

Title: Requests in Heritage Russian: A Case Study
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The field of Russian as heritage language (HL) so far has focused on describing grammatical competency of heritage speakers (HS), and the methodology for proficiency testing, placement and teaching Russian as a HL. However, grammatical competency is only one component of HSs language abilities. Study of pragmatic competence is vital to our understanding of the full complex linguistic competency of HSs. Present study attempts to close the gap in HL research by investigating comprehension and production of requests Russian heritage speakers.

The presentation will discuss the results of a case study which involved 48 HSs and 33 native speaker (NS) of Russian. The comprehension data come from a written questionnaire which solicited HS and NS opinions about the degrees of directness and politeness of 15 requests. The performance data consist of HS performances in open-ended role-play situations, analyzed with the help of a modified version of the Cross-Cultural Speech Act Realization Project taxonomy (Blum-Kulka et al., 1989).

The analysis found no significant between-group differences in requestive move type (conventional indirectness is preferred over direct requests by both groups). However, large differences were found in the use of morpho-syntactic and lexical politeness and request markers, specifically the use of grammatical modality and the mitigating negative particle *ne*. The analysis suggests that HSs compensate for the lack of grammatical options for mitigating their requests by over-relying on lexical politeness markers, such as *pozhalujsta* (“please”). Additionally, NSs tend to use hearer-oriented strategies while HS prefer speaker-oriented strategies, perhaps as the result of transfer from English.

In comprehension, the two groups are much more similar to each other. However, even in understanding of requests, HSs show lack of familiarity with some politeness conventions routinely used by NSs. This research suggests important implications for classroom pedagogy: HS need explicit instruction even in conventional pragmatic norms of Russian.

Blum-Kulka, S., House, J., & Kasper, G. (Eds.). (1989). *Cross-cultural pragmatics: Requests and apologies*. New Jersey: Ablex.