

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.18454/RULB.2021.27.3.28>**СТРАТЕГИИ РЕЧЕВОГО АКТА В ДИСКУРСЕ ИЗУЧЕНИЯ ИНОСТРАННОГО ЯЗЫКА**

Научная статья

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Аннотация

В данной статье рассматривается вопрос о значимости прагматических знаний для изучающих иностранный язык. Для успешной межкультурной коммуникации участники должны обладать прагматическими знаниями, включая знания о структуре и стратегиях речевых актов, знаниями о соответствующем контекстном использовании языковых ресурсов, а также о стратегиях поддержания гармоничных отношений. С целью анализа стратегий речевого акта, используемых в речевом поведении русскоязычных участников, изучающих английский язык, был проведен лингвистический эксперимент. Результаты эксперимента показали, что, по сравнению с носителями языка, участники эксперимента использовали стратегии речевого акта по-другому. Методология, описанная в статье, позволяет организовать комплексный анализ стратегий речевого акта среди изучающих иностранный язык.

Ключевые слова: речевой акт, прагматические знания, межкультурная коммуникация.

SPEECH ACT STRATEGIES IN DISCOURSE OF FOREIGN LANGUAGE LEARNERS

Research article

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Abstract

This article deals with the question about the significance of pragmatic knowledge for foreign language learners. For successful intercultural communication the participants should have pragmatic knowledge including the knowledge about the structure and the strategies of speech acts, the appropriate context usage of language resources, the knowledge about the strategies for sustaining harmonic relations. For the purpose of analyzing the speech act strategies used in the speech behavior of the Russian learners of English a linguistic experiment was carried out. The results of the experiment revealed that the Russian learners of English used speech act strategies in a different way in comparison with the native speakers. The methodology described in the article allows to arrange a complex analysis of speech act strategies of foreign language learners.

Keywords: a speech act, pragmatic knowledge, intercultural communication.

Introduction

In the age of anthropocentric approach to the research of language and language activity there arises a special interest to a person's activity in the circumstances of intercultural communication due to the fact that various problems occur in the communication of representatives of different cultures. These problems derive from the lack of knowledge necessary for efficient communication. For the purpose of finding ways to overcome these problems and reduce intercultural conflicts there is a need to look into the peculiarities of discourse of different cultures.

Following J. Searle and J. Ostin's activity approach to pragmatics [1] we consider the process of communication to be a combination of speech acts performed for a certain aim. From the point of view of linguistic pragmatics the meaning of language units may not correspond to the meaning which these language units have while being in the structure of a speech act. Moreover, the meaning of language units may not correspond to the meaning which the participants of communication process try to express. Cultural differences play a crucial role regarding the above mentioned issues. T. V. Larina admits that "it is necessary to understand in what communicative context speech acts can be used, what their pragmatic meaning is, what speech behavior would be acceptable in any communicative situation" [6, P. 10]. Therefore, it is advisable for language learners to be aware of the strategies of speech acts.

Regarding discourse from the point of intercultural pragmatics it is important to define pragmatic knowledge of the participants of intercultural communication. For successful communication the participants should have pragmatic knowledge [7], [8], [9], [10]. Pragmatic knowledge includes the knowledge about language resources for the realization of various illocutions, the knowledge about conventional and nonconventional ways of speech acts realization, the knowledge about the structure and the strategies of speech acts and the appropriate context usage of language resources, the knowledge about the strategies for sustaining harmonic relations.

Pragmatic norms reflect values of various cultures. Cultural norms reflected in speech acts differ in various languages.

For the purpose of studying people's communicative consciousness it is essential to study communicative categories. The category of politeness is an important controller in the communication process. Linguistic politeness refers to the usage of discourse strategies aimed for sustaining harmonic conditions of communication process. P. Brown and S. Levinson suggested

using the mechanisms of negative and positive politeness [2]. Negative politeness is oriented to creating the distance between communicators. Positive politeness is distinguished by the fact that a speaker and a hearer share equal wishes, aims and values. A participant of the communication process tries to take into account the interlocutor's social "face", its positive and negative sides. V. I. Karasik admits that norms of behavior refer to "sustaining and saving social "face" as self-esteem of a person" [4, P. 42].

Research Method and Procedure

Thus the sphere of our interest is a speech act of request in various communicative situations. We wondered how adequately Russian learners of English choose the appropriate politeness strategies when using a speech act of request.

A speech act of request is a unity of the core of the request and supportive elements. The core contains the essence of the request. Supportive elements contain the motive, the beginning of the conversation and some other communicative acts. A speech act of request implies the expenditure of time, requires efforts from the addressee and limits his/her freedom in a certain way. In order not to threaten the addressee's "negative face" and pay attention to his/her "positive face" supportive speech acts should be used. Supportive speech acts contain positive politeness strategies and negative politeness strategies. Supportive speech acts mainly serve for sustaining harmonic conditions. The frequency of their use varies in different cultures. For making a complex analysis of politeness strategies we used the methodology of defining speech act strategies suggested by T. Hudson, E. Detmer, J. D. Brown [3].

Two groups of the respondents participated in the experiment. The first group included 20 Russian students of the English department of the faculty of foreign languages of Kursk State University (hereinafter Rr). The second group consisted of 20 American students (hereinafter Ar). The respondents were given a card with the description of seven situations in English. The task was to respond to each situation in the written form using a speech act of request. The correlation of the politeness strategies used in the respondents' speech act of request is shown in the table (see table 1).

Table 1 – Request head act strategies used by the Russian respondents (Rr) and the American respondents (Ar)

Strategies	Rr	Ar
1. Preparatory	75%	73,5%
2. Information Request	7%	15%
3. Direct Request	7%	0,5%
4. Want Statement	6,5%	4%
5. Statement of Facts	4,5%	7%

Results

As we can see both Russian and American respondents are inclined to use Preparatory strategy. This strategy implies the inquiry about the possibility of making a speech act of request in a certain situation. The participants of the experiment used the conventional indirect means of expressing request showing respect to the independence of the addressee. This strategy belongs to negative politeness. It should be stated that the Russian respondents didn't use such constructions as *Would you be willing/ Would you happen*.

The Information Request strategy is mainly used by the American respondents. It is a negative politeness strategy.

On the whole, when it concerns request act head strategies, the bilingual speakers' discourse is characterized by either insufficient usage of some strategies (for example, the Information Request strategy, the Statement of Facts strategy) or by the usage of the strategies which are not peculiar for American speakers' discourse (for example, the Direct Request strategy, the Want Statement strategy).

Request supportive move strategies vividly reveal the differences of the two cultures towards request (see table 2).

Table 2 – Request supportive move strategies used by the Russian respondents (Rr) and the American respondents (Ar)

Strategies	Rr	Ar
1. Preliminary Announcement of Request	8%	3,5%
2. Request Grounder	38%	20%
3. Removal of Potential Objections	7%	6%
4. Imposition Minimizer	2%	–
5. Apology	54,5%	17,5%

The strategy of Preliminary Announcement of Request implies a certain attention towards an addressee, a gradual involvement in the situation of request and a creation of a certain atmosphere. Thus this strategy can be regarded as a positive politeness one.

The Russian respondents use the Request Grounder strategy two times more than the American group. They consider it necessary to give an addressee explanations before getting down to the request head act.

The Removal of Potential Objections strategy refers to negative politeness. When using this strategy the respondents emphasize possible inconveniences connected with their request. In this way they admit that they wouldn't apply to the addressee unless some problems arise, for example *I know you are very busy/I understand that you're as busy as a bee*.

The Imposition Minimizer strategy refers to positive politeness as it implies that a request is easily fulfilled, for example *It shouldn't take long/It won't take much time*. This strategy is used only by the Russian respondents.

With respect to the Apology strategy many language means of this strategy used by the Russian respondents contain sincere claims about the inconveniences connected with the request, for example *I'm so embarrassed bothering you/I'm extremely sorry*/. There are no such examples in the responses of the American group.

All the Request supportive move strategies are utilized by the Russian group far more often than by the American group because they reflect the norms of sustaining harmonic relations in the Russian linguoculture. These strategies tend to establish trustworthy relations between an addressee and an addresser and a friendly attitude to the request of the latter one.

Conclusion

The results of the experiment show that the Russian group used speech act strategies with a different frequency in comparison with the American group and in its own way. The deviations from the pragmatic norms revealed in the speech behavior of the Russian learners of English are connected with the influence of a cognitive model of a speech act of request in Russian linguoculture. In the Russian speakers' consciousness there already exists a model of this speech event. Thus while using a speech act of request only language means of the second language are added. According to V. V. Krasnykh "there occurs a transfer of national and cultural stereotypes of behavior peculiar for mother linguoculture on the communication process with representatives of other cultures" [5, P. 318]. In this case the discourse of the Russian learners of English is determined by the strategies which are grammatically correct but realize the Russian interactive model of communication. Speech behavior of bilingual speakers is under the influence of mother language, culture, national consciousness. Bilingual speakers' usage of discourse strategies different from native speakers' ones can lead to negative stereotypes and conflict intercultural communication.

Therefore, in our modern world there arises a necessity to be conscious of differences in the ways and means of language behavior of native and bilingual speakers due to the changes of sociocultural conditions in people's lives, essential changes in the ways and means of communication, the growing amount of intercultural relations. Being aware of the above mentioned differences of language behavior of native and bilingual speakers is crucial for reducing conflicts and improving the efficiency of communication.

Конфликт интересов

Не указан.

Conflict of Interest

None declared.

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