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Title: PEDAGOGICAL IMPLICATIONS OF MISMATCHES BETWEEN MONOLINGUAL AND LEARNER PRAGMATIC CHOICES IN DIRECT RUSSIAN IMPERATIVES

Abstract:

Foreign and heritage language learners are known to have challenges with Russian verbal aspect (Slabakova, 2005; Nossalik, 2009; Laleko, 2010; Mikhaylova, 2012) and with using pragmatically appropriate language (Dubinina 2013). In an earlier study, we asked advanced foreign and heritage learners of Russian and Russian monolinguals to rate on the scale from 1 (absolutely inappropriate) to 6 (absolutely appropriate) the appropriateness of pairs of imperative sentences differing in the aspectual form of the verb against the suggested discourse context. We found that the learners did not converge with the monolinguals in their judgments of pragmatically appropriate aspectual forms in direct Russian imperatives.

This follow up study examined to what degree monolingual Russian teachers (n=14) and non-teachers (n=22) found pragmalinguistic choices of the learners from the earlier study unacceptable and how they explained their rating. We asked a new subset of Russian monolingual speakers to rate and comment on those utterances from the original study (n=14 + 18 distractors) in which the learners' judgments diverged from that of monolinguals. A comparative analysis revealed that both teachers and non-teachers were equally concerned with the wrong aspectual usage in the imperative utterances: 95% of teachers' and 90% of non-teachers' comments were about the change of the aspectual form. Only 5% of teachers' and 10% of non-teachers' comments were about other issues not related to aspect, such as choice of verbal lexeme or absence of politeness markers 'pozhalujsta' for the utterance to sound more appropriate.

In the second part of the paper we discuss the implications of these findings and feedback from students learning the use of aspect in imperatives at an advanced level. We offer a set of pragmalinguistic activities that can help guide students towards contextually appropriate aspectual choices.