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Expressing REQUEST in German and Russian: a Communicative-pragmatic Field Analysis

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Abstract

The paper analyzes the speech behavior pattern of REQUEST in Russian and German. The first part of the paper discusses a definition of the illocution of request in terms of Natural Semantic Metalanguage. The second part is focused on the contrastive research. Firstly, the situations in which both languages express REQUEST are described. Secondly, the possibilities of expressing REQUEST in Russian and German are analyzed using the method of communicative-pragmatic field.

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1. Introduction

The present article is a part of the ongoing research on the communicative behaviour of Russian and German speakers. The aim of the research is to identify similarities and differences in functioning of the utterances realizing pragmatic intention of the major speech behaviour patterns (such as AGREEMENT, REJECTION, GRATITUDE, ADVICE, REQUEST, APOLOGY etc.) and to define prototypical and peripheral means expressing them in these two languages. The innovative methodology of the research is based on the synthesis of ideas about the prototypical structure of categories and the possibility of presenting various linguistic phenomena in the form of a field. The aim of a

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communicative act or its illocutionary force is regarded as a field dominant, which provides a possibility to consolidate all possible speech act realizations in a language with a given illocutionary force into a field. This field is called a communicative-pragmatic field. The set of speech utterances that make up each particular field is determined by socio-pragmatic, cultural and linguistic factors, specific to its functioning in each of the languages (cf. Kotorova, 2014). What follows is the analysis of the speech behaviour pattern of REQUEST in Russian and German using the communicative-pragmatic field approach.

2. Definition of the speech behavior pattern REQUEST

REQUEST is a speech behaviour pattern aimed at persuading the Hearer to perform a certain action which is for the benefit of the Speaker. The Hearer is free to choose whether s/he is going to implement the proposed action or not (Trosborg, 1995, p. 187; Blankenhorn, 1998, p. 45-46; Larina, 2009, p. 212). REQUEST may also consist in inducing the hearer to delay or cancel some previously planned action.

With respect to the “freedom of choice” parameter, REQUEST, in contrast, for example, to ORDER, belongs to a group of non-obligatory (non-categorical) directive speech acts called *Requestives* which are characterized by beneficialness of the action for the Speaker. In addition to REQUEST, this group includes such speech acts as ENTREATY, INVOCATION, IMPLORATION (cf. Petrova, 2008, p.131). Other researchers, however, do not distinguish between these specific speech acts and consider them to be various types of REQUEST itself (cf. Glovinskaya, 1993, p. 180-181; Ermakova, 1990, p. 27).

Various definitions of the illocutionary purpose expressed by REQUEST formulated in terms of the Natural Semantic Metalanguage can be found in the early works of Wierzbicka (1972, p. 129; 1983, p. 129). They can be generalized as follows:

- (a) I assume that you can do it or not do it;
- (b) I want to cause you to do it;
- (c) I say: want you to do X.

In our opinion though, a definition of REQUEST should also incorporate the following two important “preparatory rules” proposed by Searle (1970, p. 66-67) with respect to directive speech acts: 1) H is able to do A, S believes H is able to do A; 2) It is not obvious to both S and H that H will do A in the normal course of events of his own accord.

Thus, considering these two rules, it seems plausible to expand Wierzbicka’s definition with the following two points:

- (d) I assume that you are able to do it;
- (e) I know that X cannot happen if someone does not do something to cause it to happen.

Indeed, as (d) states, one usually does not ask for something that is obviously impossible to be done, for example, to get a star from the sky. Likewise, there is no sense in asking for something that can happen by itself, for example, to move the legs while walking, as is indicated in (e).

It should be noted that Wierzbicka (1987) gives in her semantic dictionary of English speech act verbs different semantic definitions to certain English verbs (*ask, request, beg* etc.), which she merges into the group ASK₁. In Russian, all these verbs correspond in most cases to the verb *prosit’*, in the German – to the verb *bitten*. Therefore, a united generalized definition for the illocution of the REQUEST pattern is necessary.

Taking into account the broad meaning of the speech behavior pattern of REQUEST in Russian and German, it seems reasonable to follow Glowinskaya who defines the presupposition of this speech behaviour pattern not as “X wants Y to do P,” but rather as “X wants that it will be P” (Glovinskaya, 1993, p. 181). This makes it possible to cover cases where the desired action is performed by a third party, for example:

- (1) *Po schuch’emu velen’yu, po moemu hoten’yu – stupayte, vedra, sami domoy!*
- (2) *Ich bitte dich, das Kind dazu zu bringen, gesund zu essen.*

Summarizing all mentioned above, we propose to define the illocution of REQUEST as follows:

- (a) I assume that you can do it or not do it
- (b) I want to cause you to do it
- (c) I believe that you are able to do it
- (d) I know that X can not happen if someone does not do anything to make it happen
- (e) I say: I want to see X happen

Along with a request to do something (positive request), there is also a request to not undertake anything (negative request). In addition to the denial of the relevant verb (*I want to cause you **not** to do this, I say: I do **not** want to see X happen*), the definition of the negative request also includes the following component:

(f) I believe (see) that you will do it (you do it) (cf. Ermakova, 1990, p. 23).

Indeed, it makes no sense to ask not to do something that the interlocutor is not going to do anyway, ex.: *Please don't throw me into the briar patch!* Otherwise, such a request can act as an incitement.

Thus, the illocution of the negative requests can be formulated as follows:

(a) I believe (see) that you will do it (you do it)

(a) I assume that you can do it or not do it

(b) I want to cause you not to do it

(c) I believe that you are able not to do it

(d) I know that X can not happen if someone does not do anything to make it happen

(e) I say: I do not want to see X happen

REQUEST does not represent a homogeneous pattern of speech behavior, as one can distinguish certain subtypes within this pattern. When analyzing the realization forms of REQUEST, it is important to consider the difference between symmetric and asymmetric REQUEST on the one hand, and the difference between the large and small REQUEST on the other hand.

A request is considered to be symmetric, if the Addressee can make a similar request to the Speaker in a similar situation. In this case, the possibility of request can be considered as mutual. An asymmetric request excludes this possibility (cf. Önnerfors, 1993, p. 83; Hindelang, 1978, p. 498). For example, asking your friend to borrow a pen is a symmetric request, while asking your boss to grant a leave is asymmetric.

In general, the significance of request depends on two factors: 1) personal relationship between the Speaker and the Addressee and 2) importance of the action requested by the Speaker. The more important the desired effect and the higher the distance between the interlocutors, the higher is the value of request. The small REQUEST is a type of request the implementation of which is not associated with serious risks or time consumption and significant efforts. The large REQUEST involves all the above-mentioned to a greater or lesser extent. The category of significance of the request is not binary, it is a continuous variable affected by a number of different factors (Hindelang, 2004).

3. Situational-pragmatic factors

The speech behaviour pattern of REQUEST is a prototypical directive act and thus belongs to the most frequently used face threatening acts. According to Brown and Levinson (2007) such speech acts may threaten the public face of an interactant by impeding or damaging his/her wants and desires such as freedom of choice, independence, rights for non-distraction. In order to avoid this, the Speaker uses specific strategies to minimize the potential threat.

Face threatening situations caused by the act of REQUEST as well as the extent of the threat are culturally conditioned and differ in the Russian and German language communities. In the Russian communication, the request act can often be observed in situations in which a representative of the German culture is not likely to use it, as Germans prefer to solve their problems independently, if it is possible. For example, it is common for Russians to come and ask their neighbours to borrow some little things, especially for cooking (like salt, eggs, onions, etc.), when there is an urgent need, instead of going to a store. Such situations are often mentioned in the Russian fiction: *Medsestra prishla k mame, sosedka zashla za kartoshkoj* ('A nurse came to the mother, a neighbour came for potatoes') (Ol'ga Sulchinskaya); *Kto tam prishel? – donessya iz komnaty golos Lukashina. – Sosedka zashla za lukovitsey! — otozvalas' mat'* ('Who's there? – Lukashin's voice reached from the room. – A neighbour came for an onion bulb! – answered the mother') (El'dar Ryazanov).

The aforementioned differences are based on the peculiarities of these two cultures. Thus, Rathmayr (1996, p. 178-185) believes that the Russian culture is more focused on solidarity, while the German culture - on distancing. Therefore, due to a lesser distance between the interactants, the act of request is not perceived as a significant face threat in the Russian culture. It is usually a rather common act which is in most cases perceived by the Addressee with understanding and willingness to comply (cf. also Larina, 2009, p. 131). However, it should be noted that every nation can be stratified both socially and psychologically, i.e., in every culture there are people who prefer convergence strategy and those who prefer distancing (cf. Zemskaya, 2004, p. 577). This is why the abovementioned characteristics of the Russian and German cultures should be regarded as statistically expected. In addition, the overall changes in lifestyle influence the

psychological attitude and communicative behaviour of Russians. As a result of globalization, the former customs and rules of etiquette have been superseded by new ones and the cultural differences have gradually eroded: *Vokrug povyrastali vysotnye doma, pomenyalis' sosedi – uzhe po-prostetski «soli poprosit'» ne zaydesh'...* ('High rises have grown up around, the neighbors have changed - it is now impossible to "come for salt" without ceremony...') (Sergey Trofimov).

The much closer distance between the interactants in the Russian culture also affects how one perceives the degree of relevance of the request. What Russians can interpret as a small request, Germans often perceive as a large one, which entails the use of different linguistic means to express it:

(3) *Nina, ty ne mogla by pomenyat'sya so mnoy dezhurstvom v subbotu?* – small REQUEST

(3a) *Nora, ich möchte dich um einen Gefallen bitten: Könntest du vielleicht am Sonnabend mit mir den Dienst tauschen?* – large REQUEST

Social distance and age are the pragmatic factors that build the basis for the opposition of symmetric and asymmetric request. In the case of asymmetric "bottom-up" relations, both Russian and German employ various means minimizing the face threat, cf.:

(4) *Yasha (Lyubovi Andreevne): Lyubov' Andreevna! Pozvol'te obratit'sya k vam s pros'boy, bud'te tak dobry! Esli opyat' poedete v Parizh, to voz'mite menya s soboj, sdelayte milost'* (Anton Chehov) – asymmetric "bottom-up" REQUEST

(5) *Lyubov' Andreevna (Trofimovu): Ya mogu seychas kriknut'... mogu glupost' sdelat'. Spasite menya, Petya. Govorite zhe chto-nibud', govorite...* (Anton Chehov). – asymmetric "top-down" REQUEST

In the case of symmetric request, the choice of means depends on the weight of the desired effect and the degree of intimacy of the relations between the interactants:

(6) *Susanna Nikolaevna, usevshis', vdrug pospeshno opustila steklo v dvertse karety i kriknula Agrafene Vasil'evne: – Vy bud'te tak dobry, kak-nibud' posetite nas; my budem vam ochen' rady* (Aleksey Pisemskiy) – symmetric REQUEST (distant relations)

(7) *Kannst du mal die Musik anmachen?* – symmetric REQUEST (close, confidential relations)

To the pragmatic peculiarities of situational-communicative behaviour belong also the differences in the choice of discursive strategies.[†] With respect to REQUEST SBP when comparing the German and Russian languages one should pay attention to the differences in using the following strategies:

1) Orientation towards Self vs. Orientation towards Other

In Russian, both strategies can be used to implement REQUEST, and the speakers do not see any pragmatic differences between them (cf. Larina, 2009, p. 182):

(8) *Ty ne mog by dat' mne na vremya svoy velosiped? = Ya mogu vzyat' na vremya tvoy velosiped?*

In German, the predominant strategy is "Orientation towards Other" (9), while the other one is much less frequent (9a):

(9) *Könntest du mir bitte dein Fahrrad leihen?*

(9a) *Könnte ich bitte dein Fahrrad leihen?*

2) Directness vs. Indirectness

Comparative studies of the Russian and German languages show that even now in Russia the pattern of REQUEST is often used without much fear to damage the public face of the interlocutor. In Russian, the necessity to minimize the face threat is expressed to a much lesser degree than in the German language. Therefore, the wording of a request in Russian is often more direct than in German. For example, if a passenger in a crowded train wants to get to the exit, s/he most often formulates her/his request in a straight manner: *Razreshite / pozvol'te projti or Propustite, pozhaluysta, ya vyhozhu*. Another possibility, although a less frequent one, is to use a direct question: *Vy vyhodite na sleduyuschej?* In German, in most cases, one uses a neutral indirect question: *Darf ich bitte durch?* The speakers avoid direct requests, so that even the equivalent of the Russian question *Vy vyhodite na sleduyuschej ostanovke? - Steigen Sie an der nächsten Haltestelle aus?* is considered to be too personal for Germans.

These discursive behaviour peculiarities have also impact on the distribution of the central and peripheral means of expression of the REQUEST illocution as will be shown below.

[†] See House (House, 1996, p. 347; 1998, p. 71; 2005, p. 21) on various discursive strategies.

4. Organization of the communicative-pragmatic fields in German and Russian

4.1. Central forms of realization

The majority of linguists lean to the view that the imperative is the most common means used to express REQUEST in Russian (cf. Larina, 2009, p. 222; Lysakova & Veselovskaya, 2008, p. 74; Kantorczyk, 2008, p. 70; Rathmayr, 1994, p. 274; Wierzbicka, 1991, p. 30-31). At the same time, the latest research data from Ogiermann (2009, p. 209) show that there is an increasing tendency among the contemporary Russian speakers to make a request using indirect speech acts. It should, however, be taken into account that the author's informants were exclusively students of Moscow universities. This social group can be characterized by a high level of education and frequent international contacts, which could influence their answers. In our opinion, the survey conducted by Ogiermann reflects that the formulation of requests in the Russian culture is undergoing a change due to globalization. At the same time, the results of the survey also show that the number of imperative constructions in the answers of the Russian respondents is much higher than that in the answers of the German ones: 5% in German and 35% in Russian (Ogiermann, 2009, p. 209). Therefore, in what follows, we assume that the imperative is a prototypical means of expressing the request in Russian:

(10) *Rebenok, prinesi mne verhnij yaschik moego komoda*, — poprosila ona.

In German, however, the preferred means of implementing the pattern of REQUEST is to use interrogative sentences (cf. Kantorczyk, 2008, p. 71; Ogiermann, 2009, p. 209). Therefore, they form the center of the communicative-pragmatic field of request in German:

(11) *“Könnten Sie bitte noch etwas warten, meine Oma kann nicht so schnell laufen”*, bat er.

These communication preferences should be taken into account when translating into these languages, i.e. a Russian imperative statement expressing request corresponds, as a rule, to an interrogative sentence in German:

(12) *Pomogite mne, pozhaluysta, polozhit' chemodan na polku.*

(12a) *Könnten sie mir bitte helfen, den Koffer auf das Regal zu legen?*

This, however, does not mean that the imperative in German does not belong to the means of implementation of REQUEST. It can be used, for instance, to express a small request, mostly in personal communication. In this case, the use of the imperative can often be accompanied by particles *mal* and *doch*, which indicate that it is a small favor:

(13) *“Bring mir doch noch einen Gin Tonic”*, ruft Meta Huber ihrem Sohn Markus zu.

In Russian, the insignificance of the request, as well as the informal relationships between interactants are marked with the particle *-ka* attached to the verb. This form is only possible with the implementation of symmetric request, or in the case when the status of the Speaker is higher than the status of the Addressee (cf. Rathmayr, 1994, p. 257):

(14) *“Lelya, vyydi-ka na minutku”*, — skazala ona.

The semantic verb can also be accompanied by a particle *davaj-ka*:

(15) *Davay-ka bystren'ko napishi mne ofitsial'nyu bumagu, chto vot on okonchil shkolu, chto on tut delal pervye shagi v tsirke*

The large request in Russian as well as in German is prototypically realized in the form of a modalized question, often in combination with the introduction, explanation or justification (Buscha et al., 1998, p. 257-258):

(16) *U menya k vam ne sovsem obychnaya pros'ba. Vy ne mogli by organizovat' mne vstrechu s Natal'ey Ol'hovtsevoy?*

(17) *Ich hätte eine Bitte an Sie, Herr Pfarrer: Könnten Sie vielleicht in Ihren Archiven nachschauen, ob eventuell Kinder von August Högn in Wallersdorf getauft wurden? Mir geht es vor allem um Geburtsdaten.*

In the Russian language, a question with the verb *moč'* in the request function, is, as a rule, in the subjunctive mood and the negative form. Affirmative questions are perceived as a direct question about the possibility of the implementation of the action rather than as a request (cf. Rathmayr, 1994, p. 268):

(16a) *Vy mogli by organizovat' mne vstrechu s Natal'ey Ol'hovtsevoy?*

When answering the direct question in (16a), the Addressee will likely inform the Speaker, whether he know the named person and whether s/he is able to organize such a meeting. The negative question in (16) assumes both of these conditions as granted.

Explicitly performative utterances likewise belong to the central means of expressing request. However, neither

in Russian nor in German are they placed directly in the core of the field. The most frequent performative means in both languages is the verb *prosit'* - *bitten*:

(18) *Ya proshu tebya, govori potishe. Razbudish' kogo-nibud'.*

(19) *Ich bitte dich, mir meinen Wunsch zu erfüllen.*

Just like other performative verbs, the verbs *prosit'* and *bitten* can be combined with modal modifiers, in this case almost exclusively with the verb *hotet'* - *mögen* in the indicative or subjunctive mood:

(20) *Hochu tebya poprosit' pozvonit' Ase i pomoch' ey razbrat'sya s postupleniem na rabotu.*

(21) *Ich möchte Sie bitten, die Situation noch einmal zu überdenken.*

In German, the use of the verb *wollen* in the abovementioned context makes REQUEST sound more categorical, thus rendering it closer to REQUIREMENT:

(22) *Ich will Sie bitten, an dieser Stelle keine falschen Debatten zu führen.*

In Russian, this semantics is expressed by non-modalized perfective or conjunctive forms of the verb *prosit'*:

(23) *Tol'ko vot chto, Feliks, ya Vas poproshu nikogda bol'she ne nazyvat' menya etim imenem.*

(24) *Ya poprosil by prekratit' eti nameki, – reshitel'no skazal on.*

Both in Russian and German, statements containing the imperative sound more confident than those with performative verbs (cf. Rathmayr, 1994, p. 264). Therefore, performative utterances are more often used in official communication (cf. Formanovskaya, 1994, p. 36), cf.:

(25) *Prinesi mne v subbotu knigi, kotorye ty bral.*

(25a) *Ya proshu tebya prinesti mne v subbotu knigi, kotorye ty bral.*

Example (25a) marks the relations between the interactants as less personal and less confidential than those in (25).

The nominal performative formula can be formed exclusively with the noun *pros'ba* - *Bitte*:

(26) *Est' u menya k tebe pros'ba, esli poluchish' moyu posylku, to sohrani vse, chto tam budet.*

(27) *Ich wende mich an Sie mit der Bitte, mich auf dem Laufenden zu halten, was mit meinem Vater passiert!*

The combination of the noun *pros'ba* with the infinitive denoting a desired action, is typical of the official communication in the Russian culture. It can be considered as a polite categorical requirement:

(28) *Ubeditel'naya pros'ba k turistam ne musorit' na marshrute i na mestah svoih stoyanok.*

4.1.1. Mitigating modifiers

Since the request relates to acts that threaten the public face of the interlocutor, both languages employ certain verbal strategies to mitigate the pressure on the Addressee. However, as we have already mentioned, in the German culture this pressure is perceived more clearly, acutely and painfully, which affects the choice of the language means.

In German, in order to mitigate the threat, one mainly uses indicators signaling the doubt of the speaker that s/he has right to make such a request, for example, *eventuell*, *vielleicht*, *ausnahmsweise*, etc.:

(29) *Könntest Du vielleicht auch Tina und Mario heimfahren?*

In the Russian language, the use of similar indicators in questions with the request illocution is not common:

(29a) * *Ty mog by pozhaluy otvezti domoy takzhe Tinu i Mario?*

In this case, one would use the negative question as in (29b), which is the most appropriate translation of the sentence in (29) into the Russian language.

(29b) *Ty ne mog by otvezti domoy takzhe Tinu i Mario?*

The minimizing of the threat in the German language can also often be realized by means of the colloquial particle *bitte*. The Russian equivalent *pozhaluysta*, however, cannot be used in questions concerning the feasibility of the desired action, cf. example (30) and its Russian translation:

(30) *Wenn du zur Bibliothek gehst, kannst du bitte dieses Buch für mich abgeben?*

(30a) *Esli ty poydesh' v biblioteku, ne mog by ty sdat' za menya knigu?*

The use of the Russian equivalent of the German particle *bitte* in this context is not conventional:

(30b) * *Esli ty poydesh' v biblioteku, mog by ty, pozhaluysta, sdat' za menya knigu?*

In order to reduce the pressure on the Addressee, one can use diminutive forms in Russian. They can be used not only in personal confidential communication, but in other forms of communication as well:

(31) *Poday, detochka, staren'koy mamen'ke lozhku sahara na propitanie.*

(32) Master zval ego pomoch': "Poderzhi-ka, synok, nashu lodochku, a ya molotochkom proyduz'".

In the Russian language, one can also use various situational modifiers to reduce the importance of a desired action (see Larina, 2009, p. 223; Ogiermann, 2009, p. 204). For example, *čut'-čut', kapel'ku, na paru dnei, do zavtra*, etc.:

(33) *Udeli mne, pozhaluysta, neskol'ko minut.*

(34) *Dayte mne hot' nemnogo vypit', Marlen Mihaylovich, naleyte hot' kapel'ku.*

(35) *Ya budu v aprele v Moskve, ne mog by ya ostanovit'sya u vas na paru dnei?*

In German, the use of similar modifiers is possible as well, although it is less frequent.

The large request in both languages is often preceded by a preventive introduction which has more or less conventionalized forms. A certain "justification" of the request can also be implemented in the statement:

(36) *Vladimir Yur'evich, sdelajte odolzhenie, ne ostav'te v bede, posmotrite bol'nuyu svoim almaznym okom!*

(37) *Vielleicht könnten wir ja mal – wenn es Ihnen nichts ausmacht – irgendwie so über mein Gehalt sprechen?*

Small requests can also be commented and "excused":

(38) *Kak govoriš'ya, ne v službu, a v družbu, otkroyte-ka na minutochku vhodnyu dver'.*

(39) *Würden Sie bitte so liebenswürdig sein und einen Schritt zur Seite treten.*

4.1.2. Intensifying modifiers

The most common means employed to intensify the request are the gradational adverbs *očen' - sehr* used with performative verbs as well as the adjectives *bol'shaya / ogromnaya - große* used with performative noun:

(40) *Wir bitten sehr, den Fehler zu entschuldigen.*

(41) *Ogromnaya pros'ba, tovarišchi, vedite sebya sderzhanno i korrektno!*

One can also use other lexical intensifiers such as adverbs *ubeditel'no, nastoátel'no, dringend, ausdrücklich*. etc. They mark the fact that the desire of the speaker to commit a certain action is very strong. These intensifiers can be used both in symmetric and asymmetric requests:

(42) *Ya nastoyatel'no proshu peredat', chtoby eta zhenschina ne smela pokazivat'sya na pohoronah.*

(43) *Ich bitte ausdrücklich um Entschuldigung, wenn wir Sie nicht mit auf die Anmeldeleiste gesetzt haben.*

(44) *Ubeditel'no proshu Verhovnyy Sovet osvobodit' menya dlya togo, chtoby ya mog plodotvorno i chestno rabotat' na blago Rodiny.*

(45) *Ich bitte dich dringend, keine weiteren Provokationen dieser Art vorzunehmen.*

When the speaker wants to appeal to the feelings of the interactant, s/he can use various expressions like *okazhite lyubeznost', sdelay milost', voydi v moe polozenie, bud' moim spasitelem, Hristom-Bogom molyu, seien Sie so lieb, seien Sie so freundlich, lass mich nicht im Stich, um Gottes Willen* and so on.

In many cases, this may also lead to use of a double imperative construction. The degree of politeness of such expressions is higher than that of constructions with single imperatives (Larina, 2009, p. 233):

(46) *Hristom-Bogom molyu – ne vydavayte, a ya vse, vse po sovesti rasskazhu*

(47) *Seien Sie bitte so freundlich und nehmen Sie sich einen Augenblick Zeit, um noch einmal in die Begründung zu schauen.*

It should be noted that in the Russian language the expression *bud'te lúbezny*, uttered in certain situations and with certain intonation, can be used to express a categorical demand and is perceived in this case as "super polite" (cf. Larina, 2009, p. 231):

(48) *Nikakie ob'yasneniya v raschet ne prinimayutsya. Zaklyuchen kontrakt – bud'te lyubezny ego vpolnyat'.*

4.2. Peripheral forms of realization

To the peripheral forms of expression of REQUEST we can assign certain types of questions, affirmative and desiderative statements, as well as elliptical nominal constructions (cf. Rathmayr, 1994, p. 269-272; Ermakova, 1990, p. 31-34; Lysakova & Veselovskaya, 2008, p. 90-91; Kantorczyk, 2008, p. 91).

4.2.1. Questions concerning the possibility of an action in the future

In both languages, REQUEST may be implemented by using an interrogative sentence, inquiring whether the Addressee is about to perform the desired action. This model is common, first of all, for a small request:

(49) *Hilfst du mir bei der Renovierung?*

(50) *Ty mne prinesesh' zavtra lekarstvo?*

In the German language such an interrogative sentence can be introduced by means of the conjunction *ob*:

(51) *Ob du mit mir nach Leipzig fahren wirst?*

In Russian, such interrogative sentences can be used in negative form, as in (52). Optionally, one can also use the particle *li* in combination with negation. This adds a high degree of politeness to the statement, as illustrated in (53):

(52) *Ty ne poderzhish' minutochku moe pal'to?*

(53) *Ne odolzhite li Vy mne eti zapisi na nekotroie vremya?*

Rathmayr (1994, p. 269) points out that the literal translation of the Russian negative question into German expresses a repeated claim associated with the annoyance of the speaker, cf.:

(54) *Ty ne shodish' za molokom?* – REQUEST or polite DEMAND

(54a) *?Wirst du nicht Milch holen gehen?* – OUTRAGE or repeated DEMAND

4.2.2. Questions concerning wishes and plans of the Addressee

This model is more frequent in the German language and represents a common type of indirect requests:

(55) *Möchten Sie mir bitte etwas Aufmerksamkeit widmen?*

In Russian, this implementation of REQUEST is possible as well, but it is often considered as an ironic statement expressing disappointment or irritation of the speaker, because the desired action is not fulfilled:

(56) *Ty ne hochesh' (voobsche-to) za hlebom shodit'?*

4.2.3. Questions concerning the availability of an object

In certain situations, the question whether the Addressee has a certain item can be unequivocally perceived as a request to borrow this item, or to report certain information about it:

(57) *Hast du ein Feuerzeug?* = 'Kannst du mir dein Feuerzeug geben?'

(58) *Izvinite, u Vas est' chasy?* = 'Ne skazhete, kotoryy chas?'

4.2.4. Desiderative statements

The request can also be expressed by a statement in which the desired action is characterized as a useful, beneficial or enjoyable for the speaker. Such desiderative sentences stand, as a rule, in the subjunctive mood. They can be both affirmative and negative; impersonal sentences can also be used:

(59) *Ich würde jetzt sehr gern die Meinung der Herren Kollegen hören* = "Bitte sagen Sie mir Ihre Meinung"

(60) *Ya byl by rad poyti s toboy v teatr* = 'Priglaseniya menya tozhe v teatr'

(61) *Ne meshalo by moloka kupit'* = 'Shodi za molokom'

4.2.5. Assertive statements

Another possibility of expressing REQUEST is to describe a certain state of affairs which can lead the Addressee to conclusion that s/he must undertake a certain action to change this situation:

(62) *Du hast doch noch Bier im Kühlschranks!* = 'Gib mir ein Bier'

(63) *Oy, ya sovsem u vas zamerzla* = 'Vsklyuchite otoplenie'

4.2.6. Elliptic nominal constructions

In casual conversation, the illocution of REQUEST can be expressed by prepositional constructions or single isolated nouns (less frequently adjectives or adverbs). In Russian, these nouns are used in the accusative or genitive form.

(64) *Ohne Zucker bitte!* = ‘Bringen Sie mir bitte Kaffee / Tee ohne Zucker’

(65) *Vody!* = ‘Prinesite vody’

(66) *Karetu mne! Karetu!* = ‘Podayte mne karetu!’ (Aleksandr Griboedov)

5. Conclusion

The analysis of the speech behaviour pattern of REQUEST has revealed the following peculiarities in Russian and German:

1) In the Russian culture, REQUEST is often used in the communicative situations, in which a German speaker would most likely abstain from making a request. This is connected with a much closer distance between the interactants in the Russian culture.

2) In the Russian language, the field core generally consists of imperative utterances in the complete and incomplete form. In the German language, the field core contains interrogative utterances mostly realized in the form of a modalized question.

3) Explicitly performative utterances belong to the central means of expressing request in both languages. However, they are not placed directly in the core of the field in both languages.

4) In both languages, the peripheral forms of expression of request include certain types of questions, affirmative and desiderative statements, as well as elliptical nominal constructions.

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