

2010

# Appropriateness in requests: perspectives of Russian EFL learners

Ekaterina Victorovna Shcherbakova  
*Iowa State University*

Follow this and additional works at: <https://lib.dr.iastate.edu/etd>



Part of the [English Language and Literature Commons](#), and the [Rhetoric and Composition Commons](#)

---

## Recommended Citation

Shcherbakova, Ekaterina Victorovna, "Appropriateness in requests: perspectives of Russian EFL learners" (2010). *Graduate Theses and Dissertations*. 11469.

<https://lib.dr.iastate.edu/etd/11469>

This Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by the Iowa State University Capstones, Theses and Dissertations at Iowa State University Digital Repository. It has been accepted for inclusion in Graduate Theses and Dissertations by an authorized administrator of Iowa State University Digital Repository. For more information, please contact [digirep@iastate.edu](mailto:digirep@iastate.edu).

Appropriateness in requests: perspectives of Russian EFL learners

by

Ekaterina Victorovna Shcherbakova

A thesis submitted to the graduate faculty  
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of  
MASTER OF ARTS

Major: Teaching English as a Second Language/ Applied Linguistics (English for Specific  
Purposes)

Program of Study Committee:  
Barbara Schwarte, Major Professor  
Carol A. Chapelle  
Dawn Bratsch-Prince

Iowa State University  
Ames, Iowa  
2010

Copyright © Ekaterina Victorovna Shcherbakova, 2010. All rights reserved.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES .....	v
LIST OF TABLES .....	vii
ABSTRACT .....	viii
CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION .....	1
1.1 Purpose of the Study .....	2
1.2 Research Questions .....	4
1.3 Organization of the Study .....	5
CHAPTER 2. LITERATURE REVIEW .....	6
2.1 Politeness, Indirectness and Appropriateness in Requests.....	6
2.2 English Requests and English Learners .....	10
2.3 Approaches to Pragmatic Data Collection .....	17
CHAPTER 3. METHODOLOGY .....	22
3.1 Participants .....	23
3.1.1 Expert Analysis Group .....	23
3.1.2 Request Production Group .....	23
3.1.3 Perception Group.....	24
3.1.4 EFL Instructors of Perception Group .....	27
3.2 Materials.....	27
3.2.1 Contextual Situations.....	27
3.2.2 Expert Analysis Survey .....	30
3.2.3 Demographic Questionnaire for Request Production Group.....	31
3.2.4 Elaborated Semi-oral DCT .....	31
3.2.5 Demographic Questionnaire for Perception Group.....	31
3.2.6 Acceptability Questionnaire .....	31

3.2.7 EFL Instructors' Interview .....	33
3.3 Procedures .....	34
3.3.1 Data Collection from Expert Analysis Group .....	34
3.3.2 Data Collection from Request Production Group .....	41
3.3.3 Data Collection from Perception Group .....	46
3.3.4 Data Collection from EFL Instructors of Perception Group .....	47
3.4 Analysis .....	47
3.4.1 Research Question One .....	47
3.4.2 Research Question Two.....	48
3.4.3 Research Question Three.....	48
3.4.4 Comparability of Request Objects.....	48
CHAPTER 4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION.....	52
4.1 Research Question One .....	52
4.2 Research Question Two .....	55
4.3 Research Question Three .....	61
CHAPTER 5. CONCLUSION.....	72
5.1 Implications.....	75
5.2 Limitations .....	76
5.3 Suggestions for Further Research .....	78
APPENDIX A. EXPERT ANALYSIS SURVEY .....	81
APPENDIX B. DEMOGRAPHIC QUESTIONNAIRE FOR REQUEST PRODUCTION GROUP.....	83
APPENDIX C. ELABORATED SEMI-ORAL DCT.....	84
APPENDIX D. DEMOGRAPHIC QUESTIONNAIRE FOR PERCEPTION GROUP.....	86
APPENDIX E. ACCEPTABILITY QUESTIONNAIRE.....	87
APPENDIX F. INFORMED CONSENT FORMS.....	90

APPENDIX G. RESULTS OF EXPERT ANALYSIS SURVEY .....	98
APPENDIX H. ELABORATED SEMI-ORAL DCT TRANSCRIPT .....	99
APPENDIX I. TRANSCRIPT OF HEAD SPEECH ACTS OF REQUESTS .....	101
APPENDIX J. PRAGMALINGUISTIC REQUEST PATTERNS ACROSS FOUR SITUATIONS .....	103
APPENDIX K. LETTER WITH INSTRUCTIONS TO DATA COLLECTOR IN RUSSIA .....	105
APPENDIX L. SUMMARY OF COMMENTS FROM WRITTEN PROTOCOL .....	107
APPENDIX M. TRANSCRIPT OF INTERVIEW WITH EFL INSTRUCTORS .....	129
APPENDIX N. COMPARABILITY OF REQUEST OBJECTS .....	135
REFERENCES .....	137
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS .....	143

## LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1: Summary of participants and data collection tools implemented in research .....	22
Figure 2: Speech acts native English speaking experts (n=19) considered producing as utterances for situations a-d in expert analysis survey.....	36
Figure 3: Value of social distance between interlocutors in four contextual situations as perceived by experts (n=19) in expert analysis survey .....	37
Figure 4: Value of level of familiarity between interlocutors in four contextual situations as perceived by experts (n=19) in expert analysis survey.....	38
Figure 5: Impositions of requests upon addressees in four contextual situations as perceived by experts (n=19) in expert analysis survey .....	39
Figure 6: Scenarios of data collection from participants of request production group.....	42
Figure 7: Russian EFL learners' (n=39) perceptions of appropriateness of five request categories for book and questionnaire scenarios within student and professor-related situations .....	50
Figure 8: Mean appropriateness ratings for five request categories as perceived by Russian EFL learners (n=39) in acceptability questionnaire.....	53

## LIST OF TABLES

Table 1: Demographic data of request production group .....	24
Table 2: Demographic data of perception group .....	26
Table 3: Contextual situations developed for research .....	29
Table 4: Design of sociopragmatic factors employed in four contextual situations.....	29
Table 5: Linguistic forms found in five request categories .....	32
Table 6: Patterns for randomizing request categories in acceptability questionnaire.....	33
Table 7: Mean scores for social distance between interlocutors in four contextual situations as estimated by experts (n=19) in expert analysis survey.....	37
Table 8: Mean scores for impositions of requests made to addressees in four contextual situations as perceived by experts (n=19) in expert analysis survey .....	40
Table 9: Five pragmatlinguistic request categories discovered in utterances produced by request production group and adapted for acceptability questionnaire .....	45
Table 10: Mean appropriateness ratings for five request categories as perceived by Russian EFL learners (n=39) in acceptability questionnaire.....	53
Table 11: Paired-samples t-test results for variable of interlocutors' social standings for request category 'can you lend/fill out' .....	56
Table 12: Paired-samples t-test results for variable of interlocutors' social standings for request category 'would you lend/fill out' .....	57
Table 13: Paired-samples t-test results for variable of interlocutors' social standings for request category 'would you mind lending/filling out'.....	58
Table 14: Paired-samples t-test results for variable of interlocutors' social standings for request category 'I was wondering if you could lend/fill out' .....	59
Table 15: Paired-samples t-test results for variable of interlocutors' social standings for request category 'I was wondering if you would lend/fill out' .....	60
Table 16: Linguistic forms embedded into request categories and analyzed in Research Question Three.....	61
Table 17: Paired-samples t-test results for linguistic forms 'can+Infinitive' and 'would+Infinitive' in 'can you lend/fill out' and 'would you lend/fill out' request categories .	62

Table 18: Paired-samples t-test results for linguistic forms 'if you could' and 'if you would' in 'I was wondering if you could lend/fill out' and 'I was wondering if you would lend/fill out' request categories.....	64
Table 19: Paired-samples t-test results for linguistic forms 'would+Infinitive' and 'would you mind+Gerund' in 'would you lend/fill out' and 'would you mind lending/filling out' request categories .....	66
Table 20: Paired-samples t-test results for linguistic forms 'would+Infinitive' and 'if you would' in 'would you lend/fill out' and 'I was wondering if you would lend/fill out' request categories .....	68
Table 21: Paired-samples t-test results for linguistic forms 'would you mind+Gerund' and 'if you would' in 'would you mind lending/filling out' and 'I was wondering if you would lend/fill out' request categories .....	69



**ABSTRACT**

This study analyses whether two types of variables (i.e., social standings of interlocutors (a student and a professor) and linguistic forms embedded into head speech acts of requests) affect the perceptions of Russian learners of English as a foreign language (EFL) about the appropriateness/politeness of requests. By completing an elaborated semi-oral Discourse Completion Task (DCT), twenty American undergraduate students produced eighty request utterances. The most frequent and consistent request patterns were then used to form five different types of head speech acts. These five head speech act forms were then evaluated by thirty-nine Russian EFL learners. To do the evaluation, Russian subjects completed an acceptability questionnaire that involved a ten-point Likert-type evaluation scale and a written protocol. The findings of the study partially support the hypothesis that Russian EFL learners evaluate more conventionally indirect request patterns as more appropriate/polite when they are aimed at the professor and as less appropriate/polite when they are aimed at the student. Comparison of the social standings of the addressees used in the contextual situations and the linguistic forms embedded into the head speech acts of requests revealed that not all of them influenced the perceptions of Russian EFL learners about the appropriateness/politeness of requests. The findings from the EFL instructors' interviews also suggest that when evaluating appropriateness/politeness of requests, Russian EFL learners demonstrated negative pragmatic transfer from Russian and were influenced by classroom effect.

## CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

Awareness of pragmatically-appropriate language use is an indispensable part of successful language learning. In fact, pragmatic knowledge has been recognized as one of the essential components of language ability (Bachman and Palmer, 1996). For foreign English language learners (EFL), conscious pragmatic awareness is a special issue because pedagogical materials and classroom environment are often their only sources of pragmatically appropriate input (Bardovi-Harlig, 1996). Moreover, the limited input to pragmatic knowledge is aggravated by the fact that communicative aspects of English, including language pragmatics, are commonly introduced to EFL learners using a rather conventional approach (Crandall and Basturkmen, 2004). Literature has criticized English conversation textbooks for their lack of pragmatically accurate models for learners (Bardovi-Harlig, 1996; Crandall and Basturkmen, 2004) and for lack of professional training on pragmatic issues in L2 for ESL instructors (Elzami-Rosekh, 2005). To further complicate this situation, some existing studies indicate that thorough development of sociopragmatic and pragmalinguistic awareness is rarely a focus of EFL/ESL courses (Clennell, 1999). In other words, EFL learners are often exposed to very superficial ideas about pragmalinguistic patterns in L2 communication and their appropriate usage in everyday, professional or academic settings (Clennell, 1999). In this context, the pragmatics-related challenges of Russian EFL learners are not an exception.

A number of contemporary conversational English textbooks for EFL learners with Russian as their mother tongue (Golitsinski, 1998; Dudorova, 2005; Drozdova, 2007) present explicit linguistic formulas for a set of main speech acts, followed by several dialogues that do not provide students with many opportunities to estimate what linguistic and non-linguistic factors may shape real social practices in the target language. Drawing on my personal English learning experience, I would definitely support the statement of Crandall and Basturkmen (2004) about the conventional approach to teaching pragmatics in EFL classrooms. When an English major in a respectable TEFL program at a Russian university, I was required to memorize a list of linguistic formulas for main speech acts from a manual for use with my classmates or instructor in a classroom context. Our classroom activities

rarely expanded beyond doing exercises from English textbooks and manuals (Arakin, 2005) or reading and translating passages from classic British and American literature.

As with EFL learners of other L1s and cultural backgrounds (Bardovi-Harlig and Dornyei, 1998; Elsami-Rasekh, 2005), it is possible to hypothesize that the essential pragmatic aspects of English often remain undiscovered for Russian EFL learners even when they engage in real and meaningful interactions with native speakers. In fact, it would not be surprising if they ran into a difficulty trying to find an appropriate way to address a person with a request in English outside of the classroom settings. Research has indicated that the absence or insufficient L2 sociopragmatic and pragmalinguistic awareness training that Russian and other EFL learners receive commonly leads to miscommunications with native speakers (Clennell, 1999), or causes noticeable errors of appropriacy, which subsequently may lead to erroneous judgments of English native speakers about rudeness or awkwardness of non-native English speakers (Crandall and Basturkmen, 2004; Bown and Hassell, n.d.; Ogiermann, 2009). According to Kasper and Blum-Kulka (1993, p.7), “restricted L2 knowledge impedes learners’ comprehension and production of appropriate pragmatic meaning, with politeness and indirectness being central features of such appropriate comprehension and communication.” Situations involving requests are common cases where difficulties of pragmalinguistic appropriacy arise.

### **1.1 Purpose of the Study**

The perception and production of requests by non-native English speakers is a fairly defined research area in cross-cultural and interlanguage pragmatics. There are, of course, many investigations in this field, and the subjects engaged in the existing research represent a wide array of L1 and cultural backgrounds (Carrell and Konneker, 1981; Kitao, 1987; Cohen and Olshtain, 1993; Bardovi-Harlig and Dornyei, 1998; Takahashi, 1996; Chen, 2001; Lin, 2009, etc.). This study presents an overview of some of this research (Literature Review). Although the literature provides numerous studies on production and perception of requests by non-native speakers of English, not much has been done with Russian EFL learners in mind.

The following statistics shows why it is relevant to engage Russian EFL learners into an empirical study on perception of requests. According to the *Open Doors* report on International Education Exchange, published annually by the Institute of International Education with support from the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (2008), the number of Russian students enrolled in U.S. universities in the 2007-2008 academic years equaled 4,906 persons. This represents a 3.3% growth from the previous academic year. This number places Russia in 26<sup>th</sup> place among the countries of citizenship of international students enrolled in U.S. universities.

Moreover, Russian statistics provide incentive to believe there is a potential for future influx of international students from Russia into U.S. universities. According to current educational statistics, English is the most popular foreign language studied in Russia at the tertiary and university levels. The Official Information Portal for Unified National Examination reports about 78,000 persons to have taken English as an elective exam to enter Russian higher educational establishments in 2009. That is almost 17 times more than the number of applicants who tested their knowledge of German, 38 times more than the number of applicants who took their examinations in French, and 500 times more than the number of Spanish learners. According to the BBC online information service, the number of Russian students who display interest in pursuing academic and research experience in the U.S. has been steadily growing in the last four years (Tuzovskaya, 2007). At the same time, Tuzovskaya notices that due to the insufficient English language training of many Russian applicants, only three persons on average are able to compete for a U.S. government scholarship. Therefore, the information mentioned above signals a large demand for learning English in Russia. At the same time, there is an urgent need to pay more attention to the L2 communicative and particularly pragmatic capacity of Russian EFL learners.

The purpose of this study is to examine how Russian EFL learners perceive pragmalinguistic appropriateness/politeness of requests in situations where the social standings of interlocutors vary. In particular, the study investigates the effect of addressees' social standings (peer-student interlocutor vs. professor interlocutor) on the appropriateness/politeness perceptions of Russian EFL learners. Moreover, the study seeks to determine whether or not linguistic forms embedded into head speech acts of requests

(such as modal verbs and grammar constructions) affect the perceptions of Russian EFL learners on request appropriateness/politeness.

## 1.2 Research Questions

The main objective of this study is to examine how a sample of Russian intermediate EFL learners from Ivanovo State Power Engineering University in Russia evaluates the appropriateness/politeness of requests produced by undergraduate native speakers of English from Iowa State University in contextual situations where the social standings of addressees differ. A group of 39 Russian participants involved in the study were offered two contextual situations with two types of addressees in each context (i.e., a student and a professor accordingly). In the first contextual setting, an undergraduate student requested an addressee to lend him/her a book. In the second setting, an undergraduate student requested an addressee to complete a questionnaire. These two contextual situations (i.e., with the book and the questionnaire) were chosen for the study instead of one because, supposedly, they provided a wider scope of request introspections from the native speakers rather than it would be possible with only one scenario. The objects of requests in the contextual situations (i.e., a book and a questionnaire) are viewed in the study as equivalents. Each of the four situations was supplied with five types of requests identical across the situations. The Russian EFL learners were asked to evaluate the appropriateness/politeness of each type of request on a ten-point scale and accompany their evaluations with written protocol. The linguistic forms examined in the study were: modal verbs (1) ‘*can*’ and 2) ‘*would*,’) and grammar structures (3) ‘*would you + infinitive*, 4) ‘*would you mind + gerund*,’ 5) ‘*I was wondering if you could*,’ 6) ‘*I was wondering if you would*’). Although each of the request types produced by native English speakers in the given situations was considered to be pragmatically appropriate, Russian participants were not informed about this. The research questions for the study are the following:

1. How appropriate/polite do Russian EFL learners evaluate the requests produced by native speakers of English from the U.S.?

2. How do the social standings of interlocutors influence the perceptions of Russian EFL learners upon appropriateness/politeness of requests?
3. What linguistic forms affect Russian EFL learners' perceptions of appropriateness/politeness of requests in situations where the social standings of interlocutors vary?

### **1.3 Organization of the Study**

The next chapter, Chapter Two, presents a literature review of the theoretical and empirical foundations for the study. Chapter Three provides a thorough description of methods and materials applied in the study, including the participants, data collection instruments, procedures, and methods for data analysis. Chapter Four contains a detailed discussion of the results obtained in the study for each research question. The final chapter, Chapter Five, summarizes the key findings of the study, addresses its implications, limitations, and suggests ideas for further research. Fourteen appendices contain copies of data collection materials, transcriptions and tables of data elicited from different groups of subjects. Finally, the list of references and acknowledgements complete the write-up of this study.

## **CHAPTER 2. LITERATURE REVIEW**

Chapter Two establishes a theoretical foundation for this study. It presents the research that has focused on theoretical and empirical explorations in the fields of cross-cultural and interlanguage pragmatics. The first part of the chapter unravels the views on linguistic politeness, indirectness and appropriateness that are practiced in the field. The second unit of the chapter looks at directions taken in the research on the perception and production of requests by English learners. Finally, the third section of Chapter Two focuses on approaches to speech act data collection, and requests in particular.

### **2.1 Politeness, Indirectness and Appropriateness in Requests**

It is common practice among language learners to carry out a small inner ‘cost-benefit analysis’ (LoCastro, 2003) before addressing someone with a request. This procedure often becomes necessary for non-native speakers of English as an effort to avoid numerous pitfalls that requests can cause during communication in L2. If a request is not realized correctly in a local culture, modes of its performance may carry heavy social implication (Ervin-Tripp, 1976), because, as Weizman (1989, p. 93) justly explains it, “the speaker may fail to achieve not only the desired requestive end but also the interpersonal end.” Therefore, much attention has been paid to requests in the literature on interlanguage and cross-cultural pragmatics (Blum-Kulka and House, 1989; House, 1989; Huang, 1996; Bown and Hassell, n.d.; Ogiermann, 2009; Lin, 2009). Past research made considerable effort to describe and analyze requests, social factors that can affect interpretation of this speech act in various situations, the circumstances in which requests are appropriate, the effect of various socio-cultural background factors on the perception and production of requests, and commonalities across languages and cultures in their vision of contextually appropriate requests. However, little research has addressed perceptions of appropriateness in requests as viewed by EFL learners in the context of various social standings of interlocutors (Chen, 2001; Kitao et al., 1987). This study will attempt to help fill in this gap.

Prior to reviewing existing empirical studies on requests in cross-cultural and interlanguage pragmatics, it is essential to outline how key concepts of the field such as *politeness*, *indirectness* and *appropriateness* are rendered, and explain what terminology is adopted in this research. The concepts of politeness, appropriateness and indirectness are closely linked to each other, but they are by no means synonymous. Discussions of linguistic politeness engage the notion of ‘face’ which, according to Leech (2005) and Paltridge (2006) originates from Goffman’s (1967) work on face and from the English ‘folk’ notion of face. However, studies on pragmalinguistics and politeness traditionally adopt the framework on face and politeness developed by Brown and Levinson (1987) as their reference point (Kitao et al., 1987; Chen, 2001; Leech, 2005; Bousfield, 2008). According to this theory, every person has a public image or a face with negative and positive face wants. One face want is a desire to be unimpeded; the other is to be recognized and accepted by others.

Drawing on Brown and Levinson’s theory, Yule (1996) and LoCastro (2003) interpret linguistic politeness as means to show respect for the face wants and needs of their conversational partners. In compliance to negative and positive faces of their interlocutors, individuals may prefer to employ negative or positive politeness strategies in their speech, depending on the estimate of the threat to the addressee’s face. Because a request is a discourteous speech act (Kitao et al., 1987), speakers may exercise negative politeness in them to minimize the imposition on addressees. For example, they may employ apologies, regrets, compliments, request mitigators and softeners, hedges, downgraders, explanations of reasons for requests, and may implement indirectness in their speech.

The level of threat in a request can be calculated from a combination of contextual factors that usually influence the choice of linguistic strategies for production or perception of requests. Discussions of contextual factors that typically affect requests may slightly vary across studies, but overall they provide solid argumentations for analysis of this speech act. The foundations of contextual factor analysis with regards to speech act behavior adopt distance, power and imposition as three pillars for detection of face-threat that needs to be compensated for by appropriate linguistic strategies in request (House, 1989; LoCastro, 2003; Kitao et al., 1987; Chen, 2001). The framework by Brown and Fraser (1979) views the linguistic form of request in relation with context external and internal factors (cited from



Blum-Kulka and House, 1989, p. 130) with social distance, social power and participants' rights and obligations making up external factors, and type of requestive goal, degree of imposition and prerequisites needed for compliance making up internal factors.

The request coding schema developed within the Cross-Cultural Speech Act Realization Project (CCSARP), which examined cross-cultural variation in requests and apologies, suggests three main linguistic categories for requests production: direct, conventional indirect and non-conventional indirect (Blum-Kulka et al., 1989). The notion of indirectness comes in light of language strategies commonly employed by speakers during production of face-threatening speech acts (Searle, 1975; Blum-Kulka and House, 1989; Kitao et al., 1987; Chen, 2001). As Blum-Kulka (1989) advocates, indirectness may be represented in requests through conversation principles (Grice, 1975), pragmalinguistic conventions, and contextualized conventions. Describing pragmalinguistic universals of conventionality Lin (2009) singles out manifesting ability (*can/could*), willingness (*will/would*), permission (*may*), and presenting a guess (*I was wondering*). The past tense modals make the request in English sound more polite than present tense modals (Blum-Kulka and House, 1989; Lin, 2009). In this context, Brown and Levinson (1987) view negative politeness (i.e., avoidance-based strategies aiming not to impede or interfere with addressee's freedom of action (Chen, 2001, p. 3)) as closely related to indirectness. However, studies have shown that indirectness needs to be handled with great attention, since it does not only benefit the production of a polite speech act, but it may actually impede it.

A number of studies on requests (House, 1989; Lin, 2009; Bown and Hassell, n.d.) indicate that despite the differences in how contextual factors condition speech act realization, conventionally indirect requests remain the safest strategy in English for potentially face threatening situations. Non-conventional indirect requestive strategies (e.g., hints) were found to lack illocutionary transparency and led to a high chance of being denied by the addressees due to a considerable threat to their face (Weizman, 1989; Ogiermann, 2009). Weizman discovered that conventional indirectness (e.g., *can you/ would you* strategies) correlate with politeness, and nonconventional indirectness does not. House (1989), in her comparative study of politeness markers 'please' and 'bitte' in English and

German, also revealed interconnection between an increase of potential threat in a request and the likelihood of nondirect requestive strategies.

Cross-cultural and interlanguage pragmatics has advanced enormously (Wierzbicka, 2003, quoted from Leech, 2005, p. 3) hence Brown and Levinson's seminal work is not without constructive criticism. Meier (1997) notes two issues that are relevant to this study with regard to politeness in Brown and Levinson's theory. First, she points out that the factors that are introduced in the framework as defining politeness (i.e., nominalization, passivization, use of certain lexical items, deference and indirectness) may not have the same values or functional equivalents across languages. Meier's observation is supported by House (1989) on the request marker '*please*' in English and '*bitte*' in German and Mey (1993) on Japanese multi-purpose '*excuse me.*' Second, and the more serious issue, that Meier (1997) raises, concerns the universality of principles about the realization of indirect speech acts and the linear relationship between politeness and indirectness advocated by Brown and Levinson. Meier expresses the concern that directness and indirectness inherent to different languages and cultures to different extent may not be used to define more or less polite languages. Studies on the Spanish (Mir, 1993) and Chinese (Na, 2009) languages also challenge Brown and Levinson's interconnection of indirectness and politeness in languages.

Similarly, studies on Russian requests indicate that directness in Russian is realized to a larger extent than in English (Bown and Hassell, n.d.), and attempts to apply English schema for the production of indirect requests in colloquial Russian would prove ineffectual (Mills, 1992, p. 68). According to Mills, formulaic request strategies in Russian are derived from perspectives almost antithetical to English. Remarkably, Ogiermann (2009), in her recent comparative analysis of English, German, Polish, and Russian requests, did not confirm assertions made in previous studies, according to which imperatives are the most frequent Russian strategy for requests. The arguments presented above illustrate the 'chameleon-like' character of politeness in different cultures (Watts, 2003, quoted from Ogiermann, 2009, p. 189). Measurements of politeness in requests in one language are misleading if we are using the scales from another language and culture. These findings indicate the need for clear and unambiguous terminology when referring to the notion of politeness with regards to requests.

In order not to establish a linear relationship between the indirectness of speech act realization and politeness, the terms '*pragmatic appropriateness*' and '*contextually appropriate request*' are used in this study as equivalents to '*politeness*' and '*contextually polite request*' respectfully, as they are seen by speakers with different cultural norms (Meier, 1997; Mills, 1992, 2009; Ogiermann, 2009). This study adopts an interpretation of culture suggested by Foley (1997), who views it not as a set of fixed unchangeable values and a way of speaking but as 'embodied practices' that manifest themselves in everyday life and practices of individuals (quoted from Mills, 2009, p. 1056).

## **2.2 English Requests and English Learners**

A number of studies have tried to discover pressing issues that EFL learners experience with face-threatening speech acts, requests in particular, the reasons why such issues appear, and how they can be minimized (Cohen and Olshtain, 1993; Goldschmidt, 1996; Crandall and Basturkmen, 2004; Elsami-Rosekh, 2005; Lin 2009). This part of the chapter will outline the studies that address the perception and production of requests by non-native speakers of English, and examine the variables that attribute to the perceptions of language variations by L2 learners.

Lack of pragmatic awareness has been defined as one of the possible reasons why L2 learners experience difficulties with requests. To address this issue, Crandall and Basturkmen (2004) carried out research to determine if a non-native speakers' pragmatic awareness can be raised by studying of authentic requests produced by native-speakers to university staff. After explicit culture-comparative pragmatic training with participants of this study, they were able to point out the factors that affected politeness in requests, such as the size of the request and the relationship between the speakers. The findings of this study suggest that perceptions of EFL learners on the appropriateness/politeness in requests may depend on linguistic practices common in the native cultures and languages of the learners. In other words, language and culture-specific background of the speaker may be an important external factor. Thus, the study of Crandal and Basturkmen suggests that the relationship between the interlocutors in a requestive situation is a variable which requires special

attention on the part of EFL learners, since they may not sense what factors influence appropriateness in L2 (i.e., what might be appropriate for one group of interlocutors may not be appropriate for another).

The variable of social role has been previously applied in studies on language variation (Wolfson, 1986), and on the production of requests by EFL learners in particular (Cohen and Olshtain, 1993; Varghese and Billmyer, 1996). However, only a few studies have attempted to analyze the explicit role of an interlocutor's social standing in performance of requests and evaluation of contextual appropriateness of such requests (Kitao et al., 1987; Bouton, 1996; Huang, 1996; Goldshmidt, 1996).

In this study, the perceptions of Russian EFL learners about the appropriateness/politeness of requests will be examined as dependent upon two variables: 1) the social standings of interlocutors (i.e., a student and a professor in relation to each other) and 2) linguistic forms embedded into head speech acts of requests. Kitao et al. (1987) analyzed how Japanese EFL learners, Japanese students in the U.S. and American college students perceived sixty one requests in four different situations according to politeness and frequency of occurrence in natural situations. Similar to what is analyzed in this study, two out of four situations of Kitao et al. featured an academic environment with a student addressing a professor with requests to open a window and to speak louder during a lecture. The suggested requests were of interrogative, declarative and imperative forms, and varied in the use of verb forms, modal verbs, tenses, moods, and tags. The origin of sixty one requests employed in the study remains unclear. According to one of the eighteen hypotheses proposed in the study, Japanese learners of English would establish a linear relationship between the hearer's high power in relation to the speaker and the increasing level of politeness used in a request.

In order to find out the perceptions of the participants, Kitao et al. (1987) used a paper-based semantic differential questionnaire with three sections: politeness in requests, frequency of occurrence of requests, demographic information. The section for the evaluation of politeness in requests contained four contextual situations, with each of the situations followed by a list of requests along with ten-point evaluation scales.

Partially due to the large number of the original hypotheses, the findings of the study are quite complex. Surprisingly, the first hypothesis of Kitao et al. (i.e., the higher the hearer's power in relation to the speaker, the higher the level of politeness used in a request) was fully supported for the group of American college students, partially supported for the Japanese students studying in the U.S. and not supported for the Japanese EFL learners. The findings for the first situation (i.e., a student requests a professor to close the window) showed that despite the fact that the perceptions of all groups of subjects were generally similar in regards with the polite modals '*could you...*,' '*would you ...*,' '*will you ...*,' the Japanese EFL group rated '*can you ...*' fairly low. The preference for negatively worded requests (e.g., '*couldn't you ...*' ) became the general tendency for both Japanese groups of students for the first situation. Americans rated such requests as less polite ones. In the second situation (i.e., a student requests a professor to speak louder in class), the group of Japanese EFL learners rated requests with request softening device '*please*' less polite than Americans did. Japanese students in the U.S. perceived requests with '*would you*' as more polite than Japanese EFL learners and American groups. On the whole, Kitao et al. (1987) came to the conclusion that Japanese EFL learners perceived requests in the scenarios where a student asked a professor to close the window or to speak louder as being less polite than American students and Japanese ESL learners did.

A contrastive study by Huang (1996) on the production of requests by American native speakers and Chinese EFL learners revealed that the L1 cultural norms and the variable of social role in the situations preconditioned the Chinese preference towards more indirect linguistic strategies in requests than it did for Americans. Chinese EFL learners preferred more indirect request strategies.

Lin (2009) compared query preparatory modals (e.g. *can/could, will/would, may*) in conventionally indirect requests produced by native speakers of English, native speakers of Chinese and Chinese learners of English when asking professors for favors. A comprehensive analysis of the use of requestive modals, substrategies and pragmalinguistic expressions among the three groups of participants detected cross-linguistic and interlanguage patterns that are specific to every group. First of all, Lin discovered that the requestive modals that the three groups chose differed in their order. Native speakers of

English most frequently used the ability modal (*'can/could'*), then the willingness modal (*'will/would'*), and finally the permission modal (*'may'*). The order of preferences was reversed for Chinese native speakers. They used permission modal most frequently, followed by the ability and willingness modals. Chinese learners of English exhibited the same preferences regarding the three modal auxiliaries as their native English counterparts.

Lin's (2009) second, relevant findings indicate that English seems to have a wider range of indirect requests than Chinese does. For example, Lin (2009) comments on the absence of *'Would it be possible ...'* equivalent in Chinese and demonstrates that the percentage of *'can you ...'* request modals chosen by Chinese native speakers is higher than that of *'could you ...'* which was more common among Americans. It is interesting that certain types of query formula, for instance, *'do you think I (you) can (could) ...'*, *'Would you mind ...'* or *'I would appreciate it if ...'* which are request patterns for "high-status" situations in English, were used only by native English speakers but not by EFL learners or Chinese native speakers. Lin attributes the absence of the above mentioned request patterns in the data produced by Chinese EFL learners to the classroom effect. Lin's preliminary survey of English textbooks in Taiwan and follow-up interviews with several EFL participants showed that these linguistic forms had been rarely or never taught as request strategies.

When examining the cross-situational variations that occurred in the study, Lin notes that in the situations where native English speakers produced requests with the willingness modal (e.g., *'would you be interested ...'*, *'would you like to ...'*, *'would you be willing to ...'*), Chinese natives speakers did not reveal the same preference. However, a similar finding was found in the use of *'I was wondering ...'* The native English speakers used past tense with *'I was wondering if ...'*, whereas the Chinese EFL learners did not follow this convention, preferring either the present tense for the modal verb or infrequent adjectives in the embedded clause (e.g. *convenient* instead of *possible*). To avoid creating an uneasy situation with the requester, all native English speaking participants employed *'Would you like to ...?'* only in interpersonal situations (e.g. addressing a department or organization). The EFL learners were found to recede from the native pattern and stretched this request strategy to personal communication. Finally, Lin (2009) discovered that EFL learners

excessively used the ability modal verbs ‘*can/could*’ when requesting professors to participate in fundraising, and yet failed to resort to the past tense form of the verb (e.g. ‘*Can you donate ...*’). The native speakers, on the contrary, practiced ‘*can/could*’ request strategies less and preferred more indirect patterns (e.g. ‘*Could you please show your support ...*,’ ‘*Could you help us with ...*’).

The conclusions that follow from the study conducted by Lin (2009) are multi-fold. First, since Chinese EFL learners were able to make some similar choices with requestive modals as the native English speakers did, it is possible to assume that certain development of pragmatic awareness of L2 learners is attainable outside of authentic English speaking environment. Second, it would be a delusion to believe that pragmalinguistic request patterns are universal across languages and Chinese EFL learners are not influenced by their local language and cultural conceptions when they produce conventional indirect requests in English.

Discourse strategies in e-mail requests written to university professors were the focus of the study which employed Taiwanese ESL and American students. Chen (2001) examined what supportive moves the groups of participants used in their requests, how they sequenced them, and what textual features Taiwanese and American students employed in every type of supportive move. Among other findings, Chen discovers that Taiwanese and American students used opening and closing e-mail textual features (i.e., address terms, salutation, self-introduction, phatic communication, and closings), but that their distribution and function differed. The majority of Taiwanese students showed deference or negative politeness through formal address terms and salutations like ‘*Dear ...*’ whereas most of American students started their emails either with ‘*Hi*’ or with no salutation. International students underlined their non-native status in their self-introduction to increase the chance of having professor comply with their request. Depending on the social distance with professors, American students employed professors’ first or last names.

Looking at requests for an appointment, Chen discovered noticeable distinctions in the request structure of lack type of subject. Taiwanese students exhibited pragmatic transfer from their L1 by placing the actual request head acts at the end of their e-mails, and preceding it with a sequence of explanations as a way to show politeness. Compliments to

professors were included in the explanations. This phenomenon was rarely observed in pre-requestive moves of American students, who stated their requests immediately in the beginning of their emails and then provided reasons. The style of Americans' requests was of two kinds, either transactional and close to business letters, or more informal and conversational.

Finally, the study on e-mail requests produced by Taiwanese and American students reports that the linguistic realization of head speech acts varied not in their syntactic structures but in the usage of internal request modification features. In terms of the syntactic structures of requests, Chen (2001) states that both groups of participants mainly used query preparatory moves (e.g., '*Could you give me some suggestions about ...*,' '*Would it be possible for you to ...*'), indirect want statements (e.g., '*I would like to make an appointment with you*'), if-clauses (e.g., '*It would be helpful to me if you would ...*') or indirect questions (e.g., '*Could you give me some suggestions ...*,' '*When would it be convenient ...*'). As for the internal modification features of the requests, American students used them extensively to increase indirectness and thus mitigate the imposition on the professors. The internal features in requests comprised past-tense modal verbs ('*would*,' '*might*,' '*could*'), modal adverbs used as downgraders ('*possibly*,' '*perhaps*,' '*maybe*'), past progressive forms ('*I was wondering ...*,' '*I was hoping ...*'), lexical items showing deference ('*respectfully*'). Taiwanese speakers of English, on the contrary, produced few internal request modification features but more external ones (i.e., pre-request supportive moves). According to Chen, insufficient level of language proficiency, negative pragmatic transfer from the Chinese language, and the classroom effect precluded the ESL learners from applying internal modification features similar to those that were used in requestive acts by American students.

The studies discussed above show that the number of languages in the field of cross-cultural and interlanguage pragmatics is growing rapidly. Surprisingly, Russian EFL learners have been rarely involved in studies on speech acts. Of those studies that have done so, the focus has been either on the appropriateness of requests as perceived by learners of Russian as a foreign language (Bown and Hassell, n.d.) or a comparison of conventionalized indirect requests in colloquial Russian and in English (Mills, 1992). Ogiermann (2009) provides insights to the studies of requests in Russian written by Russian linguists and presents a



contrastive analysis of English, German, Polish and Russian requests. However, one study revealed that the participation of Russian subjects in studies on cross-cultural and interlanguage pragmatics may bring interesting results. For instance, Russian learners of Hebrew were found to produce apologies (i.e., to employ negative politeness strategies) more often than native speakers of Hebrew and native speakers of English (Olshtain, 1983). From the standpoint of interlanguage pragmatics, Takahashi (1996) explained this finding by negative transfer (i.e., erroneous influence of the learner's knowledge about the politeness value of linguistic form-function from the native language into the perception and production of a similar situation in the target language). Thus it can be inferred that negative transfer can hypothetically influence the speech act production of language learners in any target language and any communicative situation. Therefore, an evaluation of the appropriateness of requests in English by Russian EFL learners can also be affected by negative transfer.

With regard to the social status of interlocutors as the variable that affects perceptions of EFL learners on appropriateness of requests, it is reasonable to infer that it may have a sizeable effect on Russian EFL learners due to Russian culturally-specific communication practices. Findings from existing studies shed some light onto patterns of social interaction between Russian people. For instance, Brett et al. (1998) suggest that Russian negotiators identify hierarchy as a guiding culture value and the negotiator role in the society as a source of power in negotiation. Berdiaev (1990) describes Russian communication norms as indirect and holistic. Adair et al. (2004) present similar findings, reporting that Russian negotiators prefer to use indirect communication strategies.

Research on American norms of interaction, on the other hand, reveals that American negotiators are likely to use direct communication strategies without focus on power of interlocutors (Adair et al., 1998). In this context, it would be especially interesting to see how Russian EFL learners react to the variable of social role during the evaluation of appropriateness/politeness of requests produced by native English speakers in situations common to academic environment. Would they reveal any negative transfer from sociopragmatic Russian communication practices when evaluating appropriateness of requests produced by English native speakers? How would they comment on their evaluations on request appropriateness?

### 2.3 Approaches to Pragmatic Data Collection

An overview of data collection methods previously employed in research on speech acts provides this study with insights to the design of request elicitation and request perception. In studies involving appropriateness perceptions with regards to requests, not only sociolinguistic and sociocultural factors but also choice of data collection instruments can play an important role. In other words, researchers view the choice of data collection instruments along with sociolinguistic variability as double layers of variability in pragmatics (Kasper and Dahl 1991, p.215). Because the design of data collection influences the results of the research, Wolfson (1986) advocates the importance of constant reexamination of the research methodology with regards to its validity. This part of Chapter Two addresses advantages and disadvantages of several data collection instruments used for elicitation of requests.

A discourse completion test (DCT) is traditionally used to elicit speech act sets for research in interlanguage and cross-cultural pragmatics (Cohen, 1996; Kwon, 2004; Lin, 2009; Bown and Hassell, n.d.; Ogiermann, 2009). According to Blum-Kulka, House and Kasper (1989), a DCT "... consists of scripted dialogues that represent socially differentiated situations." These dialogues are incomplete and are generally supplied with descriptions of the situations, settings, and sociopragmatic information about the interlocutors (i.e., social distance between the speakers and their status). The participants' task is to complete the dialogues by producing expectable speech acts.

Various modifications of DCTs were developed in attempt to minimize the disadvantages of this method of data collection and increase the number of its advantages. Varghese and Billmyer (1996) tested two DCT modifications during the production of request sets. Significant differences in elicited response data were found when they were collected with an unelaborated DCT, which provided very basic information about the settings of situations, and an elaborated DCT, which provided very detailed information about the setting and relations between the interlocutors. Two findings from this study speak in favor of using an elaborated DCT, since it brings the elicited data closer to naturalistic speech. First, elaborated DCT results are two to three times longer in the mean length of

entire request than those produced in unelaborated DCT. Second, the mean number of supportive moves in an elaborated DCT became two to three times greater than in the original version of an unelaborated DCT. However, Varghese and Billmyer found no significant differences across versions of request head acts themselves.

Role-plays have also been successfully used to elicit speech acts, requests in particular (Cohen and Olshtain, 1993). This method was found to be effective during the elicitation of close-to-naturalistic oral data when respondents were given situations that were familiar to them from their everyday social interactions. Cohen and Olshtain criticize role plays with unfamiliar situations because they force unnatural language behavior from participants and create a time pressure on them. The findings from the studies by Varghese and Billmyer on DCTs and Cohen and Olshtain on role-plays suggest a compilation of both approaches into an elaborated semi-oral DCT. An elaborated semi-oral DCT would involve respondents reading a description of a detailed situation on a card first and then providing an utterance to the researcher aurally. Such an approach would make an effective tool to collect a set of requests from native speakers of English.

To validate the choice of the elaborated semi-oral DCT as the data collection instrument for this study, it is essential to outline ideologies relevant for the research in terms of the elicitation of 'natural' and 'unnatural' language. When considering the issue of request authenticity, two linguistic ideologies summarized by Bucholtz (2003) become essential. Each of these ideologies displays certain deficiencies that may have to be faced and accepted during the field work. The first ideology described by Bucholtz presents the linguist as obstacle to linguistic authenticity. It is well-known as 'observer's paradox' through the works of Labov (1972, 1981) where he argues that systematic observations and face-to-face interviews fail as solutions to this paradox because the experimenter's effect on the speakers is generally maximal. Due to the physical presence of the researcher at the data collection sight, participants restrain their normal conversation behavior in the contexts of the situation (Bousfield, 2008, p. 13), and thus it can no longer be considered authentic. Numerous studies had to abstain from calling their language data as 'naturally occurring' due to the 'observer's paradox' issue at the sight of data collection (Bousfield, 2008).

The second ideology which is relevant for elicitation of requests in this study is characterized by Bucholtz (2003) as the linguist as arbiter of authenticity. This ideology appeals to engage the researcher's own responsibility of identifying who and what will be used for the purposes of analysis. In other words, the researcher in each particular situation has to determine the participants who can be considered most appropriate for data collection, and the data elicitation methodology that can at most suffice specifications of authentic language data.

Finally, Bucholtz (2003) introduces a concept of authentication, which she views as alternative to the concept of the hardly attainable 'authentic speaker.' The fundamental idea of this concept shifts the focus from the speaker alone to the authenticity effects that can be achieved by the researcher through the authenticating practices of using, analyzing and evaluating the language (Bucholtz, 2003, p. 408). The example of authenticated practices presented by Bucholtz features African American vernacular English speech (AAVE) and various discourse communities (e.g., Americans who are not native speakers of AAVE, white hip hop fans) seeking to be part of AAVE larger discourse community. It remains unclear from the study whether authentication practices introduced by Bucholtz are applicable to empirical research where collection of authentic data is an issue. However, it seems possible to transfer the approach of authentication practices to this study by correlating it with 'the linguist as an arbiter of authenticity' approach. This means consistent and systematic authentication practices at every stage of the research throughout the study: stating the purpose of research, formulation of the research questions, designing the research methodology, defining, locating and recruiting participants, eliciting and analyzing data. In other words, the set up of the study needs to consist of thoroughly planned and described stages.

Wolfson (1986) demonstrates a critical view on naturalistic data collection and appears to advocate 'the linguist as arbiter of authenticity' research ideology. She posits that any linguistic material or judgments produced by native speakers as part of an elicitation on task are not much different from introspection. Thus, she defines data collected from native speaker intuitive but still not the actual everyday speech.

Obviously, the elaborated semi-oral DCT does not provide this study with advantages of request elicitation devoid of ‘observer’s paradox.’ The presence of the researcher may cause more careful language behavior on the part of the participants. However, this method of data collection presents several undeniable advantages. First, since the elaborated semi-oral DCT has elements of an interview guided by protocol (i.e., situations on the cards and a fixed question at the end of each situation), it ensures consistency of data within the contextual factors and, thus, comparability of elicited data (Labov, 1981; Kasper, 2000; Lin, 2009; Ogiermann, 2009). Second (as quoted from Ogiermann, 2009, p. 195), such a DCT reliably illustrates the pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic norms of the respondents culture (Beebe and Cummings, 1996, p. 75; Kasper, 2000, p. 329). Besides, by adopting the ideology of ‘the linguist as arbiter of authenticity’ to the design of the research methodology, along with the application of the concept of authentication to recruiting the participants (Bucholtz, 2003), the elaborated semi-oral DCT appears to be an appropriate tool for request collection.

Moreover, the concept of authentication can be applied in this study through the demographic questionnaire which will narrow down the random pool of potential participants to those who comply with the pre-specified requirements (i.e., sex, age, academic background and L1). This approach to the design of data collection tools was applied by Labov (1981).

Two other factors need to be considered when investigating speech act appropriateness. Rating Likert-type scales (Kitao et al. 1987; Takahashi, 1996; Bardovi-Harlig and Dornyei, 1998) and written protocol in respondents’ native language (Cohen and Olshtain, 1993) have been successfully used in interlanguage pragmatics research, in particular to find out how non-native speakers of English evaluate politeness of requests and retrospectively comment on processing strategies in speech act formulation. Likert-type evaluation scales vary in length. A six-point scale (Bardovi-Harlig and Dornyei, 1998) was used to determine the seriousness of pragmatic and grammatical errors as seen by EFL and ESL learners. A seven-point rating scale (Takashashi, 1996) was used to discover the range of participants’ opinions about the equivalence between the Japanese request strategies and the corresponding English ones with regard to contextual appropriateness. A ten-point

Likert-type rating scale (Kitao et al., 1987) was used to find out how Japanese EFL and ESL learners perceived levels of politeness in requests, and how native English speakers produced appropriate requests in Russian (Bown and Hassell, 2009; Takimoto, 2008).

From the statistical viewpoint, Bush (1993) considers longer scales (e.g., seven or more categories) to be more desirable because of the gain in score variability. Evaluation scales with an even number of categories also have support in the literature because they require respondents to choose one direction whereas an odd number offers a neutral response (Reid, 1990). Therefore, it appears that a Likert scale with 10 categories will allow respondents to define an issue under the question with more precision than a smaller odd-numbered scale.

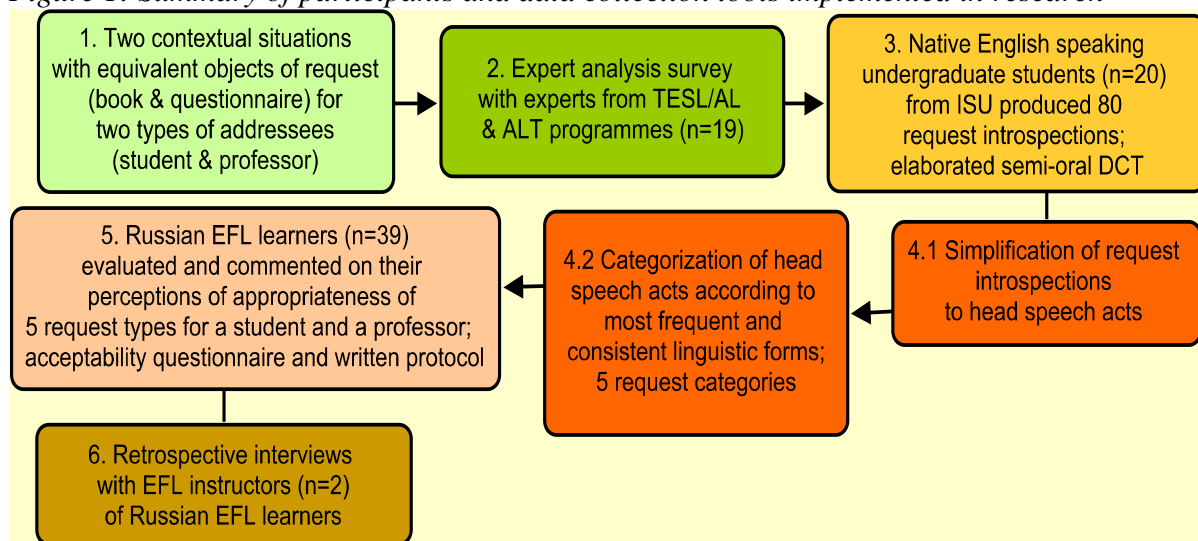
Any Likert-type scale is limited in that this system gives respondents the option of not making distinctions between the utterances, since they can evaluate two different items the same. Therefore, the use of a Likert scale with an opportunity to provide feedback on these evaluations in L1 in the written protocol has obvious advantages for research in interlanguage pragmatics. A triangulation of these data collection tools has been successfully used in studies on requests. For example, Iwata and Fukushima (1986) employed a combination of a rating scale and a written protocol with Japanese EFL learners to discover their preferences in terms of negative and positive politeness strategies in requests.

Therefore, a 10-point Likert scale is a comprehensible and effective tool for respondents to assess speech act behavior and to arrange their choices depending on the degrees of appropriateness/politeness of certain utterances compared to other available choices. Written protocol in L1 allows elicitation of insights into the assessment language behavior, and the processing and planning of linguistic strategies, which non-native speakers execute while evaluating or producing speech acts. Thus, a combination of a Likert-type evaluation scale and a written protocol appears to be reasonable in this study since respondents will have a complex tool to support their ratings with verbal explanations of appropriateness/politeness of requests.

### CHAPTER 3. METHODOLOGY

This chapter describes the data collection methodology and data collection tools used in the study. There were six stages to this study. Figure 1 introduces the participants and procedures employed in each stage of the research. First, contextual situations for elicitation of request introspections were constructed. Second, there was a gathering of information about the contextual situations from native speakers of English. This is the ‘expert’ analysis. Third, request introspections were gathered from undergraduate native speakers. Fourth, elicited request introspections were simplified to head speech acts of requests and categorized according to the most frequent and consistent linguistic forms embedded into them. Fifth, data were collected from Russian EFL learners on perceptions about request appropriateness/politeness. Finally, EFL instructors of the Russian EFL participants gave interviews to comment on the results of the evaluation of request appropriateness/politeness by Russian EFL students. Chapter Three explains in details who the participants are, and how each group of subjects contributed to the research in its different stages. It also outlines the materials and procedures employed in the study for data collection. An analysis of research methods used for each research question proposed in Chapter One concludes the chapter.

*Figure 1: Summary of participants and data collection tools implemented in research*



### **3.1 Participants**

#### **3.1.1 Expert Analysis Group**

The expert analysis group consisted of nineteen graduate students and professors from Teaching English as a Second Language/Applied Linguistics (TESL/AL), Applied Linguistics and Technology (ALT) programs from the Department of English at Iowa State University (ISU). They needed to confirm that requests were the speech act that would be typically produced in the situations constructed for data elicitation. Moreover, the experts were asked to estimate the weight of each sociopragmatic factor that could potentially influence the participants' production and evaluations of requests in each contextual situation. This is the "expert" analysis.

Originally, international graduate students were included into the expert analysis group, since their near-native knowledge of the English language and advanced research expertise in the fields of applied linguistics were not viewed as capacities dependent upon their culture and L1 specific factors. However, comparison of responses elicited from a mixed group of the experts first, and then of native English-speaking experts only revealed that international graduate students could not participate in the study. Their vision of the contextual situations constructed for the research noticeably differed from that of the native English speaking group. Therefore, 14 international graduate students were excluded from the expert analysis group and substituted by native English speakers. When graduate students were invited to participate in the expert analysis, neither their affiliations with certain academic levels of the graduate programs nor their levels of advancement in these programs were taken into consideration.

#### **3.1.2 Request Production Group**

The request production group of participants consisted of twenty undergraduate students from ISU with English as their mother tongue. Their main task for this group was to produce utterances (i.e., requests) that they would typically say in four contextual situations constructed for the study. Therefore, it was essential for the participants in the request production group to have English as their L1 and American culture as their guide in their



everyday way to perform social practices. Ten of these subjects were males and ten were females. Every person in this group was 18 years or older. Table 1 summarizes the demographic data of the request production group. As it can be seen from the table, all the participants in this group were undergraduate ISU students in their early twenties, with English as their L1.

*Table 1: Demographic data of request production group*

<b>N**</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>Average Age</b>	<b>L1</b>	<b>Academic Status</b>
20	10 – males 10 - females	20.85	20 - English	20 – undergraduate students

### **3.1.3 Perception Group**

The perception group was comprised of 40 Russian EFL learners enrolled in the Translation in the Sphere of Professional Communication program at the Department of Intensive English Language (IELD) at Ivanovo State Power Engineering University (ISPU) in Ivanovo Russia. All 40 subjects were double-majors in either Engineering or Business and English, and were studying to become translators in their engineering and business fields. To enter the Intensive English Language program, they were required to pass a comprehensive entrance examination, which consisted of writing, listening and speaking parts. The difficulty level of the entrance examination was high and set the entrance level for students at the intermediate English language proficiency. Only those students who got the highest scores both in the written and oral parts of the examination were accepted to the program. Table 2 summarizes the demographic data of the participants from the perception group.

Table 2 shows that similarly to the subjects from the request production group the participants of the perception group were undergraduate students in their early twenties. Everybody but one participant had Russian as their L1. One student indicated Azerbaijani as his native language. Azerbaijan is a former republic of the Soviet Union which is located to the south of Russia. Due to the fact that this person was a student at the IELD program at ISPU, he was kept in the perception group. By the time this study was conducted, 90% of the participants had never studied English in an English speaking country. The remaining 10% of the subjects (i.e., four participants) reported that they had studied English in a native

speakers' environment less than one, two, three and twelve months accordingly. When answering the question about the experience of living in an English-speaking country, 87% of the participants (i.e., 34 students) responded in the negative, 5% (i.e., 2 student in each case) indicated that they had spent a month and two months in English-speaking countries, and only one person (i.e., 2.5% of the subjects) received up to one year of language and culture input in a native English-speaking environment. The average daily input of English consists of 47 minutes for each participant (i.e., 20 minutes of aural communication with native English-speakers and 27 minutes of TV programs). Out of 39 participants, 27 (i.e., 69%) reported that they usually didn't talk English to native speakers outside of class, three persons (8%) indicated that they spent time socializing with one native speaker, four participants (10%) mentioned two native speakers, two ESL students (5%) interact with three native speakers of English, and only one subject (2.5%) reported to have been conversing with five persons with English as their L1.

*Table 2: Demographic data of perception group*

<b>N**</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>Age Average</b>	<b>L1</b>	<b>Academic Status</b>	<b>Average Number of Years Studying English</b>	<b>Studying English In an English- speaking Country</b>	<b>Lived in the U.S.A. or Other English- speaking Country</b>	<b>Talk to Native Speakers of English Outside of Class</b>	<b>Average Time Conversing in English with Native Speakers a Day</b>	<b>Average Time Watching TV in English a Day</b>
39	22 females 17 females	20.2	38 – Russian 1 – Azerbaijani	39 – undergrad. students	10	35 – never 1 – less than a month 1 – less than two months 1 – less than three months 1 – 6-12 months	34 – never 2 – less than a month 2 – less than three months 1 – 6-12 months	0 – 27 1 – 3 2 – 4 3 – 2 5 – 1	20 min.	27 min.

### **3.1.4 EFL Instructors of Perception Group**

The EFL instructors of the perception group were two female professors and my colleagues from IELD at ISPU. These instructors were invited to participate in the study because they have taught them for at least one semester and thus are personally familiar with the participants from the perception group. Therefore, the instructors would be able to comment on the performance of the perception group in the acceptability questionnaire.

Both of the EFL instructors received extensive formal education in the field of the English language and EFL pedagogy. By the time when this study was conducted, they had more than eight years of teaching experience. One of the professors assisted the principal investigator of the study in collecting data from the perception group at the IELD at ISPU. She earned her Ph.D. in English majoring in phonology from Ivanovo State University in Russia in 2007. Language interference and pragmalinguistics are areas of her research interest. The second EFL instructor received her MA degree in English philology and pedagogy from Ivanovo State University in 2002 and at the time of the study was a second year Ph.D. student majoring in the theory of translation, phraseology and comparative stylistics at the Department of English Philology at Leningrad State University.

## **3.2 Materials**

### **3.2.1 Contextual Situations**

Two cross-culturally appropriate situations that require production of requests were selected from the existing literature on speech acts (Bardovi-Harlig and Dornyei, 1998; Varghese and Billmyer, 1996). In order to obtain a larger scope of language data for analysis, two contextual situations with two objects of requests are used in this study. The initial ideas for the situations (i.e., to borrow a book and to fill in a questionnaire) were kept as they were proposed by Bardovi-Harlig and Dornyei (1998) and Varghese and Billmyer (1996). However, the contexts were modified and expanded to conform to the hypothesis of Varghese and Billmyer (1996) on effectiveness of data collection by means of elaborate DCT. Therefore, these modifications aim to reach two objectives. First, it was important to

instigate the respondents with the ensuing speech acts. Second, it was hoped to elicit elaborated data that would be as close as possible to that found in natural conversations. Therefore, both situations were described in an equally elaborate manner. The contexts explained reasons why students needed to make requests, who the interlocutors were, and what their social standings were. The genders of the addressees, their role relations with the speakers, length of their acquaintances, and frequencies of their interactions were also stated explicitly.

To minimize numerous variables that could intervene in the study (Bardovi-Harlig and Dornyei, 1998; Cohen, 1996; Wolfson, 1986; Lin, 2009), several measures were taken during the construction of the contexts for the situations. To make them cross-culturally equivalent for American and Russian students, both situations were chosen from an academic environment (Bouton, 1996, p. 4; Bardovi-Harlig and Dornyei 1998, p. 240; Lin; 2009; Ogiermann, 2009). Following the contextual design of Clark and Carlson (1982), interaction in each situation was intentionally planned only between two people (i.e., one speaker and one addressee). The social roles of the speakers are the same across both contexts: an undergraduate American student asking his/her peer and his/her professor to lend him/her a book and then to complete a questionnaire. The social distance between the speakers and the addressees is the only sociopragmatic variable which is meant to change in the situations. Table 3 demonstrates four situations that were developed for the study.

The social roles of the interlocutors in the situations are chosen as variables because they are expected to affect Russian participants' perceptions of contextual appropriateness/politeness in requests. Findings from previous studies on the preferences of Russians for indirectness (Berdiaev, 1990; Brett, 1998; Adair et al., 2004) suggest that the higher the social status of an addressee, the more indirect is a request produced by a Russian speaker. Hypothetically, Russian EFL learners may transfer culture-specific patterns from Russian social practices into English through their evaluations of appropriateness/politeness of requests produced by native English speakers. Table 4 summarizes the arrangement of sociopragmatic factors used in each contextual situation constructed for the study.

Table 3: Contextual situations developed for research

Features	Situations
<b>Speaker</b> – undergraduate students <b>Addressee</b> – peer <b>Potential request</b> – to lend a book	1. You are at the end of a history class and you are sitting next to Tom Yates. Your history textbook hasn't arrived yet and you need to borrow his book. He has been in the same program as you for one year, and you see him socially about once a month in a group. You will also be taking classes in the future. He is one of the best students in class. You have borrowed his book twice before, and he did not seem to mind. At the end of next week you have a presentation to make about your readings.
<b>Speaker</b> – undergraduate student <b>Addressee</b> – professor <b>Potential request</b> – to lend a book	2. You are looking for a book, which you know a History instructor, Professor Smith, has. You have been in this program for a year and took a class with this professor last semester. Now you see each other once in a while in the hall and say hello. There is a possibility that you will be taking one of his classes in future. You borrowed books from Professor Smith twice in the past, and he did not seem to mind. The book you need now contains some reading for your next week's test. As you are walking down the hall, you see Professor Smith approaching.
<b>Speaker</b> – undergraduate student <b>Addressee</b> – peer <b>Potential request</b> – to complete a questionnaire	3. You are collecting data for your history class project via written questionnaire which you created. Now you are looking for people who could fill your questionnaires out. It is lunch time and you are sitting in a café. Mike Stratford, who is in your class, and also has been in the same program with you for a year, suddenly takes a seat next to you. You see Mike socially about once a month in a group. You think that both of you will continue taking same classes in future. You have seen other people from your class asking Mike to fill their questionnaires out. He did not seem to mind doing that. Your project is due the end of next week.
<b>Speaker</b> – undergraduate student <b>Addressee</b> – professor <b>Potential request</b> – to complete a questionnaire	4. You are collecting data for your history class project via written questionnaire which you created. Now you are looking for people who could fill your questionnaires out. It is lunch time, and you are sitting in a café. Professor McCormick, whose history class you took last year, takes a seat next to you. You run into each other on campus every other week or two, and say hello. There is a possibility that you will be taking a class with him in future. You know that other students from your history class have asked professor McCormick to fill their questionnaires out. And he did not say no to them. Your project is due the end of next week.

Table 4: Design of sociopragmatic factors employed in four contextual situations

	Social Distance	Level of Familiarity	Frequency of Interaction	Previous Similar Requests	Request Imposition
<b>Context 1</b> (to borrow a book)	small (student vs. student)	low	about once a month socially and in class at present	took place with successful outcomes	low
	large (student vs. professor)	low	in class last semester and occasionally at present	took place with successful outcomes	low
<b>Context 2</b> (to fill in a questionnaire)	small (student vs. student)	low	about once a month socially and in class at present	took place with successful outcomes	low
	large (student vs. professor)	low	in class last semester and occasionally at present	took place with successful outcomes	low

Table 4 shows that since the interlocutors from each contextual situation interact infrequently but consistently, and previously made requests had successful outcomes, the imposition of the request in each context is estimated as low. The design of the contextual situations with the sociopragmatic factors presented in Table 4 was intended to create rather comfortable psychological atmosphere for the interlocutors. Hence, the participants from the request production group are expected to perceive imposition to be low upon the addressees in all four situations and produce appropriate conventionally indirect requests. Both contexts (i.e., borrowing a book and filling out a questionnaire) are designed with equally low request imposition in mind. Based on this finding, these two objects of requests are viewed as equivalents in this study. In Chapter Three and Chapter Four, the contextual equivalency of the book and questionnaire will be supported by presenting the results obtained from the expert analysis survey and statistical analysis. The value of books among students and professors in the U.S.A. and in Russia are considered very similar in this study as well.

### 3.2.2 Expert Analysis Survey

The purpose of this survey was to check whether the sociopragmatic factors (Table 4) were properly assigned to each of the four situations. Twenty experts from the expert analysis group were asked to complete the survey (Appendix A).

The questions in the survey partially mirror the data from Table 4. Subjects provided four types of information for each situation: 1) speech acts instigated by the situation, 2) social distance between the interlocutors, 3) level of familiarity between the interlocutors, 4) imposition of the request upon the hearer. Defining the social distance, level of familiarity and imposition of request upon the addressee in each situation, the experts were asked to select speech acts that they considered probable for reciprocal utterances in the contexts. For probable speech acts, the experts had nine options to choose from (*request, apology, greeting, complaint, refusal, compliment, invitation, reproach* and an *open option*). For the social distance, level of familiarity and imposition of request there were three degrees (*high, medium, low*).

The results of the expert survey showed that no adjustments had to be made in the constructed contextual situations. If the sociopragmatic factors for the situations indicated in

Table 4 had not matched those assigned by the experts, relevant changes would have had to be made in the elaborated contexts to bring the situations into accordance with the prescribed degrees for each variable. For instance, a book or a questionnaire would have to be substituted with objects that corresponded more with the low level of imposition upon the hearer. To minimize the level of imposition, frequency of interactions between the interlocutors would possibly have to be increased.

### **3.2.3 Demographic Questionnaire for Request Production Group**

The demographic questionnaire for the request production group (Appendix B) consisted of four questions about the participants (see Table 1). It asked them to provide data about their gender, age, L1 and academic status.

### **3.2.4 Elaborated Semi-oral DCT**

The elaborated semi-oral DCT comprised four cards with one contextual situation in each card (Appendix C). In the bottom of every card, there was a question “What would you say?”

### **3.2.5 Demographic Questionnaire for Perception Group**

The demographic questionnaire for the perception group was a modified version of the demographic questionnaire used in an existing study on politeness strategies in requests (Kitao et al., 1987). It consisted of ten questions and requested Russian EFL learners to indicate their sex, age, L1, academic status, history of studying English and exposure to English outside of classroom (Appendix D).

### **3.2.6 Acceptability Questionnaire**

The acceptability questionnaire was designed according to the guidelines provided in previous research on interlanguage pragmatics (Cohen 1996, p. 24). In this study, the questionnaire aimed at measuring how Russian EFL learners judged the contextual appropriateness/politeness of five request categories that the participants of the request production group produced through the elaborated semi-oral DCT (Appendix E).



Five request categories offered for evaluation were identical across the situations. All of them were conventionally indirect requests but incorporated different linguistic forms that were expected to influence the perceptions of Russian EFL learners upon appropriateness/politeness of the utterances. Number one was assigned to the least indirect request category and number five to the most conventionally indirect one. Thus, category one contained a present-tense modal verb ‘*can*’ (‘*Can you fill out a questionnaire for me?*’). Category two incorporated a past-tense modal verb ‘*would*’ (‘*Would you fill out a questionnaire for me?*’). Category three combined a consultative device (*would you mind*) with a gerund construction (i.e., ‘*Would you mind lending me a book?*’). Category four comprised a consultative device (*I was wondering*), if-clause and past-tense modal verb ‘*could*’ (i.e., ‘*I was wondering if you could fill out a questionnaire?*’). Finally, category five contained a consultative device (*I was wondering*), if-clause and past-tense modal verb ‘*would*’ (i.e., ‘*I was wondering if you would lend me a book?*’).

As it was mentioned earlier, apart from the social standings of the interlocutors (i.e., student-addressee and professor-addressee), the subjects’ perceptions of contextual appropriateness/politeness of requests are expected to depend upon various linguistic forms embedded into the request categories. The sets of these linguistic forms are shown in Table 5. As seen from the table, five sets of linguistic forms are: ‘*can* + *Infinitive*,’ ‘*would* + *Infinitive*,’ ‘*if you could*,’ ‘*if you would*,’ ‘*would* + *Gerund*.’ They occur in five request categories listed above.

*Table 5: Linguistic forms found in five request categories*

<b>Sets of Linguistic Forms</b>	<b>Request Categories</b>
1. <i>can</i> + <i>Infinitive</i> vs. <i>would</i> + <i>Infinitive</i>	<i>Can you lend/fill out</i> (request category 1) <i>Would you lend/fill out</i> (request category 2)
2. <i>if you could</i> vs. <i>if you would</i>	<i>I was wondering if you could lend/fill out</i> (request category 4) <i>I was wondering if you would lend/fill out</i> (request category 5)
3. <i>would</i> + <i>Infinitive</i> vs. <i>would</i> + <i>Gerund</i>	<i>Would you lend/fill out</i> (request category 2) <i>Would you mind lending/filling out</i> (request category 3)
4. <i>would</i> + <i>Infinitive</i> vs. <i>if you would</i>	<i>Would you lend/fill out</i> (request category 2) <i>I was wondering if you would lend/fill out</i> (request category 5)
5. <i>would</i> + <i>Gerund</i> vs. <i>if you would</i>	<i>Would you mind lending/filling out</i> (request category 3) <i>I was wondering if you would lend/fill out</i> (request category 5)

*Table 6: Patterns for randomizing request categories in acceptability questionnaire*

Situation 1 Student - book	Situation 2 Professor - book	Situation 3 Student - questionnaire	Situation 4 Professor - questionnaire
5	2	1	3
1	4	5	2
2	1	3	4
4	3	2	5
3	5	4	1

To minimize the effect of the presentation order in the acceptability questionnaire (Lin, 2009), the sequence of requests categories for each contextual situation was arranged in different order. Table 6 demonstrates the randomization patterns that were applied to request categories in each situation.

In order to evaluate every request category in the acceptability questionnaire, the subjects used a ten-point Likert scale (Kitao et al., 1987; Takahashi, 1996; Bardovi-Harlig and Dornyei, 1998). The values on the Likert scale were distributed from 0 to 9, where ‘0’ was assigned to least appropriate/polite types of requests and ‘9’ to most appropriate/polite ones. Triangulation of these data (Long, 2005) from the request production group was achieved by complementing this acceptability questionnaire with a written protocol in Russian. In other words, Russian EFL learners were asked to comment upon their request evaluations in their L1 below every Likert scale.

### **3.2.7 EFL Instructors’ Interview**

Triangulation of the data also involved an interview. It consisted of seven tentative questions given to two EFL instructors who teach English courses to the participants from the perception group at ISPU. The instructors were asked the following questions: 1) How much attention do you generally pay to English pragmatics during your classes? 2) What are some of the approaches that you use to teach pragmatics? 3) Are there any typical patterns that you generally teach the students to follow when they make requests in English? 4) What order of increasing politeness would you teach to your students if you were to teach these requests? 5) Do the patterns in request appropriateness/politeness indicated by Russian EFL learners surprise you? 6) Could you suggest any explanations to these patterns? 7) Do you think the

results of the acceptability questionnaire reflect what the students have been generally taught at the IELD?

The data from the interviews with the instructors of English from IELD may assist in better understanding of the results of the acceptability questionnaire completed by Russian EFL learners. In particular, the interview aims at clarifying how results of the acceptability questionnaire correspond with what the students are taught during their English courses at IELD. The EFL instructors may also reveal some additional insights into the performance of their students on the acceptability questionnaire. For example, their comments could reveal certain linguistic forms that EFL learners could consider more or less appropriate due to the classroom effect.

### **3.3 Procedures**

Data collection for the study took place during four stages over four different time periods: early November 2009, late November 2009, December 2009 and February 2010.

#### **3.3.1 Data Collection from Expert Analysis Group**

The expert analysis survey was conducted in the first half of November 2009. It was designed to confirm that the sociopragmatic factors suggested by the researcher in the contextual situations constructed for the elaborated semi-oral DCT (i.e., the social distance between the interlocutors, the level of familiarity between the interlocutors, and the imposition of request) were assigned correctly (Table 5) across both contextual situations (i.e., request to borrow a book and to fill out a questionnaire). The experts were supposed to read the constructed situations and evaluate the levels of these factors as small, medium or large on the basis of the information available from the contexts. The expert analysis survey had to be conducted twice because the composition of the expert analysis group needed to be changed from a mixed group of native and non-native speakers to native speakers of English only. Originally, 20 graduate students and professors affiliated with TESL/ Applied Linguistics and ALT programs at the Department of English at ISU were the experts in the study. It took four days to collect data from them. The group consisted of 13 international

graduate students from Brazil, China, Ghana, Vietnam, Serbia, South Africa, Syria, Ukraine, Mexico, Argentina, and 7 native speakers of English with 5 participants from the U.S.A., one from Canada, and one from England. When the first variant of the expert analysis survey was conducted, no distinctions were made between the international and native English-speaking participants since L1 and culture-specific backgrounds of the international participants were not viewed as variables that could cause any discrepancies in the results of the survey.

I invited the experts to participate in the study in person. First, I gave them a detailed overview of the study and explained the purpose of the expert analysis survey. Second, I provided them the informed consent form (Appendix F) and the expert analysis survey (Appendix A). The experts had to read and sign the consent forms if they wished to participate in the study. The participants completed the surveys within next two days, and then I collected them. Two surveys were not properly completed. The results of the other 18 surveys did not indicate that the context with a book was assigned sociopragmatic factors that were similar to the questionnaire context. Thus, the situations with a student and a professor could not be used as equivalent ones across these two contexts (i.e., book and questionnaire). Since the findings of the first round of the expert analysis survey showed negative results, it was decided to conduct another round of the survey but to narrow down the group of experts by their L1 and cultural background.

Therefore, when the second expert analysis survey was conducted, 13 international participants were substituted with native speakers of English. Two native English-speaking participants from Canada and England were kept in the expert group after they verbally confirmed that sociocultural practices provided to them in the expert survey were very similar across the U.S.A., Canada and England respectively. Fourteen other native English speaking graduate students and instructors from the Department of English replaced the 13 international graduate students in the expert group.

The data assembled from 19 surveys completed by native speakers of English (Appendix G) showed quite clear and consistent sociopragmatic trends for both types of addressees (i.e., a student and a professor) and across two contexts (i.e., request to borrow a book and to fill out a questionnaire). Appendix G presents the summarized answers that the

native English speaking experts provided for the questions indicated in the expert analysis survey. As it was explained earlier, the first question in the expert analysis survey aimed to obtain a confirmation with the majority of the experts that native English speakers would typically produce requests as utterances for both contextual situations constructed for the elaborated semi-oral DCT. Figure 2 summarizes what speech acts the experts would consider producing in the contextual situations provided to them in the expert analysis survey. It is very clear from Figure 2 that all four constructed situations trigger the production of request speech acts (19 subjects). Greetings and apologies are second and third most popular speech acts that the experts thought were possible in the given situations.

Figure 3 summarizes how the experts answered question two from the expert analysis survey where they were asked to estimate the value of the social distance between the interlocutors in four situations. As it can be seen from Figure 3, the expert group confirmed that the social distance between the interlocutors is a differential variable in four constructed situations. The social distances between the interlocutors in the book/student, book/professor and questionnaire/professor contexts are evaluated as predominantly medium, and mostly small in the questionnaire/student context. None of the experts indicated that the social distance between a student and a professor is small, or large between the peer students.

*Figure 2: Speech acts native English speaking experts (n=19) considered producing as utterances for situations a-d in expert analysis survey*

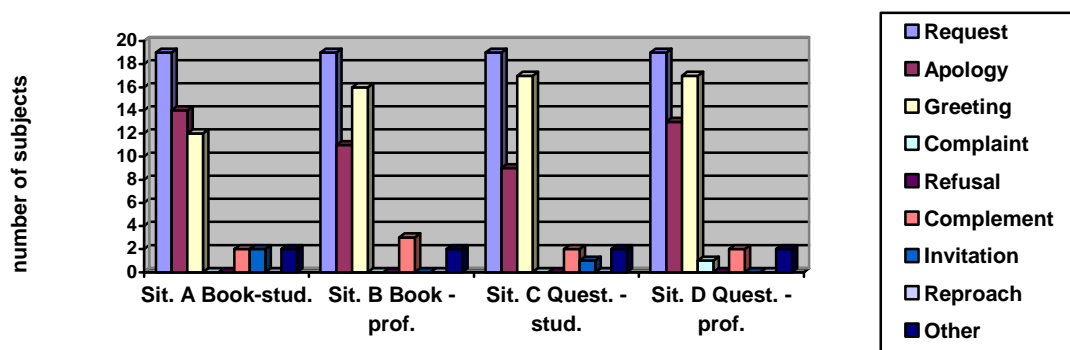
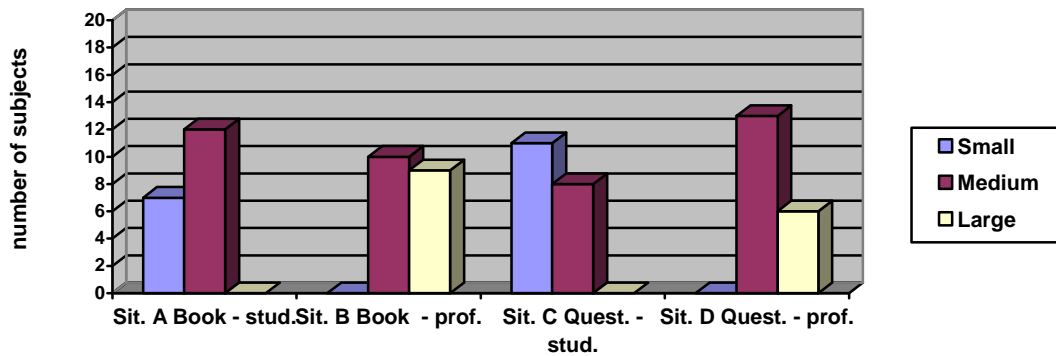


Figure 3: Value of social distance between interlocutors in four contextual situations as perceived by experts (n=19) in expert analysis survey



Thus, it can be inferred that the value of social distance between the interlocutors in these scenarios depends on the social standings of the addressees. The mean scores assigned by the experts for the variable of the social distance between the interlocutors (question two from the expert analysis survey) are presented in Table 7. As seen from the table, bond on the social distance between the student-peers (1.63 and 1.42) is perceived as smaller than the social distance indicated for the student and the professor (2.47 and 2.31) across both contextual situations.

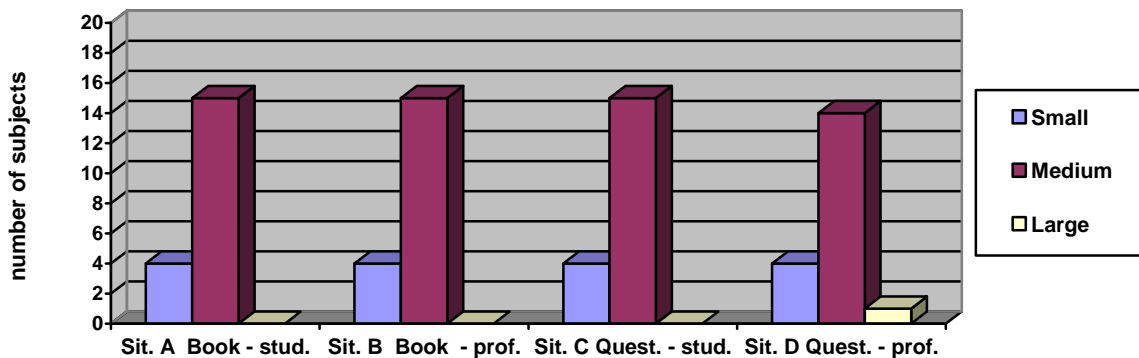
Table 7: Mean scores for social distance between interlocutors in four contextual situations as estimated by experts (n=19) in expert analysis survey

	Contextual situations			
	Sit. A Book - student	Sit. B Book - professor	Sit. C Questionnaire - student	Sit. D Questionnaire - professor
Mean scores	1.63	2.47	1.42	2.31

Question three in the expert analysis survey required the experts to estimate the levels of familiarity between the interlocutors in four situations provided to them. Figure 4 summarizes the answers that experts indicated for each of the situations. As seen from the figure, in all four situations, the experts indicated the level of familiarity between the interlocutors as medium. The main trend is very consistent throughout the four scenarios. The mean score assigned by the experts for the level of familiarity between the interlocutors is 1.78 in the book/student, book/professor, questionnaire/student situations and 1.84 in the

questionnaire/professor situation. The patterns demonstrate no dependence either on the objects that are being requested (i.e., a book vs. a questionnaire), or on the social distances between the interlocutors. It is also important to note that in all four situations there is a clear tendency towards considering the interlocutors as strangers since four subjects estimated the level of familiarity between the interlocutors as small in all four situations. Only one expert assigned high level of familiarity between the student and the professor (for the questionnaire/professor situation). It is possible that this answer could be indicated by error, since the scenario did not provide enough information to the experts to qualify the interlocutors as close acquaintances or friends. In view of the results for question three from the expert analysis survey (Appendix A), as shown in Figure 4, we can infer that the level of familiarity between the interlocutors is well-balanced across the situations.

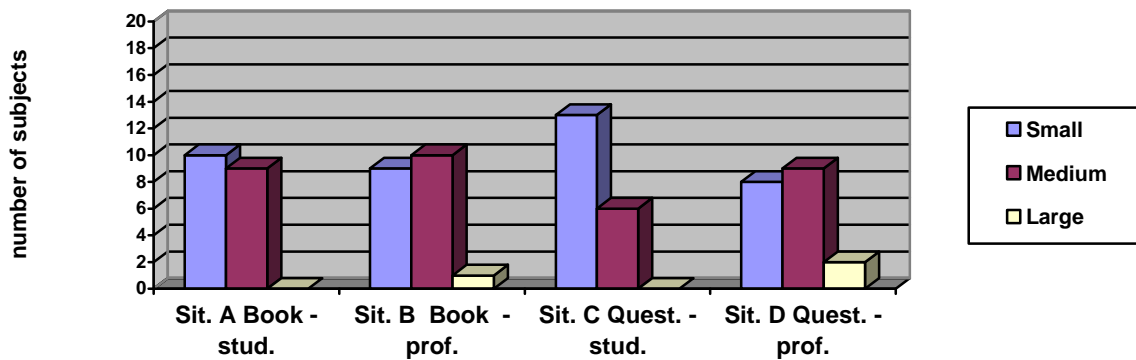
*Figure 4: Value of level of familiarity between interlocutors in four contextual situations as perceived by experts (n=19) in expert analysis survey*



Question four in the expert analysis survey focused on analyzing how the experts perceive the amount of pressure that the addressees in the four situations experience when they are being requested to lend the student a book or to fill out a questionnaire for him. As was explained earlier, requests to borrow a book and to fill out a questionnaire were originally chosen for the scenarios because it was hypothesized they would impose similar amounts of pressure on the addressees regardless of their social standings. Moreover, it was assumed that the levels of imposition upon the addressees in both contextual situations (i.e., with the book and the questionnaire) would be consistent and minimized.

Figure 5 summarizes how the experts perceived the amount of pressure (i.e., impositions of requests) upon the addressees in the four situations provided to them in the expert analysis survey. Their answers show that the pressure on the addressees in both situations (book vs. questionnaire) is mainly distributed on two levels of imposition (i.e., small and medium). The experts indicated that a request for a book from the peer student involves either small (10 experts) or medium (9 experts) imposition on the addressee. Large imposition is excluded in this situation.

*Figure 5: Impositions of requests upon addressees in four contextual situations as perceived by experts (n=19) in expert analysis survey*



As seen in Figure 5, in terms of filling out a questionnaire, the level of imposition on the peer student is also small in the majority of the cases (13 experts). The tendency to consider it a medium imposition remains according to the opinion of 6 experts. Large imposition is again excluded in this situation. The imposition on the professor when he is asked for a book is evaluated by the experts as medium (10 experts) or small (8 experts). Only one respondent thought that lending a book to a student could largely impose on the professor. This response could possibly be explained with a personal negative experience of an expert in a similar situation.

The degrees of imposition on the professor in the questionnaire-related situation were evaluated by the experts as small (8 experts) or medium (9 experts). These figures are quite similar to those in the book/professor situation. This means that the imposition on the professor is not very dependent on the context of the requests (i.e., a book or a questionnaire). The mean scores assigned by the experts for the imposition of requests aimed



at the student-addressee and at the professor-addressee across two contextual situations are presented in Table 8.

As Table 8 shows, the imposition of the requests addressed to the student are rather low and quite similar (1.47 and 1.31) regardless of the objects of the requests. The impositions of the requests aimed at the professor demonstrate that the experts considered the questionnaire to be slightly more burdensome (2.21) than the book (1.63). Two experts assigned large levels of imposition for the questionnaire/professor scenario. When asked, they explained it by the time pressure imposed on the professor with the questionnaire.

*Table 8: Mean scores for impositions of requests made to addressees in four contextual situations as perceived by experts (n=19) in expert analysis survey*

	Contextual situations			
	Sit. A Book - student	Sit. B Book - professor	Sit. C Questionnaire - student	Sit. D Questionnaire - professor
<b>Mean scores</b>	1.47	1.63	1.31	2.21

However, the scenario does not specify what type of a questionnaire the professor is asked to complete. Supposedly, the experts had a time-consuming task in mind when they ascribed the imposition of the request as large, or they answered the question on the basis of their own experience of having to complete long surveys.

As explained earlier, the expert analysis survey was provided to the experts to verify that the social standings of the interlocutors are the only prominent variables to affect the production of requests by native speakers of English in the study. Therefore, the results of the survey support the purpose of the scenario design. First, the differences between the social standings of the student and the professor are obvious in every scenario. Second, the levels of familiarity between the interlocutors are consistent and depend neither on the interlocutors' social standings nor on the contents of the requests. Third, the perceptions of the experts on the impositions of the requests show rather consistent patterns and do not demonstrate any large dependences on the objects of the requests (i.e., a book or a questionnaire). However, the results of the expert analysis survey also revealed that the evaluations of the sociopragmatic factors that influence the production of requests may be

affected with respondents' personal attitudes, opinions and experiences. Elimination of personal factors from research on pragmalinguistics may be an unrealistic task. The time imposition on the professor, which two experts pointed out in the questionnaire/professor scenario, is viewed in this study as a minor sociopragmatic factor. Its influence is relatively mild and should not affect the overall picture of the study.

### **3.3.2 Data Collection from Request Production Group**

The data from the request production group was collected via the demographic questionnaire and the elaborated semi-oral DCT in the second part on November 2009 on the ISU campus, namely in the Parks Library and the Caribou Café. These facilities are popular among university students during the week because they provide comfortable and student-friendly atmosphere for studying and socializing. Data collection from the request production group took four days. I approached ISU students randomly on campus.

Originally, the most appropriate time of the day for data collection was not taken into consideration. However, the first day of request elicitation showed that early mornings and later evenings are the busiest hours for students (Cieri et al., 2002). Five students invited to participate in the study during these hours declined the offers. Thus, these hours of the day were excluded from the data collection sessions as ineffective. Students were most willing to be recruited during the lunch and after lunch hours. Only two students refused to participate in the study during the lunch time and twenty accepted the invitations.

When looking for prospective subjects for the request production group, I took into account three criteria. It was essential to avoid groups of students, persons talking in other languages, and those who were obviously preoccupied with studying or talking on the phone. Therefore, I approached single students taking a break from reading or those establishing an eye contact. Figure 6 summarizes step-by-step scenarios used to elicit request introspections from twenty native speakers of English at ISU.

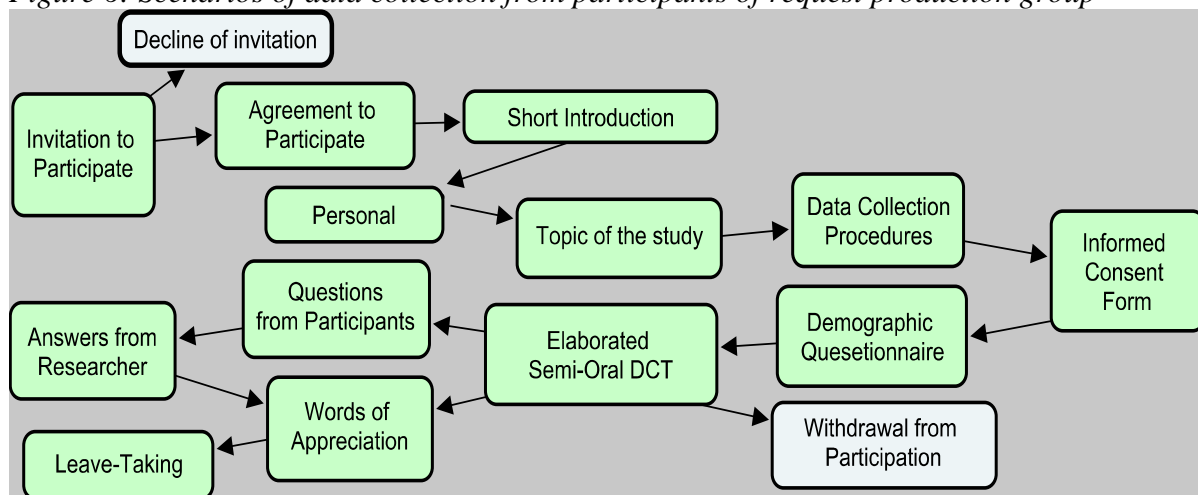
In cases, when the students agreed to participate, I gave them an overview of the study. First, I introduce myself, told them what department and graduate program of study I affiliated with, and what my area of research was. During the introduction, I indentified myself only as a graduate student and did not emphasize my position of the instructor of

Russian. According to Labov (1981), any identification of the interviewer as a teacher would stress the fact that he/she is a person the information flows from, not to. This detail would potentially influence the language the participants would want to use during request elicitation.

To keep the request introspections produced by the participants as close to naturalistic speech data as possible I did not explain the purpose of the research to them in full. I did not tell the subjects that the contextual appropriateness/politeness of requests was the main focus of the study. Instead, I informed them that the purpose of the research was to investigate how Russian EFL learners view requests in different situations. I notified the subjects about their right to withdraw from the study at any moment they wished. Next, I provided the participants with a detailed explanation of the data collection procedures. When the process of data collection was disclosed to the participants, I asked for their verbal permission to have their utterances recorded on a digital voice recorder. The participants from the request production group completed the demographic questionnaire and elaborated semi-oral DCT anonymously.

Next, the subjects were asked to read and sign the informed consent form (Appendix F) if they wished to participate in the study. After the form was signed, they received a short paper-based demographic questionnaire to complete (Appendix B). When the participants

*Figure 6: Scenarios of data collection from participants of request production group*



filled it out, I provided them with four contextual situations on the cards (Appendix C). Each card contained only one contextual situation, starting with the book/student scenario. The participants received the cards one at a time. I asked the students to associate themselves with the speakers in each situation and produce the actual utterance which they would typically say in these contexts. The only question I asked them before they produced their utterances was ‘What would you say?’ Two of the participants attempted to retell how their requests would sound in the indirect speech. In order to advance the approach to the data collection, I had to reconstruct the question into ‘How would you say it?’ or ‘How would you verbally say it?’ One participant was intimidated with the first situation in the elaborate semi-oral DCT (i.e., requesting a book from a peer student) and withdrew from participation. When asked what seemed strange in the situation, the students explained that she would never ask any peer students for a textbook.

The utterances of the participants were recorded on a digital voice recorder SANYO ICR-FP600D. To avoid any tangential shifting (i.e., contribution of the researcher to the data produced by the interviewee), I answered four additional questions about the constructed contexts and the purpose of the study only when requests were elicited and recorded (Labov, 1981). It was essential for the participants to apprehend the scenarios and the whole study only with the information that was provided to them in the informed consent form. Before ending the sessions, three participants requested additional information about the purpose of the study and implications of its findings for Russian EFL learners. One participant expressed her concern about unreliability of the elaborated semi-oral DCT for elicitation of naturalistic requests.

Overall, the request production group produced a total of eighty utterances. They were transcribed (Appendix H) and reduced to request head speech acts of requests (Appendix I). Removed were greetings (*hey, hello*), apologies (*excuse me*), alerters (*Tom, Mike, Professor McCormick, professor, Professor Smith*), explanations of reason (*so I could study for next week’s test, for a test next week, for history class, to do the research paper, etc*), indications of time and request mitigators (*just, real quick, take a few minutes, within next few days, some time, please*), hedges (*and I will fill out for you, is there any way,*

*possibly, etc*) that either accompanied head speech acts in external modifications of requests or were embedded into the head acts.

When the elicited data were simplified to the head speech acts, it became obvious that two contexts used to construct situations for the study (i.e., book vs. questionnaire) caused two request perspectives (Blum-Kulka, 1989). In the context with a book, for both the student and professor hearers participants produced speaker-oriented requests (for example, *Can I borrow a book?*), whereas, with a questionnaire, requests for both types of addressees were hearer-oriented (for example, *I was wondering if you could fill out this questionnaire?*). According to Lin (2009), '*Can/could I borrow...*' is a prominent request pattern produced by native English speakers in a borrowing situation. However, should these two request perspectives be left unchanged, they would create an undesirable variable which could affect the evaluation of appropriateness of requests by Russian EFL learners. Therefore, in order to eliminate this variable, the verb '*borrow*' in requests elicited for the book scenario was replaced with the verb '*lend*,' for example, '*Can you lend me a book?*' Therefore, requests in the situations with a book also acquired hearer-oriented perspective.

The final stage of processing the data from the request production group involved the categorization of the language forms. The corpus of 80 requests contains five most distinct pragmalinguistic request patterns that consistently occur across the four situations (Appendix J). All five request categories belong to the group of conventionally indirect requests, which corresponds with the findings in previous studies on requests (Blum-Kulka and House, 1989; Lin, 2009). The linguistic forms and pragmalinguistic elements that comprise five request categories were described above (Table 5).

The data show that the frequencies with which each request pattern occurs in every situation depend on the context. For instance, '*would you mind + Gerund*' is frequent in the questionnaire scenario (n=11), but is absent in the book scenario. Apparently, gerund does not occur in the book situation because it originally triggered speaker-oriented requests. The book scenario, on the contrary, suggests a lot of '*can I + Infinitive*' constructions (n=10), whereas in the questionnaire situation they are few (n=2). The most conventionally indirect request category, like '*I was wondering if I could*' is rather frequent in the book scenario (n=8), but occurs less in the questionnaire situations (n=4). '*I was wondering if you would*' is

more frequent in the professor/questionnaire situation (n=5), but not popular in all other cases (professor/book n=1; student/questionnaire n=1; student/book n= 1). ‘*Would you*’ is an infrequent but consistent request pattern across all situations (student/book n= 1; student/questionnaire n=1; professor/book n=1; professor/questionnaire n=2). Table 9 demonstrates five finalized pragmalinguistic request categories discovered in the utterances produced by the request production group and adapted for the acceptability questionnaire.

The request categories in Table 9 are listed in the order of the increasing indirectness, with ‘*Can you lend me a book?*’ being the least conventionally indirect and ‘*I was wondering if you would lend me a book?*’ the most conventionally indirect. Despite the different levels of indirectness, all five request categories are viewed in this study as equally appropriate/polite for any of the four constructed situations, because they were produced by native speakers of English. As Wolfson (1986) remarked, “native speakers are very well able to judge correctness and appropriateness of speech behavior in the everyday setting in which it occurs.”

*Table 9: Five pragmalinguistic request categories discovered in utterances produced by request production group and adapted for acceptability questionnaire*

Pragmalinguistic request categories	Constructed scenarios	
	Request – book	Request - questionnaire
1. Conventional indirect with present tense modal can (Yes/No question)	Can you lend me a book?	Can you fill out a questionnaire for me?
2. Conventional indirect with past tense modal would (Yes/No question)	Would you lend me a book?	Would you fill out a questionnaire for me?
3. Conventional indirect with consultative device (would you mind) and gerund <i>Would you mind + gerund</i>	Would you mind lending me a book?	Would you mind filling out a questionnaire for me?
4. Conventional indirect with consultative device (I was wondering), if-clause, past tense modal could <i>I was wondering + if-clause + could</i>	I was wondering if you could lend me a book?	I was wondering if you could fill out a questionnaire for me?
5. Conventional indirect with consultative device (I was wondering), if-clause, past tense modal would <i>I was wondering + if-clause + would</i>	I was wondering if you would lend me a book?	I was wondering if you would fill out a questionnaire for me?

### 3.3.3 Data Collection from Perception Group

Data collection from the perception group, who evaluated their perceptions of appropriateness/politeness of native speakers' requests in the appropriateness questionnaire, took place in the first part of December, 2009. It was conducted by an EFL professor from the IELD at ISPU in Russia. Informed consent forms (Appendix F), demographic (Appendix D) and acceptability questionnaires (Appendix E) for the perception group were emailed to the IELD. The professor printed 40 copies of each document and held on to them until it was time to distribute them to the participants. In a separate letter (Appendix K), the professor received very detailed explanations of the purpose of the study and data collection instructions.

All data from Russian EFL learners were collected in five days during regular class hours when they met for English Conversation classes at one of the IELD classrooms. First, the professor explained the purpose of the study and procedures of data collection to prospective participants. Second, she provided the informed consent form to the students who wished to participate in the study. When the subjects read and signed the informed consent form, data collection started with the demographic questionnaire. The acceptability questionnaire followed. No time limit was set for the participants' completion of the tasks.

For data processing purposes and to preserve their identities, the participants were asked to sign their names in Russian in both questionnaires. The names were used to match the data of the demographic questionnaires with the data in the acceptability questionnaires.

Given that the participants from the perception group were asked to evaluate the contextual appropriateness/politeness of five request types for four situations, they were not informed that all five request types were considered appropriate for any of the given situations by default. Upon completion of the acceptability questionnaire by the participants, the professor collected the surveys. Then, she scanned the documents and emailed me the electronic files. The paper-based documents were sent to me by regular mail.

While processing the electronic files with the demographic and acceptability questionnaires from the Russian EFL students, I discovered that one participant indicated inconsistent data in his acceptability questionnaire. There was an obvious disparity between high levels of appropriateness assigned to the requests and rather critical verbal comments

about the same requests. Therefore, the questionnaires of this participant were eliminated from the data, leaving the perception group with 39 subjects. Thus, 39 written comments on the ratings of contextual appropriateness were summarized and translated into English (Appendix L).

### **3.3.4 Data Collection from EFL Instructors of Perception Group**

Two EFL instructors of the participants from the perception group (i.e., Russian EFL learners) were contacted via phone and email in February, 2010. They were requested to give an interview on the performance of their EFL students on the perception of appropriateness/politeness of requests produced by the native speakers. First, the informed consent form was sent to the EFL instructors via email (Appendix F). They were asked to read and sign it if they wished to participate in the study. Second, I interviewed every instructor by contacting them through Skype. The interviews were conducted anonymously, recorded on a digital voice recorder SANYO ICR-FP600D and then translated into English, and transcribed (Appendix M).

## **3.4 Analysis**

Below is a summary of the analysis methods used for each research question. In order to determine the proper statistic test to be applied for the analysis of the collected data, I consulted with two ISU statisticians. Given there was only one group of Russian EFL learners who participated in the study, a dependent paired-samples t-test was chosen as the tool for statistical analysis. To avoid false positives in the results of the multiple dependent paired-samples t-tests that were conducted for Research Questions Two and Three, the “protected” level of confidence was applied through the Bonferroni correction.

### **3.4.1 Research Question One**

In order to answer Research Question One – “How appropriate/polite do Russian EFL learners evaluate the requests produced by native speakers of English from the U.S.?” the mean appropriateness/politeness ratings for five request categories assigned by the Russian EFL participants in the acceptability questionnaire were calculated when used for two types



of addressees (i.e., peer-student and professor). Overall, ten mean appropriateness ratings were calculated.

### **3.4.2 Research Question Two**

In order to answer Research Question Two – “How do the social standings of interlocutors influence the perception of Russian EFL learners upon appropriateness/politeness of requests?” five dependent two-tailed t-tests (paired-samples t-tests) were conducted on the appropriateness/politeness ratings indicated by the Russian EFL participants for five request categories when addressed for the peer-student and the professor in the situations from the acceptability questionnaire. The probability value (p-value) was set at .05 for the variable of the social standings of the interlocutors across all five request categories, and subsequently corrected to  $p \leq .01$  by the Bonferroni correction.

### **3.4.3 Research Question Three**

Research Question Three – “What linguistic forms affect Russian EFL learners’ perceptions of appropriateness/politeness of requests in situations where the social standings of interlocutors vary?” – was addressed by an analysis of dependent t-scores calculated for pairs of scores on linguistic forms (i.e., *can + Infinitive* vs. *would + Infinitive*; *if you could* vs. *if you would*; *would + Infinitive* vs. *would + Gerund*; *would + Infinitive* vs. *if you would*; *would + Gerund* vs. *if you would*) embedded into five request categories (Table 5), and evaluated by the Russian EFL learners in the acceptability questionnaire. Ten dependent paired-samples two-tailed t-tests were conducted. The probability value (p-value) was set at the .05 level and subsequently corrected by the Bonferroni correction to  $p \leq .005$ .

### **3.4.4 Comparability of Request Objects**

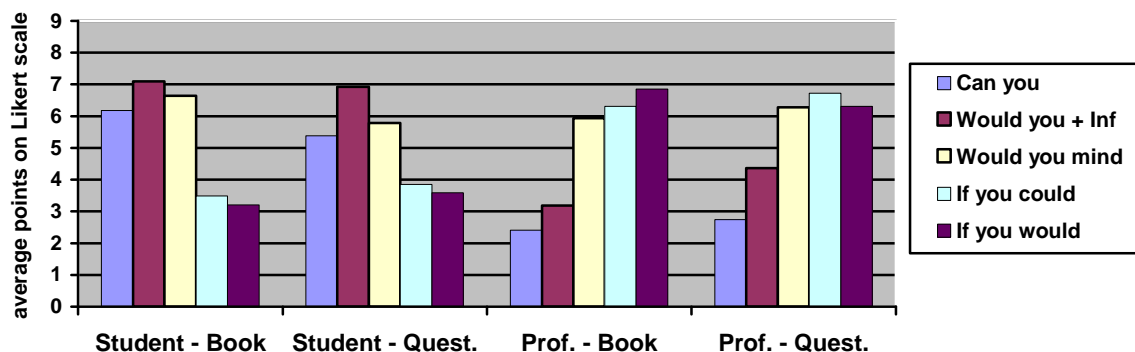
As it was explained earlier in Chapter Three, the contextual situations for the acceptability questionnaire were constructed by using two scenarios (i.e., request to lend a book and to fill out a questionnaire). It was done to obtain a wider scope of language data for the analysis. The book and the questionnaire were selected for the scenarios as comparable objects of requests that would create equivalent impositions on both types of the addressees

in the contextual situations. The comparability of request objects was closely examined during several stages of data analysis. The results of three different data analyses – the results of the expert analysis survey, the analysis of the mean acceptability/politeness ratings assigned by Russian EFL learners to five request categories for both scenarios, and the results of the statistical analysis of the appropriateness/politeness ratings for five request categories across both scenarios - are discussed below.

First, the experts' answers to question three about the impositions of requests on both types of addressees created with the book and the questionnaire (See Figure 5 and Table 8 with the analysis of the experts' survey) demonstrate that these objects are perceived by the expert group for the most part as comparable for the peer-student (book – 1.47; questionnaire – 1.31) and the professor addressees (book – 1.63; questionnaire – 2.21). Second, when the mean appropriateness/politeness ratings provided by the Russian EFL learners for five request categories were calculated for the book and for the questionnaire situations separately (Appendix N), and then visualized in a graph for the student and the professor addressees accordingly, it also became obvious that this group of participants treated the book and the questionnaire scenarios similarly to the native English speaking experts. Figure 7 illustrates that Russian EFL participants consistently assigned comparable appropriateness/politeness ratings to each of the five request categories for the book and questionnaire scenarios within the student and professor-related situations accordingly.

As it is seen from Figure 7, Russian EFL learners (the perception group of participants) do not differentiate their evaluations of request appropriateness on the basis of the request objects, but rather the types of the addressees suggested in the situations. For example, with the peer-student, they consider '*would you lend/fill out*' as the most acceptable request form for both, the book (7.10) and questionnaire (6.92) scenarios. This request category is then followed by similarly consistent trends for the ratings of decreasingly appropriate '*would you mind lending/filling out*' (book – 6.64; questionnaire – 5.79), '*can you lend/fill out*' (book – 6.18; questionnaire – 5.38), '*I was wondering if you could lend/fill*

Figure 7: Russian EFL learners' (n=39) perceptions of appropriateness of five request categories for book and questionnaire scenarios within student and professor-related situations



out' (book – 3.49; questionnaire – 3.85), and, finally, 'I was wondering if you would lend/fill out' (book – 3.20; questionnaire – 3.59).

Figure 7 also shows that Russian EFL learners did not see much difference between the book and the questionnaire scenarios within the professor-addressee situations. The request ratings are consistently low for 'can you lend/fill out' (book – 2.41; questionnaire – 2.74), with steady increase in appropriateness for 'would you lend/fill out' (book – 3.18; questionnaire – 4.36) and 'would you mind lending/filling out' (book – 5.94; questionnaire – 6.28). As expected, the most conventionally indirect request categories 'I was wondering if you would lend/ fill out' (book - 6.85; questionnaire – 6.31) and 'I was wondering if you could' (book – 6.31; questionnaire – 6.72) are perceived as most appropriate/polite for the professor but the ratings for these forms are not consistent across the book and questionnaire scenarios. The perception group chose 'I was wondering if you would' as the most appropriate request form for the professor/book setting, but in the professor/questionnaire scenario this request category yielded the first rank to 'I was wondering if you could' category. Overall, the arrangement of the mean appropriateness ratings for the five request categories described above suggests that Russian EFL learners treated the book and the questionnaire scenarios as comparable ones.

Finally, the comparability of the book and the questionnaire scenarios was checked by conducting ten dependent paired-samples t-tests on the data obtained from the Russian EFL learners through the acceptability questionnaire (Appendix N). The criterion for

significance in the t-tests was set to  $p \leq .05$  (probability value) and corrected with the Bonferroni correction to  $p \leq .005$ . The results of the statistical analysis revealed no significant differences between the two objects of requests.

The results discussed above secure enough evidence to advocate that the book and the questionnaire are comparable objects of request in the contextual situations provided to Russian EFL participants in the acceptability questionnaire. Therefore, for the purposes of the statistical analysis conducted to answer Research Questions One, Two and Three, the ratings, that Russian EFL learners assigned to each of the five request categories across the book and the questionnaire scenarios in the acceptability questionnaire, are combined in Chapter Four into one 'perception measure.' In other words, the distinction between the book and the questionnaire scenarios is no longer made.

## CHAPTER 4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter will address each research question in turn, reporting the findings from the data analysis and discussing them in the light of the relevant research discoveries on pragmalinguistics, cross-cultural pragmatics, speech acts and the evaluation of the appropriateness/politeness of requests by native and non-native speakers of English in particular.

### 4.1 Research Question One

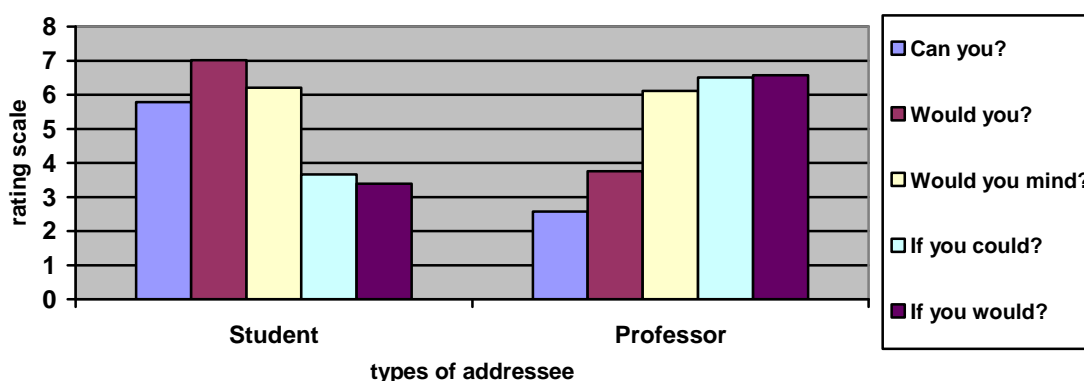
#### **How appropriate/polite do Russian EFL learners evaluate the requests produced by native speakers of English from the U.S.?**

This question was answered by calculating the mean appropriateness ratings for five request categories that 39 subjects of the perception group assigned in the situations addressing the student and the professor with requests. The Russian EFL participants evaluated each request category in the acceptability questionnaire on the 10-point Likert-type scale, where 0 represented the lowest request rating and 9 - the highest request rating accordingly. Therefore, in this analysis, the means with higher value indicate more appropriate/polite requests and the means with lower values less appropriate variants. Table 10 summarizes how the perception group evaluated five request categories provided to them in the acceptability questionnaire as request options to address a student and a professor. As has been previously explained in Chapter Three, the book and the questionnaire are viewed in this study as sociopragmatically equivalent objects of request. That is why the mean ratings for each request category represented in Table 10 are cumulative for the book and the questionnaire scenarios. Figure 8 displays the data from Table 10 and demonstrates that Russian subjects made rather clear distinctions between the appropriateness of five request categories when they were used as request options to address the student and the professor.

Table 10: Mean appropriateness ratings for five request categories as perceived by Russian EFL learners (n=39) in acceptability questionnaire

	Student-Hearer		Professor-Hearer	
	Mean Appropriateness Rating	Standard Deviation	Mean Appropriateness Rating	Standard Deviation
1. Can you lend/ fill out?	5.78	1.99	2.57	2.60
2. Would you lend/ fill out?	7.01	1.47	3.76	2.45
3. Would you mind lending/ filling out?	6.21	1.96	6.11	2.43
4. I was wondering if you could lend/ fill out?	3.66	2.70	6.51	2.14
5. I was wondering if you would lend/ fill out?	3.39	2.46	6.57	2.18

Figure 8: Mean appropriateness ratings for five request categories as perceived by Russian EFL learners (n=39) in acceptability questionnaire



The mean appropriateness ratings range from 3.39 (for ‘*I was wondering if you would lend/fill out*’) to 7.01 (for ‘*would you lend/fill out*’) in the situations with the peer-student addressee. The dispersions of the appropriateness ratings for the professor-addressee requests vary from 2.57 (for ‘*can you lend/fill out*’) to 6.57 (for ‘*I was wondering if you would lend/fill out*’).

The general patterns of the mean appropriateness ratings in the student and professor scenarios do not entirely correspond with the original hypothesis proposed for Research Question One. In Table 10, the request categories are arranged in the order of increasing level of conventional indirectness. Should the hypothesis of the research question be confirmed in full, the mean appropriateness ratings would decrease linearly along with the levels of conventional indirectness in requests in the student scenario and increase in the professor context. Contrary to expectations, Russian EFL learners did not assign the highest

level of appropriateness to the least conventional indirect request category (i.e., *'can you lend/fill out'*) in the scenario with the peer-addressee. Instead, they placed *'would you lend/fill out'* and *'would you mind lending/filling out'* higher than *'can you lend/fill out'* on the evaluation scale. The comments from the acceptability questionnaire reveal that some participants described *'can you lend/fill out'* as a casual but not polite and, moreover, quite bold request even for the student scenario. When explaining low appropriateness of this request, several participants indicated low level of familiarity with the peer student, which therefore precluded them from being too casual with the interlocutor. *'Would you lend/fill out,'* on the contrary, was indicated as an informal but still acceptable request form. As for *'would you mind lending/filling out'*, the participants made positive remarks about its politeness and respectful tone.

The mean appropriateness ratings of the most conventionally indirect request categories (i.e., *'I was wondering if you could lend/fill out'* and *'I was wondering if you would lend/fill out'*) do not refute the hypothesis that was proposed for Research Question One, but, on the contrary, add new flavor to its possible interpretations. According to the collective opinion of Russian EFL learners, increasingly indirect requests categories remain the least appropriate forms for peer interaction. Some participants labeled these request options as *'too formal and polite'* for a casual conversation with a peer. However, certain EFL learners unexpectedly attributed rudeness to *'I was wondering if you would lend/fill out.'* Such comments project a new dimension to the study, namely they introduce the perception of impoliteness or rudeness in English requests. Drawing on Goffman's categorizations of threats to face (quoted from Bluefield, 2008, p. 70) it is possible to presume that the participants sensed "incidental impoliteness" in these linguistic forms. In this case, it would be reasonable to suspect negative pragmatic transfer (i.e., erroneous influence of the learner's knowledge about the politeness value of linguistic form-function from the native language into the perception and production of a similar situation in the target language (Takahashi, 1996)) of L1 pragmatic request strategies and linguistic means into the target language (Beebe and Warring, 2005).

As for the professor-addressee situations, Table 10 demonstrates a clear interconnection between the increasing level of conventional indirectness in request

categories and the increase in their appropriateness mean ratings. This tendency corresponds with the original hypothesis made for Research Question One. Russian EFL learners assigned the lowest acceptability scores to the least conventional indirect request category ‘*can you lend/fill out.*’ As was expected, the participants evaluated this request form as ‘insufficiently polite when addressing a professor’ or an older person. Again, several comments emphasized rudeness of this request form when used toward the professor. By contrast, the highest levels of conventional indirectness in ‘*I was wondering if you could lend/fill out*’ and ‘*I was wondering if you would lend/fill out*’ made these requests the most acceptable forms for the situations with the professor-addressee. The participants’ comments touched upon their sufficient formality and politeness toward the professor. Just like Berdyaev (1990), Brett (1998) and Adair et al. (2004) have advocated, formality and high level of indirectness are appropriate/polite request features when addressing a superior official in Russian socio-cultural practices.

#### 4.2 Research Question Two

##### **How do the social standings of interlocutors influence the perceptions of Russian EFL learners upon appropriateness/politeness of requests?**

Research Question Two was addressed by means of a dependent t-test for two sociopragmatic variables of social distance between the addressees (student vs. professor) for five request categories used in two contextual situations (i.e., book vs. questionnaire) that for the purposes of this study are viewed as equivalents. Therefore, Research Question Two was answered with one ‘combined’ object of request in mind. The model used here was a paired-samples t-test for paired sets of data from one group of subjects (n=39). The subjects’ responses for each type of request were analyzed by SPSS, for the student and the professor-hearer accordingly. The confidence interval of the difference was set at 95% (p-value  $\leq .05$ ) and the degree of freedom at 38. In order to avoid false positives in the results of the multiple dependent paired-samples t-tests (n=5), the “protected” level of confidence was applied by means of the Bonferroni correction (p  $\leq .01$ ).



First, a t-test was conducted to determine whether the social distance between the interlocutors was a significant variable when the request category ‘*Can you lend/ fill out a questionnaire*’ was used. Table 11 shows paired-samples t-test results for the variable of social standings of the interlocutors for ‘*Can you lend/ fill out*’ request category.

As seen in Table 11, the mean appropriateness rating for ‘*Can you lend/ fill out*’ request with the student-addressee are significantly higher ( $M = 5.782$ ) than the mean appropriateness rating for the same request category when addressed to the professor ( $M = 2.577$ ),  $t(38) = 6.377$ ,  $p \leq .05$ . 95% confidence interval for the mean difference between the student and professor addressees is 2.187 to 4.222. The “protected” level of confidence calculated according to the Bonferroni correction ( $p \leq .01$ ) does not change the significance of these results. In other words, the results of the statistical analysis indicate that the social standings of the addressees influenced the perceptions of the Russian EFL learners upon the appropriateness of the request category ‘*Can you lend/ fill out.*’

*Table 11: Paired-samples t-test results for variable of interlocutors' social standings for request category 'can you lend/ fill out'*

Forms on Social Standing – Student vs. Professor	Paired Samples Statistics		Paired Differences			Paired Samples Test				
	Mean	Std. Deviation	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Conf. Interval		t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
						Lower	Upper			
Can+Inf_St. – Can+Inf_Prof.	5.782	1.999	3.205	3.138	.502	2.187	4.222	6.377	38	.000

The participants’ comments from the acceptability questionnaire largely support the pragmalinguistic suitability of ‘*can + Infinitive*’ request pattern for the student-hearer, but criticize it in most cases for the professor. Informality, which is viewed as acceptable among Russian peers at a university level, features as a partial explanation of why Russian EFL learners assigned higher mean appropriateness ratings to ‘*can you lend/ fill out*’ in the student context. The criticism for the request category, on the other hand, extends to its impoliteness and lack of formality. What is even more interesting, a few participants sensed rudeness in the use of ‘*can you lend/ fill out,*’ explaining it as a lack of respect for the social status and age of the professor. Surprisingly, the participants subconsciously associated the social

status of the professor with his older age, although it had never been mentioned in any of the contextual situations.

In the interviews, the EFL instructors of the Russian participants indicated that the clear cut distinction between the social standings of the interlocutors for the form ‘*can + Infinitive*’ is a good example of formal social practices that are common between students and their instructors in Russian universities. Therefore, the findings described above support the original hypothesis for Research Question Two. Russian EFL learners clearly differentiate the social distance between the student and the professor when they assign the level of appropriateness for the least conventionally indirect request ‘*can you lend/fill out.*’

Next, the study investigated the influence of the student’s and professor’s social standings when the Russian EFL learners were suggested the request category ‘*would you lend/fill out.*’ Table 12 shows the results of paired-samples t-test for this question. Similarly with ‘*can you lend/fill out.*’ the mean appropriateness rating for the request category

*Table 12: Paired-samples t-test results for variable of interlocutors' social standings for request category 'would you lend/fill out'*

Forms on Social Standing – Student vs. Professor	Paired Samples Statistics		Paired Differences			Paired Samples Test				
	Mean	Std. Deviation	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Conf. Interval		t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
						Lower	Upper			
Would+Inf._St.	7.013	1.471	3.243	2.672	.428	2.377	4.110	7.579	38	.000
Would+Inf._Prof.	3.769	2.457								

‘*would you lend/fill out*’ is significantly higher ( $M = 7.013$ ) when it is addressed to the student than when the professor is an interlocutor ( $M = 3.769$ ),  $t(38) = 7.579$ ,  $p \leq .05$ . When the Bonferroni correction ( $p \leq .01$ ) was applied, the significant difference between the mean appropriateness ratings remained. These statistical findings demonstrate that the Russian EFL subjects paid close attention to the social standings of the addressees when they evaluated the appropriateness of ‘*would + Infinitive*’ request category.

Next, a paired-samples t-test focused on the influence of the social standings of the addressees for the request category ‘*would you mind lending/ filling out*’ (‘*would + Gerund*’). Table 13 summarizes the results that were obtained in this case. Unlike in two previous

cases, the difference in the mean appropriateness rating of the request category ‘*would you mind lending/filling out*’ for the student ( $M = 6.218$ ) and the mean appropriateness rating of the request for the professor ( $M = 6.115$ ),  $t(38) = .259$ ,  $p \leq .05$  is not significant. The application of the “protected” level of confidence ( $p \leq .01$ ) intensified the insignificance of the difference between the social standings of the interlocutors for the given request category.

*Table 13: Paired-samples t-test results for variable of interlocutors' social standings for request category 'would you mind lending/filling out'*

Forms on Social Standing – Student vs. Professor	Paired Samples Statistics		Paired Differences			Paired Samples Test				
	Mean	Std. Deviation	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Conf. Interval		t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
						Lower	Upper			
Would+Ger_St.	6.218	1.969	.102	2.476	.396	-.700	.905	.259	38	.797
Would+Ger_Prof	6.115	2.440								

Surprisingly, Russian students evaluated the request category ‘*would you mind lending/filling out*’ equally appropriate when it was addressed to the student and to the professor. In this case, the interlocutors’ social standings did not influence the subjects’ opinions on the appropriateness of the request category. The EFL instructors concur in their viewpoints that Russian participants were challenged with the ‘*would you mind + gerund*’ construction because this request pattern has a difficult grammar structure and it is quite neglected during class work. The instructors even suspected that the students pondered about the form of this request category more than over its function and contextual appropriateness. As one would assume, the challenging grammar of the request should throw it to the lower appropriateness levels for both types of addressees. The opposite effect is a conundrum which needs to be interpreted.

The participants’ comments provide a wide range of possible viewpoints on the appropriateness of this request category. For example, when it is addressed to the student, single individuals assign gender and humorous flavors to ‘*would you mind lending/filling out.*’ Others notice its powerful effect upon the addressee because it does not leave him any choice but to grant the object of the request to the speaker. In the comments for the professor situations, a few unexpected opinions indicated low frequency of this request pattern, its

personal attitude towards the interlocutor, impoliteness or insufficient politeness. Nevertheless, the overall assessment of ‘*would you mind lending/filing out*’ in the written protocol remains positive.

The following paired-samples t-test was conducted to check the influence of the addressees’ social standings on the level of appropriateness for ‘*I was wondering if you could lend/ fill out*’ request category. Table 14 contains the results obtained for this question. It demonstrates that the mean appropriateness rating for the request addressed to the student-addressee is significantly lower ( $M = 3.667$ ) than the mean appropriateness rating for the same request category used towards the professor ( $M = 6.513$ ),  $t(38) = -5.519$ ,  $p \leq .05$ .

*Table 14: Paired-samples t-test results for variable of interlocutors' social standings for request category 'I was wondering if you could lend/ fill out'*

Forms on Social Standing – Student vs. Professor	Paired Samples Statistics		Paired Differences			Paired Samples Test				
	Mean	Std. Deviation	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Conf. Interval		t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
						Lower	Upper			
If_could_St. - If_could_Prof.	3.667	2.705	-2.846	3.220	.515	-3.890	-1.802	-5.519	38	.000

The result does not change with the introduction of the “protected” level of confidence by means of the Bonferroni correction ( $p \leq .01$ ). The interlocutors’ social standings influenced the perceptions of Russian EFL participants upon the appropriateness of the request category ‘*I was wondering if you could.*’ They view it significantly more acceptable in the context with the superior interlocutor (i.e., the professor) and significantly less appropriate in conversations with the peer (i.e., the student). This means that the original hypothesis for Research Question Two is supported for the request pattern ‘*I was wondering if you could.*’

Finally, a paired-samples t-test was used to identify whether Russian EFL learners considered the importance of the interlocutors’ social standings when defining the appropriateness levels for ‘*I was wondering if you would lend/ fill out*’ request category. The results of the statistical analysis are represented in Table 15. As with the categories of ‘*can you lend/ fill out,*’ ‘*would you lend/ fill out,*’ and ‘*I was wondering if you could lend/ fill out,*’ the t-test results for ‘*I was wondering if you would lend/ fill out*’ display significant

differences between the mean appropriateness ratings in the context with the student ( $M = 3.397$ ) and those with the professor ( $M = 6.577$ ),  $t(38) = -6.212$ ,  $p \leq .05$ . The results of the statistical analysis remain the same with the “protected” level of confidence applied according to the Bonferroni correction ( $p \leq .01$ ). As was expected, the results of the statistical analysis indicate that Russian EFL learners prefer to use the most conventionally indirect requests, namely ‘*I was wondering if you would lend/fill out*’ with interlocutors of higher social standings, such as professors. In the situations with the student-hearer, this request formula was rated as significantly less acceptable.

*Table 15: Paired-samples t-test results for variable of interlocutors' social standings for request category 'I was wondering if you would lend/fill out'*

Forms on Social Standing – Student vs. Professor	Paired Samples Statistics		Paired Differences			95% Conf. Interval		t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
	Mean	Std. Deviation	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	Lower	Upper			
If_would_St.	3.397	2.463	-3.179	3.196	.511	-4.215	-2.143	-6.212	38	.000
If_would_Prof.	6.577	2.184								

The suppositions of the EFL instructors and comments of the participants also speak in favor of the fact that the social standings of the interlocutors is a significant variable for the appropriateness ratings of ‘*I was wondering if you could lend/fill out*’ and ‘*I was wondering if you would lend/fill out.*’ For instance, the EFL instructor who teaches Grammar and Conversation courses to the Russian EFL participants explained the learners’ attitude to the most conventionally indirect requests with the language interference from their Russian mother tongue: “Perhaps, longer and more elaborate phrases are marked as more polite/appropriate for situations where students need to keep subordination. I think they paid attention to the length of the phrase, to how it is constructed, how it sounds, and how it can be interpreted. It is quite logical that they perceived this phrase as more acceptable for the professor.” Once again, these findings corroborate with Berdiaev (1990), Brett (1998) and Adair et al. (2004).

Research Question Two dealt with the sociopragmatic variable of the interlocutors’ social standings and how it affects the participants’ evaluations of appropriateness across five

request categories. Five linguistic forms embedded into the request categories is another variable to be examined in this study. A detailed analysis of the influences that these linguistic forms impose on the perceptions of Russian EFL learners upon appropriateness of requests is provided below.

### 4.3 Research Question Three

#### **What linguistic forms affect the way Russian EFL learners estimate appropriateness/politeness of requests in situations where social standings of interlocutors vary?**

To answer Research Question Three, five request categories offered to Russian EFL learners in the acceptability questionnaire were split into five pairs according to the linguistic forms embedded into request categories that could presumably influence the subjects' perceptions of appropriateness of requests. When defining these linguistic forms, special attention was paid to identification of the preferences that Russian EFL learners displayed to modal verbs and grammar structures in requests. Table 16 demonstrates five pairs of linguistic forms that were analyzed across five request categories.

With the help of SPSS, a paired-samples t-test was conducted for each pair of the linguistic forms to determine which of them had stronger effects on the subjects when they evaluated the appropriateness/politeness of request categories aimed at different types

*Table 16: Linguistic forms embedded into request categories and analyzed in Research Question Three*

<b>Linguistic Forms</b>	<b>Compared Linguistic Forms</b>	
<i>can + Infinitive vs. would + Infinitive</i>	Can you lend/ fill out? (1)	Would you lend/fill out? (2)
<i>if you could vs. if you would</i>	I was wondering if you could lend/ fill out? (4)	I was wondering if you would lend/ fill out? (5)
<i>would + Infinitive vs. would + Gerund</i>	Would you lend/ fill out? (2)	Would you mind lending/ filling out? (3)
<i>would + Infinitive vs. if you would</i>	Would you lend/ fill out? (2)	I was wondering if you would lend/ fill out? (5)
<i>would + Gerund vs. if you would</i>	Would you mind lending/filling out? (3)	I was wondering if you would lend/fill out? (3)

of addressees (i.e., student and professor). The probability value (p-value) set to  $p \leq .05$  was used as a criterion for significance in the tests reported here. Similar to Research Question Two, multiple t-tests ( $n=10$ ) were conducted. Therefore, in order to protect the results of statistical analysis from false positives, the Bonferroni correction ( $p \leq .005$ ) was applied. As in Research Question Two, instead of treating the book and the questionnaire as two comparable but separate objects of requests, a ‘combined’ object of requests is used here as a perception ‘measure’ to conduct statistical analysis. In other words, the mean appropriateness rating for the appropriateness/politeness of each request category was calculated after calculating the combined means of appropriateness ratings for these request categories that Russian EFL participants provided in the book and the questionnaire situations together.

Table 17 demonstrates how Russian EFL learners differentiated the appropriateness of requests by looking at the linguistic forms ‘*can + Infinitive*’ and ‘*would + Infinitive*’ in ‘*Can you lend/fill out*’ and ‘*Would you lend/fill out*’ request categories. As seen from Table 17, statistically significant differences were found between the mean appropriateness/politeness ratings of request categories ‘*Can you lend/fill out*’ and ‘*Would you lend/fill out*’ for both types of addressees. Russian EFL participants evaluated the linguistic form ‘*can + Infinitive*’ as significantly less appropriate ( $M = 5.782$ ) than ‘*would + infinitive*’ ( $M = 7.013$ ) in situations where the student was addressed with requests. The results of the statistical analysis showed similar results for the professor-addressee, i.e., ‘*would + Infinitive*’ is significantly more appropriate ( $M = 3.769$ ) than ‘*can + Infinitive*’ ( $M = 2.577$ ). Thus, even with a peer-student, Russian EFL learners prefer the willingness modal verb ‘*would*’ to

*Table 17: Paired-samples t-test results for linguistic forms 'can+Infinitive' and 'would+Infinitive' in 'can you lend/fill out' and 'would you lend/fill out' request categories*

Pairs of Linguistic Forms for Each Type of Addressee	Paired Samples Statistics		Paired Differences			Paired Samples Test				
	Mean	Std. Deviation	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Conf. Interval		t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
						Lower	Upper			
Can+Inf._St.	5.782	1.999								
Would+Inf._St.	7.013	1.471	-1.230	2.022	.323	-1.886	-.575	-3.801	38	.001
Can+Inf._Prof.	2.577	2.607								
Would+Inf._Prof.	3.769	2.457	-1.192	1.988	.318	-1.837	-.547	-3.744	38	.001

'*can*,' which according to pragmalinguistic universals of conventionality designates manifesting ability (Lin, 2009). With the Bonferroni correction ( $p\text{-value} \leq .005$ ), the results of the statistical analysis also remain significant.

The combination of the written protocol provided by the Russian EFL learners in the acceptability questionnaire and the interpretations of the findings by the EFL instructors from the interview supplement the statistics well. The students' comments indicate that despite the available positive evaluations of appropriateness for '*can*,' they see '*would*' as more polite, less casual, and thus more acceptable in the student, and particularly in the professor situations. According to the observations provided by one of the EFL instructors, the students comfortably practice '*would you + Infinitive*' as a request pattern during class work. Therefore, since the significant difference between '*can*' and '*would*' has been presented on different levels for both types of addressees, it is possible to arrive to a conclusion that Russian EFL learners determine the past-tense willingness modal verb '*would*' as more appropriate in requests than the present tense ability modal verb '*can*.' As it was described in Chapter Two, past-tense modal verbs, such as '*could*' and '*would*' are among the preferred linguistic choices for requests among native English speakers (Chen, 2001).

The next pair of linguistic forms features modal verbs '*could*' and '*would*' in conventionally indirect requests '*I was wondering if you could lend/fill out*' and '*I was wondering if you would lend/fill out*' with consultative devices ('I was wondering') and conditional if-clauses. Table 18 summarizes the results that were obtained for this question through a dependent paired-samples t-test.

As can be seen in Table 18, the mean appropriateness ratings for '*I was wondering if you could*' and '*I was wondering if you would*' are insignificantly different when they occur in requests for the student ( $M = 3.667$ ;  $M = 3.397$ ),  $t(38) = 1.513$  and for the professor ( $M = 6.513$ ;  $M = 6.577$ ),  $t(38) = -.432$ ,  $p \leq .05$ . When the 'protected' level of confidence was applied through the Bonferroni correction ( $p\text{-value} \leq .005$ ), the differences between the mean appropriateness ratings of the linguistic forms remained insignificant for both types of addressees.



Table 18: Paired-samples t-test results for linguistic forms 'if you could' and 'if you would' in 'I was wondering if you could lend/fill out' and 'I was wondering if you would lend/fill out' request categories

Pairs of Linguistic Forms for Each Type of Addressee	Paired Samples Statistics		Paired Differences			Paired Samples Test				
	Mean	Std. Deviation	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Conf. Interval		t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
						Lower	Upper			
If_you_could_St.	3.667	2.705								
If_you_would_St.	3.397	2.463	.269	1.111	.177	-.091	.629	1.513	38	.139
If_you_could_Prof	6.513	2.144								
If_you_would_Prof.	6.577	2.184	-.064	.926	.148	-.364	.236	-.432	38	.668

These results suggest that the perception group does not differentiate between the modal verbs 'could' and 'would' when projecting most conventionally indirect requests with consultative device 'I was wondering' and if-clause to peer-students. The mean appropriateness ratings of both request types are rather low ( $M = 3.667$ ;  $M = 3.397$ ), which also indicates that the Russian EFL participants considered them not very appropriate for the suggested addressee. Drawing from the written comments in the acceptability questionnaire, it is possible to generalize that both conventionally indirect requests sound overly polite and excessively formal to the participants when the situation involves the peer-student context. This finding correlates with the conversational contact view perspective on politeness described by Fraser (1990) as one of the main approaches to politeness commonly adapted in research. With this perception in mind, it is possible to argue that Russian EFL learners selected both request categories (i.e., 'I was wondering if you could' and 'I was wondering if you would') as insufficiently appropriate for the interlocutors' status, power and roles in the interaction. A few unexpected remarks from the written protocol even pointed at rudeness of these request categories. Comments from the written protocol also suggest that Russian EFL learners are not familiar with the pragmatic function of 'I was wondering' construct with regards to requests by Lin (2009).

The findings of Research Questions Two and Three create a fuller picture of the situation. It appears that while clearly differentiating the social standings of the addressees (student vs. professor), Russian EFL learners revealed no difference between 'I was wondering if you could' or 'I was wondering if you would' for the student. Perhaps, these findings show that when the participants evaluated the same request categories for two

addressees, they saw that these requests created more threat to the face of the professor than of the student. If this is the case, then the findings from the Russian EFL learners may be looked at from the angle suggested by House (1989, p. 114): "...the more the situation is potentially face-threatening, the greater the likelihood than a nondirect requestive strategy such as the query-preparatory will be employed..." To be able to strengthen this assumption, we need to bring in the discussion for the professor setting.

The results of the statistical analysis derived for '*I was wondering if you could*' and '*I was wondering if you would*' for the professor scenario reveal that the participants did not make a significant distinction between '*if you could*' (M = 6.513) and '*if you would*' (M = 6.577),  $t(38) = -.432, p \leq .05$ . The Bonferroni correction (p-value  $\leq .005$ ) also did not change the situation. Hence, if the modal verbs '*could*' and '*would*' are the indicators of the relative increase in the face threat to the professor, the statistics do not show it when the professor is involved in the request scenario. Both, the ability convention past-tense modal verb '*could*' and willingness convention past-tense modal verb '*would*' were evaluated as quite appropriate for the professor-addressee. This is an unanticipated finding. Nevertheless the interviews with EFL instructors suggest its possible interpretation.

EFL instructors noticed that both conventionally indirect request categories caused a lot of confusion among the participants, since these request patterns are almost never practiced in class. The most conventionally indirect requests categories challenged the group of Russian EFL learners due the unfamiliar guess phrase '*I was wondering*' in the combination with the difficult grammar in the if-clause '*if you could/would*.' What is yet more unexpected, these request patterns were reported to be even less practiced than '*would you mind + Gerund*' pattern. That is why, the instructors supposed that during the evaluation of the appropriateness of '*I was wondering if you could/would*' request categories, the students mainly relied on their intuition and polite requests from Russian rather than on the knowledge of the actual forms and functions in the English requests categories.

At this point, the findings present enough evidence to suggest that Russian EFL learners consider both most conventionally indirect request categories rather inappropriate when addressing a peer-student. With the professor scenario, we may argue that both most conventionally indirect request categories are applicable to the interlocutor of a higher social

standing. However, the participants' confusion which took place around the linguistic forms embedded into the request categories suggests working on linguistic aspects of speech acts, such as word choice, and their functions in particular speech acts. According to Beebe and Waring (2005), such work may be more effective for L2 learners than teaching pragmatics strategies *per se*.

The next set of linguistic forms to be examined is '*would you + Infinitive*' and '*would you mind + Gerund*' embedded into '*would you lend/ fill out*' and '*would you mind lending/ filling out*' request categories. A t-test was conducted to compare how Russian EFL learners identified levels of appropriateness/politeness for these constructs in requests. Table 19 demonstrates the results of the statistical analysis.

*Table 19: Paired-samples t-test results for linguistic forms 'would+Infinitive' and 'would you mind+Gerund' in 'would you lend/fill out' and 'would you mind lending/filling out' request categories*

Pairs of Linguistic Forms for Each Type of Addressee	Paired Samples Statistics		Paired Differences			Paired Samples Test				
	Mean	Std. Deviation	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Conf. Interval		t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
						Lower	Upper			
Would+Inf._St.	7.013	1.471								
Would+Gerund_St	6.218	1.969	.794	2.520	.403	-.022	1.611	1.970	38	.056
Would+Inf._Prof.	3.769	2.457								
Would+Gerund _Prof.	6.115	2.440	-2.346	2.651	.424	-3.205	-1.486	-5.527	38	.000

Just as with the previous set of linguistic forms, Russian EFL learners saw no distinctions between the infinitive and gerund constructions in requests when they were addressed to the peer-student. The mean appropriateness rating of request category with '*would + Infinitive*' (M = 7.013) is insignificantly higher than the mean appropriateness rating of request category with '*would you mind + Gerund*' (M = 6.218),  $t(38) = 1.970$ ,  $p \leq .05$ . To avoid occurrence of false positives in the results of the statistical analysis, the Bonferroni correction to the level of confidence was introduced ( $p \leq .005$ ). However, it did not change the picture. The difference between the mean appropriateness ratings of the linguistic forms still remains insignificant for the student scenario. The mean appropriateness ratings are above average for both request categories. Apparently, Russian

EFL learners consider both constructs to be relatively appropriate for the student-addressee. Comments from the acceptability questionnaire characterize them as suitable and polite.

With the professor-addressee, the findings mirror a trend which is different from what happened with *'if you could'* and *'if you would'* constructs. Russian EFL learners clearly contrasted the appropriateness levels for the request patterns with the infinitive and gerund when the addressee is of a higher social position than the speaker. The results of the statistical analysis show that *'would you mind lending/filling out'* is significantly more appropriate ( $M = 6.115$ ) than *'would you lend/fill out'* ( $M = 3.769$ ),  $t_1(38) = -5.527$ ,  $p \leq .05$ . The “protected” level of confidence applied to the results of the analysis by means of the Bonferroni correction ( $p \leq .005$ ) does not affect them. Therefore, the hypothesis that Russian EFL learners relate linguistic means of conventional indirectness in requests directly to the level of contextual appropriateness of these requests is supported statistically for *'would you + Infinitive'* and *'would you mind + Gerund'* when addressed to the professor.

When the *'would you lend/fill out'* request category is aimed at the professor, a number of comments from the written protocol indicate the participants' concern about its insufficient politeness, excessive directness and lack of formality and respect for the hearer. The amount of criticism noticeably decreases for *'would you mind lending/filling out'* request category. As the EFL instructors supposed, *'would you mind + Gerund'* could remind the learners of a Russian indirect request pattern that they commonly employ in interactions with professors at a Russian university. Therefore, it is quite possible that the preference of *'would you mind + Gerund'* request strategy in the professor situations is an example of a negative transfer, which occurred when Russian EFL learners compared two linguistic forms. As was mentioned in Chapter Two, Takahashi (1996) discovered that Russian L2 learners resorted to a negative transfer during the production of apologies. This study indicates that negative transfer may also occur for Russian L2 learners during the evaluation of requests.

Comparison of the willingness modal verb *'would'* in requests with the infinitive (i.e., *'would you lend/fill out'*) and with the consultative device and if-clause (i.e., *'I was wondering if you would lend/fill out'*) exhibited anticipated results. Table 20 demonstrates the preferences Russian EFL learners made when choosing between the given linguistic forms. As it is displayed in Table 20, the mean appropriateness rating for *'would you +*

*Infinitive*' (M = 7.013) is significantly higher than the mean appropriateness rating for '*if you would*' (M = 3.397) when the student was the addressee,  $t(38) = 7.059, p \leq .05$ . The Bonferroni correction to the level of confidence ( $p \leq .005$ ) does not affect the significance of these results. They mean that the participants discarded the conditional clause '*if you would*' as an element of an appropriate request for the student-related context. For the professor, the mean appropriateness rating for '*would you + Infinitive*' is significantly lower (M = 3.769) than the mean appropriateness rating for '*if you would*' (M = 6.577),  $t(38) = -4.782, p \leq .05$ . The "protected" level of confidence ( $p \leq .005$ ) does not violate the significance of the results. Therefore, the original hypothesis that less conventionally direct requests are more acceptable during interactions with the peer-student rather than with the professor is fully supported statistically for '*would you lend/ fill out*' and '*I was wondering if you would lend/ fill out.*'

Table 20: Paired-samples t-test results for linguistic forms 'would+Infinitive' and 'if you would' in 'would you lend/fill out' and 'I was wondering if you would lend/fill out' request categories

Pairs of Linguistic Forms for Each Type of Addressee	Paired Samples Statistics		Paired Differences			Paired Samples Test				
	Mean	Std. Deviation	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Conf. Interval		t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
						Lower	Upper			
Would+Inf._St.	7.013	1.471								
If_you_would_St.	3.397	2.463	3.615	3.198	.512	2.578	4.652	7.059	38	.000
Would+Inf._Prof.	3.769	2.457								
If_you_would_Prof.	6.577	2.184	-2.807	3.666	.587	-3.996	-1.619	-4.782	38	.000

These statistics are as well supported by the written protocol data from the acceptability questionnaire. Criticism about the use of '*I was wondering if you would*' towards the student can be categorized into three groups (Appendix M). First, the majority of Russian EFL learners see it unreasonably polite and formal for the peer-student, whereas '*would you lend/fill out,*' on the contrary, is mostly suitable, polite, informal and casual. Second, if it is addressed to the student, several respondents view the conventional indirect request '*I was wondering if you would*' in a negative adulation light. Finally, the third group of the subjects considers this request category to be poorly worded and thus, apparently, confusing or incorrect on the syntactic and grammar levels. The EFL instructors subscribe to

the opinion that Russian native speakers obviously mark expanded request constructions as more appropriate for the interlocutor with the higher social status. Evidently, a combination of a consultative device ‘*I was wondering,*’ if-clause and past tense modal verb ‘*would*’ in one request pattern made the group of Russian EFL learners conscious of its distinctive appropriateness for the professor and inappropriateness for the peer-student.

Finally, a paired-samples t-test was conducted to compare how the willingness modal verb ‘*would*’ embedded into ‘*would you mind + Gerund*’ construct and then into an if-clause in ‘*I was wondering if you would*’ affected the perceptions of Russian EFL about the appropriateness of requests. The results of this comparison are exhibited in Table 21. The table shows that the student and professor addressees introduce noticeable differences in the appropriateness of requests. As expected, when the addressee is a student, the mean appropriateness rating for the requests with ‘*would you mind + Gerund*’ (M = 6.218) is significantly higher than the mean rating for the most conventionally indirect request with ‘*if you would*’ (M = 3.397),  $t(38) = 8.088, p \leq .05$ . The difference between these linguistic forms remains significant with the Bonferroni correction to the level of confidence ( $p \leq .005$ ). Just like it was earlier discovered for ‘*would you + Infinitive,*’ the comparison of ‘*would you mind + Gerund*’ with ‘*if you would*’ in the student-addressee scenario reveals the same significant advantage position of the less conventionally indirect request scenario (i.e., ‘*would you mind + Gerund*’) over the most conventionally indirect one (i.e., ‘*I was wondering if you would*’).

*Table 21: Paired-samples t-test results for linguistic forms 'would you mind+Gerund' and 'if you would' in 'would you mind lending/filling out' and 'I was wondering if you would lend/fill out' request categories*

Pairs of Linguistic Forms for Each Type of Addressee	Paired Samples Statistics		Paired Differences			Paired Samples Test				
	Mean	Std. Deviation	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Conf. Interval		t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
						Lower	Upper			
Would+Gerund_ St.	6.218	1.969								
If_you_would_St.	3.397	2.463	2.820	2.177	.348	2.114	3.526	8.088	38	.000
Would+Gerund_ Prof.	6.115	2.440								
If_you_would_ Prof.	6.577	2.184	-.461	3.698	.592	-1.660	.737	-.779	38	.441

The picture changes dramatically when the Russian EFL learners evaluate the appropriateness/politeness of requests within the professor-addressee scenario. Strikingly, when aimed at the professor, the grammatical structures maintain unessential differences with regards to the mean appropriateness ratings of the request patterns. The mean appropriateness rating of the request with the willingness modal verb *'would'* embedded into an if-clause *'if you would'* ( $M = 6.577$ ) is insignificantly higher than the mean appropriateness rating of the request with *'would'* incorporated into *'to mind + Gerund'* construction ( $M = 6.115$ ),  $t(38) = -.779$ ,  $p \leq .05$ . The same results remain with the p-value set by means of the Bonferroni correction to  $p \leq .005$ .

In the light of these findings, the original hypothesis that Russian EFL learners evaluate less conventionally indirect requests as more acceptable for peers holds true, because according to the classification of conventionally indirect requests suggested by Blum-Kulka (1989), *'I was wondering if you would lend/fill out'* is more indirect than *'would you mind lending/filling out.'* However, it is surprising that the same hypothesis is ineffective within the professor-addressee situations. The mean appropriateness ratings of both request categories go beyond the medium value on the Likert-type scale, which indicates the participants consider both linguistic forms quite appropriate. However, neither of them becomes their preference.

According to the data from the written protocol, the criticism for using *'I was wondering if you would'* seems to embrace a noticeably larger scope of weaknesses than it does for *'would you mind + Gerund.'* As it was mentioned above, Russian EFL learners commented on the excessive politeness, adulation flavor, poor wording, and low frequency of *'I was wondering if you would'* in the professor scenario. For *'would you mind lending/filling out,'* the participants just mention its insufficient politeness toward the professor and its low frequency as a request pattern. Do Russian EFL learners hesitate when choosing between the linguistic forms *'would you mind + Gerund'* and *'if you would'* in terms of their acceptability for the professor? Possibly, though there is not enough data in this study to answer this question. One hypothetical assumption is the existence of an appropriateness threshold. Once a request category moves above the threshold, Russian EFL learners cease to notice any further differences between linguistic forms incorporated into

such request pattern. However, more research needs to be done to provide evidence for this hypothesis. Meanwhile, the comparison of five sets of linguistic forms embedded into five conventional indirect request categories suggests that Russian EFL learners indeed determine the levels of appropriateness/politeness in requests depending on certain linguistic forms incorporated into them.



## CHAPTER 5. CONCLUSION

Given that the pragmatic studies surveyed in the literature review on requests do not specifically provide insight to the performance of Russian EFL learners on speech acts, requests in particular, this work attempts to fill this gap by examining their perceptions of appropriateness/politeness of requests in situations where the social standings of interlocutors differ. The findings of the study are quite complex.

The analysis of the sociopragmatic factors in the contextual situations revealed interesting results. The social standings of the interlocutors (i.e., student-addressee and professor-addressee) influence the perceptions of Russian EFL learners about the appropriateness of five request categories. As was previously expected, Russian EFL learners viewed less conventionally indirect requests (i.e., *'can you lend/fill out,' 'would you lend/fill out'*) as more appropriate when they were addressed to the peer-student and, vice versa, less appropriate when they were aimed at the professor. The most conventionally indirect requests (i.e., *'I was wondering if you could lend/fill out'* and *'I was wondering if you would lend/fill out'*), on the contrary, were found to be more appropriate when they were aimed at the professor and less appropriate when the interlocutor was a peer-student. Against the expectations, the request pattern *'would you mind lending/filling out'* established a distinctive threshold of appropriateness/politeness for the addressees of both social standings. In other words, the social standings of the addressees did not influence the perceptions of Russian EFL learners on the appropriateness of this request category. It is quite possible that the participants assigned mostly positive pragmatic ratings for *'would you mind lending/filling out'* for both types of addressees due to the fact that they are taught to do so during their English classes, and due to the pragmatic transfer from the Russian language.

The mean appropriateness ratings of five sets of request categories with different linguistic forms embedded into them (i.e., *'can + Infinitive'* vs. *'would + Infinitive;'* *'I was wondering if you could'* vs. *'I was wondering if you would;'* *'would you + Infinitive'* vs. *'would you mind + Gerund;'* *'would you + Infinitive'* vs. *'I was wondering if you would;'* *'would you mind + Gerund'* vs. *'I was wondering if you would'*) were compared in view of the effects the linguistic forms made on the perceptions of Russian EFL learners about the

appropriateness/politeness of requests. The obtained preferences of Russian EFL learners are not the originally anticipated patterns, as will be discussed in the following paragraphs.

When the roles of the present tense ability-convention modal verb ‘*can*’ and of the past tense willingness-convention modal verb ‘*would*’ were compared (in ‘*can* + *Infinitive*’ vs. ‘*would* + *Infinitive*’), the findings indicated that ‘*would*’ made the conventionally indirect request more appropriate for the addressees of both social standings. For the situations where the hearer’s social status was higher than that of the speaker, this result conforms to the original hypothesis that Russian EFL learners consider more conventionally indirect requests to be more pragmatically appropriate for the professor. The preference of ‘*would*’ to ‘*can*’ became unexpected with the peer-student addressee in mind. Perhaps, these findings can be explained with the classroom effect (i.e., that ‘*would*’ is more polite in requests than ‘*can*’), as indicated in the interviews of the EFL instructors on the findings from the acceptability questionnaire.

In accordance with the original hypothesis for the study, Russian EFL learners did not notice any significant difference between the past tense modal verbs ‘*could*’ and ‘*would*’ embedded into the most conventionally indirect requests ‘*I was wondering if you could lend/fill out*’ and ‘*I was wondering if you would lend/fill out.*’ Both of these request categories were evaluated as insufficiently appropriate/polite when they were addressed to the peer-student and quite appropriate/polite when addressed to the professor. Supposedly, these requests categories were evaluated intuitively or with reliance on Russian linguistic forms, since both, Russian EFL learners, and their EFL instructors noted insufficient familiarity of the participants with the overall linguistic structure of these request patterns in English.

In the case of ‘*would you* + *Infinitive*’ and ‘*would you mind* + *Gerund,*’ the findings indicate that Russian EFL learners did not make any distinctions between these linguistic forms, but considered both of them quite appropriate in requests for the student-addressee. Contrary to the expectation, the absence of subordination between the interlocutors in the situations with the peer-student did not trigger the participants’ preference for the less conventionally indirect request form ‘*would you* + *Infinitive.*’ As for the professor-related context, the linguistic form with gerund ‘*would you mind lending/filling out*’ became an

obvious favorite. Therefore, the hypothesis that Russian EFL learners relate linguistic forms of conventional indirectness in requests directly to the level of contextual appropriateness of requests aimed for a person of authority was supported statistically for ‘*would you + Infinitive*’ and ‘*would you mind + Gerund*.’ Of course, more research is needed to validate the explanation to this phenomenon. Meanwhile, a plausible explanation suggested by the EFL instructors is a negative pragmatic transfer from the Russian language and Russian social practices (i.e., an equivalent Russian form ‘*would you mind*’ would be used in requests towards an interlocutor of a higher social status).

The findings for the comparison of ‘*would you + Infinitive*’ and ‘*I was wondering if you would*’ conform to the anticipated results. Russian EFL learners favored the linguistic construction with an infinitive as a more appropriate and less formal request pattern than the one with the *if*-clause for the student-addressee setting. Alternatively, the expanded and the most conventionally indirect request ‘*I was wondering if you would*’ appeared to be more appropriate than the request with the ‘*would + Infinitive*’ construction for the professor-addressee.

Consistent with the previously mentioned discovery is the finding that Russian EFL learners evaluated ‘*would you mind + Gerund*’ as more appropriate for the peer-student addressee when it was compared with ‘*I was wondering if you would*.’ Surprisingly, the professor-addressee context failed to provide corresponding results. No significant differences were discovered between the appropriateness of these request patterns, and both linguistic forms complied with the participants’ vision of the request appropriateness/politeness to be used towards the professor. The comments of the participants from the written protocol and EFL instructors’ suppositions about the findings suggest possible clues to the interpretation of this phenomenon. One hypothetical explanation is the existence of a pragmalinguistic threshold. Once a request moves above the threshold, Russian EFL learners cease to notice any pragmatic functions that linguistic structures fulfill in request patterns. Of course, a follow-up study would have to be conducted to validate this assumption.

Having provided a summary of the results, the rest of this chapter will explore the classroom implications of the findings, limitations in the study, and suggestions for further research.

## 5.1 Implications

There are several pedagogical implications that can be derived from the study. First, the participants may demonstrate intuitive awareness of some common language patterns suitable for interaction in the foreign language, but they may not be consciously aware of the pragmatic functions that various linguistic forms fulfill in certain speech acts. For instance, the failure to recognize the most conventionally indirect request '*I was wondering if you could/would*' as appropriate in the student-addressee situations may be pointing at the fact that Russian EFL learners are not familiar with the forms and functions of these two request patterns. In this instance it is reasonable to agree with the suggestions made by Beebe and Waring (2005) about the effectiveness of work on execution of linguistic aspects of speech acts, such as word choice and their functions in particular speech act strategies for L2 learners. Hence, EFL teachers might need to incorporate explicit context-based analysis and discussion of authentic forms and functions commonly applied in requests into their classroom activities.

Second, it is quite possible that some EFL learners may not realize what is involved in complex speech act behavior (Cohen and Olshtain, 1993, p. 90), and how the appropriateness/politeness in requests may differ across cultures and languages. Several comments from the written protocol revealed that some learners erroneously transferred pragmatic meanings of linguistic forms from Russian to conventionally indirect requests in English. These negative pragmatic transfers resulted in misleading judgments about the appropriateness of certain linguistic forms in English requests. For example, it is possible that the Russian equivalent for '*I was wondering if you would fill out a questionnaire*' may sound excessively polite and even ingratiating when it is addressed to the peer-student. Therefore, EFL learners could benefit from an open classroom discussion of differences between request practices in Russian and American cultures. A comparison and analysis of various linguistic forms with regards to indirectness in speech acts as they are practiced in Russian and English may also prove effective in raising pragmatic awareness of EFL learners (Mills, 1992; Ogiemann, 2009).

Finally, it is important to direct L2 learners' attention to their pragmalinguistic knowledge and present them with an opportunity to provide introspections about what they know. In this study, the Russian EFL learners were offered the role of a self-observer, since they had to judge the appropriateness of different forms. They drew on their pragmalinguistic knowledge, previous experience of using the linguistic structures, and consciously reflected on their decision through written explanations. It seems that similar types of tasks in the classroom may raise Russian EFL learners' pragmatic awareness in English.

## **5.2 Limitations**

The limitations of this study are mainly due to its design and constraints entailed by the data collection instruments. First, despite the attempts to minimize all unnecessary variables from the four constructed situations, some were still discovered in the course of the study. Several experts from the expert analysis group said the contexts of the situations were not elaborated enough to clarify certain details about the interlocutors. For instance, the contexts did not provide any information about the personal attitudes of the interlocutors towards each other. In the situations with the peer-addressee, it was not clear whether the student-hearer needed the book to get ready for an assignment, thus indicating a degree, which could have been a factor (i.e., the greater the need, the greater the degree of imposition, and the greater the level of politeness in a request). In the questionnaire context, the situations did not indicate the level of difficulty, the amount of time, and effort it required from the addressees to complete it. According to the experts, these missing details affected the level of familiarity and imposition of requests in the situations. The above mentioned omissions may also have influenced the performances of the participants from the request production and perception groups. It is possible that the native English speakers paid attention to these details during the production of requests, and the Russian EFL learners may have subconsciously considered them when they evaluated the appropriateness of the requests.

Second, one limitation was discovered during the analysis of the completed expert group surveys. A few experts were especially sensitive to the time imposition upon the professor in the questionnaire context. Perhaps, they drew on their personal attitudes, opinions and face threatening experiences to the constructed contexts. It is quite likely that a larger number of participants in the expert analysis group would reveal inequivalence between the book and the questionnaire as objects for requests. Nevertheless, elimination of personal factors from research on language pragmatics, requests in particular, may be unrealistic to attain.

Third, the design of data collection from the request production group also revealed a few limitations. As was expected, the elaborated semi-oral DCT triggered the so-called 'observer's paradox' effect. Due to this factor, one undergraduate ISU student expressed her concern about the unreliability of the elaborated semi-oral DCT for elicitation of naturalistic requests. Therefore, as Chapter Two explains, given the design of the study, the native speakers of English did not produce authentic requests but rather introspections to possible verbal behavior during the suggested situations. Moreover, as it was discussed in Chapter Two, previous studies proved an elaborated DCT to be an effective tool for elicitation of speech act introspections. A small number of ISU students recruited for the study confined the categories of elicited request introspections to five types. It would be reasonable to expect that using a larger group of undergraduate English speakers would have resulted in a wider range of pragmatic patterns in requests produced for the same situations.

A fourth limitation is that the composition of the perception group did not consist entirely of Russian native speakers. One participant in the group indicated Azerbaijani as his L1. Due to the possible influence of Azerbaijani sociocultural practices, this person may have demonstrated a slightly different perception of appropriateness/politeness in requests. Despite his different L1, the student's acceptability questionnaire did not reveal any noticeable differences from those of the rest of the perception group. In addition, one of the EFL instructors verified that this participant's level of Russian was native-like.

Finally, no empirical studies on requests involving Russian EFL learners were discovered. As a result, no existing studies on perception of requests involving Russian

learners could be used to inform the design of this research or the interpretation of its findings.

### 5.3 Suggestions for Further Research

The perceptions of EFL learners on the appropriateness/politeness of various linguistic forms in face threatening speech acts is a promising area for research in language pragmatics. This study explored how two social standings of addressees (i.e., equal and unequal) and five sets of linguistic forms (i.e., *can* vs. *would*; *could* vs. *would*; *would* + *Infinitive* vs. *would* + *Gerund*; *would* + *Infinitive* vs. *if you would*; *would* + *Gerund* vs. *if you would*) embedded into the head speech acts of requests affected the perceptions of Russian EFL learners upon the appropriateness/politeness of requests. The findings discovered in this research are rather interesting and project valuable insights for the fields of pragmalinguistics, cross-cultural sociopragmatics and interlanguage pragmalinguistics. Although the study provided answers to the research questions specified in Chapter One, it also raised relevant issues that could be of potential interest for further research in this area. Below are some ideas for future investigations of requests that could employ Russian EFL learners.

First, a replication of this study with more elaborated contexts (i.e., providing more details about the relationships between the interlocutors and the degrees of request imposition) for the elaborated semi-oral DCT could yield more generalizable results. To attain better comparability between the constructed contexts, the objects of requests in the situations may be substituted with other items that students commonly request from their peers and professors (e.g., references of an article or links to pertinent websites). It would also be interesting to see if an increase in the number of participants in the request production group can contribute to the quantity and consistent patterns of request categories that can be subsequently used with Russian EFL learners during the evaluation of their pragmatic appropriateness.

Second, a new study could undertake a comparative analysis of the perceptions of appropriateness/politeness in requests from the perspectives of Russian EFL learners and

their English native-speaking peers from an American university. Such a study could provide insights to whether non-native English speakers are more sensitive to politeness in speech acts than native English speakers (Kitao et al., 1981). With respect to the data collection methodology for such a study, it could still resort to native English-speaking undergraduates for request introspections, and then employ a new group of native English speakers for the evaluation of appropriateness/politeness of requests. The study set up would supposedly address quantitative and qualitative differences between the perceptions of native English speakers and Russian EFL learners upon appropriateness/politeness in requests, and possibly provide some valuable ideas for EFL instructors and their class work.

Third, instead of request perceptions, a study might investigate request production. A research like this may look at the scope of linguistic forms that Russian EFL learners prefer to use to comply with certain pragmatic practices in interactions between people of different social standings. Moreover, since speech acts is a fertile ground for examination of interpersonal communication strategies, the requests produced by EFL learners could be examined from the standpoint of the appraisal theory, which according to Eggins and Slade (1997, p. 124) looks at the “attitudinal coloring of talk along a range of dimensions including certainty, emotional response, social evaluation, and intensity.” In such a study, possible research questions may address the awareness of EFL learners about attitudinal meanings in requests, for example mitigations. In other words, a study would look at how Russian EFL learners express indirectness, mitigate the impositions of requests, and indicate vagueness or incompleteness in requests.

Furthermore, in the course of current studies on impoliteness in interaction, it would also be of interest to focus on how Russian EFL learners perceive rudeness or impoliteness in requests produced by native English speakers. The study performed by Beebe and Waring (2005) may serve as pilot for such a project. The study could possibly shed more light on negative transfer from L1 that learners of English may exhibit through matching forms and functions of linguistic elements in requests while indentifying various levels of their impoliteness.



In sum, the investigation of request speech act in general and with regards to Russian EFL learners' perceptions in particular has much to offer the fields of pragmalinguistics, cross-cultural sociopragmatics and interlanguage pragmalinguistics.

## APPENDIX A. EXPERT ANALYSIS SURVEY

*Participation in this survey is voluntary. All the information obtained through the survey will be kept strictly confidential.*

*The purpose of this study is to see how Russian EFL learners evaluate contextual appropriateness of requests produced by native English speakers in situations where the social status of the interlocutors varies (i.e., a student and a professor).*

*Please, read the following four situations one by one and answer the questions that follow each situation.*

What speech act(s) would you produce as an answer to the question ‘What would you say?’ in situation a)? Please, circle all speech acts that apply.

### **Situation a)**

You are at the end of a history class and you are sitting next to Tom Yates. Your history textbook hasn’t arrived yet and you need to borrow his book. He has been in the same program as you for one year, and you see him socially about once a month in a group. You will also be taking classes in the future. He is one of the best students in class. You have borrowed his book twice before, and he did not seem to mind. At the end of next week you have a presentation to make about your readings.

#### **What would you say?**

1. How would you define the social distance between two interlocutors in situation a)?
2. How would you define the level of familiarity between two interlocutors in situation a)?
3. On the basis of all the sociopragmatic information available from situation a), and your previous answers to questions 1 and 2, how would you define the imposition of the request in situation a)?

- request
- apology
- greeting
- complaint
- refusal
- compliment
- invitation
- reproach
- other \_\_\_\_\_
- small
- medium
- large
- small
- medium
- large
- small
- medium
- large

What speech act(s) would you produce as an answer to the question ‘What would you say?’ in situation b)?

### **Situation b)**

You are looking for a book, which you know the History instructor, professor Smith, has. You have been in this program for a year and took a class with this professor last semester. Now you see each other once in a while in the hall and say hello. There is a possibility that you will be taking one of his classes in future. You borrowed books from professor Smith twice in the past, and he did not seem to mind. The book you need now contains some reading for your next week’s test. As you are walking down the hall, you see professor Smith approaching.

#### **What would you say?**

1. How would you define the social distance between two interlocutors in situation b)?
2. How would you define the level of familiarity between two interlocutors in situation b)?
3. On the basis of all the sociopragmatic information available from situation b), and your answers to questions 4 and 5, how would you define the imposition of the request in this situation?

- request
- apology
- greeting
- complaint
- refusal
- compliment
- invitation
- reproach
- other \_\_\_\_\_
- small
- medium
- large
- small
- medium
- large
- small
- medium
- large

What speech act(s) would you produce as an answer to the question ‘What would you say?’ in situation c)?

**Situation c)**

You are collecting data for your history class project via written questionnaire which you created. Now you are looking for people who could fill your questionnaires out. It is lunch time and you are sitting in a café. Mike Stratford, who is in your class, and also has been in the same program with you for a year, suddenly takes a seat next to you. You see Mike socially about once a month in a group. You think that both of you will continue taking same classes in future. You have seen other people from your class asking Mike to fill their questionnaires out. He did not seem to mind doing that. Your project is due the end of next week.

**What would you say?**

1. How would you define the social distance between two interlocutors in situation c)?
2. How would you define the level of familiarity between two interlocutors in situation c)?
3. On the basis of all the sociopragmatic information available from situation c), and your answers to questions 7 and 8, how would you define the imposition of the request in this situation?  
What speech act(s) would you produce as an answer to the question 'What would you say?' in situation d)?

**Situation d)**

You are collecting data for your history class project via written questionnaire which you created. Now you are looking for people who could fill your questionnaires out. It is lunch time, and you are sitting in a café. Professor McCormick, whose history class you took last year, takes a seat next to you. You run into each other on campus every other week or two, and say hello. There is a possibility that you will be taking a class with him in future. You know that other students from your history class have asked professor McCormick to fill their questionnaires out. And he did not say no to them. Your project is due the end of next week.

**What would you say?**

1. How would you define the social distance between two interlocutors in situation d)?
2. How would you define the level of familiarity between two interlocutors in situation d)?
3. On the basis of all the sociopragmatic information available from situation d), and your answers to questions 10 and 11, how would you define the imposition of the request in this situation?

- request
- apology
- greeting
- complaint
- refusal
- compliment
- invitation
- reproach
- other \_\_\_\_\_

- small
- medium
- large
- small
- medium
- large
- small
- medium
- large

- request
- apology
- greeting
- complaint
- refusal
- compliment
- invitation
- reproach
- other \_\_\_\_\_

- small
- medium
- large
- small
- medium
- large
- small
- medium
- large

*Thank you for participating in the research!*

## APPENDIX B. DEMOGRAPHIC QUESTIONNAIRE FOR REQUEST PRODUCTION GROUP

*Participation in this survey is voluntary. All the information obtained through the survey will be kept strictly confidential.*

*This information will be used in a research on how Russian learners of English view requests in different situations. This demographic information will be used by the researcher for statistical purposes only, and will appear in the research as summarized data.*

*Please circle one answer that fits you best for each question in this survey.*

1. Are you a:           \* female           \* male?
  
2. Your age:
  - less than 20   • 20-21           • 22-23           • 24-25           • 26-27
  - 28-29           • 30-31           • 32-33           • 34-35           • over 35
  
3. Are you a native speaker of English?   \* Yes   \* No
  
4. Are you a:           \* graduate           \* undergraduate student?

*Thank you for participation in the research!*

## APPENDIX C. ELABORATED SEMI-ORAL DCT

### Situation 1

*Participation in this survey is voluntary. All the information obtained through the survey will be kept strictly confidential.*

*This is not a test. We are interested in what you think.*

*If you have a question, please ask before you provide your response to the question on this card.*

You are at the end of a history class and you are sitting next to Tom Yates. Your history textbook hasn't arrived yet and you need to borrow his book. He has been in the same program as you for one year, and you see him socially about once a month in a group. You will also be taking classes in the future. He is one of the best students in class. You have borrowed his book twice before, and he did not seem to mind. At the end of next week you have a presentation to make about your readings.

What would you say?

### Situation 2

*Participation in this survey is voluntary. All the information obtained through the survey will be kept strictly confidential.*

*This is not a test. We are interested in what you think.*

*If you have a question, please ask before you provide your response to the question on this card.*

You are looking for a book, which you know a History instructor, Professor Smith, has. You have been in this program for a year and took a class with this professor last semester. Now you see each other once in a while in the hall and say hello. There is a possibility that you will be taking one of his classes in future. You borrowed books from Professor Smith twice in the past, and he did not seem to mind. The book you need now contains some reading for your next week's test. As you are walking down the hall, you see Professor Smith approaching.

What would you say?

### Situation 3

*Participation in this survey is voluntary. All the information obtained through the survey will be kept strictly confidential.*

*This is not a test. We are interested in what you think.*

*If you have a question, please ask before you provide your response to the question on this card.*

You are collecting data for your history class project via written questionnaire which you created. Now you are looking for people who could fill your questionnaires out. It is lunch time and you are sitting in a café. Mike Stratford, who is in your class, and also has been in the same program with you for a year, suddenly takes a seat next to you. You see Mike socially about once a month in a group. You think that both of you will continue taking same classes in future. You have seen other people from your class asking Mike to fill their questionnaires out. He did not seem to mind doing that. Your project is due the end of next week.

What would you say?

Situation 4

*Participation in this survey is voluntary. All the information obtained through the survey will be kept strictly confidential.*

*This is not a test. We are interested in what you think.*

*If you have a question, please ask before you provide your response to the question on this card.*

You are collecting data for your history class project via written questionnaire which you created. Now you are looking for people who could fill your questionnaires out. It is lunch time, and you are sitting in a café. Professor McCormick, whose history class you took last year, takes a seat next to you. You run into each other on campus every other week or two, and say hello. There is a possibility that you will be taking a class with him in future. You know that other students from your history class have asked professor McCormick to fill their questionnaires out. And he did not say no to them. Your project is due the end of next week.

What would you say?

## APPENDIX D. DEMOGRAPHIC QUESTIONNAIRE FOR PERCEPTION GROUP

*Participation in this survey is voluntary. All the information obtained through the survey will be kept strictly confidential.*

*This information will be used in a research on how Russian learners of English perceive appropriateness/politeness in requests in situations where addressees are of different social status. This demographic information will be used by the researcher for statistical purposes only, and will appear in the research as summarized data. Please circle **one** answer which fits you best for each question in this survey.*

**Please, write your name in Russian here:**

1. **Are you a:**           \* female           \* male?
2. **Your age:**           • less than 20   • 20-21           • 22-23           • 24-25           • 26-27  
                                  • 28-29           • 30-31           • 32-33           • 34-35           • over 35
3. **Are you a native speaker of Russian?**   \* Yes   \* No (indicate your native language)
4. **Are you a:**           \* graduate           \* undergraduate student?
5. **How long have you studied English in Russia?**
  - less than 4 years
  - 4 years
  - 5 years
  - 6 years
  - 7 years
  - 8 years
  - 9 years
  - 10 years
  - 11 years
  - 12 years
  - 13 years
  - 14 years or longer
6. **How long did you study English in the United States or other English speaking country?**
  - never studied English outside of Russia
  - less than one month
  - less than two months
  - less than three months
  - less than 6 months
  - 6-12 months
  - less than 1.5 years
  - less than 2 years
  - less than 2.5 years
  - less than 3 years
  - longer than 3 years
7. **How long did you live in the United States or other English speaking country?**
  - never lived in an English speaking country
  - less than one month
  - less than two months
  - less than three months
  - less than 6 months
  - 6-12 months
  - less than 1.5 years
  - less than 2 years
  - less than 2.5 years
  - less than 3 years
  - longer than 3 years
8. **Outside of class, how many Americans or other native speakers of English do you talk to, on average, every day?**  
                                  0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 (people) 9 (more than 8 people)
9. **How long do you spend conversing with them in an average day?**
  - I don't speak to native speakers of English outside of class
  - 0-30 min.
  - 30 min. to one hour
  - one hour to one hour and 30 min.
  - one hour and 30 min. to two hours
  - two hours to two hours and 30 min.
  - longer than two hours and 30 min.
10. **On average, how long do you watch TV in English each day?**
  - I don't watch TV in English
  - 0-30 min.
  - 30 min. to hour
  - hour to hour and 30 min
  - hour and 30 min. to two hours
  - two hours to two hours and 30 min.
  - longer than two hours and 30 min.

## APPENDIX E. ACCEPTABILITY QUESTIONNAIRE

*Participation in this survey is voluntary. All the information obtained through the survey will be kept strictly confidential. Your name will be deleted from this survey form as soon as the researcher has collected and clarified all the data necessary for the research.*

*This is a questionnaire to find out how you evaluate degrees of contextual appropriateness/politeness of requests in situations where the social status of addressees varies. Please use your intuition and **evaluate each utterance from the lists provided for all four situations** on a ten-point scale from 0 to 9. Please be attentive when evaluating! Assign “9” to the requests that seem most appropriate to you, “8” – to those which seem less appropriate and “0” to the least appropriate/polite requests. You can assign same values to several utterances if you think they correspond with the same level of appropriateness/politeness for the provided situations. Please explain your ratings **in Russian** in blank spaces below each scale. Make sure you write your comments in clear handwriting!*

*Your opinion is very important and highly appreciated!*

*Please write your name in Russian here:*

**Situation 1.**

You are at the end of a history class and you are sitting next to Tom Yates. Your history textbook has not arrived yet and you need to borrow his book. He has been in the same program as you for one year, and you see him socially about once a month in a group. You will also be taking classes together in the future. He is one of the best students in class. You have borrowed his books twice before, and he did not seem to mind. At the end of next week, you have a presentation to make about your readings.

What would you say? Here is what people said in this situation:

1. I was wondering if you would lend me a book?      not appropriate/polite      0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9      very appropriate/polite  
 Please explain your opinion in Russian:  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

2. Can you lend me a book?      not appropriate/polite      0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9      very appropriate/polite  
 Please explain your opinion in Russian:  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

3. Would you lend me a book?      not appropriate/polite      0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9      very appropriate/polite  
 Please explain your opinion in Russian:  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

4. I was wondering if you could lend me a book?      not appropriate/polite      0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9      very appropriate/polite  
 Please explain your opinion in Russian:  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

5. Would you mind lending me a book?      not appropriate/polite      0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9      very appropriate/polite  
 Please explain your opinion in Russian:  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_



**Situation 2.**

You are looking for a book, which you know the History instructor, Professor Smith, has. You have been in this program for a year and took a class with this professor last semester. Now you see each other once in a while in the hall and say hello. There is a possibility that you will be taking one of his classes in future. You borrowed books from professor Smith twice in the past, and he did not seem to mind. The book you need now contains some reading for your next week's test. As you are walking down the hall, you see professor Smith approaching. What would you say? Here is what people said in this situation:

1. Would you lend me a book?      not appropriate/polite      very appropriate/polite  
 0   1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9  
 Please explain your opinion in Russian:

---



---

2. I was wondering if you could      not appropriate/polite      very appropriate/polite  
 lend me a book?      0   1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9  
 Please explain your opinion in Russian:

---



---

3. Can you lend me a book?      not appropriate/polite      very appropriate/polite  
 0   1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9  
 Please explain your opinion in Russian:

---



---

4. Would you mind lending me a      not appropriate/polite      very appropriate/polite  
 book?      0   1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9  
 Please explain your opinion in Russian:

---



---

5. I was wondering if you would      not appropriate/polite      very appropriate/polite  
 lend me a book?      0   1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9  
 Please explain your opinion in Russian:

---



---

**Situation 3.**

You are collecting data for your history class project via written questionnaire which you created. Now you are looking for people who could fill your questionnaires out. It is lunch time and you are sitting in a café. Mike Stratford, who is in your class, and also has been in the same program with you for a year, suddenly takes a seat next to you. You see Mike socially about once a month in a group. You think that both of you will continue taking same classes in future. You have seen other people from your class asking Mike to fill their questionnaires out. He did not seem to mind doing that. Your project is due the end of next week.

What would you say? Here is what people said in this situation:

1. Can you fill out a      not appropriate/polite      very appropriate/polite  
 questionnaire for me?      0   1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9  
 Please explain your opinion in Russian:

---



---

2. I was wondering if you would      not appropriate/polite      very appropriate/polite  
 fill out a questionnaire for      0   1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9  
 me?      Please explain your opinion in Russian:

---



---

- 3. Would you mind filling out a questionnaire for me?      not appropriate/polite      very appropriate/polite  
0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9  
Please explain your opinion in Russian:  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
  
- 4. Would you fill out a questionnaire for me?      not appropriate/polite      very appropriate/polite  
0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9  
Please explain your opinion in Russian:  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
  
- 5. I was wondering if you could fill out a questionnaire for me?      not appropriate/polite      very appropriate/polite  
0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9  
Please explain your opinion in Russian:  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Situation 4.**

You are collecting data for your history class project via written questionnaire which you created. Now you are looking for people who could fill your questionnaires out. It is lunch time, and you are sitting in a café. Professor McCormick, whose history class you took last year, takes a seat next to you. You run into each other on campus every other week or two, and say hello. There is a possibility that you will be taking a class with him in future. You know that other students from your history class have asked professor McCormick to fill their questionnaires out. And he did not say no to them. Your project is due the end of next week.

What would you say? Here is what people said in this situation:

- 1. Would you mind filling out a questionnaire for me?      not appropriate/polite      very appropriate/polite  
0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9  
Please explain your opinion in Russian:  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
  
- 2. Would you fill out a questionnaire for me?      not appropriate/polite      very appropriate/polite  
0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9  
Please explain your opinion in Russian:  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
  
- 3. I was wondering if you could fill out a questionnaire for me?      not appropriate/polite      very appropriate/polite  
0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9  
Please explain your opinion in Russian:  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
  
- 4. I was wondering if you would fill out a questionnaire for me?      not appropriate/polite      very appropriate/polite  
0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9  
Please explain your opinion in Russian:  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
  
- 5. Can you fill out a questionnaire for me?      not appropriate/polite      very appropriate/polite  
0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9  
Please explain your opinion in Russian:  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## APPENDIX F. INFORMED CONSENT FORMS

### INFORMED CONSENT DOCUMENT

Title of Study: Appropriateness in requests: Perceptions of Russian EFL learners  
Investigator: Ekaterina Victorovna Shcherbakova

Dear sir/madam,

This is a research study which examines how Russian learners of English perceive appropriateness/politeness of requests in situations where the social status of the interlocutors varies. In order to confirm that request is the speech act which is typically produced in four constructed situations, and to make sure that the sociopragmatic factors are correctly assigned to each of four situations, I will need your collaboration. Please take your time in deciding if you would like to participate. Please feel free to ask questions at any time.

You are invited to participate in this study because you are an experienced researcher in the field of the English language and are either a professor or a graduate student at the Department of English at ISU.

If you agree to participate in this study, your participation in confirming the correctness of the sociopragmatic factors in four situations is needed throughout the Fall 2009 semester. This study requests your one-time participation and will take ten to fifteen minutes of your time to be completed. During the study you may expect the following study procedures to be followed: you will be asked to fill in an expert analysis survey with sixteen multiple-choice questions, to four communicative situations. Each situation will be followed by four questions (which speech acts may the situation generate as a response, what are the social distance and the level of familiarity between the interlocutors, and what is the imposition of the request). The situations will be familiar to you. They take place at an American university where students and professors are interacting. These situations are informal and were created to simulate authentic situations which occur at a university as closely as possible.

It is hoped that the information gained in this study will benefit Russian EFL learners as well as the the field of second language learning and teaching by providing valuable information into the studying of communication in English; developing explicit ways of teaching English pragmatics in the classroom; raising learners' sociopragmatic, pragmalinguistic, and cross-cultural awareness; and minimizing cross-cultural misconceptions between Russian EFL learners and native speakers of English from the U.S. The results of this study will also benefit current and future students in the Intensive English Language program at Ivanovo State Power Engineering University, Russia. You will have no direct benefit from participating in this study.

You will not have any costs from participating in this study. You will not be compensated for participating in this study. Your participation in this study is completely voluntary and anonymous, and you may refuse to participate or leave the study at any time. If you decide to not participate in the study, or leave the study early, it will not result in any penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. We hope you are willing to permit us to use your expert analysis survey results as part of this study.

Records identifying participants will be kept confidential to the extent permitted by applicable laws and regulations and will not be made publicly available. However, federal government regulatory agencies, auditing departments of Iowa State University, and the Institutional Review Board (a committee that reviews and approves human subject research studies) may inspect and/or copy your records for quality assurance and data analysis.

To ensure confidentiality to the extent permitted by law, the following measures will be taken: your name will not be required. The principal investigator will have access to the study records and they will be kept confidential by placing them in a locked filing cabinet. The data will be retained for ten years before destruction. If the results are published, your identity will remain confidential.

You are encouraged to ask questions at any time during this study. If you are willing to participate and permit us to use your expert analysis survey results, please sign the permission form below. Your name will not be used in any report of the research.

•For further information about the study contact:

Ekaterina Victorovna Shcherbakova  
Graduate Teaching Assistant of Russian  
Department of World Languages and Cultures  
3102 Pearson Hall  
Iowa State University  
Ames, IA 50011 USA  
(515) 294-4046  
...@iastate.edu

•If you have any questions about the rights of research subjects or research-related injury, please contact the IRB Administrator, (515) 294-4566, IRB@iastate.edu, or Director, (515) 294-3115, Office of Research Assurances, Iowa State University, Ames, Iowa 50011.

**PARTICIPANT SIGNATURE**

Your signature indicates that you voluntarily agree to participate in this study, that the study has been explained to you, that you have been given the time to read the document and that your questions have been satisfactorily answered. You will receive a copy of the written informed consent prior to your participation in the study. I understand that my utterances produced for the situations which were described above may be used for research purposes. I understand that my name will not be used in reports for this study.

Participant’s Name (printed) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Participant signature)

.....  
I certify that the participant has been given adequate time to read and learn about the study and all of their questions have been answered. It is my opinion that the participant understands the purpose, risks, benefits and the procedures that will be followed in this study and has voluntarily agreed to participate.

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Signature of Person Obtaining  
Informed Consent)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Date)

## INFORMED CONSENT DOCUMENT

Title of Study: Appropriateness in requests: Perceptions of Russian EFL learners

Investigators: Ekaterina Victorovna Shcherbakova

Dear student,

This is a research study which examines how Russian learners of English perceive requests produced by native speakers of English in different situations at an American university. In order to collect a sample of requests produced by native speakers of English, I will need your collaboration. Please take your time in deciding if you would like to participate. Please feel free to ask questions at any time.

You are invited to participate in this study because you are 18 years old or older, you are a native speaker of American English enrolled in one of the undergraduate programs offered at ISU and you are the most appropriate person we can address to produce several requests in English.

If you agree to participate in this study, your participation in request production activities is needed throughout the Fall 2009 and Spring 2010 semesters. This study is done during your free time on campus and requests your one-time participation to be completed. During the study you may expect the following study procedures to be followed: you will be asked to fill in a short demographic questionnaire with four questions (your gender, age, native language, academic status at ISU). Then you will be given four short situations to read. Each situation will be typed on a separate card. You will read one situation at a time and answer a question at the end of each situation (i.e. produce an utterance which you would typically make in such situations). These situations will be familiar to you. They take place on campus of an American university where native speakers of English (students and professors) are interacting. These situations are informal and were created to simulate authentic situations which occur on campus as closely as possible. The utterances that you will produce will be recorded on a digital voice-recorder.

It is hoped that the information gained in this study will benefit Russian learners of English as well as the the field of second language learning and teaching by providing valuable information into the studying of communication in English; developing explicit ways of teaching English pragmatics in the classroom; raising learners' sociopragmatic, pragmalinguistic, and cross-cultural awareness; and minimizing cross-cultural misconceptions between Russian learners of English and native speakers of English from the U.S. The results of this study will also benefit current and future students in the Intensive English Language program at Ivanovo State Power Engineering University, Russia. There will be no direct benefit for you from the study.

You will not have any costs from participating in this study. Your identity will remain anonymous. You must be 18 years or older to participate in the study. You will not be compensated for participating in this study. Your participation in this study is completely voluntary and you may refuse to participate or leave the study at any time. Please, note that performance in this study will not affect your grade in any of your courses. If you decide to not participate in the study, it will not result in any penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. We hope you are willing to permit us to use your intuitive knowledge of the English language, demographic data and the records with your voice as part of this study.

Records identifying participants' voices will be kept confidential to the extent permitted by applicable laws and regulations and will not be made publicly available. However, federal government regulatory agencies, auditing departments of Iowa State University, and the Institutional Review Board (a committee that reviews and approves human subject research studies) may inspect and/or copy your records for quality assurance and data analysis.

To ensure confidentiality to the extent permitted by law, the following measures will be taken: the names of the subjects will not be required. The principal investigator will have access to the study records and they will be kept confidential by placing them in a locked filing cabinet. The data will be retained for ten years before destruction. If the results are published, your identity will remain confidential.

You are encouraged to ask questions at any time during this study. If you are willing to participate and permit us to use your intuitive knowledge of English, demographic data and your voice as part of this study, please sign the permission form below. Your name will not be used in any report of the research.

•For further information about the study contact:

Ekaterina Victorovna Shcherbakova  
 Graduate Teaching Assistant of Russian  
 Department of World Languages and Cultures  
 3102 Pearson Hall  
 Iowa State University  
 Ames, IA 50011 USA  
 (515) 294-4046  
 ....@iastate.edu

•If you have any questions about the rights of research subjects or research-related injury, please contact the IRB Administrator, (515) 294-4566, IRB@iastate.edu, or Director, (515) 294-3115, Office of Research Assurances, Iowa State University, Ames, Iowa 50011.

### **PARTICIPANT SIGNATURE**

Your signature indicates that you voluntarily agree to participate in this study, that the study has been explained to you, that you have been given the time to read the document and that your questions have been satisfactorily answered. You will receive a copy of the written informed consent prior to your participation in the study. I understand that my utterances produced for the situations which were described above may be used for research purposes. I understand that my name will not be used in reports for this study.

Participant's Name (printed) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
 (Participant signature)

I certify that the participant has been given adequate time to read and learn about the study and all of their questions have been answered. It is my opinion that the participant understands the purpose, risks, benefits and the procedures that will be followed in this study and has voluntarily agreed to participate.

\_\_\_\_\_  
 (Signature of Person Obtaining  
 Informed Consent)

\_\_\_\_\_  
 (Date)

## INFORMED CONSENT DOCUMENT

Title of Study: Appropriateness in requests: Perceptions of Russian EFL learners

Investigator: Ekaterina Victorovna Shcherbakova

Dear student,

This is a research study which examines how Russian learners of English perceive appropriateness/politeness of requests in situations where the social status of the interlocutors varies. In order to find out how Russian learners of English evaluate appropriateness of such requests, I will need your collaboration. Please take your time in deciding if you would like to participate. Please feel free to ask questions at any time.

You are invited to participate in this study because you are a native speaker of Russian enrolled in the Intensive English Language program in a university in Russia and you are the most appropriate person we can address to evaluate the requests which were produced by American undergraduate students.

If you agree to participate in this study, your participation in evaluation of request activities is needed throughout the Fall 2009 and Spring 2010 semesters. This study is done during your classtime and will not take time outside your English class to be completed. During the study you may expect the following study procedures to be followed: you will be asked to fill in a demographic questionnaire with ten questions (your gender, age, native language, academic status at your university, your background of studying English). Then you will be given a questionnaire with four short situations to read. Each situation will be accompanied with several requests and a scale which you will use to evaluate appropriateness/politeness of these requests. You will read one situation at a time and evaluate each request offered for each situation. The situations will be familiar to you. They take place at a university and students, and professors are interacting. These situations are informal and were created to simulate authentic situations which occur at a university as closely as possible. You will also be asked to write a short explanation of your evaluation in Russian next to each request in the questionnaire.

It is hoped that the information gained in this study will benefit Russian learners of English as well as the field of second language learning and teaching by providing valuable information into the studying of communication in English; developing explicit ways of teaching English pragmatics in the classroom; raising learners' sociopragmatic, pragmalinguistic, and cross-cultural awareness; and minimizing cross-cultural misconceptions between Russian learners of English and native speakers of English from the U.S. The results of this study will also benefit current and future students in the Intensive English Language program at Ivanovo State Power Engineering University, Russia. You will be informed about the findings of the research and will be able to apply this knowledge to your further learning of English.

You will not have any costs from participating in this study. You will not be compensated for participating in this study. Your participation in this study is completely voluntary and you may refuse to participate or leave the study at any time. Please, note that performance in this study will not affect your grade in any of your English courses. If you decide to not participate in the study, or leave the study early, it will not result in any penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. We hope you are willing to permit us to use your request evaluation tasks' results as part of this study.

Records identifying participants will be kept confidential to the extent permitted by applicable laws and regulations and will not be made publicly available. However, federal government regulatory agencies, auditing departments of Iowa State University, and the Institutional Review Board (a committee that reviews and approves human subject research studies) may inspect and/or copy your records for quality assurance and data analysis.

To ensure confidentiality to the extent permitted by law, the following measures will be taken: participants will reveal their names written in the Cyrillic alphabet. The principal investigator will need the names of the Russian participants to match the data of the demographic questionnaires with the data in the acceptability questionnaires and to be able to contact them in case if any difficulties arise when deciphering their handwriting in the questionnaires. As soon as the principal investigator receives all the data in clear handwriting, the names of the Russian participants will be deleted from the questionnaires. The principal investigator will have access to the study records and they will be kept confidential by placing them in a locked filing cabinet. The data will be retained for ten years before destruction. If the results are published, your identity will remain confidential.

You are encouraged to ask questions at any time during this study. If you are willing to participate and permit us to use your demographic data and request evaluation tasks' results, please sign the permission form below. Your name will not be used in any report of the research.

•For further information about the study contact:

Ekaterina Victorovna Shcherbakova  
 Graduate Teaching Assistant of Russian  
 Department of World Languages and Cultures  
 3102 Pearson Hall  
 Iowa State University  
 Ames, IA 50011 USA  
 (515) 294-4046  
 ...@iastate.edu

•If you have any questions about the rights of research subjects or research-related injury, please contact the IRB Administrator, (515) 294-4566, IRB@iastate.edu, or Director, (515) 294-3115, Office of Research Assurances, Iowa State University, Ames, Iowa 50011.

#### **PARTICIPANT SIGNATURE**

Your signature indicates that you voluntarily agree to participate in this study, that the study has been explained to you, that you have been given the time to read the document and that your questions have been satisfactorily answered. You will receive a copy of the written informed consent prior to your participation in the study. I understand that my utterances produced for the situations which were described above may be used for research purposes. I understand that my name will not be used in reports for this study.

Participant's Name (printed) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
 (Participant signature)

I certify that the participant has been given adequate time to read and learn about the study and all of their questions have been answered. It is my opinion that the participant understands the purpose, risks, benefits and the procedures that will be followed in this study and has voluntarily agreed to participate.

\_\_\_\_\_  
 (Signature of Person Obtaining Informed Consent)

\_\_\_\_\_  
 (Date)



## INFORMED CONSENT DOCUMENT

Title of Study: Appropriateness in requests: Perceptions of Russian EFL learners  
Investigator: Ekaterina Victorovna Shcherbakova

Dear sir/madam,

This is a research study which examines how Russian learners of English perceive appropriateness/politeness of requests in situations where the social status of the interlocutors varies. In order to see, how the results of Russian EFL learners on the acceptability questionnaire correspond to what they learn during the courses taught in the Intensive English Language Program, I will need your collaboration. Please take your time in deciding if you would like to participate. Please feel free to ask questions at any time.

You are invited to participate in this study because you are an instructor of English at the Department of Intensive English Language at Ivanovo State Power Engineering University (Russia) and an experienced researcher in the field of the English language.

If you agree to participate in this study, an interview with you via the phone is needed in the Spring 2010 semester. This study requests your one-time participation and will take fifteen to twenty minutes of your time to be completed. During the study you may expect the following study procedures to be followed: the principal investigator will interview you over the phone on how the results of Russian EFL learners on the acceptability questionnaire correspond with what the students learn during the courses taught at the Department of Intensive English Language at Ivanovo State Power Engineering University, Russia. The interview with you will be recorded and transcribed.

It is hoped that the information gained in this study will benefit Russian learners of English as well as the field of second language learning and teaching by providing valuable information into the studying of communication in English; suggesting explicit ways of teaching English pragmatics in the classroom; raising learners' sociopragmatic, pragmalinguistic, and cross-cultural awareness; and minimizing cross-cultural misconceptions between Russian learners of English and native speakers of English from the U.S. The results of this study will also benefit current and future students at the Department of the Intensive English Language at Ivanovo State Power Engineering University, Russia. When the research is completed, you will be provided with the findings from the study and will be able to use them in your teaching curriculum.

You will not have any costs from participating in this study. You will not be compensated for participating in this study. Your participation in this study is completely voluntary and you may refuse to participate or leave the study at any time. If you decide not to participate in the study, or leave the study early, it will not result in any penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. We hope you are willing to permit us to interview you and use the interview recordings as part of this study.

Records identifying participants will be kept confidential to the extent permitted by applicable laws and regulations and will not be made publicly available. However, federal government regulatory agencies, auditing departments of Iowa State University, and the Institutional Review Board (a committee that reviews and approves human subject research studies) may inspect and/or copy your records for quality assurance and data analysis.

To ensure confidentiality to the extent permitted by law, the following measures will be taken: the names of the interviewees will not be registered. The principal investigator will have access to the study records and they will be kept confidential by placing them in a locked filing cabinet and a computer file secured by a password. The data will be retained for ten years before destruction. If the results are published, your identity will remain confidential.

You are encouraged to ask questions at any time during this study. If you are willing to participate and permit us to interview you and use the interview recordings as part of this study, please sign the permission form below. Your name will not be used in any report of the research.

•For further information about the study contact:

Ekaterina Victorovna Shcherbakova  
Graduate Teaching Assistant of Russian  
Department of World Languages and Cultures  
3102 Pearson Hall  
Iowa State University  
Ames, IA 50011 USA  
(515) 294-4046  
...@iastate.edu

•If you have any questions about the rights of research subjects or research-related injury, please contact the IRB Administrator, (515) 294-4566, IRB@iastate.edu, or Director, (515) 294-3115, Office of Research Assurances, Iowa State University, Ames, Iowa 50011.

**PARTICIPANT SIGNATURE**

Your signature indicates that you voluntarily agree to participate in this study, that the study has been explained to you, that you have been given the time to read the document and that your questions have been satisfactorily answered. You will receive a copy of the written informed consent prior to your participation in the study. I understand that my utterances produced for the situations which were described above may be used for research purposes. I understand that my name will not be used in reports for this study.

Participant's Name (printed) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Participant signature)

.....  
I certify that the participant has been given adequate time to read and learn about the study and all of their questions have been answered. It is my opinion that the participant understands the purpose, risks, benefits and the procedures that will be followed in this study and has voluntarily agreed to participate.

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Signature of Person Obtaining  
Informed Consent)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Date)

## APPENDIX G. RESULTS OF EXPERT ANALYSIS SURVEY

Native English Speakers (n=19)	Situation a) book - student	Situation b) book - professor	Situation c) questionnaire - student	Situation d) questionnaire - professor
<b>Speech acts</b>				
Request	19	19	19	19
Apology	14	11	9	13
Greeting	12	16	17	17
Complaint				1
Refusal				
Compliment	2	3	2	2
Invitation	2	0	1	0
Reproach				
Other	gratitude explanation	gratitude explanation	gratitude explanation	gratitude explanation
<b>Social distance between interlocutors</b>				
Small	7		11	
Medium	12	10	8	13
Large		9		6
<b>Level of familiarity between interlocutors</b>				
Small	4	4	4	4
Medium	15	15	15	14
Large				1
<b>Imposition of the request</b>				
Small	10	8	13	8
Medium	9	10	6	9
Large		1		2

## APPENDIX H. ELABORATED SEMI-ORAL DCT TRANSCRIPT

### Situation 1. Student – book

Excuse me, Tom. Do you think it would be alright to borrow your textbook again?  
 Hey, Tom, do you mind if I borrow your book?  
 Can I borrow your book?  
 Would it be alright if I borrowed your book for the presentations we have to do next week?  
 Can I borrow your book within next few days?  
 Do you think it would be cool if I borrowed it just before the presentation?  
 I was wondering if I could borrow your history textbook?  
 I was wondering if I could borrow your book for the presentations we have to make?  
 Tom, can I please, use your book again?  
 Do you mind if I borrow you book?  
 Tom, I was wondering if I could borrow your textbook?  
 Hi, Tom. Can I borrow your book real quick?  
 Can I borrow your book?  
 Can I borrow your book again?  
 Can I, please, borrow your book?  
 Can I borrow your textbook?  
 Would you have the time to let me borrow your book?  
 Hey, Tom, is it alright if I borrow your book for this presentation?  
 Can I, please, borrow your book to do the research paper?  
 Would you mind if I borrowed your history book again?

### Situation 3. Student – questionnaire

Hey, Mike, would you mind filling out a questionnaire for me as well?  
 Hey, Mike, would you mind filling out my questionnaire for history class?  
 Hey, Mike, can you fill this out real quick?  
 Hey, Mike, would you mind filling out a questionnaire for an assignment I have due next week?  
 Will you fill out this questionnaire for me and I will fill out one for you?  
 Hey, Mike, do you think you'd mind if you would fill out this questionnaire for me?  
 I was just wondering if you could take a few minutes to fill my questionnaire out?  
 Hey, Mike, I was wondering if you might have time to fill out my questionnaire right now or if not, sometime next week?  
 Mike, do you think you could fill out a questionnaire for me, please?  
 Mike, do you mind filling out this questionnaire for me?  
 Would you mind filling out this questionnaire for the project?  
 I was wondering if you could take some time and fill the questionnaire out and just get it back to me some time before next week?  
 Do you mind filling out this questionnaire for me?  
 Mike, would you mind filling out my questionnaire?  
 Hi, Mike, I was just wondering if you would fill out my questionnaire for me for my class?  
 Mike, would you like to answer some questions for me?  
 Would you have the time right now to fill out this questionnaire?  
 Is it alright if you'd take time to fill out this questionnaire?  
 I was curious, could you fill out this questionnaire for my history class?  
 Would you mind filling out a questionnaire for my history class project?

### Situation 2. Professor – book

Excuse me, Professor Smith, would you mind if I borrow a book so I could study for next week's test?  
 Excuse me, Professor Smith, could I borrow that book for the assignment?  
 Professor Smith, can I borrow that book?  
 Hey, Professor Smith, I was wondering if I could borrow your book for a test next week?  
 Professor Smith, is there any way I can borrow the book so I can study for a test next week?  
 Excuse me, Professor, I'd like to talk to you about borrowing a book for next week's presentation?  
 Hello, Professor Smith, I was wondering if you had a copy of that textbook I could borrow for the test we have on Friday?  
 Professor Smith, I was wondering if I could borrow that history book for some upcoming tests that I have?  
 Excuse me, Professor. Would you mind if I borrow a book from you? Please?

Professor Smith, do you mind if I borrow a book so I can study for next week's test?  
 I was wondering if I could possibly borrow one of the books I know you have? Would you be willing to lend it to me?  
 I was wondering if you had a book I need for one of my classes?  
 Can I borrow a book that you have just for some readings?  
 Professor Smith, can I borrow a book that you have?  
 I was just wondering if it's be ok if I borrow a book from you to study and then give it back to you?  
 Can I borrow your textbook?  
 Would you be willing to let me borrow your book?  
 Professor Smith, is it ok if I borrow a book for a test?  
 I was curious if I can borrow one of your books because I have an exam next week?  
 Professor Smith, I was wondering if I could borrow the book with the readings for next week's test?

**Situation 4. Professor – questionnaire**

Excuse me, Professor McCormick, would you mind filling out this questionnaire if you have a minute for my history class?  
 Professor McCormick, would you mind filling out this survey for me?  
 Doctor McCormick, can I get you to answer my questionnaire out for my next week's project?  
 Hey Professor Mc Cormick, I was wondering if you could give me some of your time and give me some feedback on my questionnaire?  
 Professor McCormick, would you mind filling out a questionnaire for me?  
 Excuse me, Professor, would you mind filling out this questionnaire for me real quick?  
 (Hello, Professor McCormick.) I was wondering if you would be willing to fill out one of my questionnaires for the project that we are working on?  
 Professor McCormick, I was wondering if you might have time to fill out a questionnaire for a project which is due next week?  
 Professor, do you think you could take a few minutes to fill out a questionnaire for me, please?  
 Professor McCormick, would you mind filling out this questionnaire for me?  
 Hi Professor McCormick, I was wondering if you would fill out this questionnaire for me?  
 Hi, Professor McCormick, I am just wondering if you'd have time to fill out a questionnaire?  
 Do you mind filling out a questionnaire for me?  
 Professor McCormick, I was wondering if you could fill out this questionnaire?  
 I was wondering if you would like to take a questionnaire for me?  
 Professor McCormick, would you like to fill a questionnaire out for me?  
 Would you have the time available to fill out this questionnaire for me?  
 Professor McCormick, is it ok if you would fill this questionnaire out?  
 I was curious, could you fill out a questionnaire for my history class?  
 I was wondering if you would help me out by filling out a questionnaire?

## APPENDIX I. TRANSCRIPT OF HEAD SPEECH ACTS OF REQUESTS

### **Situation 1. Student – book. Head speech acts**

Do you think it would be alright to borrow your textbook?  
 Do you mind if I borrow your book?  
 Can I borrow your book?  
 Would it be alright if I borrowed your book?  
 Can I borrow your book?  
 Do you think it would be cool if I borrowed your book?  
 I was wondering if I could borrow your book?  
 I was wondering if I could borrow your book?  
 Can I use your book?  
 Do you mind if I borrow you book?  
 I was wondering if I could borrow your book?  
 Can I borrow your book?  
 Can I borrow your book?  
 Can I borrow your book?  
 Can I borrow your book?  
 Can I borrow your book?  
 Would you let me borrow your book?  
 Is it alright if I borrow your book?  
 Can I borrow your book?  
 Would you mind if I borrowed your book?

### **Situation 3. Student – questionnaire. Head speech acts**

Would you mind filling out a questionnaire for me?  
 Would you mind filling out my questionnaire?  
 Can you fill this out?  
 Would you mind filling out a questionnaire for me?  
 Will you fill out this questionnaire for me?  
 Do you think you'd mind if you would fill out this questionnaire for me?  
 I was just wondering if you could fill my questionnaire out?  
 I was wondering if you might fill out my questionnaire?  
 Do you think you could fill out a questionnaire for me?  
 Do you mind filling out this questionnaire for me?  
 Would you mind filling out this questionnaire?  
 I was wondering if you could fill the questionnaire out?  
 Do you mind filling out this questionnaire for me?  
 Would you mind filling out my questionnaire?  
 I was wondering if you would fill out a questionnaire for me?  
 Would you like to answer some questions for me?  
 Would you fill out this questionnaire?  
 Is it alright if you'd fill out this questionnaire?  
 Could you fill out this questionnaire?  
 Would you mind filling out a questionnaire for me?

### **Situation 2. Professor – book. Head speech acts**

Would you mind if I borrow your book?  
 Could I borrow that book?  
 Can I borrow that book?  
 I was wondering if I could borrow your book?  
 Is there any way I can borrow the book?  
 I'd like to talk to you about borrowing a book?  
 I was wondering if you had a copy of that book I could borrow?  
 I was wondering if I could borrow that book?  
 Would you mind if I borrow a book from you?  
 Do you mind if I borrow a book?  
 I was wondering if I could borrow your books?  
 I was wondering if you had a book I need?

Can I borrow a book that you have?  
 Can I borrow a book that you have?  
 I was just wondering if it's ok if I borrow a book from you?  
 Can I borrow your book?  
 Would you be willing to let me borrow your book?  
 Is it ok if I borrow your book?  
 I was curious if I can borrow your book?  
 I was wondering if I could borrow your book?

**Situation 4. Professor – questionnaire. Head speech acts**

Would you mind filling out this questionnaire?  
 Would you mind filling out this survey for me?  
 Can I get you to answer my questionnaire out?  
 I was wondering if you could give me some feedback on my questionnaire?  
 Would you mind filling out a questionnaire for me?  
 Would you mind filling out this questionnaire for me?  
 I was wondering if you would be willing to fill out my questionnaire?  
 I was wondering if you might fill out a questionnaire?  
 Do you think you could fill out a questionnaire for me?  
 Would you mind filling out this questionnaire for me?  
 I was wondering if you would fill out this questionnaire for me?  
 I am wondering if you'd have time to fill out a questionnaire?  
 Do you mind filling out a questionnaire for me?  
 I was wondering if you could fill out this questionnaire?  
 I was wondering if you would like to take a questionnaire for me?  
 Would you like to fill a questionnaire out for me?  
 Would you fill out this questionnaire for me?  
 Is it ok if you would fill this questionnaire out?  
 Could you fill out a questionnaire for me?  
 I was wondering if you would fill out a questionnaire?

## APPENDIX J. PRAGMALINGUISTIC REQUEST PATTERNS ACROSS FOUR SITUATIONS

Pragmalinguistic Categories	Head Speech Acts for Student/Book Situation
1 Conventional indirect with present tense modal can (Yes/No question)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>Can</b> I borrow your book?</li> <li>2. <b>Can</b> I borrow your book?</li> <li>3. <b>Can</b> I borrow your book again?</li> <li>4. <b>Can</b> I borrow your textbook?</li> <li>5. <b>Can</b> I borrow your book?</li> <li>6. <b>Can</b> I borrow your book real quick?</li> </ol>
2 Conventional indirect with past tense modal would (Yes/No question)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>Would</b> you have the time to let me borrow your book? (Would you lend me a book?)</li> </ol>
3 Conventional indirect with consultative device and gerund	This category is very frequent in the questionnaire situation. Apparently, gerund does not occur in the book situations because it triggers a speaker-oriented request.
4 Conventional indirect with consultative device, if-clause, past tense modal could	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>I was wondering if I could</b> borrow your book?</li> <li>2. <b>I was wondering if I could</b> borrow your history textbook? <b>I was wondering if I could</b> borrow your textbook?</li> </ol>
5 Conventional indirect with consultative device, if-clause, past tense modal would	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>Do you think</b> it would be cool <b>if</b> you lend me your book?<sup>1</sup></li> </ol>
	<b>Head Speech Acts for Student/Questionnaire Situation</b>
1 Conventional indirect with present tense modal can	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>Can</b> you fill this out real quick?</li> </ol>
2 Conventional indirect with past tense modal would	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>Would</b> you like to answer some questions for me?</li> </ol>
3 Conventional indirect with consultative device and gerund	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>Would</b> you mind filling out this questionnaire for the project?</li> <li>2. <b>Would</b> you mind filling out a questionnaire for an assignment I have?</li> <li>3. <b>Would</b> you mind filling out a questionnaire for me?</li> <li>4. <b>Would</b> you mind filling out my questionnaire?</li> <li>5. <b>Would</b> you mind filling out a questionnaire for me?</li> <li>6. <b>Would</b> you mind filling out my questionnaire?</li> </ol>
4 Conventional indirect with consultative device, if-clause and past tense modal verb could	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>I was wondering if</b> you <b>could</b> take a few minutes to fill my questionnaire out?</li> <li>2. <b>I was wondering if</b> you <b>could</b> take some time and fill the questionnaire out?</li> </ol>
5 Conventional indirect with consultative device, if-clause, past tense modal would	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>I was wondering if</b> you <b>would</b> fill out my questionnaire?</li> </ol>

<sup>1</sup> The linguistic form of the request pattern differs from the one used in request category number five in this study (i.e., '*I was wondering if you would lend me a book?*'). The requestive utterance provided here is the only linguistic form elicited from the native speakers of English for the request category number five in the student/book situation.



## APPENDIX J. (continued)

<b>Head Speech Acts for Professor/Book</b>	
1 Conventional indirect with present tense modal can	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>Can</b> I borrow that book?</li> <li>2. <b>Can</b> I borrow a book that you have?</li> <li>3. <b>Can</b> I borrow your textbook?</li> <li>4. <b>Can</b> I borrow a book that you have?</li> </ol>
2 Conventional indirect with past tense modal would	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>Would</b> you be willing to let me borrow your book?</li> </ol>
3 Conventional indirect with consultative device and gerund	<p>This category is very frequent in the questionnaire situations. Apparently, gerund does not occur in the book situation because it triggers a speaker-oriented request.</p>
4 Conventional indirect with consultative device, if-clause, and past tense modal could	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>I was wondering if I could</b> borrow your book?</li> <li>2. <b>I was wondering if I could</b> borrow that history book?</li> <li>3. <b>I was wondering if I could</b> possibly borrow one of the books I know you have?</li> <li>4. <b>I was wondering if</b> you had a copy of that textbook <b>I could</b> borrow?</li> <li>5. <b>I was wondering if I could</b> borrow the book with the readings?</li> </ol>
5 Conventional indirect with consultative device, if-clause, and past tense modal would	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>I was wondering if it would</b> be ok if I borrow a book from you?</li> </ol>
<b>Head Speech Acts for Professor/Questionnaire</b>	
1 Conventional indirect with present tense modal verb can	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>Can</b> I get you to answer my questionnaire out?</li> </ol>
2 Conventional indirect with past tense modal would	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>Would</b> you like to fill a questionnaire out for me?</li> <li>2. <b>Would</b> you have the time available to fill out this questionnaire for me?</li> </ol>
3 Conventional indirect with consultative device and gerund	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>Would</b> you mind filling out a questionnaire for me?</li> <li>2. <b>Would</b> you mind filling out this survey for me?</li> <li>3. <b>Would</b> you mind filling out this questionnaire for me?</li> <li>4. <b>Would</b> you mind filling out this questionnaire for me real quick?</li> <li>5. <b>Would</b> you mind filling out this questionnaire if you have a minute?</li> </ol>
4 Conventional indirect with consultative device, if-clause, and past tense modal verb could	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>I was wondering if you could</b> give me some of your time and give me some feedback on my questionnaire?</li> <li>2. <b>I was wondering if you could</b> fill out this questionnaire?</li> </ol>
5 Conventional indirect, with consultative device, if-clause, past tense modal would	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>I was wondering if you would</b> be willing to fill out one of my questionnaires?</li> <li>2. <b>I was wondering if you would</b> fill out this questionnaire for me?</li> <li>3. <b>I was wondering if you would</b> like to take a questionnaire for me?</li> <li>4. <b>I was wondering if you would</b> help me out by filling out a questionnaire?</li> <li>5. <b>I am just wondering if you would</b> have time to fill out a questionnaire?</li> </ol>

## APPENDIX K. LETTER WITH INSTRUCTIONS TO DATA COLLECTOR IN RUSSIA

M. V. P., Ph.D.  
Department of Intensive English Language  
Rabfakovskaya str., 34  
Ivanovo State Power Engineering University  
Ivanovo 153003  
Russia

Doctor M. P.,

Thank you for agreeing to assist me in collecting data from your students enrolled in the Intensive English Language at Ivanovo State Power Engineering University. In this letter, I would like to provide you with important details about the study and the procedures of data collection from Russian EFL learners.

The research study “Appropriateness in requests: Perceptions of Russian EFL learners” attempts to enhance what is known on how Russian EFL learners perceive pragmalinguistic appropriateness/politeness of requests in situations where the social status of the interlocutors varies. Special attention will be paid to whether Russian learners of English are more sensitive than Americans to the social status of interlocutors while estimating appropriateness of requests. The study will examine if any linguistic features influence the perception of Russian EFL learners on pragmalinguistic appropriateness/politeness of requests in two different situations, and what these linguistic features are.

The participants for this study are forty intermediate Russian EFL learners enrolled in your English Conversation course. These students are the perception group for the research study. This study is done during classtime and should not take students’ time outside your English class to be completed. To collect reliable data from the perception group of participants, it is very important to follow the data collection procedures required for the study. According to the procedures, I would like you to proceed with data elicitation in the following order: informed consent form, demographic questionnaire, acceptability questionnaire.

First, the students need to understand the purpose of the study and provide their written consent to participate in it. In your email, you will receive a file with an informed consent letter which the participants need to read and to sign before you elicit any data from them. Please, print forty copies of the informed consent letter, provide them to your students, and allow them enough time to read it, and decide whether they would like to participate in the research study. When the informed consent letters are signed, they need to be collected and sent to me by regular mail.

Second, to be able to analyse possible factors that influence the participants’ performance on the tasks provided to them in the acceptability questionnaire, it is important to collect certain demographic information about them. In your email, you will receive a file with the demographic questionnaire which I would like you to print out (40 copies) and provide to the participants to complete. Please, make sure that the participants write their names in the questionnaire in Russian. The participants must be allowed to skip any questionnaire items they do not wish to answer, and they should not be pressured to provide responses to all questionnaire items. When the questionnaires are completed, I would like you to collect them and send them to me. In order to speed the process of my receiving the elicited data, I request you to scan the questionnaires and send me the files by email at <...@iastate.edu>. The paper-based questionnaires also need to be sent to me by regular mail.

Third and the last stage of data elicitation is the completion of the acceptability questionnaire. In this questionnaire, the participants are asked to read four communicative situations, one situation at a time, and rate each request provided after each situation on a 10-point scale. The requests considered most appropriate/polite for the given situations should be rated ‘9’ and the least appropriate requests - ‘0.’ Please, ask the participants to rate each request provided to them in the lists after each situation. While they are rating, ask the students to comment on their ratings for each request. The comments for each rating need to be written in Russian in the spaces below the rating scales. Just like in the demographic questionnaire, it is important to allow the participants to skip any questionnaire items they do not wish to answer, and they should not be pressured to provide responses to all questionnaire items. In your email, you will receive a file with the acceptability questionnaire. Please, print forty copies of the questionnaire and provide them for the participants to complete.

Please, make sure that the participants write their names in the questionnaire in Russian, rate every request, and comment on every rating in Russian. When the questionnaires are completed, I would like you to collect them and send them to me. In order to speed the process of my receiving the elicited data, I request you to scan the questionnaires and send the files to me by email at <...@iastate.edu>. The paper-based questionnaires also need to be sent to me by regular mail.

To ensure confidentiality to the extent permitted by law, the following measures will be taken: the completed paper-based demographic and acceptability questionnaires need to be stored in a locked filing cabinet and the files with the scanned questionnaires need to be stored in a computer folder protected with a password. The principal investigator will need the names of the Russian participants to match the data of the demographic questionnaires with the data in the acceptability questionnaires and to be able to contact them in case if any difficulties arise when deciphering their handwriting in the questionnaires. As soon as I receive all the data in clear handwriting, the names of the Russian participants will be deleted from the questionnaires. The files with the scanned questionnaires should be also deleted from your computer. The data elicited in this research will be retained for ten years before destruction. If the results are published, the identities of the participants will remain confidential.

It is hoped that the findings from this study will benefit Russian learners of English as well as the field of second language learning and teaching by providing valuable insights into the studying of effective communication in English; suggesting ways of teaching English pragmatics in the classroom explicitly; raising learners' sociopragmatic, pragmalinguistic, and cross-cultural awareness; and minimizing cross-cultural misconceptions between Russian learners of English and native speakers of English from the U.S. The findings from this study will be provided to the Department of Intensive English Learning at Ivanovo State Power Engineering University (Russia) in order to enhance the curriculum of English conversation courses. Thus, it is hoped that the findings of the study will benefit current and future students at the Department of the Intensive English Language at Ivanovo State Power Engineering University, Russia. When the research is completed, you will be provided with the findings from the study and will be able to use them in your teaching curriculum.

I greatly appreciate your assistance in collecting data from Russian EFL learners. I will be glad to answer any of your questions concerning the research study.

Please, send signed informed consent forms and completed demographic and acceptability questionnaires to the following address:

E. S.  
 Department of World Languages and Cultures  
 3102 Pearson Hall  
 Iowa State University  
 Ames, IA 50011 USA  
 (515) 294-4046  
 ...@iastate.edu

Sincerely,

E. S.  
 Graduate student in Applied Linguistics/TESL  
 Department of English  
 Iowa State University

<b>Situation 1.</b>			
<p>You are at the end of a history class and you are sitting next to Tom Yates. Your history textbook has not arrived yet and you need to borrow his book. He has been in the same program as you for one year, and you see him socially about once a month in a group. You will also be taking classes together in the future. He is one of the best students in class. You have borrowed his books twice before, and he did not seem to mind. At the end of next week, you have a presentation to make about your readings.</p> <p>What would you say? Here is what people said in this situation:</p>			
<b>Request Categories</b>	<b>Points on Likert-type Scale</b>	<b>Number of Participants Chose</b>	<b>Comments</b>
1. I was wondering if you would lend me a book?	0 (not appropriate)	13	Too polite. The style is not appropriate. Too polite. Too formal. Too polite and formal. Too rude. Rude answer. The style is not appropriate. Too formal. To formal. I would never say it this way. I don't construct phrases like this. One should not construct a phrase like this in such situation. More suitable as an address to an older interlocutor. Too polite. I know the student and can be more casual.
	1	2	This looks too polite for a conversation between students. Too polite for a talk with a peer.
	2	3	Is not appropriate, not polite. Almost never constructed like this. Almost never constructed like this.
	3	2	Too polite. Too polite.
	4	5	Possible, too polite. Too polite to use in a conversation with a peer. Too polite. Too formal. No comment.
	5	3	Too polite. Too formal to be used with a peer. No comment.
	6	5	Fits the situation, but too polite (excessively polite). A little bit insufficient for what is needed. No comment. This is too much, like insinuating. Too polite.

	7	4	Polite enough. Too pompous (snobbish, pretentions). Fits the given situation quite well. Too much.
	8	0	
	9 (very appropriate)	2	Very polite. This is excessively polite.
<b>Request Categories</b>	<b>Points on Likert-type Scale</b>	<b>Number of Participants Chose</b>	<b>Comments</b>
2.	0 (not appropriate)	0	
Can you lend me a book?	1	2	Does not sound good, not polite. Fits the situation very little, insufficiently polite.
	2	0	
	3	5	Insufficiently polite, they are not friends. Sounds too rude to me. A question about an ability to lend a book. The question is polite when addressing a friend. Not polite.
	4	2	Buddy-to-buddy way. No comment.
	5	7	No comment. Casual (fits the situation) but not polite. Can be used in the given situation. Insufficiently polite for the given situation. Quite suitable. No comment. Quite bold.
	6	3	Suitable variant. Is used quite often. Is often used in spoken discourse, but is not a very polite form.
	7	5	Polite. A polite answer but is used more rarely than #3. Quite suitable. Quite suitable. It is only missing a name (alserter) and 'please.'
	8	7	Is quite suitable. A typical universal question. It is commonly used. No comment. No comment. A little less respectful than #3. Typical interaction between students: quite polite, friendly.

	9 (very appropriate)	8	<p>Most suitable request.  This phrase is polite and suitable in this situation.  Common way for a student to address another student.  Common form of address.  Polite question, often.  Quite suitable.  Suitable.  No comment.</p>
<b>Request Categories</b>	<b>Points on Likert-type Scale</b>	<b>Number of Participants Chose</b>	<b>Comments</b>
3. Would you lend me a book?	0 (not appropriate)	0	
	1	0	
	2	1	This request is not enough for this situation.
	3	1	Impolite.
	4	1	Too polite and formal.
	5	6	<p>Can be used, a little formal.  Polite.  Ok.  Neutral meaning, quite polite.  Can be used in the given situation.  No comment.</p>
	6	3	<p>Suitable.  No comment.  No comment.</p>
	7	8	<p>Suits the situation, people know each other for a long time, but not ... (unfinished).  Suitable. Very polite.  Most suitable variant for a dialogue between students.  Polite request.  No comments.  I use 'would' seldom.  One can say it in a more simple way.  It's ok, it can be used here, but #5 is better.</p>
	8	7	<p>Polite way to address, suitable in this situation.  Very polite.  Used most often.  Is quite suitable.  Is quite suitable.  More polite than #2.  Polite, very polite.</p>

	9 (very appropriate)	12	Also suits well in this situation. This phrase is polite enough to address an acquaintance whom you don't see very often. Polite, because they don't know each other very well. Suitable phrase. Fits casual interaction, polite. Suitable in communication with an acquaintance. Fits this situation ideally. Used frequently. Polite question, common. Polite. Suits quite well. No comment. Polite request towards a classmate.
<b>Request Categories</b>	<b>Points on Likert-type Scale</b>	<b>Number of Participants Chose</b>	<b>Comments</b>
4. I was wondering if you could lend me a book?	0 (not appropriate)	9	I don't like how it sounds. Impolite. This request is too long. Not comment. Not comment. The style is not appropriate. Too formal. More suitable when addressing an older interlocutor. Very polite, they will laugh you down.
	1	5	Very formal. The phrase is too snobbish. Too polite, does not fit. Too formal and polite. I don't like 'I was wondering.' It is not common for my way of thinking.
	2	1	Person may think that his interlocutor is insinuating.
	3	5	Too polite. Can be used, but it is too formal for an address to a peer. Demanding. Not common. Too polite.
	4	4	Question about an ability. Is not very common. Too polite. No comment.
	5	2	Does not fit well. Too polite.

	6	6	The request is suitable, but the focus is on the person who is asking. Should not be used on in everyday communication. Very polite. No comment. No comment. Not for a classmate.
	7	5	Possibly, too polite, focus is on the speaker. Too polite. Too much. No comment. No comment.
	8	1	Very polite.
	9 (very appropriate)	1	Very polite.
<b>Request Categories</b>	<b>Points on Likert-type Scale</b>	<b>Number of Participants Chose</b>	<b>Comments</b>
5. Would you mind lending me a book?	0 (not appropriate)	1	Inconsiderate request.
	1	0	
	2	1	Less formal than #4.
	3	1	Too polite.
	4	2	The style is not suitable. Sounds more like a request for a girl.
	5	5	Very polite. Too polite and formal for this situation. No comment. Polite. No comment.
	6	8	Suitable. Suitable, polite form of address. Acceptable phrase. Polite. Quite possible. Needless words in the phrase which is inappropriate in this situation. Very polite, not very common. Suits quite well.
	7	5	Most suitable. More or less suitable. The phrase is suitable. Suitable. No comment.



	8	6	Suitable but too formal. Fits the situation. Suitable phrase. Used commonly. Polite form of address. I would not say it like this, but it sounds good, very polite, and can be used.
	9 (very appropriate)	10	Both, polite and not too formal. Most suitable in this situation. The answer depends entirely upon the person who is being asked. Quite polite. Very polite. Is most suitable for the given situation. Fits ideally. Polite request. Polite, that's what is needed. Not comment. Not comment. Just right.

**Situation 2.**

You are looking for a book, which you know the History instructor, Professor Smith, has. You have been in this program for a year and took a class with this professor last semester. Now you see each other once in a while in the hall and say hello. There is a possibility that you will be taking one of his classes in future. You borrowed books from professor Smith twice in the past, and he did not seem to mind. The book you need now contains some reading for your next week's test. As you are walking down the hall, you see Professor Smith approaching. What would you say? Here is what people said in this situation:

Request Categories	Points on Likert-type Scale	Number of Participants Chose	Comments
1. Would you lend me a book?	0 (not appropriate)	10	Impolite. Insufficiently polite. Inappropriate in this situation. Insufficiently polite when talking to a professor. Impolite form of address. Does not fit the situation, too informal. Insufficiently polite. No comments. Impolite request towards an older interlocutor. Bold.
	1	3	He is a professor, insufficiently polite. Too straightforward and impolite. Acceptable only when you know the professor well enough.

	2	4	Inacceptable phrase. Not the most appropriate form of address. It is acceptable only when there is a very good rapport with a professor. It could have been more polite. No comment.
	3	7	Impolite towards a professor. Obtrusive. The phrase is not polite enough for a formal situation. Polite but not for a conversation with a professor. It could have been more polite. Is not commonly used. Not very appropriate when addressing a professor.
	4	2	No comments. Is inappropriate in situations when you address a professor.
	5	6	Not very polite. Polite. Neutral question. Too impolite for this situation. Impolite. No comments.
	6	2	Slightly rude. No comments.
	7	1	Suits quite well.
	8	1	Very polite.
	9 (very appropriate)	3	Fits this situation. Frequently used. Suits.
<b>Request Categories</b>	<b>Points on Likert-type Scale</b>	<b>Number of Participants Chose</b>	<b>Comments</b>
2. I was wondering if you could lend me a book?	0 (not appropriate)	1	I don't use 'I was wondering' in spoken discourse.
	1	0	
	2	2	This is the first time I see such a phrase. Impolite.
	3	3	No comments. Impolite. #5 is the best.
	4	4	Technically, it is appropriate. About an ability. Bad word combination. Too formal.

	5	5	Insufficiently polite. Acceptable. Less polite than #5. Good for further relations. This is less polite than #1. No comments.
	6	3	Possible, but it does not suit the context. No comments. Too polite.
	7	4	Suitable. Suits for a conversation with a professor. It could have been better. No comments.
	8	7	Most appropriate in this situation. Quite polite. Acceptable form of address towards an instructor. Quite polite towards a professor. More rare than #1. Acceptable style. No comment. Good but sugary.
	9 (very appropriate)	10	Acceptable for a request in this situation. Very polite. Most acceptable in this situation. Most acceptable. Too polite. Quite polite. Very polite request when conversing with a professor. Polite request. Acceptable, quite formal and polite. Respectful and formal request.

Request Categories	Points on Likert-type Scale	Number of Participants Chose	Comments
3. Can you lend me a book?	0 (not appropriate)	16	Rude. Insufficiently polite. This situation implies another type of request. Insufficiently polite. Insufficiently polite for a conversation with a professor. Impolite request towards a professor. Impolite, does not fit this situations. Impolite towards an older interlocutor. We are not on friendly terms with a professor in this situation. Insufficiently polite form. Doe not suit, too informal. Insufficiently polite. No comments. Impolite requests towards an older person. Impolite towards an older person. Not for a professor. Too rude.
	1	3	Very impolite phrase. At least it's a request. Not in a conversation with a professor (possible with a student, for example).
	2	3	This form is least polite. Rude, you cannot say it to a professor. More common for informal situations.
	3	5	Impolite. This phrase is impolite in this situation. Does not suit the status of the professor. Insufficiently polite. Insufficiently polite when addressing a professor.
	4	5	Question about an ability. Used rarely. No comments. Impolite. No comments.
	5	2	Is more common for informal communication. Informal.
	6	0	
	7	1	Please and would are missing. There should be more respect.
	8	3	Very polite. Polite. Quite suitable.
	9 (very appropriate)	1	Most suitable without personal attitude.

Request Categories	Points on Likert-type Scale	Number of Participants Chose	Comments
4. Would you mind lending me a book?	0 (not appropriate)	1	Impolite request.
	1	2	Better not to be used. Very rare.
	2	2	No comments. Insufficiently polite. More formal style is needed.
	3	5	Impolite towards an instructor. Not acceptable when talking to a professor. More polite. No comments. #5 is the best.
	4	2	Technically, it is acceptable. Commonly used.
	5	2	Quite suitable phrase. Used but rarely.
	6	5	Polite. Quite polite. Suitable but not really. Quite suitable. There is very personal attitude here.
	7	5	Quite polite. Most suitable. Fits. As polite as #1. This form is more acceptable.
	8	7	A little informal. Acceptable when addressing older people. Quite suitable for this situation. Acceptable style. No comments. No comments. Polite approach.
	9 (very appropriate)	8	Acceptable. Acceptable variant for a request. Very polite. Most acceptable. Most acceptable. Most polite variant. It's better to make a request this way. No comments.

Request Categories	Points on Likert-type Scale	Number of Participants Chose	Comments
5. I was wondering if you would lend me a book?	0 (not appropriate)	1	I don't use 'I was wondering.'
	1	0	
	2	2	Have never seen such phrase. I think this phrase is unacceptable.
	3	1	Impolite.
	4	2	It' the first time I see such a combination. Too bookish.
	5	2	Quite polite. Good for further relation.
	6	3	Polite form. No comments. Too polite.
	7	9	Most polite when addressing a professor. Because a student is requesting a professor. Excessively polite, but acceptable. Acceptable, but may be too polite. Fits. Not so often. A bit more polite than #2. No comments. The speaker does not expect a possibility of rejection.
	8	10	May be too polite but acceptable. This phrase is acceptable in this situation. Acceptable form of address for this situation. Most suitable. No comments. Acceptable. Polite and quite formal. Acceptable style. Will do, but it's not an ideal way. No comments. Sugary.

	9 (very appropriate)	9	Most suitable phrase for a conversation with an older interlocutor. Very polite. Acceptable phrase. Too polite. Professor won't say no to such a request. Quite polite. As polite as # 2. No comments. Just what is needed.
<p><b>Situation 3.</b> You are collecting data for your history class project via written questionnaire which you created. Now you are looking for people who could fill your questionnaires out. It is lunch time and you are sitting in a café. Mike Stratford, who is in your class, and also has been in the same program with you for a year, suddenly takes a seat next to you. You see Mike socially about once a month in a group. You think that both of you will continue taking same classes in future. You have seen other people from your class asking Mike to fill their questionnaires out. He did not seem to mind doing that. Your project is due the end of next week. What would you say? Here is what people said in this situation:</p>			
Request Categories	Points on Likert-type Scale	Number of Participants Chose	Comments
1. Can you fill out a questionnaire for me?	0 (not appropriate)	0	
	1	5	Insufficiently polite. Not very polite. We don't know each other very well. Quite rude. No for sure.
	2	0	
	3	5	Not sufficiently polite. Very informal. Insufficiently polite. Less polite form. No comments.
	4	6	Not very polite. Polite. Question about an ability. Okay. Can be used. No comments.
	5	4	Insufficiently polite. Less polite, but it is acceptable with a classmate. No comments. No comments.
	6	3	Okay. No comments. Somewhat formal.

	7	4	Unceremoniously (casual), but okay. Common form of address towards a friend. Not very polite. No comments.
	8	8	Most suitable in this situation. Acceptable (informal), he knows what the conversation is about. Acceptable style. Suitable for this situation. Quite suitable. Still, I like 'could' more. Polite informal request. Okay, but more rude than #4. I would say like in #4.
	9 (very appropriate)	4	Acceptable for a friendly talk. Common form of address towards a peer. Quite acceptable. Quite acceptable.
<b>Request Categories</b>	<b>Points on Likert-type Scale</b>	<b>Number of Participants Chose</b>	<b>Comments</b>
2. I was wondering if you would fill out a questionnaire for me?	0 (not appropriate)	6	Too formal. Too polite. Boot-licking. Too formal. I don't use 'I was wondering.' Very formal request.
	1	7	Too formal. Too formal for a classmate. Not suitable phrase. It's possible, that a peer will misunderstand me. Too polite and formal. The style is not suitable when conversing with students. Insinuating-like.
	2	4	Too polite. Too polite in this situation. Too polite. Very formal.
	3	4	Too formal. Elevated and posh. Too formal. The style is not suitable.
	4	2	Technically, it suits, but it's probably too polite. No comments.
	5	2	Bad combination. No comments.



	6	9	Quite polite. Quite polite. Too polite. Rather polite. Very polite. Polite, but not polite enough. No comments. No comments. No comments.
	7	1	Suitable in this situation.
	8	2	Polite. Suitable.
	9 (very appropriate)	2	No comments. Polite form.
<b>Request Categories</b>	<b>Points on Likert-type Scale</b>	<b>Number of Participants Chose</b>	<b>Comments</b>
3. Would you mind filling out a questionnaire for me?	0 (not appropriate)	5	Too polite. Formal. Too polite. Excessively formal. If only this is a joke.
	1	0	
	2	1	Not acceptable.
	3	1	Too formal.
	4	5	Too polite. No comments. Too bookish. Does not leave a choice. Can be used, but #4 is better.
	5	3	Not very suitable in this situation. Quite polite. Quite okay.
	6	5	Suitable variant. No comments. Polite form, but it is used rarely. Quite suitable. Acceptable. More polite than #1, but less common in spoken language.
	7	3	Most suitable form. No comments. No comments.

	8	9	Polite. Suitable form of address in this situation. Most polite variant. Acceptable. Quite acceptable. Acceptable. Acceptable. Quite acceptable. Very-very close.
	9 (very appropriate)	7	Most suitable. Most suitable, because I am not the first person who asked Mike. Very polite. I like everything. Most polite variant, most respectful way to ask. No comments. No comments. No comments.
<b>Request Categories</b>	<b>Points on Likert-type Scale</b>	<b>Number of Participants Chose</b>	<b>Comments</b>
4.	0 (not appropriate)	0	
Would you fill out a questionnaire for me?	1	1	Not very polite.
	2	0	
	3	0	
	4	3	Not very polite. Too polite. No comments.
	5	5	No comments. Acceptable. Rather polite. Can be used. Quite acceptable.
	6	4	Unceremoniously (casual), but acceptable. No comments. No comments. Suitable variant.
	7	9	Ideal variant. No comment. Similar to #1, a little bit more polite. Rather polite. Not very polite. Most acceptable form. Acceptable. Polite, but not quite. No comments.

APPENDIX L. (continued)

	8	8	Polite. Acceptable. A request like a suggestion is most suitable. Suitable. Rather polite form. Quite fits. Acceptable in this situation. No comments. Okay.
	9 (very appropriate)	9	Polite and straightforward phrase. Best variant. Polite. No comments. Acceptable. More polite than #1. Less polite than #3, but as common and sounds well. Polite and informal request. I would use it.
<b>Request Categories</b>	<b>Points on Likert-type Scale</b>	<b>Number of Participants Chose</b>	<b>Comments</b>
5. I was wondering if you could fill out a questionnaire for me?	0 (not appropriate)	10	Too much. Too formal. Not suitable for a conversation with a classmate. Too formal. Too polite. Excessively polite. Formal and does not suit the context. Too formal. I don't use 'I was wondering.' Too formal. If only it is a joke.
	1	3	Too formal and polite. Does not suit the style of communication between students. I don't like it. It is not appropriate for professor's status.
	2	3	Too polite. Not an appropriate phrase. No comments.
	3	5	Too formal. Too polite. Formal. Not commonly used. Excessively polite.
	4	2	Technically, it works, but too polite. Question about an ability, less polite.

	5	2	Bad combination. No comment.
	6	2	Rather polite. Fifty-fifty.
	7	3	Too polite. No comments. No comments.
	8	6	Very polite. Polite. Acceptable. Excessive, even sugary. No comments. It's better to be polite with everyone.
	9 (very appropriate)	3	Fits. No comments. Polite form.

**Situation 4.**

You are collecting data for your history class project via written questionnaire which you created. Now you are looking for people who could fill your questionnaires out. It is lunch time, and you are sitting in a café. Professor McCormick, whose history class you took last year, takes a seat next to you. You run into each other on campus every other week or two, and say hello. There is a possibility that you will be taking a class with him in future. You know that other students from your history class have asked professor McCormick to fill their questionnaires out. And he did not say no to them. Your project is due the end of next week.

What would you say? Here is what people said in this situation:

Request Categories	Points on Likert-type Scale	Number of Participants Chose	Comments
1. Would you mind filling out a questionnaire for me?	0 (not appropriate)	2	Not acceptable when conversing with a professor. Impolite request.
	1	1	No comments.
	2	0	
	3	4	Insufficiently polite. Impolite. Better not be used in this situation. Polite, but not for a conversation with a professor.
	4	2	Not bad. Not commonly used.
	5	5	Okay. Polite. Quite suitable. No comments. No comments.
	6	3	Rather polite form of address. Quite suits the style of communication with a professor. No comments.

	7	6	No comments. Good. Suitable. Suitable. Quite acceptable. Quite acceptable. Most polite form.
	8	5	Most suitable form. Acceptable in this situation. Quite polite. Quite suitable. Very polite. Can be used, but #3 is better.
	9 (very appropriate)	11	Suitable. Polite. Most suitable. Most suitable and polite variant in this situation. Very polite. Most polite. Suits this situation. Most polite form. Polite form. Very polite. 100%. Good, polite, respectful.
<b>Request Categories</b>	<b>Points on Likert-type Scale</b>	<b>Number of Participants Chose</b>	<b>Comments</b>
2. Would you fill out a questionnaire for me?	0 (not appropriate)	6	No comments. Impolite. He is a professor. Not acceptable when conversing with a professor. Insufficiently polite. Not acceptable when addressing an older person. Rude.
	1	2	Unacceptable. Too formal.
	2	2	No comments. Too simple, but more polite than #5.
	3	5	Insufficiently polite. Informal phrase, unacceptable in this situation. Not according to the context. So-so. A bit rude.
	4	4	Insufficiently polite. Not very polite. Too buddy-like. No comments.

	5	5	Suitable, but insufficiently polite. May be insufficiently polite. Neutral variant. No comments. No comments.
	6	3	Too rude. Less polite form. No comments.
	7	6	Quite polite. Suitable. No comments. Polite form, but is less commonly used. Does not suit a conversation with a professor and with any older interlocutor. No comments.
	8	6	Less polite but suitable. Polite. Quite acceptable. Very good. Very polite. Most commonly used.
	9 (very appropriate)	0	
<b>Request Categories</b>	<b>Points on Likert-type Scale</b>	<b>Number of Participants Chose</b>	<b>Comments</b>
3. I was wondering if you could fill out a questionnaire for me?	0 (not appropriate)	2	Have never seen such phrase. I don't use 'I was wondering.'
	1	0	
	2	0	
	3	1	Excessively polite.
	4	2	Question about an ability. Too bookish.
	5	5	Complicated phrase. Impolite. I don't really like it. Good. Not okay.
	6	3	Okay. No comments. Quite polite.

APPENDIX L. (continued)

	7	9	Suitable variant. Because this conversation is with a professor. Quite suitable. Quite polite. Acceptable. Less polite than #4. Suits the situation. No comments. No comments. Very ...
	8	8	Suits. Can possibly be used. Acceptable. Acceptable for this situation. No comments. Polite form. Suits the style. No comments.
	9 (very appropriate)	9	No comments. Most suitable variant. Too polite. Suitable. Very polite and in according to the situation. Polite form. No comments. Respectful request for an older interlocutor. Address to a professor. I think I would say the same.
<b>Request Categories</b>	<b>Points on Likert-type Scale</b>	<b>Number of Participants Chose</b>	<b>Comments</b>
4. I was wondering if you would fill out a questionnaire for me?	0 (not appropriate)	2	Have not seen such a phrase. I don't use 'I was wondering.'
	1	0	
	2	1	Not acceptable.
	3	3	Too polite. Excessively polite. Excessively polite.
	4	2	Even worse than #3. Too sugary.
	5	5	Complicated phrase. No comments. Good. Won't suit this situation. Big expectations.

	6	3	No comments. Similar in politeness with #3. No comments.
	7	9	Acceptable variant. Rather suitable. Rather suitable. Rather suitable. Polite form, but not commonly used. Quite suitable. Fits the situation. No comments. No comments.
	8	5	No comments. Fits. Quite polite. Fits this situation. No comments.
	9 (very appropriate)	9	Also suitable. Appropriate when addressing an older person. Too polite. The more respect, the more chance for success. Polite phrase and is appropriate for the situation. No comments. Appropriate style. No comments.
<b>Request Categories</b>	<b>Points on Likert-type Scale</b>	<b>Number of Participants Chose</b>	<b>Comments</b>
5. Can you fill out a questionnaire for me?	0 (not appropriate)	11	Rude. Is not acceptable when conversing with a professor. No comments. Impolite towards an older person. Inappropriate, too informal. Professor is neither a friend nor a buddy. Inappropriate when conversing with a professor. Inappropriate. Insufficiently polite. Inappropriate when conversing with an older person. Rude.
	1	5	No comments. Insufficiently polite when conversing with a professor. Impolite form of address towards a professor. Too formal. Less polite than #2

APPENDIX L. (continued)



	2	6	Too informal and impolite. Impolite. Bad. Less polite form. Impolite. No comments.
	3	3	Insufficiently polite. Not the most appropriate form. No comments.
	4	6	Not very polite. Question about an ability. Too rude. Casual form. If they know each other well, then it's possible. No comments.
	5	1	Appropriate.
	6	1	No comments.
	7	3	Not very polite. No comments. Acceptable, but not very polite.
	8	2	Very polite. If the request had please and the person's name, it would be perfect.
	9 (very appropriate)	1	Common.

APPENDIX L. (continued)

## EFL instructor 1

### Questions of Researcher

1. How much attention do you generally pay to English pragmatics during your classes? What are some of the approaches that you use to teach pragmatics?
  
2. Are there any typical patterns that you generally teach the students to follow when they make requests in English? Do you teach them any politeness strategies?
  
3. What order of increasing politeness would you teach to your students if you were to teach these requests?
  - Can you lend me a book/fill out a questionnaire for me?
  - Would you lend me a book/fill out a questionnaire for me?
  - Would you mind lending me a book/filling out a questionnaire for me?
  - I was wondering if you could lend me a book/fill out a questionnaire for me?
  - I was wondering if you would lend me a book/fill out a questionnaire for me?
4. Does the pattern given below surprise you? Could you suggest any explanation to it?

The results of the acceptability questionnaire show that Russian EFL learners considered most conventionally indirect requests to be most appropriate when addressing a professor.

### Answers of EFL Instructor

1. During the Conversation course, in every unit we study conversational patterns, create dialogues with them, discuss them in class. Our main textbook does not offer much in this case. So I have to look for conversational formulas in alternative sources, for instance, dialogues from the Internet, other textbooks available at the department. There is practically no time left to watch any videos to study pragmatics. Conversation is a short course, where we need to focus on vocabulary practice. In other courses, we show videos to students, but there are not any pragmatics-oriented materials there.
2. We usually begin with 'How do you do?' 'How are you?' Our students sometimes have hard time differentiating between these two forms. We analyze pragmalinguistics of disagreements and arguing. Students learn that they should agree first to show their respect to the interlocutor, and then they can express their opinion. We practice this a lot.
3. I would teach them in the order you have them here. I am a little uncertain about number one and two. But overall, this is the order in which I would teach them.
  
4. No, I am not surprised. Most conventionally indirect requests are more formal. The relations between students and professors are also formal. That is why I think that these are expectable results for EFL learners with Russian L1. It could be happening due to the language interference. May be the participants did not know which requests were the correct ones in English, but the request forms were extended, indirect, with complex structure. This could be the reason why they considered them more appropriate than the less direct ones.

5. Does the following finding from this study surprise you? Why? Could you suggest an explanation to why the request pattern ‘*Would you mind lending me a book?*’ is equally appropriate when it is addressed to the student and to the professor?

The participants made no distinctions between the social standings of a student-addressee and a professor-addressee when the request ‘*Would you mind lending me a book?*’ was used. In both cases, Russian EFL learners perceive this request form appropriate.

6. How would you explain the following finding?

The request pattern ‘*I was wondering if you could lend me a book?*’ is found to be significantly more appropriate for the professor-addressee than for the student-addressee.

7. How would you explain the following finding?

The request pattern ‘*I was wondering if you would lend me a book?*’ is found to be significantly more appropriate for the professor-addressee than for the student-addressee.

8. Does the finding provided below surprise you? Why?

*Russian EFL learners indicated that neither of the request patterns (i.e., I was wondering if you could lend me a book? vs. I was wondering if you would lend me a book?) are appropriate when addressing a peer-student.*

Could you assume why Russian EFL learners suggested the following?

With the professor-addressee, the difference between the modals ‘*could/would*’ (i.e., *I was wondering if you could lend me a book?* vs. *I was wondering if you would lend me a book?*) was only discovered in the situation when a student is asking the professor for a book. The request pattern with the modal ‘*would*’ was perceived as a more appropriate one.

9. Could you, perhaps, suggest why Russian EFL learners made the following choice?

When evaluating ‘*Would you lend me a book?*’ and ‘*Would you mind lending me a book?*’ the participants exhibited no differences in their perceptions of the grammatical structures in requests addressed to the student. Both of them were considered to be quite appropriate. When these requests were addressed to the professor, ‘*would you mind + gerund*’ was found to be more appropriate than ‘*would you + Infinitive.*’

5. First of all, we practically never use this request pattern. They study the form during Grammar, but in Conversation classes we don’t practice it much. I think that they just don’t know it well. In other words, pragmalinguistically, they have little knowledge in terms of how to use it when addressing different people. That is why this pattern is not very challenging but at the same time, not very easy one as well. It is semi-formal. We study request patterns with students when we talk about ordering meals in restaurants and so on. Maybe we need to pay more attention to requests. I mean, they will recognize the pattern, but I am not sure whether they will use it on their own. Most probably, they would use the ‘*could*’ patterns.

6. Russian EFL learners consider it to be more formal.

7. Russian EFL learners consider it to be more formal.

8. I think we pay even less attention to this request pattern than to ‘*would you mind + Gerund.*’ We stress vocabulary and grammar structures more. Maybe this pattern is somewhere in the list that we cover when talking about requests, but it is almost never practiced in class. They simply don’t know it as a request. Probably, they evaluated this pattern using their intuition.

It is hard to say why. I advocate that many students were challenged by ‘*I was wondering if you could/would*’ pattern. Maybe even EFL instructors would not use it. It is probably the interference with the Russian language. It is a difficult structure for us. We would prefer to use requests with modal verbs.

9. I am not sure, maybe they don’t know the second pattern well, though we study it. I am very confident about it. Maybe they translate ‘*would you mind lending*’ into Russian where it sounds more formal ‘*а не возражаете ли вы.*’ I am not sure why they made no distinctions between the two request patterns for the student-addressee.

10. Does the following finding surprise you? Why?

When ‘*Would you mind lending me a book?*’ and ‘*I was wondering if you would lend me a book?*’ were evaluated, ‘*Would you mind lending*’ was perceived as more appropriate in requests to the student. As for the situations with the professor-addressee, no significant differences in appropriateness of these request patterns were found.

11. Do you think the findings that we have just discussed reflect what the students have been generally taught at the IELD?

## **EFL instructor 2**

### **Questions of Researcher**

1. How much attention do you generally pay to English pragmatics during your classes? What are some of the approaches that you use to teach pragmatics?

10. It is possible that they perceive ‘*I was wondering*’ as an explicitly formal request pattern. As for the first one, they assigned high level of appropriateness to this request earlier and that is why, perhaps, they do not differentiate it any further. I can’t suggest you a certain explanation, but it seems they established a certain threshold of appropriateness/politeness for the request patterns aimed at the professor, and both of these phrases are above this threshold. It seems that this threshold starts with ‘*would you mind.*’

11. Well, overall we just don’t pay necessary attention to all this. Although, may be, we should. Overall, I think it does reflect what we teach our students, because we mainly teach vocabulary, how to translate something correctly. In other words, we teach what to say and how to say, and only then what pragmalinguistic patterns they need to use to say something. The dialogical speech is out of the close focus if you want to compare it with the attention that the monologic speech has. It is happening because the students in our program are of slightly different language levels, and the program itself has different objectives. Finally, the students in our program don’t have very many oral communication courses. Conversation is 63 classroom hours only. We are placing our efforts to teach them how to speak English. The Analysis of Texts course focuses on reading and retelling. The only other conversation course for them is Country Studies of the British Isles where they mostly learn nonlinguistic information. This is all.

Maybe the instructors at the department do not have enough training on teaching pragmalinguistics because we don’t usually practice it.

### **Answers of EFL Instructor**

1. We usually practice pragmatics in textbook contexts, mainly through dialogues. Listening materials are used rarely for this purpose. I attract their attention to pragmalinguistic aspects of English in dialogues.

2. Are there any typical patterns that you generally teach the students to follow when they make requests in English? Do you teach them any politeness strategies?

3. What order of increasing politeness would you teach to your students if you were to teach these requests?

- Can you lend me a book/fill out a questionnaire for me?
- Would you lend me a book/fill out a questionnaire for me?
- Would you mind lending me a book/filling out a questionnaire for me?
- I was wondering if you could lend me a book/fill out a questionnaire for me?
- I was wondering if you would lend me a book/fill out a questionnaire for me?

4. Does the pattern given below surprise you? Could you suggest any explanation to it?

The results of the acceptability questionnaire show that Russian EFL learners considered most conventionally indirect requests to be most appropriate when addressing a professor.

2. We don't teach patterns of politeness as a separate unit. Generally, instructors illustrate pragmalinguistic patterns during their courses. For example, during Grammar course these could be patterns of politeness with modal verbs and special constructions. We take these politeness formulas from British and American textbooks.

At the advanced levels, we don't study politeness and speech etiquette. Students typically acquire communication skills during the previous years of studying English. We just correct their skills while practicing new conversational topics. For example, during discussions of the topic 'Travelling', we pay attention at how the students address people politely, what they say when they want to interrupt someone, or what they say at leave-taking. However, separate politeness strategies have never been in the focus of any teaching units.

The scope of politeness strategies that the students use is rather narrow. In other words, they use what they know. The variability of pragmalinguistic means is very low among the learners. Difficulties that you may see in students' speech may be caused by the lack of pragmalinguistic variability. Sometimes, they just don't see the possibilities that variability of pragmalinguistic means offers them. Instructors also fail to pay due attention to this language aspect in class.

When teaching the modals 'can' and 'may,' we try to differentiate the possible meanings they may have in different contexts. As a result, EFL learners still demonstrate misunderstandings in their usage.

3. 'Can you' – is a neutral request form. I would start with it. Next goes 'would you lend me.'

Then, it seems, everything is ordered correctly, except for the last two requests. I would switch their order. I think, 'could' sounds more polite.

4. No, I am not surprised. I think we can draw an analogy with Russian here. When trying to make a polite request formally, we construct a more complex phrase. I believe that Russian EFL learners relied on their sense of the native language, and transferred indirectness of requests into English. It seems to be the case of the language interference here.

5. Does the following finding from this study surprise you? Why?  
Could you suggest an explanation to why the request pattern ‘*Would you mind lending me a book?*’ is equally appropriate when it is addressed to the student and to the professor?

The participants made no distinctions between the social standings of a student-addressee and a professor-addressee when the request ‘*Would you mind lending me a book?*’ was used. In both cases, Russian EFL learners perceive this request form appropriate.

6. How would you explain the following finding?

The request pattern ‘*I was wondering if you could lend me a book?*’ is found to be significantly more appropriate for the professor-addressee than for the student-addressee.

7. How would you explain the following finding?

The request pattern ‘*I was wondering if you would lend me a book?*’ is found to be significantly more appropriate for the professor-addressee than for the student-addressee.

8. Does the following finding surprise you?

When ‘*can you lend me a book?*’ and ‘*Would you lend me a book?*’ were evaluated, the request pattern with the modal verb ‘*would*’ was found to be more appropriate than the one with ‘*can*’ for both types of addressees, the student and the professor.

9. Could you assume why Russian EFL learners suggested the following?

When evaluating ‘*I was wondering if you could lend me a book?*’ and ‘*I was wondering if you would lend me a book?*’ for the situations with the professor-addressee, the difference between these request patterns was discovered only in the situation when a student is asking the professor for a book. The request pattern with the modal ‘*would*’ was perceived as a more appropriate one.

10. Could you, perhaps, suggest why Russian EFL learners made the following choice?

When evaluating ‘*Would you lend me a book?*’ and ‘*Would you mind lending me a book?*’ the participants exhibited no differences in their perceptions of the grammatical structures in requests addressed to the student. Both of them were considered to be quite appropriate. When these requests were addressed to the professor, ‘*would you mind + gerund*’ was found to be more appropriate than ‘*would you + Infinitive.*’

5. Here, I believe that the grammatical construction itself was difficult for the students. I am not really sure how to explain this finding. I just think that this construction is challenging. First of all, there is a gerund here. Second, honestly speaking, our students rarely use this construction in conversation. I would assume they had to think about the grammar a lot when they evaluated the contextual appropriateness of this request.

6. I would think that ‘*if you could*’ sounds more polite than ‘*if you would.*’ The students did not see the difference between the ability and willingness conventions here, I am sure. We need to pay more attention to pragmalinguistics in class.

7. Grammar may be playing an important role here. The phrases are elaborate, with past continuous tense, a clause, and indirect word order. It could also be the length of the phrase. Russian interfered with English. Longer and more elaborate phrases are may be marked as more polite/appropriate for situations where students need to keep subordination. I think they paid attention to the length of the phrase, to how it is constructed, how it sounds, how it can be interpreted. It is quite logical that they perceived this phrase as more acceptable for the professor.

8. ‘*Would you*’ is a very frequent pattern in conversation of our students. They use this request a lot. That is why the finding is not surprising here. Another outcome would be very improbable.

9. In their choice, Russian EFL learners are guided by the linguistic stereotype according to which ‘*would you*’ is more polite than ‘*could you.*’ I don’t think there was any analysis of ‘*could*’ and ‘*would*’ here. Instead, they just resorted to the pattern they already knew. ‘*Would*’ is more frequent in this pattern than ‘*could.*’

10. Perhaps, the students doubt they know the gerund construction very well. Something that is not really clear, seems more difficult, elaborate and thus appropriate during a communication with the professor. The grammar is challenging here. They concentrated their attention on the form more, and considered the gerund to be more polite.

11. How would you comment the following findings?

When *'Would you lend me a book?'* and *'I was wondering if you would lend me a book?'* were evaluated, Russian EFL learners perceived *'Would you + Infinitive'* to be more appropriate in requests for the student-addressee and *'If you would'* to be more appropriate in requests for the professor.

12. Does the following finding surprise you? Why?

When *'Would you mind lending me a book?'* and *'I was wondering if you would lend me a book?'* were evaluated, *'Would you mind lending'* was perceived as more appropriate in requests to the student. As for the situations with the professor-addressee, no significant differences in appropriateness of these request patterns were found.

13. Do you think the findings that we have just discussed reflect what the students have been generally taught at the IELD?

11. Expanded request constructions are obviously marked by Russian EFL learners as more appropriate for a professor. Their perception of request appropriateness depends on the grammar level in the phrase.

12. They don't see any differences in the meanings. Again, maybe they don't quite understand these grammar constructions. They are equally challenging to the learners. They are both quite elaborate and extended, they even sound very similar, if you wish. Maybe this is the reason why they seem similar to them. They don't feel that one is more polite than the other. That is why both requests are equally polite.

I believe that grammar clearly influences the choices of requests for the participants.

13. Certainly, these findings reflect what the students study in the EILD program. Unfortunately, we don't teach English pragmatics as a course. Students learn bits and pieces of it in various language aspects. For example, we cover modal verbs and gerund during our Grammar course. I teach grammar, and I focus their attention at pragmatic meanings that modal verbs carry. Conversation classes touch upon the contextual situations with pragmalinguistic forms and their functions. As for other language aspects such as Translation Studies, Country Studies of the British Isles, I cannot really tell you. It would be a good question to the language instructors who teach these courses.

## APPENDIX N. COMPARABILITY OF REQUEST OBJECTS

*Mean appropriateness ratings for five request categories as perceived by Russian EFL learners (n=39) for book and questionnaire scenarios from acceptability questionnaire*

	Student-Hearer		Professor-Hearer	
	Book	Questionnaire	Book	Questionnaire
1. Can you lend/ fill out?	6.18	5.38	2.41	2.74
2. Would you lend/ fill out?	7.10	6.92	3.18	4.36
3. Would you mind lending/ filling out?	6.64	5.79	5.94	6.28
4. I was wondering if you could lend/ fill out?	3.49	3.85	6.31	6.72
5. I was wondering if you would lend/ fill out?	3.20	3.59	6.85	6.31

*Dependent paired-samples t-test results for ratings of book and questionnaire as objects of request in contextual situations from acceptability questionnaire as perceived by Russian EFL learners (n=39) when 'can you lend/fill out' request form is suggested*

	Paired Samples Statistics		Paired Differences			Paired Samples Test						
	Mean	Std. Deviation	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Conf. Interval	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)			
Book/Student – Quest./Student	6.18	2.372	5.38	2.592	.795	2.949	.472	-.161	1.751	1.684	38	.100
Book/Prof. – Quest./Prof.	2.41	2.741	2.74	2.692	-.333	1.528	.245	-.828	.162	-1.363	38	.181

*Dependent paired-samples t-test results for ratings of book and questionnaire as objects of request in contextual situations from acceptability questionnaire as perceived by Russian EFL learners (n=39) when 'would you lend/fill out' request form is suggested*

	Paired Samples Statistics		Paired Differences			Paired Samples Test						
	Mean	Std. Deviation	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Conf. Interval	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)			
Book/Student – Quest./Student	7.10	1.861	6.92	1.855	.179	2.270	.363	-.556	.915	.494	38	.624
Book/Prof. – Quest./Prof.	3.18	2.799	4.36	2.758	-1.179	2.594	.415	-2.020	-.339	-2.839	38	.007

*Dependent paired-samples t-test results for ratings of book and questionnaire as objects of request in contextual situations from acceptability questionnaire as perceived by Russian EFL learners (n=39) when 'would you mind lending/ filling out' request form is suggested*

	Paired Samples Statistics		Paired Differences			Paired Samples Test						
	Mean	Std. Deviation	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Conf. Interval	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)			
Book/Student – Quest./Student	6.64	2.158	5.79	2.940	.846	3.329	.533	-.233	1.925	1.587	38	.121
Book/Prof. – Quest./Prof.	5.95	2.704	6.28	2.655	-.333	2.216	.355	-1.052	.385	-.939	38	.354



*Dependent paired-samples t-test results for ratings of book and questionnaire as objects of request in contextual situations from acceptability questionnaire as perceived by Russian EFL learners (n=39) when 'I was wondering if you could lend/ fill out' request form is suggested*

	Paired Samples Statistics		Paired Differences			Paired Samples Test				
	Mean	Std. Deviation	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Conf. Interval		t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Book/Student –	3.49	2.809								
Quest./Student	3.85	3.289	-.359	2.851	.457	-1.283	.565	-.786	38	.437
Book/Prof. –	6.31	2.483								
Quest./Prof.	6.72	2.271	-.410	2.061	.330	-1.078	.258	-1.243	38	.221

*Dependent paired-samples t-test results for ratings of book and questionnaire as objects of request in contextual situations from acceptability questionnaire as perceived by Russian EFL learners (n=39) when 'I was wondering if you would lend/ fill out' request form is suggested*

	Paired Samples Statistics		Paired Differences			Paired Samples Test				
	Mean	Std. Deviation	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Conf. Interval		t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Book/Student –	3.21	2.922								
Quest./Student	3.59	2.816	-.385	2.943	.471	-1.339	.570	-.816	38	.420
Book/Prof. –	6.85	2.231								
Quest./Prof.	6.31	2.483	.538	1.790	.287	-.042	1.119	1.879	38	.068

## REFERENCES

- Adair, W., et al. (2004). Culture and negotiation strategy. *Negotiation journal*. January, 87-111.
- Arakin, V.A. (Ed.), (2005). *Practical course of the English language*. Moscow: Vados.
- Bachman, L.F., and Palmer, A.S. (1996). *Language testing in practice*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Bardovi-Harlig, K. (1996). Pragmatics and language teaching: Bringing pragmatics and pedagogy together. In L. Bouton (Ed.), *Pragmatics and language learning*. (Vol. 7, pp. 21-39). Urbana-Champaign: University of Illinois, Division of English as an International Language.
- Bardovi-Harlig, K., and Dornyei, Z. (1998). Do language learners recognize pragmatic violations? Pragmatic versus grammatical awareness in instructed L2 learning. *TESOL Quarterly*. 32, 233-262.
- Beebe, L.M. and Cummings, M.C. (1996). Natural speech act data versus written questionnaire data: How data collection method affects speech act performance. In S. M. Gass and J. Neu (Eds.), *Speech acts across cultures* (pp. 65-86). Berlin, New York: Mouton de Gruyter.
- Beebe, L. and Waring, H.Z. (2005). Pragmatic development in responding to rudeness. In J. Frodesen and C. Holten (Eds.), *The power of context in language teaching and learning* (pp.67-80). Boston: Thomson/Heinle.
- Benson, C. (2002). Transfer/cross-linguistic influence. *ELT Journal*. 56/1, 68-70.
- Berdiaev, N. (1990). *Knowing yourself*. Moscow: DEM.
- Blum-Kulka, S. and House, J. (1989). Cross-cultural and situational variation in requesting behavior. In S. Blum-Kulka, J. House and G. Kasper (Eds.) *Cross-cultural pragmatics: Requests and apologies*. (pp. 123-154). New Jersey, Norwood: Ablex Publishing Corporation.
- Blum-Kulka, S. et al. (1989). Investigating cross-cultural pragmatics: An introductory overview. In S. Blum-Kulka, J. House and G. Kasper (Eds.) *Cross-cultural*

- pragmatics: Requests and apologies*. (pp. 123-154). New Jersey, Norwood: Ablex Publishing Corporation.
- Bousfield, D. (2008). *Impoliteness in interaction*. Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company.
- Bouton, L. (1996). Pragmatics and language learning. In L. Bouton (Ed.), *Pragmatics and language learning* (Vol. 7, pp. 1-20). Urbana-Champaign: University of Illinois, Division of English as an International Language.
- Boxer, D. (1993). Complaints as positive strategies: What the learner needs to know. *TESOL Quarterly*. 27, 277-299.
- Bown, J. and Hassell, E. (n.d.). Men, women, and Russian requests: The influence of gender on the pragmatic competence of second language learners. Retrieved February 15, 2010, from [www.orca.byu.edu](http://www.orca.byu.edu)
- Brown, P. and Fraser, C. (1979). Speech as a marker of situation. In K. Scherer and H. Giles (Eds.), *Social markers in speech* (pp. 33-63). Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press.
- Bucholtz, M. (2003). Sociolinguistic nostalgia and the authentication of identity. *Journal of Sociolinguistics*. 7/3, 398-416.
- Bush, M. (1993). Using Likert scales in L2 research. A researcher comments. *TESOL Quarterly*. 27/4, 733-736.
- Brett, J.M., et al. (1998). Culture and joint gains in negotiation. *Negotiation Journal* 14/1, 61-86.
- Brown, P. and Levinson, S. (1987). *Universals in language usage: Politeness phenomena*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Chen, C. (2001). *Making e-mail requests to professors: Taiwanese vs. American students*. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED4661299). Retrieved from ERIC database.
- Cieri, C. et al. (2002). *Research methodologies, observations and outcomes in (conversational) speech data collection*. Proceedings of the second international conference on Human Language Technology Research. (pp.206-211). San Francisco: Morgan Kaufmann Publishers Inc.

- Clark, H.H. and Carlson, T.B. (1982). Hearers and speech acts. *Language*. 58/2, 332-373.
- Clennell, C. (1999). Promoting pragmatic awareness and spoken discourse skills with EAP classes. *ELT Journal*. 53/2, 83-91.
- Cohen, A. (1997). Developing pragmatic ability: A case study. In E. Castillo (Ed.), *Applied linguistics: Focus on second language learning/ teaching* (pp. 1-13). Manila, Philippines: De La Salle University Press, Inc.
- Cohen, D. and Olshtain, E. (1993). The production of speech acts by EFL learners. *TESOL Quarterly*. 27, 33-56.
- Cohen, A. (1996). Investigating the production of speech act sets. In S. M. Gass and J. Neu (Eds.), *Speech acts across cultures* (pp. 21-43). Berlin, New York: Mouton de Gruyter.
- Crandall, E., and Basturkmen, H. (2004). Evaluating pragmatics-focused materials. *ELT Journal*. 58/1, 38-49.
- Drozdova, T. (Ed.). (2007). *Everyday English*. St. Petersburg: Anthology Publishers.
- Dudorova, E. S. (2005). *A practical course of conversational English*. St. Petersburg: Lenizdat, Soiuz.
- Eggins, S. and Slade, D. (1997). *Analysing casual conversation*. London, Washington: Cassel.
- Elsami-Rasekh, Z. (2005). Raising the pragmatic awareness of language learners. *ELT Journal*. 59/3, 199-208.
- Ervin-Tripp, S. (1976). Is Sybil there? The structure of some American English directives. *Language is society*, 5(1), 25-66.
- Foley, W. (1997). *Anthropological linguistics*. Blackwell, Oxford.
- Fraser, B. (1990). Perspectives on politeness. *Journal of Pragmatics*. 14, 219-236.
- Gass, S.M., and Selinker, L. (2008). *Second language acquisition*. New York, London: Routledge.
- Goldschmidt, M. (1996). From the addressee's perspective: Imposition in favor-asking. In S. M. Gass and J. Neu (Eds.), *Speech acts across cultures* (pp. 241-256). Berlin, New York: Mouton de Gruyter.
- Golitsinski, Y. (1998). *Spoken English*. St. Petersburg: KARO.

- House, J. (1989). Politeness in English and German: The functions of please and bitte. In S. Blum-Kulka, J. House and G. Kasper (Eds.) *Cross-cultural pragmatics: Requests and apologies*. (pp. 96-119). New Jersey, Norwood: Ablex Publishing Corporation.
- Huang, M. (1996). A contrastive study of American and Chinese requests. Ph.D. dissertation. University of Illinois (Urbana-Champaign).
- Iwata, Y. and Fukushima, S. (1986). Politeness principles. *JACET Bulletin*. 17, 85-98.
- Kasper, G. (2000). Four perspectives on L2 pragmatic development. *Applied Linguistics*. 22/4, 502-530.
- Kasper, G., and Rose, K. R. (1999). Pragmatics and SLA. *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics*, 19, 81-104.
- Kasper, G. and Blum-Kulka S. (1993). Interlanguage pragmatics: An introduction. In G. Kasper and S. Blum-Kulka (Eds.) *Interlanguage pragmatics*. (pp. 3-20). Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Kasper, G., and Dahl, M. (1991). Research methods in interlanguage pragmatics. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition*, 13, 215-247.
- Kipers, P. (1984), Partings: A sociolinguistic perspective. Unpublished manuscript, University of Pennsylvania.
- Kitao, K., et al. (1990). *An exploratory study of differences between politeness strategies used in requests by Americans and Japanese*. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED284426). Retrieved from ERIC database.
- Kwon, J. (2004). Expressing refusals in Korean and in American English. *Multilingua*, 23, 339-364.
- Labov, W. (1972). *Sociolinguistic patterns*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.
- Labov, W. (1981). Field methods of the project on linguistic change and variation. Sociolinguistic working paper number 81. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED250938). Retrieved from ERIC database.
- Leech, G. (2005). Politeness: Is there an East-West divide? *Journal of Foreign Languages*. 6, 2-30.
- Lin, Y. (2009). Query preparatory modals: Cross-linguistic and cross-situational variations in request modification. *Journal of Pragmatics*. 41, 1636-1656.

- Liu, D. (1998). Ethnocentrism in TESOL: Teacher education and the neglected needs of international TESOL students. *ELT Journal*. 52/1, 3-10.
- LoCastro, V. (2003). *An introduction to pragmatics: Social action for language teachers*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.
- Long, M.H. (Ed.). (2005). *Second language needs analysis*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Meier, A. (1997). Teaching the universals of politeness. *ELT Journal*. 51/1, 21-28.
- Mey, J. (1993). *Pragmatics*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Mills, M. (1992). Conventionalized politeness in Russian requests: A pragmatic view of indirectness. *Russian Linguistics*. 16, 65-78.
- Mills, M. (2009). Impoliteness in a cultural context. *Journal of Pragmatics*. 41, 1047-1060.
- Mir, M. (1993). Direct requests can also be polite. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED359799/ FL021346). Retrieved from ERIC database.
- Na, Z. (2009). Do the modern Chinese request strategies fit into CCSARP? *US-China Foreign Language*. 7/3, 14-21.
- Ogiermann, E. (2009). Politeness and in-directness across cultures: A comparison of English, German, Polish and Russian requests. *Journal of Politeness*. 5/2, 189-216.
- Olshtain, E. (1983). Sociocultural competence and language transfer: The case of apology. In S. Gass and L. Selinker (Eds.), *Language transfer and language learning* (pp. 232-249). Rowley, MA: Newbury House.
- Paltridge, B. (2006). *Discourse analysis*. Bodmin, Cornwall: MPG Books Ltd.
- Reid, J. (1990). The dirty laundry of ESL survey research. *TESOL Quarterly*. 24/2, 323-338.
- Searle, J.R. (1979). *Expression and meaning: Studies in the theory of speech acts*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Searle, J. (1975). Indirect speech acts. In P. Cole and J. Morgan (Eds.), *Syntax and semantics, 3: Speech acts* (pp. 59-82), New York: Academic Press.
- Smith, L.C., and Mare, N.N. (Eds.). (2004). *Issues for today*. Boston, Massachusetts: Thompson Heinle.
- Takahashi, S. (1996). Pragmatic transferability. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition*. 18, 189-223.

- Tran, G.Q. (2002). Pragmatic and discourse markedness hypothesis. *Proceedings of the 2002 Conference of the Australian Linguistic Society*. 1-10.
- Tuzovskaya, N. (2007, July 12). *Russia – U.S.A.: Migration of intellect*. Retrieved from [http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/russian/russia/newsid\\_6293000/6293214.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/russian/russia/newsid_6293000/6293214.stm)
- Varghese, M., and Billmyer, K. (1996). *Investigating the structure of discourse completion tests*. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED401758/ FL024255). Retrieved from ERIC database.
- Watts, R.J. (2003). *Politeness*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Weizman, E. (1993). Interlanguage requestive hints. In G. Kasper and S. Blum-Kulka (Eds.), *Interlanguage pragmatics*. (pp. 123-137). New York, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Weizman, E. (1989). Requestive hints. In S. Blum-Kulka, J. House and G. Kasper (Eds.) *Cross-cultural pragmatics: Requests and apologies*. (pp. 71-95). New Jersey, Norwood: Ablex Publishing Corporation.
- Wolfson, N. (1986). Research methodology and the question of validity. *TESOL Quarterly*. 20/4, 689-699.
- Wolfson, N. (1983). An empirically based analysis of compliments in American English. In N. Wolfson and E. Judd (Eds.), *Sociolinguistics and language acquisition* (pp. 82-102). Rowley, MA: Newbury House.
- Wolfson, N., D'Amico-Reisner, L., and Huber, L. (1983). How to arrange for social commitments in American English: The invitation. In N. Wolfson and E. Judd (Eds.), *Sociolinguistics and language acquisition* (pp. 116-128). Rowley, Ma: Newbury House.
- Yule, G. (1996). *Pragmatics*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to a number of people without whom this research would not have been possible. In particular, I am profoundly indebted to my supervisor, Dr Barbara Schwarte, who was very generous with the time and expertise, and willingly assisted me during every stage of my work on the study. I am immensely grateful to Dr Carol Chapelle and Dr Dawn Bratsch-Prince for the insightful suggestions about the ways of further improvement of the study. Many words of gratitude to the participants from Iowa State University and Ivanovo State Power Engineering University who kindly allowed their time to participate in the research and share their expertise, intuitions and perceptions about the requests in the English language.

I would like to express my appreciation to the colleagues from the Department of Intensive English Language at Ivanovo State Power Engineering University, especially Dr Natalya Dudareva, Dr Maria Pankratova and Prof Ekaterina Korochkina, for the moral support and invaluable assistance in the data collection process. Without your cooperation, it would be next to impossible to collect the data from the Russian participants in such a timely and organized fashion.

I would also like to acknowledge Dr Mack Shelley and Ph.D. student Mark McKelvey for the time, willingness and patience they found to consult me about the proper statistic tests and approaches to analyse my data. A very special “thank you” goes to my friends and colleagues from Iowa State University, and my friends from Russia for their understanding and encouragements.

Finally, no words can convey my infinite gratitude to my family for being my plentiful source of inspiration and support.