International Conference on Developments in Education
Hosted from Toronto, Canada
https: econferencezone.org
June 15th 2022

TERMS OF ADDRESS IN ENGLISH REQUESTS

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Annotation. This article studies the problems of terms of address in English request. It also investigates greetings and apologies in Modern English and Uzbek.

Key words: greeting, the addressee, requestive situations, *casual appellatives,* real apology.

The speech act of *request*, whose illocutionary force is to ask someone to do something, has wide applications in daily communication. Since making a request is asking someone to do something, it can be a face-threatening act (FTA) because it imposes the speaker's desire on the addressee and so potentially impinges on the addressee's freedom of action. Therefore, in order to maintain smooth social relations, speakers typically make a careful calculation of social variables such as social power, social distance between the speaker and the addressee and ranking of request imposition is needed to ensure its perlocutionary success. When speakers from other cultures make requests in a second language, even when they try to overcome the interference generated by the transfer of request strategies from their native language to the target language, they may perceive the social variables differently from the speakers of the target language and, as a result, produce inappropriate requests [1,77].

This article endeavors to explore the similarities and differences displayed in the requests produced by native speakers from three cultures, American English, Uzbek and Russian, to examine possible cultural influences on the assessment of the weight of requestive situations, and to discuss how the different assessments may affect the way a request is made.

Only 3 kinds of terms of address are used by the American English-speaking participants in their requests: *titles* referring to the addressee's professional status or role, sometimes in combination with surnames; *courtesy terms* such as *sir, ma'am,* or *miss*; and *casual appellatives* used with good friends, such as *dude* in.

Hello, Professor …., Do you have a moment? I actually wanted to ask you if I could schedule an appointment with you? (AE16)

Sir, can you help me find a book? (AE23)

Ma'am, could you tell me if the chair is in the office at the moment? (AE6)

Dude, I forgot my wallet. Can I borrow 10 bucks? (AE3)

In the American English requests, the attention-getters occur exclusively in the form of *greetings* and *apologies.* Although both the greetings and the apologies keep their direct illocutionary forces, their primary functions in the requests would seem to be phatic, i.e., to attract the addressee's attention. In *greetings*, the speaker greets the addressee first, such as *hi* or *hey*.

The apologies attested are *Excuse me* and *I am sorry* (or contracted *I'm sorry).* Native speakers of American English prefer to use *Excuse me* as an attention-getter. *I am sorry* serving as an attention-getter occurs only four times in the American English requests, while *Excuse me* appears fifty-one times. The locution *Excuse me* (17) is a polite form commonly used prior to English requests for information. The locution *I am sorry* (18), when functioning as an attention-getter, is different from *I am sorry* used as an external modification serving as a real apology. Although *I am sorry* keeps its illocutionary force as to make an apology (functioning as a secondary force of the locution), the primary force is to get the addressee's attention. Furthermore, *I am sorry* as an attention-getter always stands in the beginning of the requests [2,56].

Excuse me, could you tell me where the medical center is? (AE1)

I am sorry, but I can't seem to find this book, could you help me, please? (AE25)

Comparison of Tables 4.2 and 4.3 shows that the American English-speaking participants prefer to use attention-getters over terms of address before making their core requests. Nevertheless, even attention-getters occur in a minority of the responses (86/349 or 24.6% of the possible cases). Altogether, alerters of either type occur in only 109/349 or 31.2% of the American English responses. This finding is suggestive, but it must be

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kept in mind that the written medium of the questionnaire may have reduced the informants' use of phatic devices, since there [1,78].

Next the usage and the distribution of the request strategies in the core requests will be discussed. Table 4.4 shows the distribution of the ten types of strategies that are attested in core requests in the American English data. As noted above, I made some adaptations in the process of analyzing the data when I could not find appropriate coding standards in the CCSARP. Thus I have added strategies such as inquiry, intention, permission, mind, and appreciation strategies, which are marked with an asterisk in Table 4.4.e 4.4 shows, preparatory is the most frequent strategy by far in the American English core requests. This strategy conventionally checks on the preparatory condition for the feasibility of the request; thus in English it typically involves the verbs of possibility *can* or *could*. A core request preparatory strategy can also be combined with a conditional structure, as in example (21).

Can I borrow your dictionary for a second? I just want to look up this word. (AE1)

I am applying for a job and need a recommendation from someone. Do you think you could write me a good one? (AE5)

Hi, if you are not too busy, can you please help me move over the weekend? We're going to take you out to lunch afterwards. (AE4)

The use of internal modifications with preparatory strategy is illustrated by (22).

I need a letter of recommendation. I was wondering if you could write it for me. (AE4)

Internal modifications (linguistic elements or syntactical structures within the request proper) are widely used in this type of request. In (22), the internal modification *I was wondering* is added to the basic core request. In fact, a few internal modifications can accompany the core requests with preparatory strategy, as illustrated in (23–27).

Excuse me, I'm looking for a book, but I can't find it here. Do you happen to know where it might be? (AE9)

I was hoping you could tell me if the chair is in. If not, do you know when he/she returns. (AE11)

Hello, Professor …., Do you have a moment? I actually wanted to ask you if I could schedule an appointment with you? (AE16)

I had a personal problem and could not finish my paper. Is it possible that [I] could have more time? (AE5)

Excuse me sir, but is there any way you can help me find this book? (AE1)

These evidently have the function of making the requests sound less imposing.

Total Preparatory
1.Can (could) I (you)
2.Do you think I (you) can (could)
3.Is there anyway I (you) can (could)
4.I was wondering (hoping) I (you, we) can (could)
5.Is that possible
6.Would I (you) be able to
7.Would it be possible to

Is the chair in the office right now? (AE4)

Do you know where the medical center is? (AE2)

The permission, mind, and hint strategies account for 19 examples or 5.4% each. The first two types are functionally similar to the preparatory strategy in that they conventionally check on preliminary conditions for the realization of the request. In the permission strategy, the speaker asks the hearer for permission to perform the request the action (30–32). *May I* or *Might I* are used in this kind of core requests.

May I borrow your camera? I have a club activity this weekend. (AE9)

Excuse me, might I borrow a pen for class? (AE11)

In the mind strategy, the speaker is checking if the hearer has any objection to performing the request (32–33). The name of the given strategy is based on the typical locutions used for it in English, such as *do you mind?* (33) or *would you mind?* (34). This strategy is named by the researcher. Whereas CCSARP seems to

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consider this strategy part of the preparatory one, I would like to separate it from the preparatory strategy due to the use of different linguistic elements *do you mind*, *would you mind* versus *can* or *could.*

I have a school project that requires some photos; <u>Do you mind</u> if I use your camera? It'll only be for a day or so. (AE8)

<u>Would you mind</u> helping me move this weekend? (AE9)

The relative frequency of hints is obviously a function of inferences in specific contexts, as in (34), where the speaker is asking to borrow lunch money.

<u>I forgot to bring my wallet today</u>. (AE4)

All of the other types of core requests account for fewer than 5% of the American English responses. In the intention strategy, the speaker again checks on a precondition, the addressee's willingness to fulfill the request (35–36).

I forgot my wallet. <u>Will you loan me $10?</u> (AE2)

<u>Would you please extend the deadline?</u> I have some family emergencies. (AE7)

In the American English data, requests involving the intention strategy are usually made from the hearer's perspective. As will be seen, this contrasts with the situation in Chinese, where requests involving the intention strategy are typically made from the speaker's perspective, as in (37).

Teacher, due to family-related issues <u>I will turn in the homework later, is it ok?</u>

Want inquiries like (38–39) are similar to the intention strategy; the speaker phrases the request locution as if checking to see whether the hearer would like to do the requested action. Finally, need statements (40), the appreciation strategy (41), and mood derivable (42) are also attested in a only small number of examples.

<u>Do you want to help me move?</u> (AE15)

Professor, <u>would you be willing to write me a letter of recommendation?</u> (AE3)

<u>I need to make an appointment with you to talk about my thesis.</u> Do you know when you are free? (AE5)

<u>I would greatly appreciate your help if you could lend me the reference book.</u> It is not in the library. (AE22)

<u>You buy lunch today</u>. I'll get it next time. (AE6)

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