

Openings and Closing in Emails by CLIL Students: A Pedagogical Proposal

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Abstract

Email communication is pervasive in faculty interaction. As there exists status imbalance between students and professors in this type of context, emails are expected to cater for the uneven power relationships by means of using appropriate polite features. Previous research (e.g., Eslami, 2013; Salazar-Campillo & Codina-Espurz, in press) has pointed out the pragmatically deficient use of openings and closings in requestive emails sent by non-native students in educational contexts, revealing a lack of the expected deference and respect to the professor. In this paper, we firstly explore this topic further by looking at different groups of emails written by CLIL students to ascertain whether this variable affects students' pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic ability when writing their emails. Secondly, a proposal for the teaching of openings and closings is suggested, which aims to help second and/or foreign language learners behave in a more target-like manner thus avoiding pragmatic failure.

Keywords: openings, closings, CLIL, pragmatics, pedagogical proposal

1. Introduction

Research on email communication between students and professors has mushroomed for the past two decades (Bella & Sifianou, 2012), mainly because of the broad spread of this type of interaction in academia. In Félix-Brasdefer's (2012, p. 223) words, email communication is "the most preferred, pervasive, and efficient means of communication between students and instructors". Although students have time to elaborate, write and edit their emails due to the asynchronous nature of this form of interaction, emails may also show some characteristics of oral discourse, since it has been regarded as a hybrid genre (Crystal, 2006). This means that emails may fuse features of both oral and written modes, a fact which may cause difficulty if non-native students do not know how to appropriately address their professors. In fact, impolite behaviors may arise if students do not take into account variables such as status of the interlocutor, degree of imposition or social distance, especially in face-threatening acts (i.e., requests). In this vein, when faced with inappropriate emails, "some professors may simply refuse to reply" (Butler, 2012, p. 12), as pragmatic infelicities are "judged more harshly than mistakes in syntax, pronunciation, or lexis" (Krulatz, 2014, p. 19). Due to these potential negative reactions, in the early 2000s some voices (e.g., Bardovi-Harlig & Mahan-Taylor, 2003) already argued for the need of teaching pragmatics in an attempt to improve students' ability to use pragmatically adequate language.

In the present study, we aim to analyze opening and closing moves by two groups of undergraduates who were taught within a Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL, henceforth) framework with different intensity of instruction in English. As stated by Nashaat Sobhy (2017), more evidence is needed to ascertain the impact of CLIL approaches on students' appropriate use of the target language (TL). Therefore, we aim at comparing openings and closings addressed to faculty in order to shed light on an aspect, which, to our best of our knowledge, has not received sufficient attention: the effect of CLIL on email writing in faculty communication. Moreover, our second goal is to suggest a pedagogical proposal for the instruction of openings and closings by means of a five-stage approach (Expose-Examine-Enact-Evaluate-Expand) which will be referred to as the *Five Es Approach*.

1.1 Openings and Closings in Faculty Communication

Openings and closings are optional elements in email communication (Crystal, 2006), and consequently, they may be omitted in this type of exchanges. For instance, in an email corpus collected in two different settings (a large insurance company and UK universities) Gains (1999) found that 92% of the emails did not include an opening; in

a similar way, Lan (2000) showed that over 50% of the emails she gathered from staff at a Japanese university also lacked the opening move. However, the absence of openings in faculty communication may result in too direct or even offensive emails for the professor if variables such as power imbalance and status of participants have not been taken into account. Yet, when openings and closings do appear in emails, they may not be successfully used. For example, Eslami (2013) found that her Iranian non-native speakers (NNs) of English overused openings and closings and they included small talk and phatic comments, which reflected Iranian culture-specific features but may not be regarded as appropriate in the university context. Waldvogel (2007) collected email data from two different settings (an educational organization and a manufacturing plant). In the former, openings and closings reflected a more familiar and intimate tone, whereas in the latter those two moves included more deference towards the recipient.

Salazar-Campillo (2018) carried out a study on openings and closings in first-contact emails by graduate students. The emails were written by two groups of students: the first group used their L1 (Spanish) and the second one wrote the emails in English, the students' foreign language (FL). In the case of openings, none of the groups showed the expected level of deference to the professor because only a greeting or a greeting and the professor's first name was mainly employed. In contrast, closings did include status-appropriate politeness and respect regardless of the language used.

Bou-Franch (2011) examined opening and closing moves in three email exchanges. Her findings revealed that increasing familiarity and greater informality took place from initial to non-initial mails; that is to say, openings and closings were less elaborated as the student-professor interaction developed. Very recently, Salazar-Campillo and Codina-Espurz (in press) examined politeness in openings and closings in first and follow-up emails. Their findings showed that openings were rather informal, since they mostly included a greeting expression and the professor's first name. In the closing moves, a decrease in polite features was found particularly in the follow-up emails, a fact, which the authors believe, reflects a more conversational way of communication.

The afore-mentioned studies are some examples of research conducted on openings and closings taking into account comparisons of email production by native and non-native speakers and non-native students' production in their FL. In this study, we examine openings and closings in emails by non-native students taking into account different intensities of CLIL implementation (strong CLIL vs. weak CLIL).

1.2 Pragmatics in Content and Language Integrated Learning

The term CLIL appeared in the 1990s in Europe in an attempt to look for an alternative term to 'immersion', much more related to models in Canada (Coyle, 2007). Although CLIL has been used as an umbrella term that embraces many variants and approaches (Cenoz et al., 2014), in the present study, we adhere to Coyle et al.'s (2010, p. 1) brief and clear definition of CLIL: "Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) is a dual-focused educational approach in which an additional language is used for the learning and teaching of both content and language". Although traditionally this additional language has been English, CLIL may embrace any language other than the L1. CLIL is best defined by means of a continuum of types of integration of language and content at different educational levels, including tertiary. The diversity of CLIL is reflected in the number of subjects that may be taught through the additional language (from only one to several subjects in the students' curriculum).

Despite the discrepancies in the term CLIL, different models agree on learning the TL while focusing on content. Thus, two elements are crucial in CLIL approaches: the development of TL skills as well as content knowledge of one or more academic subjects. Therefore, the existing proposals share the goal of learning the TL by means of the content and the TL in which this content is taught.

Different CLIL programs can be taken into consideration depending on the intensity of implementation of content knowledge and, in turn, the TL. A 'strong'/'hard' and a 'weak'/'soft' version of CLIL has been distinguished (Ball, 2009; Bentley, 2010; Ikeda, 2013). Ball (2009) conceptualizes strong CLIL programs as immersion programs in bilingual contexts and weak CLIL as programs with a focus on language while emphasizing content, in an English-as-a-foreign-language (EFL) context we can extrapolate and adapt this distinction to a context in which the TL (in our case English) is not the L1 of the community.

Positive results of CLIL methodologies in areas such as receptive skills (Jiménez Catalán & Ruiz de Zarobe, 2007) and fluency in speaking (Ruiz de Zarobe, 2008) have been reported; yet, pragmatics does not seem to be much affected by using English as the medium of instruction. As shown by Tedick and Wesley (2015), students' sociolinguistic competence in CLIL programs seems not to be fully developed. This claim is further supported by Nashaat Sobhy (2017), whose study on request modifications by CLIL and non-CLIL students showed that the CLIL program did not have a strong impact on students' pragmatic competence, at least on that specific speech act.

For this reason, this is an area that clearly deserves further research, since, as attested by Bardovi-Harlig (2001), being linguistically competent does not equate with being pragmatically appropriate.

The aim of the present study is to investigate whether the degree of intensity (i.e., strong vs. weak CLIL approaches) has an impact on the way students at tertiary level write their emails to a higher up (i.e., a professor) in order to ascertain the appropriateness of opening and closing moves. As stated by the European Commission (2008), one of the main goals of CLIL is to help learners transfer academic skills to “general life skills”. Moreover, the Council of Europe (2001) also has as a main objective to build communicative competence, which comprises linguistic, sociolinguistic and pragmatic competences. Therefore, it seems paramount to conduct research which examines CLIL and the development of pragmatic aspects in the EFL classroom.

2. Method

2.1 Data Collection

In order to examine potential differences in email communication to a faculty member among CLIL students, we selected a total of 40 messages from two different groups of undergraduate students which differed in the degree of exposure to content knowledge in the TL (English), from low intensity (weak version) to a higher intensity (strong version) of CLIL. In the present study, a weak version of CLIL (henceforth, w-CLIL) is represented by students in Primary Education Degree who received 3 hours of Education content instruction in English per week. On the other hand, English Studies majors, who are taught their curricular subjects in English, comprised the group following a strong version of CLIL (henceforth, s-CLIL).

The 40 emails (20 from the w-CLIL and 20 from the s-CLIL group) that constitute the corpus of the present study were requestive emails asking for an appointment, information about a classroom-related aspect or action on the professor’s part (i.e., send a task again or accept a late assignment), and were spontaneously sent to two professors at a Spanish university.

2.2 Data Analysis

The analysis of the data was carried out by means of Salazar-Campillo and Codina-Espurz’s (in press) typology of openings (see Appendix A) and closings (see Appendix B). Within opening moves, the authors distinguished three elements: *Salutation*, *Pleasantry* and *Identification of self*. *Salutations* entail either a genuine greeting expression (i.e., *Good morning*) or a term of deference (i.e., *Dear*) and a form of address (i.e., the use of a title and/or the professor’s first name/last name). A *Pleasantry* is a polite social remark, which may show an expression of gratitude or apology, among others. In some mails, the sender may use the *Identification of self* move to introduce him/herself to the recipient.

As far as closings are concerned, three moves were also described. First, the *Pre-closing statement* may express gratitude about the anticipated granting of the request, or apology for the request imposition, for example. The second move, *Complementary close*, is a more conventional and formulaic closing expression such as *Regards*. The last element is the *Signature*, which can be expressed by either the student’s first name (FN), his/her last name (LN) or both (FN+LN).

3. Results and Discussion

Results on the production of opening and closing moves will be discussed for both groups of subjects (s-CLIL and w-CLIL).

3.1 Openings

All s-CLIL subjects used an opening to initiate the email to the faculty member. As Table 1 illustrates, 90% of the subjects in the s-CLIL group chose a greeting expression and their first name (GE+FN) to open their emails, whereas the remaining 10% opted for a GE only. The preferred greeting expression in the GE+FN formula was the greeting *Hello* (5 instances) and its variant *Hi* (3 instances). It is interesting to comment that one subject used the Spanish salutation *Hola* even though the message was written in English. The second most preferred greeting expression was a form of *Good morning/afternoon/night* (5 instances), and in one case, the greeting *Merry Christmas* was used instead. *Hello* was the only GE produced without an address term in this group (10%). The wide use of GE+FN corroborates previous research (e.g., BjØrge, 2007; Salazar-Campillo & Codina-Espurz, in press) which argues for a “neutral” form of greeting when students are uncertain about greeting the professor. There was only one occurrence of *Pleasantry* (*I hope you feel well after the operation*) and three subjects (15%) included an *Identification of self*.

Table 1. Distribution of opening moves

A	<i>Salutation:</i> Greeting expression + Address term	Example	s-CLIL	w-CLIL
GE+FN		<i>Dear FN</i>	3	3
		<i>Good morning FN</i>	2	1
		<i>Good afternoon FN</i>	2	1
		<i>Good night FN</i>	1	
		<i>Hello FN</i>	5	4
		<i>Hi FN</i>	3	2
		<i>Hola FN</i>	1	
		<i>Merry Christmas FN</i>	1	
GE		<i>Hello</i>	2	5
		<i>Good morning</i>		2
		<i>Hi</i>		2
B	<i>Pleasantry</i> (gratitude, apology, etc.)		1	1
C	<i>Identification of self</i>		3	14

In the w-CLIL group, 55% of the emails included an opening in the form of a GE+FN and 45% contained a GE only. The use of the term of deference *Dear* with the instructor's FN comes as the third choice (15%). Whereas in the s-CLIL group the tendency was to opt for the GE+FN formula, students in the w-CLIL group seem to be more polarized towards choosing either GE+FN or GE as opening formulae. In contrast to the low incidence of *Identification of self* of the s-CLIL group, 70% of the messages in the w-CLIL group included this opening move. Since several class groups of the w-CLIL course are available, students may feel compelled to identify themselves to let the instructor know the cohort they are registered in. On the contrary, there is only one class for the s-CLIL course. As far as the use of *Pleasantries* is concerned, only one subject in the w-CLIL made an apologetic remark to the professor (*I hope not to bother you*).

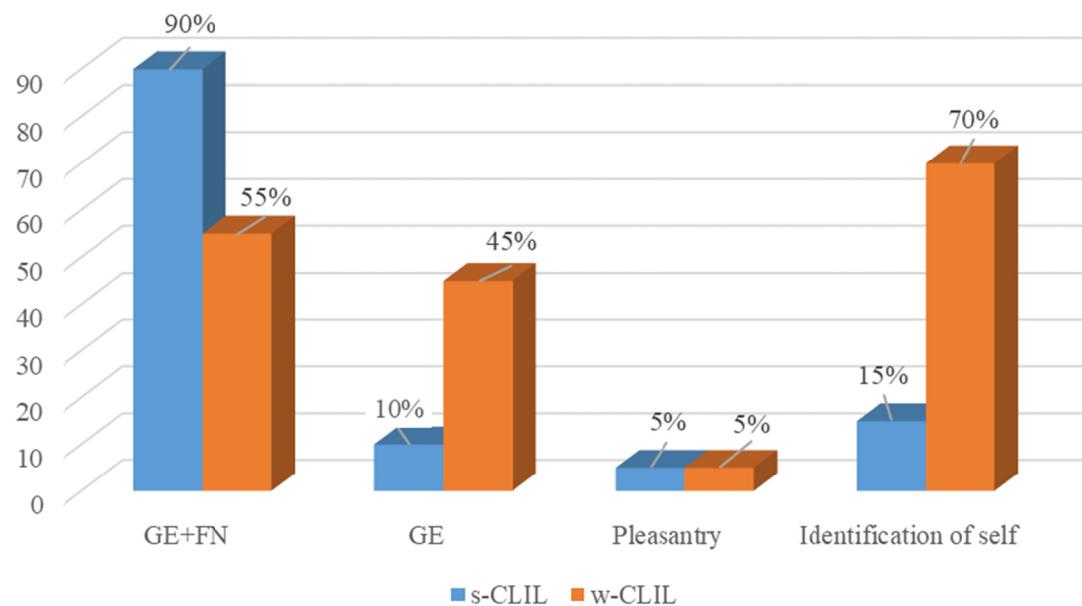


Figure 1. Comparison of opening moves in emails by s-CLIL and w-CLIL students

3.2 Closings

In the s-CLIL group, seven emails (35% of the total) included a *Pre-closing statement*; six were of gratitude (i.e., *Thank you so much for your collaboration*) and one expressed apology (*Sorry for the inconvenience*) to mitigate the imposition of the request while asking the instructor to accept a late assignment.

A total of 24 *Complimentary closes* were identified in the 20 emails since four emails included two *Complimentary closes*. In this case, besides a standard *Complimentary close* such as *Regards* or *Thanks*, the subjects added a holiday greeting (i.e., *Merry Christmas* or *Happy Easter*) to close the email. As Table 2 illustrates, *Regards* was the preferred formula (9 instances) followed by the formulaic *Thanks* (5 instances).

Table 2. Distribution of closing moves

CLOSINGS		s-CLIL	w-CLIL
A	<i>Pre-closing statement</i>		
	Apology	1	
	Gratitude	6	2
	Appeal		2
B	<i>Complimentary close</i>		
	(<i>Best, Kind</i>) <i>Regards</i>	9	5
	<i>Thanks</i>	5	11
	<i>Best</i>	1	
	<i>Best wishes</i>	2	
	<i>Greetings</i>		2
	(* <i>A greeting</i>)		
	<i>Happy Easter</i>	1	
	<i>Merry Christmas</i>	2	
	<i>Happy holidays</i>	1	
	<i>See you next Tuesday/</i>	3	2
	<i>Hope to see you soon</i>		
	<i>Bye</i>		1
	Ø		2
C	<i>Signature</i>		
	FN	10	9
	FN+LN	9	5
	Ø	1	6

As for the *Signature*, 50% of the students signed the email with their FN only, whereas 45% opted to use FN+LN. Only one subject did not include a *Signature* to close the email in the s-CLIL group.

In the w-CLIL group, only 20% of the emails contained a *Pre-closing statement* (10% of gratitude and 10% appeal). Although two emails in the w-CLIL group did not include a *Complimentary close*, 21 *Complimentary closes* were produced in 18 messages as three messages contained two of these closing formulae. In these instances, the students added a phatic comment (*Hope to see you soon*) or an extra formulaic closing. Within this group, the formulaic *Thanks* (11 instances) was favored over *Regards* (5 instances). The other *Complimentary close* present in our data was **A greeting* (2 instances), the direct translation of *Un saludo*, which is frequently used to close a message in Spanish. Surprisingly, one student decided to close the email with a *Bye*, and did not sign the email, which reflects the conversational nature of emails (Nistorescu, 2009). Most of the emails were signed by either using the subject's FN (45%) or FN+LN (25%); however, 30% of the students chose not to include a *Signature* to

close the email. Surprisingly, with the exception of one student, those who did not sign their messages had not identified themselves in the opening either. Since learners have the tendency to simply reply to an existing message exchange with the professor to post a new request, we believe learners relied on that previous message or their usernames to be identified by the faculty member.

Although the overall number of *Complimentary closes* is similar in both groups, as Table 2 illustrates, the w-CLIL students appear to rely mostly on only two formulae whereas the s-CLIL subjects offer a wider spectrum of expressions. In short, there is not a quantitative difference in the number of *Complimentary closes* provided by both groups, but from a qualitatively point of view, the s-CLIL group shows a greater variety of closing expressions when writing an email.

Overall, our results seem to indicate that in spite of the differences in exposure to the English language, emails produced by s-CLIL and w-CLIL students exhibit limitations in pragmatic competence. Although all the emails of our corpus included a form of greeting, these are restricted to the use of two patterns: GE and GE+FN. Moreover, our data do not show a single instance in which the learner uses a title to address a professor. As Salazar-Campillo and Codina-Espurz (in press) pointed out in a previous study on openings and closings in emails, learners may be transferring the rules of the L1 when using the FL. Although in certain cultures it may not be appropriate to address a person of a higher status such as a faculty member by his/her FN only, in Spain, most students (at all levels of education, from elementary to higher education) tend to do so. In this sense, Alcón-Soler (2015) argued that students did not take into account social distance relationships in their emails with professors. In the same vein, Waldvogel (2007), in her study of openings and closings in two different contexts (one of them being an educational organization), also found an extensive use of FN in openings irrespective of status differences. As this author claims, this level of informality may mirror the egalitarian nature of a society. Regardless of cultural differences, we believe learners need to know that other cultures may operate differently, and therefore, they should be instructed on how to write culturally acceptable emails.

Taking into account the above results, instruction seems necessary in light of three findings of this exploratory study: first, the wide use of an opening formula operationalized by GE+FN and GE; second, the overuse of *Regards* and *Thanks* as *Complementary closes* and third, the avoidance of a sign-off formula in the w-CLIL group. Our claim is in line with previous studies (Butler, 2012; Chen, 2015), which urge for instruction in pragmatics, in particular in the use of openings and closings in emails, since unsuccessful or inappropriate email writing may portray a wrong perception of a student and affect her/his relationship with the professor.

4. Pedagogical Implications: A Proposal for the Teaching of Pragmatics

In spite of being the most common form of student-professor consultation, learners seem to experience difficulties when communicating via emails in the educational setting. When writing to a professor, some of them may not know how to structure an email or how to properly address the professor, for example, which may indicate a lack of knowledge of the rules of computer-mediated communication. Students do not seem to benefit from the asynchronous nature of email communication, which allows for extra time to carefully and appropriately organize and develop email writing.

As our results suggest, most students are deficient in the use of opening and closing formulae in email writing to faculty members, thus, the importance of focusing on how to approach instruction of pragmatic aspects. Specifically, Bardovi-Harlig and Mahan-Taylor (2003, p. 38) pointed out the need for the instruction on pragmatics in a quite straightforward way: "...observation of language learners shows there is a demonstrated need for it, and instruction in pragmatics can be successful". In the case of openings and closings, some proposals have been suggested for the teaching of these moves in emails. For instance, Butler (2012) carried out research with Japanese students and native speakers (NSs) who were requested to write 3 emails which involved different status and power relationships. As for openings, NSs consistently used a formal greeting (Dr./Professor + professor's last name) to start their emails, whereas the learners employed more informal greetings by using the professor's first name. This students' preference to include an unmitigated direct request also signaled informality. In light of these results, the author suggests pedagogical intervention to teach appropriate openings and requests in emails addressed to professors. Additional evidence for the need of instruction was provided by Chen's (2015) research, which revealed that instruction may increase the production of more formal openings and closings. Still, to the best of our knowledge, the two studies reported above are the only examples of research addressing the need for instruction in the specific field of opening and closing sequences.

Recently, Hilliard (2017) has put forward a proposal for the teaching of complaints which includes activities, such as awareness raising tasks, readings and videos to illustrate authentic complaints, discourse completion tasks and

role plays, among others. All these activities can also be used to teach other speech acts in order to help students to become pragmatically competent.

In what follows, we present a proposal for the teaching of openings and closings in email writing which may also be applicable to other pragmatic aspects both in CLIL and EFL contexts. We have termed this proposal the *Five Es* Approach: Expose-Examine-Enact-Evaluate-Expand (see Figure 2).



Figure 2. The *Five Es* Approach for the instruction of openings and closings

The first step in promoting the development of pragmatic competence is to EXPOSE learners to samples of real-life pragmatic exchanges. This is especially important in the EFL context, where learners may have limited interaction with NSs of the TL and thus, exposure to authentic input is scarce. In this vein, learners should be exposed to how realizations of a certain speech act or the structure of an email are accomplished. Therefore, with regard to the teaching of openings and closing in emails, learners should be provided with samples of authentic emails in the TL (Krulatz, 2014). At this stage, learners need to be presented with NS models. In a globalized world where English is used as a lingua franca, NNS models produced by speakers of other languages could also be provided. Following Bardovi-Harlig and Mahan-Taylor (2003), students should be introduced to authentic examples taken from natural data on the one hand, and input should be given before production, on the other.

This initial stage fulfills several functions. On the one hand, the presentation of different email models may activate the previous knowledge learners have on how to structure an email and allow them to appeal to their background knowledge prior to tackling any task. In this phase, group discussion also provides an opportunity to generate and check ideas learners have about email writing and, thus, contribute to a better understanding of the targeted phenomenon.

At the EXAMINE stage, we suggest to analyze the emails and focus on the targeted structures. It is crucial to raise the learners' awareness on how openings and closings are realized. To our mind, awareness raising should be at the center of our approach since it can be activated at any stage. The learners and the professor work in collaboration to examine (explore and explain) how to open and close emails. A more inductive approach (explore) could be the starting point to ask students to detect the structures that emerge from the data available (i.e., openings and closings in emails). At the same time, a deductive approach (explain) can also be adopted to exemplify different types of salutations and leave-taking moves learners can use when writing to a professor. Since some students may feel more comfortable with a particular perspective, by appealing to both types of approaches we can cater for different learning styles and learners' preferences.

We urge to establish cross-cultural comparisons between the L1 and the TL to give learners an opportunity to detect L1-TL differences, if any. Students need to be aware that what may be acceptable in their L1 may not be appropriate in the TL. In order to detect potential differences between their L1 and the TL culture, we can ask learners to compare and contrast how openings and closings (or a particular speech act, for example) are realized. Cross-cultural comparisons may contribute to raising learners' pragmatic awareness and, in turn, develop TL pragmatic competence.

Some previous research has pinpointed the key role of raising learners' awareness in the instruction of pragmatics (e.g., Bardovi-Harlig & Mahan-Taylor, 2003; Narita, 2012). An interactive, collaborative approach between the instructor and students may be desirable to discuss pragmalinguistic aspects which may otherwise go unnoticed to some students if allowed to explore by themselves. Thus, for example, it may be helpful to look at how to open and close emails in different contexts.

Learners need to implement what has been presented in the previous stage. The ENACT stage focuses on learners' production since they are asked to write emails taking into consideration a variety of potential recipients and cultural situations. Ideally, we suggest to prompt learners to write real emails they may need to send to other instructors. Given the availability and immediacy of the internet, learners can feel free to ask instructors about any academic-related concern that arises. Especially in an EFL context, learners will be most likely to address their professors in the L1 rather than in their FL. This phase offers an excellent opportunity to practice writing an email draft. By doing so, learners may feel more confident about their communicative ability and start taking the initiative to communicate to other faculty members in English (and perhaps, and hopefully to their peers as well).

In the following phase, learners may exchange the email drafts with their classmates and have them appraise (EVALUATE) the pragmatic appropriateness of their messages. Learners should receive feedback from both the teacher and their peers in order to repair potential pragmatic failure. Learners need to know whether and how well they have successfully accomplished their intended pragmatic communicative function. Feedback and repair will undoubtedly contribute to improving pragmatic competence. Moreover, by exchanging the emails they have produced, learners are exposed to more input (messages written by their peers) and, in turn, given the opportunity to learn from the input presented to them.

Finally, we propose to EXPAND the task to other contexts and modes of communication. Within email writing, for example, we could adapt the task by changing the status of the sender and receiver (from unequal status in email writing to faculty members, to equal when writing to a peer). We could also shift to oral discourse and focus on how to open and close a conversation in service encounters, and start the *Five Es* cycle again.

5. Conclusion

Bearing in mind that foreign language students' proficiency may not match their pragmatic ability (Bardovi-Harlig & Dörnyei, 1998) and that instruction on pragmatics is effective (Norris & Ortega, 2000), the aim of the present study was twofold: first, to examine EFL learners' production of email openings and closings taking into account the intensity of CLIL approaches. Second, we put forward a proposal for the teaching of email openings and closings, which may be suitable for the instruction of any pragmatic feature, as the phases are amenable to be implemented in any pragmatic intervention. Our findings indicate that despite different degrees of exposure to the TL, learners still show pragmatic deficiencies. The data suggest that exposure to the TL may qualitatively increase the production of openings and closing moves, but that instruction is needed to help learners to write appropriate emails to faculty, at least in an EFL context.

The exploratory study we presented is subject to a number of limitations: first, the level of proficiency of students could not be established; second, no information was collected about the students' contact with the TL outside the academic context (stays abroad, private lessons, etc.). Moreover, this pedagogical proposal has not been implemented yet; therefore, in practice, moving from one phase to another may not be as straightforward as described and may require to backtrack to a previous step. Nevertheless, this should not be regarded as a limitation, but as a possibility for future pedagogical intervention.

Finally, some issues could be considered for further research on email writing in educational settings. In order to further understand some of the decisions learners make when writing emails to faculty (i.e., failing to sign an email, lack of student's identification in the opening, etc.), we suggest to interview the sender whenever possible or even use think-aloud techniques which may provide verbalizations of their email writing process. Although it is out of the scope of this paper, we have also noticed that many learners do not pay any attention to the layout and formatting of the message. In some instances, their emails are just a string of sentences (no spaces between the opening and body of the message, for example). Therefore, the layout of the email is an issue which deserves further analysis, along with the use of punctuation and emoticons.

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Appendices

Appendix A. Typology for the analysis of opening moves (Salazar-Campillo & Codina-Espurz, in press)

OPENINGS						
A Salutation:		Example				
		Greeting/term deference	of	Title	First name	Last name
Degree of formality	1.	GE+T+FN+LN	X		X	X
	2.	GE+T+LN	X		X	X
	3.	GE+T+FN	X		X	
	4.	T+FN+LN			X	X
	5.	T+LN			X	
	6.	FN+LN			X	X
	7.	GE+T	X		X	

8.	T		X		<i>Professor</i>
9.	GE+FN+LN	X		X	<i>Dear</i> (professor's first name and last name)
10.	GE+LN	X		X	<i>Dear</i> (professor's last name)
11.	GE+FN	X		X	<i>Dear/Hello</i> (professor's first name)
12.	GE	X			<i>Hello, Good afternoon</i>
13.	FN+LN		X	X	(professor's first name and last name)
14.	LN			X	(professor's last name)
15.	FN			X	(professor's first name)
16.	Ø	-	-	-	(no Salutation)
B.	<i>Pleasantry</i> (gratitude, apology, etc.)				<i>I hope this email finds you well.</i>
C.	<i>Identification of self</i>				sender's identification

Appendix B. Typology for the analysis of closing moves (Salazar-Campillo & Codina-Espurz, in press)

CLOSINGS		
A.	<i>Pre-closing statement</i>	Examples
	Gratitude	<i>Thank you for your help/your answer</i> <i>(Many)Thanks for your attention</i>
	Appeal	<i>Looking forward to hearing from you</i>
	Hope/wish	<i>I hope I can register</i>
	Apology	<i>Sorry for the inconvenience</i>
B	<i>Complimentary close</i>	<i>Regards/Thanks/Have a nice day</i>
C.	<i>Signature</i>	Student's first name and/or last name(s)

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