

Request Mitigation by Korean Learners of Russian: Power and Social Distance Factors

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The present study examines the influence of social distance and power factors on the use of internal and external mitigating devices and strategies in the production of requests by Korean learners of Russian. The data was collected by using a Discourse Completion Task (DCT) containing twelve situations that varied in the facts of power and social distance. The results of the study indicated that the learners showed preference for the use of interrogative, modal verb *moch'* ('can') and politeness marker *pozhalujsta* ('please') among internal mitigating devices, and grounder and apology among external mitigating strategies. On the other hand, the learners demonstrated an underuse of such devices/strategies as negation, conditional/interrogative particles and imposition minimizer, which are frequently employed by native Russian speakers. It was concluded that the social distance and power factors influenced the choice of mitigating devices/strategies in the requests produced by Korean learners of Russian. In general, the learners employed more internal and external mitigating devices/strategies in the situations with greater social distance and greater social power.

Keywords: request, request mitigation, speech acts, Russian, CCSARP

1 Introduction

The speech act of request has become a topic of great interest among linguists. Many scholars have compared native speakers and L2 learners' request production in order to examine how the learners' performance differs from those of the native speakers' (Blum-Kulka & Olshtain, 1984; Byon, 2004; Economidou-Kogetsidis, 2008, 2009). However, most interlanguage studies on the speech act of request have been centered on EFL/ESL learners. Moreover, there have been no relevant studies on the interlanguage requests produced by Korean learners of Russian.

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As noted by Sohn (1999), the Korean language is an honorific language with six distinctive speech levels which indicate the social relationships between the speaker, addressee and referent, considering such power variables as age, kinship, social status, and such solidarity variables as the degree of intimacy/distance. Therefore, we assume that power and social distance variables might affect request production including the use of mitigating devices and strategies employed by Korean learners of Russian in their L2 requests.

The present study focuses on interlanguage request modification produced by Korean learners of Russian. Particularly, the study examines the influence of social distance and power factors on the use of internal mitigating devices (syntactic and lexical downgraders) and external mitigating strategies (supportive moves) employed by Korean speakers in Russian language requests.

The following research questions were designed:

1) What types of internal and external mitigating devices and strategies are most frequently employed by Korean learners of Russian in their requests? Are there any differences with Russian native speakers?

2) How do the power and social distance factors influence the linguistic choice of mitigating devices/strategies in the Korean learners' request production?

2 Theoretical Background

2.1 The speech act of request

In accordance with Searle's (1969) classification of speech acts, the speech act of request belongs to the category of directives, which are employed by the speakers to get someone to do something (Yule, 1996), e.g.:

(1) Сделай мне кофе, пожалуйста. 'Make me coffee, please.'

Furthermore, following Brown and Levinson's (1987) Politeness Theory, the speech act of request is a face-threatening act (FTA) since it threatens the hearer's negative face-want¹. As outlined by Brown and Levinson (1987), when performing a speech act of request, in order to determine the level of politeness it is important to assess the following three variables: the social distance between the speaker and the hearer (D), the relative power of the hearer over the speaker (P), and the degree of imposition in the particular culture (R). Economidou-Kogetsidis (2008) maintained that

¹ Negative face-want is defined as the person's freedom from imposition and freedom of action (Yule, 1996).

the greater power the hearer has over the speaker, the greater the social distance between the interlocutors and the greater the imposition of the favor is, hence greater politeness and mitigation is generally expected from the speaker.

2.2 Internal and external request mitigating devices and strategies

As proposed by Faerch and Kasper (1989), we can distinguish between internal and external modifications. Such modifications can either intensify the illocutionary force of the utterance (upgraders), or soften it (downgraders). The present study aims to focus only on the downgraders – mitigating devices that soften the illocutionary force of the requests.

According to Blum-Kulka and Olshtain (1984), internal modifications (or internal mitigating devices) are devices that appear within the head act. They can be subdivided into two categories: a) syntactic downgraders and b) lexical/phrasal downgraders. External modifications (or external mitigating strategies), on the other hand, appear before or after the head act. They do not affect the head act utterance, but rather modify the context in which the head act utterance occurs by softening the illocutionary force (Blum-Kulka & Olshtain, 1984). External mitigating strategies are also called supportive moves.

Based on the taxonomies suggested in the CCSARP² by Blum-Kulka and Olshtain (1984), Blum-Kulka et al. (1989), as well as studies by Economidou-Kogetsidis (2008, 2009, 2012, 2013) and Woodfield (2012), the syntactic, lexical/phrasal downgraders, and supportive moves can be classified as summarized in the Table 1.

According to the Table 1, syntactic downgraders include such devices as the interrogative form (request in the form of a question), negation (negating the hearer's desire/ability to perform a request), past tense (when used with the present time reference), conditional clause (*if*-clause), aspect (aspect marker) and conditional structure (when the verb is in the conditional mood and refers to a hypothetical state of affairs). Lexical/phrasal downgraders comprise such devices as the politeness marker '*please*', hedges, downtoners, consultative devices, etc. Supportive moves include grounders, disarmers, preparators, apologies, and others (For a more detailed description and examples of mitigating devices/strategies please refer to Table 1).

² The CCSARP refers to the Cross-Cultural Study of Speech Act Realization Patterns conducted by Blum-Kulka and Olshtain (1984). The project aimed to investigate the realization patterns of requests and apologies, as well as to determine the similarities and differences between native and non-native speakers' realization patterns in eight languages: Australian English, American English, British English, Canadian French, Danish, German, Hebrew, and Russian.

Table 1. Internal and External Request Mitigating Devices/Strategies

	Types and examples
Internal mitigating devices (syntactic downgraders)	(1) Interrogative (e.g. ‘ <i>Can you lend me your pen for a second?</i> ’)
	(2) Negation (e.g. ‘I wonder if you <i>wouldn’t</i> mind helping me with the dishes?’)
	(3) Past tense (e.g. ‘I <i>wanted</i> to borrow your notes.’)
	(4) Conditional clause (e.g. ‘I would greatly appreciate it <i>if you could help me with the presentation.</i> ’)
	(5) Aspect (e.g. ‘I <i>was wondering</i> if you could help me with the assignment.’)
	(6) Conditional structure (e.g. ‘Maybe <i>I could borrow your laptop again.</i> ’)
Internal mitigating devices (lexical/phrasal downgraders)	(1) Politeness marker ‘ <i>please</i> ’ (e.g. ‘Could you switch on the light, <i>please?</i> ’)
	(2) Downtoner (expression employed to decrease the impact of the request on the hearer via devices indicating the possibility of non-compliance. e.g. ‘ <i>possibly</i> ’, ‘ <i>maybe</i> ’, etc.)
	(3) Hedge (expression used to avoid specification of the illocutionary point. e.g. ‘ <i>something</i> ’, ‘ <i>somehow</i> ’, ‘ <i>kind of</i> ’, ‘ <i>sort of</i> ’, etc.)
	(4) Consultative device (expression by use of which the speaker asks for the hearer’s cooperation. e.g. ‘ <i>Do you think...?</i> ’, ‘ <i>Is it all right...?</i> ’)
	(5) Subjectivizer (expression by using which the speaker explicitly states his/her subjective opinion. e.g. ‘ <i>I’m afraid</i> ’, ‘ <i>I wonder</i> ’, ‘ <i>I think</i> ’, ‘ <i>I suppose</i> ’, etc.)
	(6) Understater (expression which minimize parts of the proposition. e.g. ‘ <i>a bit</i> ’, ‘ <i>a little</i> ’, etc.)
	(7) Cajoler (expression used to establish and maintain friendliness between the interlocutors. e.g. ‘ <i>you know</i> ’, ‘ <i>you see</i> ’, etc.)
	(8) Appealer (expression used by the speaker to appeal to the hearer’s understanding. e.g. tag questions, such as ‘ <i>..., will you?</i> ’, ‘ <i>..., ok?</i> ’, ‘ <i>..., right?</i> ’, etc.)
External mitigating strategies (supportive moves)	(1) Grounder (reasons and justifications. e.g. ‘ <i>I missed the class yesterday. Could I borrow your notes?</i> ’)
	(2) Disarmer (removing any potential objections the hearer might raise. e.g. ‘ <i>I know you’ve been very busy these days, but could I ask you to help me with the presentation?</i> ’)

(3) Preparator (preparing the hearer for the request. e.g. *'I'd like to ask you something'*, *'I need your help'*, *'May I disturb you for a second?'*)

(4) Getting a precommitment (obtaining a precommitment from the hearer before making a request. e.g. *'Could you do me a favor?'*)

(5) Promise of a reward (promising to provide a reward upon the completion of the request. e.g. *'Could you help me with the assignment? I'll buy you coffee.'*)

(6) Imposition minimizer (reducing the imposition. e.g. *'Could you give me a lift, but only if you're going in the same direction.'*; *'Could I borrow your car? Just for a few hours.'*)

(7) Sweetener (praising the hearer's skills, flattering the hearer. e.g. *'I've never met anyone who makes such delicious coffee as you do.'*)

(8) Apology (apologizing for making a request. e.g. *'I'm sorry to bother you but...'*.)

(9) Appreciation (thanking, e.g. *'I would really appreciate your help'*, *'Thanks a lot.'*)

2.3 Politeness and requests in the Korean language

As indicated by Sohn (1999), Korean is an honorific language. The honorific system signifies the relative social hierarchy between the participants.

Honorifics are reflected in personal pronouns (e.g. first person humble forms *ce* and *ce-huy* to address seniors vs. plain forms *na* and *wuli* to address children or younger adults), terms of address (e.g. adding the suffix *-nim* to titles and kinship terms, such as in *kyoswu-nim* 'honourable professor'), nouns, verbs and particles (e.g. *sengham* instead of *ilum* 'name'; *kyeysita* instead of *issta* 'to be present'; the honorific nominative case particle *-kkeyse*, etc.), verbal suffixes (e.g. the addressee-honorific suffix *-(su)p*), and speech levels (e.g. the polite level is used to address adults in daily conversations; the deferential level is used in formal situations; the intimate level is used to younger people and between close friends, etc.).

Byon (2004) examined requests produced by fifty American KFL learners and fifty native Korean speakers considering power and social distance factors. He found that the most popular supportive move strategies for the native Korean speakers were grounders, openers (names/titles, etc.), apologies and self-introductions. It was also concluded that power and social distance factors affected both groups. However, native Korean speakers were more sensitive to those variables, and employed more variations of the strategies depending on the situation.

According to Rue and Zhang (2008), requests in the Korean language can also be mitigated by means of syntactic downgraders (such as interrogatives and conditionals), and lexical downgraders (such as politeness markers, e.g. *com* 'kindly/please'; downtoners, e.g. *-nuntey-yo* '...you know, but...'; understaters, e.g. *cokum* 'a little'; hedges, e.g. *kunyang* 'just'; honorific devices, e.g. *-nim* 'honorific title suffix', *capswusita* 'eat' (honorific), etc.). The study findings revealed that Korean speakers preferred honorific devices and honorific speech levels among lexical downgraders, and interrogatives among syntactic downgraders. The grounder was the most popular external mitigating strategy. It was also observed that Koreans were sensitive to both power and familiarity factors.

2.4 Previous studies on Russian language requests

Results from previous studies on Russian language requests indicated that the main internal modification device for mitigating requests in the Russian language is negation (Mills, 1991, 1992; Ogiermann, 2009; Rossolovich, 2016)³. L2 Russian learners, however, fail to approximate native speakers' use of the negative particle *ne* ('not') in their request production (Mills, 1993; Owen, 2001; Rossolovich, 2016). Requests in Russian can also be modified internally by using the modal verb *moch'* ('can'), the interrogative particle *li* or the conditional particle *by* (Dong, 2009; Mills, 1992; Owen, 2001; Rossolovich, 2016). As for the external mitigating strategies, the most preferred strategy in L1 Russian is the grounder (Dong, 2009; Ogiermann, 2009). Ogiermann (2009) also observed that L1 Russian speakers showed specific preference for mitigating devices that minimize the duration of the favor.

Owen (2001) compared requests produced by sixty native and eighty-four non-native speakers of Russian⁴ using Oral Proficiency Interview (OPI) role-plays. Focusing on proficiency levels and experience studying abroad, the study considered only three mitigating devices which appeared in the data most regularly: the negative particle *ne*, the conditional particle *by* (frequent in the

³ One of the first studies on the speech act of request in the Russian language were conducted by Mills (1991, 1992, 1993). Mills (1992) found that in Russian indirect requests the verb is often accompanied by the negative particle, interrogative particle, conditional particle, or their combination. In addition, Mills (1992) determined the following conventionalized formula for polite indirect requests in Russian: [felicity condition + question + negation + perfective finite verb]. e.g. *Вы не закроете окно?* 'You won't close the window?' The formula [felicity condition + negation + question + conditional + interrogative particle + operator] was indicated as the formula for hyper-polite indirect requests in the Russian language.

⁴ The majority of Russian language learners in Owen's (2001) study were native speakers of English, and three were native speakers of Chinese, Spanish and Polish with prolonged stays in the United States.

native speakers' data), and the politeness marker *pozhalujsta* (frequent in the learners' data). The results indicated that experience studying abroad was an important factor in the approximation of the native speakers' request production, regardless of proficiency levels. He also found that even highly proficient learners failed to employ as many negative particles *ne* and conditional particles *by* as native Russian speakers.

Nonetheless, the influence of power and social distance on the use of internal and external mitigating devices/strategies in Russian language requests has not received enough attention. Rossolovich (2016) compared requests produced in the DCT by Russian language learners and native Russian speakers considering social distance and power factors. The language background of the learners, however, was not specified. The results revealed that the native speakers mainly preferred using the interrogative with the modal verb *moch'* ('can') and negation, and/or subjunctive mood. Rossolovich concluded that power and social distance factors affected native speakers' requests: requests were found to be longer in the situations with greater social distance/power between the speakers and higher imposition of the favor. In the situations with high imposition requests addressed to strangers, the most frequent strategy was giving reasons (grounders), while with acquaintances – giving promises. It was also observed that the learners tended to express requests by using interrogative constructions with the modal verb *moch'* ('can') without negation or by using imperatives. In addition, when compared to the native speakers, the language learners used fewer such devices as verbs in the future tense, minimizers, giving reasons and promises.

For L2 learners of Russian it is important to know different ways of request mitigation and making polite requests for successful communication with native Russian speakers. When making requests, power and social distance factors should be considered because they can affect linguistic behavior. Since no relevant studies have been conducted on the requests produced by Korean learners of Russian, there is a need in the literature to investigate the interlanguage requests produced by Korean learners of Russian with the consideration of such social variables as power, social distance, etc.

3 Method

3.1 Subjects

Ten Korean learners of Russian participated in the present study, including three males and seven females⁵. Their proficiency level ranged from

⁵ Due to the COVID-19 pandemic and overall reduction of learners of Russian in Korea, the researchers experienced difficulties recruiting a larger number of participants for the experiment.

Intermediate to Advanced based on the TORFL/FLEX (Russian) scores (note: one participant did not possess the language proficiency certificate). Each participant had experience studying abroad in Russia.

3.2 Instrument and procedures

The data was collected using the written DCT distributed via Google forms. As presented in the Table 2, the DCT contained twelve situations that differed in social distance and power between the interlocutors: two sets for each of [+P +SD], [-P +SD], [=P +SD], [+P -SD], [-P -SD], [=P -SD]. +P refers to situations in which the hearer has more power than the speaker, -P – situations in which the speaker has more power than the hearer, =P – situations with equal power between the interlocutors. -SD refers to situations where requests are made to acquaintances, while +SD – situations addressed to more distant interlocutors (for the DCT situations, see Table 3 and Appendix 1). The total collected data was comprised of one hundred and twenty request samples. Due to the relatively small number of participants, only frequencies were calculated and compared in the present study.

Table 2. DCT Situations. Power and Social Distance Factors

		Power		
		+	-	=
Social distance	+	S1, S3	S5, S7	S9, S11
	-	S2, S4	S6, S8	S10, S12

*S - Situation

Table 3 below gives a short description of the DCT situations provided in the Appendix 1.

Table 3. DCT Situations Description

Social distance	Power	Situations
+	+	S1: asking a new professor to have a meeting after a class
	+	S3: asking a new professor to repeat explanation
	-	S5: lending notes from a junior who is younger and whom the speaker does not know well
	-	S7: asking a new colleague who is younger to help with an English e-mail
	=	S9: asking a stranger for directions
	=	S11: asking a stranger to take a picture
	+	S2: asking a familiar professor for a deadline extension

+	S4: asking to reschedule a meeting with a thesis advisor
-	S6: asking a younger brother/sister to turn down the volume on the TV
-	S8: asking a younger sister/brother to do the dishes
=	S10: asking a best friend to take a picture
=	S12: asking a close friend to lend some money

3.3 Coding scheme

The present study followed the coding scheme proposed in the CCSARP project by Blum-Kulka and Olshtain (1984) and Blum-Kulka et al. (1989), as well as in studies from Economidou-Kogetsidis (2008, 2009, 2012, 2013) and Woodfield (2012) (see Table 1), with modifications made according to the collected Russian language data and previous studies on Russian/Korean language requests (Byon, 2004; Ogiermann, 2009; Owen, 2001; Rossolovich, 2016). Thus, particles *by/li*, future tense, diminutives, self-introduction, and *bud'te dobry*⁶ categories were added to the data analysis.

The internal and external mitigating devices/strategies were coded as mentioned in the Table 4.

Table 4. Devices/Strategies Coding

Types	Devices/strategies and examples
Internal syntactic	Interrogative, e.g. <i>Можешь сфотографировать меня?</i> [INTERROGATIVE] ('Can you take a picture of me?')
	Particles <i>by/li</i> , e.g. <i>Не могли бы</i> [PARTICLES <i>by/li</i>] <i>Вы перенести нашу встречу?</i> ('Could you-V reschedule our meeting?')
	Modal verb <i>mozh'</i> , e.g. <i>Ты можешь</i> [MODAL VERB <i>mozh'</i>] <i>сделать телевизор потише?</i> ('Can you turn down the volume on the TV?')
	Negation, e.g. <i>Не</i> [NEGATION] <i>могли бы помочь?</i> ('Could not you-V help me?')
	Future tense, e.g. <i>Сможешь ли одолжить</i> [FUTURE TENSE] <i>деньги?</i> ('Will you be able to lend me some money?')
Internal lexical	Politeness marker <i>pozhalujsta</i> , e.g. <i>Сфотографируй меня, пожалуйста</i> [POLITENESS MARKER <i>pozhalujsta</i>]. ('Take a picture of me, please.')

⁶ *Bud'te dobry* – 'Would you be so kind' (literally: 'Be kind'); a polite expression used to address someone with a request to do something. E.g. *Будьте добры, передайте эти документы в бухгалтерию.* 'Would you be so kind and give these documents to the accounting department?'

	Understater, e.g. <i>Сделай, пожалуйста, немножко</i> [UNDERSTATER] телевизор потише. ('Turn down the volume on the TV a little, please.')
	Hedge, e.g. Ты могла бы одолжить <i>какую-нибудь</i> [HEDGE] сумму? ('Could you lend me a small amount of money?')
	Diminutive, e.g. Можно вашу тетрадь <i>на минуточку</i> [DIMINUTIVE]? ('Can I take your notes for a minute-DIM.')
External	Self-introduction, e.g. Здравствуйте, <i>меня зовут Гаён</i> [SELF-INTRODUCTION]. ('Hello, my name is Ga-yeon.')
	<i>Bud'te dobry</i> , e.g. <i>Будьте добры</i> [Bud'te dobry], подскажите, пожалуйста, как можно добраться до... ('Would you be so kind and let me know how I can get to...please.')
	Grounders, e.g. На прошлой неделе я пропустила занятие, <i>потому что заболела</i> [GROUNDER]. ('I missed the lecture last week because I was sick'.)
	Disarmer, e.g. <i>Я знаю, что я должна сдать курсовую до этого числа, но, к сожалению...</i> [DISARMER] ('I know I should submit the term paper until that date, but unfortunately...')
	Getting a precommitment, e.g. <i>Могли бы выручить меня?</i> [GETTING A PRECOMMITMENT] ('Could you-V help me out?')
	Preparator, e.g. <i>У меня к тебе одна просьба</i> [PREPARATOR]. ('I have one favor to ask of you.')
	Sweetener, e.g. <i>Я слышала, что вы очень хорошо знаете английский язык</i> [SWEETENER]. ('I've heard that you know English very well').
	Promising a reward, e.g. <i>Если ты сделаешь, я тебе куплю мороженое</i> [PROMISING A REWARD]. ('If you do it, I'll buy you an ice-cream.')
	Imposition minimizer, e.g. <i>Если только Вам не трудно</i> [IMPOSITION MINIMIZER]. ('Only if you-V are okay'.)
	Apology, e.g. <i>Извините; Прошу прощения</i> [APOLOGY]. ('I am sorry; Excuse me')
	Appreciation, e.g. <i>Спасибо заранее!</i> [APPRECIATION] ('Thank you in advance')

As Table 4 shows, requests in the Russian language can be modified internally by employing syntactic downgraders (such as conditional/interrogative particles *by/li*, negation, modal verb *moch'*, etc.) and lexical downgraders (such as the politeness marker *pozhalujsta*, diminutive forms, hedges, etc.), and externally - by employing supportive moves (such as grounders, *bud'te dobry*, imposition minimizers, sweeteners, etc.).

4 Results and Discussion

The present section presents and discusses: (1) the general results of the use of syntactic and lexical downgraders, and supportive moves; (2) the results with regard to the social distance and (3) power factors.

4.1 General results

The general results on the distribution of internal and external mitigating devices/strategies are presented in Table 5 and discussed below.

Table 5. General Results of Request Mitigating Devices/Strategies

Type	Device	Total
Internal syntactic	Interrogative	40.1% (85)
	Particles <i>by/li</i>	13.7% (29)
	Modal verb <i>moch'</i>	36.3% (77)
	Negation	8.0% (17)
	Future tense	1.9% (4)
	Total	100% (212)
Internal lexical	Politeness marker <i>pozhalujsta</i>	67.6% (25)
	Understater	24.3% (9)
	Hedge	2.7% (1)
	Diminutive	5.4% (2)
	Total	100% (37)
External	Self-introduction	7.9% (15)
	<i>Bud'te dobry</i>	1.1% (2)
	Grounders	38.6% (73)
	Disarmer	2.1% (4)
	Getting a precommitment	0.5% (1)
	Preparator	6.3% (12)
	Sweetener	4.8% (9)
	Promising a reward	4.8% (9)
	Imposition minimizer	2.6% (5)
	Apology	26.5% (50)
	Appreciation	4.8% (9)
Total	100% (189)	

Table 5 shows that, in general, Korean learners of Russian relied largely on syntactic downgrading of their requests, among which the interrogative

(40.1%) and the modal verb *moch'* (36.3%) were the most frequent. Preference for interrogatives and modal verbs seems universal in conventionally indirect requests in many languages. According to Ogiermann (2009) and Rossolovich (2016), such devices are also frequent in the native Russian speakers' data. Here are some examples from our data:

(2) а. *Можете [MODAL VERB *moch'*] сфотографировать меня на фоне Собора Василия Блаженного? Can you-V take a picture of me in front of the Saint Basil's Cathedral? [INTERROGATIVE].*

б. *Вы можете [MODAL VERB *moch'*] объяснить ещё раз? Can you-V explain it one more time? [INTERROGATIVE].*

Among the lexical downgraders, the most widely used device was the politeness marker *pozhalujsta* (67.6%), e.g.:

(3) а. *Сфотографируй меня, пожалуйста [POLITENESS MARKER *pozhalujsta*]. 'Take a picture of me, please'.*

б. *Скажите, пожалуйста [POLITENESS MARKER *pozhalujsta*], как добраться до Большого театра. 'Tell me, please, how to get to the Bolshoi Theater.'*

In the study conducted by Owen (2001) it was found that learners of Russian employed the politeness marker *pozhalujsta* more often than native speakers did.

Similar findings have been reported in a study by Dubinina and Malamud (2017), who found that heritage speakers of Russian overused *pozhalujsta* as compared to native Russian speakers. Such overreliance was explained by the authors as follows: *pozhalujsta* has a low cognitive load and functions as an "unambiguous marker of politeness", which explicitly indicates politeness in a requested utterance (Dubinina & Malamud, 2017, p.107). Therefore, we can infer that, in comparison to other internal downgraders, the use of the marker *pozhalujsta* may cause less difficulties for the learners when mitigating requests in L2 Russian.

As for the supportive moves, the grounder (38.6%) and the apology (26.5%) were found to be the most popular strategies in the data, e.g.:

(4) *'...на прошлой неделе я пропустила занятие, потому что заболела [GROUNDER]. Можно попросить у тебя одолжить конспекты?'. '...last week I missed the lecture because I was sick. Can I ask you to lend me the notes?'*

While grounder was confirmed to be one of the most popular external mitigating strategies for both native speakers and learners in previous interlanguage and intercultural studies on request speech acts in different

languages (Economidou-Kogetsidis, 2008, 2009, 2012; Fukushima, 1996; Hassal, 2012; Ogiermann, 2009), preference for apologies might be regarded as an L1 transfer and explained in terms of the hierarchical orientation of the Korean language (Byon, 2004)⁷. Nevertheless, such mitigating devices as negation (8.0%), conditional/interrogative particles (13.7%), and imposition minimizer (2.6%), as reported in previous studies and frequent in native speakers' data (Mills, 1991, 1992, 1993; Ogiermann, 2009; Owen, 2001; Rossolovich, 2016), were used by the learners at a low rate. Although negations, conditionals and imposition minimizers can be used in L1 Korean requests as well, the learners did not employ them frequently in their L2 Russian requests. It can be inferred that Korean learners of Russian are lacking the knowledge that such devices can also be used for mitigating requests in the Russian language.

4.2 Social Distance

Table 6. Request Mitigating Devices/Strategies. Social Distance

Type	Device	Social distance	
		-SD (Sit.2, 4, 6, 8, 10, 12)	+SD (Sit.1, 3, 5, 7, 9, 11)
Internal syntactic	Interrogative	42.4% (36)	38.6% (49)
	Particles <i>by/li</i>	11.8% (10)	15.0% (19)
	Modal verb <i>moch'</i>	37.6% (32)	35.4% (45)
	Negation	7.1% (6)	8.7% (11)
	Future tense	1.2% (1)	2.4% (3)
	Total (syntactic)	100% (85)	100% (127)
Internal lexical	Politeness marker <i>pozhalujsta</i>	65.0% (13)	70.6% (12)
	Understater	30.0% (6)	17.6% (3)
	Hedge	5.0% (1)	0.0% (0)
	Diminutive	0.0% (0)	11.8% (2)
	Total (lexical)	100% (20)	100% (17)
	Total (internal)	100% (105)	100% (144)

⁷ In Byon's (2004) study apologies were one of the most frequent formulae in the requests produced by native Korean speakers. Korean language is an honorific language which reflects social hierarchy. In addition, requests addressed to people of a higher social status might impose a heavy burden on the hearers. Considering these facts, Byon concluded that Korean speakers employ apologies in +P situations to reduce face-threats on those who possess a higher social power. He maintained that apologies might be regarded as "a sort of protocol" when making requests in Korean language (p.1689).

External	Self-introduction	4.1% (3)	10.4% (12)
	<i>Bud'te dobry</i>	0.0% (0)	1.7% (2)
	Grounder	48.6% (36)	32.2% (37)
	Disarmer	4.1% (3)	0.9% (1)
	Getting a precommitment	0.0% (0)	0.9% (1)
	Preparator	2.7% (2)	8.7% (10)
	Sweetener	4.1% (3)	5.2% (6)
	Promising a reward	4.1% (3)	5.2% (6)
	Imposition minimizer	5.4% (4)	0.9% (1)
	Apology	23.0% (17)	28.7% (33)
	Appreciation	4.1% (3)	5.2% (6)
	Total (external)	100% (74)	100% (115)

Table 6 demonstrates that in +SD situations (requests addressed to more distant interlocutors), learners in general employed more internal and external mitigating devices as compared to -SD situations (requests to familiar interlocutors). Although learners showed preference for the same strategies in +SD and -SD situations, in situations with greater social distance between the interlocutors the learners, learners used more self-introduction (10.4%), preparators (8.7%) and apologies (28.7%), as compared to situations with low social distance (4.1%, 2.7% and 23.0% respectively).

(5) а. *Здравствуйте, меня зовут Гаён. Мы слушаем 000 лекцию вместе* [SELF-INTRODUCTION]. *Hello, my name is Ga-yeon. We are taking 000 lecture together.*

б. *Вы сейчас свободны?* [PREPARATOR] *Are you available now?*

с. *Мария, привет. У меня к тебе одна просьба.* [PREPARATOR] *Maria, hi. I have one favor to ask of you.*

д. *Извините, пожалуйста.* [APOLOGY] *Не могли бы повторить ещё раз? Excuse me, please. Could you please repeat it again?*

On the other hand, it was observed that in -SD situations, for example, learners used more understaters (30.0%) than in +SD situations (17.6%):

(6) *Сделай, пожалуйста, немножко* [UNDERSTATER] *телевизор потише. Turn the TV down a little, please.*

The analysis showed that the participants demonstrated differences in the use of some strategies depending on the social distance between the speakers. In situations with more distant interlocutors, learners employed more self-introductions, preparators and apologies, but less understaters as

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Power and Social Distance Factors

compared to situations with familiar interlocutors. They also employed more mitigating devices/strategies in situations with greater social distance. Therefore, we may conclude that social distance factor influenced the choice of request mitigating devices/strategies for Korean learners of Russian.

4.3 Power

Table 7. Request Mitigating Devices/Strategies. Power

Type	Device	Power		
		+P (Sit. 1, 2, 3, 4)	-P (Sit. 5, 6, 7, 8)	=P (Sit. 9, 10, 11, 12)
Internal syntactic	Interrogative	37.5% (30)	39.1% (25)	44.1% (30)
	Particles <i>by/li</i>	17.5% (14)	14.1% (9)	8.8% (6)
	Modal verb <i>moch'</i>	37.5% (30)	37.5% (24)	33.8% (23)
	Negation	7.5% (6)	6.3% (4)	10.3% (7)
	Future tense	0.0% (0)	3.1% (2)	2.9% (2)
	Total (syntactic)	100% (80)	100% (64)	100% (68)
Internal lexical	Politeness marker <i>pozhalujsta</i>	83.3% (5)	62.5% (10)	66.7% (10)
	Understater	16.7% (1)	25.0% (4)	26.7% (4)
	Hedge	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	6.7% (1)
	Diminutive	0.0% (0)	12.5% (2)	0.0% (0)
	Total (lexical)	100% (6)	100% (16)	100% (15)
	Total (internal)	100% (86)	100% (80)	100% (83)
External	Self-introduction	10.7% (8)	9.1% (6)	2.1% (1)
	<i>Bud'te dobry</i>	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	4.2% (2)
	Grounder	44.0% (33)	39.4% (26)	29.2% (14)
	Disarmer	1.3% (1)	3.0% (2)	2.1% (1)
	Getting a precommitment	0.0% (0)	1.5% (1)	0.0% (0)
	Preparator	5.3% (4)	9.1% (6)	4.2% (2)
	Sweetener	1.3% (1)	12.1% (8)	0.0% (0)
	Promising a reward	0.0% (0)	10.6% (7)	4.2% (2)
	Imposition minimizer	1.3% (1)	0.0% (0)	8.3% (4)
	Apology	33.3% (25)	9.1% (6)	39.6% (19)
	Appreciation	2.7% (2)	6.1% (4)	6.3% (3)
	Total	100% (75)	100% (66)	100% (48)

Overall, it can be observed that the learners employed more internal and external mitigating devices in +P situations. Consequently, requests in +P situations tended to be longer. Although learners demonstrated preference for similar mitigating devices/strategies across +P, -P and =P situations, there were some differences in the employed devices/strategies. In situations where the hearer had greater power than the speaker (+P), learners used more particles *by/li* (17.5%), self-introduction (10.7%), and grounders (44.0%):

(7) а. *Можно ли [PARTICLES by/li] встретиться с вами после занятия? 'May I meet with you-V after the class?'*

б. *Я студентка Василиса на русском языке факультете, которая слушаю вашу лекцию в этом семестре [SELF-INTRODUCTION]. 'I am Vasilisa, a student from the Russian language department, who is taking your lecture this semester'.*

с. *На следующей неделе у моей сестры свадьба, поэтому я не могу встретиться с Вами [GROUNDER]. 'My sister is getting married next week, therefore I am not able to meet with you'.*

We can infer that by employing such devices and strategies more frequently in +P requests, Korean learners of Russian were trying to soften face-threats addressed to people of a higher social power, and thus, make their request sound more polite.

In +P situations the learners employed fewer understaters (16.7%), as compared to =P (26.7%) and -P situations (25.0%):

(8) *Сделай, пожалуйста, немножко [UNDERSTATER] телевизор потише. 'Turn the TV down a little, please'. [-P].*

It was also observed that in -P situations the learners used markedly fewer apologies (9.1%) than in +P (33.3%) and =P situations (39.6%). However, they used more sweeteners (12.1%), and promises of a reward (10.6%):

(9) а. *Я слышала, что вы очень хорошо знаете английский язык [SWEETENER]. 'I've heard that you know English very well.'*

б. *Если ты делаешь, я тебе куплю мороженое [PROMISING A REWARD]. 'If you do it, I'll buy you an ice-cream.'*

Considering the fact that the learners used more mitigating devices/strategies, and produced longer requests in +P situations, we can conclude that they were sensitive to the power factor. The sensitivity to social power and distance can be accounted for by the influence of the Korean language that reflects the hierarchical social status of interlocutors. When addressing people who hold a higher social power, Korean speakers put

emphasis on showing their respect and preserving face by trying to minimize face-threats on the hearer.

5 Conclusions and Limitations of the Study

The present study draws the following conclusions:

First, previous studies on Russian language requests have shown that the main internal mitigating device in indirect Russian language requests is negation (Mills, 1991, 1992; Ogiermann, 2009; Rossolovich, 2016). According to Larina (2009), in the Russian language the interrogative requests with the negative particle *ne* are considered to be more polite, since they give the addressee an option to respond either positively or negatively. In addition to the negation, requests in the Russian language are often modified internally by using the modal verb *moch'*, the interrogative particle *li*, or the conditional particle *by* (Dong, 2009; Mills, 1992; Owen, 2001; Rossolovich, 2016). The previous studies have also demonstrated that the most frequent external mitigating strategy for native Russian speakers is the grounder (Dong, 2009; Ogiermann, 2009).

Second, the results of the present study have revealed that Korean learners of Russian showed preference for the use of interrogative and the modal verb *moch'* among the syntactic downgraders. The most widely employed lexical downgrader was the politeness marker *pozhalujsta*. As for external mitigating strategies, the learners expressed preference for the grounder and the apology. However, such request mitigating devices/strategies as negation, conditional/interrogative particles and imposition minimizer, which were reported as frequently used in native speakers' production (Mills, 1991, 1992, 1993; Ogiermann, 2009; Owen, 2001; Rossolovich, 2016), were employed by the learners at low rates.

Third, the present study has found that power and social distance factors influenced the choice of mitigating devices and strategies in the requests produced by Korean learners of Russian. In general, the learners employed more internal and external mitigating devices in situations with greater social distance and greater social power. There were some differences found in the use of devices/strategies as well. For instance, in +SD situations, the learners employed more self-introductions, preparators and apologies than in -SD situations. In +P situations, as compared to others, learners employed more particles *by/li*, self-introductions and grounders, and fewer understaters. In -P situations, on the other hand, learners demonstrated a tendency to employ more sweeteners, promises of reward, and fewer apologies. It was concluded that the effect which power and social distance factors have on mitigating devices/strategies in Korean learners' request production can be attributed to the influence of the Korean language that reflects social hierarchy.

Due to the small sample size, the current study provided data by using descriptive statistics only. It is suggested to recruit more participants and employ other statistical methods and tests to conduct more detailed research. It is also suggested to investigate the influence of social variables such as age, gender, proficiency level and degree of imposition. Further research could also examine the use of request mitigating devices and strategies employed by learners of Russian from other language backgrounds.

The present study contributes to studies in interlanguage pragmatics, including studies on the speech act of request. It suggests the importance of the development of pragmatic competence and inclusion of instruction on speech act production in the RFL classroom.

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Appendix 1

안녕하세요?
 저는 고려대학교 일반대학원 언어학과 실용언어학 박사 과정에 재학 중인 몰로드첸코 올가입니다.
 박사논문 주제로 러시아어 요청화행에 대해서 연구하고 있습니다.
 아래의 설문조사는 12 개의 다양한 요청상황을 나타내고 있습니다.
 각각의 상황에 따라 실제상황에서 어떻게 답변할 것인지 오래 생각하지 말고 대답해주시기 바랍니다.
 본 설문 결과는 연구 목적 이외에는 다른 용도로 사용되지 않을 것입니다.
 설문에 응해주셔서 감사합니다!

I. 응답자의 배경 정보

1. 성별: 남 여
2. 나이: _____
3. 국적: _____
4. 직업: 대학생 대학원생 기타: _____
5. 학년: 1 학년 2 학년 3 학년 4 학년 기타: _____
6. 전공: _____
7. 러시아어를 얼마나 오랫동안 배웠습니까?
 1년 미만 1~2년 2~3년 4년 이상
8. 러시아에서 유학한 적이 있다면 공부한 기간이 얼마나 됩니까? _____
9. 러시아어 능력 인증 시험: (TORFL 또는 FLEX 러시아어):

TORFL: 기초 단계 <input type="checkbox"/> 기본 단계 <input type="checkbox"/> 1 단계 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 단계 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 단계 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 단계 <input type="checkbox"/>	FLEX 러시아어: 1A <input type="checkbox"/> 1B <input type="checkbox"/> 1C <input type="checkbox"/> 2A <input type="checkbox"/> 2B <input type="checkbox"/> 2C <input type="checkbox"/> 3A <input type="checkbox"/> 3B <input type="checkbox"/> 3C <input type="checkbox"/>
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II. 먼저 아래의 상황을 읽고 나서 실제상황에서 당신이라면 어떻게 요청할 것인지 답변해주시기 바랍니다. (답변은 러시아어로 작성해주시기 바랍니다)

Пример: Вы едете в автобусе. Из окна дует ветер, поэтому Вам стало холодно. Возле окна сидит пожилая женщина. Как Вы попросите её закрыть окно?

예시: 당신은 버스를 타고 가고 있습니다. 버스 안에 창문에서 바람이 불고 있는데, 당신은 추위를 느꼈습니다. 창문을 닫고 싶어졌습니다. 하지만 창문 옆자리에는 중년의 여성이 앉아있습니다. 당신은 그녀에게 어떻게 부탁할 수 있을까요?

Ответ: Женщина, извините. Вы не могли бы немножко прикрыть окно? А то сильно дует.

답변: 아주머니! 죄송합니다만 문을 좀 닫아주실 수 있을까요? 바람이 너무 불어서 추워요.

S1: Вы студент университета. В этом семестре Вы впервые слушаете лекцию у нового профессора. Содержание лекции было сложным. Как Вы попросите профессора встретиться с Вами после занятия, чтобы он объяснил Вам непонятные моменты?

S1: 당신은 대학생입니다(대학원생입니다). 이번 학기에 당신은 잘 모르는 교수님께(새로운 사람에게) 처음으로 강의를 듣고 있습니다. 그러나 강의 내용이 어렵습니다. 그래서 당신은 이해가 잘 가지 않는 부분에 대해서 교수님께 좀 더 질문하고 싶습니다. 방과 후에 교수님을 찾아 뵙기 위해서 어떻게 부탁할 수 있을까요?

S2: Вы студент университета. В данный момент Вы пишете курсовую по предмету профессора, которого Вы уже давно знаете. Кажется, что Вы не успеваете закончить работу в срок. Как Вы попросите профессора дать Вам больше времени на написание работы?

S2: 당신은 대학생입니다(대학원생입니다). 이번 학기 기말고사에 보고서를 제출해야 하는데, 이번에는 잘 아는 교수님의 수업입니다. 아무래도 당신은 정해진 기간 안에 보고서를 제출하지 못할 것 같습니다. 당신은 교수님께 제출 기한을 더 늘려달라고 부탁하고 싶습니다. 어떻게 부탁할 수 있을까요?

S3: Вы студент университета. Вы находитесь на занятии у профессора, которого мало знаете. Профессор говорит очень быстро, и Вы за ним не успеваете. Как Вы попросите его повторить ещё раз то, что он объяснял?

S3: 당신은 대학생입니다(대학원생입니다). 당신은 잘 모르는 교수님 수업을 듣고 있습니다. 수업시간에 교수님께서 말씀을 매우 빨리

하셔서 강의 내용을 다 이해하지 못했습니다. 이런 상황에서 교수님께 다시 한 번 설명해달라고 요청드리고 싶습니다. 어떻게 부탁할 수 있을까요?

S4: Вы студент университета. На следующей неделе у Вас назначена встреча с Вашим дипломным руководителем. Оказалось, что Ваша встреча совпадает с днём свадьбы Вашей старшей сестры/старшего брата. Как Вы попросите профессора перенести встречу на другой день?

S4: 당신은 대학생입니다(대학원생입니다). 다음 주에 당신의 지도교수님과 약속(논문과 관련된)이 있습니다. 하지만 그 날은 누나(언니/형/오빠)의 결혼식입니다. 이러한 상황에서 당신은 교수님과의 약속을 다른 날로 미뤄야 하는데, 어떻게 부탁할 수 있을까요?

S5: Вы студент университета. На прошлой неделе Вы пропустили одну из лекций. Как Вы попросите у малознакомого младшекурсника, с которым вместе слушаете лекцию, и который младше Вас на несколько лет, одолжить конспекты?

S5: 당신은 대학생입니다(대학원생입니다). 지난 주에 당신은 강의 하나를 결석했습니다. 이 수업에는 아는 사람이 별로 없습니다. 그래서 별로 친하지 않은 어린 후배에게 노트를 빌려야 하는데, 어떻게 부탁할 수 있을까요?

S6: Вы дома готовитесь к предстоящему экзамену, но слышите громкий звук телевизора из комнаты Вашего младшего брата/сестры. Как Вы попросите брата/сестру сделать телевизор потише?

S6: 당신은 집에서 중간고사(기말고사, 시험 등)를 준비하고 있습니다. 그러나 남동생(여동생)이 텔레비전 소리를 크게 켜서 보고 있습니다. 그렇다면 이 상황에서 텔레비전 소리를 줄여달라고 어떻게 부탁할 수 있을까요?

S7: Вы сотрудник компании. Вам требуется написать деловое письмо клиенту на английском языке. У вас очень плохой английский, поэтому Вы не уверены, правильно ли написали письмо. Вы слышали, что Ваша новая коллега, которая младше Вас на 5 лет, и которую Вы ещё плохо знаете, свободно владеет английским. Как Вы попросите её помочь проверить ошибки в Вашем письме?

S7: 당신은 직장인입니다. 당신은 거래처에 영어 이메일을 보내야 합니다. 영어 실력이 좋지는 않지만, 영어로 이메일을 작성했습니다. 그래서 영어 이메일을 검수해 줄 사람이 필요합니다. 얼마 전 팀 내에 신입사원이 입사했는데, 당신보다 5 살 어립니다. 신입사원은 영어를 아주 잘하지만 당신과 잘 모르는 사이입니다. 이러한 상황에서 당신은 신입사원에게 영어 이메일을 검수해달라고 어떻게 부탁할 수 있을까요?

S8: Вы приготовили ужин для Вас и Вашей младшей сестры/брата.
Как Вы попросите младшую сестру/брата помыть посуду после ужина?

S8: 당신은 당신 여동생(남동생)과 함께 먹을 저녁을 준비했습니다.
저녁을 다 먹고 난 후에 여동생(남동생)에게 설거지를 부탁하고 싶습니다.
어떻게 부탁할 수 있을까요?

S9: Вы только что прилетели в Москву и собираетесь посетить
Большой театр, но не знаете, как туда добраться. Как Вы попросите
незнакомца подсказать дорогу?

S9: 당신은 방금 전 모스크바에 도착했습니다. 볼쇼이 극장에 가고
싶은데, 어떻게 가는지 잘 모르겠습니다. 모르는 사람에게 길을
물어보려고 하는데, 어떻게 부탁할 수 있을까요?

S10: Вы пришли в красивое кафе со своим лучшим
другом/подругой. Как Вы попросите друга/подругу сфотографировать
Вас?

S10: 당신은 친한 친구와 예쁜 카페에 왔습니다. 카페에서 친한
친구에게 자신의 사진을 찍어달라고 부탁하고 싶습니다. 어떻게 부탁할
수 있을까요?

S11: Вы приехали на Красную Площадь в Москве и хотите
сфотографироваться на фоне Собора Василия Блаженного. Как Вы
попросите незнакомца сфотографировать Вас?

S11: 당신은 모스크바 붉은광장에 놀러 왔습니다. 바실리 성당을
배경으로 사진을 찍고 싶습니다. 모르는 사람에게 부탁하고 싶은데,
어떻게 부탁할 수 있을까요?

S12: Вы хотите купить новый ноутбук, но у Вас не хватает денег.
Как Вы попросите своего близкого друга/подругу одолжить Вам деньги?

S12: 당신은 노트북을 새로 사고 싶습니다. 하지만 돈이 조금
모자랍니다. 이 노트북을 사기 위해서 친한 친구에게 돈을 빌리고
싶습니다. 어떻게 부탁할 수 있을까요?

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