Title of Project
Learning by Simulating: Investigating the Development of L2 Pragmatics in a Task-based Digital Simulation with Feedback

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TIRF Research Topic Investigated
Digital Technology in Language Education

Project Summary
This study examines the extent to which task-based digital simulation practice with more and less explicit pragmatic feedback contributes to English-as-a foreign language learners' English pragmatic development. In an increasingly connected globe, learners of English are expected to engage in various multilingual and multicultural interactions. Competent participation in such interactions involves not only attending to the explicit rules of the target language, but also to its pragmatics, the implicit rules of what to say, how to say it, when, and to whom. Despite its importance, pragmatics instruction has remained virtually nonexistent in language classrooms and textbooks, leaving learners unable to comprehend or communicate intended meaning. Task-based language teaching (Long, 2015), a language pedagogy using communicative tasks as the unit of instruction, has been shown to promote morphosyntactic and lexical learning. Research to date, however, has rarely investigated how tasks, particularly tasks delivered through digital simulations with adaptive feedback, facilitate learners' immediate and sustained pragmatic development (Plonsky & Kim, 2016). In this mixed-methods study, 75 learners at an English-medium university in Turkey will be randomly assigned to implicit feedback, explicit feedback, or control group with no feedback. Learners' receptive and productive pragmatic gains will be measured before, immediately after, and one week after digital practice. These experimental data will be triangulated with surveys, stimulated recalls, and interviews to gain insights into learners' individualized experiences of the digital simulation and feedback. Findings will expand scholarly understanding of digital task-based instruction, with benefits for learners, teachers, curriculum designers, and digital learning platform developers.