

THE LINGUISTIC AND CULTURAL DISTINCTIVENESS OF THE REQUEST SPEECH ACT BASED ON RUSSIAN, KOREAN AND ENGLISH LANGUAGES

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Abstract. This article analyses the characteristics of the speech act of making a request in Russian, Korean and English language use. Emphasis is placed on considering the pragmatic attributes of each language. The objective of this study is to analyse the characteristics of request speech act in Russian, Korean and English languages, and to define its situational properties through a comparative method. The result may be described as follows: in English-speaking culture, the act of making a request is influenced by the values of individuality, personal autonomy, and a horizontal kind of interaction. In Russian-speaking culture, which is fundamentally collectivist, the notions of individual autonomy and privacy are not as prominent as in English-speaking culture. Consequently, the necessity of employing a distancing strategy to convey a request is not as urgent as it is in English-speaking culture. Non-linguistic factors, such as the context of communication, social status, age of participants, and personal relationships, significantly influence the communication approach in Korean culture.

Keywords: pragmatics; speech act; request speech act; cross-linguistics.

Modern linguistics is characterised by its inclination to incorporate several methodologies in the analysis of language. This is a result of language's inherent complexity and its diverse range of purposes. This enables us to convey the notion that in order to fully and thoroughly describe language as a complex and diverse phenomena, a holistic depiction of language is essential, considering its diverse purposes. The ethnocultural distinctiveness of a language is evident in both its structural features and the way speakers of that language interact with each other.

Intercultural communication issues are becoming important in linguistic study during the period of globalisation. There is no question that having knowledge of the laws and patterns of communication in a specific nation is crucial for successful communication between representatives of various cultures. The process of making a request is particularly challenging in international communication since the range of patterns used for this purpose is highly varied, even within a single language. Furthermore, these patterns sometimes do not have direct equivalents in other languages.

In the English language, there are several ways to make a request, each differing in the level of directness in conveying the goal of the speaker. Scientists categorise directness into three distinct levels:

- 1) The most direct form of communication is explicit, using techniques such as the imperative mood (*Study hard, please*), performative verbs (*I request you follow the fellows*), and hedged performatives (*I would like you to make your meaning clear*).
- 2) Indirect speech acts involve different types of interrogative sentences that soften the assertiveness of the request (*could you, why not?, would you...*).

3) Implicit requests, also known as hints, can be expressed either as a question (*Why is the door open?*) or as a statement (*It's hot in here*). Researchers have shown that these three levels of directness in making a request are widely applicable, and their selection frequency is influenced by the communication style specific to different ethnicities.

In English-speaking culture, which values individualism, personal autonomy, and egalitarian relationships, the prevalent method of making a request is traditionally through indirect speech acts, such as using interrogative sentences like "*Would you mind passing the book?*" "May I request that they provide me with a book?"

In this scenario, the request, as demonstrated by the examples, might be directed at either the listener or the speaker. Other methods for diminishing categorization include employing politeness markers (*May I have an ice cream, please?*), utilising the past tense of verbs (*I was inquiring if you could assist me with baking the cake*), employing the subjunctive mood (*It would be highly beneficial if you tidied the desk*), and depersonalising the request (*It might not be a good idea to leave now*).

In English-language pedagogical discourse, the most common types of directive statements include "*Why don't we do it right now?*", "*Let's discuss it again*", and "*Now we'll go to the trip*".

These statements involve the speaker including themselves in the action, which reduces the level of certainty in the statement. Simultaneously, the use of imperative forms is not precluded when engaging in communication inside the familial sphere, with cherished individuals, and in the realm of customer service.

In Russian-speaking culture, which is fundamentally collectivist, the notions of individual autonomy and privacy are not as crucial as they are in English-speaking culture. Consequently, the necessity to employ a distancing strategy when making a request is not as urgent as it is in English-speaking culture. According to T. V. Larina, in a collectivist society, making a request is seen as a normal and expected behaviour. «The speaker relies on the expectation that the communication partner would be eager to reply to the request» [1, p.234]. This elucidates the broader utilisation of explicit methods for articulating demands, predominantly through the utilisation of the incentive mood. In these cases, the expression of politeness is not conveyed through indirect speech acts, as it is in English. Instead, politeness is indicated through various markers such as the use of "please" and phrases like "be kind" (e.g., *Пожалуйста, позвони мне* "*Please, call me*"). Politeness can also be expressed through denial (e.g., *Вы не подскажете, как мне найти профессора?* "*Can you tell me how to find a professor?*") and through indirect expressions of desires (e.g., *Я хотел бы получить помощь* "*I would like to get a help*").

Additionally, diminutives and affectionate forms of address (e.g., *Братушка, подойди пожалуйста*. "*Brother, come please*") can also be used to convey politeness. In addition to direct speech actions, indirect speech acts can also be employed, but less frequently than in English. In Russian educational speech, straight imperative remarks with a verb in the imperative mood are commonly used. This may be attributed to the hierarchical social structure, where the instructor holds a higher position than the pupils.

This communicative norm is used to the action of speaking in a foreign language. The survey and observation of English language instructors' speech behaviour revealed that direct directive speech actions are the most common in their English-language instructional discourse.

Based on the framework developed by American anthropologist E. Hall, cultures can be categorised as either low-context or high-context, depending on the importance of context in communication. Context refers to the information and circumstances that surround an event and contribute to its meaning. Korean culture is considered a high-context culture according to this classification. Non-linguistic background, such as the communication situation, social standing, age of interlocutors, and interpersonal connections, plays a crucial part in determining the communication technique in Korean culture.

The salient aspect of the Korean language, owing to its cultural nuances, is the inclination to convey a request indirectly. For instance;

-직접. (direct).

-표현. (expressive).

-질문? (interrogative.)

-확언. (assertive).

There is a progressive reduction in the intensity of explicit purpose (explicit speech act) in this sequence. Only in the initial case is the request to activate the light sent by a direct speaking act, whereas the remaining instances demonstrate indirect forms of expressing the desire. The formulation of a request is affected by aspects that arise from the speaker-listener interaction, including social standing and the level of intimacy in their relationship. For instance, the speaker assesses the level of politeness based on these variables and subsequently selects a specific language form to convey this particular type of politeness.

«Strict adherence to social hierarchy and rules of speech etiquette often leads to the fact that a request in Korean is expressed through an indirect speech act» [2, p. 23].

Speech acts, which together shape the ethnic communication style, are the outcome of culturally influenced patterns of discourse. Within these acts, fundamental cultural values are expressed. Lack of understanding of these values and how they are expressed in verbal communication can result in communication breakdowns in intercultural interactions.

In order to effectively communicate across cultural boundaries, it is crucial to cultivate linguistic and cognitive empathy. This entails the capacity to understand and empathise with an interlocutor who represents a different language and culture, and to view the world from their perspective, using the appropriate speech act of request.

References:

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