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LINGUISTIC POLITENESS STRATEGIES IN THE DISCOURSE OF ARTIFICIAL BILINGUALS (ON THE  
EXAMPLE OF A SPEECH ACT OF REFUSAL)

Research article

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**Abstract**

The article deals with the issue of the politeness strategies used by the artificial bilinguals when uttering a speech act of refusal. Linguistic politeness is regarded as an essential part of artificial bilinguals' pragmatic competence. For the purpose of studying linguistic politeness strategies in the discourse of artificial bilinguals, research on the basis of a written discourse test was carried out. The written discourse test described in the article allows to analyze the politeness strategies used by the artificial bilinguals when uttering a refusal speech act. These strategies are found in the supportive speech acts of refusal. The research revealed that the artificial bilinguals used various politeness strategies when speaking a foreign language.

**Keywords:** a refusal speech act, negative politeness, positive politeness, artificial bilingual.

СТРАТЕГИИ ЛИНГВИСТИЧЕСКОЙ ВЕЖЛИВОСТИ В ДИСКУРСЕ ИСКУССТВЕННЫХ БИЛИНГВОВ (НА  
ПРИМЕРЕ РЕЧЕВОГО АКТА ОТКАЗА)

Научная статья

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**Аннотация**

В статье рассматриваются стратегии лингвистической вежливости, к которым прибегают искусственные билингвы при произнесении речевого акта отказа. Рассматривается значимость лингвистической вежливости как составляющей части прагматической компетенции искусственных билингвов. С целью изучения стратегий лингвистической вежливости в дискурсе искусственных билингвов было проведено исследование на основе письменного дискурсивного теста. Письменный дискурсивный тест, описанный в статье, позволяет проанализировать стратегии вежливости, используемые искусственными билингвами при произнесении речевого акта отказа. Эти стратегии содержатся во вспомогательных речевых актах отказа. Исследование показало, что искусственные билингвы используют разнообразные стратегии вежливости в дискурсе на иностранном языке.

**Ключевые слова:** речевой акт отказа, негативная вежливость, позитивная вежливость, искусственный билингв.

**Introduction**

The communicative consciousness of artificial bilinguals provides interest in the framework of linguistic researches. One of the ways of studying communicative consciousness is studying communicative categories. T. V. Larina admitted that studying communicative categories is of great importance for studying communicative consciousness of peoples and for overcoming communicative interference [6]. The category of politeness is one of the most important categories when analyzing speech behavior of artificial bilinguals. Linguistic politeness covers strategies which sustain harmonic communication process and help to avoid conflicts. According to V. Karasik "All behavioural acts limiting freedom and endangering a person's self-assessment are realized in three typical strategies:

- 1) intentional ambiguity, veiling sense with the help of metaphor and irony;
- 2) direct expressing of sense without emollient means;
- 3) polite expressing of sense using negative and positive politeness" [4, P. 77].

N. I. Vlasenko admits that politeness "in the practice of speech interaction plays a more regulatory role than the principle of cooperation" [9, P. 23].

The aim of our research is the analysis of politeness strategies applied by artificial bilinguals when uttering a refusal speech act. A refusal speech act is accompanied by politeness strategies because this speech act carries a threat to a listener's "face". P. Brown and S. Levinson considered politeness as a strategy of saving a "face" which is a certain social image which a person creates during the communication process [2]. According to P. Brown and S. Levinson, there are two main directions in saving a listener's "face" and a speaker's "face". The first direction relates to negative politeness, aimed at keeping distance

between interlocutors and respecting mutual independence. The second direction is associated with positive politeness aimed at creating friendly atmosphere.

### Research methods and principles

The pragmatic approach gives the possibility to analyze different principles of discourse behavior in the framework of natural communication. In this way, our research is based on a written discourse test. The test is widely used for assessing pragmalinguistic knowledge of foreign language learners [1], [8], [10]. Twenty Russian learners of English got forms with the definition of 5 situations which can happen in everyday life. They were to reply to the situations in the written form utilizing a speech act of refusal. Here is one of the situations: *At the beginning of the week, you promised your son to go hiking at the weekends. On Friday evening, your boss gave you some extra tasks to be completed by Monday. You understand that you will be busy all the weekends. You should explain it to your son.*

The structure of a refusal speech act comprises the core of the refusal and supportive speech acts, which are given a special role. They provide the opportunity of intensifying or softening the refusal. We mentioned earlier that "In order not to pose a threat to the addressee's "negative face" and at the same time to demonstrate attention to his/her "positive face" some additional language means accompanying the core of the refusal should be used" [7, P. 104]. Supportive speech acts comprise these language means. Supportive speech acts serve for expressing linguistic politeness in discourse.

### Main results and discussion

During the course of our research, we got 100 refusal speech acts. In each refusal speech act, we distinguished the core and the supportive speech acts. We should admit that the respondents applied a great variety of supportive act strategies.

The strategy of Preliminary Indication of Refusal Conditions was applied by the respondents in the volume of 10,8%. The strategy is specified by the following language means, for example, *I have some unforeseen circumstances / I need to tell you that unfortunately I felt sick after lunch / Unfortunately, I can be fired from my work if I don't do these tasks.* The strategy relates to positive politeness because the addresser creates a special emotional switching over before passing to the core of a refusal speech act.

The strategy of Hope for Understanding and further tackling the question was used in 7% of cases, for example, *I know that I promised you, but I didn't expect such changes / It's work, I hope you will understand me.* The strategy refers to positive politeness. The addresser understands that in spite of the refusal in this situation, it is necessary to save trustworthy relations with the addressee for communication in future.

The strategy of Promise was utilized by the respondents in 19% of cases. The following language means were used for the realization of this strategy – *I promise we will go next time / Let's go hiking next week.* This is a positive politeness strategy because the addresser reveals concern towards the addressee. He tries to smooth a negative effect of the refusal, promising to fulfill later everything that he refuses now.

A refusal speech act can't be utilized without such a necessary strategy as the Apology strategy. The respondents utilized the strategy in 50% of cases. The strategy relates to negative politeness.

The Refusal Grounder strategy can be observed in the respondents' answers in 38% of cases. Adhering to this strategy, the respondents tried to reach mutual understanding with a supposed addressee and explain the reason for the rejection. The strategy belongs to positive politeness, for example, *I'm going to a party that day / I have to hurry back to work.*

When analyzing supportive strategies we also encountered The Gratitude strategy which was used rather often by the respondents (13,6%); the strategy of the Statement of Positive (0,8%), for example, *Have a good day / That's a good idea;* The Empathy strategy (1,7%), for example, *I realize you are in a difficult situation.* All these strategies are positive politeness strategies.

Thus, we ensured that the artificial bilinguals used a great variety of supportive strategies while uttering a refusal speech act. In most cases, they use positive politeness strategies rather than negative politeness ones. The usage of positive politeness strategies assures us in a diplomatic approach to the communication process, in a wish to avoid conflicts and find common ground with an addressee. The artificial bilinguals' tendency to use a sufficient amount of supportive strategies in their discourse demonstrates their thoughtful approach to foreign language speaking. The participants of the experiment tried to use appropriate means to smooth over a negative impression of their refusal, and not to threaten an interlocutor's "face".

### Conclusion

We may conclude that national perception of the world is revealed in the communicative behavior of representatives of different linguocultures. D. B. Gudkov calls intercultural communication "an interaction of speaking consciousnesses" [3]. He outlines that "for the opportunity of this interaction, there should be overlapping of speakers' cognitive areas; a large overlapping area means a more adequate communication" [3]. Politeness is an essential category of communicative consciousness. The meaning which representatives of different cultures put across in a certain notion (in our case the notion of "refusal") affects the set of politeness strategies and the emotional brightness of the core and supportive speech acts which they tend to use being participants of communication process. It should be added that positive and negative politeness strategies fulfill an important communicative function. In any culture there exist unique lexical, morphological and syntactic means for politeness strategies realization. We should admit that being aware of the linguistic politeness strategies and being able to apply to them while speaking a foreign language demonstrate the level of an artificial bilingual's pragmatic competence. It is essential for an artificial bilingual to master pragmatic competence for successful intercultural communication. Pragmatic knowledge also includes the knowledge about conventional and non-conventional ways of speech acts realization [5]. Pragmatic knowledge allows to develop the effectiveness of intercultural communication.

**Конфликт интересов**

Не указан.

**Рецензия**

Все статьи проходят рецензирование. Но рецензент или автор статьи предпочли не публиковать рецензию к этой статье в открытом доступе. Рецензия может быть предоставлена компетентным органам по запросу.

**Conflict of Interest**

None declared.

**Review**

All articles are peer-reviewed. But the reviewer or the author of the article chose not to publish a review of this article in the public domain. The review can be provided to the competent authorities upon request.

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