

Negative Pragmatic Transfer as a Factor Jeopardizing Formation of Multicultural Personality in RFL Classroom (the case of request speech act)

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Abstract. *Language learning provides vast opportunities for formation and development of multicultural personality since language is a source and method of learning culture. However, sometimes this process may be hindered by lack of crosses between cultural awareness and negative pragmatic transfer resulting in culture shock. Cross-linguistic influence makes learners transfer their pragmatic and sociocultural knowledge from their native language into a target language without differentiating them. From this point of view, the speech act of request presents one of the areas that due to cultural and linguistic specifics of the Russian language might with great possibility be affected by negative pragmatic transfer on the part of English-speaking RFL learners. This paper contains results of research aimed at answering the question whether negative pragmatic transfer influences the production of Russian requests by English-speaking students and, if not, what other factors may hinder this process. The findings show that negative pragmatic transfer is an important but not the sole factor jeopardizing students' production of Russian requests. What is much more important is students' insufficient knowledge of means to express requests in the Russian language, which are vital in terms of pragmatics, i.e. linguistic means that affect politeness of requests in a positive or negative way, as well as a range of standard constructions for requesting in communicative situations with different sociolinguistic variables. Thus, developing pragmatic competence in this sphere can be a key factor facilitating cross-cultural awareness and formation of multicultural personality through language learning.*

Key words – *multicultural personality, pragmatic competence, negative pragmatic transfer, request*.

I. INTRODUCTION

Globalization in the modern world implies that people of diverse cultures and languages more and more often find themselves in a situation of communication. As a result, language is actively used as a means of transmission of different cultures. Active interaction of people representing different cultural values and linguistic traditions facilitates the formation of common cultural space, with interpenetration of cultures. Multilingualism, which is

defined by the European Commission as "the ability of societies, institutions, groups and individuals to engage, on a regular basis, with more than one language in their day-to-day lives", becomes an instrument and an outcome of this process [3, p. 6]. In 2005, the European Commission listed multilingualism as one of the key long-term objectives of the European linguistic policy and decided that it should develop to the level when "every citizen has practical skills in at least two languages in addition to his or her mother tongue" [3, p. 6].

Thus, individual multilingualism development through foreign languages learning is in line with the current needs of the society, helping people of different cultures to understand systems of cultural values and mentalities of other sociocultural communities.

However, multicultural personality formation could be jeopardized by different factors, for example, by negative pragmatic transfer. As a result of cross-cultural influences, pragmatic and sociocultural knowledge, accumulated by a person in the process of enculturation, could be transferred into a target language. Thus, learners' performance in the Russian language would be influenced greatly by social and cultural conventions and norms of polite behavior that exist in their native language. From this perspective, the transfer of utterances, which are semantically and syntactically equivalent, but tend to convey different pragmatic force and level of politeness, is especially dangerous, since, when speaking to foreigners, people, as a rule, easily forgive grammatical and lexical mistakes but they are very sensitive to any violation of norms of behavior, thinking that it is done on purpose in order to insult the interlocutor [7].

From this point of view, specifics of Russian communicative behavior in a situation of request are especially difficult for foreign learners of Russian [4], [7].

There is an opinion that request is one of the most frequent and difficult speech acts in Russian [15]. When asked for a request, the hearer has a freedom of choice whether to fulfill the request or not. Due to this, the speaker is especially careful with selecting specific linguistic means when interacting with people of a different ethnic group, since using the wrong language for requesting in a certain communicative situation may result in culture shock and a communicative failure. Getting involved in communication, the speaker selects specific lexis and grammar for requesting depending on norms of polite behavior accepted in a certain

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culture. However, politeness is nation-specific. In particular, researchers write about significant differences in concepts of politeness in the Russian and British cultures, for example, [7], [8], [10], [18]. Negative pragmatic transfer in this case can be especially dangerous since it may lead to the creation of stereotypes and a negative attitude towards L2 culture.

Thus, studying various ways of requesting in Russian and how much Russian requests are subject to negative pragmatic transfer is vital because it corresponds to learners' communicative needs and facilitates individual multilingualism.

The present article is aimed at solving the research question of whether negative pragmatic transfer influences the production of Russian requests by English-speaking learners of Russian and, if not, what other factors may hinder this process. Basing on the data-based study, we will try to point out the main problems that English-speaking RFL (Russian as a foreign language) learners might experience producing Russian requests in order to suggest possible solutions. The hypothesis is that, drawing on pragmatic and sociocultural knowledge from their native language, English-speaking students may wrongly consider certain request forms acceptable or unacceptable in various communicative contexts, as well as incorrectly evaluate their politeness level, which affects production of requests in communicative situations with multiple sociolinguistic variables. Such mistakes are crucial for communicative success and may result in a communicative failure and culture shock.

II. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

In his fundamental classification of illocutionary acts, Geoffrey Leech divides speech acts into polite and impolite. The *first group* is represented by speech acts that facilitate establishing and maintaining good-neighbor relations (for example, *invitation*, *permission*), the *second group* is represented by speech acts that hinder or prevent reaching this social purpose (Leech calls them *impositive*) [9]. According to the researcher, requests belong to impolite speech acts. This is determined by the structure of the request speech act, when the speaker impinges on the hearer's freedom trying to influence the latter in order to get something done. Hence, researchers call request the most self-seeking speech act. In the case of order or demand, the speaker is often interested in getting the action done not as a person but because they function as a boss or commanding officer and act in compliance with some convention (rules, instructions), whereas request has nothing to do with the speaker's authority, it is always personal [4, p. 129]. On the other hand, a situation of requesting constitutes a threat to the hearer, whose freedom is being impinged upon, as well as to a speaker, who may face a refusal. Speech act of request involves risk for the speaker to lose face, because they find themselves in a disadvantageous position of a requester, whose future actions depend on whether the speech act is successful or not. All this leads to the fact that the request speech act fulfillment is closely connected with the *category of politeness*.

Describing utterances with the meaning of request in terms of politeness, researchers talk about three possible levels of the speaker's polite linguistic behavior: *politic* behavior (neutral requests in terms of politeness), *polite* behavior (requests with a higher level of politeness), *impolite* behavior (requests with a lower level of politeness) [17]. *Politic* behavior is understood as non-marked linguistic behavior, which is perceived by the hearer as being in line with their current communicative expectations. Linguistic behavior that is perceived by the hearer as being above or below their expectations is marked and can be defined as *polite* or *impolite*. In this case, *polite* utterances exceed the hearer's communicative expectations, whereas *impolite* ones fail to meet the hearer's expectations in a specific situation of communication [17, p. 20-21].

Different languages have specific ranges of strategies and linguistic means that increase or decrease the level of politeness and that depend on the way politeness is understood.

The definition and description of the category of politeness can be found in numerous papers and monographs: [1], [6], [11], [12], [16], [2], [7], [8], [4] among others. In general, *politeness* can be defined as a system of cultural scenarios and ritual strategies of communicative behavior that are aimed at a conflict-free interaction and are in compliance with socially-acceptable norms of interactive communication [7, p. 17]. The definition above implies that the category of politeness is nation-specific: different cultures have a different understanding of politeness, as well as a specific range of cultural scenarios for its implementation.

A vivid example of the politeness category being a nation-specific phenomenon is Leech's classification of requests as an impolite speech act, which is mentioned above. Such description of the speech act is connected with the English concept of politeness and serves as an example of Anglocentrism, which was popular in pragmatics of that time [18]. It is the English-speaking culture that views pressurizing the hearer and impinging on their freedom as something impolite and able to threaten the social purpose of establishing and maintaining good-neighbor relations. To minimize such influence, there are multiple strategies of negative politeness in the English-language communication, stated as part of Brown and Levinson's theory – one of the most influential theories in intercultural pragmatics. Such strategies are the following: minimize assumptions about the hearer's wishes, speak indirectly, ask questions, be evasive, be pessimistic, apologize, etc. [1]. Researchers note that a polite request in the English-language communication is impossible without employing these strategies [1], [18] et al. Linguistic means that verbalize these strategies are the following: use of various questions in the function of request, the so called "whimperatives" (*Could you do X? Will you do X? Would you do X?*), use of linguistic means that allow the speaker to present their request in the form of a simple sentence or an assumption about the hearer's wishes (*You might consider doing X. Perhaps you might like to do X. I suggest we do X. I was just wondering if you might like to do X*), as well as explication of the speaker's

doubt in a possibility of an action (*Is there any chance you could do X*). The purpose of using these linguistic means is explication of the speaker's respect towards the hearer's autonomy, which increases the politeness level of a request and, thus, makes it more efficient [7], [18].

However, there are many cultures that do not consider pressurizing the hearer in order to prompt them to do something as impolite, and using negative politeness strategies is not viewed as a way to make a request more polite or efficient. Take, for example, the Russian culture. Researchers suggest that the means mitigating illocutionary force of request in the Russian-language communication are greatly reduced or not used at all [18]. For example, very often imperatives do not decrease the politeness level, unlike in the English language. Moreover, imperatives are the most frequently used means of requesting in any situation of communication (more on this in [13], [14]). Using an imperative, the speaker explicitly states their desire to pressurize the hearer, and in order to make a request more efficient they can employ additional linguistic means aggravating illocutionary force of an utterance. Among such means are performative utterances (*Ya proshu tebya, sdelay eto. I am asking you, do this*), which are a significant ethnopragmatic lacuna in the English language (more on this in [18]). Performative utterances allow the speaker to increase the pressure on the hearer in a situation of request, which is not easy to fulfill, sensitive, important or urgent. Increased pressure is considered by the speaker as a way to make a request more efficient. However, this does not make a request impolite, which is supported by extensive use of performatives in formal situations of communication (when employees address their bosses, etc.) (more on this in [14]).

It should be mentioned that there is a range of lexical means in the Russian-language communication that simultaneously increase both the politeness of a request and pressure on the hearer. An example of such means is utterances with a double imperative (*Bud'te dobry, sdelayte eto. Be kind, do this. Bud'te tak lyubezny, sdelayte eto. Be polite, do this*). The paradox is that politeness actualisators in such requests are used to intensify them rather than make them less straightforward. It is the increased pressure on the hearer and appeal to their moral qualities that make a request more efficient without making it less polite.

Imperative utterances are frequent and can be used in any communicative context to express both neutral and higher-level-of-politeness requests, and this indicates that Russian linguistic behavior in the case of requesting is more impositive, i.e. exerting communicative pressure on the hearer is normal. Imperative constructions by themselves neither decrease the politeness level of requests nor make them closer to demands. On the contrary, in many cases intensifying pressure on the hearer is connected with trying to make a request more efficient, which is in opposition to the rules of effective requesting in English.

Analyzing the factors that influence how the hearer evaluates appropriateness/inappropriateness and politeness level of a request expressed with specific lexis and grammar

in the Russian-language communication, researchers note the role of sociocultural factors of a communicative situation [4], [14]. Depending on social distance and social status, as well as style of communication (formal/informal), one and the same utterance with the meaning of request can be used to express either a higher-level-of-politeness or neutral or impolite request. An example of this is the pattern "*Ya proshu vas (I ask you) + action verb infinitive*", which is used to express neutral requests in formal communication when the speaker addresses the hearer who is of a higher status (for example, an employee talking to a boss, a student talking to a teacher, etc.). However, using the same construction in informal communication makes utterances a little too categorical and emphatic and, therefore, results in a lower level of politeness (cf. *Proshu bol'she so mnoj na etu temu ne govorit! I ask you not to speak with me on this subject again*) [4]. Thus, we can talk about specific lexical and grammatical means used to express either neutral, or higher-level-of-politeness, or impolite requests in a certain communicative context. This makes research aimed at identifying appropriateness of various constructions (for neutral, higher politeness or lower politeness level requesting) in different communicative situations especially important.

Considering the above, we can make a conclusion that negative pragmatic transfer in production of requests by English-speaking students in the Russian-language communication is based on employing strategies to increase politeness of utterances that are traditional for the English-language communication, i.e. English-speaking students, hypothetically, should avoid imperative or performative utterances and express requests in Russian using questions in almost any communicative situation. At that, an interesting factor is which Russian lexical and grammatical means are employed by English-speaking students to increase or decrease the politeness level of requests in different communicative contexts and whether they correspond to the means used in the English-language communication. To obtain empirical evidence in order to test how much production of requests by English-speaking L2 learners of the Russian language is subject to negative pragmatic transfer and what other factors may influence this process we conducted an experiment. The experiment also provided additional data on sociocultural norms and politeness rules underlying Russian speech behavior in situations of requesting. The study provides a thorough investigation of empirical data by exploring the usage of different linguistic formulae for expressing requests of different level of politeness in different communicative contexts.

III. METHOD

The objective of this research was to study production of requests by English-speaking L2 learners of the Russian language with reference to the following research question: 1. To what extent do requests of English-speaking L2 learners of Russian reveal negative transfer of their L1, and what other factors may influence their production?

The experiment was conducted in groups of American students (20 people in total) studying Russian at advanced level at Saint-Petersburg State University (Saint-Petersburg, Russia). They were in the age range of 20-22.

To evaluate the results provided by the English-speaking L2 learners of the Russian language in terms of their correspondence to the norms of the Russian-language communicative behavior, the same experiment was conducted in a group of Russian students (20 people) studying at Herzen State Pedagogical University in Saint Petersburg, Russia. This group consisted of students aged 18-21. Such structure of the experiment allowed us to evaluate the data collected from the American students in comparison with the results obtained from the native speakers of Russian in analogous situations, as well as to expand the existing data on functioning of utterances with the meaning of request in various communicative contexts of the Russian-language communication.

The students were given an open-ended written discourse completion questionnaire (DCQ), with tasks that focused on requesting in different communicative contexts. According to Gallaher, although the validity of DCQs has been widely criticized, this method is useful for collecting cross-cultural data on semantic strategies and linguistic structures used in speech act realization [6]. The students were offered 12 scenarios that varied in social distance (degree of familiarity), the relative status (social status) and style (formal/informal). According to these variables, four meaningful communicative contexts (CC) were selected:

CC 1: communication between the student and the teacher (formal communication, high social distance, the speaker's social status is lower than that of the hearer).

CC 2: communication between colleagues at work (formal communication, high social distance, the speaker and the hearer do not differ in social status).

CC 3: communication between strangers on the street (informal communication, high social distance, the speaker and the hearer do not differ in social status).

CC 4: communication between friends (informal communication, low social distance, the speaker and the hearer do not differ in social status).

Situations when the speaker's social status was higher than that of the hearer were excluded from the experiment since it is difficult to draw a line between requests made in such situations and demands and orders.

Each of the four communicative contexts had three scenarios, which required neutral, high politeness level and potentially low politeness level requests. The first type was represented by scenarios when the request was unmarked, i.e. neither difficult nor urgent nor important for the speaker. For example, pass the fare to the driver or borrow a pen. The situations that required higher politeness level requests were represented by scenarios when the request was marked, i.e. either difficult or important for the speaker, for example, fulfilment of the request demanded much effort on the part of the hearer (asking a stranger to help carry a heavy suitcase upstairs or asking a friend to take a book back to the library). Each of the communicative contexts comprised scenarios when the speaker could employ strategies, which could result in a decreased politeness level request. Such scenarios implied requesting in situations when the speaker's interests were violated by the hearer's behavior, and the hearer might not want to fulfill the request because it infringed on their interests. For example, asking a colleague to close the window that he/she opened because the speaker is cold, or asking a stranger to park his/her car somewhere else for the speaker to be able to leave the parking lot. The list of the situations is given in the Results and Discussion section (Table 1).

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

While evaluating the data obtained from the American students' DCQs, we considered the range of syntactic constructions used for requesting, as well their correspondence to the constructions used for the same situations by the Russian students. The results are given in Table 1.

Table 1 shows considerable differences between the American and Russian students' answers.

TABLE I. DCQ RESULTS

Description of the scenario	Constructions used by American learners of Russian (with frequency of use given in brackets):	Constructions used by Russian students (with frequency of use given in brackets):
1. You left your pen at home. Ask your university friend to lend you a pen for a day.	Mozhno (<i>Can</i>) + infinitive? (9) U tebya est' ruchka? (<i>Have you got a pen?</i>) (8) U tebya net ruchki? (<i>Don't you have a pen?</i>) (1) Ty mozhesh' dat' ruchku? (<i>Can you give a pen?</i>) (1) Imperative + pozhalujsta (<i>please</i>). (1)	Imperative + pozhalujsta (<i>please</i>). (8) U tebya net ruchki? (<i>Don't you have a pen?</i>) (4) U tebya ne najdyotsya ruchki? (<i>Don't you have a pen?</i>) (3) U tebya est' ruchka? (<i>Have you got a pen?</i>) (2) Mozhesh' (<i>Can you</i>) + infinitive? (2) Ne mog by ty (<i>Couldn't you</i>) + infinitive? (1)
2. You are going away on holidays but forgot to return a book to the library. Ask your friend to take the book back when he/she goes there next time.	Ty mozhesh' (<i>Can you</i>) + infinitive? (13) Imperative + pozhalujsta (<i>please</i>). (3) Ty ne mog by (<i>Couldn't you</i>) + infinitive? (1) Ty ne mozhesh' (<i>Can't you</i>) + infinitive? (1) Eto vozmozhno, chto vy mogli by (<i>Is it possible that you could</i>) + infinitive? (1) Sdelaesh' odolzhenie, mozhesh' li (<i>Will you do me a favor, could you</i>) + infinitive? (1)	Imperative + pozhalujsta (<i>please</i>). (9) Smozhesh' (<i>Can you</i>) + infinitive? (5) Ya hotel(a) by poprosit', chtoby ty (<i>I would like to ask that you</i>) + Past. (2) Ne mog by ty, pozhalujsta, (<i>Couldn't you, please</i>) + infinitive? (2) U tebya budet vozmozhnost' (<i>Will you have possibility</i>) + infinitive? (1) Mogu li ya tebya poprosit' (<i>Can I ask you</i>) + infinitive. (1)
3. You are reading a book in the library. Your friend is sitting nearby and talking loudly on the phone. Ask him/her not to disturb you.	Ty mozhesh' (<i>Can you</i>) + infinitive? (11) Imperative + pozhalujsta (<i>please</i>). (5) Ne mozhesh' (<i>Can't you</i>) + infinitive? (2) Imperative. (1) Mozhno (<i>Can</i>) + infinitive? (1)	Mozhesh' (pozhalujs'ta) potishe? (<i>Can you (please) be quiet?</i>) (7) Ty ne mog by (pozhalujs'ta) (<i>Couldn't you, please</i>) + infinitive? (7) Ty ne mozhesh' (pozhalujs'ta) (<i>Can't you, please</i>) + infinitive? (5) Imperative + pozhalujsta (<i>please</i>). (1)
4. You cannot find a book in the library that you need for your research paper. You know that your	Mozhno (<i>Can</i>) + infinitive? (6) (S)mozhet mne (<i>Can you do something for me</i>) + infinitive? (5) Mozhet li (<i>Can you</i>) + infinitive? (4) Vy ne mogli by (<i>Couldn't you</i>) + infinitive? (2)	Ne mogli by Vy, pozhalujsta (<i>Couldn't you, please</i>), + infinitive? (8) Ne mogli by Vy (<i>Couldn't you</i>) + infinitive? (7) Proshu Vas (<i>I ask you</i>), + imperative. (3)

teacher has it. Ask him/her to lend it to you.	Mogu li ya (<i>Can I</i>) + infinitive? (1) U vas est' kniga? (<i>Have you got a book?</i>) (1) Bylo by vozmozhno (<i>Would it be possible</i>) + infinitive? (1)	Mozhno poprosit' u Vas knigu? (<i>Can I ask for a book?</i>) (2)
5. You do not feel well and want to leave the classroom and go home. Ask your teacher to let you go.	Mozhno (<i>Can</i>) + infinitive? (9) Mozhete (<i>Can you</i>) + infinitive? (3) Imperative + pozhalujsta (<i>please</i>). (2) Vy ne mogli by (<i>Couldn't you</i>) + infinitive? (1) Mozhno li mne (<i>Is it possible for me</i>) + infinitive? (1) Mogu li ya (<i>Can I</i>) + infinitive? (1) No request. (3)	Ne mogli by Vy (<i>Couldn't you</i>) + infinitive? (7) Vy ne (<i>Won't you</i>) + 2nd person plural Future verb form? (4) Razreshite (<i>Allow me</i>) + infinitive. (3) Proshu Vas (<i>I ask you</i>), + imperative (3). Ya hotela by (<i>I would like</i>) + infinitive (1). Mozhno li (<i>Can</i>) + infinitive (1)? Nichego strasnogo, esli ya (<i>Is it all right if I</i>) + verb (1)?
6. Your teacher gave you a bad mark for the test. You do not understand why. Ask him/her to explain.	Mozhete (<i>Can you</i>) + infinitive? (12) Vy ne (s)mogli by (<i>Couldn't you</i>) + infinitive? (2) Mozhno (<i>Can</i>) + infinitive? (2) Ya hotel(a) by (<i>I would like</i>) + infinitive (2) Esli vozmozhno (<i>If it is possible</i>), imperative + pozhalujsta (<i>please</i>). (1) Udobno li vam (<i>Is it convenient for you</i>) + infinitive? (1)	Ne mogli by Vy, pozhalujsta (<i>Couldn't you, please</i>) + infinitive (6)? Ne mogli by Vy (<i>Couldn't you</i>) + infinitive (5)? Impertive + pozhalujsta (<i>please</i>) (5). Proshu Vas (<i>I ask you</i>),+ imperative (4).
7. You are traveling by bus. Ask a person in front of you to pass your fare to the driver.	Imperative + pozhalujsta (<i>please</i>). (11) Imperative. (2) Mozhete (<i>Can you</i>) + infinitive? (3) Mozhno (<i>Can</i>) + infinitive? (2) Bud'te dobry, pozhalujsta (<i>Please, be kind</i>) + imperative. (1) Vy ne mozhete (<i>Can't you</i>) + infinitive? (1) Mozhete li (<i>Can you</i>) + infinitive? (1)	Imperative + pozhalujsta (<i>please</i>). (19). Imperative (1).
8. You are walking out the store and see somebody parking their car in front of yours so that you cannot leave. Ask him/her to park the car in another place.	Imperative + pozhalujsta (<i>please</i>). (8) Mozhete (<i>Can you</i>) + infinitive? (4) Mozhete li (<i>Can you</i>) + infinitive? (4) Ne mozhete razreshit' mne (<i>Can't you allow me</i>) + infinitive? (2) Vy (<i>You</i>) + 2nd person plural Future verb form? (1) Imperative. (1)	Ne mogli by Vy (<i>Couldn't you</i>) + infinitive? (6) Ne perestavite mashinu? (<i>Won't you move your car?</i>) (3) Imperative + pozhalujsta (<i>please</i>). (3) Mogu ya poprosit' Vas (<i>Can I ask you</i>) + infinitive? (3) Vas ne zatrudnit (<i>Won't it be difficult for you</i>) + infinitive? (2) Bud'te chelovekom (<i>Be a human</i>) + imperative. (1) Mozhete (<i>Can you</i>) + infinitive? (1)
9. You are going to the train station. You have a heavy suitcase. You cannot take it upstairs. Ask a passer-by to help you.	Imperative + pozhalujsta (<i>please</i>). (6); Mozhete (<i>Can you</i>) + infinitive? (5) Mozhete li (<i>Can you</i>) + infinitive? (3) Vy ne smozhete (<i>Can't you</i>) + infinitive? (1) Vy pomozhete (<i>Will you help</i>)? (1) Mozhno (<i>Can</i>) + infinitive? (1) Ne pomozhete li (<i>Won't you help me</i>) + infinitive? (1) "Bud'te dobrym, mozhno mne" (<i>Be kind, can I</i>) + infinitive? (1) Imperative. (1)	Ne mogli by Vy (<i>Couldn't you</i>) + infinitive? (6) Ne mogli by Vy, pozhalujsta (<i>Couldn't you, please</i>), + infinitive? (5) Ne pomozhete (<i>Won't you help</i>) + infinitive? (3) Vas ne zatrudnit (<i>Won't it be difficult for you</i>) + infinitive? (2) Imperative + pozhalujsta (<i>please</i>). (2) Bud'te dobry (<i>Be kind</i>) + imperative. (1) Mozhete, pozhalujsta (<i>Can you, please</i>) + infinitive? (1)
10. You are working in the office. You need a folder with documents to finish your report. You see it on your colleague's desk/ He/she does not need it anymore. Ask him/her to give you the folder.	Mozhno (<i>Can</i>) + infinitive? (11) Mozhete (<i>Can you</i>) + infinitive? (5) Imperative + pozhalujsta (<i>please</i>). (2) Ya mogu (<i>I can</i>) + infinitive? (1) Mogu li ya (<i>Can I</i>) + infinitive? (1)	Imperative + pozhalujsta (<i>please</i>). (9) Mozhno, pozhalujsta (<i>Can, please</i>), + infinitive? (3) Ya voz'mu papku? (<i>I'll take a folder?</i>) (3) Mozhesh' (<i>Can you</i>) + infinitive, pozhalujsta (<i>please</i>)? (3) Vy ne protiv, esli ya (<i>Would you mind, if I</i>) + 1st person singular Future verb form? (2)
11. You have problems with your computer at work and there is an urgent email to send. Ask your colleague to let you use his/her computer.	Mozhno (<i>Can</i>) + infinitive? (13) Ya mogu (<i>I can</i>) + infinitive? (4) Mozhno li ya (<i>May I</i>) + 1st person singular Future verb form? (1) Mogu li ya (<i>Can I</i>) + infinitive? (1) Imperative. (1)	Mozhno, pozhalujsta (<i>Can you, please</i>), + infinitive? (7) Razreshite (pozvol'te) (<i>Let me</i>) + infinitive. (4) Vy ne protiv, esli ya (<i>Would you mind if I</i>) + 1st person singular Future verb form. (4) Ya mogu (<i>Can I</i>) + infinitive? (3) Imperative + pozhalujsta (<i>please</i>). (2)
12. Your colleague opened a window that is right next to you. You are cold. Ask him/her to close the window.	Imperative + pozhalujsta (<i>please</i>). (9) Mozhesh' (<i>Can you</i>) + infinitive? (5) Mozhno (<i>Is it possible</i>) + infinitive? (5) Mozhno, pozhalujsta (<i>Can you, please</i>), + infinitive? (1)	Ne mogli by Vy (<i>Couldn't you</i>) + infinitive? (6) Nichego, esli ya (<i>Is it okay if I</i>) + 1st person singular Future verb form? (4) Imperative + pozhalujsta (<i>please</i>). (3) Vy ne protiv, esli ya (<i>Would you mind if I</i>) + 1st person singular Future verb form? (3) Ne mogli by Vy, pozhalujsta (<i>Couldn't you, please</i>), + infinitive? (2) Razreshite ya (<i>Let me</i>) + 1st person singular Future verb form. (1) Vy ne pozvolite (<i>Won't you let me</i>) + infinitive? (1)

The main ways of requesting used by the American students in every scenario were such constructions as *Mozhesh' (mozhete) (Can you) + infinitive? Mozhno (Can) + infinitive?*, and utterances with imperative verb forms (both with *pozhalujsta (please)* as a marker of politeness and without it). Frequent use of such constructions can be explained by several reasons. One of the possible reasons why the American students used *Mozhesh' (mozhete) + infinitive?* so often is that it correlates with the English construction *Can (Could) you + infinitive?*, which is a common form of requesting in the English language. It is possible that due to negative pragmatic transfer the students actively used this construction for requesting in every communicative situation. This confirms the original hypothesis of this research. However, constructions with questions were not the only means of requesting

commonly used by the American students. Imperative constructions were also rather frequent. In particular, most of the students used this construction type to formulate their requests in scenarios 7, 8, 9, 12. Thus, in these situations negative pragmatic transfer did not affect the choice of means used for requesting.

Another reason (which seems more plausible and significant) why the two construction types described above were so frequent might be the students' insufficient knowledge of inventory of both grammatical and lexical forms used for expressing different pragmatic meanings in Russian communication. Researchers note that a "strong correlation between the learners' grammatical competence and their use of pragmatically significant linguistic means" [5, p. 80]. However, although the students, who took part in this research, had a good command of the Russian

language at advanced level and had a study-abroad experience, the means of requesting that they used were fairly similar. For example, some students (5 people) in each of the 12 situations used the construction *imperative + pozhalujsta (please) or Mozhesh' (Can you) + infinitive? Mozhno (Can) + infinitive?* and nothing else. This means that sociolinguistic variables of the communicative situations were not taken into account, and the students virtually failed to use linguistic means aimed at increasing or decreasing the politeness level of requests depending on the situation of communication.

The Russian students' answers were more varied and indicated a strong correlation between the usage of specific linguistic means and a certain communicative context; their requests were either marked or unmarked in terms of difficulty or the hearer's indisposition to fulfill the request. In particular, in the case of unmarked requests in every communicative context, apart from CC 1 (communication between the student and the teacher), most students used constructions with imperative verb forms (scenario 1 (CC 4) – 40%, scenario 7 (CC 2) – 100%, scenario 10 (CC 3) – 45%). At the same time, such constructions as *Mozhesh' (mozhet) (Can you) + infinitive? Mozhno (Can) + infinitive?* were less frequent: scenario 1 – 10%, scenario 7 – 0%, scenario 10 – 30%. Thus, the Russian students preferred the imperative constructions for neutral requests in every communicative context except CC 1.

In CC 1, in the case of both marked and unmarked requests, the students used rather similar constructions. Most requests in this context were formulated with the help of questions and the negative particle *ne (not): Ne mogli by Vy, pozhalujsta (Couldn't you, please), + infinitive? Ne mogli by Vy (Couldn't you) + infinitive? Vy ne (Won't you) + infinitive?* (scenario 4 – 75%, scenario 5 – 55%, scenario 6 – 55%). We think that using the particle *ne* and a conditional verb form in such constructions can indicate the speaker's attempt to minimize the pressure on the hearer in a communicative situation when the speaker's social status is lower than that of the hearer. Thus, a higher politeness level of such constructions can be connected with implementing distancing strategies, identified by Brown and Levinson, that are common in the English-language communication ("be pessimistic," "doubt the hearer's capability and willingness to do the action", etc.) [1, p.129-208]. However, despite the correlation, such constructions were very few in the answers suggested by the American students, i.e. there was no pragmatic transfer in this case.

The Russian students, in situations related to CC 1, did not use such pattern as *Mozhete (Can you) + infinitive?* and only 10% of requests were formulated with the pattern *Mozhno (Can) + infinitive?* Meanwhile, such constructions were the most frequent answers suggested by the American students. In particular, 11 of the 20 students (55%) used the constructions *Mozhno (Can) + infinitive? (S)mozhete (Can you do something for me) + infinitive?* in scenario 4 (when asking to borrow a book from the teacher), in which such factors as formality of communication, social distance between the student and the teacher and the fact that the

request was marked in terms of efforts required on the part of the hearer called for a higher level of politeness. Conditional mood and/or the negative particle were used in two answers given by the American students. Thus, strikingly, the American students virtually did not use negative politeness strategies for the requests in this CC. This can be explained by their insufficient knowledge of the Russian language linguistic means suitable for implementing these strategies.

In general, we can talk about a low frequency of negative verb forms or conditional mood used in the answers. In particular, of the 240 utterances collected in the experiment, only 14 requests (5.8%) were formulated with the help of such constructions. Of them, only 5 (2%) were used in the situation of formal communication with a different social status of the participants (student-teacher), in which such constructions were most often used by the Russian students.

Analyzing the Russian students' answers proposed for requesting in CC 1, we should mention a rather high frequency of performative constructions, with the pattern *Proshu Vas (I ask you), + imperative* (scenario 4 – 15%, scenario 5 – 15%, scenario 6 – 20%). Using such constructions for higher politeness level requests in this context allows us to say that asymmetric communication situation (student-teacher) in Russian communication does not rule out direct requesting. Intensifying requests with performative constructions does not result in a lower politeness level, which can be proved by the fact that such constructions are used for requests marked in terms of efforts on the part of the hearer, when the speaker has to be especially polite (scenario 4). However, imperative constructions were used only in scenario 6 (asking the teacher to explain the bad mark for the test). It is possible that in this situation they were used for lower politeness level requesting, since there were no imperative constructions in scenario 4 and scenario 5.

The American students did not use performative constructions at all. This can be explained by the fact that performative constructions are not normally used in English for requesting (more on this in [18]). Thus, the students were not familiar with this pragmatic function of performative constructions in Russian communication.

The American students used imperative constructions in scenario 6, which allowed the speaker to make less polite requests, and in scenario 5 as well, which was characterized by neutral requesting in CC 1 (15%). Thus, imperative constructions were used by the American students in a greater number of cases.

In situations of higher politeness level requesting in other CCs, the Russian students used various constructions. In particular, in CC 4 scenario 2 (asking a friend to take back the book to the library) the most frequent construction was *Imperative + pozhalujsta (please)* (45%). Thus, almost half of the students decided not to increase the level of politeness despite the fact that the request was marked in terms of efforts on the part of the hearer. This can be explained by low social distance between the participants

of communication, when the speaker does not need to employ extra means to explicate the category of politeness. At the same time, in scenario 3 (asking a friend to keep quiet in the library) most students used constructions with questions and the pattern *Mozhesh' (pozhalujsta)? (Can you (please)?+ infinitive? Ty ne mog by (pozhalujsta) (Couldn't you, please) + infinitive? Ty ne mozhesh' (pozhalujsta) (Can't you, please) + infinitive?* (95%). Thus, in situations when the hearer may not be willing to fulfill the request that infringes on their interests, most students used different ways to minimize the pressure on the hearer. Most of the American students, in both scenarios of marked requests in CC 4, used the same construction: *Ty mozhesh' (Can you) + infinitive?* (scenario 2 – 65%, scenario 3 – 55%).

Another important difference in the American and Russian students' answers was use of constructions for requesting in situations characterized by conflicting interests of the speaker and the hearer in CC 2 (interaction of colleagues at work) and CC 3 (interaction of strangers on the street). Most Russian students employed the strategy to minimize the pressure on the hearer and used the same type of constructions as in CC 1: questions with the negative particle *ne (not)* and conditional mood *Ne mogli by Vy, pozhalujsta (Couldn't you, please) + infinitive? Vy ne pozvolite (Won't you allow me) + infinitive? Ne sdelajte (Won't you do something)?* (scenario 12 – 45%, scenario 8 – 45%). Most American students in both situations used constructions that the Russian students used in situations of neutral requesting, in particular, *Imperative + pozhalujsta (please)* (scenario 12 – 45%, scenario 8 – 40%) и *Mozhesh' (Can you)+ infinitive?* (scenario 12 – 35%, scenario 8 – 30%).

Thus, the American students in various communicative contexts did not take into consideration sociolinguistic variables and produced rather similar utterances. Some ways of requesting (for example, construction *Mozhesh' (Can you) + infinitive?*) were used by the American students in the CCs, in which they were not used by the Russian students and in which they were not appropriate. Despite the fact that negative politeness strategies are common in American communication, the American students virtually did not employ them in the Russian-language communication; in the majority of cases, for higher politeness level requests they used almost the same constructions as for neutral requesting.

The data obtained in the experiment allow us to make a conclusion that negative pragmatic transfer is only one of the factors jeopardizing productions of requests by English-speaking L2 learners of the Russian language. The main constructions for requesting in Russian were questions with the patterns *Mozhesh' (mozhet) (Can you) + infinitive? Mozhno (Can) + infinitive?*, which were used almost in every CC. However, a more important factor that negatively affected production of requests by the English-speaking L2 learners of Russian was that, in their active vocabulary, they had a limited range of linguistic means pragmatically important for expressing requests in Russian communication. The students actively used imperative

constructions where they were not used by the Russian students (for example, in the case of a higher politeness level request from the student to the teacher). At the same time, the constructions used by the Russian students to increase the politeness level (questions with the negative particle *ne (not)*, conditional mood, performative constructions) were not used by the American students despite the correspondence between strategies to increase politeness in English and Russian in this case. This problem can be solved by specifically teaching L2 learners the range of linguistic means of requesting in Russian communication. To this end, a classification of constructions for requesting in Russian can be made, with specification of communicative contexts and politeness levels of different constructions in each communicative context. In our opinion, such classification would facilitate L2 learners' pragmatic competence development and, therefore, facilitate formation of multicultural personality in RFL classroom.

We should mention that this research has its limitations. In the experiment, only production of requests by English-speaking L2 learners of Russian was tested. It is possible that negative pragmatic transfer plays a more important role in perception of requests in Russian since, in that case, learners do not require an extensive range of constructions for requesting in their active vocabulary. However, more work needs to be done to prove that.

V. CONCLUSIONS

Research shows that although negative pragmatic transfer affects production of Russian requests by English-speaking L2 learners of the Russian language in a certain way, it is not the sole negative factor hindering this process. The key factor that may jeopardize the formation of multicultural personality through language learning could be a lack of L2 learners' knowledge of pragmatically significant language means in the Russian language. This results in constant use of similar constructions by L2 learners in their speech to express a certain pragmatic meaning (for example, request). They start using one and the same construction in every communicative context and do not take into consideration important elements of the communicative situation such as sociolinguistic variables of interaction, politeness level and the speaker's communicative expectations. This may result in a communicative failure and may become the breeding ground for different ethnic conflicts. Thus, teachers of Russian as a foreign language should focus on teaching learners a range of linguistic means used for different speech acts in Russian depending on communicative situation conditions. It is this way of teaching/learning that may facilitate formation on multicultural personality in the RFL classroom.

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