

Title: The role of gender in pragmatic listening  
Author: Lisa DeWaard Dykstra, Clemson University

Dykstra (2006) investigated learners' performance in the area of pragmatic listening to determine whether they perceived the subtle nuances inherent in the usage of the address pronouns *ty* and *Vy* when listening to conversations between Russian native speakers. Learners at two institutions (a summer intensive immersion program and a traditional university program) participated in a listening task which incorporated video clips from well known Russian and Soviet films in which the use of one pronoun or the other pointed significantly to a change in the relational dynamic between the characters. Learners were asked to identify specific words or language devices that they perceived as accompanying the change. Questions were asked in English to ensure that beginning learners as well as advanced learners could be tested with the same instrument. Results indicated that there was a statistically significant difference in performance between institutions; therefore, further analysis was performed within institution. Unexpectedly, the proficiency level of students within institution did not have a significant effect on their score. Also surprising was the finding that bilinguals displayed no significant advantage over monolinguals (bilinguals defined as those having advanced proficiency prior to their learning of Russian in two or more languages, not including Russian). In fact, the only factor that had a significant impact on learner score was gender, with female students outperforming male students to a statistically significant degree within each institution.

This paper explores the potential reasons for the role of gender as a motivating factor in pragmatic listening comprehension. Issues such as the use of metacognitive strategies, preferences for global vs. detail-oriented listening, as well as the context of the speech sample being analyzed are discussed.

Dykstra, Lisa. (2006). *On pragmatic perception: Do learners of Russian perceive the sociocultural weight of the address pronouns?* Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Iowa.