said it's hot today."
Er	expressing enquiry	"What do you think of that, eh?"
	expressing surprise	"Eh! Really?"
	inviting agreement	"Let's go, eh?"
	expressing hesitation	"Lima is the capital of...er...Peru."
hello, hullo	expressing greeting	"Hello John. How are you today?"
Hey	expressing surprise	"Hello! My car's gone!"
	calling attention	"Hey! look at that!"
Hi	expressing surprise, joy etc	"Hey! What a good idea!"
	expressing greeting	"Hi! What's new?"
Hmm	expressing hesitation, doubt or disagreement	"Hmm. I'm not so sure."
Oh, o	expressing surprise	"Oh! You're here!"
	expressing pain	"Oh! I've got a toothache."
	expressing pleading	"Oh, please say 'yes!'"
Ouch	expressing pain	"Ouch! That hurts!"
Uh	expressing hesitation	"Uh...I don't know the answer to that."
Uh-huh	expressing agreement	"Shall we go?" "Uh-huh."
Um, umm	expressing hesitation	"85 divided by 5 is...um...17."
Well	expressing surprise	"Well I never!"
	introducing a question	"Well, what did he say?"

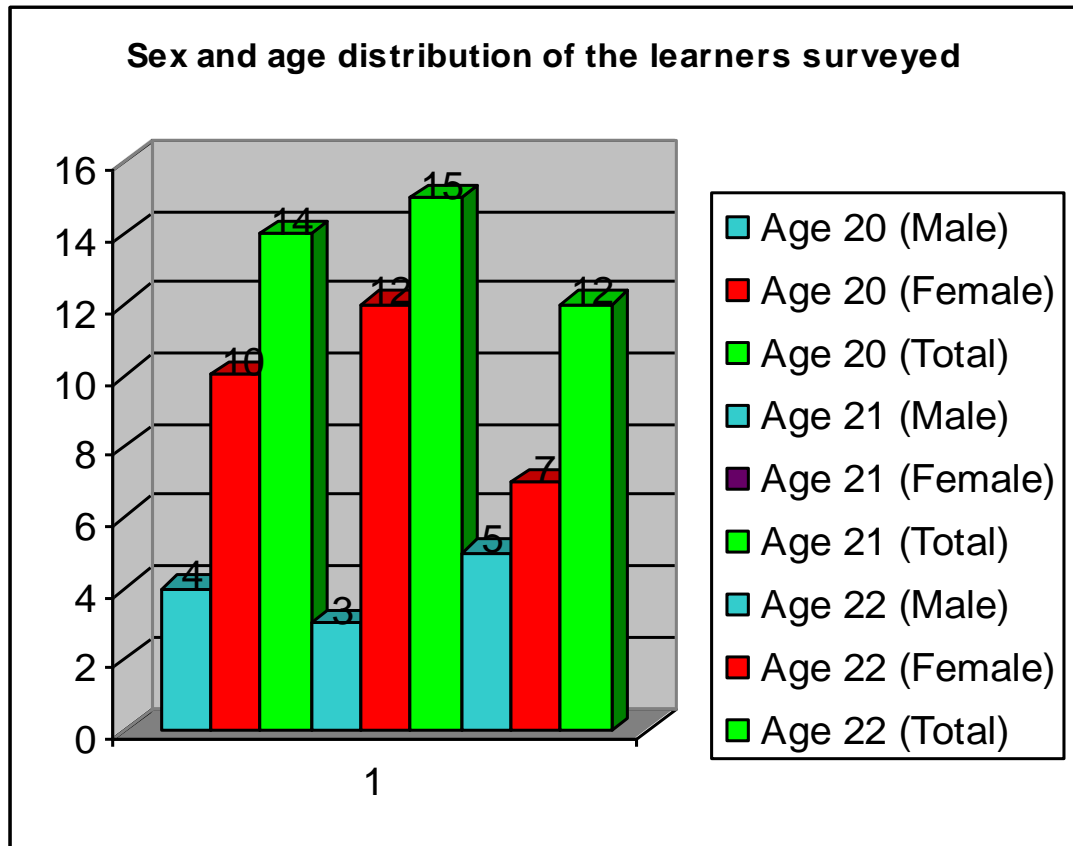
As is clearly seen in the above table, the interjections and their communicative functions are English language specific, that is, non-native learners, especially those in an EFL context like Turkey, may have difficulty in understanding the functions of English interjections and using them in a suitable

context because of not having access to authentic input of the target speech community.

METHOD AND ANALYSIS OF THE DATA

Method and subjects

41 non-native first year students at European University of Lefke, Faculty of Arts and Science, Department of English Language Teaching and 7 native teachers of English at EUL Preparatory School participated in this study. Most of the students were at the age of 20 though some of them were 21 or 22. The number of female students was higher than that of male students as seen in the graphic below.



Graphic 1. Sex And Age Distribution of the Learners Surveyed

As for the native teachers of English, it can be stated that their ages ranged from 35 to 49. The number of male teachers was 2, whereas the number of female teachers was 5.

These students are the students of a four-year teacher-training program at European University of Lefke. Their mother tongue is Turkish and they are required to have a certain level of proficiency in English to be able to start the first year. Before starting the first year, these students take a proficiency test at the beginning of the academic year. In this proficiency test, their reading, writing, speaking, and grammar abilities are tested. Those achieving the required level of proficiency start with the first year; however, those performing below the required level of proficiency attend a one-year preparatory program, and they take another proficiency test to continue with the first year at the end of the preparatory program.

These 41 students were all beyond a certain level of proficiency – which is upper-intermediate – and had all taken and succeeded in the compulsory speaking course (ELT 175 Oral Communication Skills I) in the Fall Semester of the 1st year program of the related department. However, they had difficulty in using common interjections in English. They had no pragmatic knowledge regarding the communicative functions of common interjections in English. The researcher himself observed the pragmatic failure faced by 1st year students in relation to the use of English interjections, while lecturing them in a course like ELT 171 Contextual Grammar I in the Fall Semester of 2008- 2009 Academic Year.

Problem

Interjections have always been disregarded in foreign language teaching by foreign language teachers. Especially, in speaking lessons, language teachers do not provide their students with semantic and pragmatic knowledge regarding English interjections, which, unfortunately, gives rise to students' having difficulty in reflecting their emotions with target language specific emotive words.

Because students are heavily under the influence of their mother tongue, they have tendency to express their emotions with reference to common interjections in the Turkish language. For instance, in English, the interjection *Ouch* has the meaning of "pain". However, Turkish students of English tend to use *Ah* instead of *Ouch* with the meaning of "pain".

Students do not live in a natural context where they can have the opportunity to interact with native speakers of the target language, which not only decreases their motivation to learn the target language but also negatively affects their mastering communicative functions of the emotive words in English. To put it

differently, it is the lack of the authentic context which makes learning the communicative functions of English interjections difficult for Turkish learners of English.

Instruments

Since this research aims to find out whether Turkish learners of English can make use of the right interjection in the related context successfully, the researcher designed a questionnaire consisting of 15 sentences to be used to elicit the pragmatic knowledge of the subjects regarding common interjections in English. When designing the questionnaire, the researcher not only collaborated with a native speaker of English but also had a control group of native English speaking respondents. By the help of the native speakers of English, the researcher incorporated the interjections commonly used in contemporary English into the questionnaire. However, the interjections that are highly stylized, quite literary, and antiquated were excluded from the questionnaire. All native speakers stressed that there was only one correct answer for each question in the questionnaire. The following table shows the case clearly:

Table 2. Correct Use and Misuse Percentages of the Subjects in the Control Group in Relation to Twelve Common English Interjections

Item Number	Interjection	Correct Use		Misuse	
		Frequency	(%)	Frequency	(%)
1	Dear	7	100	0	0
2	Oh	7	100	0	0
3	Hey	7	100	0	0
4	Ouch	7	100	0	0
5	Er	7	100	0	0
6	Wow	7	100	0	0
7	Dear	7	100	0	0
8	Uh	7	100	0	0
9	Hey	7	100	0	0
10	Yeah	7	100	0	0
11	Oh	7	100	0	0
12	Uh-huh	7	100	0	0
13	Ow	7	100	0	0
14	Eh	7	100	0	0
15	Well	7	100	0	0

* Out of 7 native English speaking respondents

This questionnaire was chosen as data collection instrument due to the following reasons:

1. It consists of sentences put into a real life like context.
2. It includes the most commonly used English interjections in various positions in sentences in a meaningful context.
3. It offers communicative functions of English interjections.
4. It also fits the needs of the researcher aiming to find out whether the subjects are under the negative influence of their mother tongue when using interjections to communicate certain emotions.

Data collection procedures

After selecting the data collection instrument, the researcher obtained the necessary permission from the head of the Department to conduct the research. Following this procedure, the researcher gave the questionnaire to the students of the 1st year in the Spring Semester of 2008-2009 Academic Year. In the questionnaire, the subjects were asked to choose the best interjection for the gaps in contextualized sentences. The subjects were told not to panic but to relax prior to the administration of the questionnaire by the researcher. There was a friendly, stress-free atmosphere in the language classroom. Students were asked not to make a disturbing noise during the process in order not to harm the performance of their classmates. The subjects submitted their questionnaire to the researcher after they finished placing the best interjection into the relevant gap. After the administration of the questionnaire, the scores were analyzed.

Data analysis procedures

After collecting the data at the beginning of the Spring Semester of 2008-2009 Academic Year, the researcher began to evaluate each paper by counting (a) interjections used correctly, (b) interjections used incorrectly, and (c) interjections that are not used (ignored by the subjects), and for scoring purpose, he gave one point for each correct use. Incorrect use and those ignored by the subjects were not taken into consideration. As a following step, the sum of the correct use for each item was divided into the number of subjects participating in the research to find out the frequency of correct use of interjections as the test performance of the subjects for the related interjection in English. Thus, the researcher determined problem causing English interjections for Turks through concrete proofs.

Analysis of the data

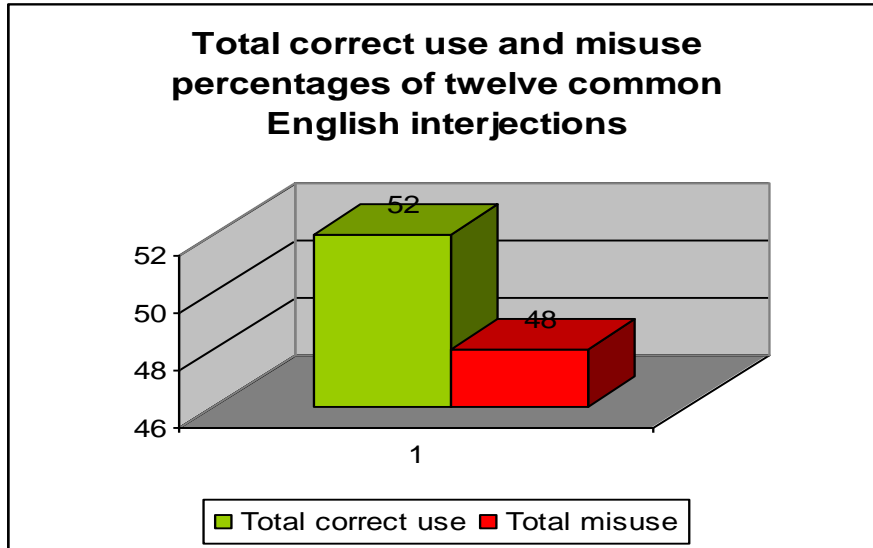
The researcher calculated the average correct use percentages for each interjection in the experimental group. The following example shows the case clearly:

Table 3. Correct Use and Misuse Percentages of the Subjects in the Experimental Group in Relation to Twelve Common English Interjections

Item Number	Interjection	Correct Use		Misuse	
		Frequency	(%)	Frequency	(%)
1	Dear	4	10	37	90
2	Oh	15	37	26	63
3	Hey	32	78	9	22
4	Ouch	16	39	25	61
5	Er	22	54	19	46
6	Wow	38	93	3	7
7	Dear	31	76	10	24
8	Uh	12	29	29	71
9	Hey	22	54	19	46
10	Yeah	26	63	15	37
11	Oh	17	41	24	59
12	Uh-huh	23	56	18	44
13	Ow	34	83	7	17
14	Eh	9	22	32	78
15	Well	21	51	20	49

* Out of 41 students

Thus, he determined problem causing interjections for non-native first year students of the ELT department. Graphic 2 shows the total correct use and misuse percentages of twelve common English interjections.

**Graphic 2. Total Correct Use and Misuse Percentages of Twelve common English interjections**

In the following, three most frequently used interjections, *Wow*, *Ow* and *Hey* and three least frequently used interjections, *Dear*, *Eh*, and *Uh* in Table 1 will be discussed in detail. The pragmatic discussions given here are based on Güneş (2004), Turkish Dictionary (2008), Oxford Student's Dictionary (2007), and Longman Dictionary (2003).

Three most frequently used interjections by non-native students of ELT department

The use of the interjection *wow* in the related context

Of 41 students, 38 students (93 %) used the interjection *wow* in the related context successfully. In English, the interjection *wow* is used for saying that you are very impressed and surprised by something as seen in the example "Wow! Look at that!" (Longman Dictionary, 2003:1909). Similarly, in Turkish, the interjection *vay* is used to express the meaning of surprise as seen in the example "Vay gülüm! Nereden bu geliş?" (Wow, my honey, where are you coming from?). However, it should be stated that, unlike the use of *wow* in English, the interjection *vay* in Turkish is also used to express the meaning of pain as seen in the example "Vay başım" (Ow, I have a headache.) (Turkish Dictionary, 2008). The reason why many subjects in the experimental group used the interjection *wow* in the given context successfully is that English interjection *wow* is similar to Turkish interjection *vay* in terms of not only sound but also meaning.

The use of the interjection *ow* in the related context

Of 41 students, 34 students (83 %) used the interjection *ow* in the related context successfully. In English, the interjection *ow* is employed to express the meaning of sudden pain as seen in the example "Ow, that hurts!" (Longman Dictionary, 2003:1179). Similarly, in Turkish, the interjection *of* is employed to express the same meaning as seen in the example "Of, kolum acıdı!" (Ow! I have an arm ache). However, it should be stressed that the interjection *of* is also used to refer to the meaning of boredom in Turkish as seen in the example "Of, bıktım artık!" (I am fed up with it!) (Turkish Dictionary, 2008). The reason why the subjects in the experimental group used English interjection *ow* correctly in the given context is that they made use of contextual clues in the given sentence.

The use of the interjection *hey* in the related context

Of 41 students, 32 students (78 %) used the interjection *hey* in the given context successfully. In both English and Turkish, the interjection *hey* is employed to get someone's attention or to show surprise, interest, or annoyance as seen in the example "Hey, wait a minute!" (Hey, bir dakika bekle!). However, it

should be stated that, unlike the case in English, the interjection *hey* in Turkish also refers to the meaning of reproach, complaining, scolding, admiration as seen in the examples, such as "Hey talih, böyle mi olacaktı!" (Back luck. I did not expect things to develop this way!), "Hey akılsız çocuk, ateşi niye ellersin?" (Silly boy, why are you playing with the fire?), "Hey Allahım, bu ne güzellik!" (Oh my God! How beautiful she is!) (Turkish Dictionary, 2008). The reason why the subjects in the experimental group used the English interjection *hey* correctly in the given context is that the same interjection exists in the Turkish language with the same meaning.

Three least frequently used interjections by non-native students of ELT department

The use of the interjection *dear* in the related context

Of 41 students, 4 students (10 %) used the interjection *dear* in the related context successfully. In English, the interjection *dear* is used for expressing disappointment, sadness, and surprise as seen in the example "Dear me! Aren't you ready? ". It is also used when speaking to somebody you know well as seen in the example "Would you like a cup of tea, dear? " (Oxford Student's Dictionary, 2007). In Turkish, however, the word *canım* is used to express the meaning of dissatisfaction and boredom as seen in the example "Canım be evladım, bırak şu el öpmeyi" (My dear son! Stop hand kissing). The same word can also be used when speaking to somebody you know well as seen in the example "Canım, bir parça kek ister misin?" (Dear me! Would you like a piece of cake?) (Turkish Dictionary, 2008). The reason why many subjects could not use this interjection in the given context successfully is that Turkish learners of English are under the influence of the linguistic system of their mother tongue, Turkish. The same reason is also valid for the interjections *eh* and *uh*, analyzed below.

The use of the interjection *eh* in the related context

Of 41 students, 9 students (22 %) used the interjection *eh* in the related context successfully. In English, the interjection *eh* is used for asking somebody to agree with you or repeat something as seen in the examples, such as 'Good party, eh?' (asking somebody to agree with you), 'Did you like the film?' 'Eh?' 'I asked if you liked the film!' (asking somebody to repeat something) (Oxford Student's Dictionary, 2007). In Turkish, however, the same interjection refers to the meaning of all right, OK, not bad, or dissatisfaction as seen in the examples, such as '-Gidelim mi?' 'Eh, haydi gidelim'. (Shall we go? OK, let's go.) (All

right, OK), ‘-Nasılsınız?’ ‘-Eh, şöyle böyle’. (How are you? Not bad.) (Not bad), ‘Eh, artık çok oluyorsun?’ (I am dissatisfied with your behaviors) (Dissatisfaction) (Turkish Dictionary, 2008).

The use of the interjection *uh* in the related context

Of 41 students, 12 students (29 %) used the interjection *uh* in the related context successfully. In English, the interjection *uh* is used to refer to the meaning of hesitation and it is also a space filler during conversation as seen in the examples "Uh, I don't know how to solve this problem", "Uh, who was that?", "Uh, let me see" (Oxford Student's Dictionary, 2007). In Turkish, however, the interjection *aaa* is used to express the same meaning as seen in the example "Aaa, en yakın bankanın nerede olduğunu bilmiyorum." (Uh, I don't know where the nearest bank is). It should also be stressed that the interjection *Aaa* in Turkish, unlike the use of the interjection *uh* in English, is used to refer to the meaning of surprise and admiration as seen in the examples, such as "Aaa! Gel Sedat, başımla beraber..." (Oh! Come Sedat, I will try my best for you.), "Aaa, doğrusu Tanrı razı olsun, iyi adamlar" (Oh! To tell the truth, they are good people) (Güneş, 2004:303).

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR LANGUAGE TEACHERS

Interjections play a vital role in communicating emotions in real life situations. However, the teaching of interjections has been disregarded by language teachers in our country. Firstly, there are very few pedagogically developed materials that can be used by teachers in the classroom context to teach the communicative functions expressed by English interjections. Secondly, there is a lack of preparation in relation to communicative teaching of interjections in TESL/TEFL programs. Thirdly, language teachers, especially non-native ones, lack the necessary pragmatic knowledge and education relevant to the pragmatics of interjections in English.

There are ways in which language teachers in Turkey can help the students to develop their pragmatic competence. The language teacher can raise the students' pragmatic awareness in relation to English interjections by having them watch videos of authentic interaction and feature films. This way, the students can become familiar with under what circumstances native speakers express surprise, what interjection(s) they employ to express surprise, and to whom.

Whether gathered via out-of-class observation or brought into the classroom via audiovisual media, authentic native speaker input is an important part of

pragmatic learning. The language teacher should attribute importance to expose the students to authentic native speaker input. This is not because the students should imitate native speakers' action patterns but in order to construct their own pragmatic knowledge based on the right kind of input (Kasper, 1997:10).

In the language classroom, the language teacher should try to give interpersonal communication tasks to the students in that interpersonal communication tasks are more concerned with participants' social relationships and involve communicative acts. Students become involved in different social roles and speech events through the inclusion of activities, such as role play, simulation, and drama into the classroom. It is through these activities that the language teacher can give the students the chance to practice the wide range of pragmatic and sociolinguistic abilities (Crookall & Saunders, 1989; Crookall & Oxford, 1990; Olshtain & Cohen, 1991) that they may need in interpersonal encounters beyond the classroom context.

To illustrate, the language teacher may give the students funny scenarios to act out by using only interjections as the dialogue. The teacher lets them practice away from other groups and then perform for the class. After that, s/he lets the class try to figure out what is going on. Look at the funny scenarios to be performed for the class:

- "Ouch!" (meaning: That hurts!)
- "Hmm!" (meaning: I am not so sure.)
- "Hey!" (meaning: Look at that!)
- "Oh!" (meaning: Please, say yes.)
- "Ah!" (meaning: Now I understand.)

Another example is that the language teacher may present some communicative situations that the students are likely to encounter in real life situations beyond the classroom context and asks them to show reaction to these situations as naturally as they can. Look at the communicative situations below and the expected reactions written in parentheses:

- You got 10 points at the IELTS exam. (expected reaction: Wow!).*
- Your little son is making a lot of noise and you want to watch the news on the TV. (expected reaction: Shh!)*
- Somebody has just stepped on your toe. (expected reaction: Ouch!)*
- You are vegetarian and you are offered a dish of raw meat (expected reaction: Ugh!)*

Finally, it should be underlined that L2 specific pragmatic development is crucial to be effective and powerful communicators in the target language and that pragmatic education should begin at the very beginning of foreign language learning since pragmatic development is just as much a significant component of language development as phonological, morphological, and syntactic improvement. In an attempt to employ more complicated structures, advanced learners with no L2 pragmatics specific education can apply to their L1 (Takahashi et al., 1987). Therefore, L2 pragmatics specific education can be said to be a necessary complement rather than a supplement that needs to commence even at the initial stages of foreign language learning (Yoshida, Kamiya, Kondo, & Tokiwa, 2000). Only then can we make our students sensitive to the importance of behaving in an appropriate way when utilizing a variety of pragmatic features and successful in communicating with the native speakers of the target language in real life situations.

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APPENDICES

A. Answers of the subjects in the control group to the questionnaire

St	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
1	D	D	A	C	B	A	C	A	A	A	B	C	C	A	D
2	D	D	A	C	B	A	C	A	A	A	B	C	C	A	D
3	D	D	A	C	B	A	C	A	A	A	B	C	C	A	D
4	D	D	A	C	B	A	C	A	A	A	B	C	C	A	D
5	D	D	A	C	B	A	C	A	A	A	B	C	C	A	D
6	D	D	A	C	B	A	C	A	A	A	B	C	C	A	D
7	D	D	A	C	B	A	C	A	A	A	B	C	C	A	D

B. Answers of the subjects in the experimental group to the questionnaire

St	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
1	C	D	A	C	A	D	A	B	B	A	C	C	A	C	A
2	C	C	B	B	A	A	A	B	C	D	D	C	C	D	B
3	C	D	B	B	C	A	A	B	C	B	D	C	C	B	A
4	B	B	A	B	D	A	C	B	D	B	B	B	A	D	D
5	B	C	A	C	A	A	D	B	C	A	D	B	C	B	B
6	B	B	B	B	B	A	D	C	B	A	B	A	C	A	B
7	B	A	B	A	A	A	C	D	A	C	A	C	C	C	D
8	B	C	A	B	B	A	C	D	D	A	B	C	C	D	D
9	B	D	B	B	C	A	C	A	B	A	A	B	A	A	C
10	C	D	B	D	C	A	C	B	C	A	D	D	C	B	D
11	B	D	A	A	B	A	D	C	D	A	B	D	B	D	D
12	B	B	A	B	B	A	C	A	A	A	D	A	C	B	D
13	D	D	A	C	A	A	D	B	D	C	D	A	C	A	A
14	C	B	A	C	B	A	C	C	C	D	A	C	C	D	D
15	D	D	A	C	A	A	C	B	A	C	D	B	C	B	A
16	B	B	A	B	B	A	C	C	A	A	D	C	C	B	A
17	B	B	A	B	B	A	C	A	A	A	D	B	C	B	B
18	B	B	B	C	B	A	C	C	A	A	B	B	B	B	A
19	B	B	A	B	B	A	C	C	A	A	D	D	C	C	D
20	B	D	A	C	B	A	A	A	A	D	B	C	C	B	A
21	C	D	A	B	B	A	C	B	B	A	D	B	C	D	D
22	D	B	A	C	B	A	C	B	D	A	D	A	C	C	D
23	C	A	A	B	B	A	C	C	A	B	A	C	C	D	D
24	B	D	A	C	B	A	D	B	A	B	C	C	C	C	D
25	A	B	A	C	C	A	C	B	A	A	B	A	C	D	D
26	B	C	D	B	C	A	C	C	D	A	C	C	C	A	C
27	B	D	A	B	C	A	C	A	B	A	B	B	C	B	D
28	C	B	A	B	C	A	C	A	A	C	A	C	C	A	D
29	B	B	A	D	C	A	C	A	D	A	B	C	C	B	C
30	B	B	A	D	B	A	C	D	A	A	A	C	C	D	D
31	B	B	A	C	C	C	C	C	A	C	B	C	C	A	B
32	D	D	A	C	A	D	C	D	B	D	C	C	C	D	D
33	C	B	A	B	B	A	C	A	A	A	B	D	C	D	B
34	C	D	D	C	B	A	C	B	B	A	D	C	C	D	D

35	A	B	A	C	C	A	C	A	A	A	B	C	B	D	C
36	B	D	A	B	B	A	C	B	A	A	B	D	C	D	C
37	B	B	A	B	B	A	C	A	A	C	B	C	C	A	A
38	C	D	A	C	C	A	B	A	A	A	B	D	C	B	D
39	B	B	A	B	B	A	C	A	A	C	B	C	A	A	D
40	B	B	A	C	B	A	C	B	A	A	B	C	C	C	B
41	C	B	A	B	B	A	C	C	A	A	D	C	C	A	D

C. Questionnaire**Participant Details**

Name of the University:

Age: Sex:

 Native speaker of English Non-native speaker of English**Dear Participants,**

This questionnaire aims to find out whether you are aware of commonly used English interjections and whether you can use them in the related context.

Please note that your answers will be kept confidential

- 1) “_____ me! That’s a surprise!” (expressing surprise)
a) Er b) Ouch c) Hey d) Dear
- 2) “_____, please say 'yes' !” (expressing pleading)
a) Er b) Ah c) Eh d) Oh
- 3) “_____ Ted. How are you today?” (expressing greeting)
a) Hey b) Yeah c) Er d) Ah
- 4) “_____! You’re stepping on my foot.” (expressing pain)
a) Eh b) Oh c) Ouch d) Well
- 5) “Dhaka is the capital city of _____ Bangladesh.” (expressing hesitation)
a) oh b) er c) eh d) hey
- 6) “____! What a good idea!” (expressing surprise, joy, etc.)
a) Wow b) Eh c) Ouch d) Er
- 7) “Oh ____! Does it hurt?” (expressing pity)
a) hey b) er c) dear d) eh
- 8) “_____... I don’t know the answer to that.” (expressing hesitation)
a) Uh b) Oh c) Ah d) Ow
- 9) “____! look at that!” (calling attention)
a) Hey b) Ye c) Yeah d) Oh
- 10) “_____, that seems good.” (expressing pleasure)
a) Yeah b) Er c) Hey d) Ow
- 11) “_____! You’re here!” (expressing surprise)
a) Uh b) Oh c) Er d) Hey
- 12) “Shall we go?” “_____.” (expressing agreement)
a) Er b) Hey c) Uh-huh d) Ow
- 13) “____! I’ve got a toothache.” (expressing pain)
a) Hmm b) Eh c) Ow d) Er
- 14) “What do you think of that, _____?” (expressing enquiry)
a) eh b) ah c) oh d) ow
- 15) “_____, what did he say?” (introducing a question)
a) Ah b) Uh c) Ouch d) Well

Thank you for your participation. Dr. Murat Hismanoglu