

Irina Y. Dubinina and Sophia A. Malamud\*

# Emergent communicative norm in a contact language: Indirect requests in Heritage Russian.

## Abstract

The present paper contributes to the study of speech act pragmatics, language contact, bilingualism, and heritage languages by bringing attention to the pragmatics of a contact language, heritage Russian (HR). The current study has a descriptive orientation, its main goal being to create a baseline for the pragmatic competence of speakers with incomplete acquisition of L1, which characterizes language contact in immigrant populations. We focus on communicative strategies and the choice of linguistic forms in requests made by heritage speakers of Russian, native speakers of full Russian, and native speakers of American English. The specific research questions explored in this study are: Is the linguistic variable – the form of polite requests – correlated with the population (speakers of HR vs. speakers of full Russian)? How do the differences play out? Do HR speakers have their own communicative norms? If yes, did these new norms develop under the influence of English or as a result of language-internal restructuring?

We report that HR exhibits evidence of developing its own conventions for expressing polite requests which differ from the corresponding conventions in full Russian. Specifically, HR speakers use significantly more impersonal modals than monolingual native speakers of Russian in informal scenarios and rely on increased syntactic complexity to mark polite requests in formal scenarios. In indirect requests produced in both types of scenarios, HR speakers overuse the downgrader *požalujsta* ‘please’ and underemploy the negative particle *ne*. These emergent communicative norms in HR seem to be partially influenced by English, but may also involve language-internal change.

## 1 Introduction

Pragmatics lies at the interface between grammatical knowledge and general social cognition. A basic task in communication is adjusting one’s speech to the social and discourse situation at hand. High-order intentionality inherent in the task of deciding on the best utterances to convey the intended meaning is universal and unique to human communication; yet the manipulation of linguistic structures requires language-specific knowledge.

This paper attempts to fill the gap in the study of speech act pragmatics, language contact, bilingualism, and the study of heritage languages by bringing attention to the pragmatics of heritage Russian (HR), a contact language. Specifically, we focus on communicative strategies and the choice of linguistic forms in directive speech acts made by speakers of HR, and comparing them to strategies and forms used by monolingual native speakers of full Russian (NSs) and by monolingual native speakers of American English.

---

\* **Irina Y. Dubinina**, Russian Language Program, Department of German, Russian, and Asian Languages and Literature, Brandeis University, 415 South Street, MS 024, Waltham, MA, 02453, USA. Email: idubin@brandeis.edu

**Corresponding author: Sophia A. Malamud**, Language & Linguistics Program, Department of Computer Science, Meaning in Language (MILa) Research Group, Laboratory for Linguistics and Computation, Brandeis University, 415 South Street, MS 018, Waltham, MA, USA. Email: smalamud@brandeis.edu

This choice of speaker populations and linguistic phenomenon is not accidental. Heritage speakers<sup>1</sup> (HSs) are individuals who grew up hearing one language at home, who speak that language, and who [are] to some degree bilingual in another, dominant language and their home heritage language (HL) (cf. Valdés 2000). In heritage language (HL) acquisition, the child “receives ample exposure to a parental language early in life, only to have that exposure end or undergo a dramatic reduction within a matter of years” (O’Grady et al. 2008). The study of HL acquisition, in particular, allows insight into questions such as the defining features of a native speaker, the robustness of speakers’ knowledge of various components of their first language grammar, and the grammatical options that emerge in the absence of full and sustained input. HL acquisition, in the words of O’Grady and colleagues, “offers unparalleled opportunities for the study of these questions” (O’Grady et al. 2008; see also Benmamoun et al. 2010; Polinsky and Kagan 2007, *inter alia*). In the study of language acquisition, HSs “provide a crucial missing link between competent L1 learners, balanced bilinguals, and possibly L2 learners” (Polinsky 2008d). In particular, adult HL grammars have been shown to evolve through reanalysis of incomplete linguistic input, and not simply through fossilization of child grammar, or through transfer from the dominant second language (Polinsky 2008a, 2008b, 2008c, 2008d; Laleko 2010). While the acquisition of phonology, morphosyntax, semantics, pragmatics (albeit to a lesser degree), and interfaces between these components of grammar have been well explored over the last several decades in the case of normal monolingual acquisition, the properties of the grammar that emerges in circumstances of incomplete acquisition, bilingualism and language attrition are much less studied.

Adult HSs are thus an ideal population for the study of the ingredients of linguistic competence, including, as part of it, pragmatic competence. Such speakers are cognitively unimpaired and able to conceive the full range of communicative intentions, yet, at the same time they lack full competence in their native language. They may not have access to the full repertoire of language-specific tools to express such concepts as deference or politeness and therefore are likely to have to resort to some other strategies for signaling their communicative intentions. The source of such strategies may be another language in which the speakers are competent, revealing the workings of language contact and cross-linguistic influence; or the strategies could be independent of any other language, revealing preferences that stem from unmarked grammatical options or from general cognitive mechanisms (Polinsky 2008a). Thus, by examining pragmatic competence in bilingual speakers who have not completely acquired their first language, we can study the boundary between the universal and language-specific in pragmatics, and between grammar and social cognition. We examine pragmatic competence in English-dominant adult Russian HSs as a case study.

More specifically, we focus on one aspect of pragmatic competence of Russian HSs, namely, how these speakers formulate requests. We choose to focus on the directive speech acts for several reasons. First, requests are pervasive in language and represent one of the most risky communicative behaviors: speakers run the risk of rejection when attempting to get somebody else to perform an action for their benefit (and perhaps not for the immediate benefit of the hearers). Second, HSs are able to function in their HL, performing many daily communicative tasks, and thus can be reasonably expected to be proficient in requesting. Third, the syntactic form of a prototypical Russian request is different from the form of a prototypical English request (Mills 1991). Moreover, in many cases Russian requests involve lexical and morphosyntactic forms that may be unavailable to HSs due to incomplete acquisition or attrition, such as the interrogative and subjunctive particles, or the formulaic

---

<sup>1</sup> The term “heritage speaker” was introduced at the inception of the Ontario Heritage Languages Programs in 1977.

use of negation. This means that in making a request, HSs are performing a function for which they may not have a readily available linguistic form, and thus may develop a form of their own, whether adopted under the influence of their dominant language or not. Hence, a study of requests by Russian HSs may provide a unique opportunity to observe the emergence of linguistic conventions in a contact situation.

Anticipating the conclusions, we report that HR shows evidence of developing new conventions for expressing polite requests, which differ from the corresponding conventions in full Russian. Specifically, HSs of Russian use significantly more impersonal modals than their NS counterparts in informal scenarios; at the same time, they rely mainly on increased syntactic complexity to mark polite requests in formal scenarios; and in both types of scenarios HSs overuse the politeness marker *požalujsta* ‘please’ and lack the negative particle *ne* in indirect requests. These communicative norms are partially influenced by English, but also involve language-internal change.

This paper is structured as follows: in the remainder of this section, we provide an expanded discussion of social and linguistic characteristics of HR in general (Section 1.1). Background information on the pragmatics of requests in general, and specifically on requests in English and Russian, is presented in Section 2. Next, we describe a corpus study of requests made by monolingual Russian and English speakers (Section 3). In subsequent sections, we report on an experimental study of requests in HR and full Russian, presenting our methodology in Section 4 and results in Section 5. We discuss our findings in Section 6, comparing the results of the corpus studies of requests produced by monolinguals with the experimental study of requests elicited from Russian HSs, and offer some preliminary conclusions.

## 1.1 Heritage Speakers of Russian

As follows from the definition given above, HSs are bilinguals who have varying proficiencies in the two languages: they use their chronologically second language as primary and their first language as secondary. An important feature of HSs’ linguistic profile is a functional, stylistic, and linguistic reduction of the home language. The reduction has several causes. First, HSs in the U.S. usually receive education only in English and, therefore, become literate only in that language; hence, they lose some channels of expression in the home language (Valdés 2000). Second, HLs are often represented by the colloquial register (i.e. informal language used only for interpersonal interactions), which may be, and often is, a stigmatized dialectal variety. Children who grow up in a HL environment have access only to the dialect of their parents; hence, we find a reduction of the full dialectal range of the HL (Valdés 2000). More generally, the absence of schooling in the home language and lack of access to the high register variety (such as the language of TV or radio programs) results in a significant reduction in the input that HSs receive in acquiring the HL, both in terms of absolute quantity, and in terms of variety of domains, genres, and registers. The reduction affects not only the functions of the language, but also its grammatical and lexical structure. Without a varied and abundant linguistic input that creates opportunities for repairs, HSs never develop a full command of all grammatical, stylistic, and pragmatic forms available to monolingual speakers (Polinsky 2000).

However, despite these reductions, even low-proficiency HSs frequently exhibit stronger competence in their HL (as measured, e.g., by college placement tests; see also Martin 2012) than their English monolingual counterparts who start studying that same language post puberty. HSs often can function in their home language to perform a variety of daily communicative tasks, despite grammatical and lexical deficiencies – that is, they are fittingly termed *speakers* (as opposed to simply *learners*).

The overwhelming majority of research on HLs has concentrated on their grammatical features and isolated linguistic modules (morphology and syntax being the most studied, cf. Benmamoun et al. 2010). The pragmatic competence of HSs remains underexplored. One study that does address speech act pragmatics in a HL – Pinto and Raschio (2007) – reveals interesting patterns of competence that exhibit signs of cross-linguistic interference, and demonstrates the need for further inquiry. Pinto and Raschio (2007) investigate requests made by adult HSs of Spanish in comparison to two groups of monolingual NSs – English and Spanish (Mexican). The most significant finding of the study is that HSs avoided using direct imperatives, resembling monolingual English NSs (who never used them) and contrasting with monolingual Spanish NSs (who used them 15% of the time).

Qualitative comparison between the HS and the two monolingual groups revealed signs of interference from English in requests made by HSs. They used utterances that are grammatically correct, but not conventionalized in monolingual Spanish. For instance, like English speakers (see Blum-Kulka et al. 1989), they tended to use multiple downgrading even in requests addressed to peers. The authors suggest that HSs may adhere more closely to the pragmatic conventions of English even when speaking Spanish because they live in an English-dominant culture. They argue that interference from English in pragmatics of heritage Spanish parallels other, well-documented language contact phenomena in HLs (such as borrowings and reduction of syntactic features). However, without a broader and more detailed study of the HS requests in comparison to monolinguals, the role of the dominant language in HL pragmatics cannot be understood. After Pinto and Raschio (2007), our study presents one of the first investigations of HL speech acts to date.

Russian spoken in the U.S has distinct features separating it from the Russian spoken in the Russian Federation. Polinsky (1997, 2000) argues, in fact, that there exist two varieties of Russian in the U.S.: Émigré Russian (ER) and American Russian (Heritage Russian, i.e. HR). Speakers of the first variety include immigrants whose schooling has largely been completed in an environment where Russian was the majority language, before the emigration. Their speech is characterized by heavy lexical borrowing and extensive code-switching (Andrews 1999; Polinsky 2000) as well as by some syntactic changes (Polinsky 2011). Speakers of the second variety consist of children who arrived in the U.S. with their parents during the critical acquisition period (and therefore, their schooling took place predominantly in English), and children born in the U.S. to Russian-speaking families. It is this second group, bearers of American Russian, who are considered HSs and who are of interest to the current study.

With rare exceptions, these children grow up hearing mostly ER in their homes and, therefore, regard it as the standard of spoken Russian. In line with the general definition of HL, HR is a “restricted language with no register variation and with a grammar of its own” (Polinsky 2000: 451). On the lexical level we observe a reduction of the vocabulary range, evidenced, for instance, by the difficulties HSs experience in lexical retrieval tasks (Benmamoun et al. 2010). Lexical borrowings from English also exist in HR, but as Polinsky (2000) points out, HR speakers tend not to code-switch, unlike ER speakers. The main language reduction in HR happens on the morphological level (Benmamoun et al. 2010). According to Polinsky (1997, 2000, 2005, 2006, 2008b, 2008c, 2008d), the HR grammatical system is characterized by a reduction of the case system, lexicalization of verbal aspect and the disappearance of pragmatically motivated meaning of aspectual pairs (also Laleko 2011), reduction of verbal conjugation paradigms, inconsistent use of the subjunctive and the conditional, disappearance of reflexive verbs, and prevalence of the so-called resumptive pronouns, i.e. “clause-internal pronouns” co-referential with subjects within the same clause (Polinsky 2000:458).

A study of requests in HR allows us to investigate if these reductions in morphosyntax are paralleled by reductions in the pragmatic conventions.

## 2 Requests in English and Russian

### 2.1 Speech acts

The illocutionary force of an utterance is the component of meaning that corresponds to the speaker's intention in delivering the utterance (Austin 1962 [1955]). An illocutionary act<sup>2</sup> can, in principle, “be carried out by saying that one is doing so” (Green 2009), as in (1a). Utterances with different content can perform the same act, which in ex.1 is a directive – that is, an attempt to get the hearer to perform an action –, vice versa, and the same content can be used to perform a variety of acts.

- (1) a. *I request that you do this exercise now.*  
b. *Sdelaj eto upražnenie, požalujsta!*<sup>3</sup>  
do:IMP.SG this exercise please  
*'Do this exercise, please!'*  
c. *You will do this exercise now, and that's a request.*

How can directive illocutionary force be communicated to a hearer? First, in explicit performative utterances such as (1a), it is derivable directly from the content (also 1c). Second, the imperative clause type is routinely associated with directive force. Thus, requests expressed using imperative clauses, as in (1b), are termed “direct”.

In addition to direct (1b) and explicitly performative (1a) utterances, a speaker may perform a speech act by virtue of performing some other speech act, conveying the ultimate illocutionary force indirectly. For instance, the (direct) question in (2) may (additionally) convey the same request as the utterances in (1).

- (2) *Can you do this exercise now?*

How the speaker's directive intention in uttering (2) becomes manifest to the hearer is one of the most important questions in pragmatics. One answer is that the illocutionary force can be derived through rationality-based reasoning (Grice 1975; Searle 1975). In addition, some scholars argue that to communicate a speech act, the speaker invokes linguistic conventions that go beyond those determining the content of the utterance (Searle 1975). Such linguistic

---

<sup>2</sup> Also termed a speech act.

<sup>3</sup> A note about glosses.

First, we will generally not mark tense on non-past verbs – in Russian, non-past verbs are marked for person (e.g., *odolžu* PRF:borrow:1SG), while past verbs are not marked for person and instead are marked for gender (e.g., *odolžila* PRF:borrow:F.SG). Thus, the reader will note that those finite non-imperative verbs that are glossed for person but not gender are non-past.

Second, we use the abbreviation IP for impersonal verb-forms.

Third, where appropriate, we gloss aspectual markers: perfectivizing prefixes are glossed in the beginning of the verb-gloss, while the imperfectivizing suffix is glossed at its correct morphological position, following the root. We do not gloss inherent aspect.

Fourth, we will only mark case as necessary to make the meaning clear.

Finally, note that Russian has two distinct forms for singular and plural second-person pronouns, which we will gloss as you.SG and you.PL, respectively. The plural second-person pronoun is also used as the formal pronoun, even when there is only one addressee. We will thus mark formal second-person pronouns and agreement morphology as PL.

conventions exist both for direct (by definition) and for indirect speech acts. For instance, the marker *please* in English can be used only in conventional requests – both direct (1b) and indirect (3). However, it is not allowed in utterances that do not have the form conventionally used for requests, even when their form and propositional content are similar to conventional requests, and even if these are ultimately interpreted as requests (4).

- (3) *Could you open the door please?*
- (4) *Are you able to open the door (#please)?*

Acquiring competence in a language involves learning both the grammatical conventions that determine the content of the utterances and conventions that associate utterances with their illocutionary meaning (cf. 3).

## 2.2 Indirect requests in Russian and English: prior scholarship

The choice of linguistic expression for a speech act is often influenced by politeness. The most widely used framework for modeling politeness, Brown and Levinson (1978, revised 1987), builds on the notion of *face* (Goffman 1955, 1967). A face is the self-image which the individual wants to have appreciated and approved by others, and the desire not to be imposed upon. Any linguistic interaction is a complex balancing act of attending to one another's face needs.

Brown and Levinson observe that requests are inherently face-threatening acts (FTA) and argue that the weight of the face threat depends on the power differential between the speakers, social distance between speakers, and the degree of imposition, which is influenced by the first two factors. Speakers' politeness strategies and the choice of a linguistic form for a request are therefore motivated by the desire to achieve the goal behind the request, and the sometimes contradictory face needs: to avoid rejection (avoid damage to speaker's own face), to minimize imposition, and to build rapport (stoke face of the hearer).

The desire to achieve the goal behind the request exerts pressure on the speaker to choose a direct strategy, such as the imperative clause type or an explicit performative. Yet, the face-saving goals of avoiding rejection, minimizing imposition, and building rapport cause the speakers of both Russian and English to routinely choose a particular type of indirect strategy for making requests, namely interrogatives.

In the study of the form and content of indirect speech acts, Searle (1965, 1975) argues that conventionalized indirect requests may involve sentences concerning one of the following four defining conditions (felicity conditions) for requests:

- i. the speaker's wish or want that the hearer perform the requested action,
- ii. the hearer's ability to do the action,
- iii. the hearer's desire or willingness to do the action, or
- iv. the hearer doing the action.

Languages have tendencies to exploit different felicity conditions in making indirect requests, and in general, make available a range of linguistic conventions for marking this pragmatic function. This range, and preferences within it, are language-specific.

The range of linguistic conventions used for making requests in Russian was studied by Margaret Mills (1991, 1992, 1993). She collected naturally occurring utterances (surface interrogatives and imperatives) made by adult NSs in natural speech production and conducted a close contextual analysis, which focused on the illocutionary force of these utterances. In her (1991) study, Mills shows, based on NSs' opinions, that direct requests in Russian can be just as polite as indirect ones (contra, e.g., Brown and Levinson 1987),

depending on the intonation used: even imperatives without *please* sound polite if pronounced with the appropriate rise-fall intonational contour.

In a subsequent paper (1992), Mills aims to establish a formula for conventionalized indirect requests in contemporary Russian. She compares English and Russian conventionalized requests, which she finds to be overlapping in logic, specifically, in the felicity conditions they address. English speakers tend to address Searle's condition (ii), the hearer's ability to perform the action (cf. Brown and Levinson 1987), as in (5).

(5) *Can/Could you close the window please?*

In comparison, Russian speakers exploit either condition (ii) as in (6) or condition (iv) as in (7) – the hearer doing the action expressed by a perfective future verb.

(6) *Ty ne možeš / ne mog by podbrošit' men'a?*  
 You.SG NEG can:2SG / NEG can:PST.M.SG SBJV PFV:give.lift:INF me.ACC  
 'Can/could you give me a lift?' (literally: Can't you/couldn't you give me a lift?)

(7) *Ty ne podbrošiš men'a?*  
 You NEG PFV:give.lift:2SG me.ACC  
 'Will you give me a lift?' (literally: Won't you give me a lift?)

However, Mills shows, contra Brown and Levinson (1987), that while English uses positive sentences with or without the subjunctive (5), Russian prefers negative sentences with or without the subjunctive (6, 7).<sup>4</sup>

Mills further notes that in Russian requests, the verb is usually accompanied by (a) the negative particle (6, 7), (b) the interrogative particle, (c) the subjunctive particle (conditional, as she calls it) as in (7), or a combination of the above – (a) and (c), or (a) and (b). NSs in Mills's study perceived the combination of the negative and subjunctive particles as more polite (showing a greater degree of deference) than just the subjunctive particle. Furthermore, NSs considered combinations of particles as hyper-polite, which suggests that the most prototypical indirect polite request in Russian uses just the negative particle.

Mills argues that English has no special means of differentiating between a true information-seeking question and an indirect request,<sup>5</sup> whereas the negative particle *ne* serves this function in Russian. Thus, in (8) below, the directive interpretation receives strong competition from the information-seeking question reading, and may often be unavailable, similar to an English interrogative *Are you able to give me a lift?* (cf. 5).

(8) a. *Ty podbrošiš men'a?*  
 You.SG PFV:give.lift:2SG me.ACC  
 'Will you give me a lift?'  
 b. *Ty smožeš / možeš / mog by podbrošit' men'a?*  
 You.SG PRF:can:2SG / can:2SG / can:PST.M.SG SBJV give.lift me.ACC  
 'Will you be able to / Can you / Could you give me a lift?'

<sup>4</sup> What is a most polite conventional request in Russian is, in fact, rude behavior in English (i). Such variation in the politeness of directive interrogatives with negation is a phenomenon which lies outside the scope of this study.

(i) #Can't you/couldn't you close the window?

<sup>5</sup> We must include a caveat to this generalization – in fact, English allows the use of *please* in conventionalized indirect requests. Interrogatives with *please* cannot be interpreted in any other way – they must be directive.

In contrast, the sentences in (6, 7) are unambiguous – and polite – requests, and generally cannot be interpreted as information-seeking questions. Mills argues that it is the negative particle that creates the directive illocutionary force; without it, the directive interpretation becomes totally dependent on situational factors. The NSs in Mills’s study deemed the negative particle (in combination with the rise/fall intonation) sufficient for conveying both the illocutionary force and politeness level of the request. It is important to point out that NSs in Mills’s study did not rate positive indirect requests as rude, but rather as lacking mitigation and deference (and thus still appropriate in situations where such mitigation and deference are not called for).

### **3 Corpus studies of Russian and English requests**

To corroborate studies of requests in Brown and Levinson (1987) and Mills (1991, 1992), and to establish a baseline for polite requests in English and Russian, we conducted two corpus studies. The corpus study of monolingual Russian requests is based on the data from the spoken sub-corpus of the Russian National Corpus (RNC) which consists of 8,870,387 words of scripted (e.g., film), public unscripted (e.g., TV interview), and non-public unscripted (e.g., casual conversation) speech. For higher-frequency phenomena we use searches in a 1,162, 567 word sub-corpus of the RNC consisting of just non-public unscripted speech. Both the spoken corpus and the non-public unscripted sub-corpus include speakers of diverse ages and backgrounds. Although the full text of the corpus is unavailable, the corpus is searchable for text, lexical, and morphological information.

The second corpus study analyzes requests in English. The data for this study come from the 1,848,364 word Michigan Corpus of Academic Spoken English (MiCASE). We limit our searches to the speech of NSs of American English, who are all college students, professors, or staff at the University of Michigan. The corpus includes academic situations (seminars, office hours, lectures, etc.) as well as some service encounters. Additionally, MiCASE is text-searchable only, and the entire corpus is available for download. Notably, the two corpora are not fully comparable: most importantly, while the RNC includes academic speech, it is much more varied both in the age and background of the speakers and the situations of language use.

#### **3.1 Interrogative indirect vs direct requests**

To investigate Russian requests, we conducted an RNC search that was biased against finding imperative or declarative requests, and towards finding interrogative indirect ones. Specifically, we searched for 2nd-person verbs several words before a question mark. After non-directive utterances were discarded from the data set, however, we still had 424 direct, imperative requests, and only a quarter of this number of indirect interrogative requests (only 90 interrogatives were judged to be requests by all 3 annotators<sup>6</sup>). At the same time, an unbiased<sup>7</sup> manual search in a 832,855 word subcorpus of MiCASE yielded 166 interrogative

---

<sup>6</sup> All annotators in this project were monolingual native Russian speakers.

<sup>7</sup> We excluded some of the less interactive transcripts from the search to create this subcorpus. Note that while the annotators were instructed to extract all requests from the corpus, the direct requests were easier to identify than indirect ones since imperatives are typically directive. As a result, finding direct requests was usually a matter of finding an imperative clause, while finding an interrogative indirect request was usually a matter of making a judgment about context-dependent meaning. This may have actually biased the search in favor of direct requests.

indirect requests and 928 direct imperative requests. Thus, both English and Russian speakers seem to use more direct than indirect requests in general.

However, when requests for favor were isolated in the RNC search described above, direct (35 tokens) and interrogative indirect (32 tokens) strategies were about equally frequent. The same holds true for the MiCASE search: when only requests for favor were considered, direct and indirect strategies were used equally frequently (23 and 21 tokens respectively). Since the extra-linguistic variables of degree of imposition and social distance were not controlled across these examples (and since the two corpora are not fully comparable with respect to these variables), these corpus data do not support any definite conclusions about the factors affecting the choice between direct and indirect forms. However, these data do support the conclusion that indirect strategies are employed in both languages, and that interrogatives are conventionally used to express indirect requests, and specifically requests for favor.

### 3.2 Negation

All English interrogative indirect requests were expressed as positive utterances; by comparison, some of the Russian interrogative requests contained the negative particle *ne*, in agreement with Mills (1992). However, negative utterances did not constitute the majority of interrogative requests in our RNC data. By way of explanation of the unexpectedly low frequency of *ne*, we contend that unambiguous marking of directive force is not always part of the speaker's intention: in situations where the speaker wants to leave the hearer room for avoiding the request without expressing direct rejection, a form that is ambiguous between a request and a question would be preferable. This also means that *ne* may be dispreferred in situations when extra-linguistic factors would all point to the directive interpretation. In addition, the negative particle marks not only the directive function of an interrogative, but also signals deference. Thus, it may be inappropriate in situations of close social distance.

A study of the 90 interrogative requests from the RNC shows that 7 out of 60 interrogatives questioning the hearer's performing the action included negation; and 4 out of 30 interrogatives questioning the hearer's ability to do the action included negation. From these data it is clear that negation is not, in fact, obligatory in either type of indirect requests, at least in social situations represented in the corpus. Thus, we interpret negation as a disambiguating marker, which turns a categorical directness distinction into a three-point scale: the imperative requests are the most direct, negation-marked interrogative requests are indirect, but still more direct than non-negated interrogatives. Anticipating the discussion of the experimental study, we will show that a monolingual Russian whose goal is to produce an unambiguous indirect request for favor would almost universally choose the negated interrogative form.

### 3.3 Please

With conventionalized indirect requests in English, the lexical softener *please* is permitted – and even preferred. A MiCASE search found 159 requests with *please*: 67% of these were direct requests, and 30% were interrogative indirect requests.<sup>8</sup> Thus, *please* is often used in English indirect requests.

---

<sup>8</sup> Note that in a different MiCASE search that looked for requests, rather than for *please*, 12 out of 166 interrogative indirect requests included *please*. See above, however, for potential bias in favor of direct requests in that search.

Its Russian counterpart *požalujsta* is for the most part ruled out<sup>9</sup> in such directive interrogatives (9), especially requests whose propositional content concerns the hearer performing the desired action.

- (9) a. #Vy      ne            zakrojete      okno,                      požalujsta?<sup>10</sup>  
           You.PL NEG      PRF:close:2PL window.ACC            please  
           ‘Would you close the window, please?’
- b. #Vy      ne            možete zakryt'                      okno,                      požalujsta?  
           You.PL NEG      can:2PL PFV:close:INF            window.ACC please  
           ‘Can you close the window, please?’

This incompatibility of Russian *požalujsta* with directive interrogatives has exceptions, including, systematically, instances of one elliptical construction which is used to request a thing or a person (as opposed to an action). The utterances representing this construction have no overt verb, but include an impersonal modal *možno*, which can denote possibility or permission (we discuss modals, including *možno*, in the next subsection). In such requests, the asked-for thing or person is expressed using the accusative or partitive-genitive noun phrase, as in the RNC example in (10). Since in Russian the interrogative clause type is marked only by intonation, the example in (10) is an interrogative, and therefore an exception to the prohibition against *please* in interrogatives.

- (10) *Požalujsta, Jelizavetu Petrovnu možno?*                      [on the phone] (RNC)  
       Please      J.:ACC      P.:ACC possible.IP  
       ‘May I speak with J.P., please?’

To support our hypothesis regarding the use of *požalujsta*, we conducted a search of the spoken sub-corpus of the RNC which yielded 10,124 occurrences of *požalujsta*, of which 5,647 were within 2 words, and 6,057 were within 5 words of an imperative verb.<sup>11</sup> Many, perhaps most, of the remaining utterances with *požalujsta* were non-directive, and thus best left to future investigation (these are translational equivalents of *welcome*, *there you go*, and the like). We did not have the resources to go through all these examples individually,<sup>12</sup> and so instead we aimed to identify the uses of *požalujsta* with interrogative indirect requests by searching for all its occurrences within a few words before a question mark but without the presence of an imperative verb. This more restricted search in the spoken RNC yielded 41 examples<sup>13</sup> where *požalujsta* occurred in the utterance that ended with a question mark. One example represented non-native speech and was therefore excluded from the analysis, leaving 40 utterances. Of these, the word indicates a turn-taking function in 36 examples.

<sup>9</sup> We do not mean to claim that *požalujsta* is ungrammatical in such requests. However, NS informants judged it to be “off” and “bothersome”, supporting the conclusion that it is infelicitous.

<sup>10</sup> These are made-up examples – neither positive nor negative interrogatives in Russian are normally used with *požalujsta*. *Požalujsta* can be used as a separate utterance following the interrogative, akin to the English *pretty please!* as a follow-up to a request.

<sup>11</sup> RNC does not allow syntactic searches. Therefore, there is no way to search directly for an imperative sentence that contains *požalujsta*. The best we could do is to search for *požalujsta* in close proximity to an imperative verb.

<sup>12</sup> We also conducted a search for *požalujsta* in the sub-corpus containing just the spontaneous (unscripted, non-public) speech, resulting in a total of 418 instances of the word. Of them, 264 occurred in requests. The vast majority (232) were in direct requests with an imperative verb, and the remaining 32 were in constructions without an overt verb, such as the one exemplified in (10). There were zero instances of *požalujsta* in indirect requests expressed using full interrogative clauses.

<sup>13</sup> Additional 4 examples were of a *pretty please!* variety, where *požalujsta* is not an integral part of the interrogative utterance, but rather a separate conversational move.

Only 4 occurrences of *požalujsta* were used inside the interrogative utterance expressing a request. One is given in (10) above. Note that example (10) is an instance of the elliptical construction which we have already described as a systematic exception to the infelicity of *požalujsta* in interrogatives. Thus, in the entire spoken sub-corpus of the RNC we found only 3 bona fide examples of *požalujsta* in an indirect request expressed as a full interrogative sentence. Even conceding that our restricted search might have missed a few examples, we can conclude with a high level of certainty that the use of *požalujsta* is exceedingly rare in Russian interrogative requests, probably representing a small fraction of a percent of all occurrences of *požalujsta* (on the order of 3 examples out of 10,000, or 0.03%).

### 3.4 Modals and moods

The type of indirect requests that addresses the hearer's ability to perform an action has, by its very definition, modal semantics. Therefore, we expect such requests in both Russian and English to contain modals. In addition, for languages that have both an indicative and a subjunctive mood, utterances using the latter denote or suggest that they are not about actual, but rather about possible situations. As a result, the use of the subjunctive offers speakers a way to remove the content of the question or request from the actual situation, making it more indirect. Thus, in situations where a higher level of face work is desirable, we expect the use of the subjunctive in indirect requests. Finally, a modal adverbial expression, such as *possibly* or *maybe* could serve the same mitigating function.

For English, Brown and Levinson (1987) indicate a conventionalized form for polite indirect requests that involves an interrogative with the modal verb *can* or its subjunctive counterpart *could*. Our search for requests in a sub-corpus of MiCASE yielded interrogative requests with *can*, *could*, *may*, *will*, and *would*. Specifically, we found 92 indicative *can* requests, 5 of them also including *please* (and 7 indicative requests with other modals that could potentially have *please*, 2 of which did); and 37 subjunctive *could* requests, of them 2 with *please* (and 10 subjunctive requests with other modals that could potentially have *please*, and 2 of them did). We tracked the social relationship between the speaker and the hearer(s) for the 16 requests for favor that contained *can* or *could*, but there was no correlation between the mood (indicative vs. subjunctive) and the social relationship.

Turning to the use of modals in Russian requests, works by Russian linguists (Akišina and Formanovskaja 1986; Formanovskaja 1987; Formanovskaja and Švecova 1990; Zemskaja and Šmelev 1993) note that requests can be posited as interrogatives with the modal *moč* 'can'.<sup>14</sup> Besides the personal forms of the verb *moč*, Russian also has the form *možno*, which is an impersonal modal with dual meaning: alethic, i.e. logical possibility (usually with imperfective infinitive) or permission (usually with perfective infinitive).

To the best of our knowledge, there are no studies specifically addressing the role of *možno* in Russian requests. Mills (1993) mentions in passing that requests produced by some L2 speakers of Russian sound like requests for permission rather than requests for favor because they utilize the impersonal modal. Formanovskaja and Švecova (1990) state that expressions containing the modal *možno* are reserved in Russian for requests for permission and provide its equivalent English expression - *may I*. They also list several phrases with *možno* in the section on formulaic expressions for various social situations, such as *Vas možno pozdravit'?* / *Can/may I congratulate you?*, usually embedding a performative verb under the modal, and usually immediately followed or preceded by the speech act described

---

<sup>14</sup> Note that these Russian scholars either focus on prescriptive norms or on reasons for communicative failures, and are not basing their conclusions on naturally occurring and statistically analyzed data.

by this performative; in the example above, the listener would expect to hear a congratulatory statement.

We will argue that the Russian impersonal modal has a much more complex pragmatic meaning, which includes that of request for favor, and that its distribution in requests is not parallel to the use of the English *may I* phrase. The spoken sub-corpus of the RNC contains 2,899 occurrences of *možno* up to 12 words before a question mark. For a detailed examination of the use of this impersonal modal in spontaneous speech, we have searched a sub-corpus containing only non-public unscripted speech. This sub-corpus yielded 1,705 instances of *možno*. Most of these utterances were assertions, true information-seeking questions, or confirmations about a possibility, such as (11) below.

- (11) *To jest' možno prijeti v konce sent'abr'a?* (RNC)  
 That is possible.IP PFV:come:INF at end September:GEN  
 'That is, it's ok to come at the end of September?'

There were 215 instances of *možno* in requests. Of them, 53 were verbless requests for things or people, including instances of the construction illustrated in (10). Some of these requests had a flavor of asking for permission (*May I have the next problem set?*), but most did not. Further 13 examples had embedded performatives, and thus combined the sense of permission with the function of alerting the hearer to an impending speech act (as described by Formanovskaja and Švecova). Another 15 requests were not in a permission situation, but rather asked for an action that was part of the hearer's job (such as asking a salesperson to show goods being sold).

The majority of directive interrogatives with *možno*, 108 tokens in total, are interpreted as requests for permission (12a, b) although many of them could also be interpreted as requests for favor (12b). It is notable that despite the use of the perfective verb after *možno* in (12b), which according to Šmelev and Zaliznjak (2006) should produce the alethic reading, permission is a much stronger interpretation although certainly not the only possible one.

- (12) a. *Možno, ja povedu efir?* (RNC)  
 Possible.IP I PFV:lead:1SG broadcast  
 'May I lead the broadcast?'
- b. *Možno, ja u vas Bulgakova voz'mu?* (RNC)  
 Possible.IP I from you.PL Bulgakov:ACC PFV:take:1SG  
 'Can I take your Bulgakov (book)?'

We propose that (12b), like many other utterances in the corpus, is a case of modal indeterminacy: both permission and alethic possibility are plausible interpretations; they are not mutually exclusive and can coexist. Interpretation of modals is always context-dependent (cf. Kratzer 1981). At the same time, underspecified utterances may fail to be resolved to a more specific meaning when multiple interpretations are optimal in the context (Malamud 2012). The modal here is underspecified and could be interpreted as expressing possibility with respect to what the hearer would allow, or with respect to what the hearer would be able and willing to do for the speaker, or both. Thus, in (12b) the speaker is requesting a favor to borrow a book, but is also seeking permission to have that favor.

It is telling that only 24 utterances in the non-public unscripted spoken sub-corpus of the RNC were judged by NS annotators as unambiguously seeking a favor, such as (13) below. However, the flavor of permission to a greater or smaller degree was still noted by the annotators as additional in most of the utterances. In fact, distinguishing the permission

and favor categories was a judgment similar to drawing a line on a spectrum, rather than making a categorical distinction. Therefore, the data from the RNC support the observation that the impersonal modal in indirect requests can be used to fine-tune the directive speech act: it may be used to ask for permission, to ask for favor or to blend seeking permission and favor.

- (13) a. *Možno ja tut u tebja perekantujus'?* (RNC)  
 Possible.IP I here at you.SG.GEN PFV:hang.out:1SG:RFL  
 ‘Can I hang out here at your place?’

It is clear that the actual use of the word *možno* goes far beyond the prescriptive rules of Formanovskaja and Švecova. As corpus data demonstrate, the impersonal modal *možno* is indeed used widely in Russian requests. Some of these impersonal requests do produce the meaning of asking for permission, particularly in combination with perfective infinitives. However, not all requests with the impersonal *možno* ask for permission; they also ask for goods or people (10), signal an imminent speech act, and request a favor by way of asking for permission to have that favor (13).

An important point of discussion is the combinability of the impersonal modal *možno* with the lexical politeness marker *požalujsta*. Outside requests for a thing or person, such as (10), this combination is mostly judged as unacceptable or at least “strange” by monolingual NSs. In the spoken RNC, only 3 of the 2,899 sentences with *možno* and an overt verb also have *požalujsta* ‘please.’ The presence of these constructions in the corpus suggests that such combinations are not always infelicitous, but their low frequency suggests that they are an anomaly rather than a convention.

In addition to the modals, the subjunctive mood can also be used as a conventional marker of politeness in both English and Russian requests (cf. Brown and Levinson 1987, Mills 1991). In English, the subjunctive is marked by essentially past-tense morphology on the tensed verb. Since the tense morphology is on the auxiliary – which is a modal – rather than on lexical verbs in English interrogatives, the forms *could* and *would* are perceived as unambiguously subjunctive (rather than the case of lexical verbs which are ambiguous between subjunctive and past) (14a). Russian has a slightly more complex form of the subjunctive which requires the past-tense morphology to be accompanied by the subjunctive particle *by* (14b).

- (14) a. *Could you give me a lift?*  
 b. *Vy ne mogli by men'a podvezti?*  
 You.PL NEG can:PST:PL SBJV me.ACC PFV:give.lift:INF  
 ‘Could you give me a lift?’ (literally: ‘Couldn’t you give me a lift?’)

Two of the 90 interrogative indirect requests in our RNC search had the modal *moč'* in the subjunctive mood, and 24 had the verb in the indicative. The sample was too small to provide any measure of correlation with the social distance; nor was there any traceable correlation between the mood and the form of the second-person pronoun (formal vs. informal).

Finally, as noted in Brown and Levinson (1987) and Mills (1992), both English and Russian include modal adverbs as politeness markers in interrogatives. Like the use of the subjunctive, this is a mitigating strategy. Indeed, 19 of the indirect interrogative requests in our RNC corpus search had a modal adverbial.

- (15) *Možet, ty men'a podvez'oš?*

Maybe you.SG me.ACC PFV:give.lift:2SG  
Would you give me a lift? (literally: ‘Maybe you’ll give me a lift?’)

In sum, the linguistic forms available for expressing requests are quite similar in English and Russian, and include imperative direct requests, and interrogative indirect requests. Both languages employ modals and the lexical softener *please*, and use the subjunctive mood and modal adverbs as softening devices. However, differences between requestive conventions also exist, the most important being the use of the negative marker, the availability of impersonal modal *можно* in Russian, and the difference in the distribution of the lexical marker *please* between clause types.

Given the degree of similarity, the subtlety of the differences between the conventional formulation of requests in the two languages, and HSs’ reduced access to linguistic resources (especially the impoverished morphology), at least some divergence of HSs requests from the baseline is expected, specifically, in the use of morphosyntactic and lexical means of expressing conventionalized politeness. In the subsequent sections, we will investigate how HSs’ requests differ from the baseline, and discuss what processes could account for the observed differences.

## **4 Experimental study of requests in Heritage Russian: methodology**

The experimental part of this study is based on a framework already used to investigate L1 and L2 pragmatics, namely the Cross-Cultural Speech Act Realization Project (CCSARP) by Blum-Kulka et al. (1989)<sup>15</sup> with some modifications. The study employed several role-play situations which called for the speaker to issue a request and which since then have been used widely in research on directives in a variety of languages. Specifically, two situations were chosen for this study to elicit directives in social scenarios that differ in the degree of social distance between interlocutors. The degree of imposition was kept constant in order to reduce possible variables. In the first situation, a student needs to borrow lecture notes from a classmate with whom he/she is in a friendly relationship. The student missed a lecture and knows that his request comes only three days before a test. In the second scenario, a student needs to borrow a rare book that is not available otherwise from his/her professor in order to complete a presentation.

### **4.1 Participants**

The study involved 48 HSs of Russian, between 18 and 22 years of age, all college students with at least some reading proficiency in Russian, and 31 NSs of Russian. The latter group consisted of monolingual Russian college students and recent graduates who have never spent any time in a foreign language environment. The groups were age- and education-matched. An average HS in this study immigrated to the U.S. at the age of 3.5 (62% left Russia before the age of 6 and 21% were born in the U.S.). Overwhelming majority of HSs (89%) have not had formal or informal education in Russian when they were growing up.

Although over half of the heritage participants consider Russian to be their native language, they speak it at a much slower rate than their NS counterparts: 88 words per minute in this study, in comparison to an average Russian NS rate of 105 words per minute (in Polinsky and Kagan 2007). They are also significantly slower speaking Russian than English: their average speech rate in Russian is 88 wpm (SD = 26), whereas in English it is

---

<sup>15</sup> From here on, cited as CCSARP.

148 wpm (SD = 29). In a series of recent papers, Polinsky and Kagan convincingly argue that a linguistic measure, rate of speech, is a better predictor of grammatical knowledge than any of the social factors, such as age of arrival in the U.S. (Kagan and Friedman 2004, Polinsky and Kagan 2007, Polinsky 2008c, 2008d, *inter alia*). Thus, the slower speech rate of our HS participants leads us to expect divergences in their grammar, and as we will see here, in pragmatic competence as well.

## 4.2 Data elicitation and analysis

Instead of the discourse completion test used in CCSARP, the project used role enactment (following Trosborg (1995), which allowed participants to play out a social situation together with the interviewer and to produce speech samples that maximally resemble naturally occurring speech. An additional motivation to use role-plays was the necessity to collect data even from those HSs who are not literate in Russian. The role-plays involved always the same interviewer (Irina Y. Dubinina).

Each role enactment was recorded, transcribed and then analyzed, using a modified version of the CCSARP taxonomy. In the taxonomy, the act of requesting is represented linguistically as a sequence of utterances. Each sequence may consist of several components: alerters, the core of the request, pre- and post-core supportive moves, but only one component is essential for realizing the directive – it is the so-called head act, which is defined as “the minimal unit which can realize a request” (CCSARP: 275). While alerters (or opening elements, such as terms of address or attention-getters) and supportive moves (such as pre-commitment, grounder, imposition minimizer or promise of a reward) all contribute to the degree of politeness of a request, it is the head act that is of most interest to us, as we try to identify the differences between requests made by Russian HSs and NSs. Once a head act was identified, it was further analyzed in terms of the strategy used to create the illocutionary force, sentence type (syntactic form), morphosyntactic structure of the utterance, use of modals, internal morphosyntactic and lexical downgraders, and orientation. These categories are based on the coding manual from the CCSARP with certain modifications, which were called for by the realities of the elicited data and by the specifics of the conventionally indirect Russian requests (Mills 1991, 1992). We will now briefly describe each of the categories and their values.

### 4.2.1 Category 1: Strategy Type

Blum-Kulka and Olshtain (1984) and CCSARP based their analysis of head acts on the theoretical assumption that there seem to exist three major levels of directness in request strategies: the most direct and explicit level (including imperatives and performatives), the conventionally indirect level (communicative norms conventionalized in a given language) and unconventionally indirect level (strong and mild hints). The authors of the CCSARP subdivided these three basic levels into more specific sub-levels which they called “strategy types.” These types were changed based on the Russian conventions for request (after Mills 1991, 1992) and on the data elicited for this study. For example, the type “query action” was added since this is a wide-spread conventionally indirect form of request in Russian (7, 8a, 15) (Mills 1991). Hints were excluded from the analysis as they were obvious outliers. Thus, the values for the category “strategy type” are as described in Table 1 below.

Table 1. *Category 1: Strategy type*

1. performative: a performative verb, such as *ask* or *request* expresses the directive force (16a)

2. preparatory: the request is indirectly expressed in an utterance whose content addresses the preparatory condition – hearer’s ability to perform the requested action (16b)
3. query action: the request is indirectly expressed in an utterance which is literally a question asking whether the hearer will perform the desired action (16c)
4. hint: the request is unconventionally indirect; these were excluded from the analysis
5. want/need statement: the request is indirectly expressed in a declarative utterance expressing the speaker’s need or want to have the requested action performed. (16d)
6. mood derivable: direct request; an imperative clause structure involving a verb with imperative morphology (16e)
7. sincerity condition: an indirect request, which is literally a statement addressing the sincerity condition – speaker’s desire that the requested action be done; category 5 is, in fact, a particularly frequent subtype of this strategy, so only those declaratives that are not, in fact, want or need statements were included in this category (16f)
8. locution derivable: the nature of the request is clear from the locution, though it includes neither an imperative verb, nor a performative (16g)

The various strategy types analyzed here are exemplified in (16).

- (16) a. *Ja xotela poprosit' u teb'a konspekt.* (value 1)  
 I want:PST:F.SG PFV:ask:INF from you.SG notes.ACC  
 ‘I wanted to ask you for the notes.’
- b. *Ty možeš mne odložiti konspekt?* (value 2)  
 You.SG can:2SG me.DAT lend:INF notes.ACC  
 ‘Can you lend me the notes?’
- c. *Vy mne jejo dadite na odin večer?* (value 3)  
 You.PL me.DAT her.ACC give:2PL for one evening  
 ‘Will you give it to me for one evening?’
- d. *Mne nužna kniga.* (value 5)  
 Me.DAT needed:F.SG book:F.NOM  
 ‘I need a book.’ (literally: ‘To me, a book is needed’)
- e. *Daj mne, požalujsta, na den'ok!* (value 6)  
 Give:IMP.SG me.DAT please for day:DIM  
 ‘Give [it] to me, please, just for a day!’
- f. *Mne bylo by očen' prijatno, jesli by ty* (value 7)  
 Me.DAT be:PST:N SBJV very pleasant if SBJV you.SG  
*mne odalživala svoj konspekt.*  
 me.DAT lend:IPFV:PST:F.SG self's notes.ACC  
 ‘It would be very pleasant/nice (for me), if you could lend me your notes.’
- g. *Konspekt!* (value 8)  
 Notes!

#### 4.2.2 Category 2: Sentence type (clause type)

CCSARP does not have this category, but we thought it was essential to the analysis of directive strategies. Having sentence type as a separate category allows us to distinguish the function or content of a linguistic expression (namely, the strategy type which is based on essential conditions for the directive speech act, i.e. on the meaning of the utterance) from the form of this expression (namely, the syntactic shape of the utterance). The values in this

category were driven by the data and are interconnected with the strategy type. For example, an imperative clause is the only possible sentence structure for mood derivable requests. However, the correspondence between strategy type and syntactic form is not one-to-one: for instance, a preparatory condition (strategy type 2) can be addressed through an interrogative (16b), a complex declarative (17b), or an embedded interrogative utterance (17a). At the same time, a single sentence type can be used in requests based on different strategies: for instance, an interrogative can be used to query a preparatory condition or to query the hearer's doing the desired action; a complex declarative could be used to address a sincerity condition (16f) or a preparatory condition (17b). We classified the sentence type as described in Table 2.

Table 2. *Category 2: Sentence type (clause type)*

1.	imperative:	a sentence containing an imperative verb and pronounced with exclamatory intonation (16e); elliptical utterances that are verbless on the surface yet intonationally exclamatory and paraphrasable using a full imperative clause also count as imperative for our purposes (16g)
2.	interrogative:	this sentence type in Russian is, for the most part, distinguished from the declarative via intonation (16b, c)
3.	embedded interrogative:	a subordinate interrogative utterance usually embedded under an attitude verb (17a)
4.	declarative:	simple declarative statement (16a,d)
5.	complex declarative:	complex declarative statement: often a conditional if-then clause (16f, 17b)
6.	if-clause:	stand-alone conditional <i>if</i> -clause (17c)

(17)	a.	<i>Ja xotel uznat' jesli<sup>16</sup> ja mogu polučit' konspekt.</i>
		I want:PST.M.SG PFV:find.out:INF if I can:1SG get:INF notes.ACC
		‘I wanted to find out if I can get the notes’
	b.	<i>Bylo by očen' klassno, jesli by ty mogla odolžit' mne na noč.</i>
		be:PST:N SBJV really awesome if SBJV you.SG can:PST:F.SG lend:INF me.DAT for night
		‘It would be really awesome if you could lend (it) to me for a night.’
	c.	<i>Požalujsta jesli by ja mog odolžit' u vas knigu.</i>
		Please if SBJV I can.PST.M.SG borrow:INF from you.PL book:ACC
		‘Please, if I could borrow the book from you...’

### 4.2.3 Category 3: Morphosyntactic structure of request

CCSARP combines syntactic sentence type with grammatical elements (such as the presence of the subjunctive mood) into one category, called “syntactic downgraders,” which includes interrogative clause type, negation of a preparatory condition, subjunctive mood, conditional clause and others. We have several objections to this approach.

First, the clause type (specifically the interrogative) is not, in fact, a syntactic downgrader, contrary to its treatment in the CCSARP. The project's authors define a

<sup>16</sup> Note that the use of *jesli* ‘if’ as a complementizer translationally equivalent to *whether*, as in (17a), is ungrammatical in full Russian, but is a feature of HR (cf. Dubinina and Polinsky 2013).

downgrader as something optional in a given context, but the interrogative is not an optional choice for the conventionally indirect strategies. We view this as the essential form and introduce a separate category for sentence type (4.2.2. above).

Second, certain grammatical elements beyond the syntactic sentence type can be viewed as essential to conveying directive illocutionary force and, therefore, not belonging to the category of optional downgraders. Specifically, we treat the negative particle as an essential marker of directive force in Russian. While the particle was not widely used in the corpus data, we take this to be a reflection of two confounding factors. The first is that many social situations represented in the corpus were informal, and thus *ne*, which (in addition to directive force) marks deference, would be inappropriate. Second, in formal situations speakers may wish to leave room for doubt regarding their speech act, and thus may choose to not mark their interrogative unambiguously as a request. In this, we follow Mills (1991) whose NS informants reported that *ne* alone was enough to create the directive interpretation of the utterance while at the same time making it polite. As we will discuss below, the NSs in our study fully corroborate Mills's reports and use the negative particle when they are asked to produce an unambiguous polite request for favor.

Separating linguistic elements into those that are building blocks of a request and those that are its optional downgraders for politeness is a difficult endeavor. Nevertheless, we think it is useful to make this distinction, as it forces us to identify the elements of linguistic form that are required for communicating the directive function. Thus, we have two separate categories of analysis: morphosyntactic structure of request and morphosyntactic downgraders. In the former category, elements are viewed as formal, rather than functional just as in the category of sentence type; elements of request structure go beyond sentence type and include morphology (values 1 and 4) as well as syntax (values 2 and 3), as follows in Table 3.

*Table 3. Category 3: Morphosyntactic structure of request*

1.	negative particle (18a)
2.	embedding under performative or perlocutionary <sup>17</sup> verb (18b, 17a)
3.	conditional clause (16f, 17b)
4.	imperative verb (16e)

- (18) a. *Ty ne mogla by mne tam dat' konspekt?*  
 You.SG NEG can:PST:F.SG SBJV me.DAT APPX give:INF notes.ACC  
 'Could you give me the notes sometime?'  
 b. *Xotela sprosit' jesli ja mogu vz'at' jejo tam na den'.*  
 Want:PST:F.SG PFV:ask:INF if I can:1SG take:INF her.ACC APPX for day  
 'I wanted to ask you if I can take it for about a day.'

Values 1 and 4 are based on Mills's studies as well as our data, whereas values 2 and 3 came from the realities of the data.

The categories of sentence type and morphosyntactic request structure are not completely independent from each other. For example, the conditional clause is necessarily a complex declarative sentence type, and the imperative verb is necessarily part of an imperative clause. Yet, an imperative clause type may be elliptical and thus fail to include an

<sup>17</sup> We included in this category both embedding under performative verbs like *sprosit'* 'to ask' and embedding under attitude verbs that denote a goal behind the request, but are not strictly performative, e.g. *uznat'* 'to find out' (17a). We call this latter type of verb *perlocutionary*, since they denote an effect of an illocutionary act.

imperative verb. At the same time, the negative particle may or may not occur in two types of clauses – interrogative or embedded interrogative. Similarly, an interrogative or a declarative clause can be embedded under a performative verb. Thus, the two categories are not redundant.

Based on such reasoning, instead of having one overarching CCSARP category of syntactic downgraders, we use separate measures for syntactic clause type (category 2 above), morphosyntactic marking of request (category 3 presented here) and morphosyntactic downgraders for politeness (category 5 below), and keep them separate from strategy type (category 1 above).

#### 4.2.4 Category 4: Use of modals

This category does not exist in the CCSARP. It is based on our assumption that a conventionally indirect request in Russian which addresses the hearer’s ability to perform the action will necessarily include a modal. This could be either a personal finite or an impersonal form of the possibility modal, giving two values for this category, exemplified in (19).

1. impersonal modal (19a)                      2. personal modal (19b)

- (19) a. *Možno*     *u*     *vas*     *étu*     *knigu*     *vz'at'?*  
**Possible.IP** from you.PL    this:ACC book:ACC take:INF  
‘May I take this book from you?’  
b. *Mogu*     *li*     *ja*     *u*     *vas*     *jejo*     *vz'at'?*  
**Can:1SG** INT I from you.PLher.ACC take:INF  
‘Can I take it from you?’

The impersonal modal form does not exist in the HSs’ dominant language (English), yet Russian includes this form in conventional requests for permission and favor, the former being reasonably expected to be frequent in the early linguistic practice of both NSs and HSs. These formal and functional differences between English and Russian may lead to a divergence in the HSs’ usage, as we will show later.

#### 4.2.5 Category 5: Morphosyntactic downgraders for politeness

As we already mentioned, downgraders are those elements of the head act that are optional in the given context (CCSARP definition). According to Mills, the most common morphosyntactic downgrader in Russian is the subjunctive particle *by*. Another popular downgrader is the interrogative particle *li*. Tense modifications of the head verb were observed in the HSs data at the preliminary analysis stage and, therefore, were included in the analysis schema.

1. subjunctive (18a)                      2. interrogative particle (19b)                      3. past tense (18b)

Note that past tense morphology in HS data is ambiguous: it could be a true marker of past tense, which can serve as a downgrader by temporally removing the content of the request from the current situation into the past. Alternatively, this morphology could be an incomplete subjunctive form in HR, lacking the subjunctive particle obligatory in full Russian. Whatever its acquisitional roots and semantic functionality, we distinguish past tense morphology marking in the absence of the subjunctive particle *by* (value 3) from this

same morphology in the presence of *by* (value 1). This distinction is supported by our data: of the 16 HSs who use past tense without *by* across the two situations, half do use the full subjunctive including *by* elsewhere in the transcript. This means that at least half of our HS subjects have acquired the subjunctive, but chose to use past tense as a downgrader.

#### 4.2.6 Category 6: Uses of ‘please’

We included the presence or absence of head-act-internal uses of the lexical politeness marker *požalujsta* in our analysis.

## 5 Experimental study of requests in Heritage Russian: results

As a reminder, in scenario 1 the participants were asked to play a role of a student who missed a class and wants to borrow notes from a female classmate. The two students are not close friends, but are on good terms with each other. According to the scenario, both students will have an exam in this course in three days. In the second scenario participants were asked to play the role of a student who requests a rare book from a professor. The book is needed for a presentation and is not available otherwise. The obvious difference between the two scenarios is the social distance between the requester and the presumed requestee, which is greater in the second scenario.<sup>18</sup>

### 5.1 Types of strategy used by NSs and HSs to create the directive illocutionary force

Both groups seem to rely mostly on an indirect strategy in the first scenario, specifically on the preparatory condition that concerns the hearer’s ability to perform the requested action.

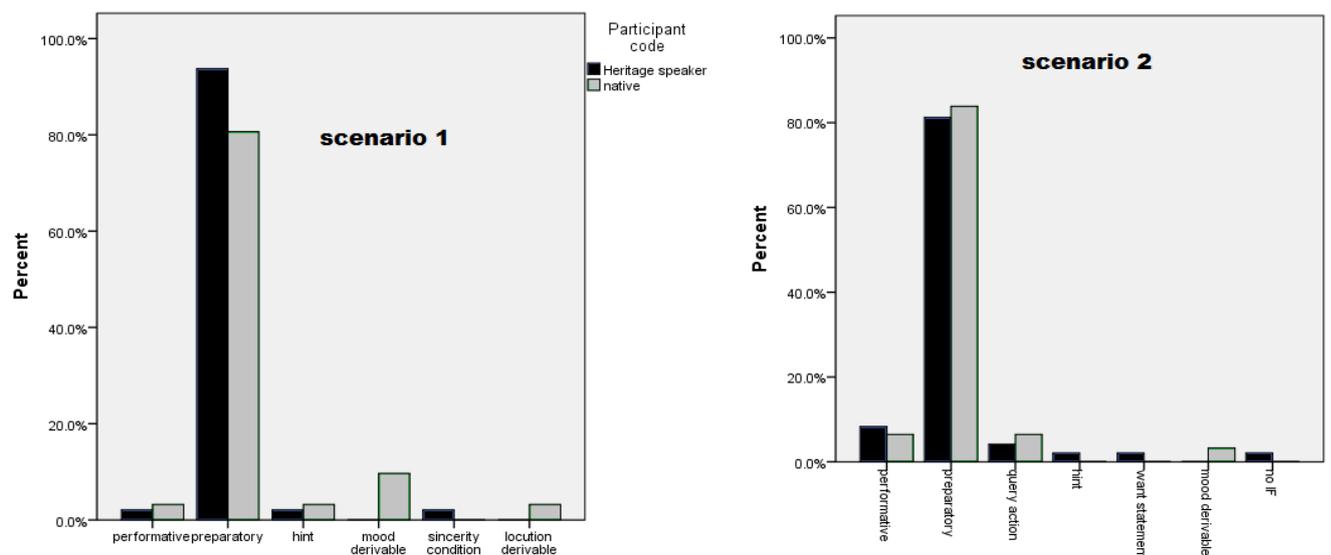


Figure 1. The strategy for creating requests

<sup>18</sup> The second scenario was closer to the real-life social situation between the informants and the interviewer, since the former were college students, and the latter was a college professor (though not necessarily the participants’ actual teacher).

Similarly, in the second scenario, both NSs and HSs overwhelmingly used the preparatory condition (hearer's ability).<sup>19</sup>

As evident from Figure 1, however, there are interesting small differences between groups. NSs have a bigger repertoire of strategies, which includes mood derivable and locution derivable illocutionary force. HSs do not use these two strategies at all. As expected from the graphs, statistical analysis showed no difference between groups.

## 5.2 The clause type of the requestive utterances

NSs and HSs use different types of sentences to produce requests. In the first scenario (request between peers), the majority of participants in both groups (83%) use interrogatives, which corresponds to the most popular directive strategy – reference to the preparatory condition. However, there are important and statistically significant differences between groups. First, NSs use imperative sentences, which correspond to the mood derivable illocutionary force, while HSs do not. In their under-use of direct requests, HSs diverge from the monolingual speakers of Russian (Mills 1991, *inter alia*), and may approximate speakers of English (but see discussion of corpus data above). On the other hand, some HSs (6%) use embedded interrogatives, something NSs never do. An example of an embedded interrogative in scenario 1 (request to a peer) is (17a), repeated below.

- (17a) a. *Ja xotel uznat' jesli ja mogu polučit' konspekt.*  
 I want:PST.M.SG PFV:find.out:INF if I can.1SG get:INF notes.ACC  
 'I wanted to find out if I can get the notes'

Finally, 9% of HSs use complex declarative sentences like the one in (16f), given in full below.

- (16f) f. *Mne bylo by očen' priyatno, jesli by ty mne  
 Me.DAT be:PST:N.SG SBJV very pleasant if SBJV you.SG me.DAT  
 odalživala svoj konspekt-s of the class<sup>20</sup>.  
 lend:IPFV:PST:F.SG self's notes-s*  
 'I would be very pleased if you could lend me your notes of the class.'

The observed difference between groups had statistical significance ( $p = .034$ ).

In the second scenario, even though both groups made reference to the preparatory condition in order to create a request, they did it in different ways. NSs predominantly used interrogatives to question the condition (94%) while HSs employed four different sentence

<sup>19</sup> Graphs represent total types for all groups; there are no outliers. Since data come from role-playing elicitation (and not from observation or interview), each individual produces exactly one head act per scenario. This means that each individual gets exactly the same amount of influence on the overall statistics.

<sup>20</sup> The code-switching is part of the participant's utterance. The singular *konspekt* 'notes' is phonologically borrowed into the English part of the utterance, and receives English pronunciation and the plural suffix *-s*.

types: interrogatives (59%), embedded interrogatives (29%), declaratives (8%) and stand-alone *if*-clauses (4%). The differences were significant, with  $p = .000$ .

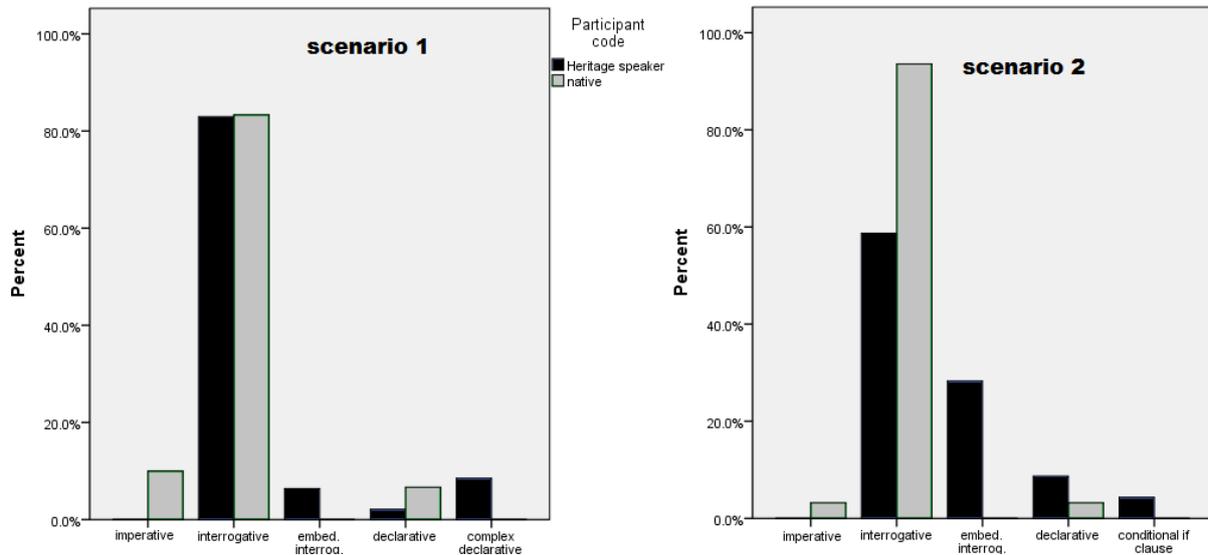


Figure 2. The sentence type (clause type) used in requests

### 5.3 Differences in the morphosyntactic marking of the directive function

There are significant differences in the morphosyntactic structure of requests between the two groups in both scenarios. Following Mills's studies, which assert that the negative particle lends an utterance its directive force, it was expected that the negative particle will be used in most, if not all, indirect requests, at least those that use a personal modal<sup>21</sup>. Results show that NSs indeed rely on this particle heavily (63% in the first scenario, 55% in the second). In fact, out of 31 head acts produced by NSs in the first scenario, 25 were interrogatives, and 21 of them used a personal modal. This means that there were 21 chances to use the negative particle, as in (20). In the second scenario, NSs produced 29 interrogative utterances, and 21 of them could potentially have the negative particle.

- (20) *Ty ne mogla by mne konspekt odolžit'?*  
 You.SG NEG can:PST:F.SG SBJV me.DAT notes.ACC lend:INF?  
 'Could you lend me your notes?' (literally: 'Could you not lend me your notes?')

Across the two scenarios, NSs used *ne* in 37 out of 42 interrogatives that support its use (or 88% of the time). The other twelve interrogatives (25 plus 29 total minus 42 with the personal modal) used the impersonal modal where the use of the negative particle would not be possible. It should be noted here that the category "no marker" includes all cases where no special grammatical structure is present that makes an utterance a request. This happens either because the sentence type and/or strategy type do not support the use of the negation or other request markers, or because speakers chose not to use them. For NSs "no marker" in this analysis refers to the two interrogatives that could use the negative particle, but did not, and to sentences that are performatives or hints (i.e., where negation is not possible). These account for 27% of utterances in the first, and 35.5% of utterances in the second scenario, but

<sup>21</sup> Negated *možno* is a suppletive form *nel'zja*, which can be used in an indirect request to increase its politeness. However, since the presence of an impersonal modal already strongly suggests a request for permission or favor, we do not have any strong expectations about negation in such utterances.

a truer reflection of the negative particle use is the proportion of cases where the NSs made a choice not to use a marker when that option was available. This was the case in 5 out of 42 interrogatives with a personal modal in both scenarios, i.e., in only 11% of cases.

In comparison, 79% of HSs in the first scenario and 54.5% in the second scenario did not use any specific grammatical marker of request. The category “no marker” for HSs includes many utterances where speakers could, but chose not to, use the negative particle. Out of 48 head acts produced by HSs in the first scenario, 39 were interrogative utterances, and 21 of them could be negated; for the second scenario, HSs produced 16 interrogatives that could potentially have the negative particle. Yet, only two HSs in the first scenario and only four in the second scenario used the negative particle. Thus, the true proportion of cases where the HSs made a choice not to use a marker when that option was available is 84% of cases for both scenarios (90.5% or 19 out of 21 total instances in the first, and 75% or 12 out of 16 instances in the second scenario). Hence, the use of the particle *ne* in requests made by NSs shows an almost completely reverse distribution compared to the HSs.

Two other notable differences between groups lie in the HSs’ use of embedding under a performative or perlocutionary verb as a grammatical strategy for creating requests (17a), and in their total avoidance of the imperative form (unlike NSs).

The difference between groups was statistically significant in both scenarios, with  $p = .000$  in the first, and  $p = .008$  in the second scenario.

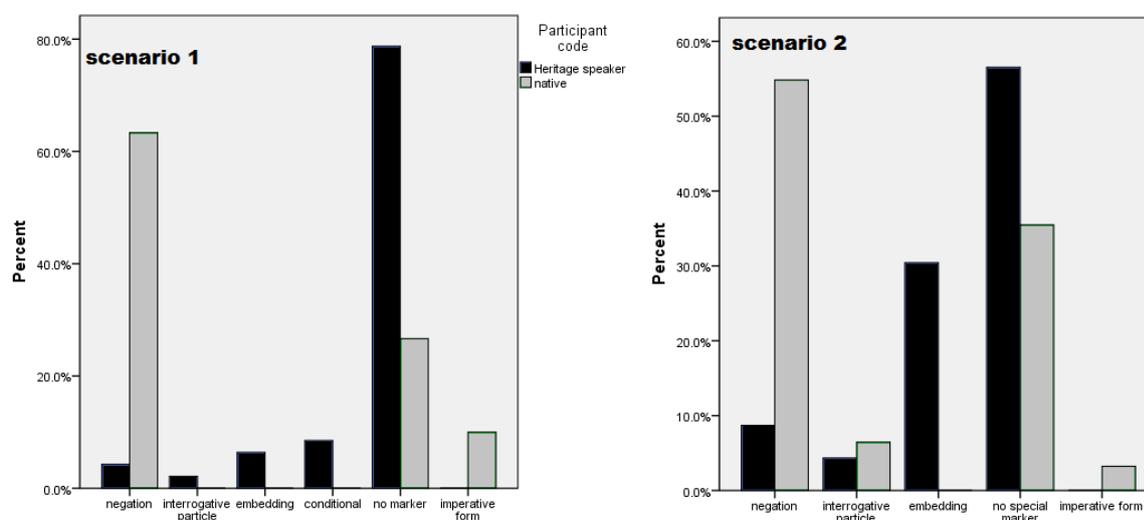


Figure 3. Morphosyntactic markers of request

## 5.4 The use of modals when one is required by the structure of the request

Since the majority of head acts in both groups and scenarios receive their illocutionary force from referring to the preparatory condition (questioning, stating, or supposing it), extensive use of the possibility modals was expected. What was not clear is what type of modal is preferred by each group: finite forms of the personal modal *moč* or the non-finite impersonal *možno*?

In the first scenario, NSs preferred using the personal modal (68%); only 13% relied on the impersonal *možno*. Although HSs in the first scenario also relied on the finite modal over half the time (54%), they used the non-finite impersonal *možno* much more frequently

than NSs: 40% vs. 13%. The difference was statistically significant, with  $p = .004$ . The two groups were identical in their use of modals in scenario 2.<sup>22</sup>

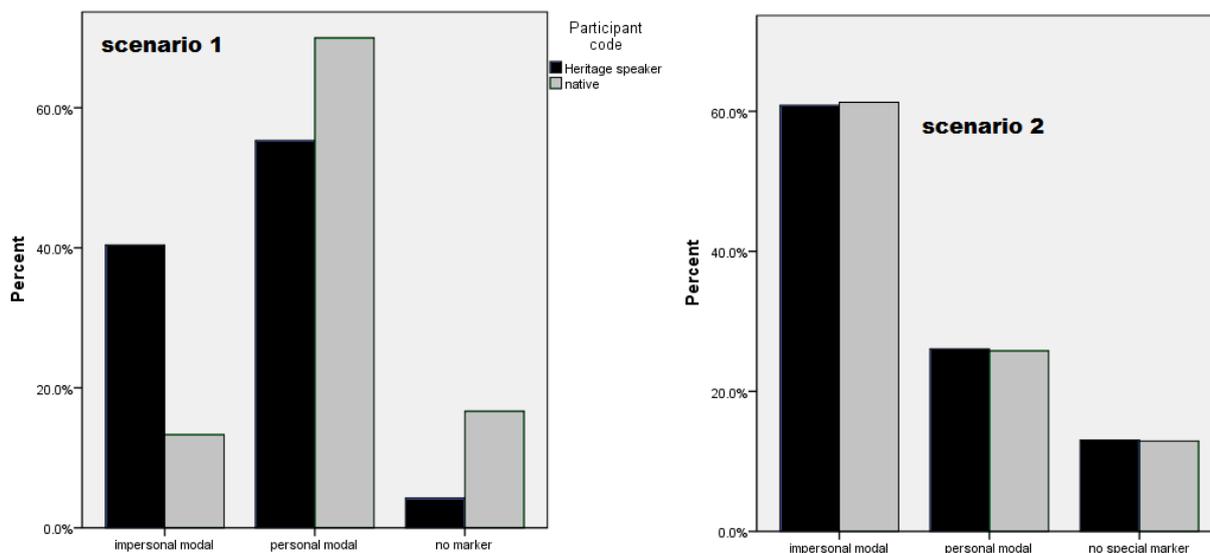


Figure 4. Choice of modals

## 5.5 The use of morphosyntactic downgraders and lexical downgrader ‘please’

Russian, like any other language, has several linguistic devices to mitigate the face threat when issuing a request. Some of these devices are grammatical (the interrogative particle or the subjunctive), and others are lexical. There are a number of hedges (e.g., *možet, možet byt’* ‘maybe’) that are routinely used by NSs, but the primary lexical softening device is the word *požalujsta* ‘please’.

In scenario 1, NSs and HSs seem to have opposite mitigating strategies. NSs favor the subjunctive (mitigating with the help of a grammatical device) while HSs rely on the lexical politeness marker *požalujsta*, as the graphs below indicate.

<sup>22</sup> Since the order of presentation was always scenario 1 followed by scenario 2, it is possible that HSs “warmed up” and thus performed closer to the NS baseline in the second scenario in their use of modals and morpho-syntactic downgraders.. However, the ‘warm-up explanation’ for observed differences is undermined by two facts: a) both scenarios were part of a larger set of role-plays, so that speakers had an opportunity to “warm up” even prior to what in this paper is called ‘scenario 1’; and 2) there were persistent differences between HSs and NSs in every category of analysis except the use of modals - even when there were no statistically significant differences, there were categorical ones, such as the HSs’ use of forms that were non-existent in NS data and were judged unacceptable by NS informants.

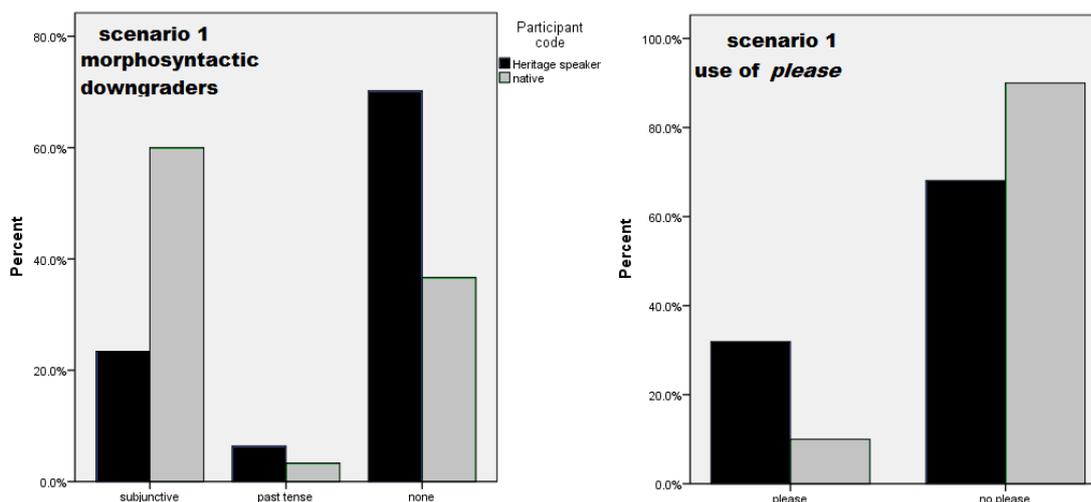


Figure 5. Morphosyntactic downgraders and 'please' in scenario 1

With regards to the lexical downgrader, 10% of NSs used *požalujsta*, and mostly in direct, mood-derivable requests (2).

- (21) *Esli možeš daj mne požalujsta na den'ok.*  
 If can:2SG give:IMP.SG me.DAT please for day.DIM  
 'If you can, give [it] to me for just a day, please.'

Notably, only one native speaker used the lexical marker *požalujsta* as part of an indirect request (22), which corresponds to the extreme rarity of such use in our corpus data.

- (22) *Ne mogla by ty lekcii odolžit' požalujsta na den'ok?*  
 NEG can:PST:F.SG SBJV you.SG lectures.ACC lend:INF please for day.DIM  
 'Could you, please, lend [me] the lectures for just a day?' (literally: 'Couldn't you...')

HSs, in comparison, used *požalujsta* widely, including in indirect requests (23).

- (23) *Ty mne možeš požalujsta dat' konspekt?*  
 You.SG me.DAT can:2SG please give:INF notes.ACC  
 'Can you, please, give me the notes?'

The marker was present in 15 of the 39 interrogative head acts produced by HSs in scenario 1 (or in 38% cases). These 15 head acts included 8 interrogatives that used the impersonal modal *možno*, as in (25a).

Statistical significance was found for both measures in the first scenario:  $p = .003$  for morphosyntactic downgraders and  $p = .028$  for the use of *požalujsta*.

In the second scenario, statistical tests did not show significance for the difference between groups on the measure of morphosyntactic downgraders, but a few details are noteworthy. First, only 26% of HSs used the subjunctive to soften their requests, half of the number of NSs (58%). Second, another 20% of HSs used past tense as a downgrader, whereas NSs did not exhibit this strategy at all. Past tense was used by HSs in embedded

interrogatives, such as (24a); in performative declaratives, such as (24b); and in declaratives with reference to the preparatory condition, such as (24c).

- (24) a. *Ja tol'ko xotela sprosit' jesli ja mogu na odin den' jejo vzjat'.*  
 I only want:PST:F.SG PFV.ask:INF if I can.1SG for one day her.ACC take:INF  
 'I just wanted to ask if I can take it for one day.'
- b. *Ja xotela prosto poprosit' knjigu, kotoraja mne nužna dl'a mojej prezentacii.*  
 I want:PST:F.SG just PFV.ask:INF book:ACC, which:F.SG.NOM me.DAT  
 needed:F.SG.NOM for my.GEN presentation:GEN  
 'I wanted only to ask for the book that I need for my presentation.'
- c. *I ja dumala mozet byt' vy smozete odolžit' mne vašu knjigu.*  
 And I think:PST:F.SG may be you.PL PFV:can:2PL lend:INF me.DAT  
 your.ACC book:ACC  
 'And I thought maybe you will be able to lend me your book.'

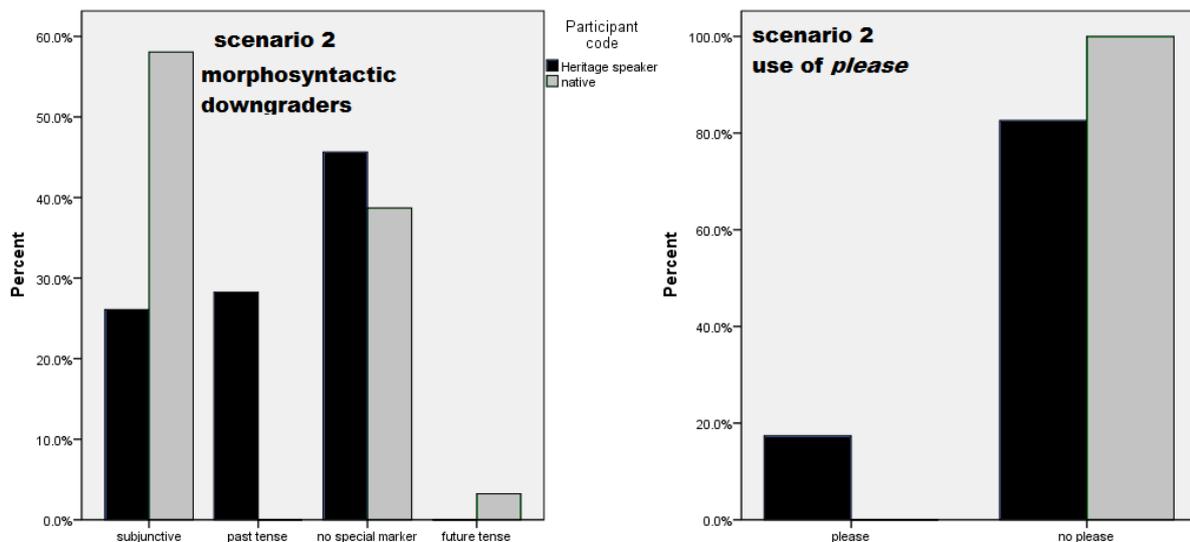


Figure 6. Use of morphosyntactic downgraders and 'please' in scenario 2

None of NSs used the lexical politeness marker *požalujsta* in their requests in the second scenario while 17% HSs chose to employ it. Since HSs did not use imperative requests in the second scenario, this marker appears in other syntactic environments: interrogatives (25a), embedded interrogatives (25b) and even conditional *if*-clauses (25c).

- (25) a. *Tak možno požalujsta odolžit' u vas knjigu?*  
 So possible.IP please borrow:INF from you.PL book.ACC?  
 'So could I, please, borrow your book?' (literally: 'So is it possible, please, to...')
- b. *Ja xoču sprosit' jesli ja jejo mogu odolžit' požalujsta.*  
 I want.1SG PFV.ask:INF if I her.ACC can:1SG borrow:INF please  
 'I want to ask if I could borrow it, please.'
- c. *Jesli b vy mogli mne požalujsta nu tam odat' na paru dnei.*  
 If SBJV you.PL can:PST:PL me.DAT please PRT APPX  
 PFV:give:INF for couple days:GEN

‘If you could give [it] to me, please, for a couple of days’

The difference in the use of *požalujsta* in the second scenario between the two groups was statistically significant, with  $p = .015$ .

The findings for the production part of the study are summarized in Table 4 in the Appendix.

The production data in the study suggest that despite important similarities, there are significant differences between requests made by Russian HSs and NSs. As was shown in this section, some of the requests produced by HSs have unique and non-conventional features in several units of analysis: clause type, morphosyntactic structure, modal use, and lexical and morphosyntactic downgraders. These features merit detailed discussion because they diverge so vividly from the NS norm described in previous studies, from our data for NS participants in this study, and from the patterns observed in the corpus studies. In the following section, we will identify salient tendencies in HSs requests.

## 6 Discussion

The current study has a descriptive orientation in establishing a baseline for the pragmatic competence of speakers with incomplete acquisition of L1; however, we would like to offer some preliminary theoretical suggestions towards an explanation for the observed difference in the data from HSs and NSs. These suggestions should be taken only as attempts at an exploration of the mechanisms behind the tendencies in the experimental HSs data, as serious theoretical analysis is outside the scope of this paper.

Methodologically, in the experimental portion of the study, we fine-tune the CCSARP taxonomy widely used in research on requests to produce a more detailed analysis of various elements that come together to create the directive force and desired politeness level in a Russian utterance. This assumption allowed us to separate syntax from morphological or lexical elements on the one hand, and on the other, to differentiate between required elements that create the illocutionary force and optional features that mitigate this force. This enhancement of the CCSARP analytical schema revealed features of HSs’ requests that otherwise would have been hidden from researchers’ view. For example, although HSs were similar to the control group in choosing an indirect strategy (namely, reference to the preparatory condition) to formulate requests in both formal and informal scenarios, they differed in their choices of syntactic realizations of this strategy. Surface interrogative was the only syntactic form employed by NSs for indirect requests, whereas HSs additionally used complex sentences where interrogatives were embedded as subordinate clauses or where reference to the hearer’s ability to perform the action was embedded as a conditional clause.

In this section, we discuss the main differences between the HS and NS populations that emerge from our study, and compare these differences with the observations made in our corpus study of English and Russian requests. We also briefly point out the consequences of our study for the study of pragmatics and language contact.

### 6.1 Morphosyntactic features of requests: transfer and incomplete acquisition

First, the two syntactic forms used by the HSs but not by NSs include embedding and complex clauses (see Fig.2). These can be seen as a transfer<sup>23</sup> from English, which also employs such syntactic structures (for instance, our MiCASE search included 11 embedded interrogative requests). This kind of transfer conforms to the hypothesis that in language contact situations, things that are easiest to borrow are Saussurean signs – combinations of a particular linguistic form and its semantic/pragmatic function (Prince 1996, *inter alia*).

We propose that the combination of the embedded interrogative construction and its function of high level of deference-marking is borrowed by Russian HSs from English. The resulting utterances conform to the rules of heritage Russian syntax and carry the desired illocutionary meaning. A formal model of such transfer would necessitate the notion of linguistic form (i.e. embedded interrogative construction) that is independent of the specific syntactic rules of each language, since the syntax of embedded interrogatives is different in Russian and English.

In addition, HSs avoid imperative clauses (direct requests), unlike NSs (see Fig.2). This avoidance can also be seen as a transfer from English. In this case, it is not clear that what is borrowed is a particular form-function combination. Rather, HSs adopt one aspect of the meaning this construction carries in American English and may sometimes carry in Russian – that of an unmitigated FTA, and thus may perceive it as rude and inappropriate for a request for favor with a high degree of imposition.

Turning to the analysis of the morphosyntactic markers of requests, a major difference between monolingual and HS groups is in their use of negation (see Fig. 3). We can explain the absence of negation in HS requests by proposing that HSs transfer the conventional form for polite indirect requests from English, where negation does not occur. An additional factor in the absence of negation in HSs may be that negated interrogative requests in English are perceived as rude and even sarcastically mocking. Thus, as in the use of imperative clauses, HSs avoid the use of this marker in Russian.

Unlike the case of the imperative clauses, however, it is not clear that HSs are aware of the pragmatic meaning of the Russian negative particle. One explanation for this lack of awareness may be the fact that the negative particle in Russian not only imparts the directive force, but also serves as a marker of deference (Mills 1992), and the proposition that linguistic realization of deference may appear relatively late in Russian L1 acquisition. There is some preliminary evidence from the CHILDES database that supports this assumption<sup>24</sup>. Indeed, deference in indirect requests may be rendered unnecessary and even infelicitous in interactions between small children and members of the immediate family or other adults. It is reasonable to assume that in HL acquisition, late-acquired features<sup>25</sup> of Russian would not be learned due to the dominance of English and lack of exposure to varied social interactions and formal speech registers in Russian.

---

<sup>23</sup> “Transfer is the influence resulting from the similarities and differences between the target language and any other language that has been previously (and perhaps imperfectly) acquired.” (Odlin 1989 p. 27) In our case, the target language is Heritage Russian and “any other language” is English.

<sup>24</sup> A search of the CHILDES database produced a number of sentences in child-directed speech that indicate that indirect requests which children hear at home do not contain the negative particle. None of the 37 indirect requests in the Tanja corpus containing a personal modal were negated. All of these requests were addressed to a 2-year-old Tanja by an adult. The other study of child Russian available on CHILDES, the Protassova corpus, contained one utterance that can be interpreted as an indirect positive interrogative request for action in child-directed speech, and several others that were requests for permission. All other unambiguously directive utterances in both child-directed and child speech in the Protassova corpus were direct imperative requests.

<sup>25</sup> This assumption is also supported by the studies of pragmatic acquisition of English-speaking children that show that linguistic expression of deference is acquired later in childhood, around the age of 8-10 (Corsaro 1979, Ervin-Tripp 1977, Gordon & Ervin-Tripp 1984; Shatz 1982).

Late acquisition of formal registers can also explain the increase in the HSs' use of embedding under a performative or perlocutionary verb to create requests in the second scenario when the social distance and power differential between interlocutors becomes bigger (See Fig. 3). Where more face-work is needed, HSs borrow English convention of embedding (24c, 25b - repeated below, and 26) as one way to enhance the indirectness and mitigation of their requests. This increased use of embedding in scenario 2 goes hand-in-hand with the HSs' use of past tense morphology (see Fig. 6), usually on a higher attitude verb (often *xotel'* 'to want') that embeds the performative (17a, 24ab, 26). We hypothesize that this divergence from the baseline is possibly due to the lack of HSs' exposure to formal situations in Russian.

- (24c) *Ja dumala možet byt' vy smožete odolžit' mne vašu knigu*  
 I think:PST:F.SG may be you.PL PFV:can:2PL lend:INF me.DAT your:ACC  
 book:ACC  
 'I thought maybe you will be able to lend me your book.' (past tense)
- (25b) *Ja xoču sprosit' jesli ja jejo mogu odolžit' požalujsta.*  
 I want:1SG ask:INF if I it.ACC can:1SG borrow:INF please  
 'I want to ask if I can borrow it, please.' (embedding)
- (26) *Ja xotel sprosit' jesli mog na paru dnejjego ispol'zovat'.*  
 I want:PST.M.SG ask:INF if can:PST.M.SG for couple days it.ACC PFV:use:INF  
 'I wanted to ask if (I) could use it for a couple of days' (past tense and embedding)

Such use of past tense as a morphosyntactic downgrader is minimal in NSs' requests in our experimental data and in the corpus study (and was never reported in previous studies), but is common in English, particularly in formal situations or those with a high degree of imposition, as in (27), from MiCASE.

- (27) *I was wondering if you could speak a little more to the pitfalls that await junior faculty members.*

While the NS participants also manipulated tense to increase politeness level (3% of NSs used past tense in scenario 1 and 3% used future tense in scenario 2), constructions with embedding (either under performative or not) were present only in the HSs data.

Since syntactic structures associated with the use of embedding and other constructions differ in Russian and English, a model of transfer of pragmatic convention in this case would involve a notion of linguistic form (i.e., embedded interrogative construction) that is independent of the syntax of both languages. In addition, such a model would need a concept of pragmatic meaning (e.g., politeness or mitigation) that is associated with some uses of the form (such as past tense in indirect requests), but not with others (e.g., past tense in assertions).

Turning now to another significant difference between NS and HS requests, the under-use of the subjunctive by HSs (see Fig. 5-6) is harder to explain. It is possible that HSs have not acquired the subjunctive, as is suggested by Polinsky (1995). Polinsky shows that HSs tend to use more past tense forms of the verb without the particle *by* in lieu of the full subjunctive form. The data in this study do not fit this observation. When HSs use the subjunctive in their utterances, they use the full form: past tense + the particle *by*, which indicates that they have acquired this form. Similarly, when they use just past tense forms, they are not meant to be the subjunctive, as in (26). Of the 16 HSs in this study who use the past tense mitigator in at least one scenario, 8 exhibit knowledge of the subjunctive form

elsewhere in the transcript. Thus, many HSs in our study have acquired the subjunctive, but for some reason tend not to use this form to mitigate their requests. This behavior runs contrary to the expectation that HSs would transfer English politeness strategy to Russian by over-supplying the subjunctive forms. After all, the subjunctive has been shown to be the major mitigating element in English requests (Brown and Levinson 1987, Blum-Kulka et al. 1989), and can be used in Russian (often with the effect of hyper-politeness; see Mills 1992). Instead, the under-use of subjunctive can be seen as a result of emergent pragmatic rules specific to Heritage Russian. HSs seem to have chosen a different strategy for mitigating threat to the speaker's face, which includes the use of past tense, embedding, and/or the lexical downgrader *požalujsta*. We turn to the discussion of this lexical politeness marker next.

## 6.2 The transfer in the use of lexical downgrader

In the informal situation, 32% of HSs used *požalujsta* in comparison to only 10% of NSs, and in the formal scenario 17% of HSs employed the downgrader while NSs never used it (Fig. 5-6). It is also notable that HSs use *požalujsta* in almost all sentence types they produce: interrogatives (28a), embedded interrogatives (28b), and even stand alone if-clauses (28c):

- (28) a. *Tak možno požalujsta odolžit' u teb'a konspekt?*  
 So possible.IP please borrow:INF from you.SG notes.ACC?  
 'So could I, please, borrow your notes?' (literally: 'So is it possible, please, to...')
- b. *Ja xoču sprosit' jesli ja jejo mogu odolžit' požalujsta.*  
 I want.1SG PFV:ask:INF if I her.ACC can:1SG borrow:INF please  
 'I want to ask if I could borrow it, please.'
- c. *Jesli b vy mogli mne požalujsta nu tam*  
 If SBJV you.PL can:PST:PL me.DAT please PRT APPX  
*otdat' na paru dnej.*  
 PFV:give:INF for couple days:GEN  
 'If you could give [it] to me, please, for a couple of days'

In comparison, 2 out of 3 NSs who used the politeness marker in both situations combined it with the imperative, and only one speaker used it in the interrogative. This difference between two groups merits an extensive analysis.

There are two possible and interrelated explanations for the overuse of *požalujsta* by HSs. The first is that *požalujsta* as a lexical marker has a low cognitive load in usage while at the same time being an unambiguous marker of politeness, and thus it may be preferred by HSs over morphosyntactic politeness strategies that carry a higher processing cost. The second explanation points to the effect of cross-linguistic influence from English. To HSs, the Russian *požalujsta* and the English *please* must seem absolutely synonymous. However, as similar as they may be, a closer look at the conditions of use for *please* and *požalujsta* reveals that the English word has a somewhat different, wider distribution. As our corpus study confirms, it is preferred and almost required in direct requests which employ the imperative, and it is permitted and even preferred in indirect requests, i.e. interrogatives. Over-reliance of HSs on this marker in Russian requests suggests a transfer from English.

It is notable, however, that in the formal situation when HSs had to address a social superior, they reduced the usage of *požalujsta* from 32% in scenario 1 to 17%. Together with the increase in the use of embedding, this suggests that the HSs treat the lexical marker as insufficient in the formal situation that requires extensive facework. We hypothesize that for HSs embedding under performative may be becoming a conventionalized way to formulate

polite requests for favor which express a greater degree of deference. This construction may be even higher on the politeness scale in HR than a conventional interrogative even when it is used with *požalujsta*.

### 6.3 Use of modals: evidence for incomplete acquisition and restructuring

Indirect requests questioning the hearer's ability to perform the action require the use of modals. Russian presents a complicated choice: on the one hand, there is the personal finite modal *moč* and the impersonal form *možno*. On the other hand, the impersonal form can potentially express either alethic or deontic modalities. Both groups of speakers in the study used both forms. There are, however, significant differences in the use of the impersonal *možno* between the groups in scenario 1.

Although requests made by both HSs and NSs in the informal scenario contained the personal modal (54% and 86% respectively), HSs used the personal modal significantly less frequently and the impersonal modal significantly more frequently than NSs did (40% for HSs vs. 13% for NSs). This pattern was not observed in scenario 2 where the two groups were identical in the use of modals (personal modal was used in 61% and impersonal modal in 26% of requests) (see Fig. 4). This poses an interesting question of why HSs use *možno* so frequently, but only in the situation of minimal social distance with the interlocutor.

We leave the answer to this question to future research, but hypothesize that the impersonal modal may be the most familiar way for HSs to create a general request in an informal situation because this is the form they acquire first through exposure to informal interaction with family members. In addition, since the impersonal *možno* carries the meaning of permission (rather than favor), it is reasonable to assume that the form is quite often used by pre-school children. Since the average age of immigration for HSs in this study is 3.52 years and 21% were born in the U.S., we can assume that their socialization in Russian was interrupted very early and continued primarily in the English language context. As a result, the forms of conventionalized requests they acquired in Russian are only those that are characteristic of informal interactions within the home. The next logical step would be to suggest that HSs may treat *možno* as a conventional and polite way to ask for a thing or action in an informal situation, such as scenario one addressed to a peer, but not in scenario two, which involves a greater social distance.

Interestingly, the use of the impersonal modal by NSs in this study differs from HSs not only within scenarios, but also across. Unlike the HSs data, the use of impersonal modal by NSs increased between scenario 1 and scenario 2: it was employed 13% of the time in requests addressed to peers, but 26% in interrogatives addressed to a professor. This increase can be explained as a mitigating strategy suggested by Gordon and Ervin-Tripp (1984). By employing the impersonal modal with its connotation of permission, NSs indicate that the hearer (professor) has more control, that in no way do they try to influence the hearer's compliance, and that they in fact surrender themselves to the hearer's will. This increase in the use of the impersonal modal in the formal situation corroborates our argument that *možno* is indeterminate between permission and favor, since one of the main factors distinguishing these modal flavors is the greater degree of power discrepancy in the permission scenarios.

It also supports our preliminary hypothesis that HSs do not fully acquire mitigating devices in Russian: the use of impersonal modal can be one of such devices employed in situations of greater power differential. The fact that HSs use fewer sentences with *možno* (even after taking into account the change in sentence type) suggests that for HSs, *možno* is simply a form that marks utterances as requests in situations of minimal social distance. If this hypothesis is true, this may indicate restructuring of pragmatic meaning of a linguistic form in heritage Russian due to the stalled first language acquisition and lack of exposure to

varied social interaction in Russian. Modeling the emergence of such pragmatic conventions would involve a complex notion of linguistic form (the impersonal modal used in a question about a favor) and of linguistic meaning (directive illocutionary force, combined with social deixis to minimal social distance between interlocutors).

## 6.4 Conclusion

Tying together the multiple levels of analysis of corpus and experimental data gives us a snapshot of pragmatic competence of HSs in comparison to monolingual English and Russian speakers.

The study demonstrates that while requests produced by HSs have no visible other-language material at the surface, they still show cross-linguistic influence in the way surface structures are used to express pragmatic meaning: i.e., the use of *ne*, embedding under performative, the orientation of requests, and the use of lexical downgrader *požalujsta*. HSs combine conventions of means and forms (Clark 1979) from both Russian and English, but while conventions of means are characterized by universal pragmatic principles (such as essential conditions, conversational maxims and universals of (in)directness and (im)politeness), conventions of forms are more language specific. Hence, requests produced by HSs rely on universal strategy to create indirect requests, but exhibit a composite English-Russian convention of form (cf Myers-Scotton 2002 who argues that convergence of the weaker language toward the stronger language results in a composite linguistic frame).

We argue that modeling such transfer requires a description of linguistic form that abstracts away from details of syntax, such as English vs Russian interrogatives or embedding. Such description would allow us to model the formation of form-function combinations where the forms are interrogative constructions or embedded interrogative constructions, and the functions are illocutionary meanings such as directive force or deference to the hearer.

Besides transfer of English syntactic constructions, HSs transfer the use of overt lexical politeness marker *požalujsta*. They include it not just in the interrogative – the use which is already for the most part infelicitous in full Russian, as the analysis of the corpus data shows – but also in embedded interrogatives and even stand alone *if*-clauses (which is impossible in full Russian).

Violations of the rule for the overt use of *požalujsta* result not in strict ungrammaticality, but rather in a gradient acceptability. In fact, two NS informants whose opinions were solicited for the analysis of the data rated the interrogative indirect requests with *požalujsta* produced by HSs in this study as acceptable, but rather strange, commenting that the use of *požalujsta* was ‘unjustified’ and ‘bothersome’. Their judgments were supported by the analysis of the spoken sub-corpus of the RNC which showed that *požalujsta* for the most part is ruled out of Russian interrogative requests.

In addition to exhibiting the effects of transfer, requests made by HSs show signs of internal restructuring of rules for the use of modals. Due to interrupted L1 acquisition, HSs lack experience in contexts outside of the immediate environment of family and close friends. One possible outcome of such incomplete acquisition may be the re-analysis and restructuring of the specifically Russian impersonal modal *možno*, which in HR requests loses its primary use as a permission seeking device and becomes generalized as a marker of any type of request, with a preference for informal usage.

The transfer of the usage of lexical politeness marker *požalujsta* and a possible internal restructuring of the meaning and usage of *možno* sometimes result in the combination *#možno požalujsta* in HR, which is usually followed by a verbal clause. Such combinations are unacceptable or at least marginal to NSs. In fact, for the two NSs who noted that the use

of *požalujsta* in indirect requests was ‘unjustified’, the combination of *možno* and *požalujsta* was especially troubling.

The combination of the impersonal modal and the lexical politeness marker was used by 20% of HSs in all surface interrogatives in the informal scenario. Such frequency in the experimental data suggests that this combination may be emerging as a new convention for indirect requests among HSs, reserved specifically for informal situations, in addition to positive interrogatives with a personal modal.

Once the social factors of a situation shift in the direction of greater power differential, HSs increase the use of conditional clauses, past tense and especially embedding under performative to mitigate the face-threat of their requests. At the same time they decrease the use of *požalujsta* and *možno*. This pattern suggests that embedding may be viewed by at least some HSs as being higher on the politeness scale than a surface interrogative with *požalujsta* or the impersonal modal. The frequency of this construction in the data is enough to indicate that in heritage Russian embedded constructions may be emerging as a conventionalized way to ask for favor in situations of great social distance and power differential.

The most dramatic difference between requests made by HSs and NSs was found in the use of the negative particle *ne* in indirect requests expressed syntactically as interrogatives. This study adopted the view that *ne* serves primarily as a disambiguating request marker, and only secondarily as a mitigating device, and the data from HSs’ requests indicate that they lack this request-marking element almost entirely. This may be explained by transfer from English or by an interrupted Russian L1 acquisition, or both. What is notable is that the lack of negative particle in a Russian interrogative may have several consequences, including communicative failure (Mills 1992:74).

To sum up, while relying on the same seemingly universal requestive strategy as NSs (i.e., preparatory condition), HSs often give it a different syntactic shell and stuff it with word combinations that may cause infelicity (as is *možno + požalujsta*, or the use of *požalujsta* in other indirect requests), that create unintended connotations (the use of *možno* to ask for favor from a peer, or lack of negation which fails to disambiguate requests from questions), or that do not exist in the NS baseline (embedding). We can hypothesize that immigrant children who receive their education in English from elementary school onwards never acquire Russian conventions for expressing deference and mitigating the illocutionary force of requests, and are not skilled in adjusting to changing social dimensions linguistically, using only Russian resources. To compensate, they rely on conventions acquired in early childhood, such as the use of *požalujsta* or *možno*, and on English conventions of form that they know very well.

Altogether, the picture of pragmatic competence of HSs that emerges from this study points to a complex situation, in which incomplete acquisition of Russian-specific conventions together with internal restructuring and transfer from the dominant language lead to the emergence of new conventions specific to HR.

## Acknowledgements

We are grateful to Maria Polinsky and Dan Davidson for discussions, comments and support, the many speakers of full and heritage Russian we worked with, the audience, reviewers, and organizers at the Fourth Heritage Research Institute and at New Ways of Analyzing Variation (NWAV) 39, as well as our student research assistant Anna Slavina, and the anonymous reviewers of this journal.

We dedicate this work to the memory of Enelia Dubinina and Ellen F. Prince, who taught us more than we can express.

## Corpora used

[RNC] RNC (2005, 2008)

Retrieved and searched at: <http://www.ruscorpora.ru/index.html>

[MiCASE] Simpson et al. (2002)

Retrieved and searched at: <http://quod.lib.umich.edu/m/micase/>

[CHILDES] MacWhinney, B. (2000)

**Protassova corpus** retrieved and searched at:

<http://childes.psy.cmu.edu/browser/index.php?url=Slavic/Russian/Protassova/>

[CHILDES: **Tanja corpus**] Bar-Shalom, E., and Snyder, W. (1997, 1998).

Retrieved and searched at:

<http://childes.psy.cmu.edu/browser/index.php?url=Slavic/Russian/Tanya/>

## Bibliography

- Akišina, Alla A. & Natalia I. Formanovskaja. 1986. *Russkij rečevoj ètiket: Posobije dl'a studentov inostrancev*. [Russian speech etiquette: A handbook for foreign students.], 4th edn. Moscow: Russkij jazyk.
- Andrews, David R. 1999. *Sociocultural perspectives on language change in diaspora*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
- Austin, John L. 1962 [1955]. *How to do things with words*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Bar-Shalom, Eva & William Snyder. 1997. Optional infinitives in Russian and their implications for the pro-drop debate. In Martina Lindseth & Steven Franks (eds.) *Formal approaches to Slavic linguistics: The Indiana Meeting 1996*, 38–47. Ann Arbor: Michigan.
- Bar-Shalom, Eva & William Snyder. 1998. Root infinitives in child Russian: A comparison with Italian and Polish. In Richard Shillcock, Antonella Sorace & Caroline Heycock (eds.) *Language acquisition: Knowledge representation and processing. Proceedings of GALA '97*. Edinburgh, UK: The University of Edinburgh.
- Benmamoun, Elabbas, Silvina Montrul & Maria Polinsky. 2010. *White Paper: Prolegomena to Heritage Linguistics*. Ms. Harvard University
- Blum-Kulka, Shoshana, Juliane House & Gabriele Kasper (eds.). 1989. *Cross-cultural pragmatics: Requests and apologies*. New Jersey: Ablex.
- Blum-Kulka, Shoshana & Elite Olshtain. 1984. Requests and Apologies: A Cross-Cultural Study of Speech Act Realization Patterns (CCSARP). *Applied Linguistics* 5(3). 196–213.
- Brown, Penelope & Stephen C. Levinson. 1987. *Politeness: Some Universals and Language Usage*. Cambridge University Press.
- Corsaro, William A. 1979. "We're friends, right?" Children's use of access rituals in a nursery school. *Language in Society* 8. 315–336.
- Clark, Herbert H. 1979. Responding to indirect speech acts. *Cognitive Psychology* 11. 430–477.
- Dubinina, Irina. 2012. *How to ask for a favor: An exploration of speech act pragmatics in heritage Russian*. Bryn Mawr, PA: Bryn Mawr University dissertation.

- Dubinina, Irina & Maria Polinsky. 2013. Russian in the USA. In Michael Moser & Maria Polinsky (eds.). *Slavic Languages in Migration*, 161–188. Vienna: University of Vienna
- Ervin-Tripp, Susan M., Mary Catherine O'Connor & Jarrett Rosenberg. 1984. Language and power in the family. In Cheris Kramarae, Muriel Schulz & William M. O'Barr (eds.), *Language and power*, 116–135. Belmont, CA: Sage Press.
- Formanovskaja, Natalia I. 1987. *Russkij rečevoj etiket: Lingvističeskij i metodičeskij aspekty* [Russian speech etiquette: linguistic and methodological aspects], 2nd edn. Moscow: Russkij jazyk.
- Formanovskaja, Natalia I. & Svetlana V. Švecova. 1990. *Rečevoj etiket: rusško-anglijskie sootvetstvija. Spravočnik*. [Speech etiquette: Russian-English correspondences. A handbook] Moskva: Vysšaja Škola.
- Goffman, Erving. 1955. On Face-work: An Analysis of Ritual Elements of Social Interaction. *Psychiatry: Journal for the Study of Interpersonal Processes* 18(3). 213–231. Reprinted in Goffman, Erving. 1967. *Interaction Ritual: Essays on face-to-face behavior*, 5–46. Garden City, NY: Anchor Books.
- Gordon, David P. and Susan M. Ervin-Tripp. 1984. The structure of children's requests. In Schiefelbusch, Richard L. & Joanne Pickar (eds.), *The acquisition of communicative competence*, 295–322. Baltimore: University Park Press.
- Green, Mitchell. 2009. Speech Acts. *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (Spring 2009 Edition)*, Edward N. Zalta (ed.), <http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/spr2009/entries/speech-acts/>
- Grice, H. Paul. 1975. Logic and Conversation. In Peter Cole and Jerry L. Morgan (eds.), *Syntax and Semantics. vol. III. Speech Acts*. New York: Academic Press. Reprinted in Grice, H. Paul. 1989. *Studies in the Way of Words*, 22–40. Harvard, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Kagan, Olga & Friedman, Debra. 2004. Using the OPI to place heritage speakers of Russian. *Foreign Language Annals* 36(4). 536–545.
- Kratzer, Angelika. 1981. The Notional Category of Modality. In Hans-Jürgen Eikmeyer & Hannes Rieser (eds.). *Words, Worlds, and Contexts*, 38–74. Berlin, New York: de Gruyter.
- Laleko, Oksana. 2011. Restructuring of verbal aspect in heritage Russian: Beyond lexicalization. *International Journal of Language Studies* 5(3), 13–26.
- MacWhinney, Brian. (2000). *The CHILDES Project: Tools for analyzing talk*, 3rd edn. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Malamud, Sophia A. 2012. The meaning of vague definites: a Decision-Theoretic approach. *Semantics and Pragmatics* 5(3). <http://dx.doi.org/10.3765/sp.5.3> (accessed August 30, 2012)
- Martin, Cynthia. 2012. Exploring linguistic profiles of heritage speakers of Spanish and Russian. Sixth Heritage Language Research Institute, UCLA, Los Angeles, CA.
- Myers-Scotton, Carol. 2002. *Contact linguistics: Bilingual encounters and grammatical outcomes*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Mills, Margaret. 1991. The Performance Force of the Interrogative in Colloquial Russian: From Direct to Indirect Speech Acts. *Slavic and Eastern European Journal* 35(4). 553–569.
- Mills, Margaret. 1992. Conventionalized Politeness in Russian Requests: A Pragmatic View of Indirectness. *Russian Linguistics* 16(1). 65–78.
- Mills, Margaret. 1993. On Russian and English Pragmalinguistic Requestive Strategies. *Journal of Slavic Linguistics* 1(1). 92–116.
- Odlin, Terence. 1989. *Language Transfer*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

- O'Grady, William, On-Soon Lee, and Jinhwa Lee. 2008. Practical and Theoretical Issues in the Study of Partial Language Acquisition. *Second Heritage Language Summer Institute: Developing a Research Base for the Heritage Field*. Harvard University, Cambridge, MA.  
[www.international.ucla.edu/languages/nhlrc/2008summer/presentations/og\\_lee\\_lee\\_6\\_23.pdf](http://www.international.ucla.edu/languages/nhlrc/2008summer/presentations/og_lee_lee_6_23.pdf)
- Pinto, Derrin & Richard Raschio. 2007. A comparative study of requests in heritage speaker Spanish, L1 Spanish, and L1 English. *International Journal of Bilingualism* 1(2). 135–155.
- Polinsky, Maria. 1995. Cross-linguistic parallels in language loss. *Southwest Journal of Linguistics* 14(1-2). 88–123.
- Polinsky, Maria. 1997. American Russian: Language loss meets language acquisition. In Wayles Browne, Ewa Dornisch, Natasha Kondrashova & Draga Zec (eds.). *Formal Approaches to Slavic Linguistics* 4, 370–406. Ann Arbor: Michigan Slavic Publications.
- Polinsky, Maria. 2000. A composite linguistic profile of a speaker of Russian in the U.S. In Olga Kagan & Benjamin Rifkin with Susan Bauckus (eds.). *The learning and teaching of Slavic languages and cultures*, 437–469. Bloomington: Slavica.
- Polinsky, Maria. 2005. Word class distinctions in an incomplete grammar. In Dorit Ravid & Hava Bat-Zeev Shildkrout (eds.), *Perspectives on language and language development: Essays in honor of Ruth A. Berman*, 419–436. Dordrecht: Kluwer.
- Polinsky, Maria. 2006. American Russian. *Journal of Slavic Linguistics* 14. 191–287.
- Polinsky, Maria. 2008a. Welcome and introduction. Presented at the *Second Heritage Language Summer Institute: Developing a Research Base for the Heritage Field*. Harvard University, Cambridge, MA.  
<http://www.international.ucla.edu/languages/nhlrc/2008summer/presentations/polinsky.pdf>
- Polinsky, Maria. 2008b. Without aspect. In Greville G. Corbett & Michael Noonan (eds.). *Case and grammatical relations: Studies in honor of Bernard Comrie*, 263–282. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
- Polinsky, Maria. 2008c. Heritage language narratives. In Donna Brinton, Olga Kagan & Susan Bauckus (eds.). *Heritage language education: A new field emerging*, 149–164. New York: Routledge.
- Polinsky, Maria. 2008d. Gender under incomplete acquisition: Heritage speakers' knowledge of noun categorization. *Heritage Language Journal* 6 (1).  
<http://www.international.ucla.edu/languages/heritagelanguages/journal/article.asp?parentid=75825>  
 (accessed 2/4/2011)
- Polinsky, Maria. 2011. Reanalysis in adult heritage language. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition* 45. 1–45.
- Polinsky, Maria & Olga Kagan. 2007. Heritage languages: In the 'wild' and in the classroom. *Language and Linguistics Compass* 1(5). 368–395.
- Prince, Ellen F. 1996. Constructions and the Syntax-Discourse Interface. Presented at Brown University, November 26, 1996. Ms. University of Pennsylvania.
- RNC. 2005. *Russian National Corpus 2003–2005. Results and Perspectives*. – Moscow: Indrik.
- RNC. 2008. *Russian National Corpus: 2006–2008. Results and Perspectives*. – Moscow: Indrik.
- Searle, John R. 1965. What is a Speech Act? In Max Black (ed.) *Philosophy in America*, 221–239.
- Searle, John R. 1975. Indirect Speech Acts. In Peter Cole and Jerry L. Morgan (eds.) *Syntax and Semantics, vol. 3: Speech Acts*, 59–82. New York: Academic Press.

- Simpson, Rita C., Sarah L. Briggs, Janine Ovens, & John M. Swales. 2002. *The Michigan Corpus of Academic Spoken English*. Ann Arbor: The Regents of the University of Michigan.
- Shatz, Marilyn. 1982. On mechanisms of language acquisition: Can features of the communicative environment account for development? In Eric Wanner & Lila R. Gleitman (eds.), *Language acquisition: The state of the art*, 102–127. Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press.
- Šmelev, Alexei & Anna Zaliznjak. 2006. Aspect, Modality and closely related categories in Russian. Paper presented at the Inaugural Meeting of the Slavic Linguistic Society in Bloomington, IN, September 2006. <http://www.indiana.edu/~sls2006/>
- Trosborg, Anna. 1995. *Interlanguage pragmatics*. Berlin: Mouton.
- Valdés, Guadalupe. 2000. The teaching of heritage languages: An introduction for Slavic-teaching professionals. In Olga Kagan & Benjamin Rifkin with Susan Bauckus (eds.), *The Learning and Teaching of Slavic Languages and Cultures*, 375–403. Bloomington, IN: Slavica.
- Vinokur, Tatiana G., Zemskaja, Elena A. & Šmelev, Dmitrij N. (eds.) 1993. *Russkij jazyk v ego funkcionirovanii. Kommunikativno-pragmatičeskij aspekt*. [The Russian language in its usage. Communicative and pragmatic aspects.] Moscow: Nauka.

## Appendix: Summary of results for the production study

<i>Categories of analysis</i>	<i>Differences between HSs and NSs</i>
<i>Strategy type</i>	No statistically significant differences Categorical: NSs employ more strategies, including mood and locution derivable
<i>Sentence type</i>	Scenario 1: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 83% of NSs and HSs used interrogatives.</li> <li>• Significant differences in other types of sentences used include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ embedded interrogatives (6%) only HSs</li> <li>○ complex declaratives (9%) only HSs</li> <li>○ imperative sentences only NSs (10%).</li> </ul> </li> </ul> Scenario 2: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 94% of NSs used interrogatives,</li> <li>• HSs referred to the preparatory condition by <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ questioning it in interrogatives (59%) and</li> <li>○ embedded interrogatives (29%), and by</li> <li>○ supposing it in declaratives (8%) and</li> <li>○ stand-alone <i>if</i> clauses (4%).</li> </ul> </li> </ul> Significant differences between groups.
<i>Morphosyntactic structure of requests</i>	There were significant differences between groups in the use of <i>ne</i> Scenario 1: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 63% NSs used the negative particle <i>ne</i> (19 out of 21 opportunities)</li> <li>• 79% HSs avoided using it (2 HSs out of 21 opportunities)</li> </ul> Scenario 2: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 55% of NSs used <i>ne</i> (18 out of 21 opportunities or 86% of cases).</li> <li>• 8% of HSs used it (25% of cases – 4 out of 16 possible).</li> </ul> Scenario 2 Categorical: Only HSs used embedding under performative (21% of HSs).
<i>Use of modals</i>	Scenario 1: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NSs prefer the personal modal (68%); 13% of NSs used the impersonal modal</li> <li>• HSs weakly prefer the personal (54%), but used the impersonal modal heavily (40%).</li> </ul> The difference was statistically significant.

	<p>Scenario 2:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The two groups showed identical use of modals (61% chose the personal form and 26% chose the impersonal modal).</li> </ul>
<i>Morphosyntactic downgraders and please</i>	<p>Scenario 1:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 60% of NSs used the subjunctive; only 22% of HSs did.</li> <li>• HSs rely on the lexical marker <i>požalujsta</i> ‘please’: 32% of HSs vs 10% of NSs used it.</li> <li>• HSs used <i>požalujsta</i> in 38% of all interrogatives they produced (and only in interrogatives).</li> </ul> <p>Differences for morphosyntactic downgraders and <i>požalujsta</i> were statistically significant.</p> <p>Scenario 2:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No significant difference on morphosyntactic downgraders, but some tendencies are noteworthy: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ 58% of NSs used subjunctive; 26% of HSs.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Categorical: 28% of HSs used past tense as a mitigator.</li> <li>• NSs did not use <i>požalujsta</i>; 17% of HSs used it in interrogatives, embedded interrogatives and in stand-alone <i>if</i> clauses. The difference was significant</li> </ul>

Table 4. *Summary of results for the production study: statistical and categorical differences*